CULTURE, MIND, AND SOCIETY

Widening the Frame with Visual Psychological Anthropology

Perspectives on Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigma in Indonesia

Robert Lemelson · Annie Tucker

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Culture, Mind, and Society

Series Editor

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To the memory of Dorothy Lemelson, with the deepest love, admiration, and respect.

Blessed is the righteous judge.

Series Editor's Preface

Robert Lemelson and Annie Tucker's book is a textual ethnography of ethnographic films. The films discussed inquire into central interrelated issues in the anthropology of suffering—traumas and their effects, gendered violence, and stigmatization. They were all produced based on Lemelson's long-term fieldwork in Indonesia. *40 Years of Silence* (2009) documents political and psychological traumas of the mass killings in 1965–1966; *Bitter Honey* (2015) follows familial violence that comes with polygamous marriages; and *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* (2012) presents family dynamics around poverty, mental illness, and gendered ethics of marriage and sexuality. The films—to be watched before and alongside reading the book—use various cinematic techniques and genres. Yet, the topics selected and the methods used underline core paradigmatic stances of psychological anthropology—closely following individuals' experiences and doing so within their social contexts, cultural logics, and political milieus. Indeed, the authors suggest that through making and watching them, ethnographic films become crucial vehicles to reflect upon, inquire into and teach about personal lives as experienced in their broader contexts. By describing, interpreting, and analyzing

the diverse contexts and deliberations through which these films were produced and outlining their theoretical significance, *Visual Psychological Anthropology* (VPA), as the authors call this unique field, receives new depths. Hence, the book offers fruitful paths for future collaborations between visual and psychological anthropology beyond accompanying the films. In particular, theorizing the process of visually translating human intimacy is achieved by offering four layers: Interpreting the films' *contents*, documenting the *fieldwork*, discussing the *editorial work*, and deliberating *epistemological and moral concerns*.

First, interpreting the various personal and interpersonal experiences documented in the films within the politics, social dynamics, culture logics, and history of modern Indonesia. Violence, traumas, stigmatization, and de-stigmatization, the authors argue, are tied up with political oppression that echoes social discrimination. The films' broader context is thus linked with poverty and suffering within families and their losses, conflicts, and the subjugation of women. Individual emotional responses, like shame (*malu*) or anger (*marah*), are deeply gendered forms. Further, local religiosities shape ethics of surrender, patience, helping others, resilience and activism.

Second, introducing the complicated research and the in-depth, person-centered interviews and conversations that allow the production of such films. This aspect lies at the base of an ethnography of ethnographic films—inviting readers to thorough visits behind the scenes. The authors share how the research unfolded and how longitudinal collaborations and relationships with participants and advisors were evolving. They also discuss the personal interactions in the field and local notions about sharing (or not) painful experiences in public and the downplaying of conflicts and negative feelings.

Third, explaining the complicated process of choosing specific parts of the fieldwork and footage and arranging them in particular ways and timelines. The authors elaborate on their emotional, cognitive, and narrative considerations and the "voice" of the narrator and how they incorporated additional materials like archival contents, art, imagery, and music. They also discuss how possible responses shape the editorial process and the role of participants' considerations about their real-life and their

exposed images (and their impacts) as portrayed in the film, and how they tried to encourage participants' agency in making the film.

Fourth, outlining epistemological and ethical deliberations that determine the cinematic outcomes—reflecting on cultural gaps in emotional expression and how to bridge such gaps or indicate them. In particular, the authors reflect on moral concerns in filming human suffering in Indonesia from a privileged subject position of Western actors. *Informed consent,* they argue, should be rethought and recalibrated when exposing individuals and trying to eliminate harm to participants, families and communities throughout the entire process of creating the films and distributing them.

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Preface

This book is one outcome of long-term fieldwork engagements with psychological and visual anthropology, Indonesia, and with making psychologically oriented ethnographic films. The three films discussed in the book were all shot over the course of many years. The methodology used to make them was decades in development, spanning back over a previous film series and prior monograph. The collaborative relationships with colleagues and film participants reach back just as long, and continue through the present day. These all are united in a career-long endeavor to promote the power of visual methods to investigate, illuminate, and communicate central areas of inquiry in the field of psychological anthropology.

The book is written to complement three ethnographic films. *40 Years of Silence* is scaffolded around the long-term effects of childhood political trauma for four Indonesian families during and in the decades after the mass killings of 1965. *Bitter Honey* addresses cultural frameworks for gendered violence as experienced in three Balinese polygamous marriages. *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* considers the intersectional vulnerabilities and processes of stigmatization that render one rural

Javanese girl vulnerable to sex trafficking. While discussing the content of these films, the volume intends to "widen the frame" for them in three significant ways.

We do this first by exploring the broader ethnography involved in research, fieldwork, and filmmaking not included in the films proper. What ends up in a film is a tiny fraction of fieldwork done and footage recorded. Given the longitudinal nature of our work, we also have maintained relationships with film participants long after the films are released, following the course of their lives. This book gives a fuller account of the range of fieldwork material—observations, interviews, et cetera—that exceeds what was eventually incorporated into the final films.

The book widens the frame again by mining the connections between the films. Despite the disparate topics they cover and distinct themes they explore, we see these projects as theoretically and ethnographically linked. We delve into the issues in psychological anthropology relevant to all and examine how they are interconnected within Indonesian history, society, and culture—and further, how all of these permeate participant subjectivity.

Thirdly and finally, we widen the frame to account for what goes on outside the limits of the camera lens. Just as most film footage ends up on the proverbial cutting room floor, any footage recorded is still just a sliver of the encounter and the overarching project, which encompasses evolving social relationships, production strategies, ethical considerations, and more. Exploring filmmaking *as process* allows us to reflect on the experience and its impact on our participants. It also allows us to discuss the unique ways in which visual and psychological anthropology are united in our methodology.

This methodology, which we call "visual psychological anthropology" (VPA) adapts person-centered ethnography for film and integrates it with visual anthropology and other cinematic elements of more mainstream film genres. We first outlined VPA in our monograph, *Afflictions: Steps Towards a Visual Psychological Anthropology.* That book was based on the six case-study films of our *Afflictions* series, which addressed interconnections between culture, mental illness, and neuropsychiatric disorder in Bali and Java via various significant aspects of the illness experience.

This volume is fundamentally connected to that book and can to a certain extent be considered an extension of it in terms of concept, structure, theory, and method, audience and goal. It is similarly designed to supplement a group of ethnographic films shot according to VPA tenets. It equally champions VPA as a way to go beyond given etic categories to reach a holistic understanding of an issue via a subjectivity-oriented, person-centered approach. Furthermore, the roots of the film projects discussed in this book can be traced back to ethnographic research for *Afflictions*, and the work and thought behind them overlap with *Afflictions* and with each other. This is evident as all the films circle around similar issues at stake, most notably stigmatization and trauma, but also family dynamics, village life, presentation of self, life course development, and more.

In VPA, longitudinality is central in determining how the psychological experiences of participants come to be understood and represented. It depends, then, on the long-term engagement of authors and research collaborators. The origins of my interest in the variable contexts and long-term outcomes of trauma, violence, and stigmatization date back to my undergraduate thesis at Hampshire College for which I conducted fieldwork with the newly-arrived Cambodian refugee community in Seattle. Their stories of trauma and survival brought home to me, as a young scholar, the importance of understanding the multiple contexts for trauma, violence, and oppression. After graduation, while pursuing a degree in clinical psychology, I worked as a clinician in a variety of mental health settings. Here I found the hegemonic clinical approach to mental health issues meant the structural origins or contexts of familial and individual suffering and "dysfunction", such as poverty, anomie and alienation, racism, and economic devolution, were rarely discussed or included in treatment provider's theoretical or clinical formulations. But it also gave me experience in long term, compassionate interviewing, albeit in a clinical setting with a focus on alleviating suffering, rather than an ethnographic one focused on understanding individual experience in a cultural context. My desire to find alternate ways of understanding these challenges of linking these disparate domains brought me back to anthropology to pursue graduate study at UCLA.

Given my long-term interest in the relationship of culture to mental illness, after taking a seminar with esteemed psychological anthropologist Robert Edgerton on schizophrenia and culture, for my dissertation I settled on the "outcome paradox" in cultural psychiatry. This research, highlighted in our *Afflictions* monograph, explored the question of differential, and better, outcome for people living with psychotic illness in the developing world. After several exploratory field visits to Indonesia in the early 1990, I received a 1996–1997 Fulbright grant to study this issue in Bali, and while doing fieldwork there, also received a WHO grant to investigate the Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders associated with Streptococcus Infections (or PANDAS) hypothesis. During this research I did case findings for individuals with neuropsychiatric disorders, such as Tourette Syndrome and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and explored their lives in a clinical ethnography. It was during this extended fieldwork that I began, in collaboration with an ethnographic filmmaker colleague, filming some of my research. When I returned to Los Angeles and began teaching at UCLA, I began to edit this footage; I became captivated by the process and founded an ethnographic film production company, Elemental Productions. Elemental has now made over 15 films on a range of topics. Many of these films address concerns that have endured throughout my career, including trauma, mental illness, personal experience, and the sociocultural and structural contexts of suffering.

This work was only made possible by deep collaborations with Indonesian colleagues. An early and central collaboration was with the cartoonist and essayist Wayan Sadha. As a Balinese man with a deep understanding of local village life, he was a central informant about the multiple domains that impacted the lives of my participants, and a dear friend. When he became increasingly ill after about 2012, I began working with his daughter, Ni Luh Gede Sri Pratiwi, and have continued to collaborate with her after Sadha's death in 2015.

I was introduced to psychiatrist Mahar Agusno and his wife psychologist Ninik Supartini by a mutual acquaintance. Both joined my WHO project on neuropsychiatric disorders in Indonesia, collecting clinical, ethnographic, and visual data on individuals living with OCD and related neuropsychiatric conditions. This initial project began a 20-year

collaboration that spans the length and breadth of almost all of my subsequent visual psychological anthropology projects in Indonesia. They have found and evaluated potential cases, organized and produced aspects of ethnographic film shoots, transcribed and translated interviews, maintained positive and productive relationships with participants, and have been full and equal collaborators.

I first met Degung Santikarma when I invited him to speak at a conference on culture, the brain, and posttraumatic stress disorder, held at UCLA in 2002. Degung is an anthropologist and writer, who was a research assistant for Hildred Geertz at Princeton. He is married to an American anthropologist and lives much of the time in the USA but was born in Bali and maintains deep and extensive connections there. Both he and several members of his extended family were key collaborators in a number of projects, most importantly *40 Years of Silence*, where he is also one of the four main participants. In addition, he was a collaborating consultant on *Bitter Honey*, for which he also served as an expert in the film itself commenting on different aspects of polygamy, culture, and personal experience.

I met psychologist Livia Iskandar in 2005 when I organized a conference on trauma and social violence in Yogyakarta. Livia established the first gender-based violence treatment program in Jakarta, Pulih (meaning recovery). We have worked together on several projects, including *Bitter Honey*. Livia has extensive experience evaluating and treating women who have endured a range of violent and abusive life circumstances, and so she was the most fitting collaborator to explore aspects of this difficult domain.

Finally, I met Annie Tucker when she was in the early years of her doctoral program in culture and performance at UCLA and she worked as a research assistant for the *40 Years of Silence project*. She had completed an undergraduate capstone ethnography on *ludruk waria*, transgender performers in the East Javanese comedic theater genre at Barnard and was beginning her thesis research. This culminated in a dissertation on the interpretation and treatment of autism in Java. These projects familiarized her with Javanese habitus and dynamics of stigmatization and resilience in Javanese contexts, which she has applied for over a decade working as researcher and writer for Elemental Productions.

While she has contributed from Los Angeles rather than joining me in the field, our collaboration in research and writing, and our friendship, has made this work possible.

Given these fertile collaborations, the book alternates between the use of “I” and “we” throughout. Here, “I” refers to my own personal thoughts, ideas, and experiences, as founder of Elemental, anthropologist, and film director. “We” refers to processes undertaken, decisions made, experiences had, and insights reached by the team as a collective, which includes the collaborators mentioned here and others, as I have also worked with a fluctuating team of film professionals from Los Angeles and Indonesia.

The book advocates for the value of ethnographic film for psychological anthropology. As such, it is primarily oriented to those who have a specialty or interest in the fields of visual and/or psychological anthropology and are curious about how a VPA approach might complement or extend their research. Many anthropologists already incorporate some filmic elements into their ethnographic research, perhaps as an addendum or insert, to provide local color or context, as a pneumonic, or a way to gather data for later analysis. Others may be approaching their footage with a plan to edit it into an ethnographic film; this is a common but rarely actualized interest among psychological anthropologists, but it is precisely what we espouse and aim to encourage.

An edited film can be a powerful tool in translational realms. Much of the thought in psychological anthropology has importance for a wide swathe of contemporary concerns and current events, and yet anthropologists are often just talking to each other. Our discipline, like many others, uses dense, specialized, and even obscure written discourse which creates numerous barriers to access and understanding; this means we miss the opportunity to reach a larger public, both here in the United States and in our field sites, and demonstrate the relevance of our theory and methods. We believe the emergent synthesis of psychological and visual anthropology modeled in this project has the promise to extend the reach of anthropological research to a wider range of audiences than is typical.

We have discovered through our own work that often, the most responsive audience to a film is one we hadn’t anticipated. The three

films in this book have been used in concert with human rights advocacy, included in training for psychologists and psychiatrists, and shared widely on Indonesian media platforms. This has been affirming but has also come with some unanticipated outcomes, which we will discuss.

At the same time visual psychological anthropology is an approach to educate and engage more typical student and scholarly audiences who are suddenly in great need of remote and asynchronous learning options. As I sit here writing this, in January 2021, the coronavirus pandemic is a wildfire ravaging the world. Even before learning was forced to go mostly, if not entirely online, some educators were increasingly positioning film as equivalent to texts to generate critical discussion. Now the era of "Zoom classrooms" has introduced many more faculty to the valuable instructional use of visual and multimodal materials. During this time, I have received numerous requests for assistance in recommending and incorporating visual materials and approaches to teaching virtually. This pandemic has thus offered an unexpected assist to the status and relevance a range of visual approaches that, before the pandemic, were often seen as secondary to the teaching of anthropology. Now instructors are hungry for visual materials that go beyond the standard university classroom fare of straight lecture and PowerPoint slides to keep their students engaged. Why not take this opportunity to branch out creatively, to build our skills as filmmakers, anthropologists, and educators, and to try new and diverse forms of presentation and explanation?

Once discovered, this use of visual materials is likely to endure. Now more than ever, visual and translational models point the way to a future of psychological anthropology that extends its reach and brings its illuminating and productive findings into a new era of learning—that "widens the frame" for the field. There is a need for pedagogical materials that integrate the theory and practice of anthropology with visual, multimodal, and other novel approaches to research, teaching, and presentation. Ultimately, we hope this book can contribute to the development of a shared knowledge and practice that has the capacity to extend the reach and impact of psychological anthropology for both new and familiar audiences.

We assume that readers will be selecting this book or certain book chapters because they have watched one or more of these films. While

watching the three films is not a firm prerequisite, many of the references and discussions throughout the book will make the most sense to the degree a reader can mentally reference particular scenes and or people described. To this end we have released all three films on YouTube to make them accessible to our readers (https://tinyurl.com/wideningtheframevpa).

Pacific Palisades, USA Robert Lemelson

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Contents

Part I Introduction

1 Filming Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigmatization 3
The Films Not Made 3
The Origins of a Visual Psychological Anthropology 8
Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigma Onscreen 12
Trauma 13
Gendered Violence 14
Stigma 15
Filming Human Suffering: Questions Raised 16
What Visual Psychological Anthropology Can Contribute 20
Sensory, Aesthetic, Emotional Representation/Experience 20
Longitudinal, Inductive, Person-Centered, Reflexive 23
Collaborative 27
Multimodal 28

Book Outline and Summary 29
References 34

Part II The Films

2 *40 Years of Silence*: Generational Effects of Political Violence and Childhood Trauma in Indonesia 47
Baskara T. Wardaya, Robert Lemelson, and Annie Tucker
Theorizing Trauma and PTSD 48
The Historical Context 51
The Film 55
Participants' Histories 59
Budi and His Family 59
Lanny 63
Degung 66
Kereta 70
Participants' Experiences and Responses 73
Conclusion: Diversity of Responses to Fear-Based Experiences 84
References 87

3 *Bitter Honey*: Culture, Polygamy, and Gendered Violence in Bali 93
An Ecological Perspective on Gendered Domestic Violence in Bali 94
Context: Polygamy and Marriage in Bali 95
Courtship, Marriage, and Patrilineal Descent 95
Economics, Marriage, and Polygamy 98
Marriage Law and Polygamy 98
The Film 100
Participant Histories 104
Tuaji's Family 104
Sadra's Family 107
Darma's Family 111
Participant Experiences and Responses 116
Conclusion: Social Change, Ambivalence, and Stigma 130
References 132

4 *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn*: Stigmatization, Social Violence, and Sex Work in Central Java 137
Stigmatization 138
Local Ecological, Cultural, and Family Contexts 140
Regional Poverty and Limited Work Opportunities 141
Gendered Norms for Sexual Behavior, Courtship, and Marriage 143
Mental Illness 145
Vigilante Community Violence 146
The Film 147
Participant Histories 149
Imam Rohani 149
Tri 153
Lisa 156
Participant Experiences and Responses 159
Conclusion: The "Violences of Everyday Life" 168
References 169

Part III Integrative Discussion

5 **Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigmatization: Tracing Themes Throughout the Three Films** 179
Trauma and Fear-Based Experience in Ethnographic Context and Individual Subjectivity 181
Trauma in Indonesia 181
Trauma in the Films 182
Connecting Trauma and Gendered Violence 185
Gendered Violence in the Films 187
Stigmatization 194
Structural Violence 197
Family Loss, Separation, and Abandonment 200
Reactions to Loss 203
Widening the Frame: Cultural Schemas and Psychocultural Themes 205
References 206

6 Additional Psychocultural Themes 217
Shame *(Malu)* 218
Gendered *Malu*; A Feminist Reading of Shame in Indonesia 221
Malu in Participant Experience 223
Anger *(Marah)* 229
Anger in Participant Experience 231
Resilience 244
Resilience in Participant Experience 245
Conclusion: Film Participation and Participant Experience 254
References 256

Part IV A VPA Approach to Film as Process

7 Visual Psychological Anthropology in the Field 269
Adapted PCE Interviews as Primary Field Method 270
The Nature of "Truth" in VPA Interview Material 273
Indonesian Psychocultural Factors in PCE: Minimizing Conflict and Maintaining Harmony 274
Psychological Truth: Memory, Self-Protection, and Paradox 281
Defense Mechanisms 283
Leaving, Returning, and the Benefits of Longitudinality 285
Emphasizing Shared Human Experience 289
Performative Disclosures 290
Considering the Interviewer 290
Narrative Templates 291
Curhat 293
Reflexive Considerations 297
Anthropologist Subjectivity and Response 298
Relationship to the Camera and Staging the Interview 301
Depicting the Ethnographic Encounter 303
References 305

8 Crafting Stories Using a VPA Approach 313
Crafting Narratives 314
VPA Narratives: Theorized but Inductive, Responsive, and Emergent 315
Narrative Style and Structure 319
Editing for Emotion 329
Arguing for Emotion 330
Techniques for Emotion 333
The Artifice of Endings 339
References 345

9 Ethical Issues in Visual Psychological Anthropology 351
Consent 353
Danger to Safety and Well-Being 354
Representation 361
Screenings, Distribution, and Digital Media 369
Social and Psychocultural Dynamics of Consent 370
Amelioration of Harm 374
Psychological Protection and Amelioration of Harm for Participants During Sensitive Interviews 374
Interventions 377
Screenings and Malu 383
Films as Advocacy, Participants as Advocates 387
References 395

10 Epilogue 399
References 404

Glossary 407

Index 413

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BH	*Bitter Honey*
CAVR	Timor-Leste's Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation
CIPDH	International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights
DER	Documentary Educational Resources
DSM	*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*
G30S	30 September Movement
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ITN	Independent Television News
LBH Apik	Lemba Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (trans. Indonesian Women's Association Legal Aid Institute for Justice)—Balinese NGO working in the area of women's empowerment and protection
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
PANDAS	Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections

PCE	Person-Centered Ethnography
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia—Indonesian Communist Party
PNI	Indonesian Nationalist Party
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TGBVS	Trauma, Gender-Based Violence, and Stigma
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VPA	Visual Psychological Anthropology
WHO	World Health Organization

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1	The author and Kereta filming *40 Years of Silence*	13
Fig. 2.1	Mini, Budi, and Mudakir	60
Fig. 2.2	Lanny	64
Fig. 2.3	Degung Santikarma	67
Fig. 2.4	Nyoman Kereta	71
Fig. 2.5	Budi's growing strength	75
Fig. 2.6	Kris and his friends singing "Destiny of My Nation"	77
Fig. 2.7	Degung reacts to Ketut's veiled threat	82
Fig. 2.8	Budi's hope for himself	86
Fig. 3.1	Tuaji as money lender	99
Fig. 3.2	*Wayang kulit* puppetry as narration device	102
Fig. 3.3	Sang Putu Tuaji	106
Fig. 3.4	Sister-wives Manis and Giriastiti	107
Fig. 3.5	Murni and her children	109
Fig. 3.6	Darma and his sons	121
Fig. 3.7	Kiawati discussing *nyentana* marriage and divorce	128
Fig. 3.8	Kiawati and her children	129
Fig. 4.1	Tri, Imam, and Lisa	138
Fig. 4.2	Lisa's hopes for her future	167
Fig. 7.1	Suciati being interviewed	271

Fig. 7.2 Suciati asks how "truthful" she should be 285
Fig. 7.3 Interviewing Sadra and Purniasih's son Artawan 288
Fig. 9.1 Made Darma and his children 354
Fig. 9.2 Darma attending screening of *Bitter Honey* 363
Fig. 9.3 First author, Robert, and collaborator, Ninik, watch a rough cut of *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* with Imam and Tri 369
Fig. 9.4 Ketut 382
Fig. 9.5 "Women only" screening of *Bitter Honey*, attended by mothers and daughters, and facilitated by psychologist Livia Iskandar 386
Fig. 9.6 Ninik, Rob, and Budi answering questions after screening at Lanny's school 392

Photo 5.1 Budi's despair 201
Photo 5.2 Lisa's sadness over loss of family 203

Part I

Introduction

1

Filming Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigmatization

The Films Not Made

In 2000, I[1] found myself sitting in an orphanage in Central Java, on a plastic chair under a weakly humming fan, conducting an interview – or, attempting to conduct one. I was in Indonesia to initiate research into the relationship between childhood exposure to traumatic experience and state-sponsored terror, and its relation to a range of individual and psychosocial outcomes, part of my enduring interest in issues central to contemporary psychological anthropology in Indonesia. Along with my Indonesian colleagues, psychiatrist Dr. Mahar Agusno and community mental health researcher Ninik Supartini, I had begun to visit Javanese orphanages for children impacted by the recent conflicts in what was then East Timor, now Timor Leste. East Timorese had recently voted for independence after twenty-five years of Indonesian occupation. Before withdrawing, Indonesian military and paramilitary troops

[1] The use of the first person in this monograph refers to the first author.

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had killed thousands, displaced thousands more, and destroyed much of the infrastructure there (CAVR, 2006; Dobbins et al., 2013).

"Mariana" (not her real name)[2] was in her early teens and had come to the orphanage via a refugee camp after her village had been set on fire and razed to the ground. Dr. Mahar had already conducted several exploratory interviews with the orphanage director, staff members, and several children. But now Mariana seemed too uncomfortable to speak at all, let alone answer questions about her experiences. In our halting interview, she alternately stared blankly, broke into panicked laughter that verged on tears, covered her face, and answered questions in as few words as possible. After a number of excruciating attempts Dr. Mahar paused his line of questioning to address her evident discomfort. The transcript reads:

MAHAR: What are you afraid of? How are you feeling, sitting here, being interviewed by myself and Mr. Rob?

MARIANA: I feel fine.

MAHAR: Really? You're not feeling worried or anxious?

MARIANA: No.

MAHAR: It's alright, you can be honest. How are you feeling being filmed? Are you uncomfortable?

MARIANA: (*Covers her face with her hands, then looks up*) Yes. I'm afraid, being recorded like this, the video is going to be sent to East Timor.

ROB & MAHAR (In unison): It will not be sent there.

MARIANA: (*Pausing, looking around doubtfully*) If they hear what I say, I will be forced to go back there.

ROB: This information will not be sent to East Timor.

MAHAR (to Rob, in English): When I interviewed her previously, she spoke freely for two hours.

ROB (to Mahar, in English): Well there's a good reason why she wouldn't want to talk to us, if she's afraid it will hurt her. We have to either find a way to reassure her, or not conduct the interview. If she's not comfortable, then it's probably not the right thing to do.[3]

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[2] Throughout the book, we follow the convention of using personal names, without the relevant Javanese or Balinese honorifics that would be appropriate in their local context. No offense is meant. All participant names used are real names, except where noted.

[3] Throughout the book, direct quotations and dialogue were taken from interviews recorded between 1997 and 2020 as part of ethnographic research for the three films under discussion.

Dr. Mahar then asked Mariana whether she was afraid of me. She nodded. He asked how she was feeling at the moment and she said her heart was pounding. When given the opportunity to switch seats to move farther away from me, she eagerly took it.

At first, I was confused as to why I seemed to frighten her so terribly. Later, I learned from Indonesian activists that some children had been subject to violence at the hands of mercenaries, some of whom came from Australia and New Zealand, and were white. Presumably, she associated me with these men. We subsequently learned that the situation was even more complicated, and the traumas more layered; many of the children at this orphanage essentially had been abducted from East Timor in order to be "integrated" into wider Indonesian society (Murdoch, 2012). Furthermore, Mariana said, the orphanage head occasionally subjected her to violence, hitting her when she did something "wrong." Given her evident strong discomfort, I tried to end the interview as gracefully as possible. I conducted no further ethnographic research with Mariana, nor did I shoot any more film on the topic.

Yet this abbreviated interaction still stands out in my memory as a formative moment for the projects I did go on to make on related topics because it provided such insight: first, into the layered contexts of violence many Indonesians are living in, and second, into the complicated endeavor of making films with such participants. As Biehl and Locke (2017, pp. 28–29) remind us, when conducting ethnography, "People and the worlds they navigate and the outlooks they articulate are more confounding, incomplete, and multiplying than dominant analytical schemes tend to account for." My own ethnographic interest was in the intersection of political trauma and personal experience, but Mariana was dealing with a more complex history – and still unfolding present – of political violence, social violence, poverty, stigmatization, displacement, and personal loss, which together had informed her experience of the interview. My intentions for including Mariana in a visual ethnography were,

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Some of this quoted material also appears in the finished films, and some does not. Quotations and dialogue, which may include grammatical errors or unconventional uses of speech, have been reproduced verbatim or translated from the original Indonesian, Javanese, or Balinese.

to my mind, good; yet I realized in the interview that I had some fundamental gaps in understanding how the film shoot, and indeed my very presence, might affect her comfort and response. I also saw how my misunderstanding could move into a deeper understanding with further questioning, and how that new understanding could determine how to move forward with work on the same issues, and with a new awareness of the multi-layered nature of trauma – even though, in this case, I determined that the work should not move forward at all.

Soon after this interview, we moved on to another child, in a different Yogyakarta orphanage, who was being treated by Dr. Mahar: a 12-year-old boy, Budi Santosa. Budi was in a deep depression, suffering from panic attacks, possible psychotic decompensation, and suicidal ideation. In our interview, Budi was emotionally expressive, quite open about his personal anguish, and exhibited a nascent understanding of his suffering as rooted in the mass killing and political violence that swept across Indonesia in 1965. His experience, and the questions it raised about history, violence, and personal suffering, jumpstarted *40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy* (Lemelson, 2009; *40 Years*), the first film discussed in this book. The production and post-production on this film occurred from the years 2000–2009, when it was released.

After working on *40 Years*, activist colleagues in Indonesia pressed me to follow up on its themes of state-sponsored violence and look at the civil disorder and violence in 1998 and 1999, at the end of Suharto's New Order regime. During this period, in the context of the Asian economic crisis and Suharto's downfall, there was widespread violence and rapes of Indonesian women of Chinese descent in major Javanese cities. (These rapes were almost certainly instigated by *agent provocateurs* of Suharto's regime and thus were directly connected to the violence of 1965, the topic of *40 Years*.) Jakarta's Chinatown, Glodok, saw some of the worst of that violence.

One of the main social service programs addressing the needs of survivors, Pulih (which means "recovered" in the psychological sense in Indonesian), arranged tours for me of their Jakarta program and reached out to women who had been raped and assaulted during this period. None of the women they contacted were willing to sit for an interview, let alone be in a film and have their identities publicly revealed. I learned

that the fear, shame, and stigma associated with being a survivor of these mass rapes was overwhelming for these women, particularly in a context where anti-Chinese racism and sentiment were still active and the potential consequences of giving even basic testimony about this violence were severe. My colleagues and I realized that the project was unfeasible.

This second film I didn't make also pushed me into a deeper understanding of the process of filming personal experiences of violence, trauma, and stigmatization. I learned that perhaps, if I had been able to spend several years living in Jakarta, getting to know these women and the communities they came from, earning their trust and developing an understanding about how to depict and narrate their stories in a sensitive way, it might have worked. Given the exigencies of my life, I was unable to do this. But it became clear to me that the issue of gendered violence in Indonesia was important and could be the focus of a socially impactful ethnographic film. I realized that I could explore gendered violence in more local contexts or intimate relationships, over a period of time, rather than the gendered violence implicated in the episodic and historically situated case of the mass rapes of Chinese women in Indonesian cities. Here, we would see the multiple dimensions of social pressures, cultural assumptions, economic conditions, and political and historical contexts, as they were woven into personal psychological experience over time. We could develop the kind of trust and understanding that allowed person-centered ethnography on film. We could be attentive to the multiple ethical considerations that such visual ethnography must entail. And this was the origin of *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015), the second of the films discussed in this book.

During this same period, we had been continuing our work on neuropsychiatric disorders and culture in Java. One of the subjects was a man, Imam Rohani, in his fifties, who lived with his young wife Tri, and daughter, Lisa, in a rural area of central Java. Imam had a range of neuropsychiatric symptoms that fulfilled the inclusion criteria for this project. But it was only after repeated interviews and fieldwork, conducted from 1999 to 2008, that a much wider range of issues emerged in this family. These issues diverged widely from the rather narrow focus on Imam's neuropsychiatric symptoms and involved Tri's out of wedlock pregnancy, family involvement in sex work, structural and

sexual violence, and related village exclusion and stigma. These issues and their effects on this family became the origin of *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012; *Thorn*), the third film discussed in this book.

The Origins of a Visual Psychological Anthropology

Each of these films had its own distinct topical and thematic focus at the time of filming, although this book goes on to note their commonalities in many dimensions. *40 Years* investigates historic political violence through the testimonies of four survivors and their families, of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, on the islands of Java and Bali. The film examines the enduring impact the violent mass killings of 1965–1966, when Suharto took over the country, have had on victims and on subsequent generations. *Bitter Honey* presents multiple intimate perspectives on gendered violence through the unfolding lives of three contemporary polygamous Balinese families. In it, we hear from three husbands, 12 wives, their children, and other community members, in revelations that unfold over time as trust and intimacy develop with the filmmakers. Finally (in order of discussion), *Thorn* parses how multiple vulnerabilities, including mental illness, poverty, marital uncertainty, and sexual transgression, lead to stigmatization for members of one rural Javanese family, witnessed by their teenage daughter who finds herself in danger of being trafficked.

Separately, each film's major theme is explored through specific, situated, subjectivity-focused and intersectional accounts of individuals. Together, the three films paint a broader picture, or present a wider frame, of Indonesian experience. Our book traces the move from the situated films to the broader shared historical and cultural landscapes.

In Indonesia in 1965 and afterward, a complex interaction of cultural, political, and historical forces has led to ongoing manifestations of fear, violence, trauma, and stigmatization operating on local and national levels (Suharnomo & Syahruramdhan, 2018). The films explore these complex phenomena, as well as wellsprings of resilience, on Java and Bali, two islands that have some common cultural elements, while being

quite distinct (Forshee 2006; Hannigan 2015). Both islands share a 60-odd years history of political terror (Vltchek, 2012), culturally structured gender inequality (Clark, 2010), and local or village-level forms of scapegoating, violence, and social sanction – all of which, as we found, can overlap. By investigating the similarities and differences across the experiences of participants from the two Indonesian islands, the films provide insight into the ways in which the phenomenology of, response to, and long-term impact of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization is shaped by culture (Good & Hinton, 2016; Kirmayer et al., 2007). The personal stories of participants comprise nodes of attention to the relationships between social violence, historical events, and individual experience. The films portray varied possible outcomes for vulnerable individuals responding to the shifting politics, social norms, and cultural beliefs of a nation marked by historical violence.

Furthermore, by putting the three films in conversation with one another, we discovered that each separate organizing theme for the films is actually relevant to and operant in all three. Many of the participants' stories presented in this volume include incidents of an initial fear exposure and their deep and structuring impact on aspects of individual subjectivity, whether or not manifested through the familiar symptomatology of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some film participants have been victims of political violence or have experienced a traumatic event. Others have had their lives more subtly shaped by fear-based experiences embedded in forms of structural violence and oppression as embodied and enacted through social and cultural practice, whether their fears are triggered by the extreme and acute state terror of 1965 and subsequent histories of political stigma and discrimination, the everyday fear of living in a family which threatens to disintegrate or erupt, or the threat or experience of sexual attack.

The films also paint a polyphonic portrait of gendered violence in contemporary Indonesia in unexpected ways – unexpected because *40 Years* and *Thorn* were not initially focused on gendered violence, yet as the filming and editing progressed this issue emerged as a significant influence on the participants. Indeed, structural and direct violence against women have recently come to the forefront of popular discourse in a moment of reckoning that marks it as an urgent and defining global

issue. As recent gripping news events and the popular globalized #MeToo movements have shown, the dynamic of gendered violence is pervasive, a formative issue even in spaces and relationships where it might not be immediately apparent.

The experience of stigmatization is also interwoven throughout the narratives in each film, as a precursor or vulnerability to discrete or ongoing incidences of violence, a motivating factor for difficult and painful decisions, and a process in its own right that shapes participant self-image and constrains their behavior.

These experiences all have to be considered in the context of other situated concerns in participants' lives, which at times and in different ways override a more singular focus on trauma, gendered violence, or stigmatization; as conceptual tools, these frames are each too narrow to contain the complexities of the participants' lives and the multiple, situated contexts that surround them. The challenge of the project, and the tension of the book, is found in connecting these various domains, elaborating on the layers within them, and ordering them in a way that most accurately reflects our participants' reality; all this while also contributing to the ongoing discussion in psychological anthropology regarding the thematic topics the films explore.

These three films are further connected through a shared methodology, what we have termed visual psychological anthropology (VPA). VPA adapts a form of person-centered ethnography that focuses on the subjective experience of film participants, and crafts narratives around that material as it emerges over the course of filming. This methodology cohered over the two-decades plus work of filmmaking, research, and writing that spans these films. We articulated the concept and discussed the development of VPA in our first book (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). To briefly review here, VPA incorporates the topical, theoretical, and methodological concerns of psychological anthropology into visual practice. In other words, VPA uses visual techniques to address disciplinary interests in experiences such as mental illness and altered states; identity, difference, and notions of the self; life-cycle development; sexuality; consciousness and other domains central to contemporary psychological anthropology. This research seeks a phenomenological understanding

of the subjective and intersubjective structuring of reality and experience, focusing on the emotional meaning in an individual participant's narratives and embodied experience.

To capture the emergent nature of "life as lived" for individual subjectivities, VPA employs longitudinal research whenever possible, with the anthropologist returning to the field at regular intervals over the course of many years and maintaining ongoing relationships with film participants via local research collaborators. As with all longitudinal research, durational observation of changing life circumstances for participants witnesses the long-term consequences of events for them – their agency, suffering, and resilience. Key for psychological anthropology, longitudinal, psychologically oriented interviewing also allows the anthropologist to, with time and trust, eventually get past responses that are socially expected or culturally contained, into more pithy, textured content.

This book builds upon our first book on VPA. As we argued there, visual approaches have generally been lacking in psychological anthropology but are useful complementary methods that add much to person-centered exploration. VPA is able to present material on sensitive and emotionally resonant topics in ways that go beyond the written and the analytical format of much psychological anthropology (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). In this book, we focus on three films, and by exploring the methodology and making of them, and the theoretical implications we derive concerning the subjects' experiences, we show that VPA can "widen the frame" for psychological anthropology research in multiple, significant ways.

First, the incorporation of visual methodology allows for a more visceral representation of lived experience that accounts for – and more directly engages – embodied subjectivity, allowing the viewer to "be there" (Worthman, 2020) with participants, who are "rendered more knowable" (Das, 2015) by an intersubjective and intercorporeal engagement with their onscreen presence. Second, this methodology helps extend beyond the etic frameworks of inquiry brought by the anthropologist/filmmaker to the subject, by celebrating the overflow of meaning that comes from the participants themselves. This is especially pronounced as VPA's longitudinal, iterative praxis leads to new theoretical connections on the part of filmmaker and participants, and captures

processes of participant "becoming" as they unfold (Biehl & Locke, 2017). Third, by embracing a reflexive ethos, it presents what is typically outside the literal and metaphorical frame of ethnographic film, drawing attention to the interaction between filmmaker and participant during the fieldwork endeavor and road to discovery – and the broader complexity of human experience and its dynamic interaction with social, political, economic, and historical forces.

The holistic framework of this methodology, accounting for the dynamic and intimate context of participant and researcher relationship to the broad context of history and culture, can be put to use to explore any number of concerns in the field of psychological anthropology. In this book, we apply it to address – and even hopefully redress – some of the major areas of concern in representing experiences of trauma, violence, stigmatization on film, representations that inevitably raise an array of ethical questions.

A fundamental premise, which developed directly out of the filmmaking method and the iterative and responsive process of anthropological analysis it requires, is that the concepts we start with to explore the life-worlds of others – "trauma" (*40 Years*), "gendered violence" (*Bitter Honey*), "stigmatization" (*Thorn*) – are too reductionistic. Using VPA, we found that what is "at stake" for participants always overflows any initial theorized frame. Before returning to what VPA adds to both psychological anthropology and ethnographic filmmaking, and how it features in the three films that are the subject of this book, we briefly review some visual accounts of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatized groups in ethnographic film (Fig. 1.1).

Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigma Onscreen

Many anthropologists have depicted the lives of those contending with economic and political vulnerability and have produced groundbreaking and "heartbreaking" written ethnographies of people contending with trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization (Behar, 1996; Biehl, 2013; Goldstein, 2003; Pinto, 2014; Scheper-Hughes, 1993). What

Fig. 1.1 The author and Kereta filming *40 Years of Silence*

role does a visual approach, and film in particular, have to play in the anthropological study of these subjects (Başci, 2017; McLaughlin, 2010; Morag, 2013)? What problems does filming such things raise for a psychological anthropologist? Here, we review relevant ethnographic visual representations of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization (Garcia, 2017). Then, based on methodological, aesthetic, and ethical concerns, we suggest how our approach of VPA might expand and contribute to this visual archive in distinctive, wider frames, to address the multiple contexts and meanings through which these experiences are shaped.

Trauma

Since trauma is a contingent concept and/or an internal state (Murphy, 2015), it is difficult to say that ethnographic films can capture "trauma" (Friedman-Peleg, 2017). They can capture fear-inducing experiences and the embodied expression of fear, long known in ethology (Darwin, 1872;

Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Ekman & Friesen, 2003), and their sequelae, or aftermath for individuals or communities. Classic ethnographic films have depicted frightening experiences in ritual contexts involving initiation ceremonies, interpersonal conflicts, and intertribal warfare. These include, respectively, *Guardians of the Flutes* (Reddish, 1994; based on Gilbert Herdt's [1994] book of the same name), *The Ax Fight* (Asch, 1975), and *Dead Birds* (Gardner, 1963). Striking recent examples of visceral and direct documentation of frightening events unfolding in real time include *Survivors* (Pratt et al., 2018), about Sierra Leoneans contending with the Ebola outbreak, and A Dangerous Son (Garbus, 2018), which portrays the interventions and treatments available to families of children with significant psychiatric problems and aggressive outbursts. While not ethnographic per se,[4] some documentary films have portrayed entrenched drug violence (Borrmann & Luhnau, 2013) and the harrowing symptoms of PTSD from military combat (Dennis, 2011). Others address the personal impacts of witnessing or participating in terrifying events during the Holocaust (Lanzmann, 1985). Still others address the "remainders of violence," if not clinical symptoms of trauma, after random acts of violence (Blubaugh, 2007; Malmberg, 2010).

Gendered Violence

Many ethnographic and documentary films addressing gendered violence seek at once to portray the experience of being a victim or survivor and also to point to the structural factors behind such violence. For example, *Driving with Selvi* (Paloschi 2015) follows South India's first female taxi driver as she works and tells her story of escaping an abusive arranged marriage, simultaneously presenting a fierce critique of women's roles in India and a portrait of one woman's strength. Frederick Wiseman's

[4] The distinction between ethnographic and documentary film has been discussed and debated at length (e.g., Heider, 2006; Ruby, 2000). We addressed our take on their differences at various points in our first book (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). While both genres are nonfiction documentations of reality, per Heider ethnographic film is made by anthropologists, based on anthropological fieldwork; is grounded in the anthropological concern with culture's role in shaping human experience; and is tied to written ethnography – all central elements of a VPA approach.

Domestic Violence (2001), set primarily at a Tampa shelter, similarly presents both the shocking pain and rupture of domestic abuse but also illuminates the social and legal architecture built around abusers to protect them, framing domestic violence as just one part of patriarchal American violence. Some of these films focus on exceptional women who, either alone or in small groups, try to protect themselves and others such as *Sisters in Law* (Longinotto & Ayisi, 2005), *Kung Fu Grandma* (Park, 2014) and *Gulabi Gang* (Jain, 2012). *Private Violence* (Hill, 2014) chronicles the life and work of Kit Gruelle, a North Carolina woman who escaped an abusive relationship and went on to become a legal defender for others. Bringing the viewer into the courtroom, the film shows women actively fighting for justice and freedom from abusive relationships, educates the viewer on the visual cues and culture of American domestic violence, and reveals the legal framework around domestic abuse.

Stigma

Now more than ever, previously and currently stigmatized communities are being represented in ethnographic film (Hamer & Wilson, 2018; Thi, 2014), often but not always from a first-person perspective via participatory and auto-ethnographic projects. In many cases, the striking experimental, visual, and/or sensory methods of these films bring a new vibrancy to discussions about the positionality and lived experience of their subjects.

LGBTQ people are one such group whose stigmatized experiences past and present are depicted in films like *Memories of a Penitent Heart* (Aldarondo, 2016), which uses home video footage and other "found" material to address the experience of Latinx LGBTQ folks in conflict with their Catholic families during the AIDS crisis. Other films address stigmatization due to health status (*The Blood of Yingzhou District*; Yang, 2006), and disability or physical difference (*A Life Without Words*; Isenberg, 2011). *Casa Blanca* (Maciuszek, 2015) takes a person-centered approach, a technique we also use and one well suited to film, to intimately portray the lived experience of developmental disability in a

family living in a small port town in Cuba. In *Voice Unknown* (Park, 2011), Jinhee Park allows a refugee from North Korea to tell her story of escape, loss, and resettlement while her face is blurred out, a visual marker of her marginalization in her new society, the ongoing vulnerability of her family and the necessity to protect them, as well as the universality of her experiences as a refugee. Perry Ogden's *The Traveller Girl* (2005) is a hybrid documentary/fiction film which has incorporated the input and participation of his subjects from the nomadic minority Irish Traveller community, stigmatized within Ireland, to tell a story about what is at stake for them. Dan Girmus's *Oyate* (2016) attempts to "sidestep the kinds of negative, issue-based approaches that have so long dominated films set in native spaces" (Girmus, 2016), by using a poetic sensory approach to portray everyday indigenous life on the Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation.

Filming Human Suffering: Questions Raised

Concerns that have been raised about films on trauma, gendered violence, and stigma sometimes echo those about written ethnography, and at other times raise issues specific to the medium. Here, we focus on two that are particularly relevant to our own project: the positionality of the filmmaker and the power dynamics inherent in the enterprise, and the relationship of ethics and aesthetics in filming suffering and its aftermath.

Historically, anthropology has been complicit in silencing voices in the realms of trauma and violence, and early ethnographic film was no different. Prior to the 1940s in Asia and the 1960s in Africa, anthropology was part of the colonial apparatus. Anthropologists were more often than not working under colonial regimes, even as colonial administrators (Thomas, 1994), and their work fit into colonial visions even when it did not overtly support its projects (Asad, 1973). Films usually focused on snippets of exotic rituals or daily life, or romanticized themes of man's relationship to nature. Shifts in anthropological theories along with a repositioning of anthropologists in the post-World War II global order, and new technical flexibility, expanded the range and

depth of films between the 1950s and the 1980s. Topics such as political and gendered violence appeared (Broadman, 1982; Hara, 1987; Laufer, 1983; Robertson, 1988; Rouch, 1961; White, 1974), as did films about individual social actors and their personal experiences (Loizos, 1993).

With increasing filming of "suffering subjects" (Robbins, 2013) came new critiques. For decades now, producers of ethnographic and documentary films have been aware of and striven to shake off what Brian Winston (1988) called the "tradition of the victim," where participants are transformed into objects of our pity and concern and the act of filming is intended to do good by spurring viewers to action (Winston, 1988; see also Robbins, 2013, on written ethnography). Given this tradition, some felt it became "difficult to justify making films about the private acts of the pathological, socially disadvantaged, politically disenfranchised, and the economically oppressed" (Ruby, 1991, p. 52). Visual anthropologists became increasingly aware of the power dynamics inherent in every aspect of filmmaking and grew increasingly uncomfortable with speaking "for" others through film, especially if those onscreen were marginalized or otherwise disadvantaged (Bruner, 1989; Ruby, 1991, 1995).

Such reflection on the neocolonialist traps of ethnographic filmmaking led on the one hand to the rise of indigenous ethnographers and filmmakers making movies about themselves and the topics important to them from their own perspectives, using visual and narrative strategies they preferred (Ginsburg, 2002; MacDougall, 1997). At the same time, ethnographers and filmmakers who continued to do research with "others" adopted self-conscious methods of collaboration between "filmmaker" and "subject," using techniques ranging from "ethnofictions" (Izzo, 2019) to discussion of daily rushes and other forms of collaborative project development (Elder & Kamerling, 1974; MacDougall, 1995) to "participatory visual ethnography" (Coffman, 2009; Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Pink, 2001) where shooting and direction duties are shared, if not handed over completely to participants.

A related discussion was taking place about whether cross-cultural research about gender, poverty, and power can ever ethically be undertaken by a researcher working from a place of privilege – which is to say, a Western white man (Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000). In some societies, this

might be practically impossible anyway, due to cultural restrictions on interactions between genders. For example, because of extreme gender dimorphism in Sambia culture, it was difficult for Gilbert Herdt to interact with women, let alone observe or interview them about sensitive subjects (Herdt 2006). But even when it is socially possible to interact, certain material may remain hidden: "Male and female interviewers will not necessarily see or be allowed to see the same social worlds" (Women and Geography Study Group, 1984, p. 135). This observation stands, as well, for the interactions between Western interviewers and their subjects, as much as for cross-gender communication.

In addition to the issues surrounding the choice of topic and the interaction between filmmaker and subjects, what a finished film looks and feels like has been increasingly subject to critical concern, with some insisting that film must be visually stylish and emotionally compelling. Looking at Indonesia, let us take films about the mass killings of 1965–66 ('65) as an example. Ariel Heryanto (2012) has reviewed this small archive – one that has now grown to at least forty films (Parahita & Yulianto, 2020) – to challenge the idea that silence about the mass killings has been solely due to Suharto's oppressive regime. He argues that this silence also hinges on the changing culture of media production and consumption. Because aging survivors and earnest activists haven't presented the issue in a way to compel attention from the next generation of Indonesians, who live in an oversaturated media environment, '65 doesn't feel "relevant" to many. Plain testimony isn't enough: a "cinematic imagination" is now a prerequisite to gaining some congress on justice, or even public acknowledgment. This argument is taken further by Nancy Van House and Elizabeth Churchill (2008), who contend that the advent of more "democratic" digital media helps little, as few in that media space will bother digitizing memories or minority perspectives that have no commercial value. In other words, whether or not it sits comfortably with the ethical positions raised by critics of ethnographic film since the 1980, contemporary culture requires a packaging and presentation of victimization that goes beyond just the substance of a film. Cinematic skill and media savvy are required to make people care.

This point was driven home by the success of *The Act of Killing*, a documentary film by Joshua Oppenheimer (2012) and anonymous Indonesian partners that received an Academy Award nomination,

numerous accolades, and international acclaim. Oppenheimer's work was successful in finally bringing the Indonesian mass killings to an international screen, perhaps because his clever and masterful "play within a play" structure and strikingly dramatic visuals drew notice (Nichols, 2013). Other more recent cinematic attempts to grapple with Indonesia's past political violence seem to have assimilated this lesson, and use artful, engaging approaches. *A Daughter's Memory* (Pratiwi, 2019), for one, uses animation to bring oral history to life, while *Song of the Grassroots* (Kurniawan, 2020) blends activist and "making the album" documentary genres to portray Fajar Merah making a record based on the poetry of his father Wiji Thukul, an activist who was disappeared in 1998.

The Act of Killing's aesthetic impact, while inspiring and galvanizing to many and hailed as a masterpiece, did not go without significant critique. Its methodology of inviting perpetrators to make a movie about their past crimes raised a host of ethical problems for Indonesianists. Critical viewers, while acknowledging the intimacy and innovation of the film's aesthetic, were disturbed by the affinities and erasures that came with it and ultimately protested the absence of context regarding the history of military influence in local violence (Cribb, 2014; van Klinken, 2014) and of activist counternarratives (Dwyer, 2014). Critics argued these lacunae created a dehistoricized ethnographic present of trauma and silence that was ultimately Orientalizing, leaving an impression of Indonesians as either ignorant or out of control (Yngvesson, 2014). Such representation "resurrecting colonial-era narratives of a barbaric "heart of darkness" penetrable only by the civilizing eye of the Western camera" (Dwyer, 2014) and ultimately perpetuating the impunity it was claiming to expose (Wandita, 2014). The critical response from scholars and activists to a putatively overly aestheticized (documentary) film highlights the positive aspects of an ethnographic approach. In ethnographic films, ethical considerations must always be primary. The three films that are the focus of this book operate in the ethnographic, interpretative, and ethical fields of VPA, visual psychological anthropology, fields that have something to offer the depiction of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization in Indonesia.

What Visual Psychological Anthropology Can Contribute

The method of VPA, a synergistic practice yoking the values and practices of visual and psychological anthropology, aims for aesthetic engagement while adhering to a rigorous ethic of reflexive inquiry and representation. It accomplishes this through the many integrated components of its method, which are: sensory, aesthetic, and emotional; longitudinal, inductive, person-centered, and reflexive; and multimodal. While these components are brought to bear in the making of each film in this book, we also found that sustained over a set of films, they revealed the cross-cutting dimensions of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization that came from historical and social context of Indonesia, and that deeply impacted the lives of our subjects.

Other filmmakers have used the components of VPA separately. Topics of psychological anthropology have been explored in film, including mental illness, selfhood and identity, the life cycle, grief, sexuality, and sensation and consciousness (Castaing-Taylor & Paravel, 2012; Gardner, 1986; Nakamura, 2010; O'Rourke, 1987; Plambech & Metz, 2018; Rickels, 2009; Rosenblatt, 2005). Filmmakers have made use of longitudinal techniques (Biella & Kamerling, 2016) and person-centered approaches (Jourdain, 2017; Maciuszek, 2015). They have also introduced critical reflexivity as a topic of the film (Breton, 2008) and worked across written and visual ethnography (Asch et al., 1986; Asten, 1997; Gill, 2011, 2014, 2016). VPA is unique for its integration of these different approaches. We now provide more detail about each component and why it can make a difference when filming trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization.

Sensory, Aesthetic, Emotional Representation/Experience

VPA is sensory, aesthetic, and emotional. Films about individuals living through experiences of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization are often countering histories of silencing, oppression, apathy, ignorance, or

eradication. Sensory, compelling, emotional films engage attention and also represent subjectivity and activate empathy in a way other mediums cannot.

Film as a medium compels with its ability to portray the affective and corporeal aspects of subjectivity (Taylor, 1998). Film represents in a way that can be experienced directly and immediately, in a sensorial manner. Ethnographic filmmaker and visual anthropology theorist David MacDougall has said, "Knowledge of the senses is one of the best channels to understand other people's experience … an opportunity to embrace the knowledge of being" (MacDougall, 2006, p. 5). For MacDougall, film's sensory evocation is one of its most significant offerings: A close-up evokes tactile characteristics, a wide-angle suggests three-dimensionality, and a telephoto lens flattens perspective. All confer a materiality to images, "recover[ing] a dimension often lost in texts" (MacDougall, 2006, p. 58). Visual psychological anthropology, therefore, has great potential to convey the individual and embodied experience of trauma, violence, stigmatization, and the social world in a way that makes these "forcefully" felt (Rosaldo, 1986) by the viewer. This is markedly different from the experience of reading written representations, which involves a number of different neural, perceptual, and interpretive/cognitive processes (Hall et al., 2019; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011).

It is this sense of immediacy, of directly hearing and witnessing the complex "lives of others," that film provides. With even the most evocative and concrete written descriptions, sensory elements remain in the realm of the imaginary. Through the visual, one can catch nonverbal communication that conveys interpersonal and social information, including tone, and that can help in developing trust, forming connections, and making more accurate assessments about others' cognitive, emotional, and attitudinal states (Hall et al., 2019; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011). When watching a film, senses beyond sight and sound are also activated – kinesthetic empathy, for example, can be activated via mirror neurons (Praszkier 2016), so that the movements and embodied states of others resonate in the viewer, forming an intersubjective relationship some have called "intercorporeal" (Csordas 2008).

While past ethnographic films often favored more dispassionate, or "objective," representations, using emotion as a guide for meaning in interpreting the lived experience of others is a main tenet of psychological anthropology (see LeVine 2010). Showing emotion onscreen as a way to engage viewers' attention, emotional attunement (Grodal & Kramer, 2010), and embodied empathy (Chung & Slater, 2013) is a tried-and-true approach in popular film and cinema, one not so different from telling tales by firelight (Wiessner, 2014). This felt, intuitive response to emotional and character-driven narrative has been demonstrated in neuroimaging experiments, where viewers watching a spaghetti western share similar brain activity, but viewers of an unedited, one-shot video clip of a music concert do not (Hasson et al., 2008). An emotional, dramatic narrative arc that involves heightened emotion and its resolution has also been associated with better memory retention of the main ideas in films, than presenting similar information in a written or a filmed but non-narrative or unemotional format (Zak, 2013). Opportunities for greater sensory information thus provide opportunities for understanding, empathy, and identification, and for conveying powerful ideas to viewers, particularly when what is being watched highlights emotion and emotional meaning.

In addition to forefronting emotional meaning and encouraging an embodied response, visual methodology affords a further opportunity to explore creative ways to capture and evoke the ineffable worlds of dreams, fantasies, memories, and sensations. It offers a cinematic toolkit for the dramatic and emotional presentation of the main subject's conflicts and concerns, such as presenting his or her narrative arc in a dramatic structure, sometimes using non-observational filmmaking techniques such as recreations, and the addition of a soundtrack, animation, or other elements that can supplement observational or other footage during the editing and post-production process (Lemelson & Tucker, 2020; for additional film examples, see Hardie, 2015, and Ledésert, 2015).

Longitudinal, Inductive, Person-Centered, Reflexive

VPA also indicates certain aspects of the filmmaking and analytical process, beyond the ultimate look and feel of the finished film. These include working on a subject over a substantial period of time, being person-centered, inductive, and reflexive.

VPA is longitudinal, which matters because while arguably impactful ethnographic projects can be shot in short, "intense" periods of fieldwork and video recording (Pink & Morgan, 2013), when people have been living in contexts of trauma, violence, or stigma, it takes time to build their trust to get honest and emotional material about their experience. This is especially true when working in psychocultural contexts that value harmony, hierarchy, and shame avoidance, as is the case in Indonesia. VPA is inductive and person-centered, which matters because it is via person-centered methodology that you can get to the heart of what matters to the individual, seeing beyond what your initial "frame" was to understand what really matters on the ground. As the esteemed ethnographic filmmaker David MacDougall (2016) has said:

> We all make films within a frame – which is to say, a frame of mind, the frame of our interests, and the questions at the back of our minds. In selecting what to film we put a frame around reality. But the point isn't to demonstrate what you already know. It's to follow where this process leads you, to explore what you find, and make an analysis with the camera. If you already know what will be in your film, what's the point of making it?

This was very much the case with the three films discussed in this book, where the frame of what each film was "about" widened considerably over and well after the period of filming.

Fundamentally, these films are yoked together by a long-term and abiding interest in how individuals manage the numerous contradictions and pressures in their personal and social lives. How do they manage their life-worlds, relationships, and their selves? How do they understand, construct, and reconstruct their identities in the face of potentially

life-shattering events? What roles do individual biography and experience, and the internalization of social and cultural worlds play in the subjective experience of these? And how can we capture these processes as they unfold at the speed of life as lived? Visual psychological anthropology contributes by situating responses to episodes of trauma, violence, or stigmatization within broader context by listening to the "cares that spill over" (Wikan, 1990) and following where these excesses lead over the life course. Life "lived forward" over the long haul shows concerns as rising into foreground and receding when balanced with other significant concerns.

Implicit in these questions is an investment in the interpretive lens of subjectivity. A primary concern in psychological anthropology, subjectivity refers to individual perceptions, emotions, overwhelming life concerns, motivations, and subsequent decisions and actions. In other words, it is how participants think of themselves as embodied individuals with capabilities and characteristics, or more poetically how they engage "identity and fate, patterned and felt in historically contingent settings and mediated by institutional processes and cultural forms" (Biehl et al., 2007, p. 5). For VPA, a focus on subjectivity promotes a holistic depiction of people's lives, struggles, and conflicts, mining the intersection points of the personal, phenomenological, and biographical *in relation to* the historical, social, cultural, and political, which impact phenomenological experience and influence ideas of personhood and the formation of the self (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011; B. J. Good, 2012; M.-J. D. Good et al., 2008). These life-course, historical experiences and self-concepts are carried through from one developmental stage to the next, through neurophysiological impacts on developing brains and bodies, identity formation, and other psychobiologically attuned individualized responses to environments and events (Rorty, 2007; Worthman et al., 2010). While this book and the films are produced within the scholarly literature on subjectivities, they also aim to contribute to a fresh understanding of the dynamics of subjectivities *in the making*. By exploring the lives of participants longitudinally, via both periodic person-centered interviewing that follows the vicissitudes of emotional experience, and personal reflections and observational footage that captures the milieu of everyday life, we

explore what happens to our understanding of subjectivity if we document life "lived forward," with all of its uncertainties, over long spans of time that track major life-course events and developmental processes.

Visual psychological ethnography can become a valuable contribution to the "anthropology of becoming" (Biehl & Locke, 2017) by testing the presumed retrospective aspects of film – and at the same time, the presumed retrospective nature of traumatic or violent life experiences as they are so often depicted in the existing literature on subjectivities. Such conventional depictions risk temporally trapping the understanding of subjectivity to the contextual interwoven cultural, biological, and neurological components of suffering. Tracking a prospective life experience and the way expectations expand or constrict, and how life paths are adjusted accordingly, we find stories of individuals "muddling through" (Rosaldo, 1985) to uncertain futures in a way that generates and responds to an overflow of emotions and experiences.

This "muddling through" applies to the filmmaker as well as the subjects: VPA is reflexive, and involves ongoing re-evaluation over time. Attentive reflexivity leads to a more transparent understanding of filmmaker subjectivity and positionality. A reflexive understanding helps address power imbalances as the anthropologist-filmmaker checks in with subjects over the longer period of research and production to ensure they are comfortable with their depiction and how that depiction aligns with their experience as they understand it. Reflexivity invites researcher, participant, and audience to look beyond what is captured on screen to address interpersonal dynamics, ethics, and filmmaking craft choices with an eye toward how such methods impact the socially dynamic experience of fieldwork and hence the material gathered, as well as the final product.

It is a given that all films, including the ones discussed in this volume, are complex constructions of the concerns and interests of the filmmaker(s), rather than an objective depiction of people's lives (Brand, 1976; Pink, 2013) and reflexivity is operative in a film whether or not the filmmaker chooses to represent it (Lutkehaus, 1989). After decades of thoughtful conversation and fruitful experimentation, though, some form of evident reflexivity is considered an integral part of ethnographic film practice (Pink, 2001). This can mean acknowledging the camera "as

an integral part of the identity of the researcher and of the intersubjective relationship between her or him and the people participating in the research" (Pink, 2009, p. 101) and "investigat[ing] how visual images and technologies become a part of the encounters through which visual and other knowledge is produced in both fieldwork and representations of qualitative research" (Pink, 2001, p. 588). It expects that "the producer deliberately, intentionally reveals to his or her audience the underlying epistemological assumptions that caused him or her to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way, and finally, to present his or her findings in a particular way" (Ruby, 1980).

We have been engaged in ongoing dialogue with our participants regarding how the film is developing, how the characters see their role in the film and understand their participation, how the film has influenced their lives, and more. At the same time, we have been committed to reflection and transparency about the researchers' own embodied reactions to the people filmed, and the vicissitudes of fieldwork and shifting relationships with team and subjects. The idea of reflexivity is extended to the craft of filmmaking and an open discussion of how the films were made – exploring and explaining the rationale for specific shots or sequences. These are usually addressed in accompanying written literature, such as this book.

The longitudinal, person-centered, reflexive process leads to a generative excess, which is mirrored both in the making the films and again in the analytical process of this monograph. A reflexive discussion of filmmaking methodology shows an ongoing process of refinement, or even a pivoting of inquiry and narrative arc to respond to participant stories, emotions, and shifting understandings that lead us outside the initial theoretical frame. This excess then leads to new connections that then can be applied back to refine theoretical understanding of these initial frames in a constant dialogue between the "experience near" – "that which "invokes praxis (rather than structure), events (rather than generalization), and feeling (rather than thinking)" (Wikan, 1991, p. 300) – and etic understandings of participant life experience.

Collaborative

While we have not insisted that it be a necessary part of VPA methodology, the three films in this book have all been collaborative endeavors, and that has complemented the reflexivity we feel necessary to VPA. Under my direction, we have made these three films with a diverse research, filmmaking, and therapeutic support team of Indonesians and Americans. Some have collaborated on all three of the films, and some just on one or two. The psychiatrist Dr. Mahar Agusno and his wife, a community health researcher, Ninik Supartini, mentioned in the encounter with Mariana that opened this chapter, contributed in multiple ways to each film, including finding potential participants, conducting interviews, serving as psychological support, and more; Livia Iskandar, PhD, a public health expert and co-founder of Pulih Center for Trauma Recovery and Psychosocial Intervention participated in *Bitter Honey* interviews. Degung Santikarma had many roles on the filmmaking team as anthropologist and researcher, conducting interviews in both *40 Years* and *Bitter Honey*, acting at certain times as cultural liaison and expert commentator for the latter, and, of course, was a participant sharing his story as a subject for *40 Years*. The essayist, cartoonist, and cultural commentator Wayan Sadha and later his daughter Sri were involved in multiple aspects of both *40 Years* and *Bitter Honey*. The lawyer and advocate Luh Putu Anggreni began as an expert commentator for *Bitter Honey* and has since become a partner in on-the-ground advocacy efforts.

This collaboration has allowed us to respond to the needs of our participants, for example, by having therapists present for psychological support when interviewing participants about past episodes of traumatic violence. It has also mitigated some of the evident discomforts or (sometimes unconscious) dynamics that may come with interviews conducted by people of a different gender/culture/class as suggested in the opening anecdote. We hope our films challenge the model of the author/director as sole creator of meaning, and that they offer a conceptual space that incorporates and juxtaposes multiple perspectives, including that of the director, subjects, and indigenous researchers and experts (MacDougall, 1978, p. 422; Martínez, 1992). Such a model helps avoid the canonical ethnographic film style of "a film made by one cultural group attempting

to describe another" by incorporating, both behind and in front of the camera, indigenous perspectives and purposes that might position ethnographic films as an instrument of political action, or a corrective to stereotyping, misrepresentation, and even denigration (MacDougall, 1997). Chapters 7 and 9 go further into how collaboration operated in interviews, filmmaking, and, indeed, use of the films once they were released.

Multimodal

Another key aspect of visual psychological anthropology is that, despite its name, it is emphatically multimodal. Given the focus and effort of the three films in this book, which each tells an emotionally moving, person-centered story about an individual or set of individuals, there was not room or time for many ethnographic details relevant, discussion of production and rational for methodological or visual style choices, or full reflexive elaboration within the films themselves. The more poetic, cinematic strategies used to make such films often work best without excessive analytical or didactic information. Yet at the same time, such information can be crucial to providing a contextualized ethnographic understanding of the topics, situations, and themes portrayed.

We believe that for ethnographic film per se to be successful, it must be directly linked with the more extensive and particularistic domain of ethnography. While we agree that ethnographic films must be approached, artistically, as their own "text" with their own creative logic, and not be mere "support" for a written ethnography (Lutkehaus, 1989), we do not leave the written behind. Our approach more closely aligns with that put forth by Sarah Pink (2013) in that films can be a meaningful element of ethnographic work that "bear an important relationship to, but cannot replace, words in a conventional theoretical discussion" (p. 6). We therefore join the existing tradition of ethnographic filmmakers providing written materials to accompany their work (Asch et al., 1973; Bateson & Mead, 1942; Gardner, 2007; Gardner & Heider 1969) and have designed the films to function in complementary fashion with ethnography presented in the more academically traditional

written format of articles, books, study guides, and the like that can highlight, comment upon, illustrate, and unpack the different issues that the films address – such as this one. As noted in the preface and hinted at above, making person-centered, reflexive films that develop over a number of years result in a generative excess. Some of that "excess" is in the films, some is in this book. The book includes interviews, contextual research, and other material that could not be included in the films, although all of it informed the finished films themselves. And the films, each with its own topic, generated integrated insight that informs, and is discussed in, this book.

Book Outline and Summary

Part II, immediately following this introduction, provides a deep dive into the ethnographic material of the films, providing a familiarity with the key context, character narratives, and major theoretical points to be referenced throughout the ensuing discussions analyzing the material, process, and products of visual psychological anthropology. Chapter 2 addresses *40 Years*, primarily exploring the connections between traumatic historical events, domains of power, domination, violence and surveillance, and how these operated, affected, and shaped the main characters, based on their positionality and status in their respective communities, but also on their idiosyncratic temperaments and personalities. Chapter 3, on *Bitter Honey*, highlights cultural influences on subjective experiences of gendered violence, discovering how the structuring effects of enduring Balinese patriarchal culture operate to create conditions for the expression of male dominance. While domestic violence and infidelity are of course in no way unique to polygamous marriages or Balinese Hindu society, there are numerous Balinese cultural beliefs and practices regarding courtship, marriage, and spiritual life that impact the thoughts and behaviors of husbands, wives, and children and may contribute to women feeling powerless or trapped in marriages they find at best less than satisfying and at worst detrimental to their physical and emotional well-being. Chapter 4, about *Thorn*, explores how the disparate vulnerabilities of mental illness, poverty, and gendered mores

for courtship, marriage, and sexual behavior become intertwined with individual development and family dynamics for two generations of one Central Javanese family. It tracks the cascading effects of stigmatization and social violence on the family as a unit and as individuals. Mother, father, and daughter have different perspectives on the conundrums and contradictions they find themselves faced with, and based on their positionality make different efforts to manage these so that the burdens they confer do not become completely unbearable.

Part III provides a discussion integrating the three main themes in, across, and through each film. Chapter 5 theorizes the connections between trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization and traces these connections through channels of Indonesian history, politics, and culture. Here, fear-inducing contexts and traumatic episodes of political violence such as the anti-communist purge of 1965 have been significantly gendered, even as more ongoing and pervasive experiences of gendered violence and stigmatization cause fear and anxiety related to the long-term felt effects of trauma. By widening the frame on each of these topics, we ultimately interconnect them under the overarching rubric of structural violence, situating violent events and stigmatizing dynamics within broader institutions of political oppression and discrimination, gendered legal protections and cultural practices, and the double-bind choices of poverty. These conditions engender precarity, often experienced as family loss, conflict, and destabilization. These more fundamental, relational losses are just as foundational to subjective experience as social violence or political trauma.

Chapter 6 turns to participant responses to these ruptures and hardships. Certain shared psychocultural themes emerged out of their quite different biographies, contexts, and experiences. First are the emotional reactions of shame and anger. As internally felt and behaviorally enacted, these are inflected by Indonesian, Javanese, and/or Balinese cultural models, schemas, and habitus of emotion and behavior. They are also deeply gendered, with different internal experiences and outward expressed behaviors expected and normalized for men versus women, in ways that compound experiences of fear, stigma, and violence. In its analysis of these emotions as felt and enacted, the discussion widens the

frame again to account for numerous domains of interest to psychological anthropology beyond the scope of Chapter 5, such as childrearing and models of normative life course development, social status and identity, and gender roles.

While the participants in the three films find their suffering compounded by shame and anger, they are also resilient. Orientations and actions that support their resilience include religious belief and ritual, as providing an internal framework for meaning and a practice that reconnects them to a more inclusive social world. This faith encompasses a belief in the workings and logic of karma, which sees cosmological meaning in the suffering of self and others. Philosophies of healing introspection and outward behavior find articulation in culturally salient ideas of patience, surrender, and bearing burdens for the sake of others. Finally, some participants draw strength and resilience from social and political activism. In asking what role participation in the film projects have to play in furthering – or catalyzing – such an activist orientation, we turn to a reflexive consideration of the filmmaking process.

Part IV asks how we can represent subjective experiences in ethnographic film, according to tenets of VPA, and what impact filmmaking has on participants and the collective understanding of these domains. Here, we discuss film as process. Addressing the theory, method, and procedures of VPA from project conceptualization through shooting, interviewing and editing, final film, and screenings, we discuss how the practice of visual psychological anthropology might empathically and accurately represent individuals' lived experience when conducting visual ethnography on "sensitive" topics with vulnerable subjects (Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000). We do this by first separating the discussion of the process into production and post-production, in other words, VPA methodology in the field and in the editing room. This is a somewhat misleading or arbitrary distinction, as in longitudinal projects often both "production" and "post-production" are occurring simultaneously and thinking through an edit might lead to insights that are brought back into the field for the next interview, but the areas of discussion are distinct enough to make this delineation useful.

In Chapter 7, we discuss two interrelated factors that are hugely influential in determining what material is generated via VPA methodology in the field. The first could be called the intersubjective factor – the psychocultural and social processes relevant to the film participants, and their relationship to and interpersonal dynamics with the interviewer/anthropologist. The second is the shooting method and approach. The discussion of VPA in the field provides an in-depth look at our longitudinal, filmed, person-centered interview process, which forms the heart of our methodology and films, as applied within Javanese and Balinese psychocultural contexts. Understanding that fieldwork is a unique, often alien and artificial social experience for our participants, we investigate dynamics of personal disclosure, performativity, and presentation of self when addressing potentially painful, embarrassing, or triggering incidents or topics. This chapter elaborates on the VPA method with a particular focus on reflexivity and Javanese and Balinese psychocultural models of social interaction and image management including understandings and embodiment of such domains as *malu* (shame) and *wirang* (disgrace); the presentation of self, encompassed in notions of the mask (Geertz), and bright faces (Wikan); and *curhat*, which can be understood as a performative spontaneous disclosure of personal matters. All factor into what participants choose to discuss on camera and how they address challenging or upsetting topics in their lives or incidents in their past as these are referenced during interviews. As we intend this book and this chapter to be a resource to those doing such work in other cultural locales, here we illustrate how culture is central, not peripheral, to the VPA process.

When further accounting for the vagaries of memory, the paradoxes of psychological truth, and the performativity of visual ethnography, the discussion of Indonesian habitus in the filmed interview dovetails with long-standing dialogue on "truth" in ethnographic film. The ever-contested notion of representational truth onscreen is further complicated by a reflexive consideration of anthropologist subjectivity and the impact of the interview staging, camera, and shooting method. How we position the camera and situate the crew impacts participants' comfort and orientation toward being filmed and influences the way they can be represented during the film editing process.

In Chapter 8, we discuss how we can carry a person-centered ethos over into the editing room; how we can use film techniques to both address and reflect the needs of each unique story but also tell this story according to the tenets of VPA. Here, we must again negotiate the ethnographer's own subjectivity in crafting any ethnographic representation of another (Pink, 2013) and address the challenges and opportunities of hewing this representation to the imperatives of visual storytelling (Marshall, 1993). Topics covered include the inductive process of narrative development, the necessarily artifice of narrative shape, the incorporation of visual and auditory elements, and editing for emotional impact. This last point is a hallmark of the VPA method, but remains contested within ethnographic film discourse. Here, we reassert the argument put forth in our first book that attempting to bridge different cultural worlds of emotional experience and expression is a necessary risk. First, emotion-oriented filming and editing enacts psychological anthropology theory that places primacy on emotional force and emotional meaning in participants' lives. Second, an emotional approach is specifically suited to topics such as trauma, violence, and stigmatization, where we are countering histories of erasure and where an absence or mismatch of viewer emotional response risks radically misrepresenting the lived experiences of the participants onscreen.

In addition to the question of emotional representation, readers undoubtedly will have questions about the ethical concerns of making films about people who have undergone traumatic and violent events and unveiling aspects of their lives, usually kept private, for public viewing. We are well aware that participants will live not only with the consequences of their original suffering, but also the consequences of the filming experience, whatever those may be. Chapter 9 discusses these crucial ethical considerations, sharing both theoretical positions and the details of specific circumstances that arose over the course of making these three films (Perry & Marion, 2010) in order to respond to the need for a more "interactive" and "thickly descriptive ethics" (Harper & Mookherjee, 2009) in visual ethnography through a "case study" approach (Harper & Jiménez, 2005).

The chapter addresses two significant concerns, consent and amelioration of harm, as they arise from and impact each stage of filmmaking.

We discuss how the filmmaking team thought through, alongside participants, initial consent discussions about joining the project and the risks to safety and well-being the film project engendered, reviewing and vetting rough cuts, and consenting to release and distribution. Here, we found that the medium of film might require different configurations of consent than written ethnography, due to film's higher levels of direct exposure of participant and simultaneous greater accessibility. Yet obtaining consent is not a simple agreement between film-er and filmed, when accounting for participant positioning in a family and community, influential local psychocultural dynamics of deference and harmony, and the environment of contemporary media sharing.

We also address the attempts to ameliorate anticipated and unanticipated harms, by establishing psychological protection protocols during interviewing, discussing the move to intervene in certain cases, and the fall-out from that; and participation in public screenings.

Ultimately, we have found that film participants assert their agency throughout the entire filmmaking process, and use the opportunity of filmmaking and the final film products to their own ends. While none of these projects were initially conceived as activist or advocacy films, we have found that through their use by invested participants and communities, to a certain extent, they have become so. This use is a welcome development but can have unanticipated ethical repercussions. In the chapter, we widen the frame one final time by tracking the lives of the finished films as put to use by participants, in Indonesia and around the world.

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Part II

The Films

2

40 Years of Silence: Generational Effects of Political Violence and Childhood Trauma in Indonesia

Baskara T. Wardaya, Robert Lemelson, and Annie Tucker

40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy (Lemelson, 2009) is a feature length film presenting personal stories of the mass killings that followed a purported coup attempt in 1965 and the ensuing decades of imprisonment, repression, and surveillance. The film investigates the intersection of fear exposure, personal experience, and historical and political processes.

The participants' stories center in part around the psychological trauma resulting from the mass killings. Although the symptoms that some participants reported could be categorized as PTSD within the Western psychiatric model, in general, the participants show a diversity of responses to political violence and its decades-long aftermath. These are influenced not only by their personal biographies, temperaments, and personalities, but also their positioning vis-à-vis Indonesian

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society, as well as such factors as ethnicity, economic status, gender, age, religion, and local culture (Fassin & Rechtman, 2007/2009). *40 Years* also explores the multigenerational effects of the mass killings – specifically, the developmental impact of childhood exposure to fear, violence, and oppression in the years that followed – by focusing on four individuals, three who were children during the events of '65 and one who grew from a child to an adolescent over the course of filming. Multiple factors – including life circumstances and local histories – profoundly affected each individual's understanding, interpretation, and adaptation to the socially oppressive and sometimes fatally violent events that all four experienced in relation to 1965. As these events were persistently fear-inducing for survivors, they had the power to deeply influence individual subjectivity and indeed individual psychobiology. The inscription of these experiences on the bodies and minds of the characters, and the structural forces that enabled and supported these inscriptions, is at the heart of this film.

Theorizing Trauma and PTSD

The heuristic most commonly used to explore the experience and aftermath of an intensely frightening episode is "trauma" and, more particularly, trauma as understood through the clinical lens of PTSD. According to the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders* (DSM-5), PTSD is a diagnostic construct that encompasses a cluster of symptoms – including intrusive memories, recurrent nightmares, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, detachment, irritability, and anger (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) – linked to one or more foundational events. These responses are persistent over time, involving a range of forms of suffering and social and occupational dysfunctions. PTSD, in essence, sees these symptoms as a dysregulation of an otherwise adaptive and self-protective response to the traumatic event(s) (Konner, 2007; Shalev, 2007; Silove, 2007).

While useful as a clinical diagnosis, one significant critique of the trauma and/as PTSD model for understanding reactions to intense fear is that, despite being posited as evidence of a damaged "universal"

neurobiological process, aspects of this process are culturally and historically situated and not necessarily transferable in other cultural settings (Kirmayer, 1989; Kleinman, 1987; Silove, 2005). Despite some clear phenomenological trans-historic and trans-cultural resemblances, interpreting the sequelae of exposure to fearful incidents and contexts, on both an individual and cultural level, remains a complex and contested endeavor. Critics have pointed out that a psychiatric model focused largely on individual responses to trauma, even with awareness of cultural shaping as described in DSM-5, can be misleading. Instead, some argue that a national trauma is better interpreted and understood through processes of individual and collective memory and commemoration (Good & Hinton, 2016; Hamburger, 2018). In that case, trauma is dependent on the subjective experience of perception and memory, within the national, historical, and cultural contexts that shaped the triggering experiences and their reception by contemporaries (Micale, 2007), and the expression of symptoms. In other words, a diagnosis risks decontextualizing trauma and traumatization from its social, familial, communal, or cultural milieus (Alarcón et al., 2002; Silove, 2007), all of which may differ significantly from those that have shaped the understanding of trauma in the US. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that Westernized ideas about the correct clinical, social, or collective responses to and treatment of trauma will be shared, and there is a wide range of culturally mediated strategies for coping with the dilemmas posed by traumatic events.

Another critique of PTSD can be found in its very name: The model, built in part out of the experiences of Vietnam veterans (Young, 1996), assumes that the traumatic exposure has an endpoint, that something singular has happened to an individual who afterward cannot “get past” it. This assumption fails to address how discrete episodes of violence might be part of broader, ongoing patterns of structural disempowerment. In this and other ways, the clinical focus of PTSD theory is too narrow and doesn’t necessarily align well with the lived experience of many trauma survivors. Classic symptomatology may be of minor individual importance compared to experiences of social and structural violence, lack of recognition of these, and humiliation because of loss of status and independence. In short, what is at stake for survivors may

not necessarily be what clinicians, and by extension neuroscientists, have studied. Seeking a unique traumatic "cause" for subsequent struggles or suffering, or presenting a particular traumatic event as the "reason" for such suffering, risks diminishing or eliding the multiple factors that infuse and shape subjective experience of fear and its aftermath (Micale & Lerner, 2001; Young, 1996).

An anthropological lens can help address these critiques, by putting traumatic experience in context with long-term, contextualized data gleaned through field observation, as opposed to psychiatric practice, which typically relies on retrospective individual accounts from people decontextualized from their social worlds. Anthropological fieldwork gets detailed information on the lived experience of fear and the interwoven cultural, biological, and neurological components of suffering – and recovering – from exposure (Good & Hinton, 2016; Hinton & Lewis-Fernández, 2010; Kirmayer et al., 2007; Lende & Downey, 2012; Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Furthermore, anthropology can complement the psychiatric model of trauma, widening its focus on the relationship of traumatic exposure to and disturbances of processes of memory and emotion with a contextual frame of issues such as status, kinship, and stigma, to discover what is truly "at stake" for people. The task of the anthropologist interested in gathering a holistic and complex account of an individual's subjectivity in relation to trauma's multiple levels of influence and meaning is not just to connect the original fear exposure to the expected and rather narrow range of discrete traumatic responses that are diagnosable and explainable to the mental health professionals. It is also to situate the impact and influence of these experiences in relation to the wider concerns that overflow the quite narrow boundaries of diagnosed traumatic response.

We discuss anthropological approaches to trauma in Part III, and its mobilization as a term and explanatory model in Indonesia, as we draw together the three films and widen their theoretical frames to account for structural violence. Here, we describe how *40 Years* depicts the ways in which survivors of the traumatic events of 1965 articulate their experiences of ongoing trauma, and how they respond, each in their own way, and each with different religious, social, and cultural resources.

The Historical Context

G30S, the Mass Killings and Suharto's New Order

Indonesia declared independence in 1945, after battling the Japanese occupation during World War II. After a brutal attempt by the Dutch to resinstate sovreignty, Indonesia achieved full independence in 1949. In the 17 years that followed, under the leadership of President Sukarno, numerous political parties gained strength as Indonesians enthusiastically strove to shape and govern their young nation. By 1965, one of the largest parties was the Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI, or *Partai Komunis Indonesia*), the third largest communist party in the world, which fought for land reform and women's rights, among other platforms (Hearman, 2018; Hefner, 2000; Parahita & Yulianto, 2020).

On the evening of September 30, 1965, seven high-ranking military officers were kidnapped and murdered in the outskirts of Jakarta. Before it was clear who the culprits were, Suharto, then a Major General commander in the military, accused the PKI of masterminding the event and launched a campaign of media censorship and propaganda. Indonesians were urged to counter "the PKI's coup attempt" and to purge members of the communist party "down to the very roots" (Robinson, 2017). Three weeks later, the Indonesian army launched nationwide military campaigns against the PKI, which were in part backed by the CIA (Robinson, 1995, p. 282; 2018). The campaigns were carried out by military personnel and anti-communist civilian groups. Members of the communist party, from the top leadership down to rank-and-file members, were hunted down throughout the nation. Anyone with purported connections to the communist party was targeted. The most heavily affected areas were the provinces of Central Java, East Java, and the Island of Bali, where PKI membership was strong (Cribb, 2001; Taylor, 2003). Many of those targeted were cruelly summoned, arrested, interrogated, tortured, and summarily killed. As a result, between 500,000 and one million suspected communists perished, and many more were imprisoned and exiled (Pohlman, 2016; Robinson, 2018).

General Suharto gradually maneuvered to take power from President Sukarno. In 1967, he declared himself the President of Indonesia, instated the *Orde Baru*, or "The New Order" government, and Indonesia descended into authoritarian rule for the next thirty years. As part of this, his government monopolized the narratives of the 1965 anti-communist violence (Cribb, 2010), published books intended to justify the violence and killings of 1965 (Robinson, 2018; Woodward, 2011), and sponsored the production of a propaganda film, *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (literally, "The Treachery of the September 30th Movement of the PKI"; Farram, 2010; Noer, 1984; Zurbuchen, 2002). Produced in 1982, the film depicts the PKI conspiring and launching a coup while antagonizing Indonesian army and Muslim communities. Demonizing the PKI and the affiliated women's movement, *Gerakan Wanitia Indonesia* (shortened to *Gerwani*), the film depicts these groups as causing political instability and social disruption, both enforcing a particular version of history and conveying a sense of threat to those who took issue with it. From 1984 until the end of Suharto's rule in 1998, every September 30th Indonesia social life ground to a halt as Indonesians were obliged to watch this 4-hour film.

Throughout Suharto's rule, survivors of the 1965 violence and their families were subject to widespread discrimination and stigmatization (Leksana et al., 2019). Slogans such as "beware of the latent danger of communism" and an "unclean environment" (referring to alleged members or affiliates of the PKI) supported the government's firm control over the nation (Cribb, 2001). Students, community leaders, and local politicians attended 100 hours of a compulsory government re-education program (Ward, 2010). Intellectuals, artists, and journalists were also targeted for violence and imprisonment – most famously, the novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer was held for decades on the gulag on Buru Island. One of the last prisoners to be released in 1979, he was then held under house arrest until Suharto's fall two decades later (Robinson, 2018).

The Era of Reform

In the wake of the Asian economic crisis and under the pressures of a student-launched protest movement called *Reformasi* (Reformation), General Suharto resigned in May 1998. A period of relative freedom and openness concerning 1965 followed. Forums were held and research and advocacy efforts undertaken. Civil organizations for survivors formed, such as SekBer '65 ("Joint Secretariat on the 1965 Tragedy"), to help connect survivors throughout Central Java to one another and to health and aid services (Pohlman, 2013). Abdurrahman Wahid (aka Gus Dur), who became president in 1999, formally apologized for the mass killings and halted the annual showings of the *Pengkhianatan* film and the New Order government's indoctrination program (Fealy & McGregor, 2010). These policies were met with heated backlash and communism quickly became "politically sensitive" once again. Today, activities seeking to redress the violence of 1965 or commemorate those lost are still disturbed, pressured, attacked, and closely surveilled by government agents as well as by elements within Indonesian civil society.

Although overt anti-communist training is no longer officially conducted, the specter of communism as a "dangerous ghost" remains a tool of social control. The formal education curriculum on '65 has not changed much, still framing the New Order as "saving" the country from communist violence during a time of crisis (Eickhoff et al., 2017). "Communism" has become less a term for political platforms and more a catchall to justify the surveillance or discipline of anyone who speaks out against hegemonic ideals, political powers, or moneyed interests (Budiawan, 2012; Robinson, 2018). Respondents in our research recounted being labeled "communist" by local law enforcement for: not wearing standardized attire at temple, not praying, participating in a peaceful political demonstration, or wearing a Che Guevara shirt at the mall. In Bali, those critical of tourism development, which has been detrimental to the environment, or those participating in leftist movements trying to organize for equal rights, can be tarred with the brush of "communist" and their arguments thereby discounted (Kuwado, 2016; Lamb, 2017). During the 2014 and 2019 presidential election

campaigns, candidate (and then President) Joko Widodo faced accusations of being the son of a communist. Communism fears linger, as Indonesians say, "like a fire in the rice husks."

Therefore, while there was the catalyzing event in '65, and immediately afterward several months of intense terror when many people were murdered or disappeared, it would be difficult to say that the climate of fear ever really came to an end. Furthermore, Robinson (1995, 2018) argues outbreaks of aggression such as that surrounding G30S should be viewed not as anomalous, but as part of the cyclical violence that has recurred throughout Indonesian history, where local politics determine how and against whom state-sanctioned violence is carried out.

This ongoing climate of suspicion complicates efforts toward a formal truth and reconciliation process, such as have been undertaken in other countries (Fletcher et al., 2009; McGregor et al., 2018; Robinson, 2018; Setiawan, 2019; Sub, 2016). Everyday life is still rife with cues that might reactivate embodied memories of fear experienced during the period of widespread political violence. In addition to appearing in political or governmental avenues, these are enacted through ongoing social dynamics and interpersonal interactions. Survivors may be subject to stigma or new episodes of community violence. It is not uncommon for Indonesians to live in close proximity to those who tormented them or their family, compelled by cultural norms and political mandate to behave deferentially in daily interactions. In some cases, the demarcation of who was a "perpetrator" and who a "victim" may not even feel clear, as some carried out violence under the threat of their own death, and others took the lives of family members to ensure a more dignified passing. While the official line is that the events of '65 are past and resolved, and that people prefer not to talk about it, for some survivors nothing has "returned to normal," problems persist, and the quest for justice remains a driving force in their lives.

There are some efforts toward public memorialization. A well-known choir composed of women survivors has been touring Java for several years. In 2015, after overcoming resistance from local authorities, a small memorial was erected in Plumbon, near Semarang, Central Java, on a mass grave site and, in 2019, the memorial was acknowledged by the International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights (CIPDH)

under the auspices of UNESCO. In Degung Santikarma's natal house compound, there is a "'65 Park" that hosts art exhibits around issues relating to the violence of 1965 and its aftermath, discussed in more detail below.

Over the past decade, there has been enthusiasm in the general public to learn about 1965. This enthusiasm rose dramatically when Joshua Oppenheimer and his anonymous Indonesian collaborator(s) released documentaries about 1965, *The Act of Killing* (Oppenheimer et al., 2012), followed by *The Look of Silence* (Oppenheimer, 2014). Despite government bans, the films were screened in hundreds of locations across Indonesia, opening up discourse and changing many people's views on 1965. Indonesian journalists, artists, writers, and musicians are increasingly addressing this chapter in their work for national and international audiences (e.g., E. A., 2014/2017; Kurniawan, 2002/2015; Mardzoeki, 2014; Mulyani, 2017–2018; Seringai, 2018; Team Laporan Khusus Tempo, 2013). For young, liberal, activist, middle-class intelligentsia, Indonesia's troubled history of violence and oppression related to 1965 has become a popular topic of discussion and action, alongside environmentalism and class empowerment (Stoler, 2002).

The Film

The idea for this film grew out of my research on mental health in Indonesia (Lemelson & Suryani, 2006; Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). A number of respondents for that project were old enough to have lived through the events of 1965, yet the issue rarely came up. If it was mentioned, it was rapidly suppressed by whoever was in the room, be they clinicians, family members, or interviewees. The one extended discussion about '65 I did ultimately have was with Kereta, a Balinese rice farmer who suffered social anxiety and withdrawal, and sustained relationships with invisible spirit beings. During my last field interview with Kereta in 1997, before I was to return home, he told his story in hushed tones. He had witnessed the brutal murder of his father and many other villagers at the hands of militia and local neighbors. This was not just the first time he was telling me – it was the first time he was telling

anyone (Lemelson & Suryani, 2006). As I pursued other research, his story stayed with me. In 2002, I organized an interdisciplinary conference on trauma, culture, and the brain, which included trauma survivors and two of my Indonesian colleagues, Luh Ketut Suryani, a prominent Balinese psychiatrist, and Degung Santikarma, a Balinese anthropologist and activist, who had lived through the period of violence in 1965. It became clear that trauma narratives were contextualized for survivors not in terms of posttraumatic symptoms per se, but in terms of issues of identity, status, and politics. I began to consider making a film on the relationship between childhood development, traumatic "exposure" and experience in Indonesia in 1965, and its relation to adult outcome. Crucially, the downfall of President Suharto's New Order regime in 1998 and the subsequent birth of the *Reformasi* movement in Indonesia with its glimmerings of political and social freedom allowed me to imagine such a project.

In collaboration with a group of Indonesian human rights activists, researchers, and clinicians, I thus began a multi-year visual psychological anthropology (VPA, although we weren't using the term yet) project. We knew we wanted to investigate how childhood trauma shaped emotions, developmental processes, life histories, health and illness, political subjectivity, and any other experience-near domains at stake for the subjects. We needed to find compelling characters and stories, and, in order to communicate clearly and situate their experiences, we planned to conduct interviews with and follow the lives of the main participants over a number of years, and then contextualize this "history through biography" approach with other voices and perspectives.

We began with those with whom I had an established relationship, either as subjects, colleagues, or friends, including Degung whom I met when he participated in the 2002 Trauma, Culture and the Brain conference I organized. In 2003, we began exploratory interviews and filming, starting with Kereta and a few other participants in my psychosis research, along with members of their families and communities. Over the next three years, we returned to Indonesia half a dozen times and searched for others who had experienced the violence of 1965 and the ensuing oppression and surveillance of New Order regime. We interviewed local political leaders and individuals in positions of social

significance, such as puppeteers and healers, historians, ex-communist party members, former political leaders, and others.

Editing and post-production took place from 2006 to 2009, when *40 Years of Silence* was released. After an initial blacklist by the Indonesian government, the film began screening internationally and continues to circulate via digital distribution. Through outlets such as YouTube and Facebook, the film has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times in Indonesia, where it continues to spur discussion and debate.

40 Years follows the testimonies of four participants and their families from Central Java and Bali, framed by historians' commentary, archival footage, photos, and recreations. We picked these families because they represented the diversity of the victims of the 1965 violence and its aftermath, in terms of ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, and age. In Bali, Kereta, the rice farmer, witnessed his father's betrayal and execution during a village massacre, and, for the length of the New Order, withdrew into a world populated by Balinese spirits and gods. Degung, the son of high-caste intellectuals who were local leaders of the PKI, was sent away following his father's death and his mother's imprisonment. He returned home as a teenager and eventually became a scholar and activist. In Central Java, Lanny, an educated ethnic Chinese woman, was a teenager when her house was surrounded by an angry mob and her father taken away. After years of anger, and a profound spiritual experience, she has dedicated herself to good works. Budi was born decades after the killings of 1965, yet he was harassed, stigmatized, and traumatized by local villagers in Java due to his father's status as an ex-political prisoner; the other members of his family also experienced persecution, stigma, and trauma. In the film, each participant describes their experiences during the events of '65 and their aftermath, and reflects upon the stigmatization and brutalization they continued to endure on village and state levels, some up until the present. Their individual narratives and perspectives reveal overarching commonalities and the impact of familial, social, and national contexts on the direct experience of fear and loss, and the long-term effect of childhood trauma on an individual's life course.

The film opens with a montage of black and white newsreel footage of '65, visually referencing the history of deportation, imprisonment, chaos, and violence. It then introduces the four main characters in the

present with a few representative statements from each. Next comes an archival sequence with commentary, primarily in voice-over, from three 1965 historians (Baskara Wardaya, Geoffrey Robinson, John Roosa) and myself. As a narrative device throughout the film, these voices illustrate the historical setting while orienting the viewer to the passage of time and key themes. Moving forward, the film is organized chronologically and thematically, moving between the characters while allowing each their own story.

"Before 1965: Memories of Childhood" provides historical background and establishes the relationship of childhood traumatic exposure to later developmental outcomes. Each participant looks back on their childhood and adolescence. Their generally pleasant and positive memories stand in stark contrast to later experiences of violence, oppression, stigma, and surveillance. The only character who does not have happy childhood memories is Budi, who grew up "the child of a communist." As he tells his story, the linkages between this stigmatized identity, brutal treatment at the hands of fellow villagers, intergenerational trauma, and troubling trauma symptoms become explicit. The second section, "The Violence of'65: Fear and Loss," focuses on significant political, economic, and cultural events underlying the massacres. The film describes the extrajudicial killings, illustrating the progression from community violence to arrests, detentions, and ultimately, mass killings. The third section covers the period of surveillance and social control under Suharto's autocratic regime. "The New Order: Suffering and Silence" illustrates what life was like for survivors, many of whom were stigmatized as communist party members or had communist party members in their family. The film notes, too, how this social sanction was imbued with gender politics and gendered violence via the targeting of Gerwani members. The final chapter, "Silence Receding, Voices Emerging: 1998 – Present," documents the beginnings of a more open, democratic period in Indonesia's history, following the fall of the Suharto regime, regarding understanding and possible narratives of 1965.

Throughout the film, we privilege individual accounts of personal experience, life concerns, and life course. In these, we see how trauma is experienced differently in relation to its social context and individual

character. We see also the long-term and multigenerational experiences of trauma and how ongoing structural violence and social conditions do not leave the trauma contained in a singular event or time.

Here, we now turn to a more detailed ethnographic account of each participant's narrative, gleaned directly from their testimony, some of which did not make it into the finished film. We first give their histories and then, later, discuss how they eventually came to live with, and in some ways resolve, those experiences. There are clear shared elements in their histories, and, to some extent, in the way they experience ongoing trauma. The ways in which they respond over the longer term, however, reflect meaningful differences in their lives. A note: Over the course of filmmaking, we came to consider Budi the "main character." While he did not himself experience the events of 1965, given his young age, he offered us the opportunity to witness processes of traumatization and resilience directly, rather than in retrospect, and so we lead with him both in the film and in the writing here.

Participants' Histories

Budi and His Family

> I want to take revenge so that they realize what they did was wrong. Because ever since I was a child, my family has been outcast. I think my future is complicated. It's like it's disappearing before my eyes.

Budi was not even born in '65 yet his life was deeply impacted by its events and effects. His story is really the story of his entire family. His mother, Mini, was a young girl at the time. Her father was accused of being a communist and was first sent to a Yogyakarta prison and then transferred four years later to an island prison off the southern coast of Java for another nine years. Mini's older sisters were expelled from school for being the "children of communists" and sent away to live with distant relatives. Mini was left behind with her two younger sisters; they barely

Fig. 2.1 Mini, Budi, and Mudakir

escaped starvation. When she was 14, Mini went to work as a housemaid (Fig. 2.1).

Soon after, Mini's family arranged a marriage with Mudakir, which she adamantly opposed. Mudakir was 15 years her senior, at times violent with her, and Mini soon learned that he, like her father, had been imprisoned for being an alleged communist and was required to attend regular "rehabilitation" meetings.

For his part, Mudakir was struggling with life as an ex-political prisoner. He had grown up in a poor village on the outskirts of Yogyakarta and by high school was already supporting himself as a coffee salesman. Hot tempered, he often got into fights. He fell in love with a local woman and hoped to marry her, but the village headman's son was also courting her and, as the events of G30S unfolded, he denounced Mudakir as a communist. Mudakir later discovered the woman he loved had married

the man who turned him in. Mudakir was arrested and imprisoned for 14 years, although he always denied he was a PKI member. As a "Category B" prisoner, defined as a PKI member, sympathizer, or a suspected participant in the aborted coup, he was sent to a series of jails and prisons, including the infamous Buru Island. Mudakir compared prison to a "cage of lions" and acknowledges that the recurrent beatings and subsequent possible cerebral trauma he suffered at the hands of his captors exacerbated his already quick temper, making it difficult for him to "think clearly." He continues to struggle with emotional control and recognizes that this makes things more difficult for his wife and their two boys.

While Mini and Mudakir love their children – Kris, the oldest, and Budi, eight years younger – as working-class Javanese (B.I. *rakyat kecil*) branded with a politically denigrated label, their lives have been difficult. The family settled in a village where they were the only Christian family, among the poorest, and stigmatized for Mudakir's status as "ex-PKI." Mini suffered ongoing sexual harassment by male villagers, but when she reported the problem, local leaders threatened her. She was told "not to do anything stupid" or her husband would be sent back to prison. Villagers tormented the boys, calling them *anakPKI*, literally "children of the communist party." When he was young, a group took Kris down to the river, saying they were going to teach him how to swim, but instead tried to drown him. As he grew, he was often beaten by villagers – kicked in the head, pelted with stones. Villagers set the boys up to get in trouble. When Kris was 17, an older teenager invited him to join in stealing a bicycle that had been abandoned in a rice field. The villagers caught them in what Kris described as a setup. They let the other boy go, but in a form of customary law "justice," which prescribes severe punishment for suspected thievery, they beat Kris, stoned him, stripped him naked, and paraded him about while an angry crowd whipped and hit him. Even the local military police joined in.

Budi was nine years old at the time and witnessed the "punishment." Kris cried and called out for him, and Budi wanted to help, but he was dragged away and narrowly escaped a beating himself. Mini, unable to go to local authorities who had themselves participated in the violence, filed a lawsuit against the military police officers who had tortured Kris.

Soon after, a sympathetic officer warned her that the local newspapers were going to publicize her case and urged her to leave the village for safety, as villagers would likely retaliate. The very next day, the family fled to Yogyakarta. For a while, they would return to their former house for upkeep, but after about a year, villagers demolished it.

Despite the move, Budi continued to suffer. He frequently fell victim to his father and older brother's violence, and was tormented by the memories of seeing his brother hurt. He had frequent nightmares that his brother was being murdered or tortured and daily flashbacks of the traumatic event: When he remembered how his brother had looked after the beating, his face grotesquely swollen, Budi would suffer somaticized symptoms, such as debilitating stomach cramps, autonomic arousal, and subsequent anxiety. He would start to feel out of breath, dizzy and hot, his heart pounding, his skin prickly. His fists would clench up and he would feel the urge to strike something or someone. He also suffered recurrent fainting spells.

Community members noticed his distress – and his family's dysfunction. Mini belonged to a Catholic organization, and some members suggested she place Budi in a nearby orphanage, where he might start to feel a bit more secure and socially self-assured away from what one nun called a "hostile environment," not to mention get a free education. At first, Mini, who was very close to Budi, refused; but she did pity Budi as the object of family and community aggression, and ultimately a local priest helped persuade her.

Budi ended up living at the orphanage on and off for over two years, but he struggled there as well. He had difficulty concentrating on his schoolwork and everyday tasks, and didn't get along with the other children. His nightmares and physical complaints continued. He had frequent suicidal ideation and was once found standing on the rim of a deep well, contemplating jumping. He was obsessed, too, with revenge fantasies and watched violent, revenge-themed movies. The nuns at the orphanage worried that he seemed lost in his daydreams, which, as an Indonesian idiom of distress, indicates vulnerability to spirit possession or mental breakdown, and so they referred him for psychiatric counseling with Dr. Mahar. Budi told Dr. Mahar:

> After all these problems I do not know who I am anymore … I now want to do evil things. For example, I want to assassinate, to torture them the way they tortured my family members … I wanted to blow up their houses so that they experience the grief and pain my family and I have been suffering.

Budi was given antipsychotic medication and, after finishing elementary school at the orphanage, received a scholarship at a nearby private junior high. But, still consumed with fears and fantasies of revenge, Budi fought with his peers, was expelled, and refused to return to school at all.

Lanny

> What did not kill me could only strengthen me. I learned to be strong from my environment, although people avoided me as if I were a leper. According to me, the best step is for those people who are suffering to rise up. We can show the society that we are humans who are really incredible creatures. So, we take revenge on those who hurt us ... by way of something that is useful.

Lanny was born into a wealthy and well-respected Chinese-Indonesian family in 1952, the third child out of eight. Her father, Alex, was a prominent community leader in the Chinese-Indonesian merchant community of Klaten, Central Java. He owned a successful bakery and a bicycle shop. At a time when almost nobody owned a car, he owned two. Out of all her siblings, Lanny was closest with her father. She saw him as her "hero" and loved when he would take her riding around town on one of his many motorcycles. She modeled herself after him, seeing herself as a hero, too (Fig. 2.2).

Chinese-Indonesians have historically been targets for long-simmering resentments and social prejudice. The Dutch colonial regime had ghettoized Chinese communities while providing for some affluent and powerful positions as merchants and middlemen (Coppel, 2005; Sai & Hoon, 2012). These resentments found an outlet during the events of 1965: Although few were associated with the communist party, Chinese

Fig. 2.2 Lanny

homes and businesses in the Yogyakarta area were burned and numerous people were arrested or "disappeared." A large mob gathered in front of Lanny's house at that time, hurling stones and axes and demanding Alex show his face. The family piled up sandbags and hid in terror as the violence escalated and shots were fired. Crouched down and fearing for her life, Lanny saw her father flee out the back, wearing nothing but his undershirt. She said, "At that moment, I remember, the image of him as a hero collapsed."

Several weeks later, Alex was captured and brought to a local internment camp. At first, the family was able to visit. Lanny remembers seeing her father through the iron bars of his prison cell: "I didn't want to cry … He said, 'Be good,' and then he took off his ring and gave it to me … That was a very, very maybe big trauma." After this, Alex was moved to another prison and never returned. Lanny said, "We were given news that Father wasn't there and all his clothing was returned to us. Ah! I understood. He's dead. But that's it. What could we do? Only hatred was left."

Lanny began to suffer migraines. She couldn't stand loud noise and startled easily, her heart would race, and she would panic at the sight of vertical lines or men in uniform, which reminded her of the prison. She became forgetful, unable to recall even the name of her long-time school desk-mate. She had troubling episodes of mental "blankness": She once "came to" and found herself riding a motorcycle, not knowing when she had left or where she was going. She developed a nervous stomach that left her frequently nauseated, and she took up smoking, which was uncommon for women at the time.

Lanny was also saddled with new responsibilities. Alex's disappearance had created a crisis in her family. Her mother was distraught so Lanny, the eldest still at home, took over business operations and the daily care of her younger siblings. The bakery had to close, and soldiers frequently raided the bicycle shop. While Lanny has always envisioned herself as the tough heroine, her younger brother, Edy, saw the impact of their situation upon her. He explains, "My sister was Dad's golden child. She was absolutely at a loss at that time. So, as soon as Dad was taken away, she was devastated."

Instead of becoming a leader, Lanny became harsh, easily enraged, filled with a desire for revenge. She scolded anyone who showed sadness, seeing this as a sign of "weakness." She became further isolated, because as she said, "PKI children were like lepers. So, at school, I had no friends … Because at that time, it was very easy for people to say, "communist", then later tonight, you disappear and bye-bye. I understood they didn't want to be friends with me because they were afraid." Lanny had her heart set on medical school and had been accepted. But the school demanded one million rupiah extra under the table (at that time, an astronomical sum) for Lanny to enroll. Her mother offered half but was denied. Lanny became an English major instead.

Lanny describes her life: "I got too angry with God. I was so angry with the government. Even my footsteps expressed anger. The tension between life and death, also the tension between what's going to happen tomorrow. Will we eat? I became very fierce." Then, in 1978, when Lanny was 26, she had her first spiritual awakening:

> So maybe, hatred made me live. But also, at the same time, it killed me. Spiritually, I was very, very disappointed. I would sit outside and say, "Why? Where is God? Why does he let this happen?" And some priest would come and he would say, "Oh, please don't doubt God's love. Let's pray and ask for forgiveness" and on and on … And I said, "Bullshit!" You know? … And when I started to really rebel against God, then I had this experience of seeing light. You know, very bright light. And I heard something like, "I am God." So, I still remember, I kneeled … knelt down and I said, "Okay, I now know that you are there," and then I said, "Use me for good things." … Then I felt peace in my heart – a feeling I had never had. Wonderful peace.

Twenty years later, after a life-changing Theravadin Buddhist Vipassana meditation course, Lanny became a practicing Buddhist and her discovery of meditation provided her profound insight into the nature of attachment and impermanence, which had so crippled her in the wake of the loss of her father. While many of her symptoms still persist – such as the episodes of "blankness" – this insight has had lasting effects on her life. She founded a center for Buddhist meditation, which conducts good works. She has also written extensively about her experiences during 1965 and afterward (Anggawati, 2001), and with the self-understanding she has achieved, she has become an inspiring teacher.

Degung

> The impact of the '65 tragedy was not limited to the disappearance of my father. It had an impact on me and on the fragmenting of the relationships in my family. The discrimination really resonates. And that is not allowed to happen to my children. And I promise to my children … that's something that I'll fight for until the end.

Degung Santikarma was born into a high-caste, educated, well-respected and well-off Balinese family, the second of three children. His family was one of the first in the neighborhood to have a car. He also enjoyed products from abroad, such as a coveted pair of swimming trunks. He remembers a happy childhood (Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.3 Degung Santikarma

His parents had an arranged marriage and didn't get along well, but both were politically active, often travelling outside the country for conferences. Degung describes his father as "an important person" who spoke English, taught Sanskrit, and held a Bachelor's degree. He was connected to the communist party and was a founder of the Parisadha, a Hindu institution putting forth the controversial idea of rationalizing and streamlining rituals. Degung's mother was renowned in the village for being a typist, which was associated with writing – a potentially subversive act in volatile times. She worked as an administrator in the Department of Public Health and was a member of Gerwani, the women's movement associated with the PKI. Their family compound was known for being a "center of culture."

Degung was five years old in 1965. When the violence and chaos first reached his village, he was too young to understand its implications; in fact, he remembers the thrill of houses burning and people crowded in the streets, and the novelty of being awake in the middle of the night or hiding out in the temple. Gradually, fear and horror took the place of

excitement, as a beloved neighborhood doctor was killed and as Degung witnessed corpses piling up on the streets and riverbanks of his village.

> They killed them in front of their houses, dragged their bodies. And they just buried them by the leaves. You know, I was just playing … And then when I walked with my Auntie, I thought, ew. We saw guts. It stopped being fun. They just killed people like *caru* [animal sacrifice]. Mutilated.

This violence soon devastated Degung's own immediate family. His parents' local renown as progressives, activists, and strong personalities made them targets of governmental violence and perhaps also village and even family jealousy. First, Degung's father was taken by paramilitary members affiliated with the PNI for interrogation. Degung's sister remembers:

> He was taken from the jail, then paraded around the city, with them saying that my father was an evil person. "This is Mr. PKI." Like that. Paraded around the town square. Many people from the family saw it but didn't dare … they just cried. I didn't see it myself at that time, I just heard the stories. Eventually, my father was taken for the very last time. We didn't know ourselves that he had died.

Soon after Degung's father's death, his mother was also imprisoned. While in jail, she developed a relationship with a guard. When the family found out, they were furious and accused her of being a prostitute. Shunned and threatened, and possibly because she had been raped in prison, Degung's mother married the prison guard and left Degung with his father's family. But members of Degung's extended family and the village ostracized him as well, avoiding or taunting him because of his communist connections. Degung felt deeply abandoned and rejected. He couldn't believe his own mother would leave him. "I hated my mother. I don't know why. Because I think she left me, because nobody took care of me."

Degung also had a hard time accepting the way people were treating each other in the wake of the mass killings and imprisonments. Friends, family, and respected community members had all shown themselves to be untrustworthy. There were deep divisions within their household and

their temple, so bitter that the family built a literal wall between those who had been nationalists and those who had been communists. Degung calls his village the "most fucked up village in the world." He and his siblings were brought up in an environment that Degung felt was "really, really, very, very, very, very unfair." Within the family and village, they were scapegoated and outcast. Hoping to remove him from this situation and help him reinvent himself without the stigma of being an *anak PKI*, Degung's paternal grandmother sent him to live with a distant paternal (*dadia*) uncle in Surabaya, in East Java. While temporarily sending unruly children to live with an extended family member for discipline is normative, with the idea that such an environment will be less indulgent than the typical natal family (Supartini, personal communication, 2010), this felt cruel to Degung, who was grieving the loss of his parents and felt he had done no wrong. Furthermore, the uncle was an exceedingly harsh disciplinarian, so Degung ran away and found refuge with a group of prostitutes in the Wonokromo neighborhood, who cared for him as best they could. While Degung continued to attend school, he also lived as a street kid, surviving on food he had stolen. He returned to Bali some years later as a "wild boy" but received some life-changing guidance from another *dadia* uncle there, who had been in high school in 1965 and had been imprisoned.

> My uncle [came] back from jail and began to see me. "Degung, you can do everything as naughty as you can. One thing I beg you, don't give up education. If you give up education, I will never speak to you again in all your life." And then I become really smart in the class. Even I go to university. And then I started to study about human rights, and I turned into an activist.

Inspired by this uncle to value education, Degung aspired to be a professor, but was denied work as a lecturer due to his "unclean environment," a reference to his family's association with communism. Despite this, he became an academic, a journalist, and a human rights activist. He received a postgraduate degree from the University of Melbourne, was a research assistant at the prestigious Institute for Advanced Studies in the US, worked with Hildred Geertz at Princeton, and has taught at

George Mason University. A significant part of his work is advocating for a more direct and open dialogue about the events of 1965, and about the flows of power in his country.

Kereta

> I saw all of them who were stabbed, those who were beaten. I saw all of them … My thoughts can't return to what they used to be. It's like they give in to that fear. Every day, night or day, I was always afraid. I wanted to hide in a quiet place, but there were always creatures and sounds. There was an image of a black creature. The rice fields were full of voices.

We have written and published extensively on Kereta's story elsewhere (Lemelson, 2016; Lemelson & Suryani, 2006; Lemelson & Tucker, 2017), as well as devoted an entire film to his story (Lemelson, 2010) and refer readers to those materials. We feel his story was significant in our account of the traumas following 1965 and want to include it here, but we give a more minimal outline in order to devote space to those whose experiences we have not yet discussed at length. We do not return to Kereta in Parts III and IV of this volume (Fig. 2.4).

Nyoman Kereta was born in 1942 in a rural Central Balinese village. His formal education ended after elementary school. He remembers a pleasant and uneventful childhood shaped by the rhythms of rice agriculture and the Balinese ritual calendar, punctuated by the excitement of playing the legong for local gamelan performances.

In 1965, Kereta was twenty-one. Military and paramilitary forces entered his village looking for suspected communists. Kereta's brother-in-law was a police officer and asked that the family's lives be spared. Still, as a known PKI sympathizer, Kereta was sure he was in mortal danger and fled to the trees to hide. From his perilous perch, he witnessed a massacre of villagers in which both killers and victims were personal acquaintances.

Fig. 2.4 Nyoman Kereta

> After they were done beating people, they buried them, only there were those who were still screaming. You could hear their screams coming up from the earth, "Oh!" … The people were still breathing. After that, they were just buried and those who had done it left. They disappeared, all of them disappeared.

Then, soon after, he witnessed his patrilineal cousin take part in the brutal assassination of his own father, luring him outside the family compound to be killed. He said, "I saw my father when he was being beaten. They had gouged out his eyes … I didn't dare look at that. That was too brutal."

Kereta's brother, Rarad, says that for years afterward, Kereta lived in a state of perpetual fear, thinking, "Will I be killed today or tomorrow?" Surviving PKI members or sympathizers were photographed for surveillance. The family re-registered as loyal to Golkar, Suharto's political party, for safety. Kereta believes his constant terror in the wake of these killings weakened his life force. For months after the massacre, he had difficulty eating and became very thin and withdrawn. He was easily startled and could feel his heart beating rapidly. His mind often went blank and an "inner pressure" weighed him down. He had difficulty falling asleep and was frequently awakened by nightmares of being chased or people being butchered.

Kereta had been deeply scarred by the killings and his continuing suffering remained visible to those around him. Ten years later, Kereta ate some eels he had caught in an irrigation ditch, not knowing that they had been recently sprayed with the powerful and since banned insecticide, Endrin. He was sick for months with vomiting and dizziness, further exacerbating his already vulnerable condition. After his recovery, in 1980, his family arranged a marriage for him. His wife-to-be was less than half his age – not quite sixteen – and although quite reluctant at first, succumbed to the families' wishes. For the first few months of their marriage, she didn't talk to Kereta and even returned to her family home for a year. But his siblings begged her to return, she accepted her fate, and they reunited. Slowly, the relationship grew warm. They had a son. Then, in 1984, they had a daughter, who died soon after being delivered. For Kereta, the grief of this event triggered memories of all that he had lost in '65. He wept uncontrollably. He started seeing and talking to spirits known as *wong samar*, who he soon feared wanted to possess him. When he became so withdrawn that he would not leave his bedroom, his family sought treatment from traditional healers and a psychiatrist. Using a combination of local medicine and biomedical drugs, he would move through bouts of recovery and relapse, as he "still remembered the things that hurt."

This back-and-forth has continued to the time of writing. Kereta says he has been living in two worlds for the past thirty-some years, the world of his family and community and the world of the spirits. When Kereta is feeling well, he is active in neighborhood activities, such as playing in

the local village gamelan orchestra. He is able to contribute to the family livelihood through farming, growing flowers, and making offerings to sell in the market. He is treated fondly by his wife, sons, and brother. But when he is disturbed again by the spirits, he withdraws.

Participants' Experiences and Responses

Budi: Internalized Victimization, Eroded Trust, and Desire for Revenge

Over more than a decade of interviews, Budi has consistently framed his lived experience in terms of wrongful victimization and righteous revenge.

As a child, structural factors may have left Budi feeling he had few other options. The intersection of Indonesian national politics and local hierarchies enabled his abuse. His socioeconomic positionality as the youngest in a poor, troubled family at the bottom of both maternal and paternal extended families; his lack of education; his religious identity as Catholic in a predominantly Muslim area; and, perhaps most importantly, his status as an *anak PKI* left him vulnerable. Many of the behavior conventions and restrictions that would typically protect a child from being so mistreated were lifted, and typical avenues for recourse were largely unavailable. Budi seemed all too aware of this, despite his young age, and saw violence as a more realistic – and perhaps more satisfying – response.

When he was a pre-teen, this desire for revenge manifested in violent fantasies and schemes. Budi taught himself to mix various poisons and build bombs. In addition to providing a cathartic outlet, the skills he gained offered him a self-image worthy of a respect he had not previously gotten from peers or teachers. He boasted:

> My former school principal called me the "insane professor" because of my vast knowledge in the field of explosives, and … poisons. I was satisfied because although I was slow in schoolwork, none of the children my age at that time [had] that …

As Budi matured, his desire for "revenge" slowly evolved into a desire for "justice." He found himself drawn to martial arts and, in 2006, began training in a classic Javanese form of *pencak silat*. The breathing and meditation exercises and physical improvisation of the "free fight" gave Budi a bodily, spiritual, and psychological outlet for calming himself and channeling his emotions at times of difficulty. Budi seemed to feel increasingly stable and brave (B.I. *berani*). He felt emboldened enough to return to his old village and stand up to past tormentors. He now wanted to help others, saying, "I will see what kind of problems they have, and if the problems are like mine, then I will use my own experiences to help them without any reservation."

It is quite likely that, in addition to his own cognitive development and personal growth, Budi's new courage was fostered by significant shifts in the sociopolitical climate regarding the legacy of 1965. Some of the worst abuses Budi's family suffered occurred during widespread national unrest in the late 1990s and early 2000s, after the Asian economic crisis and Suharto's fall. Conflicts, often violent, flared up between ethnic and religious groups, but alleged ex-PKI members were often scapegoated by communities reeling from the economic downturn and primed by years of dehumanizing anti-Communist political propaganda (Robinson, 2018). As our interviews went on, the political unrest abated somewhat, and public forums on 1965 became more common. The shift in the public discourse around 1965 offered Budi a glimpse of what justice might look like. Now, Budi could say to a former bully, "If you want to continue torturing me, fine, but it will be added to my brother's (legal) case … Now there is law" (Fig. 2.5).

In addition to more formal legal changes, the stories of other survivors were starting to circulate more widely, though often in secret. Budi and his family read some of these, and hesitantly showed the research team a worn, photocopied volume filled with survivor accounts. These helped build a shared counternarrative against the shame of the hegemonic state narrative of '65 and its aftermath, highlighting instead survivor innocence and resilience.

However, a decade after the film's release, it has become clear that for Budi, basic trust in others is difficult after an early life filled with stigmatization, violence, and family disintegration. In adulthood, Budi has had

Fig. 2.5 Budi's growing strength

significant difficulty moving past a narrative in which he is victimized, taken advantage of, or wronged. This template for relationships often plunges him into a cycle of paranoia and fear, contending that people are slandering (B.I *memfitnah*), tricking, and mocking him behind his back. He admits he frequently fights with his peers and superiors, and told us a representative anecdote: Having lost his dog, he then suspected an acquaintance had stolen it, fantasized about killing that person's dog, and even kicked the dog in real life.

This embattled orientation toward the world has made it difficult for Budi to find steady work. Budi is interested in electronics and computers, but jobs, first as a sound technician and then installing surveillance cameras, both ended quickly due to workplace conflicts. Then, after making a connection with Lanny through the film, Budi was hired to work at her school, first in a janitorial capacity and then inputting library information into a database and repairing computers throughout the campus. This job also came to an end: Spyware was discovered on all the school computers and Budi may or may not have engaged in hacking to

do things like print vouchers for luxury hotels where he could stay for free. Budi admitted to making such vouchers, but denied purposefully installing any spyware. Afraid that Budi would access bank account or other sensitive information, Lanny let him go. Most recently, Budi found work with a hospital cleaning service and quickly climbed the ranks to team leader, but remains dissatisfied and unhappy.

Mini, Mudakir, Kris: Endurance Through Ongoing Suffering

Since the film's release, Budi's family has continued to struggle financially and socially. Like many with a marked identity card as the daughter of a political prisoner, it has been difficult for Mini to find formal work, so she gets by nannying and sewing and receives government assistance. With Mudakir and Budi, Mini moved back to her hometown, where she feels less social stigma. Her husband, however, remains estranged; while people are not outright rude Mudakir is sure they are avoiding and privately judging him, and says they often short him for his tailoring work. After many years spent as a busker, Kris found work as a security guard at a local storehouse, but struggles to make ends meet. He is married and lives with his wife and young son nearby (Fig. 2.6).

Mini's suffering persists. She has recurring dreams rife with symbolism of struggle and loneliness, where she is carrying her children through rising toxic floodwaters, or finds herself alone in vast, abandoned cemeteries (Wardaya, 2011/2013). Still, she has found comfort in her Catholic faith, attending evening prayer meetings and identifying with the suffering of Jesus. The meaningful surrender to suffering harmonizes with the Javanese idioms of acceptance (B.I. *nerima*), surrender to God (B.I. *pasrah*), and trust in the divine plan (B.I.*sumarah*) (Supartini et al., 2019), a syncretism encapsulated in her statement: "This is the life I have to live. I'm a puppet and God is the Great Puppeteer". According to Supartini et al. (2019), these notions of surrender must not be misconstrued as weakness, powerlessness, or hopelessness, rather a culturally syntonic (Subandrijo, 2000) process of personal spiritual contemplation, interpretation, and constructive response. Mini also joined a group

Fig. 2.6 Kris and his friends singing "Destiny of My Nation"

called the Friends of Mother Theresa, with whom she shares her grief and conducts good works. Like Budi, Mini has found support from the growing survivor movement in Indonesia. Once the family had fled their former village and their house was destroyed, she had given up hope of ever regaining the property. But, through filming activities, she connected with a Muslim Indonesian organization dedicated to seeking justice for survivors of the 1965 political violence. This group worked with her toward re-establishing legal ownership of the land. This advocacy, and again the feeling of finally being heard and responded to, made her feel as though she were, as she said, "no longer trash."

Lanny: Moving Past Anger Through Buddhist Detachment and Pragmatic Action

Lanny's method of coping with the lingering traumas of 1965 combines Javanese and Buddhist philosophies of skillful living with a tough, pragmatic personal attitude. Lanny compares herself to the Srikandi character

in the Mahabharata; this character is born a woman but is raised as a man, prefers warfare to domestic arts, and bears great responsibility for defending the kingdom. In some ways, this warrior-like personality is evident in Lanny's response to the trials she has faced.

Lanny says that her proactive orientation toward hardship was an adaptive survival mechanism learned from her family, which tended to be "hard rather than sentimental." Expressions of grief in the family were met with black humor; they focused instead on what could be done. A favorite Chinese proverb of hers is, "Instead of weeping, why don't you just sweep the floor; at least your room will be clean." In *40 Years*, Lanny does share her experiences of great grief, loss, disillusionment, and panic. After her father's arrest, people she had once considered her friends, "treated her like rubbish," and avoided her. At that time, she was terribly hurt and decided that to maintain her own dignity, she would never seek sympathy ever again. In her mind, this would be demeaning, like "begging for money."

Lanny equates prolonged grief or other symptoms of lingering trauma to self-indulgence or self-absorption – when you realize the scope of other people's loss, it seems almost shameful to acquiesce to your own feelings of loss or helplessness. As she says, "You get sad you lost your shoes, but someone else lost their legs! Just keep going." A number of Lanny's friends had terrifying experiences during 1965, including a woman who was electrocuted in her vagina with an iron prod during torture, and a man who, when seeking a private place to defecate, was accused of trying to escape and forced at gunpoint to eat his own excrement. These experiences were instructive to Lanny about the nature of human beings. In them, she sees both their capacity for sadistic behavior and, more importantly, for resilience. These friends have survived. They have shared their experience with Lanny, but she says she won't "let [them] cry about it" because to cry about it would be weak and "if you are weak, you are dead." Lanny advocates channeling grief into anger, which she sees as a protective emotion – "when [survivors] are angry, they're OK" – and then using that anger to fuel positive action. "To hell with the past, let's do something good." She seems to think that this is a matter of self-control and free will – "choosing" grief, hopelessness,

depression, or existential doubt regarding past trauma is to "foolishly" get "pulled into the circles of useless things."

She has embraced the Buddhist principle that life is suffering, to deal with '65 and its legacy. Lanny in no way thinks that the troubles she and her family experienced were their fault. But, whether their suffering was "deserved" or not, the art of life is to face this suffering while striving not to create more for oneself or others. Lanny even says she believes the lessons of '65 gave her a "gift": "I understand that if I can stand tall now, it's because of suffering in the past."

Lanny believes this orientation toward suffering has allowed her to live without lingering effects of trauma, while others remain deeply affected.

> As one of the victims of G30S/PKI, I have often been asked: "How did you get out of the trauma?" My answer is simple: "I was fed up with suffering. I have had enough. No more!"
>
> In giving that answer, I want to say to those who still have trauma, hatred, grudge over what happened a decade longer than half a century ago (1965): "Why do you still enjoy being in suffering?" Of course they will deny, saying that nobody likes to suffer. "Only insane people enjoy suffering."
>
> They are right. Most of us are insane … Maybe I am also insane in thinking that actually I am the captain of my own "ship".
>
> I have been to several meetings with G30S victims. It was interesting to see how the atmosphere was thick with negativities: anger, sadness, wanting attention, wanting help, wanting justice … I could not help wondering how much they had suffered all those years. How many months, days, hours, minutes, seconds they had wasted in suffering … I do not understand why psychologists usually ask depressed people to tell their life stories, and so the patients relive (readily and happily) the suffering they have memorized so far – thus make it stronger. I think it is cruel to do so! They should ask, "What do you do hour by hour?" … MAKE THE BEST OF WHATEVER WE HAVE. Do something useful physically: making the bed, sweeping the floor, rearrange the wardrobe; do physical exercises, take children to school, teach nieces and nephews, do social work … And STOP FEELING WE ARE THE MOST MISERABLE PEOPLE IN THE WHOLE PLANET! Insane …. (Anggawati, personal communication, January 20, 2020)

In addition to reclaiming control over her personal narrative of trauma, Lanny tries to live her life according to the Buddhist/Javanese principle of karma. She strongly believes what you put into the world in terms of selfless good deeds and generosity, will flow back to you. Through traditional Javanese asceticism, she pursues moral conduct and has renounced worldly pleasures.

After the film, Lanny founded a K–12 school, Putra Bangsa ("Child of the Nation"), now ranked in the top three schools in the province of Central Java. She is a savvy networker and fundraiser. She also has a reputation for being strict – students with classes on the fourth floor are not allowed to take the elevator but must use the stairs to "build character" – but she is also deeply sympathetic. As part of the school's mission, Lanny takes at-risk students under her wing. She has worked with recovering addicts, students with histories of sex work, and those with major mental illness. While Budi was not a student, she hired him in the same spirit.

She has chosen to remain single and celibate and lives with four other practicing Buddhists who teach or work at the school. In her free time, she translates Buddhist texts. As she ages, she has begun to teach at local university and is slowly stepping back from leadership roles in her school and temple, preparing successors to take her place.

Degung: Advocating for Critical Dialogue

Degung has also turned outward in some ways, dedicating his life to taking a public, vocal, and productively critical approach toward Balinese society. After pursuing a graduate degree in Australia, he became a cultural anthropologist and is a prominent scholar of Balinese culture with interests in violence, gender, post-conflict social life, transitional justice, and the politics of memory and identity. He has authored chapters and books, and lead activist events, discussions, and workshops and been called a "maverick" for his writing and public speaking, which challenge stereotypes about Balinese life and boldly question the status quo. He was for many years the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Latitudes*, about Balinese culture, news, and arts, which published serious

investigative journalism, humor pieces, and other contributions. He has also been called upon by Indonesian and global news sources, such as the New York Times, as an expert commentator on Balinese life and culture. He married American anthropologist Leslie Dwyer, and together, they have taught and published research articles and books on political violence in Bali (2007a, 2007b; Dwyer & Santikarma, 2003). Degung also continued to work with the Elemental Productions team as a collaborator, anthropologist, researcher, interviewer for years after *40 Years*, and had a vital role in the research and production of *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015).

The heartbreaking experience of feeling abandoned by his mother gradually developed for Degung into an understanding that she may had to make difficult choices to ensure both her own survival and his, and may have been pressured into leaving him. He has also come to terms with the fact that his grandmother was marginalized by her status as related to communists and, therefore, having an "unclean" family environment and did what she thought best for him when she sent him to live, unhappily, in Surabaya. He has come to connect his experiences to that of an entire cohort:

> A lot of my generation grew up like that. They ended up just quitting school because the society give them a hard time – or, you just become like a scapegoat for everything [that] happened to other kids. … I remember, since I was a kid, if other kids were naughty, that [was] because of me. I influence other kids. It just become like, you know, black sheep. … Sometimes, if you're not strong enough to bear it, usually you just quit, frustrated, not go to school, become a drinker, or become a cockfighter. A lot of my friends are like that, in my village. … That's the ironic side of it. They sent me to Java, I meet the same kind of environment. But up there, because the society is more like an in-and-out kind of community … there's nobody asking you really who you are. Once you're there, you know, you're just busy how to survive. It doesn't matter. Identity is no longer an issue. Just surviving, survive, survive.

In trying to understand the choices that faced not only the members of his family but many more like them during the events of 1965, with a career's worth of experience in facilitating similar discussions, Degung

has initiated conversations with fellow villagers about 1965, including alleged perpetrators, despite the strong disapproval of his family. *40 Years* captures Degung confronting his neighbor, Ketut, about his role in targeting villagers, including Degung's own family members, for imprisonment and execution. In a chilling exchange, this alleged perpetrator managed to formally deny any wrongdoing while, in veiled terms, reassert power over Degung's kin and insinuate that he could and would do the same thing again. In that moment onscreen, which carried culturally mandated norms of politeness and politically entrenched patterns of impunity, Degung was left speechless (Fig. 2.7).

But undeterred by the complexities of confrontation, Degung continues to engage issues of culture, power, and domination in contemporary Indonesia, presents his activist and scholarly work nationally and internationally, and conducts public conversations and debates with other journalists and academics. He researches *Gerwani*, to which his mother belonged. Some of his work explores how globalized forms of commerce and international relationships perpetuate silence around

Fig. 2.7 Degung reacts to Ketut's veiled threat

1965. For example, Degung connects the mandates of a tourist economy, and its demands of presenting Bali as a peaceful paradise with smiling inhabitants, with an enforced amnesia about past and present violence, unrest, or discontent on the island. For Degung, addressing his personal experiences of grief occurs in concert with political engagement.

Degung continues to work to create a space for dialogue about '65 beyond the state control of the narrative, to open family and neighborhood discussion and truth telling, to push back against stigmatization of the *anak PKI* label, and foster local reconciliation between youth coming from families of perpetrators and victims. He and his wife have a goal of creating a research and training institute around '65 dialogue. Some family members who wanted to memorialize the survivor experience built "The 65 Park", which is located inside the family compound. It is dedicated as a public community safe space to talk about '65 and other topics of importance, as well as hold events such as independent film screenings or music performances. Degung's brother, Alit, envisioned the park as an exemplary space of openness and reconciliation, saying since victims and perpetrators already live together and pray together, that they should dare to talk about their painful history together. But half of the family was so angry about it that, calling Degung and his brother provocateurs, they boycotted Degung's grandmother's funeral.

Kereta: Withdrawal from Society

Kereta's problems with fear and social withdrawal that began soon after witnessing his father's murder and the village massacre persisted for decades. These were likely exacerbated by enduring contact with neighbors and family members who participated in the violence he witnessed in 1965 yet framed *him*, as a past PKI member, as guilty. Kereta's Balinese psychiatrist, Dr. Suryani, states that Kereta has experienced pervasive and ongoing traumatization because:

> [H]e doesn't talk things out and keeps everything to himself. It seems this trait played a significant role in his experience of trauma … Because he held in his fear and he was a PKI partisan, he was terrified. So, basically, he has no release, no outlet. He doesn't have anyone to share his burden.

Kereta describes his illness as *ngeb*. For the Balinese, *ngeb* is an intentional mute exile in the wake of witnessing something horrific or bizarre (for further details and analysis, see Lemelson & Suryani, 2006). In Kereta's case, *ngeb* can be understood as both protest and self-protection against a national political culture that, until the fall of Suharto, made the public expression of distress or memory a dangerous act where, as Kereta puts it, "You could die because of just one word."

His relationships with spirit beings have gradually waned over time, although they do occasionally return. During Indonesia's first ever national democratic election campaigns in 2002–2003, these spirits asked Kereta to rejoin the Communist Party. He wore a camouflage jacket and military helmet to protect himself, and slept outside in his family temple courtyard until the visitations subsided. While strained during their early marriage, Kereta's relationship with his wife has over time grown into a source of great support and sustenance for him. With the accommodation and care of his family, Kereta seems to have gained a certain degree of peace with the shadows and illuminations that visit him.

Conclusion: Diversity of Responses to Fear-Based Experiences

A foundational goal in making *40 Years* was to document and explore the long-term responses to "traumatic exposure" in 1965 and the multiple ways it impacted lives of a diverse set of Indonesians. Pre-existing neurobiological models of trauma informed the way we structured interviews and selected participants for inclusion in assemblies of the film. On the most basic level, an initial criterion for inclusion was that participants fit some of the basic contemporary clinical and diagnostic criteria for PTSD. It was evident in our initial interviews that all those who would become main characters had at least several, and in most cases multiple, symptoms of this diagnostic category. Although variably troubled by these symptoms, it soon became apparent that the participants clearly had many other pressing life concerns that fell outside the purview of the contemporary clinical model of PTSD. These pressing life concerns

significantly impacted the way they experienced and internalized their experiences of fear.

While not themselves the victims of direct political violence, as members of victims' families, Budi, Mini, Lanny, Degung, and Kereta all experienced both acute episodes of terror and chronic fear as a result of Indonesia's national political upheaval in 1965. All five witnessed beloved family members being beaten or taken away, and all experienced feelings of powerlessness in the face of this maltreatment. Their status as relatives of alleged communists has made them stigmatized targets for harassment, intimidation, violence, and discrimination within their communities and sometimes even their own extended families. Meanwhile, Mudakir's direct experiences of violence also left him wounded and vulnerable.

However, although their stories share these similarities, their different responses to these and long-term outcomes are each markedly unique. Even when certain aspects of their symptom configurations seem to overlap, the interpretation and response to these symptoms are quite different due to individual subjectivity. For example, both Budi and Lanny experienced problems with anger and rage: Lanny took this out on her siblings, trying to control their actions and emotions, while Budi sought to overcome his feelings of helplessness by fantasizing revenge where he could punish those villagers who caused him and his family to suffer so much. Over time, Lanny came to realize the negative effects this controlling anger was having on her life and her relationships. After she discovered a Buddhist meditation practice, she was able to confront her strong feelings of anger and also grief, and transform these into motivation toward empowerment, growth, and good works. A much younger Budi still struggles, often still subject to feelings of paranoia and retaliation for perceived ills.

These differences are in part due to individual factors, such as age, temperament, biology, biography, and embodied experience, but are also shaped by other differences. Lanny and Budi's different models of suffering and resilience are impacted by their different positions within Java's complex society; their ethnic identities, religious beliefs, socioeconomic backgrounds, levels of education, the knowledges and practices of

Fig. 2.8 Budi's hope for himself

cultural and social systems, and the resources available to them to help them cope with the violence and losses they suffered.

In Bali, Degung and Kereta's strikingly different reactions to the violence visited upon their families also point to the difference caste and class made in their personal experience. Degung came from a high-caste, educated, and activist family, and despite his family disintegration in the wake of this violence and numerous setbacks, he ultimately took a similar stance to turn outward and engage debate. Meanwhile Kereta, from the Sudra peasant caste, turned inward and to another realm, silencing himself in perhaps the only form of protest – and protection – he felt was available to him.

We further explore the ways in which the lives of these participants, and those in our other two films, are shaped by both local psycho-cultural models and the social, political, and cultural conditions of structural violence that pervade Indonesian society in Part III of this book (Fig. 2.8).

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3

Bitter Honey: Culture, Polygamy, and Gendered Violence in Bali

The practice of a man taking multiple wives has deep roots in Balinese culture and history and, while always practiced by a relatively small minority of families, has persisted to the present day. Some Balinese defend polygamy as good for women. They point out that through the arrangement, women are able to share significant household and ritual duties and, in certain circumstances, secure social status and domestic stability as a co-wife. But a longitudinal ethnographic lens reveals a complex and ambivalent picture of this marriage structure as experienced by husbands, wives, and children.

Bitter Honey (Lemelson, 2015) presents an emotionally charged and experience-near portrait of polygamy across three families and multiple generations over a seven-year period. Each family in the film has its unique configuration and history with regard to courtship and entry into marriage; relationships between husband and wives and among co-wives and children; household duties and economics; and difficulties unique to this kinship form within the Balinese cultural context. An overarching theme, however, is the role gendered violence plays in these dynamics for these families. Here we consider gendered violence as encompassing

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a range of behavior that elicits distress and dysphoria in women and co-wives, including, but not limited to, actual physical abuse.

Gendered violence is certainly not a universal experience for Balinese or Indonesian women in polygamous marriages (see Hoskins, 1998), yet in these case studies emotional abuse, neglect, and/or the threat of violence or its enactment is an ever-present life concern for some, alongside distinct but related issues of betrayal, infidelity, feeling slighted, and the subsequent psychological consequences and adaptive process of the participants subject to these dynamics. In these three families, we see the multiple dimensions in which women and children become vulnerable in Indonesian society but are especially so in polygamous households.

An Ecological Perspective on Gendered Domestic Violence in Bali

The cultural, social, spiritual, and familial repercussions of being in a polygamous marriage are the subject of this chapter but there can be another: physical abuse, also known as domestic violence. Not all the wives in the film experience it, and the motivating causes are variable. Where it does occur, however, this domestic violence can be understood as more than just a dysfunctional relationship between two people. The "ecological perspective" we take in this chapter provides a wider context.

An "ecological perspective" sees violence against women occurring within a nesting set of personal, situational, and sociocultural contexts (Afrianty, 2018; Heise, 1998). In this perspective, factors in the individual life histories of those involved; in the family, in the social structures and institutions; and in the wider beliefs, views, and attitudes of a culture; will all influence the prevalence and severity of domestic violence that occurs in intimate relationships (Hasyim et al., 2007; Heise, 1998; Nilan et al., 2014). Certain vulnerabilities making domestic violence more likely seem to hold constant cross-culturally (while of course not universal and contingent upon locally specific kinship structures and practices, Fernandez, 1997). On an individual level, a factor significantly raising the likelihood of involvement in domestic violence as an adult across cultures – whether as a perpetrator or victim – is

witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child (e.g., Holtaling & Sugarman, 1986; Johnson, 1996; Nelson & Zimmerman, 1996). Household structures where men hold most of the economic or decision-making power, family finances are stressed, wives are isolated from their family and friends, and there is frequent marital conflict are all strong predictors of violence against women. Socially and structurally, domestic violence tends to increase in situations where "family matters" are seen to be off-limits to non-kin; where gender roles are sharply delineated, men are valued for their dominant or aggressive qualities, and women are seen to be men's property, and where there are restrictions on divorce (Heise, 1998).

The film and this chapter document the unique marital stresses of polygamy within the Balinese ecological context to clarify how, when living in a society where men have authority in many domains, for some Balinese co-wives, polygamous marriage becomes characterized by psychological manipulation, infidelity, domestic violence, and economic hardship. While this might not be the case in other cultures or societies in Indonesia – on the island of Sumba, for example, research suggests polygamy might actually lead to *less* domestic violence (Hoskins, 1998) – beyond the situation of the three families in the film, these negative outcomes are so prevalent in Bali that some Balinese activists call for an end to the practice in order to better protect and empower Indonesian women and better align with the goal of gender equality befitting a modern democracy (Brenner, 2006; Putra, 2011).

Context: Polygamy and Marriage in Bali

Courtship, Marriage, and Patrilineal Descent

Balinese polygamy has functioned to build family alliances and establish political power, display male potency, and accommodate male sexual appetites. It occurs within the complex Balinese kinship and marriage system which determines many aspects of Balinese family life, including sexual behavior, childrearing, spiritual life, and afterlife, such as temple membership and soul reincarnation.

In Bali, marriage and procreation are primary life aims for men and women. Following customary law and Balinese Hindu legal treatises, "all members of the Hindu-Balinese religion must marry, the self-evident goal being to beget children and thereby guarantee the continuity of the patriliny" (Hobart et al., 1996, p. 105). In the Balinese principle of *purusa*, descent is through the male line, with male heirs inheriting their parents' wealth, caste status, and clan membership, along with the responsibility to maintain the family temple. Men are placed at the center of familial and cosmological belonging and continuity – husbands represent the family "before the law, before god, and before the deified ancestors" (Hobart et al., 1996, p. 108). In addition to continuing the patriline, having children is crucial to the afterlife. After death, only one's own children can perform the sacred rituals that ensure the emancipation and purification of the soul, its successful rebirth, and preparation for reincarnation into the next life or metamorphosis into a deity. (The complications this poses for women are discussed below.) Thus, from a spiritual perspective, getting married and having children is not only a social duty, but also a sacred one.

This system affects courtship practices. Because Balinese men are under extreme pressure from their families to continue the patriline, a man often prefers to marry a woman after she is ensured to be fertile. In fact, a young man's parents may prefer he marry a girlfriend who is already pregnant, for this proves she is capable of conceiving, and hopefully bearing male heirs. As such, some Balinese are relatively tolerant about premarital sex. It is not unusual for unmarried couples to be sexually active; once the girlfriend becomes pregnant, it is likely that a marriage will follow. In this case the couple will marry by request (B.B, *nganten ngidih*), based on their mutual attraction and affection. They might also elope (B.B., *nganten merangkat melaib*), particularly if the woman is marrying a man from a lower caste.

Despite attitudes about sex and pregnancy as a normal part of courtship, to be an unwed mother is stigmatized in Bali. If a woman hasn't married before her child is born, both mother and child will suffer strong social repercussions and even potential disownment. Abortion, while available in cases where the mother's life is endangered, is otherwise illegal and widely considered immoral. Therefore, a Balinese man

may feel a deep responsibility to marry a pregnant girlfriend, as well as hope for a male heir from her; an unwed pregnant woman will feel immense pressure to marry soon. If the man did not move forward with a marriage, the couple might be forced into it (B.B., *nganten maksa*) by the woman's family. All this may lead to polygamy if the man has been enjoying an extramarital affair.

A woman may also be forced into unwanted sexual activity, with the risk of pregnancy, via marriage by capture (B.B., *nganten ngejuk*). This kind of marriage can happen with or without the cooperation of the woman's parents, but it implies "the ignorance and often active resistance of the girl involved" and is sometimes a euphemism for rape (Jennaway, 2002, p. 66). In many cases of *nganten ngejuk*, the girl's parents would rather accept the union than be subjected to humiliation – because casual premarital sex (including rape in some understandings) and unwed motherhood shames the woman and dishonors her family, despite lenient views toward premarital sex in courtship with an intention of marriage.

Whatever the circumstances of courtship and marriage, once a union is formalized, *purusa* patrilineal descent has significant spiritual repercussions for wives. At marriage, they leave their birth families and join their husbands' families, and their children will belong to the father's patriline. They surrender membership in their natal temples – shifting the focus of their religious and ritual duties from their father's ancestral deities to their husband's. According to Balinese Hindu belief, a wife will be reincarnated after death into her husband's extended family, linked to him across the generations, and her children with him tend to her afterlife. Maintaining membership in the new patriline, then, becomes crucial in a wife's spiritual journey.

There is one unusual, but significant, variant in Bali: *nyentana* marriage. In this form, there are no sons in the woman's family, so she is designated as the "male" heir. Her husband will move into her patrilineal home and their children will inherit the rights and property in the woman's natal patrilineage. This gives *nyentana*-married women more power over their lives, especially, as we will see below, if the marriage proves unsatisfactory or even, ends in separation or divorce.

Economics, Marriage, and Polygamy

Polygamy in Bali was traditionally intended for only the most affluent upper class. The practice can be traced back centuries through its presence in ancient sacred Hindu texts, illustrated folk tales, and plots in puppet theatre (B.I., *wayang kulit*). In pre-colonial days, polygamy was "the usual practice among well-to-do gentry families and … virtually every king had a large number of sons by different mothers" (Geertz & Geertz, 1975, p. 131), in order to cement economic and political alliances between clans and kingdoms or to demonstrate power over vassal villagers, who would offer their daughters in exchange for royal patronage. While commoners were not forbidden to practice polygamy, they rarely had the financial ability or political incentive.

The expectation has been that, generally, marriage will ensure a woman's financial stability. Since in Bali's patrilineal system only sons inherit their parents' wealth, women are expected to be cared for by their husbands and in their old age, by their children. An unmarried adult woman may not find her birth family a reliable source of support. Her parents or sister-in-law may begrudge her as an ongoing financial burden and upon her parents' death – and in some cases before – she may face destitution, potentially even homelessness, since once a son takes over the natal compound, his unmarried sisters can be evicted. Jennaway describes how her informants "invariably assured [her] that it was better to marry than to suffer the impoverishment of a spinster" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 72) (Fig. 3.1).

Marriage Law and Polygamy

Polygamy is acceptable under customary Balinese and Indonesian state law, with the proviso that husbands treat all wives fairly and equally. At the same time, resistance to polygamous marriage is older than the Indonesian nation. Polygamy was "legalized" in 1924, when the Dutch government codified Balinese customary law (Pringle, 2004, p. 119). Approximately 5% of marriages were polygamous (Jones, 1994, p. 269),

Fig. 3.1 Tuaji as money lender

but to upper-class Balinese women the practice rendered women "victims" and little more than "decoration in the home" (Chandrakirana et al., 2009/2011, p. 16). One of Bali's most prominent feminists at that time, I Gusti Ayu Rapeg founded the "Balinese Women Aware" movement (B.I., *Putri Bali Sadar*), noted for its strong opposition to polygamy (Vickers, 2013, p. 82), declaring, "It is within the rights of Indonesian women to have justice and freedom, and polygamy is a genuine repudiation of that" (Chandrakirana et al., 2009/2011). The debate intensified; in 1937, the colonial government passed a law against polygamy, but this was ultimately struck down under strong opposition from Nationalist and Islamic groups – in Islam, Indonesia's majority religion, men may take up to four wives.

After Indonesia gained independence in 1945, under first President Sukarno (who himself had multiple wives), various constitutional resolutions upheld the legitimacy and legality of polygamous marriage but protected women from *forced* polygamy (Chandrakirana et al., 2009/2011). Under Suharto's subsequent rule, these protections were tightened, and civil servants (B.I., *pegawai negeri)* were banned from practicing polygamy at all. Current national law stipulates that to take an additional wife, a husband must first receive written consent from his

existing wife or wives. While these signatures are easy to fake or coerce, if a man is found to have taken additional wife without such consent, wives are legally entitled to receive fair divorce settlements.

By the turn of the new millennium, the prevalence of officially registered polygamous marriages declined to 3% in Bali (Jennaway, 2000),[1] but across Indonesia the true prevalence of polygamy is unknown, as many second marriages are not officially registered with the state. In 1992, a genealogical study in a northern Balinese village found that out of the past three to four generations of 45 families, 4.4% of the marriages were officially registered as polygamous, but a household survey found the prevalence to be 10.7% (Jennaway, 2002, p. 76). Public support for the practice, though not equally distributed across gender, age, or religious affiliation, has gained momentum over the past two decades, aided in part by high-profile polygamous Indonesians, such as Megawati Sukarnoputri's vice-president Hamzah Haz, popular singer Debby Nasution, and the well-known restaurateur Haji Puspo Wardoyo, who serves "polygamy juice," a blend of four fruit flavors, at his barbeque chicken establishments (Brenner, 2006).[2] But Muslim, Hindu, and secular critics of the practice counter-argue that polygamy is little more than the institutionalization of sexist ideas about women and practices which render them instruments of male lust and power (Robinson, 2009).

The Film

As mentioned in the Introduction, *Bitter Honey* has its origins in a film not made, an earlier project on sexual terror in Jakarta. Although I found it impractical to make a film on survivors of the rapes of Chinese-Indonesian women at the end of the Suharto regime, I wanted to understand gendered violence and had realized that to do so would

[1] We should note that Jennaway's work and the title of this article were important inspirations for the title of both the film and the broad themes explored therein.

[2] Dag Yngvesson, a cinematographer on *40 Years* (Lemelson, 2009) and *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012), also explores these dynamics in his 2020 mocumentary *Banyak Ayam, Banyak Rejeki* (Many Chickens, Lots of Luck; Akbar & Önarsson, 2020) https://filmfreeway.com/BanyakAyamBanyakRejeki.

involve working with people in a local context, over a period of time, developing trust. Meanwhile my colleagues were conducting exploratory work into cases of gendered violence in Bali. They surveyed several communities, talking to village headmen, lawyers, psychologists, and members of their own social networks. Three cases of interest were found. Coincidentally, one of the factors all three had in common – in addition all being rural, Hindu, extended families – was that the families were polygamous. This opened an avenue for a more classical anthropological exploration. Production for the film lasted from 2008 to 2015. The fact that the initial impetus for these cases was an exploration of gendered violence quite possibly skewed our research; in other words, ultimately presenting these three case study family experiences of gendered violence together as we did in the film *Bitter Honey* may have made it seem that domestic violence was more common or prevalent in Balinese polygamous families than in monogamous families, when as mentioned above this is not necessarily the case (Fig. 3.2).

Bitter Honey includes testimony from family members in the three families but focuses on the voices of co-wives as they share and reflect upon the natures of their marriages and family relationships. Tuaji is an aging patriarch with royal blood. His large family with ten wives conforms to the traditional cultural model of polygamy wherein an affluent and powerful man takes many wives to satisfy his desires, demonstrate and grow his power, and distribute his wealth. Sadra is in many ways Tuaji's opposite, economically strained and struggling to provide even the bare minimum of financial stability or personal satisfaction to his two wives. Meanwhile, Darma's five current wives and one ex-wife admit being drawn to his hyper-masculine charisma, and yet each falls along a continuum between personal satisfaction and stability, and dissatisfaction and roiling discord.

The primary structuring device of the film is its organization into thematic chapters that address the women's main concerns, highlighting how their subjectivity is shaped by the ecological environment. The viewer is guided through the film by a traditional shadow puppet show which introduces chapters, interviews (seen on screen and heard in voiceover over B-roll and observational footage), ongoing commentary

Fig. 3.2 *Wayang kulit* puppetry as narration device

by Balinese anthropologist Degung Santikarma, and the use of non-diegetic (live recorded) sound. Other Balinese, including fellow villagers, co-workers, mentors, and human rights lawyer Luh Putu Anggreni, make appearances to provide further explanation and context helpful for understanding polygamy in Bali and the lives and struggles of the main characters. Although the tone of the film is serious and at times can be quite grim given the subject matter, we decide to use the often-humorous shadow play and occasionally joking commentary by Twalen, Merdah, and the other clowns, to provide localized understandings and treatment of polygamy as a social condition, and incorporate a degree of levity which parallels how many Balinese themselves would handle a topic such as polygamy.

The film opens with a prologue of sorts: the arrival of a shadow puppet troop to a village in Bali. Scenes from the ensuing performance comment on the practice, context, and effects of polygamy in Bali, as expressed through the discourse and ribald jokes of the clown puppets (for more detail about the commissioning and staging of this performance for the film, see Chapter 8). After a credit crawl with a montage of women in contemporary Bali, the film introduces the three families' stories and

then loosely follows the trajectory of a typical marriage, from the glow of courtship to the disenchantment of married life.

In "Love and Marriage," members of each family reminisce about how they met and married and introduce the practicalities of domestic roles and responsibilities. For many wives, the thrill of romance and courtship overlapped with the shocking realization that they were not the sole love interest of their husband or husband-to-be. In describing their day-to-day activities, it becomes clear the wives are not financially supported. In Sadra's family, this becomes a major point of contention, with both wives suspicious and angry, whereas Darma's wives seem to take some pride and enjoyment in their work outside the home, perhaps appreciating the respite from the laborious daily preparations of Balinese offerings. Other voices provide social, cultural, and legal context for polygamy.

The following two sections on "Power" and "Violence" show the unique characteristics of each husband, and investigate how, despite their differences, their marriages are shaped by male privilege. Tuaji is rich and powerful while Darma is charismatic and charming, unafraid to use force to keep people in line – a potentially dangerous man despite his friendly smile. Darma's wives admit that they are afraid of him and Suciati reveals the violent origins of their marriage. This section witnesses an intervention between Sadra and his first wife, facilitated by Luh Putu Anggreni and his mentor and employer Alit, which reveals some of the major stressors on their marriage and provides the most up-to-date legal framework on domestic violence in Bali.

"Children" addresses the personal experience of the children of the polygamous marriages as well as their perspectives on their parents' marriages. Darma has eight children, five boys and three girls. Sadra also has eight children, four boys and four girls. The boys in particular report episodes of violence directed at them and yet they all seem to admire their parents and enjoy the large, bustling families that polygamy has provided them. Darma's daughters, for the most part, also enjoy being in a family environment with "many mothers" but do not desire a polygamous marriage for themselves.

Following this, "Lust & Infidelity" looks at the patterns of male behavior that trapped some wives in polygamous marriages and remain ongoing. In constructions of Balinese male sexuality, men are more

lustful than women, and male desire should not be restricted but rather indulged. Degung Santikarma, Balinese anthropologist, compares it to "the concept of Bhairawa in Hinduism, which says that lust should not be restrained. Lust should not be suppressed, but it must be followed, until you reach your limit." Combined with a generalized male prerogative, this endorses the male acquisition of multiple sexual partners before – and after – marriage, as husbands' extramarital affairs are tolerated as a "natural, if unfortunate, biological predilection of the masculine sex" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 79). For their part, wives may choose not to take issue for the sake of domestic tranquility. Observational footage of Darma at a brothel shows his continuing desire for new partners and instigates a discussion about the risk of his wives contracting AIDS or other STDs. Confessional footage of Sadra in the backseat of a car during a film shoot reveals the fact that he is courting another woman, who is unaware of his marital status. "Divorce" explains, from a person-centered perspective, why, despite their disillusionment and problems with their lives, women feel they cannot get divorced.

In the final section, "Endurance and Freedom," we hear how wives cope with the limitations and humiliations of their marriages, and their wishes for a different life for their children. We also see an alternative path: Kiawati, who married in a *nyetana* marriage, has been able to divorce Darma yet keep her children and live on her own terms. The freedom she experiences, despite the difficulties of her life, shows a glimpse of how things might be different and arguably better. Here we introduce the characters in the film, before going on to discuss their subjective experiences in the ecological environment of village Bali.

Participant Histories

Tuaji's Family

> Maybe I was fated to be with many wives. Or maybe it is due to a supernatural force. Maybe in a past life, I helped a lot of people. – Tuaji

We all get along. I have never been jealous. – Gati, 5th wife

Sang Putu Tuaji is in his eighties and has had ten wives, five of whom are still living. Closely related to a Balinese royal family, Tuaji was well known in his younger days as being a powerful man whom few in his village dared cross. During the 1960s, when Bali was rocked by political turmoil that resulted in the massacre of over 100,000 alleged communists Chapter Two, this volume, Tuaji was a leader of a local anti-communist militia who directed the killings in his neighborhood. He went on to become a village moneylender, earning both allegiance and fear. Today, his wives and neighbors say all those factors – royal status, wealth, and a reputation for violence – helped him secure his wives, who often felt powerless to refuse him. Indeed, his seventh wife, Manis, recalls knowing they would marry when Tuaji told her not that he loved her but that he would attack any other man who approached her (Fig. 3.3).

To villagers, Tuaji's family appears a model of harmony. His wives rarely argue and support each other in illness and fulfilling ritual responsibilities, although all acknowledge that Tuaji's fiery reputation helps maintain this household order. Today, none of Tuaji's many children practice polygamy. Several of his sons have high-ranking positions in the military; as civil servants, polygamy is forbidden to them (as noted above). They feel they must keep their father's marriages secret for fear of being marked with the stigma of coming from a "morally inappropriate" family.

While Tuaji's wives acknowledge there have been petty disagreements among them, they say that Tuaji has treated them fairly. Villagers note approvingly that Tuaji has provided each of his wives with land and homes of their own. When new wives came into Tuaji's family, the older wives have prepared the wedding rituals. Two of Tuaji's five surviving wives, Manis and Giriastiti, his seventh and tenth, are sisters.[3] Marrying sisters is not uncommon for Indonesian aristocratic co-wives, as it is thought to promote friendlier relations and fewer objections between

[3] When co-wives are sisters, this is referred to as *sororal polygyny*.

Fig. 3.3 Sang Putu Tuaji

co-wives (Zeitzen, 2008, p. 32); Manis even served as her husband's representative during her sister's proposal (Fig. 3.4).

Fig. 3.4 Sister-wives Manis and Giriastiti

Sadra's Family

Sadra

> I am worried … I have been harsh with my wives and children. But it would be hard to stop completely. It's hereditary. Or it might be my karma.

The eldest son of a polygamous rice farmer, Sadra is in his mid-forties with two wives and eight children. He makes handicrafts for a fair-trade foundation. With a decent job and a house inherited from his father, Sadra belongs to the middle class; still, the expenses of his polygamous family put him in a state of constant worry.

Sadra married his first wife, Purniasih, when they were both teenagers, eloping against her family's wishes. He describes their marriage as having

been good until they had their first child and Purniasih quit her job, straining the family's finances. He began beating her – and also his mother, who was living with them. In one frightening episode, he struck Purniasih in the head with a pair of heavy iron scissors. Sadra expects Purniasih to serve him around the house and gets especially angry with her when she is too slow bringing him food or coffee.

Sadra met his second wife, Murni, through a mutual friend. He kept the affair secret from his wife and also lied to Murni, who believed he was unmarried. When Murni became pregnant, Sadra threatened to send Purniasih home to her parents and keep her children if she did not consent to a second wife. Sadra's parents advised against this new marriage, warning that polygamy was a difficult path. Indeed, this new marriage was problematic from the start, as Sadra soon felt threatened by Murni's intellect. Unlike many Balinese polygamous families, including the other two in the film, the household does not live together. Purniasih and Murni live hours away from each other, with Purniasih maintaining residence in the family compound and Murni living in a rented room with her children (Fig. 3.5).

Sadra admits to having a problem with aggression and has consulted with both friends at work and Balinese traditional healers (B.B., *balian*) to try to change. While some friends have pointed to Sadra's experiences growing up with a polygamous father who beat his own wives, and healers have claimed he is a victim of black magic, Sadra himself views his treatment of women as primarily an effect of bad karma. While Sadra does not believe polygamy to be wrong, he admits to having deceived his wives and allowing his desires to outweigh the greater good of his family.

Purniasih, Sadra's First Wife

> I didn't accept him taking another wife, not at all. He is the one who wanted to … My heart is really in pain seeing them together. And I have been beaten black and blue … like a thief.

Sadra's first wife, Purniasih, is a gentle woman in her early forties. The mother of four children (one son and three daughters) she quickly

Fig. 3.5 Murni and her children

becomes emotional when talking about her marriage. Although her parents were opposed to her even dating Sadra, she agreed to marry him when he came to her house, weeping and professing his love. Soon after moving into Sadra's family home, however, Purniasih began to see

another side of him. Sadra would rage against his father and hit his mother when they failed to comply with his wishes. Sadra eventually became violent toward her as well, punching her in the face, beating her with sticks, kicking her, and threatening her with a knife. On one occasion, she left Sadra and returned to her family's home, but her parents convinced her to return.

Purniasih recalls being shocked and hysterical when Sadra told her he was planning to marry his pregnant girlfriend. Purniasih was heartbroken and intimidated by Sadra's educated, self-confident second wife. When Sadra would bring Murni to the compound and sleep with her in another room, Purniasih would be overwhelmed by jealousy and hurt. While the two women eventually reached an uneasy peace, working together during ceremonial preparations, their relationship has never been close.

Life became somewhat better for Purniasih when she got a job at Sadra's workplace and their mutual employer encouraged Sadra to treat Purniasih well. She even requested a formal mediation process with Luh Putu Anggreni, a lawyer and women's advocate, which has resulted in somewhat more peaceable relations with her husband. While Purniasih does not imagine that she will ever be able to leave her husband, she hopes that such positive outside influences on Sadra can help him to refrain from violence and treat his family better than he has in the past.

Murni, Sadra's Second Wife

> I took the risk, and so I had to take responsibility.

Murni, Sadra's second wife, is a strong-willed woman in her thirties with four children. While she projects a thick-skinned exterior, it was in part her tender-heartedness that drew her to Sadra, whom she felt sorry for, thinking he was "alone in the world" with no father, siblings, spouse, or children – none of which was true. More educated and from a higher caste than her husband and co-wife, Murni draws on her knowledge of formal Hindu doctrine and modern popular psychology to provide appropriate expectations of Sadra's behavior and to justify her acceptance of a life she admits is very difficult.

Murni continues to work to support herself and her growing family. Her job at a hotel requires that she spend much of her time away from her children, and she is often forced to leave them alone in their rented rooms to take care of themselves. Murni places a high value on education and moral behavior, and insists her children respect their father even when she feels he has abandoned them. Indeed, over the course of their marriage, Murni has experienced significant disillusionment. She has shifted from speaking of Sadra lovingly while accepting her fate as a second wife to becoming increasingly unhappy with the strains of her life and Sadra's erratic support. The distance and conflict have left Murni deeply troubled: Should she stay married to Sadra or not? She realizes that, as a working woman, she could likely get by without him. But she also knows that as a divorced woman she would incur the stigma of society and even be left without a family to reincarnate into in the afterlife.

Darma's Family

Darma

> It was my goal to have as many wives as possible, so that I could have a lively household. The important thing is that everyone gets along.

Darma, who has had five wives, claims he was destined to be polygamous. His father had four wives, and his mother lived through a series of marriages and divorces. After dropping out of high school, he married his first wife, Kiawati, in a *nyetana* marriage, and moved into her family compound. They divorced six years later, and he moved back to his village. He initially tried to make a living by carving statues for the tourist market but was unhappy with the life of a laborer. He found success in the informal economy, using his size, strength, and charisma to carve himself a niche as a local tough – running gambling games, supervising

cockfights, and providing private security services to local political gatherings. He built himself a house, where he lives with three of his four current wives and their children.

Now in his late forties, Darma runs his large household with a firm hand, rotating his affections among his wives according to a nightly schedule. Each of his wives takes a six-month turn assuming responsibility for the household's ritual duties, which in Bali are quite significant, allowing the other wives to work outside of the home and earn wages to contribute to the family's upkeep. Darma has little tolerance for conflict among his wives and does not hesitate to threaten physical force should they or his children disturb his peace. Although he admits to having deceived his wives by attracting them with the reassurance that he was single, he laughs off his trickery as the means to achieving his desires. He claims that even though he's no longer young, he could find another dozen wives if he so chose.

Kiawati, Darma's First Wife

> He kept pressing for another wife and I didn't agree. But I thought if we got divorced, I might have to give up the children. The most important thing was that I could keep the children … Now, no one decides what I do. I'm the king.

Kiawati is a strong, independent middle-aged woman, who married Darma while still in high school. Because her parents had no sons, her parents wished to recruit Darma as a *sentana*: a man who marries into a woman's family and takes on the role of the son of the house. Kiawati bore three children, one of whom died shortly after birth. When she caught Darma having sex with the woman who would become his second wife, Kiawati at first worried that she would have to accept her husband's infidelities. However, because of their *nyentana* arrangement, which mandates that children stay with their mother's family in instances of divorce, Kiawati agreed to divorce instead. Alone among the wives in *Bitter Honey*, then, she never was a co-wife in a polygamous marriage, since this divorce occurred before Darma took his second wife. Their

breakup was amicable, with Darma returning to his own home, leaving Kiawati to raise the children on her own. While she has struggled to make ends meet, often undertaking manual labor such as harvesting rice and lugging rocks from the river to make gravel, she feels proud that she has been able to survive as a single mother. Kiawati and her children now have a friendly relationship with Darma and his wives, and regularly visit his house to help with family preparations for offerings, festivals, and rituals.

Sulasih, Darma's Second Wife

> Because he has more than one wife, I can go wherever I want.

Sulasih is an outgoing middle-aged woman. She met Darma at a local drama performance when he was still married to his first wife. Captivated by his charm, she dated him for two years before he married both her and, to the women's surprise, his third wife on the same day. Sulasih is a vocal supporter of polygamy, though she admits that not every woman is cut out for the challenges it presents. She emphasizes that Darma is fair with his wives, sharing equally his attention, money, and sexual favors. She also appreciates the help of her co-wives around the house, which has allowed her to build her own business selling food and coffee at the local cockfights her husband organizes. Sulasih has one daughter, Yuliantari (nicknamed Juli), who recently gave birth to Darma's first grandchild.

Rasti, Darma's Third Wife

> Before I had children, I was not happy. I was sad and became very thin. But I then I got used to it. I don't feel jealous of anyone anymore. He loves me, I love him, that's all that matters.

Rasti is a vivacious middle-aged woman with a keen sense of humor. She and Darma had a whirlwind love affair that culminated in his proposal of marriage after only a few months. Rasti was shocked,

however, when she arrived at Darma's house for the wedding and found out that Sulasih had been staying there in preparation for her own wedding; he was planning on marrying them both at once. Rasti remembers crying in the car on the way to the ceremony but went through with the marriage out of love. She felt heartsick for months, until she realized that her husband was happy with her and that she could be happy with him. Years later, Rasti laughs at the story of her wedding and prides herself on no longer feeling any jealousy. While she discourages Darma from pursuing new wives, worried he cannot afford the expense, she allows him to continue having affairs, even giving up her allotted nights with him so he can go out and "have fun." Rasti acknowledges that it's sometimes difficult to get along with her co-wives, but she appreciates that their mutual cooperation allows her to work outside of the home as a chef at a well-known restaurant. Rasti has two children and has used her wages to build her own living space within the family compound. Her co-wives often say that she is Darma's favorite wife.

Suciati, Darma's Fourth Wife

> When a woman's husband wants her, she should be happy, right? In my case, I'm smiling on the outside, but crying in my heart. Now I'm just afraid of him, but I hide it.

Suciati is a sensitive, high caste, soft-spoken woman. Darma spotted her while she was still a high school student with her heart set on going to university and becoming a tour guide. He instructed a mutual friend to tell her that he was unmarried. He would pick her up after classes on his motorbike, and she felt flattered that an older man would pay her such attention. When Suciati found out that Darma was already married she tried to end their relationship, but one day while she was out shopping, he lured her into a car and kidnapped her. He took her to his house where he held her captive overnight, setting a group of his friends to stand guard outside of the bedroom door. He then forcibly married her. Suciati cries telling the story of how the next day Darma sent word of the marriage to her shocked parents, and how she felt in her shame

and fear that she had no choice but to stay with him. "The rice had already been turned into porridge," she says. Suciati and Darma have two children; she works at a silver factory. Suciati survives her polygamous marriage – and her traumatic memories of its beginnings – by focusing on educating her children and polishing her public image with nice clothes and a brave smile, determined not to feel shame in front of the community. She claims she would be willing to live as a divorced woman, but she does not want to risk giving up custody of her children to their father.

Purnawati, Darma's Fifth Wife

> I never asked, and he never told me. I just went along with things. By the time my friend told me he was already married, we had already been intimate. When we were dating, I was happy to be with him. My suffering started when I found out he already had many wives.

Purnawati, the youngest of Darma's wives, met her husband while she was still in junior high school. During their courtship, which she kept secret from her family, she says she was unaware that Darma already had multiple wives, only finding out after they had been sexually intimate, and she felt it was too late to turn back. Their marriage, when she was only 16, outraged her family, who took Darma to court for seducing an underage girl, an offense for which he spent a week in jail. Purnawati decided to stay married when she realized that she was pregnant. But that doesn't mean she forgave Darma; she often fought with him and he recalls incidents when she scratched him with her nails and threatened him with a knife. She and Darma no longer live together, although they remain officially married. Instead, she lives with her parents, an hour's drive away, where she sells clothing door-to-door and cares for her son.

Participant Experiences and Responses

The Emotional Economies of Balinese Polygamy

Both in popular conception and in anthropological literature, some sort of "marriage" is often taken as a cross-cultural given; while the exact structure and expectations may differ, the creation of some sort of stable family unit for the purpose of sharing resources, building alliances, reproducing, and caring for kin is usually thought of as a key element in the human life course. However, there are many different forms and functions of marriage in different cultures at different times, which may be met with various levels of personal satisfaction (Hirsch & Wardlow, 2006). Expectations for marriage will greatly determine the subjective experiences of husband or wife, and these expectations differ across culture and change across time, as do common domestic practices, which dynamically respond to shifting economic systems, educational practices, social norms, and globalized popular culture (see Dunn, 2004 on Japan, or Seymour, 1999 on India).

The film addresses the culturally specific perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies underlying the practice of contemporary Balinese polygamy and investigates how these are understood and utilized by individual husbands, wives, and children. It further asks, how do the cultural models and lived realities of Balinese courtship and kinship create contradictions for participants? How does being in a polygamous marriage impact a husband or wife's understanding of self and influence the behavioral patterns and affective textures of domestic life?

Husbands and some wives at first reported loving relationships, nestled into large bustling families, based on a sense of mutual attraction and responsibility. After extended interviews, fault lines began to show regarding the gendered rules for courtship, sexuality, and marriage that left women vulnerable. Major areas of conflict were financial support and jealousy; and a significant concern for women was a lack of negotiating power to make a meaningful difference in the nature of their marriages, even during a time where the rules and norms of gender, romantic love, and marriage might be changing for some Balinese and Indonesians. Instead, the women called on a variety of emotional, cultural, and

social resources to survive experiences of suffering and violence in their intimate marital relationships.

Financial Stress

As described above, in the traditional Balinese cultural model of polygamous marriage, the husband is expected to financially provide for all of his wives. When this model works fairly smoothly, it is possible wives may be generally satisfied, as are some of Tuaji's wives, who have each been provided with a comfortable life, including plots of land and homes of their own.

In households founded by a younger generation, where some wives work outside the home, as long as a wife's financial expectations are being fulfilled and her household duties shared, she may still feel satisfied. Work outside the home gives a measure of independence. Sulasih, who seems the most contented of the wives, puts it succinctly: "We each have our own job ... Because he has multiple wives, I can go anywhere I want."

Women seem more likely to express dissatisfaction with their polygamous marriage when their husbands are not providing them adequate financial or material support. In this event, the polygamous structure becomes a target, as it always seems like the other wife or wives is getting more. This can be seen clearly in Sadra's marriage. His first wife Purniasih says, "I earn my own money. My husband never gives me any money. He gets his wages and always takes them straight to his second wife. He tells me he pays for her boarding house and gives some to their sons for school." But for her part Murni, the second wife, reports, "He never gives me any money. I pay for our kids' school on my own. I have to borrow money for that! My husband never pays for the telephone or electricity bills. He hasn't paid the rent here in over a year!".

The effect of this disjunction between the cultural model of polygamous marriage and the lived economic reality is felt not just by wives, but also by husbands – indeed, for Sadra the costs of supporting two wives and eight children, including school fees, taxes, rent, utility payments, clothing, and food, has left him in a state of near-constant anxiety. He

says, "It's not just the problem of my wives, it's the problem of my parents being a burden, the problem of my children being a burden." He bemoans the fact that despite his large family, "There's nobody there who cares about how miserable *my* life is."

Love, Jealousy, and Pain

Some women might find a polygamous marriage pleasant or at least desirable. Tuaji's wives report that co-wife relations have been for the most part amicable. In more recent generations, the women who knowingly wed already-married men (junior co-wives) "invariably have in common the fact that their prospects for marriage have been compromised in some way by their past life experiences" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 83) such as spinsters, divorcees, widows, ill/disabled, or women pregnant through a relationship with a man who did not agree to marry. For numerous reasons, though, most women would prefer not to be in a polygamous marriage (Jennaway, 2002). In addition to the financial strain it places on the family, women prefer a relationship based on mutual love and respect – they want to feel like the sole object of their husband's affections, which can be quite painful to share. Significantly, none of the wives in Sadra's or Darma's families entered into polygamous marriages willingly. They suffer pain and jealousy to imagine – or witness – their husbands' relationships with co-wives and/or other women. Tellingly, those in polygamous marriages refer to their circumstances in Balinese as *kamaduang* (being *made into* a co-wife), "implying that they [feel] a sense of powerlessness over their fate" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 79), or at the very least reluctance. Outside royal families, all wives taken after the first are referred to as *madu* – a term that also translates to "honey" – and puns likening multiple wives to honey are typical. The title of the film, *Bitter Honey*, plays on this local idiom, as the sweetness of courtship can lead to a quite contrasting bitter appraisal of what it means to be a co-wife.

This holds true whether or not all the wives live together. Darma's wives all live together in the same family compound, with the exclusion

of Purnawati, who returned to her parents' home. It took some of them some time to adjust to this situation. As Rasti says:

> At the wedding, I found out he had another bride. It turned out that wife number two was already staying here. Neither of us knew what was happening. She didn't know he was marrying me, and I didn't know she was already here. Both his other wife and I were sobbing. How can a man marry two women at the same time? There's no way, right? Eventually, we were married at the same time. [Later] he said, "I want to get married again." That's what he said to me and the other wife. We didn't agree … we forbade him, but he would not listen.

Rasti has somehow found a way to cope with the feelings of jealousy that still arise. This may be easier for her since everyone thinks she is Darma's favorite. She seems to take comfort in the good times when she and Darma enjoy intimacy, and assuming a tolerant attitude when his attentions are elsewhere. For example, after *Bitter Honey* was completed Rasti's employer sent her to a location in Jakarta, where she lived for a year. When she returned for a two-week vacation, she felt it was like she and Darma were dating again, always together "like a stamp and an envelope." Unfortunately, this togetherness came at the expense of Suciati, who felt jealous and upset (for which Darma scolded her).

Whereas most of Darma's wives live in the same compound, Sadra's two wives live apart; one might expect this to ameliorate the situation. The living arrangements were apparently Sadra's choice – Murni was humiliated at being relegated to small rental rooms so far away particularly as she has given birth to sons, rightful heirs to Sadra's property. Murni only visits the compound on religious holidays. These visits are awful for both wives: Murni feels uncomfortable and out of place, while Purniasih feels displaced, and both women avoid each other. Purniasih says:

> When the second wife comes for a visit, I have to sleep in my daughter's room. When I am sleeping with my children and Sadra is with his other wife, my heart is in great pain to see them sleeping together.

Their mutual distrust and zero-sum competition come at a cost. As part of her counseling work, Anggreni says that to build strength, "Women should communicate clearly to each other so that wives do not blame each other. Women need to work together to change their situation." In fact, years after the film was finished, Purniasih and Murni found their co-wife relationship unexpectedly improved, in part due to increased open communication. Whereas before, Purniasih was suspicious about Sadra's behaviors, always imagining where he was going and what he was doing with Murni, she now actually talks to Murni. Whenever she has doubts about Sadra's activities or whereabouts, she cross-checks with Murni, and when Murni's accounts align with Sadra's and Purniasih's, trust in both of them is strengthened. Furthermore, the family financial stress has eased now that Purniasih's children are of working age, and her two daughters have married and are cared for financially by their husbands' families. The co-wives' children have developed warm and friendly sibling relationships and, now that they are older, they travel between the two houses freely of their own accord. This also strengthens the ties between the two families.

Domestic Violence, Male Power, Harmony, Female Isolation, and Shame

While Sadra's violence against Purniasih constitutes a primary narrative strand in the film, almost all of the wives in the film acknowledge that violence has been an issue in their marriages. Tuaiji's wives admit that their husband "used to be vicious," with fellow villagers and his own family. Similarly, Darma's wives and children all say he uses violence to "keep the family in line."

The ecological factors of Balinese culture and society make this violence possible, but not, of course, inevitable. We have seen how ongoing conflict relating to family finances and emotional jealousies feed tensions which make fertile ground for violence. *Purusa* principles and kinship structures that privilege male heirs and lead women to be structurally dependent on their husbands mean that Balinese men hold much of the decision-making power in the family. This is underscored

by ideas that women "belong" to the man in their family. Sadra says of his relationship with Purniasih:

> When we were dating, we never fought. We did, but it was never really violence, I didn't get angry because when you're dating, you don't dare do that because you don't yet have control of her because she's someone else's child. … After that, when she was already my wife, it was normal. People saw me as owning her.

Rasti, Darma's wife, also acknowledges that her thoughts on his affairs and other wives don't matter much in terms of swaying what happens in the family: "He is the head and we are the tail. The tail has to follow the head" (Fig. 3.6)

Because they leave their families of origin to live with their husband, Balinese wives may also feel isolated in a new environment, separated from friends and family. Women's isolation may be compounded in Bali (as elsewhere) by a social climate in which "family matters" are off limits for community discussion or intervention. Sadra's sister says with regard to her brother's family, "The village elders do not dare intervene into private family affairs." Bali is known for values of collective harmony

Fig. 3.6 Darma and his sons

and a smooth presentation of self (Belo, 1935/1970). Public conflict of any kind, let alone public family conflict, is considered shameful and highly inappropriate outside of certain rare conditions. Maintaining this appearance of harmony often requires intense internal "emotion work" as individuals seek to manage their own emotions and present a calm and positive exterior. The affective responsibility for this harmony falls most strongly on Balinese women, who are expected to exhibit "bright faces" and "shining smiles" no matter their struggle or strife. To do less might perhaps be met with teasing, reprimand, or other social sanction (Wikan, 1990) and would not necessarily evoke sympathy.

While in some cases an emphasis on harmony might serve to successfully diffuse marital tension, in other cases, this Balinese cultural emphasis may disempower victims of domestic violence, who seek to avoid shame and uphold their duty as a woman to seem cheerful and untroubled. Indeed, their ability to do so may become a source of cultural value and self-worth, as when Suciati takes pride in her careful and elegant appearance although she is "crying on the inside," and Purniasih, a bit more desperately says, "I never told anyone or reported [the abuse]. I'm ashamed if the neighbors knew that we fight all the time. So, I am quiet and I submit. What else can I do?".

Fate and Acceptance

Earlier generations of women may have been better prepared to accept that many aspects of their life would be out of their control, for better or for worse. We see this in Tuaji's wives, who project an air of peaceful acceptance (B.I., *nerima*). Manis says, "No, I wasn't angry. What could I do?" and Lanus says, "It was what I wanted … It was my fate."

Fate is an interesting concept here, especially in how it can be gendered. Many Indonesians believe that fate, karma, and divine reason determine how their lives unfold and explain positive, negative, and unusual things that happen to them by citing either ancestors, past lives, or the mysterious workings of supernatural powers. But when Lanus speaks, fate indicates that the general trajectory of her life may have been largely out of her control. For her, and some other polygamous wives,

saying whether or not you "wanted" something seems almost irrelevant. Fate is, for these women, a resignation to circumstances that they are powerless to change. A newer generation of wives may find it more difficult to balance gendered expectations of obedience to acceptance, fate, and karma, with their own feelings of frustration, anger, or betrayal. And with divorce mostly not an option, they are left to manage their sometimes powerfully negative emotions.

Men also use fate and karma to explain how they ended up in polygamous marriages, but the implications are quite different. By viewing their marital relationships as predetermined by a divine balance sheet of past actions, men are no longer required to take responsibility for their actions, but rather themselves victims of their own fate. Darma believes he was fated to polygamy. Sadra similarly views his violence against his wives as an effect of his *karma*, either earned through his bad deeds in a past life or inherited from his father. Indeed, both Darma and Sadra report being physically abused as children and witnessing domestic violence in their polygamous natal families. Witnessing domestic abuse has a demonstrated impact on their own psychological well-being, leading to increased vulnerability to emotional and behavioral difficulties and further abuse (Holt et al., 2008). From Sadra's perspective, as seemingly destined to violence, he feels it's "out of his hands."

By claiming in this way that polygamy or domestic violence is also being *done to them*, men are under no pressure to scrutinize or amend their own behavior. But just as some Balinese women are increasingly dissatisfied with a lack of agency and control over their own lives, some Balinese men similarly view the karmic explanation for polygamy with skepticism. Degung says karma is little more than, in his words, an "excuse." In his estimation, "Karma becomes a way for people to escape responsibility for their actions." They say, "Oh, this is my karma, this is fate. It's a defense mechanism to escape from their responsibilities." In essence, Degung is pointing to the invocation of karma as a culturally constituted defense mechanism, whose understood cultural meaning and salience Sadra and Darma utilize, and some would argue greatly distort, to explain their own behavior. In counseling Sadra, his employer (and Degung's brother) Alit says, "Don't think like that, don't blame it on your ancestors. If you believe it's passed down, you'll continue with your

behavior. The important thing is that you realize this isn't right." Indeed, feeling "out of control" with regard to his behavior has not brought Sadra much peace. He frequently becomes depressed, frustrated, and self-loathing, appearing to vacillate between idealizing traditional models of Balinese masculinity in which he would hold absolute power over his wives and recognizing that his wives have strong feelings about the hurts he has caused them. Sadra also has complicated relationships with his children, who have witnessed his violence toward their mothers, and admits to feeling haunted by fears that they will turn against him and cast him out in his old age.

Balinese Barriers to Divorce and Separation

For women, the gendered feeling that one has no control over one's own fate might be determined by cultural norms and beliefs – but also by the implicit or explicit threat of violence should one try to take manners into her own hands (Aldridge, 2015). Wives do sometimes take matters into their own hands and return to their family of origin in times of distress. In the film, Purniasih and Purnawati both report seeking refuge with their parents during times of escalating marital strife. Each woman's family will determine whether or not she will be allowed to stay; Purnawati remains with her family, although technically still married to Darma, but Purniasih was promptly sent back to Sadra despite the abuse. She explains:

> Once, when my husband was violent, I went back to my parents' house. My father told me to go back to my husband. He said, "Think of your children, all alone there. You will live and die there, and that's it." There is no place for me at my father's house. I have in-laws and my father is embarrassed.

Gendered structural barriers to divorce in Bali are social, spiritual, and economic – and, in certain ways, legal – in nature.

While divorce is legal in Indonesia, the divorce rate in Bali remains much lower there than on other islands, such as Java, where divorce has been historically quite prevalent (Heaton et al., 2001; Syafputri, 2011).

This may in part be due to stereotypes and social stigma of divorce. Both widows and divorced women (both B.I. and B.B., *janda* does not distinguish between the two) are viewed with distrust in Bali, stereotyped as being disruptive women whose desires have been awakened during their marriages but are now left without an outlet, leading to a predatory sexuality (Parker & Creese, 2016; Pohlman, 2016). In addition to stealing others' husbands by magical means, *janda* are also rumored to be loud and ill-tempered, contrary to the values of bright-faced and harmonious women. This portrait of the typical divorcee as lacking the qualities of a respectable married woman, in essence, "blames" her for the divorce (Duff-Cooper, 1985, p. 414).

With respect to property rights during divorce, it is legally important who *initiated* the divorce. If the wife is the initiator, she automatically forfeits any claim on her husband's estate, regardless of the reason for the divorce (Putra, 2011). On the other hand, if the husband is the initiator, the wife is eligible to receive up to half of his property. Since men have the option to take on another wife when they are unhappy in their current marriage, there is little incentive for them to initiate divorce and risk the material loss.

Added pain, complexity, and isolation comes when a woman has married a man of lower caste. The woman is excommunicated from her family in a formal temple ritual. This was the case for Suciati, who was Ksatria (high) caste. Once she married Darma, who is Sudra (majority/peasant caste), when she returned home, her father "ignored her." This was deeply painful for Suciati, who said, "It was like I'd been thrown away." Yet she acknowledges that should her parents treat her differently in her deeply traditional village, the whole family would be faulted and face social sanction. If she were to leave Darma and, as she puts it, "go home alone," according to custom, she would have to live as a servant in her natal home.

If, despite all this, a woman decides to divorce, the future of her soul falls into question as when a woman gets married, she leaves her natal descent group and joins that of her husband, and from that point forward, it is believed that she will reincarnate into his extended family line. Therefore, if she got a divorce, she would be in a proverbial spiritual "no man's land," excommunicated from her natal temple but no

longer part of her husband's temple, which she joined upon marriage, unless her family is willing to conduct a ceremony to welcome her back into their spiritual lineage. This is not a common nor positively valenced occurrence in Bali and posed a problem for Suciati and Sadra's second wife, Murni. Murni knows that if she divorces Sadra, not only will she incur the stigma of society but, worse than that, she will have nowhere to reincarnate:

> For Balinese women, getting divorced is almost unthinkable because Hindu reincarnation beliefs dictate that if I die, I will be reborn within my husband's or my son's lineage. If I divorce and I die, my soul will be in limbo because I can't reincarnate back into my husband's lineage.

Perhaps the greatest emotional hardship faced by women who want to divorce, however, is the fact that Balinese customary law is gender-biased (Ariani, 2010; United States Department of State, 2012) and does not recognize a woman's rights to custody of her children, who belong to the husband's patriline. Women, especially economically marginalized ones, have little recourse to appeal (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 214). Hence, a mother requesting a divorce would usually be forced to leave her children to be cared for by her mother-in-law, sister-in-law, or a co-wife. While there are uncommon cases in which the husband voluntarily relinquishes custody, the ultimatum of staying married or leaving one's children behind is perhaps the main deterrent to divorce in Bali. For example, Suciati says, "Some mothers leave their children because they choose to divorce. Their children suffer. This is my concern. I could have pursued my own happiness, but my children would suffer."

In short, while the addition of a new wife "invariably represents a deterioration in a senior wife's economic, social, and probably emotional circumstances" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 82), it may seem like a better choice to live with this new marriage structure than to live without a home to live in, without a temple to worship, without one's children, and without a family to carry out the rituals for a soul's well-being upon death.

Nyentana Marriage: A Rare Exception to Patrilineal Descent

There is one traditional form of marriage, however, where barriers to divorce are weakened. This is *nyentana* marriage, mentioned above. It arises when a family does not have any sons, and hence, is without a male heir. In this case, when it is time to marry, a daughter may assume a role that structurally resembles that of a typical son. She and her family may propose marriage to a man, who will be "adopted" into the family in order to guarantee the proper patrilineal transmission of wealth and inheritance. Unlike in the majority of Balinese unions, in *nyentana* marriage, the *woman* "proposes" to the man and it is the *man's* parents who must give their consent. In these cases, the wife is the actual successor (B.B., *sentana*) to her father and she is considered to be a man for legal purposes (Geertz & Geertz, 1975, p. 54). Since the husband is marrying into another family's descent line (like a woman), he relinquishes his own natal inheritance rights and joins his wife's temple. It is understood that the woman will be the head of the family and the couple's children become members of her family's descent group and bear her last name. Many men are reluctant to accept these types of marriages because they are considered emasculating (B.B., *mawak luh*) and can even be seen as an act of treason against their natal ancestors (B.B., *kawitan*) (Fig. 3.7).

Darma's first marriage, to Kiawati, was *nyentana*. Kiawati was an only child and therefore her parents had no male offspring to inherit their agricultural holdings. Darma, who was a younger sibling in a large polygamous family and therefore unlikely to receive significant inheritance, dropped out of high school to marry Kiawati. However, Darma grew uncomfortable as an in-marrying man in his wife's home. When Kiawati caught him having an affair, he agreed to a divorce and moved back to his own village. It is due to their *nyentana* marriage agreement that Kiawati was able to divorce without critically endangering her economic security and maternal rights. She now lives in her natal home and, as she has become a "male" for ritual purposes, her children remain in her patriline, where they will foster Kiawati's eventual reincarnation. She never had to give up many of the things that most Balinese women have to resign at marriage – her membership in her natal family, and that of her

Fig. 3.7 Kiawati discussing *nyentana* marriage and divorce

children, her temple, her village, or her family compound. The breakup was cooperative and harmonious. While Kiawati often struggles to make ends meet with low-paying menial labor, she has never had to worry about becoming destitute, losing property rights, or rejection from her natal family. Her ability to care for her children (and now grandchildren) as a single mother is an accomplishment from which she derives much pride (Fig. 3.8).

Marital Satisfaction in a Time of Change

Polygamous/polygynous marriage is not a de facto unsatisfactory arrangement (Buckner, 2018; Hoskins, 1998). Dissatisfaction, particularly among a younger generation of wives, may be in part due to the fact that some of the rules of courtship and marriage, and social expectations for women, are changing and new expectations about women's rights and long-standing cultural patterns are colliding. In the past, most Balinese marriages, especially among nobles, were arranged by parents to strengthen political ties, preserve caste standing, or keep wealth within an extended family. A woman's own desire was not of primary concern. Marriage was not considered exclusively a joining of two individuals,

Fig. 3.8 Kiawati and her children

but a partnering of their respective kin (Geertz & Geertz, 1975). Tuaji's seventh wife put it simply: "That was a typical way to live in Bali. We were used to the idea of sharing a husband with many wives and living with them." Sadra's mother's marriage can be categorized as this kind of arranged marriage: At 15, she was married to a man in his fifties whose first wife could not have a child. Once married, a woman's role was as a subordinate, as demonstrated by the Balinese proverb, "*Anak luh mule tongosne betenan, tusing dadi nglawan anak muani*," meaning, "A woman's place is below [the man], she should not oppose him" (Jennaway, 2002, p. 73). The "ideal" Balinese wife, mother, and daughter-in-law is soft and submissive (B.B., *kerenan ane lemuh, magelohan*), waiting upon her husband with proper deference (Jennaway, 2002, p. 74).

But ideas about love, personal choice, and marriage in Bali are changing. While completing ritual responsibilities through shared family labor is still very important to couples, young Balinese people also now have access to a wide range of media, with models of romantic love in marriage. Meanwhile, increased access to education and women's rights discourse promote women's independence and self-fulfillment. Women now expect a greater deal of autonomy, including in their domestic lives. Most Balinese youth now pick their own marriage partners.

This shifting sociocultural ground makes for a complex contemporary practice of polygamy. All of the women portrayed in the film believe it is a Balinese woman's role to be a dutiful wife and mother. Yet none of these women wish to see their own daughters or sons enter into polygamy. All three polygamous husbands claim to treat their wives fairly, dividing sexual attention and economic sustenance equally, yet they also admit they have used violence or the threat of physical harm to gain wives and keep control of their families; they worry about the long-term repercussions of this, particularly when it comes to their relationships with their children. This finding seems to hold across different Indonesian cultures that practice polygamy. For the Kodi of Sumba, men find polygamy a badge of accomplishment that is "hard to manage," while the wives see it as their destiny but not anything they want their children to aspire toward (Hoskins, 1998).

While some of the wives emphasize polygamy's benefits, including the practical contributions of co-wives to a household, they all stress the suffering it may bring upon women and their children. Indeed, the general consensus of the wives and children in the film is that their own personal experiences suggest polygamy may not be a satisfying or sustainable option for future generations. Darma's sons envision financial strain for themselves should they take multiple wives. Meanwhile his oldest daughter, and the first to marry, says that she would be "upset" if her husband took another wife because "I know what it's like to be in a polygamous family … it's sad. I was happy to have many mothers because they all took care of me, but if my husband had other wives, I wouldn't be happy. I'd be angry. Because his love would be shared." Popular opinion of the practice on Bali seems to be following suit (e.g., see Couteau, 2014).

Conclusion: Social Change, Ambivalence, and Stigma

In a sadly ironic turn, the changing mores regarding polygamy that the wives themselves now espouse and hold dear for their children may, in fact, further stigmatize those women who are in polygamous marriages.

They imply that the women should have known better than to choose such a life for themselves; in essence, these women are blamed for their own suffering. Wives and their children report being mocked or avoided by peers because of membership in a polygamous family.

Notably, women have achieved new legal avenues for protecting their autonomy. A recent decision by the High Council of Customary Law, which oversees the administration of *adat* law in Bali, provides for women to receive inheritance and allows women custody of their children in the case of divorce (Sudantra, 2017). This change has been lauded by women's rights activists for its potential to protect women leaving troubled marriages. Anggreni, the activist and lawyer who handled Purniasih's mediation, says these new developments are "incredible. Why are Balinese women becoming brave enough to divorce their husbands? What's going on? … It turns out that Balinese women are actually quite independent. They are used to working hard, and they're no longer afraid."

While some women may be taking advantage of the new law, the realities of daily life may render this protection impractical for others. Purniasih, for example, expresses some ambivalence about the actual degree of her empowerment. On the one hand, she felt supported and informed by talking to Anggreni and learning that marital abuse is illegal. . However, she also says that making marital abuse illegal isn't practical. If she were to formally press charges against Sadra and he went to jail, then the children would be left without a father and all that entails – no provider, no authority figure, etc. Somewhat sardonically, she says that for women in her position, taking such an action would be like "spitting in the wind": In other words, the spit would fall on her too, and her husband's punishment would be her own. Instead, she has quit working; the job had become too triggering a source of contention, with Sadra claiming that it made her late all the time and prevented her from completing the household chores to his satisfaction and, as he usually does, reacting violently. She felt that rather than fighting, she should just quit the job. So, to a certain extent, Purniasih seems to feel that her

marital situation still depends on her husband's own choices and actions, rather than on her own power to set limits or make demands.

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4

Standing on the Edge of a Thorn: Stigmatization, Social Violence, and Sex Work in Central Java

While *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015) looked at gendered violence and the cultural frameworks supporting male privilege within marriage, *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012) pushes further, showing how a woman, and ultimately her daughter, can become structurally vulnerable to sex work and trafficking. In seeking to understand why some young women end up in involuntary sex work, the favored explanation of rural poverty alone is not sufficient. *Thorn* provides a longitudinal portrait of a single family in one of the poorest regions of Java, showing how the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities – the physical and social environment of origin, gendered moral codes, temperament, personality, and mental illness and above all in this case the stigma accruing from these – all have significant roles to play.

The film is narrated by Lisa Ariyani, the daughter of Imam Rohani, a retired civil servant struggling with psychiatric problems, and Tri Suryani, who fell pregnant out of wedlock as a teenager and was married to Imam in a *nikah siri,* or "community marriage," which was never registered with the state. Struggling to achieve the legitimacy and fair

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Fig. 4.1 Tri, Imam, and Lisa

treatment she felt she deserved, and trapped by values that stigmatized her, her husband, and their relationship, Tri was eventually forced into long-term concubinage and scarring episodes of physical and sexual violence. Against this unstable family backdrop, Lisa matures into a young woman. The film documents her struggle to understand her parents' predicaments while she herself must fight back against efforts to lure her into the sex trade (Fig. 4.1).

Stigmatization

The family members in the film, but especially the women, are stigmatized by their rural Javanese community. This stigmatization first limits their scope of action, which then forces them into dangerous and further stigmatizing activities, which in turn paves the way for acts of social violence where the family is "punished" ostensibly for its transgressions of social norms.

According to Erving Goffman (1963), who wrote the foundational text on stigma and stigmatization, stigma is relative to the social context in which it occurs. It entails someone being labeled a disgraced or "discredited" person due to a particular attribute. That person, reduced "from a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3), is thus treated differently – certainly negatively, and sometimes even violently – by "normal" society in ways that breach the protective social contract. He identified three overarching types of stigma: first are those of a physical nature (not relevant to these films, but see Lemelson, 2011b). Second are those of a group, or tribal stigmas, that taint all members of a family and can be passed down through generations (quite relevant to the *40 Years* [Lemelson, 2009] participants in Chapter 2, and to be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters). Third are those of individual character traits; among others, Goffman mentions "weak will," "unusual passions," and "a known record of mental disorder," all of which are relevant in this case and will be culturally contextualized and discussed below. Goffman also introduced the concept of, and term, "spoiled identity" where, once stigmatized, one is no longer eligible to be a valued or full member of society.

More recent ethnographic work on stigma refines and expands upon Goffman's basic concepts by defining stigma as a social construction related to sociocultural, political, and historical context, and local hierarchies with an eye toward the suffering stigmatization bring and the ways of coping (Brewis & Wutich, 2019). Link and Phelan (2001) focus on the conditions and that allow for stigmatization: the distinguishing and labeling of human differences; the linking of those differences to negative and undesirable traits in cultural belief; the categorical separation of such labeled individuals or groups; and the status loss experienced by these groups at the hands of those with social, political, or economic power that leads to unequal outcomes. Others focus on the intersubjective emotional experience of stigmatization, such as fears of contagion among kinship and community, and paralyzing shame (Davies, 2015).

In these circumstances, negative changes in a person's ascribed moral status result in deprivation of their essential social position, limiting the ability to mobilize social capital, and, in extreme circumstances, can ultimately lead to dramatic social inequality and "social death" (Link &

Phelan, 2001; Link et al., 2014; Yang & Kleinman, 2008; Yang et al., 2007). As studies on social rejection show, the negative implications for the mental and physical health of those living with a stigmatized or disvalued status are observable and measurable (Dovidio et al., 2000; Major & O'Brien, 2005). Even as stigmatizer and stigmatized remain interconnected in their social worlds, "stigma decays the ability [for the stigmatized] to hold onto what matters most to ordinary people in a local world" (Kleinman & Hall-Clifford, 2009). Stigmatized individuals can also be subject to related direct violence.

Stigmatization is a dominant theme of *Thorn*. Each participant is subject to multiple vulnerabilities, and each vulnerability leads to stigmatization, which puts characters at risk for multiple forms of violence: structural, physical, and particularly, in this film, gendered sexual violence. The following section provides the contexts from which such vulnerabilities and stigmatization may arise; these include regional poverty, gendered norms of courtship and marriage, mental illness, and community sanction for perceived transgressions. We describe each vulnerability within rural Central Javanese culture before turning to participant histories to see how these vulnerabilities come together to put the family in the film at grave risk.

Local Ecological, Cultural, and Family Contexts

Imam, Tri, and Lisa live in Gunungkidul, part of the Yogyakarta Special District in Central Java. It is a rural, mountainous region with arid limestone plateaus, subject to extreme drought. In some villages, during the months-long dry season potable water is trucked in by the government, and farming can only be carried out on small patches of soil. Consequently, the wet rice irrigation common throughout Java is impossible in much of the region, whose main crops are yams and cassava. The region has been known as a stronghold for "traditional" Javanese mysticism and the magico-religious belief system *kejawen* and a more syncretic Javanese Islam, but like much of Java, has seen sweeping changes toward more conservative Islam in recent years.

Regional Poverty and Limited Work Opportunities

Gunungkidul is a beleaguered region with a long history of poverty. According to local anthropologist Dr. Gabriel Roosmargo Lono, the region is stereotyped by outsiders as the home of poor, uneducated, and unlucky peasants who are hardworking but have yet to "catch up" with the developments experienced in other parts of Java (G. R. Lono, personal communication, May 8, 2006). Some were the subject of Anne Dunham's ethnography of metalsmiths, *Surviving Against the Odds* (Dunham et al., 2009). In addition to this trade, people from Gunungkidul have found niches outside their villages as construction and factory workers, traditional health tonic peddlers, and meatball sellers.

Like other poor regions throughout Java and the eastern islands of the Indonesian archipelago, Gunungkidul sees many of its young women migrate away from their villages to work as housemaids (G. R. Lono, personal communication, May 8, 2006). These women either work in-country or join the thousands of Indonesian women who leave each month to work overseas in Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Malaysia, Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong (Rijanta, 2008). Some are subjected to terrible conditions abroad: earning low wages, going into debt to pay off "fees" for middlemen, working long hours with few or no days off, with no forms of labor protection, or stuck in mandatory live-in situations with their employing families. This leaves them vulnerable to abuse; recent reports of egregious cases have shaken the country (Austin, 2017; Victor & Jett, 2018).

Some migrant workers end up, either by their own volition or by trafficking or force, in sex work (Vltchek, 2012). Seventy percent of girls involved in the Indonesian sex trade come from poor regions like Gunungkidul and have been either sold by family or friends, or more indirectly "allowed" to get work in areas outside their village that are known entry points for sex work. This amounts to a form of "tacit acceptance" from the "sending villages," which need the cash or goods such women can obtain and send home (Martini, 2005). Teenage girls can get a very high price. In 2000, an estimated 30 to 40 percent of all commercial sex workers in Indonesia were under 18 years of age, suggesting a

high incidence of trafficking of girls (Durá & Singhal, 2009; ILO-IPEC, 2004).

Such outmigration and work outcomes have a negative impact on individual girls and women, and arguably on the region as a whole. Older family members and children are left behind. Those young people who don't have the means to leave may be ashamed; those who do leave but return without having made much money may also be ashamed (Chan, 2018). As Tri explains:

> It often happens that people who originally come from this area return home before Ramadhan driving great cars, wearing great outfits, but all of this stuff is rented. They borrow the cars, they borrow the outfits, and they act as if they were rich people. But they're not. They're still poor.

There is a discrepancy between the abundance of aspirational images that circulate in daily discourse and the often-grueling reality of people's lives. Local anthropologists posit that the large gap between dreams and reality leads to a collective frustration akin to a cultural malady (G. R. Lono, personal communication, May 8, 2006). One perceived manifestation of this is the unusually high rate of suicides in Gunungkidul, which increased in prevalence over the first decade of the 2000s (Tribun News, 2011; Wirasto, 2012). Indeed, by the end of the decade, Gunungkidul was reported to have had the highest suicide rate in Indonesia (Wirasoto, 2012), attributed by some scholars to poverty, social disintegration, and stigmatization of those in the region by wider Indonesian society (Sofjian, 2010).

In short, the poverty and stigmatization of the region renders all vulnerable but leaves women particularly at risk for sexual exploitation and violence in and outside of the workplace. This is somewhat paradoxical, as their sexual purity is subject to scrutiny in their home villages, and the sanction they face for sexual transgression in that environment can be severe.

Gendered Norms for Sexual Behavior, Courtship, and Marriage

Gendered norms for sexual behavior in Gunungkidul are shaped in part by religious beliefs. *Kodrat*, a Hindu-Javanese religiously-inspired code of conduct, based on an understanding of women's intrinsic "nature," prescribes that women be passive, sexually shy, modest, self-sacrificing, nurturing, and obedient to the male members of the family, although a discrepancy between this idealized model and the lived realities of Javanese marriage have been described (Brenner, 1995). To this end, their main vocation is wifehood and motherhood (Adamson, 2007; Wieringa, 1993, 2003). In the sexual mores of rural Java (and somewhat different from Bali in the last chapter), women are judged on their perceived sexual purity and if they break restrictive rules, they may be subject to sanctions and punishment. While many upper-class and educated urban Indonesian women are somewhat freer to enjoy dating, some degree of sexual experimentation, and even cohabitation before marriage (Holzner & Oetomo, 2004), rural women are more closely scrutinized.

Certain areas and communities in Java, particularly rural ones like Gunungkidul, are growing more conservative regarding premarital sexual activity of late. The region has long been known in Java as a stronghold of syncretic Islam (B.I. *abangan*, Geertz, 1960), with robust indigenous beliefs and practices, such as guardian spirit veneration and rituals and traditional performances associated with fertility and potency (Hughes-Freeland, 2008). However, sweeping social change began around the late nineties. As part of an increasingly conservative religiosity, the area began to follow more conservative Islam and embrace many outward demonstrations and practices of Muslim piety such as building mosques, enrolling children in koranic recitation, and, for women, wearing head-scarves (Chaudhry, 2015; Smith-Hefner, 2007). The "dating free Indonesia" movement (Davies & Hidayana, 2020; *The Economist*, 2020), a reformist Islamic movement which decrees that young people should not engage in any kind of courtship behavior, including any kind of physical intimacy, outside of planning for and proposing marriage, has taken up favor in some Javanese circles.

Whether or not their families ascribe to this new conservativism, women may have comparatively little agency in choosing their own marital partners and are expected to defer to their parents' wishes (Guest, 1992). Although a new Marriage Act in 1974 raised the age of marriage to 16 for girls (and 19 for boys), Gunungkidul is known for "early" marriage (also known as "child marriage"), which has been addressed by activists and, as recently as 2016, has been the target of government-sponsored social programs (Hanmer & Elefante, 2016; Palupi et al., 2019). Girls marrying at young ages are typically subject to family influence or pressure. But even women "of age" face family pressure in choosing a mate. With money and infrastructure for education lacking and women's education deprioritized, young women don't have many options for how to live or "what to be" aside from being a wife (or "a maid or prostitute"; Lindquist, 2008). In many ways, their social status and respectability as well as financial security are dependent upon their husbands. This may lead women to be pressed into unions they don't themselves desire, but that might be financially beneficial for themselves or their families.

Much as in the US, there are two components to a wedding, the cultural component and the civil or legal component. Since marriage in Indonesia is assumed to be – although of course, is not always – between two people of the same religion, the cultural marriage is usually a religious ceremony and the civil marriage, to be recognized, must be registered. Unlike in the US, the legal registration for an Islamic marriage is through the religious commission. Most couples do the required paperwork and get their marriage certificate around the same time as their cultural ceremony. However, a pared-down version of a cultural or religious marriage ceremony (B.I. *nikah siri*, also known as B.I. *nikah bawah tangan* or "village marriage") can be carried out for a variety of reasons. It may be chosen by poor rural couples who do not have the means to pay administrative fees for the registration. It may also be undertaken to assign a certain amount of propriety to couples who wish to cohabit or enjoy sexual intimacy without getting legally married or for men who wish to keep long-term mistresses or co-wives without their first wives knowing about it. (In one extreme example, there is a sex tourism city in West Java where international and local visitors can so "marry"

for a week or two, which is known locally as "contract marriage" (B.I. *kawin kontrak*, *Tribun* News, 2019.) *Nikah siri* makes such behavior less affronting. However, the expectation is that if a sexual relationship is to be ongoing, to be fully recognized and sanctioned by the community, a legal marriage must follow as soon as possible. If it does not, the union is looked down upon.

In addition to engendering general social disapproval, such a marriage, which is not formally legalized, has additional repercussions for wives and children. For all bureaucratic purposes, such as school registration, the children of such marriages only have one parent, their mother (Nurlaelawati & van Huis, 2019). Wives and children are also denied legal rights to financial support or access to their husband's pension money or inheritance (Latifiani, 2014).

Women whose actions fall outside of the norm – who, for example, have sex and become pregnant out of wedlock, or who find themselves in a delegitimized union – are stigmatized along with their natal families and offspring. To mitigate this stigma, the young women may be forced into expedient marriages or sent away from their village. With little family support, plunged into the difficult unskilled labor market described above, they then become vulnerable to the sex trade. In some cases, women and men thought to be engaging in inappropriate sexual relations may also be subject to violent social sanction. But sexual deviance is not the only form of deviance that may be thusly punished; more florid symptoms of mental illness may also lead an individual to community attack.

Mental Illness

As further described below, Imam was initially included in our film projects because his symptoms fit the diagnostic and inclusion criteria for another project on neuropsychiatric disorders in Indonesia. What is shown in *Thorn* is only a relatively truncated depiction of the contours of his psychiatric illnesses. The symptoms of these multiple

interacting conditions, as situated within sociocultural norms and practices, contributed significantly to his disturbed relationship with Tri, and arguably, the family's stigmatization.

Javanese culture is generally understood to be flexible and accommodating to people with mental illness. But this is perhaps primarily when support systems are in place. In studies on long-term outcome of severe mental disorders, Indonesians tend to do well with the warm support of extended family (Witoelar, 2013, especially when they can return to the health-supporting activities of daily work and family life (Subandi, 2015). Without this support, Indonesians do face familial, social, and internalized stigma regarding mental illness (Hartini et al., 2018; Pribadi et al., 2020). Institutionalization in particular is feared and avoided; while the family and community may accept and forgive minor episodes of disturbance (Subandi, 2011, 2015), institutionalization suggests a potentially intractable severity and chronicity (Connor, 1982). Therefore, many prefer other treatments, such as traditional healing, religious interventions, or home care (Horikoshi, 1980). In some cases, families may seclude or chain (B.I. *pasung*) a mentally ill family member in the home (Hidayat et al., 2020; Lemelson, 2010a; Minas & Diatri, 2008), in part to protect the family member from social "punishment" or vigilante justice against individuals who break codes of acceptable behavior due to symptoms of their illness. In our *Afflictions* series, while various participants faced different forms of social sanction, one man was beaten by an angry mob for having said, in the throes of a manic episode, inappropriate things to a young girl. His teeth were knocked out and, as he had no funds for dental work, he was left indefinitely visibly marked (Lemelson, 2011a).

Vigilante Community Violence

This type of vigilante justice is infrequent but not uncommon in Indonesia, in reaction to a variety of perceived violations, not just those due to mental illness. Mob retaliation (B.I. *menggerebek* or *keroyokan*) to alleged petty crimes or violations of local morality is typically carried out by local civilians who may consider it justified; by allegedly violating

norms, the victims have abdicated their rights to social protection (Columbijn, 2002; Kristiansen, 2003; Purdey, 2004; Welsh, 2008). This low-profile "routine" violence (Kloos, 2014) or "community violence":

> may be spontaneous or planned; … punishment is summary and violent … Authorities often sympathize and turn a blind eye to the punishment. Aside from pointing to the alleged wrongdoing, the perpetrators barely … explain their actions. Rather it is taken for granted by local communities. This ad hoc … form of justice is as pervasive or entrenched as the state justice system or formal *adat*. (Herriman, 2007, pp. 11–12)

This kind of violence has been neglected in scholarship on Indonesia for a few reasons. One might be that, while the violence of '65, the focus of *40 Years* (Chapter 2), remained an open secret for *public* discourse, in scholarship on the violence of the New Order, the construct of state violence positions a powerful New Order state against powerless citizens (Hefner, 2014). It may also be that social violence in Indonesia counters the reification of Indonesian (particularly Javanese and Balinese) communities as "harmonious" in classical ethnography (Wikan, 1987). Despite some efforts (see, e.g., the "pressure cooker" theory; Sullivan, 1994), it has been difficult to reconcile this image of the "harmonious norm" with actual violent behavior in a satisfactory manner (Herriman, 2007).

While regional poverty, gendered norms of courtship and marriage, gendered vulnerability to sexual violence, and mental illness are not intrinsically linked in rural Javanese society nor in Gungunkidul, they become connected through the experience of the family portrayed in the film, perhaps pointing to ways stigmatization and violence may be connected.

The Film

Work on *40 Years*, and later *Bitter Honey*, continued alongside longitudinal visual research into culture and neuropsychiatric disorders. In the late 1990s, an older man, Imam Rohani, was included in that study based on his moderate to severe obsessive–compulsive disorder

and Tourette Syndrome; his symptoms also suggested possible acute psychosis, bipolar disorder, and/or a personality disorder. He was in his mid-50s but had married a 16-year-old girl who had had a previous child out of wedlock and he had another child with her. In field-work interviews with myself and the local research team over the next several years, additional aspects of his family life started to emerge, including the stigmatization and violent social sanctions they had faced, and his wife's forced sex work in the context of marked poverty. As with the *40 Years* families, this family seemed to have lessons to teach about the impact of adverse family circumstances on child development. Meanwhile, *Bitter Honey* had made us particularly sensitive to issues of structural and gendered violence against women. These darker issues became the guiding inquiry for *Thorn*.

Shot over the course of twelve years, from 1999 to 2011, *Thorn* uses interviews, first-person narration, re-creations, and explanatory title cards over imagery that outlines important contextual issues. The film opens in a prologue of sorts with a title card that situates the viewer in the physical and sociocultural landscape of Gunungkidul. Black and white scenes of impoverished daily life are interspersed with shots of Lisa, who introduces herself and describes the challenges that people like her face growing up there. This invitation into Lisa's world signals her role as the film's primary narrator and her story's relevance to the broader issues facing the region she is from. The film then moves through two basic "acts."

The first act is largely concerned with Lisa's parents' relationship. The film introduces Tri and Imam and then tells of their meeting and troubled marriage. During these stories, close-up shots of participants' faces and foreboding, sorrowful music provide important emotional emphasis. Lisa is present for many of the interviews throughout the first act, but it is only in the last scene that she becomes the focus; when the interview turns to her, she innocently but earnestly passes judgment on her parents, saying they are "naughty." This closing scene shifts the focus from Tri's vulnerability to that of Lisa, the innocent child who has witnessed all her parents' strife.

The second act opens after an eight-year jump in time; Lisa is now a teenage girl and her role as narrator shifts from primarily voiceover to

primarily direct address. The film continues to show the family struggles with structural violence and poverty, culminating with Lisa herself in danger of being trafficked.

A final section of the film, more of an epilogue than an act, catches up with Lisa one year later in the streets of urban Yogyakarta, attending school in a heavy backpack and oversized heels, dreaming of becoming a doctor. Members of the research team, Ninik and Dr. Mahar, have taken on parental roles with Lisa, who has basically been abandoned by both of her parents. Despite this bittersweet turn of events, the film ends optimistically with regard to Lisa's new beginning. The film has witnessed how the traumas and grief of life grind away at Tri, changing her from an energetic, young woman to an unhappy one; the viewer cannot help but hope that Lisa will have a better life than her mother.

Although sharing their lives as a family, each participant experiences, emotionally and in practice, the unfolding events quite differently.

Participant Histories

Imam Rohani

> I was betrayed and then I was hospitalized. You see? If I was the one who did wrong, I might not suffer from mental illness … However, because I was betrayed, eventually I fell ill. Now I'm always fearing such a thing will happen again. I don't want to be burdened. So, it's Tri's fate, you see, to get someone who's already broken.

In 2000, Imam Rohani was a 50-year-old retired civil servant. He was born to a modest Muslim Javanese family in Yogyakarta, the eldest of three. Imam has experienced some symptoms of Tourette Syndrome since elementary school, including vocal and motor tics. He also has a range of repetitive and time-consuming rituals; bathing four or five times a day, frequently checking the door and gas stove, and other symptoms suggestive of Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder. His first episode of mental illness occurred in high school, when his girlfriend broke up with

him. He became a civil servant at his father's urging. He eloped with his first wife after only three days, paying for the marriage himself since the bride's parents didn't approve. The couple had three children together.

After many years of marriage, Imam's first wife left him, which precipitated his second mental breakdown. He says he "disappeared" for a year, telling no one in his family or workplace where he was going. He wandered around West Java, aimless and disoriented. On at least one occasion, a concerned village head sent him home. His job issued a formal letter declaring him "insane." After this episode, he was hospitalized several times for psychotic-like symptoms, which he interpreted through Javanese folk and syncretic globalized religious symbols and idioms, such as attributing visions to a paranormal power to heal or see the future. His job strongly encouraged him to take early retirement, and he did. He spent his time visiting Islamic religious holy sites and apprenticing himself to different traditional healers and holy men, in order to gain the forms of spiritual power (B.I., *kesaktian*) highly prized in Central Java. After a while, he believed that he could heal people and see the future.

He took up as a traveling healer and peddler. In a small town in Gunungkidul he met the family of a teenage woman who was pregnant out of wedlock. Touched by the situation, Imam offered to marry the girl despite the fact that she was thirty years his junior (the same age as his oldest daughter from his first marriage). Tri's parents eagerly arranged the union and the couple soon had a "community marriage," gathering friends and neighbors and agreeing to live together faithfully. Tri gave birth to her first child, Ida. Imam wanted to adopt the baby, but Tri's parents insisted on keeping the baby with them. Tri left her village to live with Imam in Wonosari, and Ida, who was now seven months old, stayed behind. A year later, the couple gave birth to their child together, Lisa.

While they both loved and cared for their little daughter, their marital relationship rapidly deteriorated. At first, the main point of contention was the legal status of their marriage. While their community marriage remained in place, Imam refused to take the next step and formally register his marriage to Tri. On one occasion, when the family returned to visit Tri's parents in her home village, he was badly beaten by an angry

mob of villagers trying to force him to take the proper action. The couple was chastised for their cohabitation, called in the vernacular "living like buffaloes" (B.J., *kumpul kebo*). Even so, Imam insisted that he had been too traumatized by his first wife's behavior to formally marry again. He also felt that he didn't have the money to afford the associated fees, due to his ongoing financial responsibilities to his first wife. While he was a retired civil servant with a good pension, because his legal divorce wasn't finalized nor the second marriage legalized, the funds went to his first wife and family.

Imam felt somewhat guilty about this, but also fatalistic. He said he didn't want to trouble his mind with these "old matters." He was suffering frequent headaches and consumed by fearful and anxious thoughts that, should he solidify it legally, a second marriage would also end in divorce, which would precipitate another mental breakdown. The compulsions he had experienced his whole life took on a sexual nature, and he found himself "peeping" on Tri after they had sexual relations, thinking that she was committing adultery with other men, even though he knew this was nonsensical. He had other sexual compulsions, such as feeling an impulse to touch pregnant women's bellies, and he would ask Tri to convince the women to let him do so, often on the pretense of healing or supernatural visions. He was often lost in daydreams (B.I., *melamun*), which in Java can be taken as a warning sign that a relapse of mental illness might be imminent.

With no pension money and Imam unable or unwilling to do steady work, the family was desperately poor. So, according to him, he "allowed men to help his family" by paying Tri to "spend time with them," thinking it would be "better for her." This culminated in a terrible event. Four men came to the house in the middle of the night. One entered with a weapon and claiming they were acting "on behalf of the village" threatened the couple that if Tri didn't come with them, he would attack Imam. Imam felt powerless. The men took Tri to a hut and gang raped her, bringing her back in an unconscious state. Imam interpreted the threats and rape as a "punishment" against the couple for not being legally married. The couple did not report the incident, wanting to prevent the rest of the village from hearing about it, and fearing they might face even more violent repercussions. Imam said, "We just let it

go … Actually, we couldn't let it go, but I could do nothing about it." They instead soon moved away.

Imam acknowledged that this was a "tragic" event for his wife, but life continued. In Imam's self-appointed role as a neighborhood fixer in their new location, he tried to help a client obtain Brazilian currency outside of formal bank channels. He and Tri approached a businessman named Wiji. After some discussion, Tri and Wiji decided to go into business together, although what exactly the business was wasn't clear to Imam. Tri started disappearing for days at a time; when she returned home, she would scatter flowers throughout the house. Imam took this to be a protective mystical ritual, meaning that Tri feared for the family's safety due to her suspicious activities, but she claimed the work she was doing was aboveboard. Then Imam discovered that Tri and Wiji were trafficking in counterfeit money (a charge that Tri would later deny) and doing business under the guise of being husband and wife – Wiji was even claiming Tri's children as his own.

Imam believed Tri had been preyed upon and brainwashed by Wiji, taken control of via hypnosis, black magic, or other supernatural or metaphysical means, to do his bidding (B.J., *gendam*). Imam also suspected the couple might be using charms or supernatural agents (B.J., *pesugihan*), to help them get their wealth. Imam watched as Tri's condition deteriorated: She grew pale and thin, and showed bruises and other signs of having been abused. But Tri told him she couldn't back out of the arrangement with Wiji because she had "signed a contract with a supernatural being." Imam was hurt, disapproving, and felt that Tri was putting the whole family in danger.

Tri started spending more and more time with Wiji, leaving more frequently and staying away for longer intervals, until finally she told Imam she would not be returning. She had her sister and brother-in-law ask official permission from the head of the village for her to leave, saying they were "taking her back" to her natal family. She left Lisa with Imam.

After Tri left, Imam couldn't sleep for four days. He felt on the verge of relapse and went to see a doctor; a prescription for tranquilizers staved off crisis. He conducted spiritual fasts, prayed for Tri's safety and her return, and vowed that if she changed her ways, he would welcome her back, buy her land, and marry her legally. When she didn't return, Imam was

overcome with guilt and shame. Overwhelmed by his family's dysfunction, feeling he could never give Tri what she wanted, feeling people were looking down on him because he was poor and lived with mental illness, he wanted to go someplace where people wouldn't know him, where he could have a better life and "live like a human being." He finally left Gunungkidul – and Lisa – to wander once again, visiting holy sites and teachers in West Java.

Tri

> Don't treat me like a glass of wine, when it's finished it can just be refilled. Don't treat me like a caged bird, when you are bored you just let it go. Javanese people say it's like 'standing on the edge of a thorn.' I could fall at any time … well, if I fall, then let me fall completely.

Tri was born in a poor rural village. When she was sixteen, she found herself pregnant out of wedlock. While she and her parents were panicking, feeling humiliated and hopeless, trying to figure out what to do, an older man came to their house peddling goods and massage services. He was a retired civil servant, which presumably meant he had a good pension. He purported to have some mystical knowledge, and most important of all, he was interested in Tri and didn't seem put off by her situation. Her parents arranged a marriage.

Tri was ashamed by their age difference and felt "forced" into the marriage, but in her situation couldn't refuse. Tri and Imam were married in a religious and cultural ceremony, but not a civil one, which meant their marriage was not technically legal. Imam promised Tri, her family, and the village headman he would marry her officially within three months. But despite the fact that she was soon pregnant with their child together, the legal marriage never materialized. They moved away to Wonosari, Gunungkidul's capital. On a visit to Tri's parents, because of their still unofficial marital status, they were met with the brutal community justice described above. After this, Tri was terrified to return home.

While Tri was contending with her husband's reticence to pursue a civil marriage and grant her the formal status of being a wife, she was hit with a series of additional shocks. First, she happened upon some documents from Imam's former work superiors mentioning that Imam had once been hospitalized for mental illness for twenty days. From this, she then discovered that Imam had experienced multiple, recurring episodes of mental illness over the course of his life. She felt this was too embarrassing to tell anyone.

Then, when their child Lisa was only nine months old, Imam left for a number of weeks and Tri panicked, suspecting he was having an illness episode and not knowing when – or if – he was coming back. Upon his eventual return, she experienced for herself some of his odd, excessive behaviors including cycles of manic sexual demands where he would want to have intercourse up to five times a day, day or night, for days at a time. He would disregard her refusal to the point where, exhausted and terrified, she fended him off with a knife.

On top of all this, Imam's financial situation was more dire than his employment history had suggested – the family could barely make ends meet. Tri felt that as long as Imam had enough money for his own coffee and cigarettes, he was unwilling to do anything else to care for the family. She considered leaving Lisa with her parents so that she could travel and find work – perhaps go abroad to Malaysia for a few years – to send money home and pay off some of Imam's debts. Her siblings chastised her for the idea, saying she already left one child with her parents; how could she even think about burdening them with another? In her frustration she took to scrawling graffiti on the walls of her home, writing things such as: "Tri wants to leave. All men are liars."

The family moved again, and Tri considered seeking a man who might at the least relieve her anxieties. Tri says she developed a few long-term "friendships" with different men who helped her pay for her daily needs and, by her account, treated her well, but she never considered herself a prostitute. Spending time with other men allowed her to earn some income for her family and to realize some of the many dreams and desires she still cherished for her own life. Imam seemed to have encouraged her, but then he went too far, offering her to neighborhood men without her consent. Tri was humiliated and furious that her husband was "selling"

her; she heard from a mutual acquaintance that he was offering a "yellow card," borrowing an idiom from car culture, where a yellow card or plate indicates the car is being used for public transportation: In other words, anyone can "take a ride." Supposedly, the man replied, "How could you say that. Poor Tri. But if you really want to give the yellow card, I'll take her."

As time passed, the situation escalated and culminated in the terrible gang rape described above. Terrified for her child's and Imam's safety, Tri says she "sacrificed herself." After that incident, she was shaken. She would faint, have "convulsions," and was often overtaken by fear, soothing herself with tranquilizers and sleeping pills. She thought about suicide but told no one. Increasingly frustrated with what she perceived as her illegitimate marital status, tired of being held in limbo, fed up with living in poverty, and feeling betrayed by a husband who could not and did not protect her even from horrific violence, Tri decided to take matters into her own hands. As Imam was in his own words "incapable," Tri began working with a local businessman, Wiji, to better provide for the family.

To a certain extent, it had been Lisa keeping Tri in her marriage. She didn't want to take Lisa away from her father and surely feared the gamble of going from the stigma of an imperfect marriage to that of being a single mother. Then her hurt feelings again flared up when Imam confronted Tri about the "work" she was doing with Wiji. Finally, Tri left to live with Wiji, even though he was already married. She remembers him saying to her, "You lived with Imam for 15 years and got nothing. I can buy you land; I can build you a house. I will pay off your debt." She hated leaving Lisa, even temporarily, but she figured it would be better in the long run if she could provide Lisa additional funds for schooling, to help her achieve her dreams. She stated, "Well, it's all done, and I won't get sad because it had to happen. Knowing this helps ease the burden." She left Lisa behind with Imam and remained out of contact for a while. When she did re-establish a relationship with Lisa, conflicts between Wiji and her daughter quickly flared. Indeed, Wiji soon proved quite dangerous to her daughter's well-being, but Tri felt unable to intervene.

Lisa

> I feel disappointed. Why should I be separated from my father and mother? Sometimes I miss the times when we were all together. I want to get them back.

Elvina Lisa Ariyani is Imam and Tri's daughter. Despite her parents' marital strife and the family's marginalized and stigmatized position, Lisa remembers a fairly typical childhood. While her parents always seemed somewhat distant from one another, they were always warm and affectionate with her when she was little. She was friendly with her father's three children from his previous marriage (who lived with their mother) and her mother's older daughter (who lived with her grandmother). But in early elementary school, Tri and Imam began to bicker and fight often, well into the night. Lisa remembers trying to intervene, banging on pots and pans to get their attention. She wished she could go live with her grandparents.

By the time Lisa was a preteen, the marriage had almost completely deteriorated. Despite this, Lisa continued to do well. She was a diligent student at the top of her class, and especially accomplished in Islamic prayer recitation. However, in junior high school, she pieced together a few bits of information to discover that her parents had never been legally married. The first discovery was that her birth certificate, required for school registration, listed her mother as her sole parent. In shocked disbelief, Lisa went to Tri, who told her not to think about it. Lisa turned to her cousin and half-sister, who confirmed the facts. When she then confronted her mother, Tri sat her down and confessed to Lisa that she had been "born out of wedlock" and that she herself was fed up with having to endure an illegitimate marriage. After a while, Lisa came to terms with the situation and chose to be upfront with others moving forward, rather than hiding the fact in shame; as the Indonesian saying goes, "the rice had already turned to porridge."

Despite this fortitude, Lisa grew increasingly worried about her parents' well-being. Her mother seemed to be growing more distant and distraught, but if Lisa asked her what was wrong, Tri would snap that

it was none of her business. Then, in 2011, Tri met Wiji, who seemed to be dragging her mother into mysterious and potentially dangerous behaviors. In one incident, a group of men came looking for Tri, who quickly hid. Lisa said she wasn't at home, trying to protect her mother, but Imam had admitted she was there. The men dragged a terrified Tri out of her hiding place. Lisa didn't understand the details, but they were demanding Tri return their money, which she claimed she didn't have. Then they wanted to see Wiji, and Tri said Wiji wasn't there, even though Lisa knew that he was. Despite such troubling incidents, her mother started spending more and more time with Wiji, until she finally left the house for good.

Tri explained to her daughter that she felt Wiji could help both of them live a better life, but Lisa was skeptical. In her estimation, her mother "ran off with another man." She was sure that their relationship was embroiled in shady business practices; she found pictures on her mother's phone of people sorting money. Tri's parents were also very upset. They strongly disliked Wiji and said they would welcome Tri back into the fold if she were to return to Imam but would not welcome her if she stayed with another man. They also worried that her conduct would hurt Lisa and her older daughter Ida's chances of marriage.

Lisa soon began to fear for her own safety. Soon after Tri's departure from Imam's house, Wiji came to take Lisa. He claimed she was his daughter, that Tri had been married to him first, but he had sent her away, and that since she had become so fed up with Imam, she had asked him to take her back. Lisa didn't believe him and challenged him to take a paternity test. When he tried to kidnap her forcibly, she fought back and called for help, successfully fending him off for the time being.

The longer her mother was gone, the sadder and lonelier Lisa became. Her classmates began to gossip about her mother and insult them both. At first, Lisa stayed with her father, but Imam's behavior was growing more bizarre; he seemed increasingly isolated, lost in his own fantasy world, often weeping. Lisa was afraid to discuss her feelings with her father for fear of burdening him. Then, after a number of months, he had another full breakdown; he said he would be gone for a few days but actually disappeared for eight months, without giving Lisa a clear idea of where he was going or what he was doing. At first, she maintained

sporadic contact with him via her cellphone, but then when she was visiting her mother, Wiji threw her cellphone into a well. At this point, Lisa moved into a boarding house with a caring landlady, who provided her with some supervision and occasional meals.

By 2012, Lisa's contact with her mother had grown increasingly sporadic and left her more distressed than reassured. Her mother would text her, reminding her to pray, which indicated to Lisa that "at least she still cared," but they rarely communicated about anything substantive. Lisa felt her mother was selfish, spending money on things like perfume and clothes for herself. While Tri promised to buy Lisa such things too, she did not commit to coming home. Visits to her mother at Wiji's place made Lisa ever more frightened of him. Wiji forbade Tri to contact her natal family and when he discovered that she had contacted them, Lisa witnessed him beat her and destroy her phone. Wiji threatened to hit Lisa too, and during one of her visits, he punched her in front of his whole family for defending Imam when Wiji was disparaging him. No one defended her.

On another occasion, Wiji tried to kidnap Lisa. She had just finished her bath and was changing clothes in her bedroom when Wiji barged in, grabbing her cell phone away from her, and dragging her toward his car. Once outside Lisa screamed, fought back, and cried for help. A crowd of neighbors was too frightened to intervene, but finally the landlady's brother intervened. Lisa's uncle arrived and took Wiji to the police station. They settled the case, with Wiji saying he would no longer bother Lisa, but she was left with scratch marks and scars from the altercation.

On the one hand, during this period, Lisa was able to maintain a semblance of typical daily life in public – enjoying school and spending time with friends – but privately was increasingly consumed by feelings of loneliness and grief. Lisa felt abandoned especially by her parents, but also isolated from peers, including potential boyfriends, who she felt distanced themselves from her once they learned about her family. When home alone at the boarding house, she would feel a rising panic, like she was suffocating. She would try to distract herself by watching TV. Despite Lisa's anger and grief at her mother's behavior, she still had poignant dreams of her mother coming to embrace her, and she longed to linger in such moments of maternal love and care. She re-established

contact with her mother but, in doing so, had to fend off Wiji's interferences and advances. If before he had been a frightening authoritarian, he now started asking Lisa to cuddle in bed with him and her mother.

Lisa also had practical worries now that her parents could not be relied upon financially. Although her mother had said her departure was to help support Lisa, Tri abdicated her financial responsibilities for her. And with her father increasingly fragile, and her older sister considering early marriage as protection against her own poverty, Lisa had to fend for herself. Her primary financial concern was for continuing schooling. Lisa adamantly did not want to drop out of school, even though many girls from her village were doing so; in Gunungkidul, finishing middle school is already considered to be a lot of education. Most girls leave school then, to work as maids, babysitters, or shopkeepers, until they get married in their late teens and start having children. Lisa's dreams were bigger than that, and she hoped to go to college, or even medical school, but had no idea how to afford such dreams.

Throughout the decade-plus of filmmaking, Lisa and the film team had grown increasingly attached to one another. At this point, we stepped in and offered to ease some of Lisa's financial burden by helping to pay for her school and daily expenses, the complications of which we address more fully in the section on intervention (Chapter 9).

Participant Experiences and Responses

This film's main point is that the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities for which individuals are stigmatized, such as poverty, mental illness, pregnancy out of wedlock, illegitimate marriage, and sex work, impact entire families and particularly imperil women and growing children. This discussion takes a closer look at what intersectional vulnerability and stigmatization felt like for the members of this family.

Mental Illness as Family Stressor

Poverty is one of the main sources of stress for the family. While on the surface, Imam explains his financial problems as the result of having to give his pension to his first wife, things are not so straightforward.

Imam was pressured into early retirement because of his mental illness, as he had missed so many days of work. His opportunities after that were limited; he could only get patchwork employment, such as working as a masseur or a middleman in others' business operations. He also seemed to have cycles of depression or apathy in which he was unwilling or unable to work. While, as described above, Javanese culture can support positive outcomes for people with mental illness (see also Lemelson, 2011b; Lemelson & Tucker, 2017), apparently Imam's divorce estranged him from social networks built through decades of marriage, distanced him from his children. While he glorifies what he sees as his avocation, the reality may be that he has been forced into a kind of itinerance to survive.

In responding to his predicament, he seems to alternate between grandiosity, fatalism, and internalized stigma. Imam finds great meaning in healing practices. His history of personal illness and loss is somewhat in line with backgrounds of traditional healers in Java and elsewhere and, by his own account, his reputation as a healer with the power to diagnose and heal mysterious or ongoing illness in others commanded respect in Tri's village. Yet the healer with nefarious interests is also a cultural trope. For example, in the short story "Dimples" (Kurniawan, 2016), a *dukun* (traditional healer, or witchdoctor) agrees to cure a farmer's fatal snake bite as long as the farmer gives him his teenage daughter as a second wife. In other circumstances, healers may suggest questionable treatments – such as in *The Bird Dancer* (Lemelson, 2010b), where a healer orders his vulnerable young female patient to disrobe for a breast massage she adamantly doesn't want.

Indeed, after Tri left Imam, he seemed to re-enact a similar pattern of questionable "savior healer behavior." After returning to his work as a traveling healer, where among other feats he claimed to have brought an electrocuted man back to life, he got to know the family of a vulnerable young woman. This woman was slightly younger than Lisa, and according to her family, in need of an expedient marriage. She had a number of health problems and, despite her young age, had been divorced by her first husband because, after a year of marriage, she had not gotten pregnant. Imam "took pity" on her, as he had on Tri, and married her; the marriage ended after only a year or two when the girl's

father, who had been absent during the whole course of the arranged union, returned, and was furious at her having been married off by relatives in his absence. Imam regretted but accepted this turn of events and formally ended the union with the appropriate religious leader.

This grandiosity Imam feels as a healer and savior of troubled women, seems to alternate with a sense of fatalism and internalized stigma. When he is feeling low, it seems there is nothing he can do but accept himself as a "broken man," since that is how others must see him. He says:

> Maybe my children do not want to think of me as their father, maybe they are ashamed of their father. Because people say that [I] was a lunatic. Because people assume if someone was treated in a mental hospital, he must be a lunatic. So, it might be said that he is useless.

On numerous occasions, Imam has felt so disparaged that he has longed to get away and start life anew; this explains his wandering. As of this writing, he had found work as a security guard at a local swimming pool in Banten, West Java, far from what he felt was the harsh social judgments of Yogyakarta environs. He said that, without the responsibility of a family, he finally felt "free of all [his] burdens."

Meanwhile, Tri's experiences of Imam's mental illness and family poverty have been one of precarity, trauma, and frequent stress. For example, she remembers the episode of Imam's disappearance early in their marriage:

> My daughter was maybe nine months old. My husband was away for a long time. I sold whatever I had, down to our kitchen utensils. It traumatized me: "If my husband becomes like that again, what will happen to me?"

Indeed, this premonition of danger did prove to be apt.

Gendered Sexuality, Marriage, Legitimacy, and Precarity

Tri's life fit poorly within gendered norms and practices regarding appropriate sexual behavior for women in their home communities in

Gunungkidul. The expectation – if not the actual practice – is that to maintain her purity and good social standing, a woman must remain a virgin until she is married. Tri had clearly been sexually active, but rather than judging her, Imam took pity on her. He described his thinking this way:

> She was just a village girl, and she was still so young. I thought village girls are so easily played by men, maybe because of their low education – because on average, they only graduate from elementary school, they don't even graduate from junior high, those village children. So, they easily trust city people who come, maybe a man with a motorcycle … So [I was thinking] maybe she thought some guy was serious about her, but he only wanted to take her virginity. That is so cruel … [Then] she finally admitted that she did not have sex with one man only …Well, rather than having a wife who used to be good but then turned into bad, I figured I'd better find a wife who is bad at the beginning but can finally turn into a faithful wife, to soothe my heart.

He even interprets his own beating at the hand of outraged villagers, intended as punishment for his refusal to marry Tri, as proof as his own selflessness toward her. Imam remembers: "It was like people from four villages joining in judgment of what I did. After being treated so badly, I might have let her go, right? But I knew she was meant for me, so I withstood it."

For her part, Tri feels anything but "saved." In describing her situation of being matched and forced into a marriage by her parents, Tri says somewhat indignantly, "Now it's no longer the era of Sitti Nurbaya!" *Sitti Nurbaya* (Rusli, 1922/2009) is a famous Indonesian novel, on the national high school curriculum. Originally published in 1922 and now in its 44th printing, the book is as familiar to teenagers there as *Romeo and Juliet* is in the US. Like that play, it tells the story of two young lovers, Samsulbahri and Sitti, who are forcibly separated. Disconsolate, Sitti agrees to marry a cruel rich man, Datuk Meringgih, in order to pay off her father's debts but ends up dying at his hand. With her statement, Tri compares herself to Sitti and Imam to Meringgih, implying that she agreed to marry Imam not because she wanted to but because

she felt responsible to her family, and in the same breath, accusing Imam of hurting her gravely.

In comparing herself to Sitti Nurbaya, Tri expresses her frustrated understanding that her scope of action is severely limited due first to her gender, then to her social status, and especially due to her personal circumstances. Each of these conditions removes certain life choices that would be otherwise available to her. As a poor rural woman, her opportunities to flout these conditions and work to support herself are slim, given the poverty, low levels of education, and lack of opportunity in Gunungkidul. And as a poor rural woman who is pregnant out of wedlock, the likelihood of finding a "respectable" suitor grows even smaller. Due to restrictive community norms that police and punish women's sexual behavior, Tri is forced to choose marriage with the most promising partner she or her family could hope for – one who is much older but at least is willing to accept her situation and provide for her. Unfortunately, this "choice" ends up, to a certain extent, to be based on false premises. Tri ends up neither legally married nor financially provided for and therefore put into an even more difficult position with, now, two children.

Another major source of conflict in the marriage, potentially deriving from his mental illness, is Imam's sexual behavior. He admits that since the beginning of his relationship with Tri, he has wanted to have sex five or more times a day. While this falls on the far end of a spectrum of normal marital sexual behavior, it was exhausting and troubling for Tri – clearly, this desire was not reciprocated. As articulated in DSM-5, compulsive forms of sensation-seeking, such as Imam's sexual urges, can be part of the syndrome of an obsessive–compulsive illness category, especially if causing social dysfunction, as it clearly was in this couple's relationship (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). But a compounding issue here is the cultural construction of the marital relationship, where traditionally for a Javanese wife sexual submission is part of her marital duties, and she does not feel it her right to decline sexual activity. Imam's excessive compulsions push Tri, however, to a breaking point. She says:

> So, to protect myself, as a woman, I could only use the knife, that's all I had. I couldn't take it any longer, my mind couldn't bear it. The only thing I could think of handling it was just killing him.

Feeling trapped into sexual submission, unable to achieve legitimacy and, indeed, public recognition as a wife, Tri perhaps turns to – or is forced by Imam into – a kind of ongoing concubinage outside of her not-quite-marriage. She develops a handful of extended relationships that included sex but also leaned toward companionship with men who supported her.

Tri is conflicted about her sex work, admitting that she would be willing to do some, on her own terms, but objecting to being sold by her husband.

> [In] this kind of position, with my economic condition barely enough to live, well, I don't have a heart to let my child go hungry. But if I do what my husband asked me to do … to go out with anyone, well, I am not willing to bring up my child this way, really. So, there's the problem of feeling that deep in my heart, I am willing to do sex work, I really did have that feeling.

In her longing for financial stability and ongoing desire for marital legitimacy, Tri makes and unmakes family for herself and Lisa; she moves back and forth between her natal family/parents and first daughter, her family with Imam and Lisa, and Wiji, who already had a large family of his own, but all of these families felt precarious to her.

A number of years after the film was released, Tri managed to assemble aspects of security and legitimacy. Wiji financed her to start a small fishpond and sound system rental business and bought her two parcels of land. Her sister's husband then gave her money to build a house, which she plans to leave to her daughters when she dies. Despite this foothold on financial security, Tri remained despondent about her hopes for marital legitimacy and plagued by anxiety. Wiji had other wives and Tri remained uncomfortable with the darker undercurrent in their relationship, which was colored by black magic, deception of others, and abuse. Even though he offered, she did not want to marry him legally and still regretfully longed for a "legitimized" family with Imam and Lisa.

A few years after that, Tri conducted rituals with a paranormal healer, "freed" herself from Wiji, and took refuge in Islam. She feels the self-reflection of this turn to religion has given her insight into her previous ways. When she was younger, she had internalized the stigmatization of her status as a coming from a poor family in a poor village and had been trying to compensate for these perceived inadequacies. When she couldn't, she had been filled with resentment; now she realizes that all the trappings she felt would make her worthy were superficial. Tri displays her new commitment to modesty and piety, compared to what was seen as her "immoral" background, by wearing a head covering (B.I., *jilbab*). This new behavior was acknowledged by her community, which made Tri the "guest greeter" at village celebrations, a role reserved for respected people in the village.

As of this writing, after Lisa made Tri a Facebook profile and she had a whirlwind online romance with a divorced man from Bogor, West Java, Tri is finally happily and legally married. She muses:

> Am I dreaming? Is it true that this person wants to marry me? He's a manager in a factory, he has a car … He is a quiet man but does great things for my family, while [Wiji] gave me a hundred thousand [rupiah] in front of my family but tortured my heart behind them … Now, thank God, I feel so peaceful.

Her relationship with Lisa remains stormy, however, and many of the hurts of their history remain unresolved.

Lisa's Perspective

Lisa's subjective experience of her parents and family life shifts as she develops from a young child into a young adult, and, as of this writing, a woman in her late twenties.

No matter her mother's feelings toward her father, Lisa, for the most part, is not angry at him; rather, once she was old enough, she herself seemed to take a protective orientation toward him, seeking to avoid burdening him with stressful situations and rather wishing to tenderly care for him. This orientation of "caring for gently" is commonly seen in

warm Javanese and Balinese families toward members with mental illness (Lemelson, 2011b; López et al., 2004).

Lisa's anger is directed at Wiji, who she sees as the cause of her family's dissolution. During the times when she misses her family the most, such as during holidays like Eid ul Fitri, Lisa says:

> I can only gaze at [my father's] picture and cry … Sometimes I get mad at Wiji, why he came into my life and made it this way. Sometimes … when I am about to eat, I wonder whether or not my father has had meals, whether or not he's well.

While Lisa takes an almost parental orientation to Imam, she has a more ambivalent relationship to her mother; she frequently longs for her but feels abandoned and rejected by her. She disapproves of her behavior and yet, in opposition to her vow to never put herself in her mother's position, she ends up skirting similar risks.

When Tri first took up with Wiji, Lisa worried for her mother's emotional and physical well-being. The longer her mother stayed with Wiji the more disillusioned Lisa became, so that she said, "My mother feels like a stranger. I feel numb." At one point, she felt like she no longer had a mother. What she most longed for at this time was her family to be reunited and to live "properly". When asked what she wanted above all, Lisa wished "that mother and father get together again, then they can get married legally, so that people will not talk behind their backs".

Despite this disavowal of her mother's choices and her adamant wish for independence so that she would never end up similarly trapped, and her plans to attend college at the film's end, soon after the film was released she dropped out of high school. A teacher found some questionable text messages on Lisa's phone (which Lisa says were taken out of context) and began gossiping that Lisa was a sex worker. Lisa confronted her in a heated altercation, but left school never to return. Instead, she started going by "Vina" (an abbreviation of her given first name) and moved to Magelang, on the outskirts of Yogyakarta city. With Tri's encouragement, she began modeling and working in billiard halls and karaoke clubs, activities that in Indonesia are considered entree points to – if not euphemisms for – sex work. She saw some success as a model,

and her growing career re-established her relationship with her mother, who frequently accompanied her to gigs as a kind of manager/chaperone. She even considered going into business with Wiji, opening a modeling school/salon back in Gunungkidul (Fig. 4.2).

Ultimately, this phase in Lisa's life lasted several years at most. She transitioned into a stable job at an interior design store. In 2019, Lisa married a caring man who was relatively well-off, in a celebration luxurious for her hometown, where the reception was held. She seems to be headed for middle-class marriage and motherhood. While her natal family never reunited or achieved legitimate status, she found a stable family for herself. But she still struggles with family strife and feelings of abandonment: The joy of her wedding was clouded when Tri requested that Imam be barred from attending and then, seeing him there, left the reception early with her new husband. On his way out of the celebration, Imam was taunted by a group of young men for being a cuckold. Lisa was left in tears.

Fig. 4.2 Lisa's hopes for her future

Conclusion: The "Violences of Everyday Life"

Unfortunately, because of the stigma of Tri's being pregnant out of wedlock and her status when Imam refused to formalize their marriage, she remained in a vulnerable position. The stigmatization of this family based on character traits and transgressing social norms lead to them being targets of violence, a horrific gang rape, and a mob attack. Perhaps, as Imam thought, they were made targets as a punishment for the couple's "deviance," and perhaps, as she and Imam were already stigmatized, the men knew they could justify their violence and gratify their sexual desires with no legal consequences. Ultimately, as Tri poignantly states, she was left "standing on the edge of a thorn," in an agony of precarity with no good solutions, with nowhere left to go yet terrified of falling. Tri's ensuing attempts to achieve some sort of financial stability for herself and her children implicated her in the criminal world and linked her to a man with questionable intentions toward her daughter.

Tri feared her own stigmatization could negatively impact Lisa, so she spoke of trying to keep her daughter "separate" from her bad behavior; this may be, in part, why she left Lisa when she went to live with Wiji. But, of course, this abandonment led to further gossip and stigmatization for both Tri and Lisa and desperate for financial independence, to avoid her mother's fate, she left school, began modeling and working in karaoke clubs, and forsook her previously cherished goal of completing her education and going to college.

While we have framed the family's troubles in terms of vulnerability to stigmatization, we can also see their escalating personal and family struggles an accumulation of what Kleinman (2000) calls "the violences of everyday life". These include:

> The hidden injuries of class … the spoiling of identity due to stigmatizing social conditions, the variety of forms of normative violence toward women … Explosions of communal violence … are intensified or diminished by differences of gender and geography; they are built up out of structural violence, and, in extending from one unfolding even to another, deepen it. They leave in their wake deep existential fractures for the survivors. Those breaks in physical bodies and social bodies are further

> intensified by violence done to female survivors by their own community, by their families, by the patriarchal ideology, and not least by their own inner conflicts between personal desire and transpersonal unity. Thus, there is a cascade of violence and its effects along the social fault lines of society. (p. 227)

In the next chapter, we take up the concept of structural violence in depth, examining how it operates across our three films, seen in the state violence of *40 Years* as well as the gendered violence and stigmatization of *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn*. We also delve deeper into the resilience participants exhibit in mobilizing culturally informed ways of coping with these violences.

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Part III

Integrative Discussion

5

Trauma, Gendered Violence, and Stigmatization: Tracing Themes Throughout the Three Films

The three films addressed in this book are connected by a few obvious commonalities: All are set in Indonesia, specifically Java and Bali, all address complicated family dynamics, and all illustrate, in differing ways, the complex effects of being in an unsafe or unstable position within a local social world. Beyond these domains, the three might not seem intuitively linked as their storylines address diverse topics, from a historical mass killing, to kinship and marriage, to mental illness, sex work, and child development. As the preceding chapters discuss, each film has an overriding theme that was guided by both emergent material and the theoretical concerns of the creators – trauma in *40 Years* (Lemelson, 2009); gendered violence in *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015); and stigmatization in *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012). Through a deeper analysis of ethnographic material, however, these themes emerge as cutting across all three films, albeit to different degrees of subjective salience for any individual participant.

This chapter addresses these commonalities by exploring them throughout the films and theorizing them as connected in Indonesian history and culture. We first discuss trauma in Indonesia and in the three

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films, show how the fear-based experiences that may lead to trauma have been significantly gendered there, and argue that acknowledging ongoing forms of structural and direct gendered violence requires a reconfiguration of the trauma concept. After discussing the gendered violence in the films, we investigate its relationship to stigmatization. The films explore the stigmatized or devalued role of many of the participants in the social orders of their families, communities, and, in some cases, nation, underscoring how for many the desire for a meaningful involvement with and place within their familial and social worlds is in tension with feelings of social rejection, alienation, and a loss of social status or valued social role. In a tautological cycle, victims or targets of violence are subject to stigma, while being stigmatized renders them vulnerable to further social violence. Stigma and violence thus become linked, and in the fear and anxiety they cause, are both linked to the psychobiological experience of trauma and possibly a long-standing posttraumatic response, with its attendant longer-term suffering.

Structural conditions such as national political oppression, kinship rules, and economic vulnerabilities underlie and can potentially exacerbate the experiences of trauma, gendered violence, and stigma. This structural violence also proves a cause and provides a backdrop for the personal losses and destabilizations of primary relationships, which may be just as fundamental to the subjective experience of film participants as moments of social violence or fear.

The reaction to these losses, as to traumatization, victimization, or stigmatization, are shaped by cultural schemas (Garro, 2000; Nishida, 2005) and cultural explanatory models (Kleinman, 1980; Weiss & Somma, 2007), as well as individual psychologies and responses. Chapter 6 adds further theoretical depth to the main themes of this book by connecting them to areas of inquiry in psychological anthropology, such as child development, attachment and loss, and emotion. These are not necessarily distinct from the thematic investigations of trauma, gendered violence, or stigmatization and, in many respects, can be considered part of these experiences, or responses to them. But such a structure gives further nuance, breadth, depth, and cultural specificity to these themes and draws further connections between them. We look at

which factors in participants' lives compound their suffering and which support their survival, adaption, and resilience.

We begin with the multivalent concept of trauma in the films, then illustrate how it is connected to gendered violence and stigmatization in a way that invites us to rethink each concept altogether in the context of Indonesian national political history and local cultural belief and practice (Dwyer & Santikarma, 2007).

Trauma and Fear-Based Experience in Ethnographic Context and Individual Subjectivity

Trauma in Indonesia

A loan word from Euro-American psychiatric and therapeutic discourses, *trauma* entered mainstream Indonesian discourse around the fall of Suharto and was common in the Indonesian vernacular by the end of the twentieth century (Smith, 2018). It then gained greater currency due to globalized NGO and international aid brought along with emergency and "relief and recovery" efforts related to the 2002 Bali nightclub bombing (Dwyer & Santikarma, 2007); the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, which struck against a backdrop of decades-long political violence (Grayman et al., 2009); and other bouts of interethnic and separatist violence (Bubandt, 2008). Therefore, while comparatively new in Indonesia, in a hegemonic sense trauma has become a common explanatory model for Indonesian specialists and the population at large to frame and explain the long-term psychobiological effects of exposure to fear-inducing experiences and contexts.

Yet the landscapes of terror and violence in Indonesia are, in many ways, distinct from those that historically shaped the concept of trauma and the practices involved in its amelioration or treatment in the United States (Micale & Lerner, 2001; Young, 1995). According to Dwyer and Santikarma (2007), while the Indonesianized notions of *stres* (stress) and *depresi* (depression) were common during the late New Order

regime, *trauma* was first used to describe Chinese-Indonesian women who survived the military-backed mass rapes during the May 1998 riots. From its very entry into Indonesian language and awareness, they argue, *trauma* has been associated with stigmatized, victimized, or marginalized groups in the country.

A salient concept from both an emic and etic perspective, *trauma* may be used by some Indonesians to describe their experiences even though they do not perfectly align with clinical constructs of trauma in terms of symptom categories in DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-11; Word Health Organization, 2019). Others may report experiences that do align with the Western/psychiatric model of PTSD, such as nightmares, memory intrusion, and somaticized symptoms, without labeling them as *trauma* (Good, 2015; Grayman et al., 2009). Whatever the specific context or cultural place *trauma* is being put to use in Indonesia, anthropologists find that trauma is reinterpreted through local understandings of politics, memory, social relations, and the results of violence (Bubandt, 2008; Lemelson & Suryani, 2006). Ultimately, there is a diversity of responses to threat-based exposure, and privileging either a psychiatric model of trauma or a folk model of *trauma* may skew the lived reality of the subjects.

Trauma in the Films

In Chapter 2 on *40 Years*, the film most explicitly about trauma, we foregrounded the critique that traumatization, commonly understood in the West and increasingly globally through the clinical symptomatology of PTSD, was originally premised on a single, time-bound event (DSM-III, American Psychiatric Association, 1980). *40 Years* showed it reproduced over time and over generations. In the chapter and the film, we consciously presented a diversity of responses to similar frightening events of political violence and their decades-long aftermath. We selected four individuals and families from different social, economic, political, cultural, and religious contexts to show how these variables affected their understanding, interpretation, and adaptation to the socially oppressive

and violent experiences they all had in relation to 1965 throughout their life course. Put simply, people have different responses to experiences of violence and fear. For some *40 Years* participants, fear achieved a prominence in their life and subjective day-to-day experience. For others, it was a more minor component of complex issues at stake for them in their familial and community contexts.

This is an essential rejoinder to the ways in which trauma, and, in particular, the diagnosis of PTSD, has become an increasingly dominant hegemonic model for understanding the effects of diverse forms of fear-based experience on individuals around the world. In syncretic folk models similar to those found in the United States, and as a prominent part of human rights NGO models for "treating" individuals in "post-conflict" societies (Micale & Lerner, 2001; Summerfield, 2001, 2004; Watters, 2010), trauma/*trauma* is increasingly used to explain suffering, deviance, criminality, and disturbances in family and social relations in Indonesia as it becomes "vernacularized" (Bubandt, 2008; George, 2016; Merry, 2006; Narny et al., 2019).[1]

The nuances of *trauma* in Indonesian cultural contexts can be further teased out by tracing the concept beyond its central appearance in *40 Years* through the other two films. In *Thorn*, both Imam and Tri repeatedly use the word *trauma* (two to three dozen times each over the course of interviews) to convey their disturbed states after episodes of shock, fear, and violence, and subsequent persistent dysregulation. While Imam had been treated for a mental disorder, he had never been diagnosed with PTSD, and Tri had never sought official mental health treatment or counseling. But clearly for both, *trauma* became "an idiom that [they] think with" (Hinton & Lewis-Fernández, 2011).

Interestingly, Imam does *not* think he was traumatized by the experience of being beaten by a mob, during which according to his own account, he was humiliated, tortured, stoned, and dragged (see

[1] Interestingly, it has also been invoked by perpetrators of violence of 1965, in that they claim they are "traumatized" by their violent actions, as evident in a range of reported symptoms, such as nightmares, emotional flooding and numbing, and somatic and mood disturbances. This was seen in the character of Anwar Congo in *The Act of Killing* (Oppenheimer et al., 2012, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2) and raises ethical problematics regarding the use of a psychiatric label to gain sympathy for people accused of human rights violations by positioning them as the "victims" of their own violence.

Chapter 4). But he does believe he was "traumatized" by his first wife's betrayal and abandonment, to which he attributes the psychotic break he experienced in middle age. This attribution as a "naive psychologist" (Heider, 1958) seems to function in Imam's somewhat idiosyncratic explanatory model to first invoke pity (B.I. *kasihan*; see further discussion in Chapter 6) for his perceived victimhood and simultaneously provide a rationale for why he won't formally marry Tri. Meanwhile from an etic clinical perspective there may be relatively little connection between that "trauma" and his previous or subsequent mental illness or subsequent behavior.

Unlike Imam, Tri *does* exhibit symptoms that could meet the criteria of clinical PTSD. Tri recounts multiple fearful or violent incidents in her life, for which she uses the word *trauma* – for example, being abandoned by Imam when Lisa was an infant and they both were starving, witnessing Imam's beating, and being raped. It was after these later episodes that Tri began to report symptoms that fit the PTSD profile – intrusive memories, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, sadness, dissociation, and somatized symptoms of racing heartbeat, headaches, and fainting. These got so difficult for her that she had suicidal ideations and started taking tranquilizers. She says:

> The fear, the worry is always there in my mind – it makes me pass out sometimes, [Imam] knows that I often pass out, have convulsions, then my arms and legs become so weak, I can't do anything. When the fear is overwhelming, I have difficulty sleeping, and when it happens, all thoughts come to mind until I can't sleep for a week. He should know why I overdose myself. Why do I do it? It's just because I want peace. Maybe if I take those pills, I can feel peace, can sleep undisturbed. Sometimes I'm afraid that I may go insane. But if I do, what will happen to my children? My mind often goes blank.

Even many years after the incidents, and many years after leaving Imam, Tri continued to experience similar bouts of distress.

While spared the experience of the worst of what her parents went through – and seemingly, although privy to their discussions about them, not fully understanding these – Lisa has witnessed and experienced violence. She has seen Wiji beat her mother and has herself been

victim to his threats and attacks with little protection from her parents or extended family. In her interviews, however, she never used the word *trauma* and responded in the negative to probes about key symptoms of a PTSD diagnosis. Instead, the losses associated with these dynamics and events, in particular the loss of her intact family unit, have impacted her most significantly. We return to this loss in our discussion later in the chapter.

In this, Lisa is similar to the *Bitter Honey* wives. Despite most of them having experienced some form of verbal, physical, or sexual abuse, none use the word *trauma* nor appear to be "traumatized" in a clinical sense. This may to a certain extent be due to the orientation and focus of this project, which influenced the questions we asked and, hence, what was discussed in interviews. While trauma was not an initial focus in *Thorn*, in that film (as in *40 Years*), interviews were directed toward the relationship of mental illness to cultural explanatory models and the participants' lives, which may have invited more discussion of certain "symptomatology" of trauma. Neither trauma nor mental illness were central to our concept of *Bitter Honey* – which, in retrospect, might have been an oversight that invites a critique of the very model of "trauma" we were working with.

Connecting Trauma and Gendered Violence

When we consider the stories of Tri, Lisa, and the *Bitter Honey* wives as a collective, we can see why gendered violence's relationship to structural violence against women and children has tested familiar clinical and cultural constructions of "trauma."

Most trauma literature is concerned with specific, historical, widespread, and often politically motivated episodes of mass violence such as genocide and war (and more recently, natural disasters). Women are subject to gendered forms of violence during political upheaval, such as sexual assault, that invite particular attention. However, women may also endure more chronic, pervasive, or generalized fear or anxiety due to everyday domestic violence, sexual abuse (Webster & Dunn, 2005), or other structural vulnerabilities such as sexual harassment (Herman,

1992a). These ongoing fears and "cumulative traumas" may result in specific embodied responses worthy of closer consideration, such as somatization, chronic pain, mood and personality disorders, eating disorders, and addiction (Herman & Hirschman, 2000; Root & Fallon, 1988; Webster & Dunn, 2005).

Currently, gendered violence is acknowledged as an extraordinarily widespread phenomenon cross-culturally. The latter part of the twentieth century saw a shift in conceptualizing domestic and gendered violence as a private affair or an "idiosyncratic interpersonal event" to a human rights issue (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997). This followed increases in educational, financial, and career opportunities for women, along with greater personal agency, autonomy, and control that followed from these socioeconomic developments – changes that are not unidirectional, and potentially reversible, as seen in the 1965 backlash against the women's movement in Indonesia, for example. Both acute and chronic episodes of such violence can have severe impact on women's emotional and physical health, effects which have not historically been acknowledged as "trauma."

A discussion of these effects *as trauma* was initiated by feminist scholars, clinicians, and practitioners in the late 1970s, when the diagnosis of PTSD was gaining credence in informing care for male war veterans. These scholars argued that just as wartime experiences could traumatize men, so could rape and other forms of sexual violence and exploitation traumatize women (Brownmiller, 1993; Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974; B. A. van der Kolk, 2002; Webster &Dunn, 2005). Herman proposed a new diagnosis of "Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (Herman, 1992a; included as a "new condition" in ICD-11, 2019) to acknowledge the effects of early and/or repeated acts of gendered domestic terror, captivity, and isolation as distinct from a trauma response associated with a single event that may have been experienced in the company of others. Herman (1992a) also called for further investigation into the impacts of gendered trauma on women's physical and mental health.

Feminist perspectives on trauma complemented ethnographic works that argued "the current taxonomies of violence – public versus domestic,

ordinary as against extreme political violence – are inadequate to understand either the uses of violence in the social world or the multiplicity of its effects in the experiences of suffering, collective and individual" (Kleinman, 2000, p. 227). Together, they reconsider trauma, advocating for a broader definition of the term, and a consideration of culture's role in the subjective experience of fear. Much ethnographic and therapeutic literature has focused on the ways culture is important in shaping trauma symptom and response and developing culturally appropriate therapeutic strategies (Alford, 2016; Bahu, 2019; Copping et al., 2010; de Jong, 2002; Kidron & Kirmayer, 2019; Nicolas et al., 2015; Sturm et al., 2010). But given women's often subordinate or victimized position worldwide, it must be acknowledged that certain culturally specific practices, images, or beliefs may facilitate certain forms of gendered violence, reduce access to redress, and hence compound women's trauma (McCluskey, 2001). Therefore, anthropologists and clinicians must account for the deeply held belief systems of any woman's culture, simultaneously acknowledging that such belief systems may be developed or enforced by those in power, and thus while some aspects of them may support their resilience, "these belief systems can also be oppressive to those who do not have the power to communicate their own definitions or modify socially accepted explanations that do not reflect their own experience" (Webster & Dunn, 2005, p. 113; see also Magnussen et al., 2011; Silva-Martínez & Murty, 2011; Sturm et al., 2010).

Gendered Violence in the Films

The three films illustrate the different ways gendered violence might interact with fear-based experiences in fearful contexts that both more closely align with more classical models of trauma *and* with those that expand an understanding of these contexts and the experience of and responses to them. Even though the specifics of participants' life histories and film themes are all quite distinct, violence against women is found in all three, in forms such as politically motivated gendered violence, forced marriage, domestic violence, rape, and trafficking for the sex trade. We

now turn to discuss how these forms of gendered violence are situated in Indonesian history and culture. *40 Years* illustrates the way political violence can be enacted in gendered ways. *Bitter Honey* finds connections between gendered inequality in kinship systems and cultural beliefs and the risk for domestic violence. *Thorn* further illuminates the relationship between structural and direct episodes of violence against women.

For some *40 Years* participants, gendered violence was used in an arsenal of political domination and intimidation during the events of 1965 and their aftermath as national politics and gender politics were often conflated. Members of Gerwani or *Gerakan Wanita*, Indonesia's response to the globalized women's movement, became significant actors in the political and cultural dynamics leading up to 1965, fighting for equality, self-determination, and mutual aid (Wieringa, 2003). These politically active women were primary targets of the New Order regime, blamed for the generals' murder that was the *casus belli* for the massacres and branded as sexually immoral and sadistic.

As in most instances of large-scale violent political upheaval (e.g., George, 2016; Hume, 2008; Thomas & Tiessen, 2010), during the events of 1965, women were subject to rape and sexual assault, sometimes by village members or even their own relatives. After the violence, some of these rapists rose to power on the local level and thereby held authority over their victims. Due to their dependency on the male patriline for the reincarnation of their soul (see Chapter 3), Balinese women were also forced to maintain ritual relationships with such men, leaving them even less space to talk about what they endured.

In other situations, non-local militia members took local girls as temporary "wives." Sexual assault was perpetrated under the auspices of political investigation (Pohlman, 2017): Claiming that communist women had a hammer and sickle tattooed on their upper thighs or near their genitalia, examining officers would conduct forced "examinations" behind closed doors. If sent to prison, women were also subject to sexual abuse by guards. This history is reflected in the experience of Degung's family. His mother was so examined and while imprisoned developed a relationship with a guard, which given the circumstances was not likely consensual, but she was then shunned by her family as a "prostitute." His sister Mayun says, "The point is that the men were kings. They were

kings who found opportunities during those times. Soldiers, civilians, whoever was in power."

During the political violence of '65, women also experienced difficulties specific to their gendered roles as mothers. When fleeing violence, in hiding, or being forcibly transported to prisons or labor camps, they were often separated from their children, some for years. If their children did accompany them to prison, women might be forced to watch them be abused by guards. We see the vulnerability and agony of mothers through the story of Mini, stigmatized due to her father's alleged political affiliation, forced into an unhappy and violent marriage with a similarly stigmatized man, met with threats and intimidation by local members of the military when she tried to prevent her children from becoming targets of abuse, and separated from her child when he was placed in an orphanage, ostensibly for his own good.

Long after '65, individual men who had participated then or continue to participate in various forms of political or social violence outside the home, like the elderly *Bitter Honey* polygamist, Tuaji, may also expect deference inside the home, and enact physical intimidation or punishment against wives who do not submit to their presumed authority.

Through the figure of the "tough guy" (B.I. *preman*) or "man of violence" (Cribb, 2002), political violence and gendered violence are linked through men who act with "extralegal" impunity in both political and personal realms. This stands beyond the boundaries of '65; although he was not affiliated with the '65 violence and from a younger generation, at the time of filming, Darma was an active member of *Baladika*, an informal militia. Such organizations, numerous throughout Indonesia, are nationally known as *ormas*, and Balinese members of these are known locally as *pecalang* (Rawski & MacDougall, 2004; Telle, 2009). While *pecalang* are seen as "cultural guardians," appointed by the village head responsible for enforcement of customary law (B.B. *desa adat*), many *pecalang* are feared by villagers given their propensity to violence and at times involvement in frank criminality. Members get tattoos demonstrating affiliation for their group, and different *ormas* occasionally clash (Kristiansen & Tirjono, 2005; Tempo, 2020). Darma was the leader of the local Gianyar chapter for almost a decade and remained proud of the

organization and its tactics of leadership, where dissenting members get "beaten up a little."

As Tuaji's wives did for him, Darma's wives draw a connection between his socially and domestically violent personas and attributed his ability to maintain a polygamous household to the fear his violence elicits. Suciati explains:

> [W]ho would want to live with lots of wives? [All the wives are] afraid of his violence … If I forbade him or got angry, then he would turn around and hurt me. It's because of his violence that we're all gathered here together. Maybe if he was just a regular person everyone would have left him.

Sadra appears to be a meeker man out in the world, with little power or prestige per se in his work making crafts for a fair-trade NGO. Yet, at home, he often flies into violent rages, which he can carry out with impunity.

While episodes of male violence are to a certain degree accepted or even excused as part of the male temperament, women can be blamed for the violence against them, for "transgressions" or "deficiencies" in wifely duties, so that some experiences of fear or violation are accepted or dismissed by both perpetrator and victim or blamed on the victim herself. Forced marriage and forced sexual activities can also be blamed on the woman. In *Bitter Honey*, wives report being denied protection by male family members, as when Purniasih's father sent her back to Sadra when she sought a haven. Murni reports, after confiding in her father that Sadra had hit her, her father counseled her, "If there's a man who's getting angry, don't you get angry as well," which she understood to mean, "Don't fight back. Just be quiet." She says, "Even if I'm hit, if I accuse him, they never support me. They never support me. They actually say, 'You're wrong.' My father, and my older brother as well." Here, the male reluctance to talk about violence against women is consistent with other findings. Nilan et al. (2014) encountered first silence and denial from Indonesian men interviewed about domestic abuse, followed by victim-blaming and exoneration of the male perpetrator, which they

found to be part of a continuum of violent masculine practice organized around cultural discourses of honor, respect, and hierarchy.

40 Years and *Bitter Honey* both speak to the way gendered violence has been folded into political violence and male impunity enacted across both social and familial realms, but codified discrimination against women continued well after the violence of '65. The transition to Suharto's New Order rule brought plans for national development, that legally re-inscribed women's "natural" roles as wives and mothers subordinate to the men as the "head" of the household through what is known as "housewifization", also known as state *ibuism*. Women were defined in relation to their husbands, expected to "protect" their children from negative moral influences, manage their households, and serve their families and nation without expectations of prestige or power, while men almost exclusively took leadership roles in economic and civic life (Blackburn, 1999; Chapter 3; Collins & Bahar, 2000; Downing, 2019; Jacubowski, 2008; Wieringa, 2011).

Yet, Indonesia has had a strong women's movement since the mid-twentieth century that has fought back against traditional patriarchy exacerbated by legislative inequality (Suryakusuma, 2004). Indonesian feminists have pressed for a broader recognition of women's rights, especially in the arena of domestic violence. In late 2004 and 2005, Indonesia's first female President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, signed groundbreaking domestic violence legislation, which, for the first time in Indonesia's history, defined and criminalized psychological abuse and marital rape. It stipulated that abusive husbands found guilty in court face a maximum of ten years in prison or up to a Rp. 15 million (~US$1,500) fine and calls for the provision of comprehensive social and protective services to victims (Arief, 2018; Lindsay & Butt, 2018).

Despite the radical breadth of this legislation, some argue that, in practice, little has changed in terms of women's subordinate marital role or on-the-ground reporting of domestic violence and recourse for victims (Arief, 2018). According to Indonesia's National Commission on Violence Against Women, *Komnas Perempuan*, in Indonesia, domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women, although underreported and poorly documented, with a recent inaugural survey showing 41 percent of women having experienced some form of

domestic violence and 96 percent of reported cases were wives being abused by their husbands (BBC Hulupi, 2017; News, 2017).

The reasons for this are many. New laws are contending with deep-seated ideas from both local cultural milieus and the policies and strategies of the New Order. Some women may still be unaware of their rights and the legal or social services at their disposal or afraid that pursuing their rights or seeking services would publicize painful private experiences and potentially further enrage an abusive spouse and/or family member(s), leading to further endangerment of themselves or their children. Cultural beliefs and social mores may have a more significant impact on what a woman considers to be domestic violence than legal definitions. For example, if servicing or satisfying one's husband's sexual needs is considered to be part of a wife's duty and identity, then a wife may not see herself as having any right to refuse advances, let alone think that should her husband persist against her will that it could be considered a crime (Lamb, 2019). Interviewers seeking to interview East Javanese women according to the Abuse Assessment Scale, a psychometric instrument for measuring the degree of domestic violence a person has experienced, had to alter the wording of two questions regarding "forced sex" since women resisted that concept, changing it to "unwanted sex" (Bennett et al., 2011). In short, legal rights under national law simply may not make much of a difference in the family realm, where so many other culturally specific factors impact marital expectations and perceived options, as discussed at great length with regard to Balinese *adat* in Chapter 3.

This is, of course, not to say that domestic abuse is uniform within a culture or even within a film. While providing examples of domestic violence, *Bitter Honey* provides the counter-example of Purnawati, who actively protected herself and whose family not only welcomed her back into the fold, but successfully pressed charges against Darma. But some Balinese women in our research, like many rural Indonesian women, instead use what researchers called an "elastic band strategy" for coping with domestic violence, moving between actively opposing the violence and finding ways to accommodate it (Hayati et al., 2013).

The gendered violence we see in *Thorn* encompasses forms of domestic violence but also gendered community violence and forced sex work,

as described at length in Chapter 4. Similar dynamics of "blaming the victim" are at play for Tri as were for the *Bitter Honey* wives who, due to hegemonic gender norms, were, to a certain extent, "blamed" for the violence done to them. Due to her premarital sexual activity and pregnancy, ongoing "illegitimate" community marriage, and perhaps chosen concubinage relationships, Tri was framed as a "naughty" (B.I. *nakal*) woman who was no longer afforded the same social protections as proper women, and was raped without the chance of redress or justice.

Therefore, while neither in the Western/US nor Indonesian vernacular has trauma been associated with ongoing forms of gendered violence, although used for other discrete episodes of sexual violence by strangers, we can read the participants' experiences of fear and violence as fundamentally related to the fearful experiences conceptualized as trauma (or *trauma*). While Tri is the only woman in the films who responds to her violent treatment with symptoms aligning with classical PTSD symptoms, in combing through their testimony, we do begin to see specific idioms of distress shared by some of the *Bitter Honey* wives. One idiom of distress they shared, particularly when describing their early adjustment to their marriages, was a loss of weight. As Rasti says, early in her marriage "I was not happy. I was sad and became very thin. But I then I got used to it." Suciati similarly remembers:

> I didn't know what to do with those feelings, I didn't know what I could do. This is why my body is so thin, because of all the things he did to me, like that. … Because I couldn't accept them then. Before I was plump.

In Indonesia generally, growing thin is a significant local idiom in general for worry, stress, vulnerability, and ill health (Ferzacca, 2001; Tucker, 2013), but also might indicate the women literally were not eating. These reports potentially point to "eating disorders" or somatization (Kirmayer, 1984) as response to gendered violence mentioned above (Root & Fallon, 1988), at once an embodied response to being mistreated and a form of protest when opportunities for direct protest are limited (Collins & Bahar, 2000).

In addition to having to cope with episodes of direct domestic, sexual, and otherwise gendered violence, many of the women in all three

films deal with various forms of stigma due to their sexual history and marital status. The effects of community stigmatization are persistent and pernicious in the lives of participants from all three films for different reasons.

Stigmatization

All three films take a fairly standard anthropological approach to stigma (Kleinman & Hall-Clifford, 2009) in that they document the forms of stigma and other negative social evaluations and perceptions, while highlighting the psychological adaptational strategies to – and resistance against – devalued identities. Following Goffman's model of stigma as discussed in Chapter 4, *Thorn* primarily addresses the stigma of character traits, where Imam and Tri are both judged as having violated the moral norms of society. Participants in *40 Years* are primarily contending with the group stigma of being associated with the communist party, while some of the *Bitter Honey* wives (and children) face both the stigma of participating in what some consider to be an aberrant or "lesser" marriage form, and at the same time, the stigma of becoming victims of domestic violence (Jones, 2018). Whatever the culturally marked basis for stigma, the processes of stigmatization manifest externally in social judgment and social exclusion; in the systematic, pervasive, and long-term effects of political discrimination; and in acts of direct violence, the details of which can be found in each film chapter in Part II.

Responding to stigma, in our films, one seems to have three choices (to oversimplify): internalize the stigma and feel ashamed, find culturally appropriate and understood mechanisms to cope with the stigma, or actively fight back against it via self-empowerment and not only resist shame but create positive meaning out of the experience of being stigmatized. This is a movement from an internalized response, to active actions in one's psychic and personal life, to forms of reframing and activism.

Stigma can be internalized (Bresnahan & Zhuang, 2016; Herek, 2009) as people accept society's negative evaluation of their condition. When stigmatized individuals internalize stigma, they generate affective (e.g.,

embarrassment, shame), cognitive (e.g., lack of self-worth, reduced self-esteem), and behavioral (e.g., concealment of stigmatized condition, reluctance to seek help) reactions. These processes of internalization are illustrated by Imam, who describes himself as "useless," and some of the *Bitter Honey* wives, who feel they can do little about being "an abused co-wife" but endure, save face, and try to shield their children from the worst of stigma's effects (Saraswati, 2020). In this case, internalized stigma intersects with gendered and hierarchical construct of shame in Indonesian and Balinese culture, to be further discussed in the following chapter on cultural schemas manifested in the films.

Coping can be considered the reaction to stigma when "people who are stigmatized do not like or accept being stigmatized but little can be done to reverse this condition or status" (Pachankis, 2007). They continue to feel disempowered and ostracized. Tri seems a good example of this. She continued to fight for legitimate marriage and a way out of her stigmatized status. She defended her difficult choice to engage in sex work as a result of their extreme poverty and Imam's inability to provide basic needs for the family, in her words, because "[w]e can't even afford a glass of milk and I don't have a heart to let my child go hungry." However, for most of the film and many years after, Tri made little headway in resisting the stigma she faced and longed for social acceptance and legitimation, which she found, to a certain extent (as of this writing) through an embrace of Islamic piety and the achievement of a conventional, legal marriage.

While much attention has been paid to the negative outcomes of stigmatization, there can be positive outcomes from stigma (Shih, 2004) when individuals adopt a resistant, "empowerment" model. Overcoming adversities associated with stigma can be an empowering rather than depleting process that gives valuable insight into human nature and human resilience. This model is most evident in *40 Years*. It would seem that the taint of association with the Communist party might create feelings of intense shame. Yet despite being viewed so negatively by multiple levels of society, most participants instead express anger and resentment over how they have been viewed and treated by their communities and nation. Those who actively resist the shame of stigma are those who most strongly see themselves as victims of an unjust political process.

Perhaps the most vocal proponents of this resistance orientation are Lanny and her family. Tante Hok, in her words, "trained her children hard" not to be ashamed, reinforcing the message that their father was not a criminal but a political prisoner being unjustly held, targeted by people motivated by envy and racism. This provided a framework of meaning other than one of political disgrace or personal shame; those who should be ashamed were the perpetrators. What would bring shame on the family would be if they internalized their victimhood, so they fought back and worked as hard as they could.

Ethnicity is an interesting factor in Lanny's case. Being Chinese-Indonesian arguably made her family vulnerable during '65, as some Chinese communities became targets; however, it may have also provided them with an avenue of resistance. The family was accustomed to being made targets of anti-Chinese racism. Almost paradoxically, they may have developed and shared coping strategies in reaction to this ongoing discrimination and, thus, did not internalize the stigma of '65. Lanny's brother Edy says, "I thought, 'Well, what's my fault? What's wrong with being Chinese?' You know? But they ridiculed me either for being a child of a PKI member or for being Chinese." Being Chinese even became a proud resistant identity: Tante Hoke says fiercely, when faced with the hardships of '65, her response was to "[s]how them that you are a real Chinese, not just a Chinese by blood." In the end, in an interview with the research team Lanny claimed she was "the lucky one" for having lived through her trauma and stigma.

For *40 Years*, *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn* participants, experiences of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization, are not distinct, but interrelated and mutually influential. Gendered violence and stigma add a diachronic dimension to fear-based experience, where there never is a "post" (Scheper-Hughes, 2008), while seeing the effects of gendered violence as a form of trauma, or a way to expand the idea of trauma to include more pervasive or everyday gendered experiences of fear or stigma, and relates trauma to additional idioms of suffering. We address some of these idioms in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Structural Violence

We ended the discussion of *Thorn* in Chapter 4 with a reference to episodes of "everyday violence" (Kleinman, 2000; see also Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004), which both results from and intensifies the effects of structural violence (Kleinman, 2000). These "everyday violences" connect the personal and individual with the structural and super-structural. Structural violence points to those forces in society – such as economic structures, political organizations, kinship systems, or other institutions – where unequal distribution of power requires no single identifiable perpetrator of violence to lead to unequal life chances (Galtung, 1969; Scheper-Hughes, 1992). In Farmer's ethnographic analysis (1996), different aspects of structural violence deeply penetrate individual human experience, leading some to suffer more than others. In other words, "various large-scale social forces come to be translated into personal distress and disease" (p. 251), and "suffering is structured by historically given … processes and forces that conspire … to constrain agency" (p. 252). Some of the most powerful of these forces are sexism, political violence, and poverty.

Individualized subjective experiences of trauma, episodes of direct violence, or the dynamics of stigmatization, are embedded within, and part of, larger structural violence. In *40 Years*, one form of structural violence is self-evident as state discrimination and oppression. For survivors, the overarching atmosphere of enforced political surveillance perpetuated by the legal edifice that targeted those associated with the PKI compounded the ongoing suffering from discrete episodes of trauma and loss, and, in effect, acted as a form of repeated traumatization (Chapter 2).

For *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn* women, episodes of direct gendered violence exist within local kinship and marriage systems and national legal frameworks that put women at a disadvantage and are exacerbated by the forces of grinding poverty. Women endure and tolerate physical and sexual abuse, in part, because they fear the cultural, social, economic, and spiritual repercussions of rejecting or resisting it. Therefore, acts of direct gendered violence can be considered as occurring within and as a result of macroprocesses and structures that create and reproduce

inequalities (Wies, 2011), even though they may be so normalized as to be not seen as violence.

For these women, although on different islands and, therefore, subject to different local specificities, the legitimation of certain forms of marriage functions as a form of structural violence. Delegitimized unions – whether extramarital sexual relationships, community marriages, or polygamous ones – leave wives and children in financial peril, and subject to social stigmatization (*Bitter Honey*) or violent sanction (*Thorn*). The women in our films are not alone (Nurcahyani, 2012; Nurlaelawati & van Huis, 2019). Many marriages in Indonesia (not just in Java or Bali), and perhaps as many as one in four, are not registered, particularly if they are not the man's first (Nisa, 2018; *The Jakarta Post*, 2017).

Patriarchal structures that primarily value women's sexual abstinence or marital status and limit women's agency to choose or leave marital partners – or to choose a fate besides marriage – put women at risk for direct violence since they have limited power to resist it or demand justice. Here, we get into controversial territory, however, as these structural inequities go beyond the social and the economic to the cultural. Cultural violence refers to cultural norms and patterns that support systemic discrimination and oppression against specified groups. The cultural proscriptions against unwed or single motherhood in both films, and the related social and civic discrimination, against women who are determined to be in illegitimate unions, limit the well-being and life chances of our film participants.

To some, considering cultural norms and practice as "structural violence" risks a neocolonialist stance of pathologizing normative cultural practices (see Shweder, 2000 for an extended discussion). To others, an understanding of this structural and cultural violence is crucial to supporting and protecting those who are vulnerable. Cultural relativism was typically invoked based on research in small, face-to-face, family-level societies, often studied in the past under the yoke of colonialism. The extreme inequities of many state societies, with their complex systems of authority and power, as we see in Indonesia, make extreme cultural relativism a difficult argument. To return to Farmer, critiques of cultural relativism often come from culture insiders, while from an outside and often privileged position, "cultural difference is one of several

forms of essentialism used to explain away assaults on dignity and suffering in general" (Farmer, 1996, p. 264). In sum, while identifying certain cultural practices as structural violence risks neocolonial pathologizing, overlooking such violence in the name of cultural relativism risks perpetuating harm.

Amidst and alongside these wider socioeconomic, structural, and contextual issues, another element of the subjective experiences of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization which cannot be overlooked are the more fundamental experiences of personal loss these experiences beget and inform. Of course, the two are linked; structural violence begets loss. This takes us to the heart of subjectivity theory (Biehl et al., 2007), which emphasizes the dual nature of subjectivity, which at once refers to both your unique interpretations of and responses to your life experiences and the fact that you are subject to the forces that shape these experiences.

As seen in our films, the choices that many of our participants, but particularly the women, have to make are greatly circumscribed by structural forces. Some of the decisions they are forced into lead to devastating loss that ripples out across generations. For example, by becoming pregnant outside of wedlock, a deeply stigmatized and culturally devalued status in rural Indonesia, Tri lost her status in the community as a moral and, more importantly, marriageable young woman, and became an outcast. In an attempt to mitigate this loss, she submitted to a marriage that was, at best, unsatisfactory and, at worst, tragically pathological. Tri's attempts to escape the long shadow of this marriage ultimately led to the loss of – and significant losses for – her daughter, Lisa, when Tri fled the family.

These more immediate and interpersonal and relational issues have as great an emotional force and saliency for individuals as trauma, particularly at key times in their development (Vromans et al., 2017). This return to fundamental loss replicates the ethnographic aha! moment shared by Byron Good. After conducting in-depth interviews with a young man who experienced a psychotic break, Good realized that in focusing on the culturally-specific content of the man's hallucinations, the research team had overlooked a much more basic wound: the subject had lost his father (Good, 2012). In this kind of research, there is

a danger that etic concerns may mask a more fundamental, or even universal wound; or at least, the former cannot explain the force of the latter, even though the two cannot be disentangled (Prigerson et al., 1997; Tolstikova et al., 2005).

Family Loss, Separation, and Abandonment

The loss of a parent is a foundational experience for many of the characters in these three films, whether they have literally lost loved ones to death, "disappearance," or imprisonment; temporarily or permanently lost their family of origin or parents after being sent or taken away; or lost internal objects (the mental construct or representation of a primary relationship) after repeated instances of betrayal, abandonment, or violence. Most of the participants in *40 Years*, with the exception of Budi, lost fathers to the murder, disappearances, and mayhem during the period of 1965–1966, as described in Chapter 2. (In a more metaphorical sense, the entire nation lost their father-figure, the first president of Indonesia, Sukarno.) Those who were lost in '65, of course, were taken against their will. But participants in all three films also suffer great pain from losing parents who leave of their own volition, or from themselves being sent away (Photo 5.1).

Of course, these losses have both immediate and long-term impacts. Evolutionary psychology establishes attachment as a universal human experience rooted in basic mammalian biology. While attachment theory per se (Bowlby, 1953, 1973) has been roundly critiqued by anthropologists (Quinn & Mageo, 2013), attachment relationships between primary caregivers and children, although configured and inflected differently in different cultures, form the basis of intimate social relationships (Eisenbruch, 1984; Otto & Keller, 2014). The breakdown of these relationships is associated with a variety of forms of suffering and negative individual and psychosocial outcomes (Prior & Glaser, 2006; Schechter & Willheim, 2009; van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008).

Indigenous Javanese models of attachment see a foundation of trust built through relationships with two parents. It is the parents' obligation to gently care for and guide their child with full affection (B.J., *ngemong*)

Photo 5.1 Budi's despair

(Hakim et al., 2012) and to instill values of respect and harmony (Geertz, 1961). Caregiver-child relationships have been characterized by anthropologists as low-affect and child-led (Geertz, 1961) and by Javanese parents themselves as gentle, permissive, and indulgent (Tucker, 2013), with mothers seen as providing loving care and fathers loving instruction, which contributes tight bonds between parents and children, and feelings of deep gratitude toward parents (Mulder, 1994/1996) which last well into adulthood (Hakim et al., 2012).

But in the long wake of political trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization, which stress and separate families, this model breaks down. Budi felt abandoned by his family when he was placed in the orphanage. While he was told it was to give him opportunities for an education, it caused him much suffering, sadness, and suicidal ideation. Out of all the traumas associated with this family's "unclean environment" status, including Budi witnessing the beating of his brother almost to death, it was this separation that caused him the greatest suffering. He said:

> I wasn't accustomed to the situation here (in the orphanage). I was confused. I felt lost. If I wanted to do something, I was afraid of making a mistake … I'm used to living with Mom and Dad. Whether in sadness or happiness, I want to be with my family.

Out of all the family strife she experienced, Lisa, too, seemed most affected by her abandonment by both parents, who left her alone for an extended period of time as she entered adolescence. This devastated her:

> [It made me] very sad. Just sad thinking that my friends have their mother around while I feel like I didn't have any mother. I can only say, "Oh, my friends have their mother, but me? My mother is still alive, but I seem not to have a mother … Sometimes when I miss my father, I can only look at his picture and cry in my room. Why should I be separated from my father and mother so that I have to live alone in a boarding house? I miss the time when we were together and want to have it back.

Interestingly, there are past experiences of abandonment, maternal loss, and loneliness in both Darma and Sadra's childhood histories that inform their polygamous marriages. Darma reports being lonely as a child because both of his parents remarried multiple times. In his mind, this became a motivation and justification for seeking a polygamous household. "I was living by myself, and I wanted my family to be a big one … Indeed, that was my goal in having lots of wives, so that it would be busy at the house." Sadra also remembers being "left" by his mother when she attempted to escape her own abuse at the hands of Sadra's father and feeling so lonely for her that he went to her natal village to persuade her to come back (Photo 5.2).

From a psychological perspective, damages to the parental attachment bond lead to long-term attachment issues that have wider significance. From this loss, and attendant emotions, other losses accrue, such as a sense of disappointment or deflated ideals, rage and hatred, and distancing from intimacy. These are part of an arguably universal psychology of attachment loss that becomes culturally elaborated and personally inflected.

Photo 5.2 Lisa's sadness over loss of family

Reactions to Loss

Ultimately, it isn't only the disappearance, abandonment, or estrangement of these beloved family figures that remains emblazoned in the memory of the film participants; it was the manner and meaning in which they disappeared (Wortman et al., 1993). These unique circumstances intersect with individual temperament and mental constructs to determine what even counts as a "loss"; what is devastating for one person may not be so for another.

For example, it was traumatic for Lanny to witness her father "running away" when their house was surrounded by a violent mob. This was because his actions diverged from her construction of him as a "hero" and protector; the identity-defining meaning she had ascribed to their relationship was destroyed (Davis et al., 2000; Janoff-Bulman & McPherson Frantz, 1997). But her brother Hari felt differently. He said:

> I know my sister Lanny was disappointed, but I was not. I saw my father run away. …Why was it so bad to run? That's not a problem for me. I have told my children that if you are afraid, run. But don't think it is over. If you are strong enough, fight back, seek revenge. I, myself, would have

run like my father. But it did teach me one thing. Never join a political party.

Just as the same incident may give rise to different feelings or different intensities of loss, these feelings of loss may be manifested and expressed in different ways. Rage at the loss of a "loved object", whether through death or abandonment, is commonly seen in psychoanalysis (Clewell, 2004) and has been the subject of reflexive anthropological exploration (Rosaldo, 2014). For Degung, the deep despair over the loss of his mother turned into feelings of rage as when he said, "I hated her. I wanted to kill her. Because she left me."

Meanwhile, Budi's sense of loss over his treatment at the hands of family members is, in some ways, channeled or displaced into rage and hatred for the villagers who tormented him and his brother and a host of other perceived enemies as he grows – bosses who are out to get him, traitorous friends, et cetera – and thoughts of revenge. It may be that these revenge fantasies and feelings of anger serve to deflect his attention from the familial betrayals he has endured.

Some characters separate themselves from others in the wake of loss. Hurt by family members in this way, subjects become multiply wounded, as the complicity of family members in certain kinds of structural abuse and social violence means that their stigmatization, victimization, and marginalization by those around them are compounded by a sense of betrayal by those they love and who love them, those who should be their most trusted protectors and advocates (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2005; Freyd, 1996). This can be utterly devastating. The fracture of one's view of the world as a stable, moral, and ethical place is compounded when the source of the trauma and fear is a loved one, and this effect is further compounded when it occurs at critical times in development (Cloitre et al., 2009; DePrince et al., 2012; Freyd, 1996; Herman, 1992b; B. van der Kolk, 2014).

In response, some individuals seek to avoid further intimacy, at least in the short term. At first, both Degung and Lanny said to themselves: "I'll live without you" where "you" meant the family members who failed them and the community members who mistreated them. Degung ultimately married an American and moved abroad. For a period, Lanny

kept herself, to a certain extent, separate from others by avoiding any further intimate family commitments.

> Maybe I was afraid to have commitment in that sense and for the consequences of the risks. They are too big for me, like for example, having kids … I'll have a lot of pains. Attachments, disappointments. … It happens so often, and death will surely come. So, I think the risk is too expensive to pay … It's harder to be married because the attachment is so much, so high, so tight.

Meanwhile, Lisa's loss has translated into fantasies of family reunion. Even when it seems very clear to Tri and Imam that there will be none, Lisa seems to retain a poignant image of her family as still only "temporarily" separated. She still harbors an enduring wistful fantasy that when both of her parents are old and sick, she will take care of them both in the same place and, so, they will reunite, a family again.

Widening the Frame: Cultural Schemas and Psychocultural Themes

In thinking of loss and suffering, clearly, the structural, socioeconomic, and contextual issues forced the participants and their family members to make the choices they did, choices which ultimately led to some of their losses. But the responses to these forces and subsequent losses are also deeply shaped by cultural models and psychocultural schemas.

Even ethnographically informed and expanded models of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization that link to structural violence and experiences of loss are not sufficient for understanding or participants' lives. While the ethnographic and theoretical methods – and indeed, fundamental goals – of anthropology can help move toward a more holistic and contextualized understanding of these issues, we need to "widen the frame" on them further to account for Javanese, Balinese, and Indonesian cultural schemas as filtered through the subjective individual experience of our participants. This requires reorienting the research question to: What models/frameworks do film participants use to make

sense of their lives, to evaluate what is at stake, and to find meaning for themselves? In the following chapter, we address individual and family responses that are deeply influenced by Balinese, Javanese, and/or Indonesian cultural models and schemas that shape the understanding and interpretation of fear, stigma, and loss.

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6

Additional Psychocultural Themes

We ended Chapter 5 by acknowledging the limitations of etic categories and the need to listen more closely to participant responses to the circumstances of their lives, their pains, and their priorities. Any number of interpretive lenses can be applied to any product of ethnographic research such as a monograph or film. The anthropologist and/or filmmaker creates and highlights certain overriding themes according to personal interest and intent, but alongside these are numerous other themes and domains deeply salient to the subjective experience of research participants.

This chapter elucidates some interrelated psychocultural themes not immediately encapsulated by the cross-cutting discussion of trauma, gendered violence, stigmatization, structural violence, and loss that are yet quite important to participants across all three films as they respond to these challenging and contested contexts. Responses to suffering, loss, and violence are myriad, born from individual idiosyncrasies, local cultural shaping of emotions, explanatory models (Kleinman, 1980; Weiss & Somma, 2007), and cultural schemas (Garro, 2000; Nishida, 2005). Some responses, such as rage, humiliation, "grieving, frustration,

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desperation, impotence, desolation" (de los Angeles Núñez Carrasco, 2008, p. 47) compound suffering and some, such as endurance, aspiration, or humor, manage to transcend it.

The themes to be discussed here were derived inductively, emerging out of the narratives and situated context of each film as they unfolded over time. They are organized into two sections: The first addresses the emotions that arise in response to political trauma, the gendered violence of patriarchal and hierarchical Balinese and Javanese societies, stigmatization, suffering, and loss as described in Chapter 5. These emotions, shame and anger (B.I. *malu* and *marah*), are deeply shaped by local cultural models and social processes, and often gendered, with different internal experiences and outward expressed behaviors expected and normalized for men versus women. These emotions are internally felt, behaviorally displayed, and shaped via cultural habitus (Beatty, 2013; Bourdieu, 1990; Hollan, 2000), with deep roots in Indonesian culture and hence elaboration in its ethnographic depiction. We briefly review the theorization of each and explore them in-depth in participant experiences. We then turn toward culturally specific orientations and actions and that support resilience: religious belief and ritual, including a faith in the workings and logic of karma, patiently bearing burdens for the sake of others, and engaging in activism.

Shame (*Malu)*

A theme that crosscuts across the three films is that of *malu* or shame. There are different, but overlapping, frameworks for understanding and analyzing shame that come from evolutionary psychology, psychological anthropology, and Indonesian cultural models and schemas.

Evolutionary psychology universalizes shame as an adaptive reaction to social devaluation with a transcultural response mechanism of minimization/concealment; withdrawal, appeasement, or subordination; and restoration – or if these fail, a switch to aggression (Sznycer et al., 2018). Anthropological investigations of shame (the famous "shame vs. guilt" cultural dichotomy) date back to the culture and personality movement (Benedict, 1947). Recent ethnographic investigations posit shame as a

"self-conscious" emotion, experienced internally, yet with socially contingent triggers and display conventions. Aspects of shame may be hyper- or hypo-cognized in any cultural place, and structured therein to include emotions such as sadness, disgust, or anger (Stearns, 2017). Cultural psychologists (Shweder, 2003) agree that shame is intersubjective, as it is rooted in the fear of social rejection – even without direct social interaction, the "other" is internalized. Shweder defines shame, for purposes of cultural comparison, as.

> the fear of being judged defective. It is the anxious experience of either the real or anticipated loss of status, affection or self-regard that results from knowing that one is vulnerable to the disapproving gaze or negative judgment of others. … in relationship to some shared … ideal that defines what it means to be a good, worthy, admirable, attractive, or competent person, given one's status or position in society. (Shweder, 2003, p. 1115)

Put simply, shame can be conceived as the emotional and physiological reaction to a loss of status or a violation of normative rules and the moral order in one's local world, and hence is inherently social. The cross-cultural analysis of shame then considers situational determinants, somatic and affective phenomenology, social appraisal, and self-management.

In Balinese, the concept is *lek*, translated as shame (B.I. *malu*) but interpreted by Clifford Geertz as a kind of "stage fright" over the potential for botched social relations. In Bali, individuals are positioned within their communities through caste, class, village, *banjar* and hamlet association, religious affiliation with a watershed/irrigation collective (B.B. *subak*), patriline, and multiple temples (Jensen & Suryani, 1992). Given this wide and intricate web of connection, status (meaning, collection of identity ascriptions) is important to individual social identity and therefore, profoundly impacts individual subjective experience. Here, *lek* as shame/*malu* is "at once the awareness of the ever-present possibility of … an interpersonal disaster, and … a motivating force toward avoiding it" (Geertz, 1973, pp. 402–403).

In Javanese, the concept is *isin*, defined as being ashamed due to doing something that is not noble or proper (Geertz, 1983). Since,

in Javanese socialization, harmony is maintained by an understanding and performance of proper etiquette according to unspoken hierarchies, internalizing *malu/isin* is integral to Javanese children's emotional development and involves the acquiring of particular social norms: how to behave and respond appropriately to others in terms of their gender, age, and social status (Keeler, 1983). Geertz (1983) noticed aspects of character building prominent among traditional Javanese in order to respect others, which included *isin* and *sungkan* (being reluctant to do something for fear that it may offend others). Suseno (1984) further says that learning to feel ashamed (B.J., *ngerti isin*) is the first step toward a mature Javanese character. Idrus (2004) writes that when a Javanese youngster is successful in his/her social interactions with his/her surroundings, the community will label him/her as achieving or fulfilling the criteria for being Javanese (B.J., *wis njawani*).

Given the high value placed on maintaining smooth social relations free of the awkward specter of conflict or conflict itself, it is unsurprising that the discomforts of transgression or perceived transgression are also high in Javanese and Balinese cultures. As Keeler (1983) puts it:

> [A] person's failure to act suitably in encounter […] calls into question the integrity of the speaker – who shows himself without regard for his own and other's status – and his interlocutor's power – which has been called into question by the speaker's failure to register its effects. […] [T]he awkwardness that follows from inappropriate behavior […] threatens the dissolution of several people's identities in the collapse of all social order. (Keeler, 1983, p. 162)

There are two sides to *malu* – a "positive" instructive or preventative sense of shame that prevents one from doing things that are wrong and the "negative" emotion that results from having transgressed, or "an appropriate embodied response to wrongful behavior, in the acknowledgment of transgression" (Chan, 2018, p. 88). In *malu*, some see attunement to social harmony, in that "people are sensitive to how others regard them and are inclined to consider their own actions in this light" (Goddard, 1996, p. 458); others find a motivation to cooperate and conform (Fessler, 2004). A perceived breach in this cooperation

and conformity results in *malu*, which covers "embarrassment [which] is failure of respectability" (Miller, 1996); this failure and fear that "other people could think something bad about me … leads to the final aspect of the concept of *malu*, a desire to avoid or withdraw from other people" (Goddard, 1996, p. 434).

One potential reaction to feelings of *malu* is "disgrace" (B.J., *wirang*) and a felt need to recuperate by saving face. *Wirang* encompasses humiliation before the community, sense of inadequacy, and loss of self-worth and dignity. According to Indonesian theorists, the role of *malu* or *wirang* "cannot be overstressed in a culture where form and formality connote a state of excellence" (Makarim, 1978). When putting forth any criticism, one must be mindful of the other person's risk for *malu* or *wirang* since, if recuperation is impossible, one might flee, go mad, or even commit suicide (Collins & Bahar, 2000; Makarim, 1978). As *malu* involves a sense of breaking behavioral and moral codes, it is deeply influenced by one's social status and social identity. These, in turn, are situated in historical contexts that influence how an individual is perceived, judged, and morally evaluated.

Gendered *Malu*; A Feminist Reading of Shame in Indonesia

While much of the foundational ethnography research on *malu* was done generations ago, recent research shows *malu* remains a salient concept for youth, who associate it with events that lead to negative judgment, violation of moral principles, and mismatch on etiquette in social interaction (Giawa & Nurrachman, 2018).

Critical feminist perspectives read the processes of teaching and internalizing *malu*, as well as its behavioral demands, as highly gendered (Collins & Bahar, 2000). First, *malu* is gendered in who is responsible for instilling the values, emotions, and behaviors it encompasses. Nationally, and in Bali (arguably, to a lesser extent, in Java, where this role is shared by the father and older siblings [Hakim et al., 2012; Keeler, 1983]), it is seen as primarily the mother's responsibility to instill *malu* in her children (Wieringa, 2003), and it is seen as her fault should they fail to

display proper *malu*. While all children are taught to be obedient and respectful to avoid shame from a young age, there is a greater expectation for girls to internalize these expectations, with male children's ill behavior more tolerated (Pratiwi, personal communication, 2020).

Malu also determines what is shameful for men and women and shapes gendered reactions to shame. In a feminist view, *malu* signals an "internalization of conventional morality" and its demands on individuals to "support relations of hierarchy and deference" (Collins & Bahar, 2000, p. 37). These relations of deference are highly gendered. *Malu* as a gendered guide for behavior, then, arguably constrains women in everyday public and private interactions and "enforces cultural prescriptions of acceptable or proper behavior" (Collins & Bahar, 2000, p. 42). Collins and Bahar (2000) argue that *malu* reinforces stereotypical gender roles; one feels shame when straying outside normative bounds, but since gender roles have themselves limited women's free self-expression, the reinforcement of them via *malu* is a form of oppression.

Men and women find different things to feel shameful, and they also react differently, with women becoming more reticent and men becoming more aggressive (Collins & Bahar, 2000; Wikan, 1987). Men tend to experience *malu* when their manhood is called into question, so they react by asserting their masculinity, sometimes violently. In the family, "Because fathers are supposed to react strongly to being shamed, other family members act to protect them from *malu*" (Collins & Bahar, 2000, p. 49). While the degree of normative restrictions loosened around the turn of the twenty-first century, the internalized expectation that women be more reserved remains, with women reporting personal difficulty speaking up in both public and private realms. For example, a woman would be very reluctant to discuss a point of contention with her husband (to do so would activate her experience of *malu*, and she doesn't want him to feel *malu*), so she will stay silent and often somatize or protest via other non-verbal ways, such as a loss of appetite (for a discussion of this in relation to gendered violence, see Chapter 5).

Thus, *malu* perpetuates the silencing of women with a "special power to shape human relations because it is based in deeply rooted emotional orientations that are not always accessible to rational critique" (Collins & Bahar, 2000, p. 49; Chapter 7).

Malu in Participant Experience

In these three films, *malu* is invoked repeatedly and across a range of different domains and personal experiences by multiple participants, pointing to its deep, lived, psychocultural salience. The variable instigating and contextual factors, many of which are gendered, include shame about marital status and marital partner, about having transgressed sexual mores, and about becoming the victim of violence. This experience of *malu* thus connects with the overarching themes of trauma, gendered violence, and stigma. *Malu* can be a reaction to having been traumatized or victimized and/or being placed in a socially and culturally stigmatized category (although not always; as described in Chapter 5, some film participants are ashamed about being positioned in an ascribed stigmatized category and some are not).

Marriage and Marital Status

In *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012), Tri most acutely feels the shame of her illegitimate marital status, although as an "illegitimate child," Lisa is also stigmatized and ashamed. Imam seems to move in between shame and justification of his refusal to marry her.

Similarly, in *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015), some of the co-wives and their children experience shame over their familial status, yet these feelings of shame or degrees of shame are variable. Some children report shame over polygamous status while others don't, drawing connections between their father's taking additional wives (which is seen as "non-normative") and the "normative" male behavior of having affairs. For their part, Darma and Sadra blame their polygamy on fate and karma since both their fathers were polygamous; in this case, it's not really something to be ashamed of but something inherited from the karma of their ancestors, like their regretted "vice" of gambling. To a Balinese framework for understanding such behavior, being polygamous is not so much a modeled choice as a potentially inherited or immutable destiny.

Not all the *Bitter Honey* wives experience shame in the same way. While all were tricked or forced into polygamous marriages, what is at stake is different for each and some feel much more shame than others, in

relation to individual interactions of biography, temperament, and social positioning. For example, while Sulasih doesn't seem to feel ashamed at all, Suciati feels deeply ashamed, perhaps because of her abduction into marriage and her loss of caste status after marrying Darma—hypogamy, when a woman loses caste status upon marrying a man of lower caste, is seen as somewhat tragic by many Balinese (Cahyaningtyas, 2016). Suciati expresses her feelings thus:

> I just fell so far. First, I fell in status to become a commoner. Second, I was taken by an old man, and third, he took other wives. Like that. Everyone came, my friends. […] I brought them to the house and we sat on mats, all of my friends from [home]. […] All of them cried.

Like Suciati, women in monogamous marriages also seem to feel shame about arranged marriages when their husbands are old and/or in a stigmatized category; Tri and Mini were also embarrassed to marry men much older than themselves, who were otherwise stigmatized by their mental illness and ex-prisoner (ex-*tapol*) status, respectively, but they were complying with their parents' wishes and had little to no say in the matter.

Participants also felt shame over the failure of their husbands to provide for them. Like many of the *Bitter Honey* co-wives who are financially not provided for, Tri has to rent rooms in boarding homes, not having her own land or home that she so desires. When other women made unkind comments about this, she felt so much shame she said she wanted to kill herself.

Sexual Transgressions

Another significant trigger for feelings of shame are incidents of sexual transgression – that is, sex outside of reproductive heterosexuality practiced within marriage (Java) or at least with the expectation of marriage (Bali; Parker, 2016). In *Bitter Honey*, Darma uses the word "shame" multiple times when describing how his first wife caught him out with a girlfriend, shame that at that time was so strong that he couldn't face his wife, one factor that led him to divorce. It is similar extramarital sexual

behavior of his, caught onscreen, that elicits the most shame in his wives during a feedback screening for them (discussed in Chapter 9 of this volume).

Interestingly, in *Thorn*, Imam professes to feel no shame about Tri's premarital sexual history, nor her possible sex work during it, making such comments as, "I don't want to be burdened by such things. […] I don't 'allow' it, and I don't 'forbid' her." But this can also be understood, to a certain extent, as Imam denying any responsibility in her sex work, and denying any shame that he imagines the speaker or viewer would think *he* should feel. Tri certainly feels that Imam bears some responsibility for what has happened to her sexually since their union, and during interviews, she accuses him and tries to hold him accountable for this and other failures: "Why should I live this kind of life?' I told my husband, 'You have taken me but you do not protect me; in fact, you sell me instead.'".

In counterpoint to Imam's response to Tri's sexual history, in *40 Years* (Lemelson, 2009), Degung's mother's sexual relationship with a guard she later married, most likely a form of rape, infuriated his father's side of the family, who publicly shamed her by calling her a prostitute and then shunned her for the rest of her life.

The transgressive possibilities of sexuality outside of marriage are also, at least partly, at work in the stigmatization of widows and divorcees (B.I *janda* for both), who are generally viewed as potentially sexually immoral (O'Shaughnessy, 2009; Parker, 2016; Saraswati, 2017) and thus, a danger to married women, who fear their husbands will have affairs with them, or even take them as a co-wife. For the co-wives in *Bitter Honey*, the imagined shame, in addition to the social isolation, shunning and loss of status and access to inheritance resources associated with being a female divorcee was a powerful motivator to stay in their marriages. This is particularly the case since shame over perceived sexual transgressions do not only affect people who "acted out of step, but also the entire extended family" in "kinships of shame" (Davies, 2015, p. 33) in which female chastity is equivalent to family honor. A number of the *Bitter Honey* wives report that their families would not welcome them back as divorced women; Tri's parents' openness to her is also to a certain extent contingent on her staying with Imam.

Violence and Victimization

Participants from all three films express shame over their involvement in fighting and violence, particularly when they are victimized. In general, violent argument bespeaks a failure to live up to behavioral norms and expectations of adulthood. In Javanese/Balinese habitus regarding anger described below, it is immature and weak to lose self-control to the point of violent argument, and this attaches to both aggressor and victim. Rasti says, "I'd be ashamed to be a grown up and fighting to the point of hitting. What would be the point of that? I'm someone who's already been in the world, and I'd be acting like someone who knows nothing."

Sadra's mother and sister chide Sadra for his immaturity and appeal to this sense of shame in exhorting him to change. His mother says, "Someone who hits people should know shame and regret that. Look at what is wrong and what is right first, don't hit people. But he just explodes." Sadra and Darma do feel ashamed about their violence toward their wives. Sadra says that after some violent outbursts, he feels so ashamed that he avoids people, hides himself away at home, lies down, and weeps. Over the course of longitudinal research, both husbands and wives in *Bitter Honey* felt the men were growing up and "learning" shame. Rasti said Darma "knows the meaning of shame now. […] Before, he didn't understand at all. He didn't care what anyone thought before. But now, he's totally changed."

While aggressors feel shame, being the recipient, or victim, of intimate family or community violence also breeds *malu*. This is the case for both men and women but is inflected in gendered ways. Imam is ashamed and "humiliated" when he's beaten by villagers for not legally marrying Tri. In his later adolescence, Budi is retrospectively ashamed of his "weak" younger self who could not defend his brother against violent villagers. In this case, it doesn't fit into local notions of masculinity to be weak – but the reaction is to build up and assert one's physical strength and inner, spiritual power (B.I. *kesaktian*, Keilbart, 2016; Wilson, 2011). Budi turned to martial arts in his effort to not only learn to defend himself but also to forge a new identity of someone who will not be victimized.

Many of the women in *Bitter Honey* responded to the shame of being victimized in their marriage by trying to hide this victimization from others. Here, Indonesian women's experiences of domestic violence illustrate the link between gendered violence and stigmatization. There is a strong social stigma against either informally discussing or formally reporting domestic violence because this violence is seen as proof of an unsuccessful marriage. As Murni explains, violence points to other family shames.

> If every day we fight, we're ashamed. […] Later they'll think that we're arguing over *something*; they'll think that we don't have any money. […] If we don't make a fuss […] we don't let our faults be known. As husband and wife, no matter how bad we are, we have to hide it so that other people won't look down upon us.

The woman is seen as being at least partly responsible for an unsuccessful marriage, for not displaying the expected displays of shame. So, the violence is, hence, "her fault" (Aisyah & Parker, 2014; Munir, 2005; Saraswati, 2017). This puts women in a bind. For some women, the response to being victimized in domestic abuse is to work to become quieter and more deferential (or at least, appearing so). This coping mechanism forecloses the opportunity to defend themselves or protest ill-treatment. Purniasih says:

> Yes, I was ashamed of fighting all the time. [So] I would just be quiet. But even if I was quiet, I would still be spoken to like that. "Dog," he would say to me, "You dog, eat," that's what he would say. […] I would just accept it.

This shamed silence in the household is part of larger silence within kinship systems and broader society. Purniasih says, "I would be ashamed to talk about my story. […] They'd say, "You're being beaten and you just stay at the house?!" Yet, she cannot return to her natal home or *banjar* or talk to her natal family about her abuse because they would not welcome her back; that would also be shameful. She says, "If someone is being beaten at their husband's house, that's the way it always is."

Situating *malu*: Tri and Imam's Shame

The lived experience of shame drives home its origins and meanings: It is not a singular interiorized emotion or form of practice, but deeply informed by the social meanings attached to it via politics, gender, and local communities. In concluding this section, we address the way cross-cutting aspects of *malu* convene via the example of Tri and Imam's responses to Tri's rape.

As a couple, they decided not to report this event. Tri says she chose to stay silent to maintain the family's privacy and thus preserve her own dignity: "If I reported this incident, it would result in the whole [local village] unit possibly finding out, so I just kept my mouth shut for the sake of my and my family's dignity. I sealed my lips because I didn't want to talk." In her case, speaking up about violence done to her could very well be turned against her since she has broken sexual norms by having premarital sex and engaging in sex work. Meanwhile, Imam's ostensible reason for not talking was also to preserve dignity, but in this case the dignity of the village, because there had been previous episodes of sexual violence reported there and to have another one reach the news would give it a bad image. Interwoven into his rationale is an avoidance of having to face public responsibility for what happened:

> If I reported it, this disgrace would obviously spread, *and the consequence could be worse. It could probably happen that I get separated from my wife. I don't want that to happen.* […] It has happened before. The villagers raped an orphan. […] In that village, once the villagers raped an orphan, it was in the newspaper. […] The rapists were also people in this village, around my neighborhood. If something like that happened and it was reported to the police, the name of the village would become worse. Even though it's only a small number of people who had bad conduct, but a lot of people would feel the consequences. And I want to keep the harmony of my marriage, *not because I'm afraid of being reported. The news would be widespread but if people don't report the various cases, what people say would just be considered slander, right*?

If they don't formally report the rape, then Imam faces no further consequences himself.

Ultimately, women appear to feel most ashamed of being made the victim of violence because either they feel it as "their fault" or they perceive others will think it is so. Men feel ashamed when their violence or misbehavior is made public. This dynamic is further complicated and intensified when one is perceived to have broken social moral norms and/or are put in an ascribed stigmatized category. Finally, for women, the fear of loss of marital partner or marital status, and the shame and loss of the social value this would convene, impels some to stay in marriages, furthering their experience of shame and compounding the gendered experience of *malu*.

Anger *(Marah)*

Marah or anger was present in many of our case studies. This was interesting since it has long been recognized that, across Western Indonesia, "negative" emotions such as anger are generally disvalued as dangerous to social harmony and their expression avoided. As with shame, there are a number of useful frameworks for understanding anger.

In opposition to earlier psychoanalytic models, which saw anger as a hydraulic release of energy after experiencing a social defeat or insult, and revenge as one possible behavioral response to this anger, evolutionary psychologists see anger as a behavior-regulating program evolutionarily built into the neural architecture of the human species (Sell et al., 2009b). They propose a recalibrational theory, where anger is a response to interpersonal conflict geared to gain dominance and obtain desired outcomes. If successful, anger can result in a "recalibration" upwards of the other person's tendency to place weight on the angry person's welfare (Sell, 2009b, p. 15073). This evolutionary and interactive model of anger points to the ability of the person experiencing and expressing anger to inflict costs and receive benefits as a result of their anger display. It is usually those with high social value (such as "strong men") who feel entitled to deference and acquiescence from those in less valued social positions. "These results undermine theories that attribute anger and aggression primarily to frustration, a history of negative treatment, or a desire for equity" (Sell et al., 2009a).

The study of anger, as a broader function of the study of emotion and culture, had its anthropological heyday a generation ago (Briggs, 1970; Levy, 1973, 1984; Lutz, 1988; M. Z. Rosaldo, 1984; R. Rosaldo, 1989; Wikan, 1990). With a movement toward phenomenology and subjectivity, contemporary anthropological study has focused on the experience of emotions in distinct situated settings via detailed narrative accounts, in intrapsychic, interpersonal, intersubjective, and social settings that illuminate and critically unpack both universal and culturally specific aspects of complex emotions such as anger. In ethnography, anger can refer to either an internal conscious emotion, an embodied response, behavioral or performative idioms, or as forms of justifications for individual, interpersonal, and social actions (Beatty, 2012; Dixon, 2016).

In Bali and Java specifically, there is prime cultural value placed on a containment and endurance of negative feelings to the service of an outward appearance of harmony and grace. Therefore, as opposed to shame above, which is seen as scaffolding this harmony, anger there is a "hypocognized" emotion that remains unelaborated – making it feel more personal, idiosyncratic, or even subconscious rather than public and shared (Levy, 1973). As such, it may be difficult to even acknowledge or articulate, let alone voice. The internal sensations of anger are to be managed and controlled, and the outward expression of anger is to be avoided. Expressions of anger common elsewhere, such as a raised voice, are seen as weakness and immaturity in many parts of Indonesia (Sutarto, 2006), as true power is seen there "as an attractive, not a coercive force" (Keeler, 1987). In Javanese and Balinese cultures, anger threatens the vitality of those who express it and those who become its target (Hay, 2001; Hollan, 1988, 1992; Wikan, 1989).

Indonesian has a number of words for anger with different emphases. Most studied in anthropology is *ngamuk*, an idiom for aggressive anger that indicates an outburst or loss of personal control, from a spectrum of a child's "tantrum" to severe, even homicidal rage (Browne, 2001; Columbijn, 2002). A*mok*, derived from cognate *ngamuk*, was previously seen as a "culture bound syndrome" (Carr, 1978; Saint Martin, 1999) and "running amok" was the colonial explanation for sudden episodes of individual and particularly mass violence (Winzeler, 1990); according to this older research, *amok* or related "pressure cooker" theories (that

posited the constant need to dampen anger and conflict created an "eruption" effect that allowed it to be discharged [Sullivan, 1994]) might likely have been used to explain episodes of social violence such as that visited on Imam and Tri, described in Chapter 4.

Anger in Participant Experience

Each of these films, in different ways, explores anger as a reaction to violence, suffering, and shame felt as embodied, relational, and social wounds.

Anger Directed at Family Members

One theme that has emerged in our discussion is that in the face of violence and stigma, family members often feel angry at one another, or take their anger out on one another.

When contending with the sometimes-violent realities of their polygamous marriages, instead of providing moral or practical support to one another, the *Bitter Honey* wives have isolated and even antagonized one another. In the early days living in Darma's compound, Suciati reports the other wives "hated" her and said awful things to her; Rasti remembers this conflict too, as coming from a place of jealousy and anger.

In *Thorn*, rather than providing one another with succor as similarly marginalized figures in their community, one due to mental illness and the other due to perceived moral status as sexually "dirty," Tri and Rohani instead find themselves embroiled in seemingly never-ending conflict over priorities and desires, which frequently erupts into mutual accusation and confrontation, thus further breaking Javanese cultural norms around emotional containment and harmony, leading to a "looping effect" (Hacking, 1995) of mutually reinforcing recriminations and negatively viewed and sanctioned emotions.

Political turmoil splits Degung's family during '65 and its aftermath. In this extended family compound with over 100 members, certain family members were believed to have informed on others, which

ultimately led to the death of Degung's father and other relatives. Meanwhile, some surviving family blamed the "real" communists, such as Degung's father, for the sufferings of those who were also targeted for being a part of his "unclean environment." In this case, paranoia about family members in 1965 – exploited in anti-communist fears mobilized in slogans such as "beware the enemy under your own blanket," *and* experienced by survivors who suspected other family members were responsible for their loved ones' death – overlap with more general and long-standing Balinese fears about family and betrayal. In Balinese psychocultural beliefs about witchcraft and magic, since family members and other intimates have the most access to your vulnerable and more private self, they have the most opportunity, and perhaps the most motivation, due to everyday jealousies and angers, to do you harm (Delker et al., 2017; Freyd, 1996; Wikan, 1990). During and after the events of 1965, this existing psychodynamic exacerbated and magnified the conflict within families, where suspicion and resentment reverberated in special ways. We see this in Degung's family, where, after his parents' loss, some family members mistreated Degung and his siblings and he was subsequently sent away. The family is still not fully reconciled in spite of Degung's efforts.

Gendered Anger

Whether incited by political violence, jealousy and competition, or personal resentments, anger expressed within families – as shame, above – can be deeply gendered.

Indonesian men are seen as more easily angered than women and not able to as readily control their emotions, especially if they feel their honor and authority as a man are threatened (Nilan et al., 2014), while women try their best to dampen or redirect their feelings of anger and "prevent" male anger from erupting, since this male anger can be violent. Across Indonesia, women perceive that their expressions of agency – for instance, in challenging men's authority, moral righteousness, and adequacy as breadwinners – are the most common triggers for male violence within marriage (Aisyah & Parker, 2014). Therefore, they feel

somewhat responsible for their husbands' violence against them (as seen above in the discussion on shame). For Kiawati, this was the case:

> [Darma] would come home late at night and I would ask him about it. [...] He didn't work and I didn't have anything to eat at the house. At the same time, I was taking care of two children, so I couldn't work. I would complain. He would get angry and hit me. [...] I felt embarrassed about being hit. Between husbands and wives, there are good things and there are bad things. I would get too angry. I'd complain. Yes, men can't talk about things, so they use violence, hitting. [...] Men are just like that, that's their temperament.

Here, Kiawati clearly feels she bears some of the blame for Darma's anger (that she should have modulated her behavior to avoid making him angry), understanding the spectrum of violence that is part of the male nature. This resonates with Suciati's descriptions of her management of Darma's anger. She says she can't change him or what will anger him, but she can change herself and her own behavior. For example, when she goes out alone, she says:

> [W]hen I get back to the house, he'll definitely just get angry at me. He thinks I'm doing this and that, having fun with this and that, if I go out by myself. [...] That's why it's better for him to take me so that it's safer at home. If he can't and I have to go out, I'll definitely take my daughter with me [...] So that there isn't a problem when I get home. I don't like it that he's suspicious of this and that. I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm just looking for work, but he always questions me, "Where did you go?" [...] I don't get angry about it. I feel emotional, but I'm just quiet. I don't like those kinds of bad thoughts. It makes me feel sick and hot. I don't like him being suspicious of this and that. I already feel stressed just going on with my life, and then that adds to it.

Here, Suciati emphasizes that her reaction to Darma's accusations – while felt internally as heat and physical illness – is not anger. To her, the embodied response of "getting emotional" but using self-control to limit the reaction to an internal sensation and "being quiet" is quite different from the actions of anger. This containment is ideally expected

of everyone, but especially from women. The exception proves the rule: Purnawati is notorious in the household in that, when she was living in the compound, she was not afraid to retaliate against Darma's intimidation, even going so far as to threaten Darma with a knife after he attempted to hit her.

Purnawati's reponse demonstrates that both the experience and behavioral expression of anger in the diverse contexts in the films does not just flow from male to female. Indeed, in multiple interviews with Lanny, she repeatedly expressed how angry she was in the years after her father was lost and family targeted in '65, saying, "Even my footsteps reflected anger." Other family members viewed her as having an "iron fist." This anger served as a powerful indictment against the injustices she and her family had suffered, but in her young adulthood, also isolated her and brought her (and others) pain. Gradually, her faith in Buddhism guided a channeling of her anger into positive social interactions via good works. Here, though, it is interesting to note that, as described in Chapter 2, Lanny has always identified with a more "masculine" or at least androgynous identity and associated emotions. As such, a more expressive anger may have felt more available to her.

Effects of Trauma Compound Gendered Anger and Child Maltreatment

It's not just wives that fall prey to expressions of anger within the family. When families are disrupted due to the diffuse effects of structural violence or the direct effects of political persecution, children can be put at risk for maltreatment (following the guidelines provided in Korbin [2003] to help determine what counts as normative versus abusive childrearing practices). This maltreatment may be at the hands of close family or distant extended family.

In *40 Years*, there is clear and dramatic re-instantiation of political and social violence within the family in the painful fallout of traumatic episodes. Degung and his siblings were treated harshly by some members of their family compound, and temporarily sent away to different relatives, where Degung was physically beaten by his uncle. While sending

children to relatives (for a variety of reasons such as poverty, childlessness of the relative, conflict between parent and child, proximity to school, etc.) is not uncommon in Indonesia, as a "child of the communist party" (B.I. *anak PKI*), Degung was sent away specifically to protect him from local retaliation and violence.

At the same time, psychobiological symptoms of trauma can lead to a loss of control over emotions that put children at risk of harm within their own close families (Collins & Bailey, 1990). Mudakir, himself scapegoated and beaten for over a decade in prison, once freed, beats his own family members in episodes of frustration and rage. Mudakir himself believes the possible cerebral, concussion trauma predisposed him to violence toward his family. But both Mudakir and the boys understand their father's violence as part of his own victimization. Kris says, "Maybe it was something that was carried over from that PKI incident. That could be, right? So, my father is still traumatized." Still, they both face repression, fear, and intimidation at the hands of villagers and unpredictable attack by their own father.

Gendered violence and child maltreatment become intertwined in a painful dynamic where children attempt to defend their mothers and are met with violence, and mothers feel helpless to defend their children for fear they will be made the next target. For example, Darma's son with Rasti, Ruegara, remembers an incident when:

> My mother and father were fighting. It was over on the west pavilion and I was crying. I grabbed my father. He pushed my head into the pond. My face and my shoulders. I swallowed the pond water. He was drowning me. [...] I don't really know what the problem was because I was just a child. I don't really remember but I felt really angry.

Rasti says, "If he hit them and I fought back, I would end up being hit. I would also get hurt, and that would be a problem."

Through this violent anger and its behavioral and emotional effects, trauma can be transmitted intergenerationally. Links between witnessing or experiencing abuse in childhood and being involved in abuse as an adult have been clearly drawn (Hurren & Stewart, 2019; McCloskey, 2017; Yehuda et al., 2001). This seems to be the case for Sadra: He

witnessed his father's abuse of his mother as a child and was himself subject to his father's violence. He wonders, "Indeed maybe it was because I inherited it. That's the proof, that my father beat my mother, and now I'm copying him and beating my wives." Balinese ideas of inheritance resonate with more clinical literature on abusive behavior, or how one's own treatment as a child might contribute to one's behavior as an adult through the Balinese understanding of cosmological inheritance of characteristics of a deified ancestor (B.I. *keturunan,* Lemelson, 2003). Indeed, Bu Anggreni, the human rights lawyer, noted at a screening of *Bitter Honey* that women frame their husbands' actions as karma resulting from the inheritance of ancestral flaws or misbehavior.

Downregulating Anger, Enforcing Silence

In these cases where women, children – and in some cases, men – feel angry they may be required to downregulate or suppress the expression of these emotions in an imposed (or internalized) mandate of silence. The culturally informed aversion or forbiddance of anger in Indonesia is further impacted by political prohibitions on discussing certain particular grievances.

With some notable exceptions (Schefold, 1998), Indonesian societies are overwhelmingly patriarchal and speaking out about violent anger may re-victimize women or put them at further risk for challenging the social order (Utomo et al., 2014), rather than being met with sympathy, support, or assistance. Suciati articulates her "principle" as this: "It's better I stay silent. Then I'm just a little bit wrong. That's better than answering. If I answer, my faults are sure to be multiplied. But how can you get mad at a silent person?" Rasti shares a similar strategy:

> It's for safety so he doesn't always get angry. It's better for me to say that I'm wrong. If I apologize to him, automatically, he'll think, "Oh, she understands, she knows." Even though he's the one who is wrong. […] Before, I didn't understand his position. I would fight back, and we would always fight. That's why I now say I'm the one who's wrong […] I win because I'm safe.

In a similar dynamic, after the violence of '65, public expression of trauma, loss, and anger were socially invalidated and actively silenced by Suharto's New Order regime, which made publicly remembering '65 in a way that diverged from the state narrative a dangerous act (Zurbuchen, 2005). But suppression of individual memory was enacted on all levels of Indonesian society.

Part of the rationale has been cultural, in relation to the hypercognization of "harmony" in Java, Bali, and Indonesia. State silence was supported and re-enforced by notions about the potentially negative effects of discussing these traumatic events on community resilience and cosmic order, not to mention economic development and Indonesia's perceived status on the world stage (Dwyer & Santikarma, 2007). This silent resignation to never knowing or speaking the truth has been framed as psychocultural value, but those being so silenced felt that this was disingenuous, the workings of hegemonic power in disguise. Such silence fuels feelings of anger as survivors are constantly reminded of their losses but not allowed to talk about them. So, for example, if perpetrators and victims are still living side by side, but the next generation of children get along well, it doesn't feel right to bring up these issues and create discord for the next generation where there is "none." Local communities and families remain in an awkward balance where they are intimately intertwined with one another, but still angry so some feel they are living in what Degung calls "a state of total falsity."

This connects the survivors of '65 with survivors of domestic violence in that some members of the family and community are required to silence their anger so as not to further provoke others or disrupt a "harmonious" status quo that is working for some. But there are other ways to frame their experiences than by voicing anger explicitly, including channeling or deflecting anger into different idioms and different forms of emotional expression.

"Disappointment" (*Kecewa*)

Given the avoidance of expressing anger and its possible channeling into other idioms and behaviors, there are other key words that may encapsulate some powerfully negative feelings without labeling these as "anger." One of these is "disappointment" (B.I. *kecewa*). This word/concept covers the disappointments of life, such as lost opportunities or frustrated expectations – for example, Lanny's brother Edy was "disappointed," he couldn't go to college in the wake of '65, but instead worked to support the family. But in Indonesian usage, there is a particular focus on the interpersonal sense of disappointment, "to describe the emotional reaction to someone's actions […] the focus is on the emotional impact of someone's not fulfilling the protagonist's expectations." Furthermore, "many of the examples seem to call for a translation equivalent rather more serious in tone than simply disappointment" (Goddard, 1996, p. 443). Particularly, acute or protracted "disappointment" is seen as a major vulnerability for mental illness and one of the powerful negative emotions to avoid (Good et al., 2007), but it also allows for the expression of negative emotions over idioms like anger and can function as a form of intimate protest and communication to significant "actors" in a participant's life.

Imam and Tri often use the word "disappointed" in this manner. Imam speaks to the power of disappointment in his own life, as a part of and trigger for his episode of mental illness.

> Because of the divorce, I was sick, because […] I was disappointed by my wife. […] Besides, I felt too […] what's this […] It hurt too much. […] So, it was the beginning that I felt disturbed in my thoughts, it was like a very big disappointment.

For his part, Imam admits that he has, to a certain extent, let Tri down. In the end, he couldn't or didn't give her the marriage she wanted. He thinks that for her whole life, she may have suffered from a "prolonged disappointment" because of this.

> She still often compares things, especially if she is sad. A person usually compares things when she is disappointed, right? […] She often expresses her disappointment. […] We can see that she is disappointed by something. How can I say this; it's actually so deep.

In this context, while disappointment avoids anger, it can still be read as an accusation over another's failures or misbehaviors. Others, including the partially responsible party, knows the person who is disappointed is, in fact, also angry, and it is understood that the onus is on the "disappointer" to atone or change. In Indonesian schemas (that resonate with the evolutionary biology model of shame above), if disappointment is too severe or goes on for too long, it can lead to the outburst of violent rage *amok/ngamuk* (Saint Martin, 1999).

The violent marital relationships depicted in the case studies in *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn* are in no way presented here as the norm for Indonesia, although there are social and cultural norms that may enable them or foreclose certain responses. And while "disappointment" may be a sort of couched anger, in its accusation, it also bespeaks poignant loss, as when Suciati says:

> I haven't gotten the kind of full affection that there is supposed to be between a husband and wife. […] Not all men that I see are violent, if I compare [Darma] with men that I see on the street who are caring or who are polite. Sometimes, when I get together with other women, they'll say, "He's never laid a hand on me. He never hits his wife." Then I feel jealous, to hear things like that. [I think to myself] "Why, when I have tried to be obedient to him ever since we got married, he still doesn't understand anything? What do I have to do so he understands?"

The Desire for Revenge and Its Modulation

Given these intimate interpersonal incidences of anger and grievance, and the broader political grievances of survivors of 1965 and its aftermath, fantasies of revenge and retribution are salient, if not centrally organizing, aspects of participant subjectivity.

Evolutionary psychology posits revenge as a universal human response to deter resource theft and intragroup violence (Jackson et al., 2019), with analogues found in animal behavior (e.g., Hauser & Marler, 1993). Anthropological studies have focused on revenge as a tool for maintaining social homeostasis on a group level (Ericksen & Horton, 1992), such as tribal warfare and blood feuds (Boehm, 1986). The individual impetus to revenge may stem from a feeling of social or moral affront. Culture plays a role here; individuals in societies with moral norms of individualism will more frequently feel revenge is justified when their individual rights have been violated, while more sociocentric societies will be more likely to punish those who violate social norms (Levy, 2014).

The closest Indonesian analogue for revenge is *dendam*, which can mean both the feeling of holding a grudge against someone and the act of carrying out revenge (Heider, 2006). There are many contexts for enactments of revenge in Indonesian society. For example, there are interpersonal rivalries and grievances, and conflicts of property and land tenureship, both of which played a significant role in the violence of 1965 (Robinson, 1995). Revenge that takes place in love relationships and rivalries are common themes in popular culture (e.g., Kurniawan, 2014). Then there are the intermittent interethnic and interreligious violence, for example, those following the fall of the New Order, which was often motivated by notions of revenge (Beatty, 2009). Finally, the historical trauma of 1965, which was instigated, spurred on and motivated by propaganda calling for revenge against the hated communists (Chapter 2).

Within the *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn* families, feelings of revenge are primarily directed at angry, violent, or controlling husbands and fathers. Imam, in part, ascribes his refusal to bow to social norms as getting back at a domineering father, saying, "When my father was still alive, I was afraid; he controlled everything. After he passed away, I was like 'a horse freed from the stable'. I wanted to take revenge for myself." Now, he relishes his freedom at any cost, but this "freedom" has engendered its own ambivalent feelings in his family. Tri says her anger at Imam has sometimes descended into feelings of retribution and revenge. "'Why do I become […] someone vengeful like this,' I say to myself. 'Just wait till

you get older. I won't take care of you anymore. I will leave you.' I feel this way because he abandoned me."

Some *Bitter Honey* wives also report feelings of *dendam* after being mistreated. Suciati remembers one frightening episode where she was traveling to her parents' house for a visit without having gotten Darma's permission first. He chased after her motorbike on his and crashed into her on purpose. He apologized but she says:

> Maybe when he's angry it lasts for a day, and then the day after that, he's aware of himself [...] that he's done something wrong to his wife. [...] And then he'll ask me things, like he's trying to charm me, but when someone does that kind of thing to you, you still have feelings of revenge in your heart.

Here, women who feel angry at being mistreated but as described above may have little recourse to directly protest or address the violation with their husbands, may channel their anger into feelings or threats of revenge. Here, the women may signal the intergenerational reproduction of violence by warning the men of the vengeful actions their anger, violence, or incorrect behavior might engender. Murni chides Sadra:

> I say to him, "If you're like this with your children, what do you think will happen later if you don't change? [...] Do you want them to obey you, or later take revenge against you? Automatically, if you hit your wife, your children will want to take revenge against you. [...] You're not allowed to hit children. If a father hits his children, honestly, they'll wish for revenge on you for as long as they live."

Sadra admits he's concerned about this and indeed, Komang, Sadra's son with Purniasih, says he used to dream of revenge when he was young and felt helpless to protect his mother, just like Sadra felt helpless to help his mother.

In these previous cases, family members who feel wronged have a desire for revenge against other family members. In *40 Years*, the desire for revenge is both against family and against perpetrators and wider society. The tactics of the New Order regime provide an interesting context here in that "revenge" for the murder of the seven generals was

a catalyzing force for the mass killings. So, Indonesian military, paramilitary, and everyday citizens were ostensibly taking "revenge" against communists and affiliates in what was then framed as justified violence.

Given the still heated anger between his family members, Degung knows some members of his family wish '65 would happen again so they can right the wrongs done upon them. He jokingly remarks, "If I ask people at my house about that time, 'What do you think about reconciliation?' 'Yes, it's good. Just let me bash your head in, and after that we can reconcile!'".

In other cases, feelings of revenge may be displaced outwards (perhaps, in part, because it can be distressing to consciously experience these feelings against one's own family members, as in Budi's case in Chapter 2). Budi's story illustrates the cycle of violence and revenge very clearly. The community highly stigmatized him and his family and violently beat his brother, Kris. Budi witnessed everything but was forcibly restrained, unable to help and subsequently retreated, plagued by traumatic flashbacks and suicidal depression. He later expressed a desire to get revenge on those who tormented him, not atypical for children who have experienced violence (Herman, 1992). He said:

> I want to take revenge because I can't accept that my brother lost his future. That my future is also less bright. I feel I have lost everything. […] I now want to do evil things; for example I want to assassinate, torture (people) the way they did to my family members. […] What I wanted to do was to explode their houses so that they experienced the grief and pain that I and my family members have been suffering.

In Budi's case and many of the case studies here, we see that anger and shame may sometimes be cross-cutting and sometimes in tension with one another. Being made the victim of someone else's violence can cause both shame and anger, and while "proper shame" in Balinese and Javanese contexts requires a modulation of anger, channeled into other idioms such as disappointment, shame can eventually lead to outbursts of anger. As Budi matured, his psychobiological responses to trauma receded while his emerging moral sense and political subjectivity brought

an awareness of the deeper context for the years of violence and stigmatization his family endured. This allowed some of his desire for violent revenge to turn into more righteous activism.

Moving Past Revenge

In Degung's story, the desire for both political and personal revenge overlaps, containing all the potential for a cycle of violence, but he was ultimately able to break it.

> Before maybe, when I was young, my agenda was different […] Maybe to attack the state later on, you know, with a deconstructive kind of mood. But now, I think I study this more for the future of my kid […] But the future, not only [for] my kid, my whole generation. You know, maybe we can learn something from this.

As a political activist, Degung aims to open up the discourse about 1965 and its aftermath and invite others to address and maybe even heal the pervasive trauma they still deal with every day. Lanny also seems to move past revenge in her work:

> The difficult thing about revenge is […] I don't exactly remember how I felt at that time, but right now, I feel that talking about revenge is useless. If I still keep the hatred, it's like I have a bomb inside me. So, I think I have suffered enough. Why should I suffer more? It's as simple as that. I think we should love ourselves in a good way. Whom will we revenge? It's a big […] like […] a phantom.

In the cases of Lanny, Budi, and Degung, moving "past" revenge is, to a certain extent, the product of a maturational process and personal journey that reorients them toward new meanings for their suffering and new possibilities for response. For them, being able to move past an orientation toward vengeance has contributed to their resilience and allowed them to become resources of strength for others.

Resilience

Despite their often-excruciating challenges and sorrows, the film participants are all, to a greater or lesser extent, resilient. They all adapt to their circumstances in some way, whether that be resolving or at least coping with the hurt they have experienced, navigating toward resources that will sustain their well-being, and/or striving for a greater purpose in response to violence, oppression, and despair (Ungar, 2006, p. 225). Their individual strengths and abilities to persist result from the interaction of psychological, neurobiological, and sociocultural processes (Egeland et al., 1993; Hooberman et al., 2010). Resilience entails being able to respond to adversity in culturally meaningful and socially connected ways, and expressions of resilience are influenced by one's identifications with a cultural group, relationships with family, and interactions with mainstream culture (Denham, 2008; Tummala-Narra, 2007; Ungar, 2013).

In scholarship on Indonesia, resilience has similarly been linked to factors of internal motivation and social connection (Hestyanti, 2006; Santoso et al., 2015; Subandi, 2015; Taufik & Ifdil, 2016). In the case of first episodes of mental illness, Subandi (2015) found the concept and practice of engaging in introspective and spiritual activities in order to gain insight, revitalize, change orientation toward difficulties from passive to active, and "get up again"(B.I. *bangkit*) to be crucial. Individuals often gained the strength to do this for the sake of their family or children. Subandi (2015) also points to harmonious integration with family and society (B.J. *rukun*), as key to resilience and recovery, embodied in both literal physical and social movement from isolation to community connection. For Acehnese children survivors of the 2004 tsunami exhibiting symptoms of trauma, similar characteristics were associated with resilience, including strong internal motivation, openness to other people, support from significant others, and participation in group religious and arts activities (Hestyanti, 2006).

In the context of child developmental disability, Santoso et al. (2015) have found that for Indonesian parents, resilience relies more heavily on family and community practical and emotional support than Western counterparts. Indonesian parents were less likely to seek "professional"

help (and certain kinds of specialist help may, of course, be less available), and more likely to turn to family and friends. Widyawati et al. (2020) suggest this turn to local family and community can be a benefit or an additional stressor, depending on the response of these family and friends; and being part of wider, less local systems of advocacy and social-emotional support can be beneficial to families who face familial or community stigma. It is likely true in cases of stigma, traumatization, and violence that these more intimate family and local social avenues to resilience are similarly compromised if members of these groups are partially or wholly responsible for that trauma, stigma or violence. Even in cases where there are no reports of violence, the available resources that support resilience may be gendered. At least, one study of resilience of Indonesian high school students found that in the wake of natural disaster in West Sumatera, the risk of susceptibility to social stress was higher, and protection against risk lower, for female respondents, leading to compromised resilience (Taufik & Ifdil, 2016).

Resilience in Participant Experience

Our film participants share some culturally inflected behaviors and orientations that help them make meaning from their suffering and manage their memories and their present social relations, including religious practice, indigenous philosophies of bearing burdens for the sake of others with patience and acceptance, and social and political activism.

Religious Practice and Spirituality

Religious practice and spirituality (often overlapping but not the same) can potentially support resilience in development under adverse conditions (Masten et al., 2009; Ozawa et al., 2017) and in coping with the distress of traumatic events (Pargament & Mahoney, 2009). Religious practices and beliefs may allow individuals to "respond to situations in which they come face-to-face with the limits of human power and are confronted with their vulnerability and finitude" (Pargament, 1997) with a framework that makes meaning out of suffering, offers a sense

of control, and provides hope and motivation (Peres et al., 2007; Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009). Person-centered approaches illustrate how various aspects of religious practice and belief – such as symbolism, ritual, magic and divination, moral and eschatological domains, and habitus – may bolster individuals during difficult times (Csordas, 1997; Desjarlais, 1992; Jackson, 1989; Luhrmann, 2004; Stoller, 2009).

Religious and spiritual explanatory models, tropes and symbols, and the related intrapsychic processes they effect, are significant for many Indonesians and many of the film participants, although the tone and tenor of this spirituality and belief varies for each. The film participants hold diverse religious identities, including five of the six officially recognized religions in Indonesia, including Muslim, Hindu, Christian/Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Buddhist (Laksana & Wood, 2019).[1] In addition to the ideologies and practices unique to each faith, many Indonesians share local pantheistic and heterodox variants of mysticism (Smith-Hefner, 2019) as well as cultural concepts that inform their understanding of cosmological order. For some of our participants, religious frameworks and practices allow them to find meaning in their suffering and simultaneously participate in public practices that allow for social acceptance and connection.

After the events of '65, Lanny became disenchanted with the Catholicism she was raised in and eventually turned to Buddhism. Her interpretation of Buddhist teachings on nonattachment led her to intentionally reject suffering while making it her mission to gain merit and good karma via good works; these good works have connected her to a large community of teachers, students, and fellow volunteers. Meanwhile, Mini's deep engagement with her Catholic faith and identification with Jesus allows her to interpret her ongoing suffering as meaningful. Her participation in Catholic organizations has helped her find support, bringing her closer to God and community. The irony here for both women is that the PKI and those affiliated with it were demonized as

[1] In Indonesia,, religious diversity is celebrated but religious affiliation is prioritized, and before 2017 the Indonesian government only allowed these six official religions to be noted on the national identity card. Followers of other religions faced discrimination and were denied equal rights and protections, such as the right to establish places of worship or register marriages and births (Colbran, 2010).

"godless"/atheists, a serious and dehumanizing charge in a country where citizenship incorporates religious belief (Duile, 2018).

After *Thorn*'s release, Tri, born a Muslim, gradually became more devout, praying five times a day and wearing a head covering. All of these are part of an increased religiosity in the last several decades throughout Indonesia (Rinaldo, 2013; Smith-Hefner, 2019). Tri attributes her more positive reorientation toward her past and her behavior to the self-reflection encouraged by her faith, while the practices of Muslim piety have found approval and recognition in her community.

In addition to organized/global religions, participants also use Javanese and Balinese spiritual-psychological frameworks to understand the workings of the cosmos (Lewis & Lewis, 2009; Woodward, 2010). Below we discuss two overarching concepts that are central in both cultures; a faith in the logics and workings of karma and the practice of patiently bearing burdens for others.

Karmic Justice

A central belief, shared across Java and Bali, is in the workings of karma, or in Balinese *karma phala* (Keyes, 1983; Obeyesekere, 2002); in short, that your actions, either in this life or a past one, will beget a fitting fate, either in this life or the next. Ideas about proper behavior and karma are inculcated from an early age through stories and folklore. For example, Balinese elders might tell a story about a child who was rude to his parents (B.B, *tulah*/*alpaca guru rupaka*), and then, as a *result* of his rudeness, was suddenly turned upside down and had to walk with his hands ever after. Or a child who spits at his friends might be told that he will be reincarnated as a worm (Pratiwi, 2020, personal communication).

For Indonesians who subscribe to it, karma can explain why certain bad things have happened. Many of the *Bitter Honey* wives and husbands, for example, ruminate over their tumultuous polygamous marriages and wonder, as Suciati does, "Maybe I committed some sins before, too many of them, and that's why I have to do this? [...] Maybe it's just the law of karma, according to the Hindu religion." Lanny's interpretations of Buddhist philosophy suggest that the events of '65 and

beyond were part of the longer cycle of karmic justice. If people who suffer terribly in this life may have committed terrible deeds in their past life, maybe those who lost family members or were brutalized during '65 were paying a karmic price.

The karma concept can also be mobilized to manage feelings of anger and resentment when they occur, by providing an outlet or promise of some kind of "cosmic justice" when immediate justice or retaliation seems impossible. Indeed, the belief and reassurance that wrong-doers will face karmic judgment came out through many, if not most, interviews during the research behind *40 Years*. Multiple health problems and personal tragedies were attributed to karmic suffering as a result of violent acts committed during the events of '65. This karmic justice may be more satisfying to many Indonesians than personally enacted revenge, such as Budi fantasized about, or state-mandated justice. People distrust state justice; they fear just getting cheated or trapped again since anything having to do with the state in Indonesia can be corrupted or indefinitely delayed. But karma is a kind of cosmic justice that cannot be corrupted and will never trap a truly innocent person. As interpreted for the film by anthropologist Leslie Dwyer, Degung's wife:

> Justice can be corrupted and is frequently corrupted in Indonesia. But Balinese say that karma can't be corrupted. It's a kind of *niskala* [supernatural] justice, that stands above the justice of the state, that can't be taken over by those people who hold power.

Degung's sister confirms this in an interview:

LESLIE: But were there feelings of revenge among the family?

MAYUN: Within people's hearts, definitely. Hell, what do you think? Yes, there were, but we just kept acting sweet. […] "We believe in the laws of karma," that's what we ended up saying.

LESLIE: You threw your hopes toward the laws of karma?

MAYUN: Toward karma. But in reality, actually, there are lots of examples of people who killed who ended up being killed. […] Yes, a lot of them died in very tragic ways. They were killed in turn. Most of them were like that. They didn't get along within their families. […] Balinese

> people say, "Just leave them alone and they'll be hit by their own karma. What he reaps is what he'll sow." That's what we believe.

Mini also finds some relief for her feelings of being unjustly wronged from her belief in karmic retribution. For example, a neighbor swindled her out of some sand, saying that he had paid her son for gathering it from the riverbank when, in fact, he had not paid. Kris was distraught so Mini tried to comfort him, saying, "Well, that's how it is, so let it be. Probably that sand will be taken to the grave." Later that day, when she left to take Budi to Sunday school, she saw a crowd gathered around that same neighbor's house, with some people weeping. The man who had taken her sand had climbed a tree to harvest leaves to feed his cows, was electrocuted, and fell to his death. She felt that this was a manifestation of the words she had spoken. She says:

> I have never forgotten this, and it was a lesson to me. My family was always bullied, but I was patient and accepting. And it turned out that my utterances often came true. I am convinced that God is All Knowing and All Just. [...]
>
> I believe in the saying that you reap what you sow. [...] As I said, many of those who slandered me and tortured my children have reaped the "rewards" of all those deeds of theirs. [...] One has gone blind. One of the people who tortured my son was caught in the act of theft and beaten up by a crowd. Another died, and another one broke his leg and is maimed for life. [...] There are many others who got their "just desserts" for their evil deeds to my family.[2]

The logic of karma is somewhat bidirectional – it is comforting because it puts some kind of meaning or cosmic rationale for one's own suffering, which might otherwise seem meaningless, but it also is a sublimated revenge, which allows the satisfaction of seeing others "punished" without having to experience or enact the negatively valenced sensations, emotions, and actions of anger, which can be its own burden.

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[2] This raises also the question of PTSD among perpetrators, and the moral issues involved there, a question beyond the scope of this book.

Bearing Burdens and Being Strong for Others

The idea of a burden (B.I., *beban*) is multivalent in Indonesia. On the one hand, it can be seen as potentially negative for personal well-being and a risk factor for mental illness. Rohani cites this in his reasoning for not marrying Tri, saying, "I don't want to become burdened. It's not that I don't want to marry her, but I've got trauma. I don't want to be burdened by [worries about] the relationship between husband and wife like in the past." For her part, Tri says, "I demand, as a replacement for his previous wife, I'm asking Imam right now to make me a legitimate wife. So far, I've been burdened, in limbo."

At the same time, it is seen as an important skill to be able to bear your burdens with patience and grace, to accept them and be strong for others rather than thinking too much about your plight or expending valuable energy wishing things could be different. This orientation is captured by Indonesian idioms of acceptance (B.I., *nerima*, B.J., *nrimo*), sincere surrender to the will of others and the divine (B.J., *ikhlas, ngalah*), and patience (B.I., *sabar*; Murtisari, 2013).

In this model, significant mental stress and even mental illness may arise when one is "unable to accept" one's God-given destiny (Kloos, 2014) or "thinks too much" (Andajani-Sutjahjo et al., 2007; Kaiser et al., 2015). The more adaptive response is bravery, patience, and obedience to the divine plan. Lisa says, "If there are children facing problem like mine, [my advice is] well, just be patient. It may be just a test for you. It's ok to think about it, but don't be carried away because it will just ruin you." Mini says, "I tell [my children] not to hold grudges, not to want vengeance. I tell them to be patient in facing this problem, because if we are patient, it means we conquer evil." When used in this way, patience has a religious or spiritual connotation that goes beyond an ability to "wait;" in this case, patience is perseverance in the face of physical, emotional, or spiritual calamity, despite difficulty and anxiety. The main components of this persevering patience are being able to restrain initial, more desperate or uncontrolled, responses and obey rules of proper comportment, aim for goodness, be optimistic, seek alternative solutions, be steadfast and consistent, and not complain (El Hafiz et al., 2015). This patience is considered a core personal virtue for Javanese,

Indonesian, and broader Southeast Asian cultures, and a core aspect of faith, in which difficulties will be rewarded or acknowledged by God in time (Goddard, 2001; Sutarto, 2006).

The fruit of this patience may be self-vindication. Tri, for example, ultimately says she doesn't care what people say about her – "let the dogs bark" – she's proud of herself that she has endured the challenges of her life and her children are doing well. She acknowledges that she has brought shame to her family by having two children out of wedlock, but she feels that is her fate, and even though she was treated harshly, she survived and did okay. "I'm proud of myself. Who else would be tough enough? […] I showed that I can handle it. While I was in the position of being a single parent, I was slandered, hated by siblings, and even disliked by parents sometimes. However, I don't take it to heart."

This patient acceptance of burdens seems to be more manageable to the participants when they are experienced as being borne for the benefit of the others (Subandi, 2015). These others can be various; Lanny's brother Edy thinks growing up without knowing whether their father was alive or not turned out to be a good thing. It gave all the children a reason to work hard not to disappointment him when he came back to see them, and most of them became quite successful.

The *Bitter Honey* wives all prioritize their maternal role, drawing strength and purpose from ensuring their children fare well in life. Suciati says:

> I became pregnant, I think, so that I wouldn't drown in my sadness. That's why now, even though my situation is like this, I try to do good […] so that my children can find happiness. That's all.

Doing things for the good of others is highly valued in Indonesian society, encompassed in concepts of duty or obligation (B.I *kewajiban*) and love, compassion, and pity (B.I., *kasihan*), which was among the top ten salient emotions for Indonesian samples (Shaver et al., 2001). Therefore, putting "a bright face" (Wikan, 1990) on suffering is culturally valued, in that it spares others discomfort or suffering, and therefore is also a source of personal pride. After nineteen years of marriage, Suciati still wishes she could enjoy a typical married life with a loving husband.

But since she has not been granted that by fate: "I value myself for the sake of my children."

A focus on others may not necessarily refer to blood kin; in *40 Years*, Lanny and Degung's activism speaks up for those who have no voice, in hopes of ensuring a better future for the next generation.

Activism

As described in Chapter 2, Lanny and Degung were both professed activists prior to their participation in our film projects; both have written and published books or founded organizations that have directly and indirectly addressed and fought back against the injustices they suffered. As Degung says:

> The discrimination [I and others experienced] resonates in my ears all the time. I feel that the impact of '65 was to produce that inequality, which has been really, really harsh sometimes. And that is not allowed to happen to my children. And I promise that to my children, or to the children of Alit [my brother], or the children of Mayun [my sister]. And that's something that I'll fight for until the end.

In her work, Lanny takes as her model characters from *wayang* shadow puppet theater, Bimo and Anoman: "They are strong, honest, down-to-earth, good hearted, sincere. They have dignity. They have courage to help the weak, to defend the truth."

It is perhaps not coincidental that, out of the *40 Years* participants, Lanny and Degung are highly educated and upper-class. Both before and, to a certain extent, after their personal tragedies, they had access to education and monetary resources. This translated into a position of greater strength to "talk back" to stigmatizing labels forced upon them and an ability to access a public platform from which to advocate for the truth of their own experiences. We can compare their activist trajectories with the two "peasant" class characters, Kereta and Mini. Kereta chose silent protest and withdrawal from society along the lines of Balinese social protest (B.B. *ngeb,* Lemelson & Suryani, 2006) and Mini and her children remained targets for ongoing scapegoating decades after 1965.

While large swathes of Indonesia are now in the expanding middle class (Gerke, 2000), it was, until quite recently, a much more stratified and strictly hierarchical society formed by its history, divided into kingdoms with royalty and peasantry, and the vast majority was poor, like Kereta and Mini's families.

Lanny's case suggests that gender identity may also play a part in activism. Lanny has a unique trajectory in that, by becoming a self-declared celibate Buddhist, she has removed herself from the expectations and demands of being a typical Javanese woman, such as getting married and bearing children. This has left her much more time and freedom to pursue activist (and professional and spiritual) activities. Mini, on the other hand, in part, due to her class and economic status, is bound by the gender norms and expectations of poor Javanese women, which means she can't choose her marriage partner, has little education, and little negotiating power, even in her local village while working hand-to-mouth. All of this delimits her power to resist hegemonic narratives about and templates for her life.

This is not to say that characters from the lower classes cannot be mobilized and even, to a certain extent, healed by a move toward activism despite these intersectional hurdles (Crenshaw, 1991). Over the course of the film, Budi experiences a significant change in his political subjectivity (Strauss & Friedman, 2018), moving out from a personal position of isolation and grievance to engage with the social and political world. This happens through some more indirect pathways, such as identification with the ethos of martial arts, and through more direct context with the increasingly vocal and visible activism regarding 1965 that came with increasingly open discourse following the fall of Suharto. Here, his personal development into adolescence (and the increasing sense of agency and power that came with that) intersected with developments in Indonesian cultural and political history. He narrated an encounter he had with a man who abused his brother and wider family where he says:

> I've got more courage now. I finally went back to the old village by myself. First, I met one of the guys who tortured me. He got off his motorbike and asked, "Where are you from, kid?" I revealed my true self: "I'm Kris's brother, the son of Mini." Right away he said, "In that case, let me kill

> you right here." I said, "Go ahead, kill me if you can. You might be able to kill me, but there are other Budis."

This statement is in counterpoint to Budi's younger self, who wept upon experiencing the embodied effects of his exposure to ongoing fear and violence. Here, he seems to have recovered or discovered his sense of an agentic self, in a small but significant way challenging at least one individual in a repressive and violent social order.

Conclusion: Film Participation and Participant Experience

These psychocultural and related themes present in the experiences of participants from all three films connect their varied responses to the extremely difficult and painful circumstances and contexts in which they have found themselves. These connections, across three films of considerably different topics and foci, point to their relevance to wider Indonesian society. When considering the political, cultural, or familial, conditions that shape the everyday lives of Indonesians, some participant experiences of shame, anger, and resilience in reaction to traumatization, violence, and stigmatization might be seen as potentially or even potently generalizable across related communities.

A key reflexive question also arises with regard to researching and presenting these themes: How do feelings of shame, anger, and resilience relate to the VPA ethnographic project? To explain, let us briefly return to participant activism.

Budi and Mini ultimately contextualized their experiences within a broader political movement that connected them with activist networks and perspectives that provide them with emotional support, allows them to work through and move beyond their shame, and also have afforded them access to networks of tangible support like legal and financial help. Their participation in film increased this activity and solidified this identity as Budi, in particular, attended screenings of the documentary film, spoke at conferences, and both met other survivors and joined survivor groups.

In this case, Budi's more activist orientation was starting to emerge pre-participation in filming activities. In other cases, participation in the film may have elicited a more activist or public orientation to participants' personal struggle. For example, during *Bitter Honey* interviews reflecting back on her participation in filming activities, Suciati says, "If you hadn't asked me directly [about my experience], there is no way I would have ever talked about it." And yet, when given a context and framework, she was willing to open up. The experience of being listened to, and of coming in contact with other more activist-oriented women, such as Angrenni, emboldened her. So, when Anggreni asked if Suciati was "brave enough" to attend screening events and give testimony as an "educator" for women throughout Indonesia to know their rights and avoid polygamous and "early" marriage, with her face glowing, Suciati said yes.

The feedback loop of film participation and an emerging activist or public orientation toward the subject matter is just one example of how the VPA process impacts its participants, and perhaps, its findings. This reflexive line of analysis leads us into the third part of the book. Moving forward we will detail how the theory and practice of visual psychological anthropology informs the central themes of the films and this book. We will discuss how material related to these themes are documented, ordered, and connected during the research and filmmaking process, and how they are filtered through the cultural norms and habitus of participants as well as the filmmaker's understanding and imagination, to result in a narrative ethnographic film. Finally, we will discuss how films made according to the VPA methodology can illustrate some of these points and make them accessible and understandable to a broader audience outside of anthropology.

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Part IV

A VPA Approach to Film as Process

7

Visual Psychological Anthropology in the Field

All film is artifice; even person-centered films that tell "real life" stories are crafted. Through a closer look at film as process, this part of the book demonstrates how a VPA approach influenced the final shape and feel of *40 Years*, *Bitter Honey*, and *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2009, 2015, and 2012, respectively). We discuss the methodology, events, quandaries, and insights emerging at three stages of filmmaking: in the field, in editing and post-production, and after the film's release. This chapter, on VPA in the field, addresses Javanese and Balinese psychocultural beliefs, practices, and habitus and how they intersect with our interview method. We then address our own subjectivity and turn to the specifics of filmic representation with regards to the impact the camera has on participants and questions of visual reflexivity. This focus on the visual and sensory aspects of filmmaking is carried through to the following chapter, on editing and post-production. There we discuss narration, editing for emotional impact, and a cinematic toolkit for ethnographic representation including archives, art, and sound.

The final chapter of Part IV is on ethics. While ethics are considered throughout the entire filmmaking process, some missteps only become

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evident in retrospect, after the film is done. Furthermore, many of the ethical points discussed are in regard to film screenings and distribution so the topic is placed after production and editing in the approximate chronology of our filmmaking.

Parts II and III dealt with the ethnographic content and theoretical analysis; Part IV discusses the craft and strategy of filmmaking. But while these parts are separate in the book, in practice, the method and the findings are mutually supportive. The following chapter on editing, for example, demonstrates how the iterative process of finding and developing a coherent narrative helped home in on what was truly at stake for participants. In this chapter, the strategies of longitudinal person-centered interviewing both allowed for meaningful discussion of participant experiences of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization and provided insight into Javanese and Balinese psychocultural responses to challenging events.

Adapted PCE Interviews as Primary Field Method

Psychological anthropology addresses the structural and superstructural but does so via the personal, experiential, and subjective. Therefore, while other genres of visual anthropology can be oriented to the observational (Grimshaw & Ravetz, 2009), the sensory (Castaing-Taylor, 2009), or the material (Brown, 1967; Jell-Bahlsen, 1994), VPA uses interviews as a major structuring element. The method is a psychoanalytically based format known as person-centered ethnography (PCE), adapted for film. PCE uses longitudinal, open-ended, semi-structured interviews that allow participants to reveal salient aspects of individual subjective experience and phenomenology (Hollan, 2005; Levy & Hollan, 2015). As described throughout this book, we have repeatedly found that new and often contradictory – or at least, much more nuanced – material only comes after multiple interviews and film shoots, and more often than not, this new material provides a critical perspective on what is at stake for each person (Fig. 7.1).

Fig. 7.1 Suciati being interviewed

The interview setting, particularly if filmed, is an artificial environment alien to the daily flow of experience. Even for those participants familiar with interviews on mass media, the form and length of PCE can be daunting. The basic methodological premise is that revisiting topics of significance for participants over the course of many sessions and over many years, will move past this fieldwork and filmmaking artifice – or, exploit certain components of this artifice – to get to the "truth" of personal experience. While the ends may not be therapeutic for participant nor researcher, and PCE disclosure is not equated with therapeutic disclosure (Hollan, 1997), the areas of interest and the means do overlap with psychoanalysis. The ethnographer is:

> [A]ttempting, in much the way an analyst would, to use the open-ended interview format to elicit behavior … revealing of important psychological issues and concerns. To examine, for example: how wish and desire

> may reinforce or contradict moral conscience, the extent to which interviewees are consciously aware of conflicting desires or goals; the ways in which interviewees avoid some topics of discussion but actively promote others; who or what interviewees identify with and who or what they are repelled by; the extent to which interviewees assume responsibility for different aspects of their behavior, and so include them within the scope of their conscious "selves," or attribute some responsibility to beings or forces outside their conscious control. (Hollan, 2005, pp. 462–463)

For many, the experience with or, indeed, the very idea of "talk therapy" and, hence, an interview method drawn from it, may be unfamiliar. This was certainly the case for our participants as psychotherapy, while on the rise, remains uncommon in Indonesia. The psychocultural concepts and assumptions that support the process, such as "authenticity" (Handler, 1986; Theodossopoulos, 2013), "catharsis" (Scheff, 1979; Taylor, 2003), or the idea of "uncovering" and "contemplating" sorrow in order to "get it out" (Wikan, 1990), are likewise culturally specific.

Furthermore, being interviewed repeatedly and at length in front of a camera about personal experience and intimate matters – in the case of this book, traumatic experience, violence, and stigmatization – is certainly a culturally and personally unusual or unique experience for most participants. This VPA application of PCE for film makes the differences between the therapeutically inspired interview method and actual psychotherapy even clearer. In therapeutic conversations, both questioner and respondent (i.e., therapist and client) understand the conversation and relationship to be that of a dyad. This sense of dyad may to a certain extent hold in typical PCE, if the interviewer is fluent in the language – while certainly the respondent is aware of their participation in research, the conversation could conceivably unfold with just anthropologist (with notepad and recorder, say) and respondent present.

In visual person-centered ethnography, there can be additional performative layers to disclosure, especially if, in addition to the anthropologist, a film crew is sitting nearby. Here, as opposed to a private therapeutic immersion in disclosure and self-discovery, the participant is keenly aware of how their responses relate to the expectations of the anthropologists, film team members, family and community (members of which

might be present for the filmed interview). Even if no one else is physically present in the interview beyond interviewer and interviewee, the film or video camera acts as a physical metonym for these broader "audiences." This awareness of such real or potential viewers underscores any potential disclosure. A participant's pre-established habitus, their conventions for social interaction, emotional expression, image management, and personal disclosure – and different models for behavior onscreen – are then filtered through the VPA/PCE process. The given responses of participants, who may have been subject to past or ongoing trauma, violence, and/or stigmatization, are colored by these psychocultural models and conventions during any interview. They are also colored by conscious or unconscious psychological processes – if not direct symptomatic sequelae – implicated in coping with, remembering, and recounting such traumatic or painful events. The VPA method, then, both operates in a space that may be unfamiliar to participants, but also allows for the opening up of that space and of participant revelation.

The Nature of "Truth" in VPA Interview Material

These contextual factors complicate the underlying working assumptions (on the part of the filmmaker or the film viewer) about "truthful" disclosure, complications which dovetail with long-standing debates over "truth" in the ethnographic endeavor (Banks, 1988; Blumenberg, 1977; Heider, 2006).

There is an enduring tension between seeing ethnography as a positivist search for "the truth" versus as an open-ended exploration of the contextual and relativistic intentional worlds of the participants. In the former, the truth is something to uncover or discover, while in the latter veracity and meaning are co-created through the processes of production. Contemporary social scientists, including those working in visual media, may often see themselves as espousing the latter position, whereby "a post-positivist sociology should not be concerned with the accuracy of data, as much as with the ability of that data, to provide "a perspective on the social world from a subject situated within it" (Holliday, 2001, as

cited in Pink, 2000, p. 517). But these two orientations are not mutually exclusive: To a certain extent, accurate data is needed to properly understand a participant's situated perspective on his or her social world and to craft theories or narratives supported by that contextualizing data. We embrace aspects of both positions and find the possibilities of truth in the developing and sometimes fluctuating narrative constructions of our participants.

Anticipated shifts in and increasing depth of participants' narratives are woven into the PCE method, which assumes:

> that what people are willing and able to tell us about themselves changes as our relationships with them deepen and evolve over time. We learn what part of people's minds and behaviors they have conscious access to and what part they do not, and how these parts are dynamically related. (Hollan, 2005, p. 465)

A VPA approach requires openness and flexibility, especially in addressing and understanding difficult material that arises in interviews. Particularly when dealing with topics related to trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization, material may often be kept hidden, since it is experienced as potentially shameful, triggering, or even dangerous. Individuals who have done something socially disvalued or socially sanctioned, or who have lost or fear losing status in their communities, may be consciously or unconsciously motivated to monitor self-presentation that may or may not align with their lived reality – both a disguising of one truth and a revelation of another. Their impression management in interviews will be deeply influenced by, and disclose, psychocultural norms of sociality and self-presentation.

Indonesian Psychocultural Factors in PCE: Minimizing Conflict and Maintaining Harmony

In over a century of anthropological and promotional literature, Javanese and Balinese societies have been portrayed as "harmonious" or "valuing harmony" to such an extent that the word has become a trope that risks occluding rather than illuminating real-life social behavior around

conflict that does occur (Anderson, 1965; Columbijn, 2001; Wikan, 1990). Maintaining social harmony does remain an important value in social interaction for many Balinese and Javanese, yet more recent studies depict considerable nuances to this value when enacted through interaction. Lestari et al. (2013) articulate the differences between "essential" and "pseudo" harmony. Essential harmony is identified as maintaining connections and compatibility by resolving conflicts peacefully through processes of empathy and togetherness. Pseudo-harmony is maintaining the *appearance* of a peaceful relationship by burying conflicts. This latter concept may be fruitfully illustrated by a Balinese pun shared during our fieldwork: when coming to a decision in a group setting, a person may call out "*Ju!*" This is short for both "*Setuju*" (I agree) and "*Meju*" (bullshit), which is to say that consensus may be formally achieved and harmony maintained on the surface while personal dissent still roils. Lestari et al. argue that this value of harmony, whether it is "essential" or "pseudo," teaches Indonesians to mask or avoid direct conflict.

Building on this, certain strategies have been identified for Indonesians (primarily but not solely Javanese) contending with acts with "conflict potential," such as an offering or invitation: these are delay; mitigation strategies of indirectness that leave the interpretation of the hearer's response or a quest for further information up to the initial speaker (as the one "responsible for initiating a potentially uncomfortable situation"; Basthomi, 2014, p. 1140); and "white lies" – all intended to maintain the face of, and preserve harmony between, both parties via a process of mutual adjustment and attunement (Basthomi, 2014). Geertz (1976, p. 244) discusses this Javanese concept of indirectness (B.J., *etok-etok*), as opposed to the Indonesian *bohong*, which maps more closely to English definition of outright lying. His respondent describes a scenario:

> "Suppose I go off south and you see me go. Later my son asks you, 'Do you know where my father went?' And you say no, *etok-etok* you don't know." I asked him why I should *etok-etok*, as there seemed to be no reason for lying, and he said, "Oh you just *etok-etok*. You don't have to have a reason".

In this case, indirectness is a preferred default mode; when the impact of a direct disclosure cannot be predicted, it is better to simply avoid an answer. This circuitous dynamic was also addressed by some of our Balinese film participants in reflexive fieldwork conversations, as in the following excerpt from a conversation among Sadra's coworkers, who feature as community members commenting on polygamy in *Bitter Honey*:

> DAMAI: We have to be polite. Oh, you have to be really slow about it. You have to go around and around first, and then you can get to the point. Sometimes in Bali you have to find trust. Then we can tell someone. If we tell someone straight out, it's looking for trouble. So, it's indeed difficult.
>
> …
>
> DEGUNG: [W]e in Bali, if we're criticizing, we don't want to be honest. … For the social, for harmony, we have to lie … according to Balinese culture, is it lying or is it truthfulness? Which one? What's that about?
>
> WAYAN: That's it, both of them have to be close to each other. Lying and truth both have to exist. Lying for our own good.
>
> DEGUNG: For peace.
>
> WAYAN: We have to be able to lie for something good.
>
> DEGUNG: In Bali that's allowed, yes? That's a good point, I think. It's okay to lie for the good thing.

"Untruthfulness" can then be a form of "truth" for Balinese talking about difficult subjects. In "Person, Time and Conduct in Bali," Geertz concluded that in Bali, "all social acts are first and foremost designed to please – to please the gods, to please the audience, to please the other, to please the self" (Geertz, 1966, p. 400). For him, this concern with the surface, essentially rendered each Balinese a *dramatis personae*: "[T] he masks they wear, the stage they occupy, the parts they play … constitute not the façade but the substance of things, not least the self" (Geertz, 1974, p. 35). In Geertz's analysis, the Balinese approach to sociality was amoral ("to please as beauty pleases, not as virtue pleases"). This decades-old conclusion resonates with some contemporary cross-cultural research, where out-group interlocutors get the sense that Indonesians are "not telling the truth" or "not fully disclosing" in social interaction (Panggabean, 2004).

Other anthropologists have argued against this "superficiality" as a misunderstanding; rather, in a Balinese moral world, it is a social and personal duty and virtue to "read the personality" of your interlocutor (Pannggabean, 2004) manage your own emotions and mask your own feelings in public or social interaction in order to promote social harmony (Wikan, 1990). As depicted through her ethnographic narrative of a young Balinese girl grieving the death of her fiancé, Wikan (1990) concludes that this social and personal duty to keep a "bright face" despite personal suffering operates within a social and cosmic belief system where negative emotions such as anger weaken the life force and threaten social harmony by inviting retaliation. Fear of affront is ever-present (and is a cultural factor involved in the shaping of obsessive–compulsive disorder in Indonesia; Lemelson, 2003); hence an appropriate response to a "bad question" (i.e., one that puts the hearer or respondent in an awkward situation where an answer risks affront) is silence or avoidance. Masking one's feelings for selfish ends is wrong but masking one's feelings to promote social harmony is a profound moral virtue. This provides a different perspective on what Geertz called "stage fright," the fear "that the public performance of this etiquette will be botched" (Geertz, 1966, p. 402). Geertz took the real fear to be that any misstep would reveal the individual behind the "standardized" public mask. Wikan, by contrast, might consider the fear to be that of a moral transgression and its unpredictable, and possibly destabilizing or dangerous, personal, social, or even cosmic repercussions.

This broad orientation to potentially upsetting topics of discussion is embodied through behaviors around "shame," discussed at length in Chapter 6. As described, each respondent has one or more aspects of their life experience about which they feel shame. So how did this psychocultural toolkit for preventing or mitigating conflict and minimizing shame play out during the process of person-centered interviews? When considering the way respondent replies changed in tenor over the course of longitudinal interviewing for the three films, it is fair to say that we encountered strategies of delay, indirectness, and putting a (metaphorical and literal) "bright face" on topics of great pain. Here, we provide three examples.

Example: Moving Past Templates of Harmony to Lived Experience of Marriage in *Bitter Honey*

We first filmed Darma's wives in 2009; at this point, he allowed their participation as long as he was present. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, all appeared cheerful in the interviews and stated that their husband was equitable, fair, kind, and gentle. In the subsequent summer shoot, Darma agreed to have his wives interviewed alone. The previous accounts soon began to crack, and the light of their actual lived experience began to shine through. By the third year of interviews, there was an almost complete reversal in their accounts; now in their estimation, Darma played favorites with wives and children, often failed to support them financially, and instrumentally maintained control over several wives through threats or actual physical violence.

After many years, some wives were forthright about the fact that, prior to filming, Darma had instructed them to highlight certain aspects of their experience as co-wives and to downplay or avoid others. Interviews began in 2009; in 2013, when discussing the film, our Indonesian colleagues – therapist Ninik Supartini and Balinese women's advocate Luh Putu Anggreni – asked Suciati how she felt about the film in progress. Suciati said the only thing that gave her pause was her husband's potential reaction to the material: when the family first entered into the film project, he told them not to mention anything negative. Anggreni joked, "First, he told you all to lie, and now you're all telling the truth!" Suciati nodded in agreement and laughed. This instruction to say only positive things can, however, be considered along the lines of masking conflict to avoid shame or disgrace and preserve marital harmony instead of simple lying; it is of further note that in the moment of discussion, the past "duplicity" is addressed through jokes and laughter, to soften a potentially awkward confrontation.

Example: Obscuring Real Reason for Budi's Placement in Orphanage

In the first meeting with the research team, Budi framed his placement in the orphanage as an educational decision based on the fact that his family could not afford to send him to public school (in Indonesia, there is a fee for public schools, which keeps many of the poorest from attending). While the family *was* facing financial hardship, this explanation did not begin to encompass the complexity of the violence and strife in Budi's home and social life, in fact more significant deciding factors, the details of which emerged later. This can similarly be considered an attempt to avoid potentially painful topics that would bring conflict to light. Here, cultural strategies of indirectness interact with contexts of social and political peril. As another participant in the *40 Years* research explained: "Why would we tell someone our activities? Who knows how they could use that information? Of course, we "*etok-etok*" so people won't know things about us." This mobilization of *etok-etok* ties everyday culturally shaped strategies of conversational indirection acts of secrecy designed to prevent being made the victim of further violence or stigma. In this case, the family's endangered social positioning and internal conflict only emerged in later interviews, when they began to trust that they did not have to fear disclosure, and felt increasingly confident that their story would be received in a compassionate and understanding manner.

Example: Indirect Reveal in *Thorn*

As opposed to being purposefully masked or downplayed, some important aspects of participant experience may emerge slowly because, due to psychocultural strategies of indirectness and delay, the filmmaker/anthropologist may not even recognize disclosures as such. Once key areas of concern are recognized, this shift can then be reflected in the questions asked and attention given to different areas of inquiry.

The *Thorn* interviews began as part of a project on neuropsychiatric disorders in Indonesia, and so from 1999 to 2002, interviews with Imam and his wife focused on his psychiatric symptoms and the family's

responses to them. As their level of trust and our degree of understanding of their situation deepened, material about their marital difficulties began to emerge that raised further questions for the team beyond the initial frame. It was only once we began to understand that the couple's marital strife circled around the legitimacy of their union, their stigmatization, and how that put Tri in a highly compromised position, that we started asking questions regarding these issues. It was only several years after we had begun interviews that the couple disclosed the more disturbing information about Tri's sex work and rape, and Imam's implication in these.

Although the film was edited to make this narrative unfold more or less directly, it unfolded quite differently for us. The disclosure of Tri's sex work was much more roundabout and difficult to interpret in the moment. It was only in collaborative analysis of the footage that the actual situation became evident, when we began to recognize a pattern of allusions to the men who might be interested in Tri or who could help the family solve their financial problems with their friendship. Once we caught on to this, we began to ask more explicit questions that garnered more explicit answers. Our slow recognition of vital information dramatically reoriented how we viewed and understood what we were hearing and observing.

This slow disclosure via PCE mirrors (although, as described above, is not being equated to) disclosure in therapeutic settings; many survivors will not immediately share their history of abuse, but rather cite another more immediate problem for discussion first (e.g., needing help to control panic attacks) and only disclose abuse much later (Good et al., 1982; Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008). Indonesian therapy clients in particular may need a significant amount of reassurance and encouragement to speak (Ampuni, 2005), so disclosure may take even longer. While cultural norms and psychological processes impact what participants discloses about themselves, there are also more individualized personal boundaries. Participants may assert their privacy for personal reasons, and of course rightly so – they are under no obligation to "tell all" and are entitled to make decisions according to their comfort level, especially as they weigh the potential future negative consequences of major disclosures. We return to this issue in Chapter 9, where we further

contemplate ethical issues surrounding our work with those who have suffered violence, trauma, and stigmatization.

As these examples show, in interviews, it was often those domains that explicitly revealed conflict and shame or broke deeply held social conventions – in other words, domains that were truly at stake – that were at first unmentioned or indirectly expressed. So, if we had simply taken people's initial accounts and stopped after a year of shooting, for example, we would have never understood what was really going on in each family, nor would we be any wiser about the topics of inquiry for each film. At the same time, the process of recognizing such cues and indirections also taught us much about the psychocultural management of difficult situations in Indonesia and pointed out the need to interpret participant statements within the context of cultural communication, history, local and national politics, and the idiosyncracitic personal characteristics and verbal and non-verbal expressions of each participant.

Psychological Truth: Memory, Self-Protection, and Paradox

In addition to Indonesian psychocultural strategies of conflict avoidance, another complicating factor to "truthful revelation" in these three films is that many of the narratives in the three films are retrospective. *40 Years* is most explicitly about memory, in that subjects at different ages are asked to reflect on how their early experiences shaped them, but both *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn* rely heavily on retrospective accounts of courtship and marriage.

Remembering is never simply retrieving whole cloth and recounting a past emotion or event. Memories are deeply shaped by present emotional and social context and neurocognitive processes (Maddox et al., 2019). Unfolding stories of trauma, violence, or stigmatization, in particular, may come out differently upon repeated tellings due to psychological processes of coping. Participants remember different things, and tell themselves and others different things, based on their comfort level, their present mental state, and their need to create coherence and meaning

out of their often chaotic or painful experiences (Konner, 2007). So, it matters when a memory is being recalled, what methods are being used to trigger or activate memory, and for what purpose (Suleiman, 2002). In the intersubjective process of generating or recording memories for an ethnographic film, memories are being reconstructed in a collaborative process and may certainly be influenced by the fieldwork context. Still, first-person narration of past events may provide insight into psychological strategies for coping with stressful or adverse environments.

Example: Lisa's Memories of Childhood

For example, in a bittersweet moment in the second half of *Thorn*, Lisa has, in effect, been abandoned by both her parents. She is also very upset about the way her mother's new partner, Wiji, verbally and physically abuses Tri during the rare times they do get together. Lisa says tearfully, "When I was little, I never saw my parents bicker." Viewers know this isn't technically true, as much of the first half of the film is comprised of Imam and Tri sharing many of the things they argue about and recalling episodes of severe distress over the state of their marriage, often with the young Lisa present. For example, as Tri talked about needing to fend off Imam with a knife when he tried to force her into unwanted sexual activity, Lisa was lying quietly on the floor nearby. Therefore, while Lisa was present for some difficult and graphic interviews, she doesn't seem to recall them, or the incidents they describe, later. The interview team does not remark upon this, but clearly, Lisa's memory of the past in that moment doesn't conform to the "reality" of what has been documented on screen.

At a young age, Lisa's coping methods may have magnified positive aspects of her social environment and minimized negative aspects. This positive spin on the past may be to a certain extent protective (Blum, 2005). If she had to acknowledge all that was going on in her family, she may have had a worse outcome in terms of mental health (Vignato, 2012). In a case like this, for us, the factual past doesn't matter so much. We are not trying to create a definitive version of

"what really happened." What's more interesting is the construction of the memory, the meaning that construction has in the present, and how that construction of memory motivates and influences behavior. There is a distinction between the vicissitudes and unreliability of an intersubjectively constructed personal memory, and the purposeful construction or suppression of social–historical memory on a wider political scale. While the latter must be contested for the sake of justice, the former provides insight into someone's psychological functioning, schemas, and understandings of the world so that idiosyncratic memories might be framed within larger meaning systems.

Defense Mechanisms

People are not just logical purveyors of information. Either consciously or unconsciously, they shape the narrative of their life based on how they think their real or imagined interlocutor will view them, to present themselves in a positive light (in psychology, this is known as the social desirability effect [Furnham, 1986; Tomaka et al., 1992]). With regard to shameful or guilt-producing emotions or behavior, they may also engage in certain psychological defense mechanisms – avoiding the inner tension that arises when there is conflict between norms, self-image, and one's desires or behavior via strategies such as minimization, denial, repression, or displacement.

Example: Imam's Rationalizations

Close readings of some interviews point to such defense mechanisms. For example, when Imam discusses his wife selling her sexual favors to men in the neighborhood (or, having them sold), he says, "Don't judge a prostitute, as a good housewife is not always better than a prostitute.… A good housewife can even be much worse than a prostitute." While this comment may seem offhand, it contains Imam's awareness of his interlocutor. Implicit is an understanding of a normative negative perception of sex work; and by extension, an understanding that many people might have a negative perception of him, who has either forced or condoned

Tri's sex work. By saying "don't judge a prostitute," he is able to at once anticipate the interviewer or viewer's scandalized or upset response to their situation, put the blame more on Tri for being the prostitute, deflect his own wrongdoing by affecting a gracious or generous attitude toward her, and assume the moral high ground with regard to the (inter)viewer's assumed reaction (and perhaps even slip in a sly accusation at his former wife).

Psychological Truth

Clearly, psychological truth is not straightforward. The shaping of memories can serve as self-protection against adverse circumstances; defense mechanisms can provide protection against outside judgment and self-recrimination. In thinking about person-centered ethnographic interviewing and "truth" onscreen, there is a notable difference between gathering cultural material and *psycho*cultural material. It can be considered that there are "accurate" accounts of cultural practices and behaviors – what is done, and what this means to the people doing it. There have been infamous episodes in anthropology's history where anthropologists were given a "false" account of culture, such as came to light in the extended Margaret Mead/Derek Freeman controversy where Freeman asserted Mead had been "hoaxed" by her informants (Côté, 2000). Indeed, respondents may have numerous reasons to provide inaccurate or incomplete information to anthropologist "outsiders," such as to preserve privacy around sacred rituals (Speed, 2006), and, of course, there may be disagreement within a culture about what things mean (Barnes & DeMallie, 2005). But when interviewing with an interest toward emotional truth, our understanding of "accuracy" must shift (Fig. 7.2).

By their very nature, emotions can be contradictory; a fundamental premise of narrative-based research methods is that there is no single absolute "empirical truth" to the emotional experience of relationships, and that, for many, psychological "truth" is of equal value to factual "truth" (Aldridge, 2015). So, for example, when the *Bitter Honey* wives report being both afraid of and in love with their husband, or when

Fig. 7.2 Suciati asks how "truthful" she should be

Tri reports being both infuriated by and pitying of Imam, they must be taken at their word; love and romance can co-exist with exploitation and domination, both equally real and valid for the women personally. Ambivalence and paradox are natural and expected, and indeed, according to person-centered ethnography described above, such "conflicting desires" become valuable information about an individual within a culture.

Leaving, Returning, and the Benefits of Longitudinality

Given these shifts and facets, the importance of longitudinality cannot be understated. Any ethnography is the condensation of many hours of conversation and observation. The films discussed in this book were shot over the course of multiple years – some almost a decade. We have now been working with Lisa and Budi from childhood through to their middle adulthood, even though the films in which they feature are long finished. By leaving and returning multiple times over the course of many years (according to academic schedules and other contingencies),

the research team became a consistent object in our participants' personal and social worlds and slowly built a foundation of trust (O'Reilly, 2012). Throughout this long-term working relationship, we tried our hardest to be trust*worthy* – to follow through on our commitments, to be clear about our plans for representing and distributing the material gathered. On the rare occasions when this trust broke down, the fractures were upsetting and disrupting for all involved (see Chapter 9 for an in-depth discussion of this). The context of these longer-term relationships created deep and lasting bonds with our participants that afforded them the time and space for a forthcoming narrativization of experience and expression of emotion.

Example: Sadra's Remorse

As discussed above, it may be that either due to the anthropologist's status as an outsider, or due to the desire to keep more embarrassing, unpleasant, or painful material a secret, or both, the full complexity of a situation remains purposefully obscured; in this case, the decision to disclose certain things comes gradually as trust is built. However, it may also be that certain aspects of a character's situation emerge gradually for the participant him- or herself, coming into his or her consciousness as the project progresses.

In cases of repression, some truths are cathected to painful memories or processes and therefore remain repressed in the subconscious. Psychoanalytic theory recommends talking about an incident or an issue repeatedly in order to "make the unconscious, conscious" (Posner, 2011); it may be that repeated person-centered interviewing has a similar effect and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, a stated goal of such interviewing is uncovering precisely this kind of "unconscious material". The process of repeated person-centered interviews, that often touch on or begin with already familiar areas of questioning, can bring things into conscious awareness or uncover material that has never been fully articulated, even in the participant's own mind. In this way, the process of filmmaking can lead to new epiphanies or new frameworks for experience that can be surprising for participants themselves.

For example, in the second year of the *Bitter Honey* project, Purniasih asked us directly for some support in ending Sadra's abusive behavior. We discussed what she understood her options to be, including having Alit, Sadra's boss, talk to him about his problematic behavior, which she attempted, or approaching the head of her village to initiate a community intervention, which she emphatically declined.

During our field visit the following year, she once again asked us for help. By this time, we had contacted and interviewed the human rights and feminist lawyer, Luh Putu Anggreni, who was quite familiar with such situations. She suggested we introduce her to Purniasih; we did, and she conducted an interview, depicted in the film. After this interview, Anggreni suggested we conduct an informal "intervention" with the couple at Alit's factory. We documented this process for potential inclusion in the film. During the mediation, Anggreni explained that both physical and emotional spousal abuse were now considered crimes, punishable with up to five years in prison. Sadra seemed surprised. Immediately after the mediation, we decided to interview Sadra one-on-one, to get his personal reflections on what had just transpired in the hopes of gaining insight into the experience of gendered violence in a polygamous marriage.

Somewhat shaken, Sadra began to connect his problems with his wife and son to the problems he experienced with his own father. Sadra reflected at length on his personal experience of witnessing domestic abuse as a child; his father beat his mother, this behavior enraged him, and yet he found himself almost helplessly repeating similar patterns. I asked him "Given that you hated your father for what he did, how does this relate to your relationship with your own son?" On camera, he had the realization that as he came to hate his father for the abuse of his mother, his own son might come to hate him, too. Upon making this connection, Sadra began to weep. Through his tears he said:

> I can't forgive my own father, even now. Because he was harsh … But I myself have been harsh with my wife and kids. So, I am worried. "Just wait until you're old," my son must definitely feel that way. That's always

Fig. 7.3 Interviewing Sadra and Purniasih's son Artawan

> on my mind. I tell my wife, "If my son doesn't take care of me, don't wash away my piss or shit, just leave me there and let me die."[1]

It seems likely that Sadra may have been aware of the connections between his own behavior and his father's behavior – as encapsulated in Balinese idea of karmic inheritance (B. I. *keturunan*), for example, which attributes one's own traits, behaviors, and life events to deeds done by family members in previous generations (Keyes & Daniel, 1983). But despite drawing a heritable connection between his and his father's deeds, he may have repressed the full emotional impact of that connection because it was too painful. The timing of our discussion, and some gently probing questions, may have fully brought it to conscious awareness (Fig. 7.3).

In terms of supporting personal insight into behavioral dynamics with regards to violence and trauma or other relevant issues, longitudinal

[1] In a separate interview, Sadra's son said although he is sometimes upset by his father's behavior, he, in fact, still plans to take care of him in his old age.

person-centered interviews may give participants space to make connections about their social and historical conditions that allow them to develop a new set of understandings about their social world. This may be particularly the case when the conditions of their social world strongly limit critical questioning of their own social positioning, and open conversation on the topic with peers or local community is generally forbidden.

Emphasizing Shared Human Experience

Cultural models structure ideas, mentalities, and values that are influential, but not determinative, on personal experience, personal comportment, or personal disclosures. Furthermore, as Wikan (1990) points out, cultures provide norms but that doesn't mean these are easy to follow nor that they are followed closely. Cultural models give personal experience and behavior a particular shape and texture, but in its lived reality, subjective experience is not so schematized and individual behavior may or may not conform to these cultural models. As Kleinman and Kleinman (1991, p. 293) say, "Because of the psychophysiological grounding of experience, cultural codes cannot make of each of us precisely what they will."

This is not to minimize the role cultural competence can play in conducting sensitive interviews or analyzing the material (Kirmayer, 2012; Lende, 2009), but rather than exoticizing cultural differences, we might seek shared human experience that evokes a resonance (Kleinman & Benson, 2006; Wikan, 1990). The PCE interview can be seen as a space where social cues and norms can be interrogated to create a new sense of authenticity (Smith et al., 2015), helping both ethnographer and interviewee to get past orienting cultural models and frameworks to "understand others and be understood" (Hollan, 2008), which might ultimately result in the revelation of more personally meaningful material.

Performative Disclosures

This personal material is yet elicited and shared in a performative context. As introduced above, the idea of performativity points to the awareness of an audience; but following Austin (1975) and Butler (1988), performativity also references verbal and social processes of subject formation which instantiate what they appear to be describing. In other words, any description or representation of an experience or identity category is helping to construct or produce that experience or identity, which can then solidify through repetition and shared evaluation. In the context of person-centered ethnography adapted for film, where participant responses, narratives, and behavior can be loosely considered to be performances, either for an immediate interlocutor, an imagined film audience, or both, performativity asks us to think how the performance creates the role and subject in a dialectical way. Here we consider how interviewer, available narrative templates, and cultural conventions of emotional disclosure impact the tone, tenor, and content of participant narrative and disclosure.

Considering the Interviewer

Expanding the conversation on ethnographic pursuit of "truths," clearly what participants choose to reveal changes based on who they are talking to, in everyday life and the fieldwork encounter. How I, as the anthropologist, fit into the participants' representational system – who they think I am and what my project is about – will inform the disclosures they make; in psychology and ethnography, this is known as the expectancy effect (Berg & Derlega, 1987; Bernard, 2018). Their responses, however, are also informed by a local habitus of interaction: what is deemed socially appropriate according to psychocultural norms of deference and hierarchy. As Degung explains, the material gained in different interviews depends on who is doing the interview.

> If Bu (Mrs.) Suryani [a female Balinese psychiatrist] interviewed Pak (Mr.) Kereta, the result would be different. Do you understand? Then,

> if Pak Mahar [a male Javanese psychiatrist] interviewed him, the result would be different again. That's typical for us in Bali. It depends on who we are speaking with. If it's you who invites him, it will be different again. That's it, we have to admit that. It's just honest. We're not making it up, we're just honest.

It might be assumed that participants could feel more comfortable talking to an interviewer from their own ethnicity, culture, and/or class (Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000). This may certainly be true for some; we opened the book with "Mariana" (Chapter 1), who was so uncomfortable being interviewed by a white American that we had to end the interview. We included team members from the participants' culture whenever possible in the interviews for these films, but the "insider" was not necessarily the interlocutor who would get the most "accurate" information. In *40 Years*, being an American coming from outside the networks of violence, surveillance, and judgment against those associated with the PKI helped make Kereta comfortable enough to disclose the violence and fear he experienced. Similarly, some of the participants in *Bitter Honey* seemed more comfortable with a foreign-run crew, since they felt they would face scrutiny and judgment from a fellow Balinese. In the case of *Thorn*, the production was initially focused on transcultural psychiatric research, and a psychiatrist (Mahar) was involved, which may have encouraged the family to speak more frankly.

Narrative Templates

A key component of contemporary ethnographic research is revealing its "constructedness" and acknowledging any data as a partial truth gleaned through situated relationships (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Ruby, 1977; Strathern, 2004). But of course, "constructedness" is not just on the part of the anthropologist/filmmaker crafting an ethnographic depiction of individuals informed by certain scholarly ideas. According to psychocultural norms or personal boundaries, film participants are also actively constructing what is to be depicted on screen via different methods available to them, such as what they choose to reveal and the rhetorical strategies they use. The participant is always interpreting and negotiating

the ethnographic filmmaking process (what it means to participate, what kind of impact it might have, etc.) based on their own bodies of knowledge, adopting culturally available narrative templates or strategies. In doing this, they may call not just upon models of image management and sociality but models for family life, relationships, and personal experience they have encountered in local, national, or globalized discourse. We heard our participants compare their stories to those of shadow puppet characters and heroines in famous novels read in school. Their understanding of how to frame their own experience for the camera may also likely be influenced by available film media, which, for many Indonesians, includes local soap operas, imported Korean dramas, Bollywood films, and global reality shows. Participants may be consciously or unconsciously intrigued by the idea of recreating a genre of film they have heretofore consumed, being part of something exciting and dramatic rather than factually "true." We have had respondents ask the research team, "Should we tell it like it is or should we make it up a little bit?" Just as filmmakers, in seeking to gather compelling visual and auditory content of the participant in order to make an emotionally compelling story might be biased toward certain interview or B-roll content, so respondents might be trying to dramatically amplify the stories of their lives.

This evokes an inherent "performativity" in documentary film. Yet, just because you are "making it up a little bit" doesn't mean you won't reach the "truth" of the situation. Some have argued that even the most self-consciously performative ethnographic documentaries, known as "metafictions" where participants are asked to act out scenarios, can "mak[e] true claims about real things" (Toth, 2021). The best-known innovator of metafiction in ethnographic film was Jean Rouch, who most notably used the technique in his films *Chronicle of a Summer* (Rouch & Morin, 1961), *The Human Pyramid* (Rouch, 1961), and *Jaguar* (Rouch, 1967). In the first, French individuals talk about culture, economics, and personal experience; in the second, a group of white and black lycée students in the Ivory Coast reflect on race relations and act out different "made-up" scenarios; in the third film, which appears to be ethnography but is in fact a drama loosely scripted with input from participants, three men from Niger travel to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Rouch clearly

frames these films as "experiments" by appearing on camera; setting out the parameters within the first scenes; incorporating the screening of the film to for participants; and including the "before" and "after" of the story. Rouch champions this method because the camera "becomes a kind of psychoanalytic stimulant, which lets people do things they wouldn't otherwise do" (Levin, 1971, p. 137). But just because they wouldn't otherwise do it doesn't mean it doesn't have a deeply felt resonance to the conditions and contradictions of their lives. And the camera can act as a "psychoanalytic stimulant" even outside the method of metafiction.

Curhat

In some circumstances, participants may be telling a story they've told many times before. At other times, it is as though the truth suddenly comes pouring out, spilling beyond the previously established boundaries of what is appropriate to discuss in a direct address or appeal. While both have a use or purpose in VPA, there is a palpable difference between well-rehearsed narratives and unexpected epiphanies. In the former circumstance, as people tell and retell the story of their experience, the narrative "hardens" into a particular version, often buttressed by interlocutor response, which, over time, may take on an almost mythic, detached quality (Malkki, 1995).

The latter is typically more charged with emotion and can yield insights for both the participant and the viewer. Spontaneous, emotionally forceful revelation also has a place in Indonesian social life; cultural models for maintaining exterior harmony and saving face do not preclude scenarios for more personal and direct disclosures. One cultural model in Indonesia for sharing intimate, perhaps even painful, information beyond the conventional limits for social interaction is found in *curhat*. *Curhat* is contemporary Indonesian vernacular, short for *mencurahkan isi hati*, literally "outpouring what is in your heart," commonly glossed as "sharing feelings/confiding," and understood as part of a move toward more a more egalitarian/democratic use of language and self-expression in familial and social circles (Smith-Hefner, 2009). *Curhat*

signals the spontaneous overflow of emotions and experiences that must be given voice, and is used variously: to indicate a sharing of intimate feelings and experiences on "very sensitive topics" (Thiodanu & Sari, 2019); a delicate way to address serious matters from a personal point of view rather than explicitly advising or moralizing (Tucker, 2013); an unburdening of personal grievances or a venue for sharing gossip, secrets, and the otherwise hush-hush (as used in popular articles such as Anonymous, 2019). *Curhat* is a way to share lived experience that deviates from the ideal or socially acceptable; it is a convention for breaking psychocultural convention. Therefore, while framed as "private," *curhat* is also performative, often with a desired outcome in mind. *Curhat* encompasses both a "truthful" revelation, someone saying how they "really feel" but acknowledging this disclosure as a potentially conscious or strategic move.

The model of *curhat* thus addresses the emergent nature of subjective accounts that are gleaned during the process of ethnographic filmmaking and the way these accounts might be understood as expressing and speaking to multiple layers of experience and multiple relationships at the same time. While in every case, the participant is speaking directly to the members of the film and research team in the moment, their outpouring of emotion may simply come from a need for relief; or it might be directed toward other family members, present or absent, or expressed in the hopes that the filmmaker might recount it to a family member or even intervene. Whatever the case, *curhat* requires negotiating the intersubjective dynamics of filmmaking to create the context for spontaneous and emergent revelation, one in which participants feel safe, despite acknowledged vulnerability. At the same time, it allows that their revelation might be performative or instrumental – and if so, that in itself provides more personal and cultural information about what the disclosure might mean in the participant's life.

Example: Suciati's Lingering Grief

Some instances of *curhat* speak directly to the gender politics of what experience is allowed to be given voice. After previous interviews where

she had maintained her "bright face," in a 2010 interview, Suciati wept when recounting the sweep of her marriage, from her forced wedding to her husband's disregard of her feelings, making a direct plea to interviewers that they see her true feelings. Quoted at length here:

> When I met him, he told … me that he was unmarried … It went on for a month and I got to know him, but then it turned out my neighbors knew him. They said, "He's a gambler and he's old. You shouldn't get to know him, later you'll be trapped." [I answered] "No, I'm just friends with him," like that.
>
> I ran into him on the street. "Put your bicycle down," [he ordered], like that. … He brought me into a car. Then I realized that his intention was to marry me. I had already … heard that information about him. I was worried that later people would think that I had ruined someone's household. I asked for the truth [and said], "I want to break up with you." … So, then he immediately said, "The thing is, I don't want to be apart from you." He married me immediately. You could say that I was forced a little. Forced.
>
> He locked me up for a day, until the morning … How could I find a way to run? I was being guarded by him, by his friends, until the morning … I had to make myself realize that it had really actually happened.
>
> For the Balinese, you only marry once[2]… I tried to have a full understanding of him, even though he took other wives. Again, after my second child was only eleven days old, he took another wife. Can you imagine how much that hurt me? But I still tried to make myself able to stay with my children so that they wouldn't be neglected. No matter what he did, I tried to ignore it …
>
> In my own heart, I'm sad. But I don't want to show that. I work hard to, yes, to dress up, to wear expensive clothes. I really work hard to be able to buy those things for myself … That's all I have to entertain myself … I don't want the community to see that about me. I want them to think that I'm really happy here.

Here, Suciati's testimony displays some of the Balinese psychocultural strategies toward painful life experiences, such as maintaining a bright

[2] Suciati here means that, due to all the factors elaborated in Chapter 4, Balinese *women* only marry once, as they rarely get divorced and remarry. Men are clearly free to take additional wives and/or divorce.

and pleasing experience for the sake of self and others, but she also voices her "true feelings." In a reflexive interview in 2013, Suciati considered the dynamics of this revelation. She reiterated how Darma had instructed them to respond to interview questions, articulated the dynamics of shame that kept her from speaking out, and explained that it was the unique circumstances of the film interview that created a situation where she felt like she could no longer stay silent.

SUCIATI: My husband asked me not to talk about those kinds of things. Yes, he told us to lie and just say good things. … But when I was asked, I couldn't hold it in anymore, like that. I just told the truth when I was speaking.

NINIK: When you were holding that story inside you for years and years, how did your heart feel?

SUCIATI: Yes, it really hurt. What was it like? I wanted to – the point was, I didn't know what to do with those feelings, I didn't know what I *could* do. This is why my body is so thin, because of all the things he did to me … Because I couldn't accept them then. I used to be plump. But after I gave birth to my second child, I lost weight because when my child was only eleven days old, he got married again. Who wouldn't be shocked by that? …

NINIK: Before you talked about those experiences, what did you feel, before you talked about them to us?

SUCIATI: That was the only time I did. If someone hadn't asked me, there was no way I would have talked about it. That's why I thought about my answers. I thought, if they ask me about it, what will I say? … I never talked about it before, about having many co-wives, I never did … I never would. That would be spreading around negative words, and there was no way I was going to do that on my own.

As an interviewer and a Balinese, Anggreni's analysis is that when a particular question or line of inquiry spoke directly to the women's lived experience, they responded with honesty. In her words, "When things touched their hearts, they were frank. So, it didn't apply anymore that a husband orders his wives not to tell, or to tell only the great things."

Here, there is an interesting tension in person-centered interviewing, social norms, the drive to personal testimony, and the processes of social change. The PCE interview method can be looked at critically in that

it pushes Indonesians in a way that is culturally unfamiliar and, hence, somewhat personally destabilizing or anxiety provoking; and yet, when being conducted in this ethnographic context, it is isomorphic to a process already happening in Indonesia, where some women are pushing for an equalization and democratization in speaking up, and norms favoring male prerogative and female silence are starting to shift accordingly (Smith-Hefner, 2020). As demonstrated in the analyses of *malu* (Chapter 6), fate (Chapter 3), and *curhat*, some of the women may feel more comfortable being silent, or more used to being silent, on certain topics, but that doesn't mean that there aren't things that they want to say, things that really need to be said.

Reflexive Considerations

Curhat requires a listener, usually one perceived to be at least partially sympathetic to the speaker. In the case of our films, this is the anthropologist and/or members of the research team. Just as we understand Suciati and all of our participants to be self-consciously evaluating and analyzing what they reveal or have revealed, so do we have responsibility to reflexivity by critically scrutinizing our own choices and responses. This basic issue of reflexivity is a serious concern for visual psychological anthropologists, in some ways perhaps even more central for VPA. The material gathered can be deeply personal, so clarifying and articulating the anthropologist's perspective, method, and personal orientations and responses to it, as well as their relationship with the different participants. It allows the viewer a deeper understanding of the filmmaking method and its impact on what is said and done by participants onscreen. Here, we discuss anthropologist subjectivity, the impact of the camera, and the depiction of the ethnographic encounter as nodes of particular reflexive import during the filmmaking process.

Anthropologist Subjectivity and Response

It is a truism that ethnography is always shaped by the filmmaker/anthropologist's own personality, set of assumptions, life experiences and concerns, and even sub- or unconscious motives, responses and reactions. In psychological anthropology, as in visual anthropology, this has been a long-standing issue and focus (e.g., Banks, 1988; Good et al., 1982; Rabinow, 2007). Psychological anthropologists are trained to realize the degree to which they themselves become an embodied instrument in gathering and analyzing data. They learn to be consciously aware of, process, and bring to light their reactions to research material, in order to analyze their effects on the understanding of the material and on relationships with film participants. It has been suggested that this self-reflection and discussion with colleagues and collaborators needs to be ongoing and integrated into the anthropologist's analysis of the material (Salzman, 2002). The nearest parallel here is the psychoanalytic process, where these responses and reactions, ("counter-transferences") are discussed and linked back to aspects of the clinical encounter (Good et al., 1982).

Person-centered interviewing is not just a "rational" procedure, where the ethnographer moves through a series of semi-structured questions and then responds in a controlled manner, in order to avoid "biasing" the material. Going into the interview, the researcher has a certain understanding of the multiple contextual variables involved in cross-cultural interviewing and a certain understanding of the participant to be interviewed. Then, during the interview process, the interviewer has a continuous set of emotional, cognitive, and/or embodied responses to the material. Of course, as human beings, we have deep-seated conscious or unconscious perceptions and concepts of moral worlds and so these can be quite variable. Especially when exploring domains of fear and violence in our subjects' lives, we have had personal, sometimes visceral, reactions. Sometimes, when the participant was sympathetic or vulnerable, this has meant an overflowing empathetic response based on personal experience, or a felt need for direct intervention (discussed further in Chapter 9). But not all of our personal reactions to individuals and/or

topics that arise in the course of ethnographic interviewing can be positive. Some troubling material we encountered during the making of these three films engendered personal feelings of aversion, trepidation, distrust, and moral uncertainty or outrage. These embodied responses have the capacity to shape an interview focus and are, therefore, somewhat determinative of the material gathered. They can influence whether or not the interviewee participant feels heard and understood and shape the subsequent emphasis on certain domains over others.

In these situations, both my professional background as a clinician and my training in psychological anthropology helped. Part of the training is exploring and understanding one's counter-transference, or how one's history and personality shape one's embodied responses to the topics, processes, and conflicts encountered in a psychotherapy session. One of the positive linkages between a clinical psychodynamic or psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapy and person-centered ethnography is the importance of maintaining an unconditional positive regard, or, at the very least, neutral and empathetic approach to understanding your participants.

Example: Imam's Justification for Tri's Sex Work

For example, once we knew about Imam's treatment of his wife, when he went on to discuss what he felt to be hardships in his own life, it was hard not to suspect he might be purposefully manipulating the team toward his own ends – to get us "on his side" and essentially defend what he had done. Internally, I had a particularly negative evaluation by his roundabout denials of profiting from Tri's sex work, such as when he said:

> If I really pimped my wife, then I should have gotten some money, right? I never got any! Never got any when my wife went out with someone else … But basically, I asked my wife to record who gave some help so that someday, when we had money, we could pay them back, that's it. If I intend to pimp my wife, I wouldn't think about returning the money, right?

Regardless of my internal, evoked reactions, my process for exploring and understanding my responses to the participants and their stories was to have as open and open-ended a discussion as possible with the rest of the research team, in order to explore the ways in which my understandings of, framings of, and personal responses to the participants and the research context were as clear as possible. These self-reflexive process of self-knowledge and self-reflection around these personal and internal responses to the fieldwork encounter – laying out our own personal biases, reactions, and interpretations to field material on topics such as violence, relationships, kinship, and sexuality for processing and understanding – can help diminish their impact and lead us back to a more objective accounting of what we are witnessing and documenting. Without them, these feelings of moral affirmation or condemnation of a member of another society's beliefs can be considered part of the colonialist/imperialist project. But with Imam, it wasn't Javanese culture that was being evaluated and possibly judged, but Imam's own behavior and rationalizations.

After we conducted this interview, the team members met and discussed our respective feelings on the matter. The story had been difficult for all of us to hear, not only because of our sympathy for Tri but also because of our anger, and frankly disgust, at Imam's justifications for his behavior. At the same time, we understood that the family was struggling under conditions of forms of structural violence such as extreme poverty and this was one avenue for a stigmatized husband and wife to bring in sufficient resources for daily survival. We felt disappointment and, indeed, shame at our own troublingly moralistic attitude toward the situation. We did include aspects of this interview in the film, although it has turned out that in screenings with diverse audiences, it is precisely Imam's stance that audiences have found most troubling.

In sum, there are multiple significant dynamics at play that influence what a participant might plan to say, or might be spontaneously moved to say, during the course of person-centered interviewing. Given that in visual psychological anthropology, a majority of these interviews are being filmed, the approach of the camera, and the relationship of the participant to the camera, is also a crucial factor.

Relationship to the Camera and Staging the Interview

Since the most significant element of our films are interviews, such footage makes up the bulk of any edit, and other observational material – shots following the participant's daily life at home, work, or in the community, or other relevant B-roll – is most often used to support what is said therein. Beyond specific questions asked, we have found that our shooting style, including camera type and placement, also impacts the filming experience for participants, which, in turn, can impact the material generated and with it, the choices later available for filmic representation in the editing process.

First, we wonder how different choices of camera placement and different shooting methods impact the way participants feel during the filmed interview, and hence, what can be expressed – in other words, whether shooting styles change their subjective experience of participation and, if so, how that impacts what they say or how they behave while being filmed. Are participants more comfortable with a particular shooting style, and hence, do they disclose more intimate information? Does one elicit a more performative response than the other (i.e., "action" and now we are "onstage"), which might lead an interviewee to focus on certain aspects of their experience based on what they think an interesting "performance" of their life would be and include?

Thorn and *40 Years* both made use of a more naturalistic group interview setting, which mimicked a conversational meeting, where a group of people, including the camera person, other members of the research team, and family members sit together with the participant being interviewed. In the naturalistic style, the camera is aimed primarily at the subject but occasionally pans around to show the others present. In this way, participants soon forget about the existence of the camera or the fact they are being filmed (even as they are also contextualizing and informing the relationships the interviewee has with those others present via group dynamics; Frey & Fontana, 1991). On the other hand, we conducted *Bitter Honey* interviews in a more formal "journalistic" style, where the participant sits in front of the camera and the interviewer and/or crew are behind or next to the camera. With this set-up, the

participant is more aware of being filmed. Perhaps counterintuitively, we have found this approach elicits stronger emotion from participants; the effect may be one similar to speaking to a psychologist where people start to disclose and even weep much more rapidly than they would in everyday conversation, maybe because of an understanding that the interviewer/psychologist is sympathetic (Hollan & Throop, 2008; Levy & Hollan, 2015).

If a more interrogatory style in formal interviews rather than conversational style seems to elicit stronger emotion, certain shooting styles may make the camera effectively "disappear," to different ends. It may be that once small cameras such as Go-Pros have been fixed in position for a while, the conscious awareness of being filmed and ostensibly the behavior this awareness elicits, will slowly fade. This may be even more the case now, due to shifts in cultural norms and new technologies of surveillance, where people are being recorded, either purposefully or passively, much more frequently (e.g., social media sharing or security). In our work in Indonesia, we have found that with single, small, cameras engaging in embedded or ongoing filming, participants do forget they are being recorded and may say things they hadn't intended to be recorded on film. But sometimes they say things even when the camera is larger and evident. Below are two examples from the films.

Example: Sadra's Extramarital Affair

On the way to a location, Rob, Degung, a male driver, and male camerperson were with Sadra in the car. The cameraman sat in the front while Sadra, Rob, and Degung were together in the backseat. In this men-only environment, the conversation somewhat purposefully turned to sharing bawdy jokes then moved to Sadra's family life. After some teasing from Degung, Sadra somewhat reluctantly admitted that he was having an affair with a new woman, adding, "but nobody knows about it." By admitting this, Sadra seems to have forgotten about the existence of the camera, since such a disclosure, by his own account, would shame him in front of his boss and cause his wives distress. Such disclosure of

"secret" information while being recorded is not uncommon in ethnographic fieldwork (Baez, 2002). This of course raises some ethical issues, to be discussed more fully in the following chapter; here, "empathetic" interviewing or the establishment of rapport or male camaraderie may, to a certain extent, circumvent informed consent, leading participants to share parts of their life they do not actually feel comfortable exposing (Kvale, 2007).

Example: Use of Local Language

Participants, while remembering that they are being filmed, may also forget about how the footage will be analyzed and understood after the immediate shoot is finished. For example, Indonesian was the language of interviews and exchanges with the *Bitter Honey* research team and film crew, some of whom were from Java or USA and did not speak Balinese. But participants often used Balinese for more "private" exchanges while being filmed, such as in one exchange where Sulasih says she wants her honorarium for the interview immediately and Darma reassures her, "I have a good relationship with the anthropologist, he'll give me the money now." These asides are intended to be just between the two speakers – according to Indonesian/Balinese etiquette described above, such a direct conversation about wanting money would be embarrassing should it be overheard by the research team (see discussion in following chapter regarding indirect request for additional financial support). The open discussion of such matters in a different language suggests that the two are not holding in their awareness the fact that recorded video is a permanent record, one that can be reviewed by different people, not just those immediately present.

Depicting the Ethnographic Encounter

Given that film is always and already a construction of the filmmaker/ethnographer, one decision to make is how – or whether – to visually include the anthropologist and/or research team, and their role and placement vis-à-vis the film participants or characters. This has

shifted over time in our process, and this shift has reflected evolving understandings of the role of reflexivity and its representation.

As discussed, in the earlier years of *40 Years*, *Thorn*, and other simultaneous projects, we attempted to represent reflexive issues directly on screen by positioning the anthropologist/interviewer in the same visual frame as the subjects with wide angle observational shots, even during interviews. We did this in part to meet the ethnographic goal of holism. Holism usually refers to providing a comprehensive and contextualized account of subjects' lives, but when dealing with reflexivity, it also refers to an exhaustive account of the research process, from conception and theorizing, through fieldwork, to the final output, and assessments of or reaction to that output. Those writing ethnographies have found creative ways to account for the ethnographer's positionality and subjectivity, represent the multiple aspects of fieldwork and those domains outside research per se that were nevertheless influential in the process and outcome, and put forth aspects of theory and methodology instantiated in the research (Marcus, 1995). A film analog to this holistic effort might be the aforementioned *Chronicle of a Summer* (Rouch & Morin, 1961) which attempted to represent the entire Gestalt and course of the project (see process summarized in Heider, 1976).

In subsequent years, we moved away from these observational wide shots in interviews toward shots focused on the participant, although interviewer questions and commentary could occasionally be heard from off camera. This put less emphasis on the ethnographic encounter. While this shift risked losing a degree of self-reflexivity and transparency, as it removed the ethnographer and interview context from visual scrutiny, we felt close up shots on participants' faces better aligned with a person-centered ethos that forefronts the participant's perspective and experience (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). Ultimately, it might be that, in some ways, person-centered methodology is at odds with a more holistic *visual* style. This doesn't mean that it forecloses reflexivity; MacDougall has explained through his concept of "deep reflexivity" (MacDougall, 1998) how filmmaking is inherently reflexive, whether or not we include the image of the maker in the shots. *All* images in a film refer back to their makers, and thus must be understood as including them (Henley, 2020). Reflexivity in film then goes far beyond the deliberate drawing of an audience's

attention to the filmmaking process within the body of the film. Still, if we have found that reflexive holism is less desirable or even impossible within the body of a person-centered film, then the holism might come with the integration of the films with written ethnography. Those important aspects of the story or the encounter that couldn't make it into the film can be addressed in writing. This is, in fact, one purpose of this book.

By the time we started shooting *Bitter Honey*, very few shots included the anthropologist/interviewer and instead focused on the participants. As *Thorn* was shot over a dozen years, beginning when we were shooting *40 Years* and continuing through the beginning production phase of *Bitter Honey*, the footage included both styles of shooting. In *Thorn*, though, since we made a conscious decision not to visually include me in the film, we needed to carefully edit around those shots and instead use inserts and B-roll to cover those parts of the interview where I had been visible. Of course, what seems to be an editing decision results in the changing of the record of what transpired during this interview(s) for film viewers. The following chapter goes deeper into our processes of editing, the effects editing choices can have on participants, and the implications they have for viewers.

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8

Crafting Stories Using a VPA Approach

A produced film about an individual's experience is never isomorphic with that experience. A coherent and satisfying ethnographic film, subject to genre-specific expectations and judgments, cannot include the almost infinite complexity of any individual's life or represent full subjectivity; the structure of a film narrative, by necessity, must highlight some and elide much or most of it (MacDougall, 1998). The visual psychological anthropology method is used to iteratively and inductively craft and present stories that say something about an individual's biography and subjectivity *in relation to* themes and concerns in contemporary psychological anthropology. This connection is precisely what makes these ethnographic films per se and is accomplished through the filming, editing, and post-production process.

Chapter 7 discussed the processes of filming in the field. We reflected on the nature of longitudinal PCE interviews and how they impacted the material gathered during film production and, hence, the possibilities for participant representation. This chapter turns to the process of crafting stories that, while occurring during the production phase through line of interview inquiry, shot selection, and other choices made in the field,

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occurs most intensively during the editing process. This is a similarly iterative plan of action, where we must settle on narrative themes and topics and develop a narrative structure and visual style to support those.

There are tools at our disposal, to be used or not as suits the tone, themes, or development of a film. While the bulk of most ethnographic films will be comprised of observational and/or interview footage, the creative aspects of visual or multimodal anthropology include a variety of visual strategies to both situate and enrich the ethnographic narrative. Every filmmaker has a host of materials and techniques at the ready. While some craft films with a unitarian style – for example, all direct cinema like Frederick Wiseman (e.g., Wiseman, 1967, 2001) – an intermediary approach is also possible. These additional stylistic devices can support elements of ethnographic storytelling such as providing historical or cultural context, structuring a narrative motif, or scaffolding significant narrative transitions (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). For the films here, we discuss the incorporation of archival footage, paintings, and other stylistic elements.

Furthermore, given the VPA emphasis on emotion in meaning-making, we must choose the filmic means we will use to achieve emotional connection and understanding between participants and viewers, who may come from different cultures. Here we discuss our use of juxtaposition and montage, music and sound design, and purposeful selection of participants' emotional displays.

Crafting Narratives

Once the editing process begins, the task is to find a narrative focus and shape. In other words, we must continue to develop our ideas regarding what the film will be *about* and how we will impart this to a viewer. This larger decision begets numerous other decisions, including choosing the main theoretical focus of the film (and thus its major storyline), choosing a narrative structure and style to tell this story, and choosing or developing visual or sound elements that support the development of that story. This process builds off of earlier pre-production theorizing, the

emergent qualities of participant storylines and narratives, and how these fit (or do not fit) with the pre-conceived ideas we brought to the field.

VPA Narratives: Theorized but Inductive, Responsive, and Emergent

There is rarely a linear progression from concept to research to narrative plan to shooting to editing and, finally, post-production. Rather, the process is almost always iterative, as new material emerges across the entire production process which either supports or questions initial schemas for understanding a participant's experience, and we develop helpful ways to digest and then adapt the material for film. Given this, all films are, to a certain extent, emergent and it takes time to decide on a central narrative in the post-production process. This is not unusual for ethnographic or documentary filmmakers. David MacDougall describes the pivot that came in the making of *The Doon School Quintet* (MacDougall, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2004), which switched from representing the school as a "crossing place" for students with diverse backgrounds, to exploring the institution as a locus of enculturation, which seemed much more relevant to his subjects (Earthsayers.tv, 2014). Oppenheimer describes the ideas for the themes, structures, and devices of *The Act of Killing* (Oppenheimer et al., 2012) and *The Look of Silence* (Oppenheimer, 2014) as coming only once he was well into filming a project on globalization and plantation workers, after a fieldwork incident led to a striking insight about the performances of proud impunity (Roosa, 2014).

We have found this process of constant change begins as soon as we begin filming with our theorized interests; continues through the editing process as we view footage and keep abreast of developments in our participants' lives; and persists even long after we have "finished" and released the film, since, through screening discussions and writing, we keep reflecting back on both the process and the product. Throughout the entire life of a VPA project, there is always more to be discovered.

In general, though, the first step in our pre-production process is to theorize the project, considering the applicable anthropological domains

and theories. All of the films discussed here emerged from pre-existing fieldwork, so we did have some initial understanding of the contexts and meanings that could potentially shape a film. Then, more specifically, we consider which stories are suitable for a visual treatment. This "etic grid" (Duranti, 1997), or set of interlocked and interrelated assumptions and concerns, we consciously or subconsciously bring to the field, drives the early stages of the filming, but must quickly be adjusted to the field site context and practicalities. This means that some of our theorized concerns may not necessarily be as relevant there as we thought, either with regard to participant subjectivity and local set of community and family concerns or to our shifting understanding of the multiple political, social, and structural forces acting on our field and fieldwork. At the same time, we might encounter a range of new issues, domains, and/or relationships that may or may not support our original suppositions. Some of these draw our attention due to our own orientation and interest, but more often than not these new directions come from participant interviews. As they answer questions or steer the conversation in unexpected directions, we come to better understand what participants think is important and how they might craft a narrative about themselves. It, then, becomes our task to work through this more emically derived material to develop a new synthesized understanding and refocus on a new and, in some cases, entirely different set of concerns.

This general process unfolded differently for each of the three films. While all were scaffolded around fundamental areas of inquiry in cultural and psychological anthropology, for *40 Years* (Lemelson, 2009), these areas held up throughout the production process; for *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015), they shifted somewhat; and for *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012b), they were basically overhauled.

Initially, *40 Years* was built around the question of the long-term effects of childhood traumatic exposure on individual development, which has classical roots in culture and personality studies, and influences from contemporary psychological anthropology, but also draws on contemporary trauma theory, developmental psychology, psychoanalysis, and critical medical anthropology. Given that the historic trauma of 1965, described in Chapters 2 and 5, did indeed deeply affect the lives of the cohort we interviewed, we hewed to this basic inquiry throughout; in

this case, the filming process fleshed out and nuanced our initial vision for the film.

There were more marked changes during the making of *Bitter Honey*. As discussed in previous chapters, the project initially aimed to investigate acts of sexual terror that occurred at the end of the New Order during the transition to democracy in 1998–1999. But the research rapidly shifted toward gendered violence in relation to Balinese polygamous marriage. The project then entailed linking this particular kinship form with other aspects of Balinese culture salient to the participants' subjective experiences. Here, the narrative focus further shifted over time from stories of families, with equal weight given to the perspectives of husbands and wives, to largely, but not entirely, the experiences of the wives. The theorized basis in gendered violence homed in on the structural conditions that give rise to forms of male domination; while many cultures around the world share similar enactment of male domination, the film specifically investigated how different aspects of Balinese culture interconnect to create conditions of male impunity in enacting forms of violence, control, and oppression within their own families.

The final shape and thrust of *Thorn* were in no way envisioned at the start of the project, and, thus, merit a bit more detail here. Following models from transcultural psychiatry the film was first theorized as a case study of a man with complex psychiatric symptoms for which he had been stigmatized. This element gradually fell into the background, becoming just one more detail in a family story about marital strife, multiple forms of perceived "deviance" and village social sanction, and structural violence as his daughter, Lisa's, developmental story took prominence.

During the initial interviews with Iman and Tri, we paid little heed to their daughter listening and observing. Indonesian cultural norms of discussion make it common to have various family members present for film sessions, and Lisa was still quite young. After these initial few years in the early 2000s, we temporarily discontinued film work with the family. Imam's character and disclosures didn't seem to make for a compelling story, plus we had settled on six other individuals to be the subjects of *Afflictions,* a series of films on culture and mental illness in Indonesia, of which Imam's story was originally to be a part.

We did maintain contact with the family, however, and returned to interview and film them in 2008, at a particularly tumultuous time for them. In the intervening years, the family relationship had continued to degrade, and Tri was preparing to leave the marriage. In another striking development, Lisa, the former silently observing child, had grown into a young woman and now had much to say. Her emerging subjectivity pushed her to the foreground, as did her compelling situation of being so full of promise but growing up in such challenging conditions. A new focus on Lisa dovetailed with an interest in child development and the impact of growing up with multiple vulnerabilities explored in *40 Years*; thus, we decided to restructure the narrative from a different perspective. In this way, what was initially theorized as a film on one rural Javanese man's mental illness, drawing on theory in psychiatric anthropology and transcultural psychiatry, became a family drama about how stigmatization and structural violence restrict people's scope of action and leave them to make difficult and even traumatic decisions for their lives. There would have been no way for us to predict this at the start since there would have been no way to know how Lisa would develop as a person, nor how her parents' secrets would come to affect their lives over the course of more than a decade.

While the shift in *Bitter Honey* came fairly early in the filming process, the shift in *Thorn* came much later, after much editing had been done. We went even further and made Lisa the narrator of the film, discussed below. This decision required reworking the edit. Before we prioritized Lisa as the narrator, many of the shots we had chosen focused on her parents and did not include her. We retrieved shots with Lisa in them and edited her voiceover, recorded when she was much older, onto some of this older footage. Once she emerged into adolescence in the second half of the film, though, she began telling her own story in "real time" as events unfolded. This gave viewers much more access to her internal world and reactions to all that was happening to her.

Narrative Style and Structure

The above examples show how the initial narrative focus of our films shifted over time as we encountered the realities of our field sites and became more familiar with the concerns of our participants. Once the basic themes and storylines are found, there are further decisions to be made about how to structure and present the narrative. As filming and editing continue, we need to decide what stories to focus on, which ones to exclude and why, and then balance the aesthetic and pedagogical requirements of a compelling ethnographic film in the film's style and structure.

While all ethnographic and documentary films ostensibly have some organizing structure, not all follow a traditional narrative arc, and certainly not all are narrated by a voiceover. We have used a narrator or central narrative device for each of the films discussed here, but each of a different kind: *40 Years* relied primarily on the voices of expert historians and myself, an anthropologist, *Bitter Honey* used a traditional cultural authority in the form of a *wayang* puppet show, and *Thorn* used first-person participant voiceover. The incorporation of visual and sound components, including archival footage, art, animation, music, and sound design, can mirror, amplify, or give further texture to the development and argument of narrative put forth by the narrator and the ethnographic film footage we collected.

Years

Researcher(s) as Narrator

Through direct address by anthropologist/film director, explanatory factual title cards, and historian commentary, the *40 Years* narration is provided by researchers and academic experts. While film participants share their testimony and personal accounts, these historians serve as the "guides" for the viewer, commenting on the political, cultural, and social contexts of pre-1965 events, the mass killings, and their aftermath. Our rationale for the inclusion of the "authoritative" expert voice was

twofold. First, the film aimed to demonstrate the instantiation of major historical events into individual lives and subjectivities, and this required an authoritative account of those events. More importantly, the "expert" accounts anticipated and counteracted the potential viewer reaction that the participant testimonies were suspect, as Indonesians have been so thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that the survivors are, in fact, the ones to blame.[1]

Critically Repurposing the Archive

This "expert" contestation of the existing historical record on '65, which was incomplete or erased, biased, and state-controlled was visually matched in *40 Years* with the inclusion and critical repurposing of archival movie and newsreel footage.

The archives, in fact, served multiple functions. They provided a visual window into a period of Indonesian history about which many American or international viewers might know little. Secondly, they stood in for observational footage of our participants' accounts of 1965 and subsequent years which, of course, we did not have. But most importantly, we used the archival footage to contest the monolithic state narrative of 1965, which was maintained, in part, through the state's own carefully crafted, selected, and screened film imagery.

At numerous points in the film, we critically repurposed footage that had been either used as state propaganda or collected under state control and manipulated to support its goals. For example, we juxtaposed Degung's story of his mother's imprisonment with archival shots of women prisoners, from an ABC news piece shot during this period. These women serve as a visual surrogate for his mother, but our use of the

[1] We were lucky to work with three of the most respected and dedicated historians of these events. We faced criticism, though, for including only one Indonesian expert. This was understandable, given that these were Indonesian stories and concerned Indonesian history, but there were relatively few historians in Indonesia publicly grappling with this history during the period in the early 2000s when the film was shot. Father Baskara, a Jesuit priest and historian, was one of the few publicly commenting on this history during this period, and he has bravely faced numerous threats and attempts to intimidate and silence him over the years. More recently other Indonesians scholars have publicized research on the topic, such as Dr. Soe Tjen Marching (Marching, 2017).

shot also reframes them. The foreign journalists filming these prisoners were told the women were Gerwani members who had participated in the sexual torture of the murdered generals. They took this account at its word and framed the women as perpetrators. But, given our current understanding, it is highly likely that these women, even if Gerwani like Degung's mother, were, in fact, themselves victims of torture by state actors. In this repurposing, we talk back to a state-controlled historical archive of images, in a sense, redefining their meaning, just as Degung was reclaiming his mother's story from the one enforced in his family's collective memory.

We didn't call out the footage of the female prisoners as "propaganda." But we did so with other visuals, such as the clip from the New Order film *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI* (Betrayal of the Nation by the Communist Party). We used this film to illustrate the events of that time and how they were framed by the New Order, presenting the regime's propaganda to invite the viewer to see the state narrative about the events of 1965 as such.[2] Indeed, Indonesian viewers have cited this segment in our film as being influential in helping them reorient and reinterpret their own history – even as millions of Indonesians still watch and comment positively on the version of *Pengkhianatan* uploaded to YouTube (Parahita & Yulianto, 2020).

We also used archival music in our soundtrack, specifically different versions of the song "*Genjer genjer*" (Arief, 1942). This East Javanese folk

[2] This archival footage was difficult to find. Soon after the massacres began, as the violence in Indonesia was progressing, foreign journalists were increasingly removed from the country and/or forbidden from reporting. Furthermore, when we were making the film there was not yet the technology or infrastructure for such source research online. We contacted a number of news outlets that operated in Indonesia in the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties, such as NBC, BBC, and ITN. In what turned out to be a months-long back and forth process, the broadcasters sent us mostly handwritten log sheets of unbroadcasted B-roll, with date, time stamp, and a brief description of the shot sequences. Once we reviewed these, we could request particular shots or scenes for viewing. Sometimes the news outlets would have to telecine 35 mm footage so it could be viewed in a digital format. They then sent DVDs of the requested shots. Most of this footage had never been previously broadcast, and thus, much of the archival footage we used in *40 Years* had never been seen by the general public.

During the editing process, when we were still deciding which archival shots we might want to use, we would place watermarked, low resolution versions of the images they sent, in the edit as inserts. Only at the end of the process, when the film was locked, did we request the final versions. This was because the price for such shots is by frame, not by cut or scene, so we had to ensure that each frame used was crucial to the film.

song about the *genjer* plant, which grows abundantly in the region, was originally recorded as encouragement during the hardships of Japanese occupation of Indonesia and later appealed to the communist party for its message of peasant perseverance, becoming quite popular. It was further associated with the communist party when the New Order government alleged that the song was sung during the murder of the seven high-ranking military officers during the September 30th coup that precipitated the mass killings. The song was banned until Suharto's fall in 1998, and while no longer officially banned, its stigmatized history still clings to its lilting tune, and it is rarely sung in public. For that reason, we did not ask an Indonesian performer to sing it for our soundtrack; instead, we invited the Los Angeles-based band Dengue Fever to do so. The lead singer of that band, Chhom Nimol, decided to sing it in Khmer, which was a surprise to us but referenced connections between the '65 history and history of the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia.

Bitter Honey

Traditional Cultural Authority as Narrator

In *40 Years*, the film narrators are research experts who are, for the most part, outsiders. The "narrator" of *Bitter Honey* is a cultural authority from inside Balinese culture, namely, a shadow play puppeteer.

Wayang kulit, or shadow puppet theater, is a centuries-old practice found throughout Indonesia that serves multiple cultural functions simultaneously. It allows the gods to join people on earth, provides wise commentary on behavior to alleviate suffering, keeps evil spirits at bay, entertains, and "cleanses" the village (Anderson, 1965). As such, it has historically been performed at crucial times for villages, and as part of family or village celebrations (Keeler, 1987). *Wayang kulit* provides a medium through which to reflect upon cultural values and societal conditions, typically weaving improvised sketches and storylines responsive to current events and the present audience into a repertory of

narratives drawn from two Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and situating all of these within a context of local values and history.

We saw that this interesting juxtaposition of drama, moral instruction, and sheer entertainment could be an excellent way to narrate the film, but we hesitated at first, as it has been used in other films (such as Weir, 1982) and we feared it might be taken as a caricatured referent for Indonesian culture. Ultimately, however, we used this narrative device because it was locally legible and because we believed it could say something interesting and fresh. We commissioned a shadow play focused on polygamy by the Joblar Tum Bak Bayun Troupe, run by puppeteer I Ketut Muada, working in the genre of "new creation" theater (B.I. *kreasi baru*), a form of the post-Suharto era. The New Order government wanted to present Indonesian culture as "timeless," presenting dance and other performances at a rarified remove from politics, history, or contemporary social issues. Once the New Order fell in 1998, Indonesia witnessed innovation and critique in numerous genres of performance. In the early 2000s, "new creation" shadow puppet performances began to more explicitly engage with topics that had previously been off limits. Muada himself had created performances addressing corrupt leadership, the underbelly of tourism, the Bali bombing, and the AIDS crisis, but never on polygamy.

We told him the stories of the three families and the themes emerging from interviews. We tried to stay as experience-near and emic as possible, presenting the issues as they arose in the participants' lives rather than couching it in ethnographic terms or concepts. Muada was able to quickly craft a three-hour long puppet show which included, as always, sections from the classical epic and comedic sections.

For the film, we selected sequences mostly from these comedic segments, which featured Twalen and Merdah, the father-son pair of clowns. Some of their conversation was purely for laughs (e.g., the father tells his son that he looks like a monkey because when his parents were making love, there was a loud noise, and his mother made a startled face like a monkey). But other statements were prescient to ethnographic themes emerging from the participants' narratives. The father clown character was promiscuous and polygamous, with ten surviving and

five deceased wives. In some ways, the clown characters became stand-ins for various participants, voicing common tropes about polygamy, including its cultural history (e.g., gods and kings were polygamous), practical function (e.g., first wife was barren), karmic cause (e.g., past misdeeds), and requirements (e.g., provide for all your wives and children equally and keep them happy). The clown dialogue also critiqued the way husbands in some polygamous marriages treat their wives, such as taking new wives without the previous wife's consent. This comedy couched some real pain, as in jokes about a wife forced into such a situation killing her husband with black magic, and another being reincarnated as a man to seek revenge.

This was not a sanitized performance, although members of the polygamous families featured in the film were in the audience. Voicing a so-called modern view of polygamy in a changing Bali, Joblar joked that only "monkeys" are still polygamous. He also poked fun at the female anatomy, compared co-wives to prostitutes (objects of male lust), and made a few choice digs at women, such as saying that women like polygamy as long as it boosts their wealth and status, because even as a rich man's a second wife, you still go from "eating sweet potatoes to eating hamburgers." While both men and women were subject to his "roasting," Joblar's show in some ways performed Balinese cultural norms of male-dominated discourse.

We didn't include the entire puppet show in the film, of course, especially since the clown commentary was interspersed with more classic themes drawn from the Mahabarata and Ramayan epics. We instead selected those excerpts that best suited the film's narrative needs. Our hope was that this framing strategy would appeal to both Balinese and non-Balinese viewers, and that its presentation of key concepts would be clear, engaging, and relevant to both audiences.

Cultural Continuity

As with *40 Years*, we selected supporting graphics for *Bitter Honey* to suit the theoretical point and narrative frame. This film was concerned with the subjective experience of cultural traditions. Given the large number

of participants heard from in the film, from three different families and their communities, in addition to leaning on the *wayang* puppeteer as a guide for the viewer, we organized the interview material with title cards that signaled major themes to be discussed. The graphics underlying the title cards for each section were selected from an extensive collection of original paintings commissioned by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson during their 1930s fieldwork project in Bali on themes such as daily life, ritual activity, mythology, dreams, and fantasy. In Hildred Geertz's (1994) analysis of this remarkable collection, she found multiple additional themes of psychocultural relevance such as childhood, power and violence, loss, and redemption. These images, thus, tie the film to one of the earliest forays into the integration of visual and psychological anthropology and illustrate psychocultural themes, almost three generations deep, in Balinese cultural life. As such, they underscore certain elements put forth in our contemporary analysis, such as the image of man seated on a throne surrounded by women, which visually echoes the shots of Tuaji on his throne, and family and villager testimony that a man's number of wives remains one display of, and mechanism for, gaining power.

Standing on the Edge of a Thorn

Participant as Narrator

It made sense to have a narrator for *40 Years* and *Bitter Honey* because those films included so many participants, with four storylines in the first film, and three in the second. For these two films, the diversity of subjective experience of shared cultural and historical phenomena was a main point.

Thorn, however, "zoomed in" to focus on just one small family of three. Even so, we didn't conceive of the film as having a narrator until Lisa's voice came so powerfully and sympathetically to the fore. While the story told focused on all family members, the voice narrating the film is Lisa's. This is, in fact, the first film we ever made with first-person voiceover narration. We collected most of this narration in PCE, filling

in the rest with an interview conducted near the end of the project. We found that PCE interview methodology, which focuses on co-creating a coherent narrative about the interviewee's life (see Chapter 7), proved amenable to a first-person narrative structure, as it explores aspects of a person's subjectivity. We also screened the film for Lisa and, as she watched, we interviewed her about her relationship with her parents and her reactions to what she was seeing onscreen.

Visually Referencing Subjectivity and Development

Thorn did not use graphics that were as evidently distinct from the interview and observational footage as those in *40 Years* and *Bitter Honey*. But we still consciously selected and edited imagery that would support the subjective and developmental perspective created by the use of Lisa as a first-person narrator.

Throughout the film, we referenced the narrative tension of a developmental perspective, where things hang in the balance as people grow and change, by using the visual motif of roads. By returning to these, we referenced the proverbial "path" the family was walking. These images took on additional subjective resonances depending on their placement in the film narrative. So, a shot of Imam wandering on the street evoked the disorientation of his mental illness episode; a shot of Iman, Tri, and Lisa walking away from the camera along a dirt road evoked a poignant temporary togetherness that the viewer intuits cannot last; and a streetlight shot against the darkening dusk sky creates a sense of ominous and melancholy foreshadowing, immediately followed by Tri's tearful discussion of her rape.

Throughout the film, we selected imagery that had simultaneous ethnographic and subjective resonance. In this way, shots of barren fields, for example, represented the backdrop of poverty and scarcity against which members of the family made certain wrenching decisions; but they also evoked a more subjective or emotional loneliness, representing how Lisa felt being unable to call upon her parents for psychological (or practical) support.

Near the end of the film, we shifted the style of the film to match Lisa's brightening future, a decision we question in our discussion on endings, below.

Discussion: Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Stylistic Choices

These three different narrative structures and visual strategies illustrate the power of editing in conveying a story and its meaning. All three films are grounded in participant narratives, but due to the differences in narrator and visual elements, the resulting films feel quite different from one another. These different forms of narration and visuals intersect differently with the person-centered ethos we espouse and with the broader pedagogical concerns of ethnographic film, meeting their ends in different ways. But each narrative structure poses its own problematics.

For *40 Years*, for example, we had long editorial debates about whether to include any narrative framing devices and how – or whether – to include me in the film. We ultimately did include a "director's introduction," which provides the theoretical anthropological rationale for the film, and my commentary throughout.[3] Given the goal of holism, providing more complete context via expert narrators (or contextualized local interpretations via cultural insiders as we did with *Bitter Honey*) seemed desirable. In retrospect, I question our use of such didactic styles, since anything that takes the audience out of the world of the participants can interrupt viewer engagement with that world. And while a main goal then was to introduce film as a novel approach in psychological anthropology, *40 Years* went on to reach a much broader audience than anthropologists and students, an audience for which this more theoretical introduction might not be as relevant.

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[3] I also provide some historical commentary, although I am not a trained historian. My contributions were included after we were far along in our edit and needed to address historical elements the historians had not yet referenced. As we were under a production deadline, and I was already included in the film, it made sense for me to furnish the explanation we needed. In retrospect, I think it would have been better to have solicited further historian commentary even if that meant pushing back film completion. This is an issue familiar to most documentary film makers.

In addition to the structuring device of the *wayang* puppet show, *Bitter Honey* used title cards as section headings to signal different themes in accounts of marital life and illustrate the primary didactic and contextual points we wanted to make in a concise way. We have used title cards in a similar fashion in many of our films but, in retrospect, I also question this choice; Perhaps their presentation of information echoes an outdated, pre-Boasian anthropology, exemplified by E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) and L. H. Morgan (1818–1881), who organized aspects of complex cultures into categories like "technology" and "economics," a practice that continued sporadically until the 1960s (e.g., Murphree, 1961). And yet title cards are one way to provide what we felt to be crucial contextual information. Furthermore, they give the viewer a break from all the visual and emotional content to be processed – the mostly blank screen and centering text offers the chance to think about and process the previous segment.

In any case, with different narrative structures and devices, we have tried to balance the demands that come from the genre of ethnographic film with the use of certain film techniques and storytelling strategies that might contribute to the power of its impact. It may be that having the main character as narrator, as in *Thorn*, is most closely aligned with the person-centered ethos, and might be the most impactful.

While not using PCE per se, many ethnographic and documentary films aiming to put a human face on potentially otherwise abstract numbers and facts addressing political violence (Douglas & Moreno Andrés, 2015; Panh, 2018; Zamora, 2015) or gendered violence (Hallacy, 2018; Scharlatt & Montell, 2014) via individual stories, using a first-person perspective or even voice-over. The technique is commonly used in auto-ethnography (Russell, 1999), but even when the protagonist is not the filmmaker, this perspective can effectively build sympathy and reveal inner thoughts and feelings not otherwise apparent. For example, *The Woman's Olamal* by anthropologist Melissa Llewellyn-Davies (1985) follows one adolescent Maasai girl as she prepares for and undergoes a traditional female circumcision. The film presents the ritual to the audience from her perspective, including her narration and focusing on her emotional reactions. Her subjectivity as a younger female is further underscored by Llewellyn-Davies's depiction of the men, seen onscreen

only from a woman's perspective. Following one central character's experience through the entire film creates an intimacy with the viewer, a sense of rapport and even identification that humanizes a controversial topic.

The *Daughter from Đàn˜ăng* (Dolgin & Franco, 2002) tells the story of Heidi, brought to the United States as part of the post-Vietnam War "Operation Babylift" and reunited with her biological mother, Mai Thi Kim, 22 years later. The filmmakers create a dual storytelling model that uses the first-person technique to portray the subjective viewpoint of both daughter and mother over observational, archival, and found-footage shots. This allows the viewer access to the characters' internal worlds, which, in turn, leads to more nuanced understanding of on-screen situations and a more visceral impact. For instance, during a trip to an outdoor market, both women appear happy, yet a voiceover from Heidi reveals her deep discomfort with her mother's presence.

While the use of first-person participant voiceover poses its own problems, particularly in creating the impression that the film is the product of the participant(s) rather than the filmmaker, we find this access to subjective, emotional viewpoints it affords to be desirable. We believe emotion to be central to ethnographic meaning-making and VPA methodology was developed specifically to support the elicitation of emotion from the participant and the activation of emotion in the film viewer.

Editing for Emotion

Crafting an ethnography to highlight emotional experience and elicit an emotional response means espousing an approach that goes against positivistic understandings of anthropology as an objective science (Pasqualino, 2007). While the idea of a strongly positivistic anthropology has been rejected, by and large, by most cultural and social anthropologists, criticisms against such an emotional approach remain, leaving the emotional components of much social research "hidden" (Blackman, 2007). It can be argued that individual emotional accounts are "unreliable," and shared emotional experience is an illusion (Beatty, 2010). Purposeful elicitation of emotion onscreen, it has been said, privileges

Western takes on film, narrative, and emotional engagement (Worth & Adair, 1972). At the very least, emotional "reading" of a narrative may be limited to viewers who generally share similar values and beliefs (Yeshurun et al., 2017). A related risk in activating emotional response is "overdoing it." If an audience does not respond with what feels like an "authentic" emotion, they may instead feel they are being emotionally manipulated, which would, instead, result in *dis*engagement.

Arguing for Emotion

It is our opinion, however, viewers will more deeply engage with the material presented, and empathize with the characters in the film, when that material is emotional. This is supported by recent neuroscience findings, which suggest that, at least for Western audiences, an emotional, character-centered film narrative is the most successful at empathic activation and information retention (Lemelson & Tucker, 2020). We hope this emotional engagement will support viewers in understanding variable and variegated cultural worlds and motivate them to further explore what they have just seen.

So, there are reasons for trying to make the emotions of the viewer connect with the emotions of the participants. That being said, it's a tricky proposition to use participant emotional expression to generate response from Western audiences, who may not "read" emotion in the same way it is expressed by Balinese or Javanese. There is longstanding debate in anthropology about the degree of cross-cultural translatability of emotional expression and its meaning (Beatty, 2013; Lutz, 1988). Given this debate, some may worry that, due to different cultural psychologies of feeling, as well as norms concerning emotional expression, in the act of editing a film to connect different emotional worlds, the filmmaker may write over other people's lives and experiences to make them more closely align with the conventions and expectations of the filmmaker's culture. These worries may be heightened by the subject matter discussed in this book, returning us to concerns raised in Chapter 1, that the "performance" of suffering might be rendered voyeuristically, or flattened into a neocolonialist trope. Indeed,

in Chapter 5, we raised our own theoretical concerns about the research and representation of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization. There, we argued that to understand the lived experience of these, we must look outside our etic frame for them. Is rendering these experiences within a framework for emotional experience and expression that comes from outside the culture of the participants portrayed just, once again, putting them back inside an etic frame, albeit this time a cinematic one? In other words, does editing for emotion enact the opposite of what our theoretical orientation calls us to do? This is a seeming contradiction that must be addressed. But the answer may not be found in editing "less" (if we read less visible editing or post-production strategies as "less manipulation").

All editing creates an embodied emotional response in viewers. The visual and the emotional are directly linked through shot choice and editing style. Film techniques scaffold an emotional viewer response, but without them, an emotional response still arises. The lack of this scaffolding was arguably a weakness in some classic ethnographic films in that what it evoked in the viewer was detachment. For example, *Dead Birds* (Gardner, 1964) includes the funeral of a child, but having taught this film many times to undergraduates, in general this depiction does not elicit a strong empathic emotional response. Another classic of ethnographic film that shows a funeral, *Ongka's Big Moka* (Nairn, 1974), also filmed in Papua New Guinea, also fails to connect. Why? In *Dead Birds*, it may be primarily due to the way the film was narrated; the "voice of God" mode of explanatory voiceover can stultify emotion. Here, the opportunity for emotional identification is foreclosed by explanation intended to build cultural understanding of "what's going on." In *Ongka's Big Moka*, it may be that the observational, wide-angle shots of florid emotional displays, so different from the Western habitus is what fails to connect. Arguably, the filmmakers did not find a way to bridge cultural differences of emotional experience or expression for the viewer.

A counterexample to this, also taken from the ethnographic film canon, would be John Marshall's camera work in *A Joking Relationship* (Marshall, 1962), which does evoke a mirrored mood and emotional response in the viewer. Here, a majority of extreme close-ups and reaction shots, without much contextualization, draws the viewer into the

ritualized relationship between N!ai and her great uncle Ti!kay, characterized by playful mockery and sexual innuendo. By withholding context until the end and keeping the shots tight, Marshall successfully echoes the intimacy between N!ai and Ti!kay, creating a sense within the viewer of how this kinship relationship might be experienced in the Kalahari. Indeed, this "close-up and reaction shot" style is commonly used in conventional filmmaking to communicate and evoke emotions such as sadness, surprise, or fear. In a hypothetical scene where a person is crying over a dead pet, it would not be solely the close-up of the dead pet, or the reaction shot of the person crying, but the balance of the two which communicates powerful emotion. These close-up, point of view, and reaction shots can be considered a "subjective" way to film, in that they are intended to mirror or evoke what is happening internally to the characters or participants in the film. Observational wide shots are considered more "objective" in that the goal is to capture the wider environment or scenario without evoking the inner experience of any one character.

Which storytelling style is more suitable to ethnographic film, and which one is more emotionally evocative, is still up for debate (Heider, 2006; MacDougall, 2021), but our experience suggests that that in order to make emotion recognizable and relatable in the participant and evoke it in the viewer, it may be helpful to follow some subjective cinematic conventions, such as close-ups and reaction shots, rather than more objective or observational ones more typically associated with classical ethnographic film. While this involves a bit more manipulation of footage than pure observation, if a filmmaker *doesn't* edit to elicit emotion from viewers, viewers may come away with an inaccurate understanding of the participants as somehow emotionally detached, or their cultural habitus or traditions of emotional expression merely a curiosity. To return to the examples of the funeral films above, a viewer could come away from *Dead Birds* or *Big Moka* thinking that, somehow, the people in those cultures depicted "don't feel grief." Indeed, Balinese people have been subject to this kind of gross ethnographic misrepresentation (Geertz, 1974) as we describe further below. It is only by experiencing the "force" of emotion for themselves, such as Rosaldo famously describes (Rosaldo, 1989), that a viewer/outsider can "get into" the experience of

a participant in a meaningfully way. This perspective is integral to VPA method. Our longitudinal person-centered interview method is designed to elicit emotion from participants in the field over time, and our editing strategies are designed to communicate this emotion and evoke it in viewers.

Techniques for Emotion

Given this perspective, there are cinematic conventions to use, and strategies to evoke and express emotion, and to make a more embodied, felt connection with the viewer during the editing process. These include juxtaposing significant shots, incorporating music, and selecting footage based on emotional displays of participants that align with those expected by viewers of Westernized or globalized cinema.

Juxtaposition and Montage

Observational shots can be edited together to evoke emotion (Taylor, 1923–1947/1998). For example, we created a *Bitter Honey* sequence that crosscut between Sadra's two families. We juxtaposed shots of Murni's small son crying in a room with a broken door, alone, while playing with a cheap little toy, with shots of Purniasih's children and relatives gathered in a pagoda, laughing and watching TV. This sequence highlighted the contrast between the two wives – one who had family support and one who was isolated, one who was provided for and one who was not. While individual viewers might "read" and respond to these scenes differently, we intended to evoke compassion for Murni's children, while also simultaneously inviting a sense of affront, that this setup was not "fair" toward either wife nor their children.

In other instances, the emotions displayed by those onscreen are edited in such a way to evoke a very different emotion in the viewer. Again, from *Bitter Honey*, for example, is the inter-cut between the puppet-show where the clowns crudely joke about "men these days" hiring prostitutes, observational footage of Darma at a "cafe" in the red-light district, and interview footage of Darma's wives casually talking about

their (mis)understandings about the risks of contracting AIDS (they just insist that Darma take a shower before sexual relations). This assembly creates a sense of urgent threat in the viewer, to realize that these women who have become familiar over the course of the film might be exposed to a potentially deadly virus. A different example is in *Thorn*: while Iman and Tri talked, we cut to young Lisa. She sometimes seemed to be paying no attention to her parents' conversation, but sometimes looked at them curiously. The more difficult and upsetting their stories became, the more Lisa's impassive, innocent face evoked a sense of alarm and dismay in the viewer.

We use more formal montages to open all the films, to establish key thematic concerns, and sometimes introduce key characters. Montage situates the audience in a time, place, and culture, efficiently providing information about the physical and social environment and simultaneously introducing significant themes of the film. While the individual shots are carefully selected, the impact comes from the shot sequences and juxtapositions – the whole, not just the parts (Morante, 2017; Suhr & Willerslev, 2012). The opening montage of *40 Years* was crafted to provide historical context and signal important themes to come, but we were also trying to immediately and viscerally communicate the fear, chaos, and despair of the time. We purposefully evoked horror, by including graphic archival recordings of the violence as part of this montage, including one man's beating and, essentially, another's murder. While these brutal acts are difficult to watch, the inclusion of these scenes allows viewers to directly witness events later denied or "spun" by the state propaganda machine and demonstrate the absolute impunity that was part and parcel of the extermination campaign of 1965.

While surely a reaction of visceral horror would be near-universal, other images in this montage might evoke strong emotions for cultural insiders while having little emotional impact on those unfamiliar with Indonesian culture. For example, a shot of a foot stomping on a pamphlet printed with an image of Lenin illustrates more than the "stamping out" of communism. In Indonesia, the sight or touch of the sole of the foot, as the dirtiest and lowest part of the body, is demeaning and particularly loaded in this cultural context. Similarly, in

the following series of shots depicting military raids, arrest, and imprisonment, we see a soldier, sitting above a crouched woman, rip her headscarf off and force her to look at the camera, as if to exhibit her guilt. This action also has loaded cultural significance; in Indonesian belief, the head is the most respected part of the body, and for Muslims, the headscarf is a sign of modesty and piety, so the act of removing the scarf and touching a woman's head without permission is deeply violating.

Music and Sound Design

In addition to the use of shot juxtaposition or extended montages, emotion can be evoked through the use of music and sound design.

These three films use original scores, previously recorded songs, and diagetic music (recorded live), each selected for its ethnographic significance, but more importantly, its ability to amplify the emotional resonance of the scene (Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). For example, in *40 Years*, a popular Balinese lullaby sung by a famous Balinese vocalist, Nyoman Candri (n.d.), is played over a montage of mass graves, evoking the poignant wishes that the victims of '65 might "sleep well" or "rest in peace" despite the violations they had suffered. Sorrowful instrumental music plays as the *Bitter Honey* wives discuss their feelings of jealousy, while ominous music plays under their discussions of physical abuse. Composed by Malcolm Cross, Elemental's long-term collaborator and composer, the original soundtracks for these films sought to preserve Indonesian musical instrumentation and tone while adapting it for global audiences. This led to some unexpected choices, such as featuring a dobro in *40 Years*. This slide guitar is more typical of American folk/roots music, but the pentatonic minor blues scale it uses is analogous with local Indonesian scales, transculturally and sonically communicating a mournful sound (from composer Malcolm Cross's liner notes [Various Artists, 2012]).

The use of soundtrack in ethnographic film has been long criticized on the grounds that it takes the viewer out of an immersive ethnographic experience and is manipulative (Grimshaw, 2011; Heider, 1976). Diagetic or source music may not be subject to the same critique

– arguably, this kind of music further immerses the viewer in an ethnographic locale, even as it, too, can illustrate powerful emotions, or emphasize narrative themes in an emotional way. So, for example, viewers can feel the moral force of cultural tradition evoked by the resounding puppet show gamelan music in *Bitter Honey*. At the end of *40 Years*, they can see and hear the healing power of social connection and the solidarity of found community as Budi's brother Kris performs a politically trenchant song, "Destiny of My Nation," with other "children of communists" who, like him, had been ostracized.

They can hear the purity, sincerity, and hope radiating from Lisa's sung prayer in *Thorn*. This prayer was placed at a key transitional moment in the narrative. Throughout the first half of the film, Imam and Tri argued over sexual fidelity and sexual violence, in an ongoing battle over broken promises and mutual entrapment. Tri and Imam's orientation to their story and their lives was fatalistic: in their own eyes, in some ways, their story was done; they were both "ruined." But for Lisa, something meaningful still hung in the balance. Being young, both vulnerable and hopeful, with major milestones to be navigated and major decisions to be made, her orientation was toward the future. As the storyline shifted in focus for the second half of the film, while sexuality and sexual destiny, in many ways, remained a concern, the substance of this concern shifted. We maintained thematic continuity in the transition between the two sections of the film; the first half ends with a young Lisa saying that her parents are "*nakal,*" which is directly translated as naughty but can also suggest sexual transgression. As the second half of the film opens, jumping about a decade forward in time, the first thing that the viewer hears is Lisa's lilting recitation of a Quranic verse about preserving chastity: "I take refuge in Allah from the cursed Satan, and those who turn away from falsehood and all that Allah has forbidden, and those who guard their chastity. Whoever seeks beyond that are the transgressors." This cut both implies a moral judgment on Lisa's parents, where the verse stands in for the mores of their community and establishes defending sexual purity as a major issue for Lisa to come in the next part of the film. This was a conscious choice, as we recorded Lisa chanting many different Quranic verses on a number of themes. Such

recitation is a standard element of Islamic education, at which she was quite skilled.

Finally, beyond the realm of music, sound design can shape or enhance viewer emotion. One example of sound design comes in *Bitter Honey*, during Purniasih's account of Sadra's abuse. This account arose in an interview, but instead of simply showing her speaking, we chose to put her testimony over visuals of a night scene, where Sadra sat alone in a pagoda, surrounded by darkness, while Purniasih worked alone in the kitchen. The only sound besides Purniasih's account of violence is the droning chirp of a cricket. The contrast of the quiet, intimate atmosphere of a house at night with her story of being beaten was intended to evoke feelings of cruelty, pain, and fear. The imagery underscored the rifts that such violence creates, as embodied in the character's literal isolation from one another onscreen.

Emotional Displays

Another way to elicit emotion in the viewer is to include the emotional displays of participants. As discussed in the previous chapter, we aimed to establish situational and relational contexts in the field that, over time, helped create a setting whereby participants felt comfortable revealing emotionally painful material with corresponding affect, instead of following the Indonesian social convention of sharing even very gruesome or tragic stories with a smile or a laugh, which is considered more respectful or polite to one's interlocutor (Kurilla, 2020; Lee, 1999).

Indeed, when strong emotion arose during the course of filmmaking – such as a participant breaking into tears – we took that as a signal that we had touched upon something of great importance to the participants. Emotional expression alerted us to pay close attention and delve further, and strongly motivated us to keep that footage in the film. For example, Tri spontaneously broke into tears when discussing how Imam refused to marry her, leaving Lisa technically fatherless on her birth certificate. This scene was not in the early cuts of the film, but it served as a powerful clue to us that something else was going on, and remained pivotal in the final cut of *Thorn*.

This incorporation of participant emotion can be somewhat straightforward, less so when the participants may not visibly emote all the emotions they report experiencing (Lemelson & Tucker, 2015).[4] During filming, Lanny's expression still crackled when recounting her episodes of anger at her family struggles, but she did not emote any sadness, despite the fact that she reported experiencing it; perhaps this was because, as she stated, she emphatically views emotions such as sadness as weakness. To make Lanny's experience of grief more vivid for viewers, we turned to the testimony of her family members about the episodes of loss and trauma in *their* lives. Her brother Edy conveyed the fear, desperation, and devastation that her family endured as her father was taken. Freely weeping, Edy recalled the moment when the military officers searched their house.

> [T]hey took all the valuable items … My younger brother, the sixth child, was told to sit on one of the soldier's laps. He was questioned, "Are there any pistols? Does Daddy have a pistol?" "Oh, he does. Lots!" my brother replied. He didn't know anything about it, but his imagination was like any other kid his age. He was just seven years old. He was just a little boy … Mom was furious … I always cry whenever I talk about it … In anger and despair, Mom beat him and said, "you killed your father!" … Seeing my brother, who was still so little and skinny, being beaten up by Mom, who was out of control, Mom also crying … I don't know why, that memory leaves a mark.

This is not to say that grief or sadness is the only emotion we seek to highlight, nor the only one that will engage audiences from different cultural backgrounds. Anger such as Lanny expresses is a powerful emotion, all the more so in the Javanese context where anger, particularly women's anger, is conventionally downregulated (Chapter 6). A single participant may not evoke all of the relevant aspects to their emotional experience to the same degree. Ultimately, the filmmaker must decide

[4] Of course, although there is an ethological basis for the universality of some emotional displays, much of the non-verbal gestures, some unconscious, related to the internal experience of emotion may still be visible, though interpretation of this is difficult due to both individual and cultural differences in emotional gestures and expression, leading to possible misinterpretation in the audience.

which emotions to highlight in the films, considering both the meanings they have for the participants *and* the desire to have viewers empathetically connect or identify with those participants. For some, the work of the filmmaker in shaping and framing participant emotional experience to affect an emotional experience in the viewer may remain questionable. But we stand by it, particularly in these films on these themes. When dealing with these painful, often erased histories of trauma, gendered violence, and stigmatization, we cannot afford for viewers to not pay attention or not care – or to come away thinking participants don't care. We want to engage viewers, to move them to do something, a motivation we further address more in the following chapter when we discuss advocacy and activism. But in bringing a film to an audience and in engaging them in a story, this dilemma of emotional "editing" is not the only one that remains, to a certain extent, unresolved.

The Artifice of Endings

There is another dilemma inherent to VPA: life goes on, while ethnographic films create stories of a certain expected digestible length. The longitudinal approach of VPA means that each film was shot over the course of multiple years – four for *40 Years*, seven for *Bitter Honey*, and eleven for *Thorn*. Each film functions on two different timelines– the retrospective and the ever-unfolding present – and, through weaving these together, witnesses a holistic representation of life course development. But the ethnographic product still cannot come close to capturing the ongoing processes of growth and change that is life itself. As Biehl and Locke point out, "ethnographic creations are about the plasticity and unfinishedness of human subjects and lifeworlds … views of people … in the process of becoming" (Biehl & Locke, 2017).

In crafting a bounded product out of the raw material of life, there arises the matter of an "ending." Any ending is, of course, an artifice – even when participants die, their impact reverberates within families and communities. Before such eventualities, our film work with participants continues after the film proper is finished, in the service of the larger

ethnographic project. So, how do we know that a film or a storyline within a participant's life is "done"?

In reaching an endpoint, it is easy to be swayed by subconscious desires for some kind of closure. There is also a Western narrative convention that compels us toward a "happy ending"; on the whole, viewers are most satisfied with a film that ends on a hopeful note. For the ethnographic filmmaker, this requires balancing a portrayal faithful to the truth of life as lived with a narrative that will not totally disappoint its audience (Heider, 2006). We are accordingly motivated to end a film when the participant is in a better place than they were when we started, or has achieved a new understanding. The endings of each of the three films have incorporated an element of this optimistic, temporary closure, while gesturing toward the ever-unfolding aspect of our participants' lives with a hopeful "gaze into the future." At the end of *40 Years* and *Thorn*, Budi and Lisa are looking toward their futures as adults with a more optimistic orientation than the despair or sense of hopelessness they had experienced earlier in the film. Collectively, the wives in *Bitter Honey* are also looking toward the future, wishing their children less suffering and more agency and control in their lives. To be able to include such moments in our films, we must stick with a participant through difficult times in hopes that such a positive development will come.

By the same token, we can't let longitudinality prevent the completion of a compelling story; filming more will not necessarily make the final film better. Our goal is to document the experience of individuals within a particular cultural milieu and craft *theoretically significant* stories about them with the available tools of our own society. Accordingly, the film can be considered "finished" once there is a narrative arc that illustrates our theoretical analysis in a coherent and emotionally resonant way. Despite our working methods that advocate for longitudinality, there is no set time frame for completion of a film. For example, the bulk of one of our films, albeit a much shorter one than those discussed in this book, was shot over the course of three days. *Ngaben* (Lemelson, 2012a) documented a son conducting a cremation ceremony for his father. It was conceived as a film rebuttal (joining other scholars such as Jensen & Suryani, 1992) to Clifford Geertz's assertion that individual Balinese are of "no genuine importance even to themselves. But the masks they wear,

the stage they occupy, the parts they play, and, most important, the spectacle they mount remain, and comprise not the façade but the substance of things, not least the self" (1974, p. 35). The overwhelming emotions and poignant reflections gathered in those three days were enough to realize our goal. Still, the film subject, Nyoman, had been a friend for over a decade at the time of shooting. So we had earned his trust and knew his feelings about his father and his father's death.

In any case, when settling on an ending for our longer films, we must consider our intended audience. Our films are oriented toward global academic and advocacy audiences, but also toward Indonesians impacted by and invested in the issues portrayed. The ending of *40 Years*, which highlighted the inexorable losses participants had experienced but included scenes of hope from Indonesia's gradual emergence from the silence surrounding the 1965 tragedy via political activism and artistic expression, worked well for both audiences. But the final sequences that ended Lanny's story was problematic for Indonesian audiences. Lanny shared her Javanese and Buddhist-informed belief that those who committed acts of violence would receive their proper karmic punishment, and that rather than seeking retribution, her time would be better spent conducting good works. The scenes we included next showed her conducting relief after the massive 2006 earthquake. We intended to demonstrate Lanny's resilience and the meaning she found in helping others, but some Indonesians took it as an implicit endorsement by the filmmakers of Lanny's belief in cosmic justice. In other words, some Indonesian viewers felt we were suggesting the earthquake was karmic retribution. For those who may have lost their homes or loved ones or experienced hardship during the disaster, such a message was offensive. This was not our intent, and a reminder to us that films for transcultural audiences must take the narrative logics and histories of both American and Indonesian viewers into account.

On the other hand, *Thorn* received some negative feedback from American academic audiences, who felt the ending was unrealistically optimistic. This ending was shot in a more upbeat tone and style to purposefully contrast the melancholic mood of the preceding sections of the film. All scenes in the ending sequence were filmed out in the sun, amidst modern architecture with reflective surfaces and clean lines. This

was to suggest that Lisa had a bright and prosperous future – one where she might be free of some of the poverty and claustrophobic social sanction that impacted her mother, as embodied in the previous dark interior shots of the modest boarding houses in which she grew up. We set these shots to music akin to that in a teen romance film to communicate that Lisa was a young woman emerging into a globalized world.

Some test audiences felt this put a manufactured upbeat spin on Lisa's life conditions. But we kept this ending after consultations with several human trafficking experts, who advised us that for advocacy purposes, the film needed to demonstrate the need for and efficacy of some sort of intervention. They held that without intervention by human rights workers, community organizations, mentors, et cetera, teenage girls have a slim chance of leaving sex work, but with support, they can and will. The film has, in fact, gone on to be used by Komnas HAM, (*Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia*, the Indonesian national human rights commission), as an educational and advocacy film for a national campaign on human trafficking. We hope this ending will be motivating for those who might draw connections between Lisa's story and the experiences of young women in their local communities.

It is also worth noting that, to a certain extent, the "take-away" from someone's life and/or a film about their life depends on time and perspective. Having continued to follow Lisa and her family up until this writing, we can conduct a thought experiment about how the time stamp for wrapping the final version of the film would have changed the film's message. What would have happened if we had wrapped the final version of the film in 2015 or 2020, as opposed to 2012 when we did? If we had ended in 2015, things would have, indeed, looked bleak. At this point, Lisa was 17, had dropped out of high school, was living alone in a rented room, and working as a model, which many around her interpreted as being a euphemism for an escort, still dreaming of a better job and a better life. Tri was finally been able to purchase some land and build her own house with Wiji's help, but did not want to officially marry him, and remained sickly, despondent, and anxious. Imam married a girl even younger than Lisa in another community marriage and remained mostly uninvolved in his daughter's life. If we ended the film in 2020, though, perhaps the ending would have seemed "too good to be true."

As of this writing, Lisa recently married an upstanding middle-class man who knows her history and appears to sincerely love her. Tri finally left Wiji and soon after found an upstanding middle-class man of her own, who eagerly (and quickly) married her legally and similarly accepts her despite her troubled past. Imam is once again alone, after his young wife's father retrieved his daughter, saying that his brother had married the girl off in his stead. Imam, however, says that now that his wife and daughter are properly taken care of, he is finally at peace with his life.

The ending of *Bitter Honey* was intended to be poignant but balanced, acknowledging the ongoing reality of the burdens each wife must bear as simultaneous to the joys and hopes each finds in her offspring. We ended on the counter-narrative embodied by Kiawati. By being in a *nyentana* marriage (see Chapter 3), Kiawati was able to live outside of the normative rules of Balinese marriage, make different choices for herself and, in a sense, avoid the fate that most of the other co-wives share. While her life as a divorced mother is not easy, she still relishes her agency. The final shot of her carrying bricks up a steep hill above a riverside quarry, quite grueling manual labor, with her voiceover saying she's free, was intended to communicate this blend of burden, injustice, and devastation mixed with strength, resilience, and pride. In earlier cuts of the film, this footage had come earlier, when she was first introduced. But we felt that the image of her hauling stone was an apt representation of all the women's hardship, as well as their remarkable endurance. And yet, as an ending, it may leave the sense that this is the way it is from here on out – poignant and bittersweet, but with a focus on the positive in both the wives' and the viewers' minds. The reality is rougher around the edges.

In 2013, the team held screenings of a film cut to elicit the wives' feedback. We also conducted interviews about developments in their lives. Murni arrived dressed in smart checkered pants and flowered sandals. When asked how things were going, she replied with an arithmetic of daily demands, revealing her preoccupations with managing her time and earning money. As Sadra's finances were caught up in his older children's college education, Murni had been left the sole breadwinner for her children. She said she had no spare moment or energy for anything except working to support them. She sent away her first child, a daughter,

to serve a distant relative as a housemaid, prioritizing her more "valuable" sons. She moved in with her older brother on her natal family compound, to avoid paying rent and cut down commuting time, a move she had long wanted to make but Sadra had forbidden. Her family did not judge her marriage, but expected her to help with her brother's household tasks and care for her ailing mother in return for lodging. Meanwhile, as a wife, she sees part of her responsibility to "cover" for her husband's shortcomings, so she told her brother and her children that Sadra was providing for them. She had taken on a side job ironing clothes because her regular job didn't pay enough to make ends meet.

It was clear that her relationship with Sadra had disintegrated into dislike, even disgust. In the rare instances they spent time together, he still frequently lost his temper. She reported telling him things like, "Go try to find another wife who does what I do; if you can, I'll eat her shit!" Indeed, when talking about him, her forthright tone turned disdainful, rising as she said that for all she cares, he can go get a new wife and, "I'll loan him the money for the wedding myself! … Sometimes my ears are just flaming hearing him talk. When I fight with him, I say that there's no way he'll find another woman as strong as me."

When asked whether he is still physically abusive with her, she sneered, "He can hit me if he wants – he can also go ahead and die for all I care." She said he hit her "less" because she no longer accepted it, no longer submitted to his will in any of her affairs. It's clear that Murni's hard-won independence means she has much less help than a typical Balinese wife would have, without access to extended family resources from her husband's side. Murni clearly takes pride in her own capability and is instilling these values in her young children, who cook, clean up after themselves, manage their own pocket money, and help out with household tasks so Murni can focus on her side work. But her exhaustion showed on her face.

In this question of endings, then, there is a quandary in that crafting any sort of narrative – gesturing toward any sort of ending or resolution at all – is imposing a kind of shape to human existence that doesn't actually exist. Similarly, presenting participant experience via an edited narrative designed to move a viewer is, to a certain extent, manipulating that experience, or at least creating a telling of it that is the filmmaker's.

Both narrative arcs and emotional displays are, to a greater or lesser extent, constructions. Ethnographic field material can be gathered indefinitely, which allows for a more detailed, less determinative understanding of an individual in the constant flux of life. But a short or feature-length film – much like an ethnographic monograph – is a delimited and purposeful ethnographic product. The films are created around a theme or point, which need to be made with an ending. The films aim to engage the viewer beyond the end of the film and they do so by shaping the emotional experience of the film, of which an ending is a part. In some sense, then, people's full life stories and complex shifting subjectivities are always truncated to the story. This is a necessary aspect of VPA filmmaking, but one that must be handled with care. We continue our discussion of ethics in the following chapter, which considers additional points in the ethics of production, post-production, and beyond to film distribution, release, and use for activism or advocacy purposes.

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9

Ethical Issues in Visual Psychological Anthropology

The primary edict for any ethnographic fieldwork project is to "do no harm" (American Anthropological Association, 2012). In some anthropological work, where there is little chance of negative consequences for research participants, this issue of "harm" is merely a formality. But given first, the topics of the films discussed in this book, which address personal experiences of trauma, violence, and stigma; and second, the particularly revealing nature of the PCE interview approach central to VPA described in Chapter 7, for us the ethical questions of potential harm were central, ongoing, and multilayered. Our goal could not be just to thoughtfully or empathetically represent the forces impinging upon our participants, but also take these forces into account in structuring an ethical fieldwork and filmmaking environment.

The risks to participants associated with the *40 Years*, *Bitter Honey*, and *Thorn* film projects (Lemelson, 2009, 2015, and 2012, respectively) were numerous. The most extreme risk was that of dire physical harm or even death. Participants in *40 Years* shared histories of political oppression, violence, and trauma; at the time of filming the associated dangers had subsided but were by no means past. Participants faced potential

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repercussion for their public testimony, such as interrogation or imprisonment by police or military state actors, or extra-judicial violence, including murder at the hands of state actors, militias, or vigilantes. Some participants in *Bitter Honey* were publicly sharing experiences of domestic abuse that might have put them in danger of retaliation from their husbands. In *Thorn*, both Imam and Tri had faced past episodes of violent vigilante justice and there were concerns that, given their ongoing stigmatization, the family might face this again.

There were also social risks in publicly discussing difficult, painful, or socially sanctioned thoughts and behaviors. Interpersonal repercussions that occur outside of the fieldwork setting, such as social isolation or antagonism, may be unpredictable and may fall outside the eye or control of the filmmaker (Pink, 2013, 2019) and end up creating protracted difficulties for film participants.

Related, but distinct from these concerns, are the potential psychological risks of disclosing past traumas or addressing past experiences or ongoing contexts of violence or stigmatization. We know interviewing people about their memories of or reflections on violent or traumatic events to a certain extent re-exposes them to traumatic triggers. We prepared for these effects as best we could during interviews and in follow up post interviews.

First, given the risks, the chapter discusses obtaining and maintaining informed consent. Here we address a number of different consent issues, loosely in the order in which they arise during the filmmaking process: consent to participation, consent to filmic representation, and consent to screenings and distribution. Then, we turn to the second major concern in these three films, which is ameliorating harm to participants, specifically those that might come from the filmmaking process. We provide for psychological protection and support during interviews on painful or potentially triggering topics, but amelioration of harm must continue after interviews, to address the dynamics that arise when we begin to develop caring relationships with participants and when our participants begin to reconcile with the images of themselves onscreen. Here we reflect on the ethical issues of conducting or facilitating interventions and the potentially neocolonialist or moralizing underpinning of these issues, and those implicated in the processes of making public the

trauma, stigma, and violence participants have experienced, or at the very least recording and presenting emotions that in their everyday cultural context would not typically be seen in public.

Finally, we address advocacy or activism activities with participants who have multiple vulnerabilities or have been subject to trauma, gendered violence, or stigmatization. We think through our responsibility to participants after filming, in terms of trying to support positive changes in their lives via intervention or advocacy. We also ask what role the films might play in advocacy work; what audience were they intended for, and to what uses have they been put? What role do participants have in advocacy, and how might we react to their increasing sense of purposeful investment in the film and its use?

Much, if not most, of the events and interview material we discuss in this chapter happened outside of filming proper, whether before fieldwork, during but outside of filmmaking, or long after the shooting was done and the films had been wrapped, released, and distributed. Considering these ethical dimensions of our project then "widens the frame" yet again, situating the experiences of our participants in our project as well as the longer reach of their lives, and in the sets of global viewership of the films, while focusing on the ethical issues raised by their exposure.

Consent

Issues of consent have been primary in these projects. Processes of consent are always undertaken before filming can begin, continue throughout the production, post-production, film screenings, and distribution. Each phase of filmmaking has its own challenges and quandaries. While informed consent remains the AAA ethical standard, debates about the concept's validity and/or practical meaning and application continue. Some reject it on claims that no ethnographer truly adheres to the rigorous procedure ongoing (and not simply initial) informed consent requires and that, even if they did, it is impossible for ethnographic subjects to truly consent to what ultimately amounts to their own objectification (Bell, 2014). Others (e.g., Corrigan, 2003) argue that the negotiations of informed consent can often be decontextualized from

Fig. 9.1 Made Darma and his children

the lived experience of those it is supposed to protect. Regardless of these objections, the process of thinking through with participants what their consent entails, and the implications of that consent, remains a centrally important undertaking (Fig. 9.1).

Danger to Safety and Well-Being

The contextual reasons for subject protection, evident in the three film chapters, include in order of increasing severity, the chance of raising awareness about the life experiences and personal history of the participants, which could expose them to further approbation, shunning, and stigma in their local communities; potential community violence due to anger and subsequent retribution over a range of potential disclosures; arrest and imprisonment should these disclosures be brought to the attention of state authorities; and finally, violence or even murder at the

hands of community members or state actors. Awareness of the nature of these risks, participant social positioning vis-à-vis these risks, and any individual participant's ability to grasp these risks in their complexity, affect the degree to which he or she can give true "informed consent." Here we select one example from each phase of the filmmaking.

Questions of consent arise before filming begins, when participants are deciding whether or not to join the project. The first steps, after meeting and explaining a project with potential participants, is to discuss the possible risks and dangers of participation. For *40 Years*, these included the danger that, as I put it in initial discussions with participants, "participation in this project could lead to your imprisonment or death." For ethnographic films on political violence, this risk is not hyperbole (cf. Nettie Wild discussing her film [1998] in Hartzell, 2003). While all subjects in *40 Years* were at risk for violence, these risks were not equal for each participant and their families.

Lanny and Degung saw their participation in *40 Years* as part of their pre-existing activist work and were familiar with such risks. Furthermore, these risks may have been mitigated for them, given their high levels of education, higher SES, positions of authority (and attendant cultural capital and the forms of protection these can offer), and their consciousness of the political forces and realities acting against them. Kereta and Budi, however, both less affluent than Lanny and Degung, with limited education and attendant cultural capital, would be telling their stories publicly for the first time. So, our concerns and discussions were different for each person, accounting for the potential higher level of danger Budi or Kereta's families might find themselves in as a result of film participation.

Discussions of consent, with regard to potential danger to safety and well-being, continue during editing/post-production phases. Over the course of making *Bitter Honey*, we realized that the wives' participation in the film – depending on what they said, and their relationship with their husband – might lead to their physical harm. The team regularly checked in with them over the years to ensure they felt comfortable continuing with certain avenues of discussion that might anger their husbands. Here is a typical exchange at an all-female screening of an edit of the film, before we showed the cut to their husbands, moderated by psychologist and women's advocate Livia Iskandar, who collaborated on this project:

LIVIA: First, actually I have a question, is there a problem? Do you feel safe enough? So, for example, is it possible that if the men watch this, later they'll get angry? And if that happened, that's what I'm honestly worried about, if the men watch that and then they get angry, what would that be like for you?

MURNI: From the very start, it was him being filmed. So he has to see the results of the filming. … Maybe by seeing that, he can change.

SUCIATI TO PURNIASIH: You weren't insulting your husband, you were speaking about your feelings, about what was in your heart. But your husband definitely won't want to hear that, accept that, you speaking badly of him. He must have told you to just say good things, say this, say this. Even though he told us to lie, someone asked you while they were filming you, and since that was clearly what you were feeling, that was what came out. Later when he watches it, he definitely won't accept it, and then there will be arguments in the household. That's what she's asking. … You can imagine if they don't agree with it, right? But clearly if they don't, then it's us who have to be with those men who are like that.

MURNI: Yes, they're violent people, those men of ours.

KIAWATI: They'll think we're insulting them. They'll be upset about it later.

PURNIASIH: I don't know if my husband will agree with it or not. But I already agreed to it.

RASTI: You don't understand … Tomorrow your husband will see you saying that in the film, being filmed by those tourists,[1] and he'll say that to you, that you said this and this and this. He'll be angry, your husband, and he'll hit you again at home.

The women helped each other negotiate the potential scenarios resulting from a husband hearing them "speak their true feelings on screen," but these were unpredictable. In another interview, Suciati explained how her husband's reaction to a filmed statement she made could be as mild as an annoyed question, if he was in a good mood, to something "excessive" if he had other worries on his mind. Ultimately, after extensive discussions

[1] "Tourists" is typically the way many Balinese refers to foreigners, even those they have known a long time.

of the risks these participants faced, we left it up to the women to navigate these contingencies, based on what they felt was important to say in the film. But given this, worries about potential harm stayed primary in our minds and discussions, and we followed up multiple times with them to check if there was any negative response to their participation. Thankfully, both in the immediate aftermath and in the long run, there have not been any reported violent or dangerous events related to their participation.

Some risks may arise in film release and distribution: The family in *Thorn* reveals personal experiences of stigmatization which implicate a number of other actors in their social world. In telling of the violence done to them, they reference villagers from Tri's hometown who beat them, men who raped Tri, and later in the film, Tri's boyfriend who attempted to kidnap Lisa, potentially with the intention to traffic her into sex work. While no one is mentioned by their real name, the film could possibly make such actors feel exposed or threatened, and perhaps retaliate. Less of a concern, but not impossible, might be physical attacks on or scapegoating of Imam who, as discussed in Chapters 4, 6–8, was previously stigmatized for his psychiatric illness and/or may have deeply affronted those Javanese viewers who felt he had gravely violated norms of morally acceptable behavior.

Triggering Surveillance Fears

The risks and dangers of participating in an ethnographic film about trauma, gendered violence, and stigma map onto and quite likely exacerbate pre-existing fears about surveillance.

In *40 Years*, those identified by the state as communists or affiliates were familiar with state-directed surveillance, where to stay as "invisible" as possible was to stay safe. In *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn*, female participants were subject to everyday surveillance, from their husbands and broader society. Kiawati, Suciati, Rasti, and Tri and reported being "scared" to go places unaccompanied or to talk to men in public because, as Suciati said, "there are eyes everywhere." This sense of surveillance

impacted the women's sense of freedom to tell their own stories: Participation in the *Thorn* film was just one more aspect of her life that Tri kept secret from her boyfriend, Wiji.

Participants, who had been subject to state, community, and/or family level surveillance, worried about how they would be both literally and metaphorically "viewed" by their families, communities, and state if they said certain things "on the record" for the films and were then "found out." Whether subject to state, community, or family surveillance, the feared end point of surveillance was punishment, again most likely physical violence. We took pains to avoid, ameliorate, or reduce these ever-present fears, through ongoing discussions about the range of negative effects their participation could evoke. In addition, we worked with participants to develop plans for managing any potential negative effects of their participation, such as immediately notifying local collaborators, such as Dr. Mahar and Father Baskara Wardaya, a Jesuit priest and professor, if they were to have a negative experience with someone who watched the film or developed any safety concerns.

Of course, when surveillance is conducted by the state and local community, the potential consequences cannot be entirely and appreciably mitigated. If state or local actors wanted to mete out punishment to the families as a result of film participation, there is only so much our team could have done to protect them. Given the public nature of film, we remain aware of the limitations and potential inadequacy of these efforts, particularly with the increasingly slippery nature of digital media, which is so easily reproduced and disseminated, as discussed below.

Impact on Participant in Family and Community

In consenting to their participation in a film, participants often anticipated others' interpretation of or response to their involvement in the project. In addition to or aside from physical danger, participants risked other negative repercussions in their family or community. There are two issues here; first is that we were asking the interviewees for their consent, but in subsequent interviews they could potentially reveal things about other people, who had *not* consented to their lives being "revealed" or

the resulting risks. Second is that participants' families or communities might not approve of either participation in a film project more generally, or what specifically is revealed during the course of filming, based on what the participants themselves chose to disclose (perhaps, with their own agendas).

Degung explained how his own interest or comfort level was not the only thing he took into consideration:

> For me to talk about this, with a camera or without a camera, I find it very, very, very, very therapeutic in a way. But sometimes I question myself, this story I tell [...] what implications it has. I don't really know ... But I'm worried sometimes if I tell this kind of story, whether other people will be in a problem or, you know, my family will be in a problem.

Degung was well aware of potential unintended consequences to his testimony. Given the history of '65 where people were targeted for violence due to things someone else said about them, he proceeded with trepidation. Furthermore, given the pre-existing disenchantment and anger from one side of his family at his activism, who might see his participation as further "dredging up the past," and the wariness of those who also consider themselves survivors on the other side who warn him not to "commodify" his suffering, he knew further public statements on this topic could quite likely create new problems in his family, village, and Balinese social network. He continued:

> Ethically it's very, very hard for me to explain sometimes, because ... Logically, I find, you know, this story has to be told, the experience that we've been through. But ethically we [are] brought up with the Balinese style of knowledge with the spirit of *ajawera* (secrets). Which is, you know, don't disseminate knowledge, because knowledge can harm people. Sometimes, I think [that's] true ... But sometimes we need to disseminate knowledge in order to enlighten other people.

Similar to Degung's worries of how his film participation might affect his family relationships in a compound already politically split and full of disharmony, in *Bitter Honey*, some of Darma's wives seemed to similarly fear that having an available record of their discord might flare

up old fights. After many years of participation, Suciati worried that, while the co-wives had developed much more amicable relations than they had during earlier periods of filming, the record of their conflicts on film threatened this fragile harmony. On the one hand, this fear is practical; Suciati has learned to be ever mindful of the other wives' angry and jealous feelings, which might play out negatively in her daily life within this complex kinship system. At the same time, these fears about interpersonal discord are linked to fears over open discourses about 1965 through Indonesian cultural understandings of social and societal harmony; in a psychocultural context where to discuss, portray, or otherwise refer to conflict is to risk conjuring it anew, such strife is never really "past."

Mini's case illustrates what happens if some of these fears about disrupting a fragile harmony came to fruition. Her relationship with her family, always tense, was exacerbated by disputes over her role in *40 Years*. Mini participated in the film because she wanted people to know the truth about '65, particularly that many of those who had been targeted were innocent. And while *she* felt this mission was successful, Mini's natal family did not want the film screened or discussed. In one instance, after a film screening at Atmajaya University, a professor wanted to visit their family to learn more. Mini's sister – who learned about the screening and interest from an employer's son, who works at Atmajaya – dissuaded him, saying the film's stories were lies.

Mini thinks her sister was, in part, jealous of her participation in the film, and the associated "fame" or "importance" of having a relationship with highly educated Indonesians and foreigners. People may assume Mini has been paid a high sum for her participation, a common concern for our participants – Sadra and Darma, too, worried neighbors assumed they had made money from the film, a fear supported by Balinese hypercognization of jealousy (B.I. *iri hati*, Shaver et al., 2001). In Bali, this gossip or jealousy can lead to more serious concerns, like being targeted with black magic (B.I. *ilmu hitam*), which has powerful repercussions on social relations and personal well-being. Whether the heart of the dispute comes from jealousy or lingering fears over discussing '65, Mini believes the family has retaliated against her for her participation. She now lives on a shared family plot and, after the film's release, her brother-in-law

began using the land immediately adjacent to theirs as a chicken coop. She says he poisons the rats there and leaves them out to rot, hoping the smell will drive her away.

Ultimately, we must remember that when weighing risks and dangers, participants are considering the impact on their whole family and community and on themselves *as situated within* a particular family and community. But is it enough to say that participants have the best understanding of the risks of their exposure and so are they ultimately the ones to best weigh those risks? Or, given the tight family and social networks in Indonesia, are we as filmmakers and/or ethnographers responsible for reviewing risks and dangers and/or getting consent from the entire extended family unit or discussing the film work with the broader community? Certainly, on such topics as these, if we did so, consensus would be difficult to achieve and the films would probably never be made. Furthermore, despite due diligence, some of the effects simply cannot be predicted (Lipson, 1994; for a comparative example of unanticipated consequences of filmed disclosures despite extended consent discussions see David Paperny (Paperny, 2002, as cited in Hartzell, 2003) on his documentary *Kink* [Paperny, 2001–2006]). Still, we feel it our responsibility, as anthropologists and filmmakers doing VPA to consider, digest, and thoroughly discuss these risks with the participants as part of our expanded notion of informed consent.

Representation

While risks and dangers to participant safety and well-being are addressed “first”/before filming begins and then throughout, some issues of consent only arise at later stages of filming. The major issue of consent that arises during the editing phase is what footage is to be included in the film. In essence, by consenting to the inclusion of certain scenes (or not), this phase is when participants consent to how their lives and selves are being represented.

Compromising Material

As discussions in Chapters 5–7 illustrate, when conducting ethnography with participants who may have been stigmatized or traumatized, who have expressed emotions that strain against cultural norms, and/or with participants whose behavior may be perceived as shameful – or even, illegal – often the thing most important in their lives is something they both feel a drive to talk about and simultaneously want to keep hidden (Herman, 1992). This can lead to complications around consent; consent may be freely given to include sensitive material at one time, but years later viewing that same material elicits feelings of sadness, regret, and shame, that may make participants reconsider their consent or wish they hadn't given it – sometimes long after the film has been released. Karl Heider has summed up this consent dilemma:

> If a filmmaker acknowledges an obligation to obtain permission, or releases, from the people in the film, then how can the filmmaker arbitrarily declare that the obligation is fulfilled at the time of shooting and that thereafter the subjects have no more rights? On the other hand, if the subjects exercised rights of review throughout, then few films would ever be finished. (Heider, 2006, p. 112)

Interview or observational footage that frames certain participants as victims – and simultaneously other participants as perpetrators – of violent, dangerous, or morally questionable acts, poses another problem: What of this material, if any, to include in the finished film? The ethnographic approach of "do no harm" which opened the chapter includes doing no harm to personal dignity. Here, the seemingly simple ethnographic goal of presenting marginalized or stigmatized individuals as accurately and empathetically as possible is anything but. Should filmmakers tone down or eliminate aspects of the story that are embarrassing, or even incriminating – but accurate – out of ethical considerations? Is inclusion of such material akin to critiquing or condemnation of individuals who have opened up? What if this behavior is important to understanding the themes being explored in the film? How can you balance the "truth" of an ethnographic film, participant protection, and

Fig. 9.2 Darma attending screening of *Bitter Honey*

the subjective responses of multiple participants who may feel differently about what material is accurate or acceptable? These questions, not easily answered, point to the unique requirements and challenges of ethical visual or filmic ethnographic representation versus written forms of representation and analysis (Fig. 9.2).

Ethnographic Representation on Film Versus in Writing

When thinking about ethnographic research methods and presentation, this anticipation of participant and/or community reaction may impact ethnographic filmmaking differently than writing. Viewed critically, visual ethnography puts participants at greater risk for exposure than written forms, because it presents actual faces and actual places. When writing, ethnographers can take certain precautions such as giving pseudonyms to both people and places, creating composite characters, or otherwise altering key identifying details. (We did offer *Bitter Honey* participants the option to use pseudonyms, but ultimately decided against it as their faces would still be recognizable to their local communities.)

It is possible that a written monograph may more freely include difficult details important to the case, because arguably the writing will not impact the participant's life as directly. Participants are less likely to read or share an academic book or article, due to both logistical and experiential access (i.e., written in academic English, perhaps behind a journal paywall, etc.). Historically, written ethnography was not geared toward the community it is written about. There have been cases of real upset and anger when participants encountered depictions of their lives that they felt pathologized or indicted their communities, culture, and/or themselves (e.g., Scheper-Hughes, 1983). This impact does not end with the participants in the ethnography, but can extend over generations; some children and grandchildren have felt harmed by ethnographies long-past published, such as the descendants of Malinowski's subjects (Stuart & Thomson, 2011).

More recent feminist and indigenous film efforts shifted this orientation somewhat, and ethnographers who work closely with individuals over time have chosen to include participant feedback in their books, as in projects of "reciprocal ethnography" (Lawless, 2019), but these efforts (such as Frank, 2000) remain in the minority. And it holds that the impact of revealing certain details might be mitigated by the genre of written presentation. A foundational assumption for visual ethnography is that film will be more immediately accessible to participants than writing would be, since it is in their language, and in a globalized, popularized format that requires no specialized access. Of course, hypothetically an ethnographic filmmaker could choose to release a carefully edited trailer and show entire films only at conferences, but keeping such material out of the digital realm would be a trade-off. It would relegate the film to a certain degree of obscurity and it would make it inaccessible to participants and local audiences who may come to feel a sense of ownership over the film and find new, locally meaningful uses for it, as we discuss at the end of this chapter. Films in the digital realm can be more readily accessible to local and global communities. This confers benefits, but with the participants immediately recognizable, it can also have serious implications which call for a different construction of consent and can influence what is included in the finished work.

Given the differences between releasing films and publishing written work, and given a commitment to multimodality inherent to VPA, one possible way to balance the desire to share important details while protecting personal privacy would be to share different material in the film versus in the writing. In other words, films could be edited to present a more sympathetic or at least neutral picture of some participants, and a more complete or nuanced picture could be shared in writing. Of course, such disparate representations pose their own ethical problems – if participants didn't want to be represented a certain way on film, then surely, they wouldn't want to be represented that way on paper. Unless explicitly stated, if the participant declines permission for including the material in the film, it is assumed they decline permission for other modalities as well. Given this, certain material we gathered that would be useful to understanding some of the main topics of the films and this book has been purposely left out.

In the ongoing balancing act of faithfully representing life events while remaining protective of our participants and their wishes, we strive to stay as close as possible to lived experience, without revealing too many details that would be too shameful or have too much of a negative impact within participant communities. For us, achieving this workable median requires ongoing negotiation and reworking, incorporating bidirectional intersubjective acts of empathy in the editing room: How are viewers going to perceive and understand what is going on? How would participants feel watching certain scenes?

Editing is then followed up with the interactive process of screenings of works in progress, to obtain the actual opinions of both participants and focus groups. This process influences what shots, scenes, and narrative trajectories are selected, for better or for worse: On the one hand, film ethnography may more accurately reflect participant lived experience, history, and subjectivity because it undergoes a vetting process whereby participants can tell you whether you "got things right" in the work in progress, a process not frequently available in written ethnography. On the other hand, this same process might influence a filmmaker to edit out potentially illuminating material, knowing a particular participant may not want it included. Participants can assert agency over their representation on screen by approving or vetoing certain scenes or themes

in evolving drafts of film edits. Different participants may have different ideas about the accuracy or acceptability of certain scenes, but a balance can usually be reached, and a version achieved that everyone agrees upon. We always screen versions of our films-in-progress for participant feedback, and their consent to the material, while crucial, raises its own set of ethical considerations.

In-Progress Screenings for Participant Consent and Feedback

Holding screenings and reviews with participants goes back to the beginnings of ethnographic film (Asch et al., 1981; Flaherty, 1922). Some ethnographic filmmakers choose to share daily rushes with participants; current practice, at the very least, includes vetting rough cuts and final edits with participants (Gill, 2014). In our screenings, in addition to vetoing the inclusion of certain scenes that make participants feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or that they feel to be inaccurate, we solicit participants' reactions and suggestions. We record this process and sometimes include it as a reflexive element in the final films.

Whether shown in the film or not, this process can be delicate. As previously discussed, screenings and discussions with the wives from *Bitter Honey* were often held with an eye towards their safety; we did not want their husbands to retaliate against them for saying something perceived as unfavorable. We also wanted to guard their psychological welfare; since the film depicts some unhappy aspects of their marriages and outlines multiple sociocultural factors that limit their agency in improving or leaving these relationships, we worried they could feel overwhelmed or overexposed. The internal politics between Darma's co-wives made the situation more complex; Suciati was often made into the family scapegoat, and we worried that blame for any upsetting scenes might fall more heavily upon her. Given this last point, in 2013, we decided to first screen the film for only Suciati, who watched it alongside Anggreni, a lawyer and women's advocate. Suciati had a positive reaction to the film during this private screening and said she would be comfortable showing the film to her co-wives.

We moved forward with a larger private screening for all of Sadra's and Darma's wives and adult daughters. Indonesian psychologist, Livia Iskandar, and community mental health researcher, Ninik Supartini, facilitated. In the post-screening conversation, filmed by an all-female crew, the situation we feared did not materialize; rather than being divisive, the film united the women, at least for the duration of the conversation. They talked about seeing themselves as sharing the same suffering and positioned themselves to protect one another.

PURNIASIH: It's like this, I see that these friends here, they have the same sad fate.
KIAWATI: The same fate.
SULASIH: The same fate – bad luck, bad luck.

They also liked the idea, proposed by Anggreni since initial consent conversations, of attending screenings at various Balinese villages to facilitate discussions about women's experiences of marriage – this despite the fact that they had initially only felt comfortable with the idea of screening the film outside Indonesia. The only caveat was they wanted a certain scene removed.

The women felt the scene of Darma going to a brothel ("café") and putting his arm around one of the women there was shameful and "unrelated" to the issue of polygamy. However, in our emergent framing of polygamy within Balinese courtship practices and within a larger sphere of male desire and male prerogative, the fact that the men continue to seek sexual encounters outside of their marital relationships seemed relevant, since it is often through these encounters that future co-wives are selected. Secondly, due to high rates of STDs among sex workers, unprotected sexual encounters have the potential to put wives at serious health risk. But the women asked that if the film were to be screened for Balinese audiences, this scene be removed.

We had planned to show the film to the men and their sons the following day with a male-only crew. We asked the women if they would be comfortable with us showing the film to their husbands:

NINIK (community mental health researcher): The last question from us is if, for example, we gather together your husbands, and also your sons, and we show them the film, what do you think will happen?
JULI: He would complain again.
SULASIH: No.
JULI: Maybe.
SULASIH: If he saw it for himself, maybe he wouldn't do that as much.
SUCIATI: He would be aware.
SULASIH: He could become aware.
JULI: He could be ashamed.
SULASIH: He could be ashamed of himself.
JULI: Seeing himself like that.
SULASIH: You can show it.

It is interesting here that the wives were most concerned about a scene that didn't have them in it because they wanted to uphold and protect their husband's dignity. In part, their husband's behavior shames them by extension, but as seen in Chapter 6, protecting a man's dignity is seen as a wife's duty; it is also self-protective, if the man's reaction to feelings of shame is to lash out. The most important audience – the one whose opinion and response has the most direct effect on the participants' lives – is local. When disclosing sensitive information, participants care what their families and communities, not audiences across the world, will think.

Ultimately, after the follow-up screening with the husbands, the agreement reached was that the scene could be kept in the "international" version, but should the film be screened in Bali, as the wives were now in support of, the scene would be left out. When the "screening" here referred to live screening events, which we had control over, this agreement would stand, but it could not realistically cover Internet viewing. With the advent and rapid growth of streaming platforms such as YouTube, which came out in the mid-2000s, all of a sudden, much visual research is potentially instantly accessible anytime, anywhere in the world, for free. So, a Balinese person could end up watching the "international version" via some such site should it be posted there. We discussed these distinctions with the participants, so they would understand that while we agreed not to screen the "offensive" scene at Balinese events, we

Fig. 9.3 First author, Robert, and collaborator, Ninik, watch a rough cut of *Standing on the Edge of a Thorn* with Imam and Tri

could not guarantee control over digital copying and distribution that is an inevitable part of the digital reality (Fig. 9.3).

Screenings, Distribution, and Digital Media

As the discussion with the women in *Bitter Honey* illustrates, consent to what can be shown is related to *where* the finished film can be shown, and this is complicated by nature of today's media environment.

Ethical issues regarding the life of the finished ethnographic film are emergent due to rapid and ongoing developments in digital technology, which add new challenges to long-standing issues. Anthropologists, filmmakers, and their participants have long negotiated the particulars of credit, profit, access, and control over the products of visual ethnography alongside processes of informed consent (Asch, 1992). What a filmmaker

can reliably promise when it comes to the distribution or use of a participant's image in a film has been recently questioned (Heider, 2006). The nature of new digital technologies and social media which now permeate our lives facilitate unauthorized reproduction and rapid dissemination of moving images. In this era of global media sharing, it is easy to "burn," "bootleg," or otherwise reproduce digital footage, which can then be screened in venues and/or framed in ways that may be outside of the filmmaker's control, despite best efforts (for a comparative example on unauthorized screenings of ethnographic film that changed its context and interpretation, see Stout, 2014).

Our consent discussions were based on the premise that while the films are largely educational, geared toward Western, Indonesian, and global academic audiences, if the film were to circulate digitally on a site such as YouTube, it could be seen by anyone, anywhere, at any time. This is obviously quite different from previous generations of ethnographic films, where 16- or 35-mm analogue films, and then videotapes, were screened at universities or conferences with limited additional distribution. However, some of our participants were unfamiliar with digital media sharing, such as is now common on social media. For example, in an extended (recorded) discussion of consent with Sadra, we tried to determine what screening formats he felt comfortable with. While he readily agreed to have the whole film or excerpts screened on YouTube, it became clear he was unfamiliar with the Internet. He didn't use email or social media, and from the conversation appeared to think of film as a material object that would be physically transported to screenings and guarded in the interim. The team tried to explain the nature of digital media sharing; we agreed that Sadra would be informed before any digital or live screenings. But does this gap in lived experience temper Sadra's ability to give true consent?

Social and Psychocultural Dynamics of Consent

These consent discussions arising at different phases of filmmaking share a concern: the impact of Javanese/Balinese expectations and habitus of social interaction, image management, and emotional expression,

discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Given the often-ambivalent relationship of participants to emotions raised and scenarios depicted in the film, consent is already complicated; it becomes even more so as the negotiation of consent is subject to social dynamics and intersubjective interpretations.

Our discussion of consent to risk, pre-filming, referred to participant considerations of family and community, rather than just themselves, when making decisions to join the project. Regarding representation, when participants give their consent to a certain cut of a film at a screening, is there a certain amount of inherent social pressure? Might people answer differently if they were somehow asked anonymously, or didn't have to answer directly to the filmmaker, research team, or fellow participants? And might the social pressures of consent be culturally shaped? Balinese and Javanese cultures are collectivistic and value consensus (Van der Kroef, 1953) and are also largely hierarchical. Depending on class and education levels, some are likely to defer to authority or those in power, which may mean that they are more likely to go with whatever educated research team member, or others with authority in their lives, recommend or request.

These and other psychocultural concerns came into relief dramatically in response to an unauthorized screening of *Bitter Honey* footage, which unearthed a string of previously obscured problems with consent. When original consent was being obtained for *Bitter Honey*, it was agreed that formal screenings would only occur in other areas of Indonesia or abroad, not in Bali. This was due to participant anticipation of shame; participants felt most comfortable with the film being screened where audience members would be complete strangers. Once the film was completed, however, there was a request from Anggreni's organization, LBH Apik, a Balinese NGO working in the area of women's empowerment and protection, to screen the film for Indonesian parliament. Ninik Supartini, a long-term member of our Indonesian research and production team, and an LBH representative went to speak with Sadra to confirm his consent to such a screening.

He gave his consent to this screening at the time, in 2014. But when later interviewed, in 2015, he said he hadn't actually wanted to give permission but was "afraid" to say no because he heard the other families

had already consented. He then explained how the very first time the film team had asked to film him seven years ago, he hadn't "really" wanted to participate, but felt like he "couldn't" refuse because Degung, a participant in the *40 Years* film and one of the research team members for *Bitter Honey*, was his boss Alit's brother. He didn't want Alit to think he was ungrateful for the work he and his wife had been given at Alit's organization. So, enmeshed in this local network of obligations, he named the filming conditions that he felt most comfortable with, but he never "really" wanted to. We formally apologized but felt trust had been broken and damage done. Given that certain reservations might only emerge after the film has been screened, we now realize it might be difficult to ensure "true" consent. And given the cultural specificity of consent negotiations, we must ensure that consent is, in Indonesian terms, given with "sincerity" (B.I. *ikhlas*).

A related concern: Should consent be considered "true" consent if it is being used by the participant as a negotiating tactic? Again, with *Bitter Honey*, we realized that, at times, some participants might have been viewing their consent somewhat instrumentally. While it is understandable, welcome, and ethically required for participants to be adequately compensated for their role in research (American Anthropological Association, 2012), how might this contingency influence the way we view consent per se?

In preparations for the Indonesian Parliament screening Darma, like Sadra, was asked for and gave his consent – and, after the fact, similarly said this wasn't "real" consent because he felt pressured to give it. While the negotiations of consent for this screening were conducted in good faith and with conscious intent, a clip of the film also aired on national television *without* the film team's planning or even knowledge. This happened when the NGO screened a clip of the film for journalists as part of their advocacy work. In violation of our agreement, an NGO worker also copied the feature-length film from DVD from which the clip came and gave this "burned" version to a reporter from TV Bali, who then broadcast parts of the film on Balinese news. Word got back to Darma when his neighbors teased him. He recounted, "It shocked me when somebody said, 'Are you an actor now?' 'Why?' 'I saw you on TV!'

Many people said that to me. 'What was it about?' 'Polygamy.' And they all laughed at me."

This screening had personal and social repercussions for Darma. He lost face among his local community and his entire extended family. Darma says:

> I am not the only one who feels ashamed; I have many parents-in-law because I have many wives, right? … [Their brothers ask me] Why I did that to their sisters. Why I let their sisters become subjects in this film … As if we don't have any dignity. I'm not supposed to treat them that way.

The unauthorized screening also had repercussions for our personal and professional relationship with Darma and the ongoing project. During the subsequent field visit, I explained the difficulties with consent in the age of the Internet. Darma said he understood this but still felt disappointed; he went on, seeking my reassurance that another unauthorized screening would never occur, something that, I tried to clarify, I could not promise.

Darma explained how, from his perspective, the screenings violated the original agreement that the film would not air in Bali. Once he had heard a clip had aired on television, this violation of trust led to him "giving up" on the idea that his consent mattered at all and, so, he gave permission for the film to be screened elsewhere even though he didn't "really" want to. During this conversation another point of contention emerged. Part of his disappointment seemed to be that he hadn't made any money from the television screening. First, he was suspicious that a significant amount of money may have been made but hadn't been shared with him equitably, and second, he worried that others would think he, himself, made a lot of money from it, and be jealous – or, they would think he had been taken advantage of because he didn't.

During our conversation, Darma seemed to see an opportunity and asked that I pay for his health insurance since, as he said, "You must be ashamed and feel you still owe me something." In appreciation of his family's participation in the project, I agreed to help pay for his family's insurance for a year. After this matter was settled, Darma pivoted from his dismay over the unauthorized screenings to emphasize the friendship

between himself and the team. Darma concluded by saying that we can screen whatever version of the film we want, wherever and whenever we want, as long as I agree not to be a "fair weather friend," only helping him out when I need something for the film but forgetting about him when he's old and sick.

So how are we supposed to view this? On the one hand, we can say that Darma has successfully negotiated the terms or compensation that he feels to be appropriate. But how does Darma "really" feel about the film being screened on various media outlets Indonesia? Is this new blanket consent enough from an ethical standpoint? Can we even determine his "true feelings" about the film and is it our responsibility to do so? Do such "true feelings" even exist, or will they be constructed anew at various points in the future?

All consent negotiations share a commitment to minimizing participant risk and discomfort as they join the complex endeavor of making an ethnographic film. Other aspects of filmmaking support this goal, in efforts to ameliorate the potential harms of participation.

Amelioration of Harm

Like consent, amelioration of harm comes at every stage of the filming process. It comes during pre-production, when we prepare a support team for interviews on sensitive matters. It is considered during fieldwork and filming, when the team encounters situations of potential intervention. It is raised again as we think through the implications of film screenings and the impact these screenings have on participants' psyches and lives.

Psychological Protection and Amelioration of Harm for Participants During Sensitive Interviews

Interviews with those who have been – or still are – subject to fear, violence, and stigmatization must be conducted with forethought to possible negative psychological consequences or sequelae. There are risks

here, particularly for people telling their story for the first time. (If the story has been told before and it is somewhat rehearsed by the time of filming, the tellers may have most likely habituated to the emotional component of it and therefore may have less difficulty managing their emotional and psychological response; Beddard-Gilligan et al., 2017.) Of course, even a repeated trauma narrative may elicit overwhelming reactions. Primary of these is re-experiencing the pain, loss, fear, and other complex emotions associated with episodes of trauma, stigma, or violence. Just rumination and "imaginal" exposure present risks to the traumatized person, even in a therapeutically supportive setting (Echiverri et al., 2011; Maddox et al., 2019).

At minimum, we knew interviewer and interviewee must be prepared for a strong emotional response. Before any filmed interview where we anticipated painful material would be narrated, we had off-camera discussions with the participants about this eventuality and informed them that not only would we approach these topics or memories sensitively and slowly, but that they could stop the interview at any time if the material was too painful to recount (as is standard in informed consent for ethnographic interviewing; Iphofen, 2013). We conducted off-camera interviews with some participants before filming, to help them prepare. This is a debated practice; while pre-interviewing helps build rapport and allows helps participants relax, it can also be fatiguing and make interviews sound rehearsed (Barbash & Taylor, 1997). We sometimes used a skeletal crew; particularly when interviewing women about traumatic episodes of gendered violence, such as Suciati's abduction or Tri's rape, we used a single camera and only one female interviewer to create a more intimate setting.

Having the appropriate mental health professionals on our fieldwork team, such as Mahar, Ninik, and Livia, was invaluable. A small percentage of people being interviewed about their traumatic experience will have an acute and negative psychological response, up to and including psychosis (Kinzie, 2007). We were attuned to reactions outside of the cultural norm, which could potentially point toward a serious negative impact on the participant's mental health, and always had clinically trained support available should a participant decompensate and have a more serious psychiatric response to an interview question. We

also checked in on participants and significant members of their family and social network who were involved in the production after interviews where troubling content was revealed, or where participants had an emotionally difficult time.

There is a tension here, in that the purposes of filmmaking desire strong emotional responses, even though they may be overwhelming for participants. This doesn't mean that they should be provoked, but, should they emerge, there are ways to sensitively and thoughtfully capture and represent them.

These concerns were magnified during our interviews with children and youth. Some of the material of Budi and Lisa as young children is the most memorable and moving footage of our whole film corpus. But filming *any* child, who as developing beings have agency but are inherently vulnerable (Bluebond-Langner & Korbin, 2007) raises a host of issues, let alone filming those who have been traumatized or stigmatized, although numerous visual ethnographers have done so (Büttner, 2011; Demetz et al., 2008; Koch, 2013; Mourão, 2006; Qin, 1997; Seftel, 1992; Wolowic, 2008).

When filming children, we used the same person-centered methodology as with adults, albeit with a gentler approach to questioning about painful events, memories, or processes. Above all, we let the children guide the interview. For the films discussed here we had our psychological support team in place, and adhered to protocols and guidelines in the field, including obtaining informed consent from the appropriate responsible adult, giving the child as much control as possible over the interview, asking open-ended and nonjudgmental questions, keeping interviews to age-appropriate lengths and being vigilant for signs of emotional exhaustion, and using their imagery and commentary judiciously with a primary responsibility toward their well-being (Chin, 2013; Iphofen, 2013).

We have found that filming children requires a more patient, gentle, and quiet approach where interviewer and film team need to be as tuned in to who the children are as people as much as the story they are telling. This supportive relationship building with children can amplify the already protective instinct typical to an adult–child dynamic, which sometimes elicits the urge to intervene more directly to alleviate their

suffering. On numerous occasions, Ninik and/or I found ourselves spontaneously assuming the role of confidante and counselor. For example, in the early interview with Budi featured in the beginning of *40 Years*, he ultimately broke down into tears and could not continue. Ninik came to his side and comforted him, as seen in the film. This gesture and this moment began an enduring relationship between Budi and the research team, which has now lasted for almost twenty years.

Sometimes these protective impulses toward children translate into more direct and extended intervention, as when a moment of overwhelming concern moved Ninik and the team to take on a significantly involved role in Lisa's life, which raises the question of intervention.

Interventions

Intervention is much debated in anthropology; stances run the gamut from absolutely no intervention to full investment and involvement in participants' lives. Some filmmakers have included their interventions into their subjects' lives in their films. For example, *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (O'Rourke, 1991) documents the daily life of Aoi, a Thai sex worker, but also presents the filmmaker's problematic relationship with her. Not only are they in a sexual relationship, but also he has offered her the "reward" of a rice farm for participation in the film. Given Aoi's evident discomfort in some scenes, his involvement with her comes troublingly close to mirroring the exploitative exchanges of voyeurism and prostitution.

We have found that even well-intentioned interventions into family dynamics, even in situations of family violence where we feel greatly compelled to intervene, are bound to backfire and are ethically best avoided, if only on that ground. We have discussed that ethical problem at greater length elsewhere (Lemelson, 2013; Lemelson & Tucker, 2017). And yet sometimes we are still moved to intervene.

Financial Support and Mentorship

The desire to intervene is a consistent ethical challenge, as Lisa's case makes clear. In 2012, Ninik went to interview Lisa and found her in distress. Lisa was living alone in a rented room; her mother, seemingly unwilling or unable to care for her further, had gone to live with Wiji. Her father, apparently in the throes of a breakdown after his marital dissolution, had disappeared. Over the course of the interview, the building sense of Lisa's abandonment, loss, and longing for her parents turned dire when Lisa revealed that Wiji had become threatening and predatory.

Ninik, who had been offscreen during the interview, stepped in to provide both emotional support and practical protection. She said:

NINIK: You have to listen to this, OK? Please stay away from him. OK? … Do not stay in the same house with him. If you miss your mother, text her to visit you here. Why do I say it? You know, if he gets angry at night while you are there, your mother becomes powerless, what can he do to you, do you think?
LISA: He can do anything he wants to me.
NINIK: Exactly. He can do anything he wants to you. For that reason, if you miss your mother, or if you feel fed up here … you want to go places, you can text me, take a bus and get off in front of my office and I can pick you up there. OK? You're much safer at my place than in the same house with your mother and [Wiji]. Remember that, OK?
LISA: Yes.

Ninik's involvement in Lisa's life continued, long past the movie's 2012 release. The team was quite concerned that Lisa was in danger of being trafficked into the sex trade. After extensive discussions, we decided to help her avoid this by providing enough financial support for her rent, school fees, and daily expenses, a situation she alludes to near the end of the film. We only took this step because, by then, after having worked with the family for over a decade, Ninik viewed Lisa almost as an adopted daughter. Within the normative and "widespread practice of informal fostering" in Java, where "most [children] establish relations of ritual kinship with several adults beyond the nuclear family" (Beatty, 2002, p. 475) she felt that this sort of intervention was appropriate and could

potentially alter the course of Lisa's life in a very positive way. The alternative was to do less (or nothing) and possibly witness Lisa being sexually victimized and exploited.

NINIK: Well, if for some reason your mother can't give you pocket money, in fact you need to eat, run out of rice, do text me. OK? … With one condition, you study seriously and stay away from dangers. Alright? … Your biological parents may not be able to take care of you now but there are other "parents" who are willing to support you.
ROB: Lisa, you know that we want to help you. I have worked with Dr. Mahar and Bu Ninik for 15 years and they're good people. Their hearts are full of love for you. If you have problems, please call her. (*Lisa nods her head*). We have big hopes for your future.
NINIK to LISA: Now you're relieved, right?

Of course, these sort of moralistic, neocolonial "savior" behaviors stemming from our fantasies about the impact we might have on our participants' lives are problematic, although perhaps more forgivable, given Lisa's age and promise, and our long-standing relationship with her. In this case, they soon collided with the realities of Lisa's life. Although the $50 or so a month we were providing was sufficient to meet her basic needs, she took actions to further improve her economic standing, including working in billiard halls and karaoke clubs. These jobs are considered gateways to, if not euphemisms for, sex work as described in Chapter 4. So, if our intervention was intended to have kept Lisa away from such activities, it was clearly misguided.

Our financial support and mentorship of Lisa was our longest and most involved attempt to intervene to date, but there were situations that moved us in all three films and, in general, we have found a non-interventionist stance to be quite difficult. The various interventions differed – and some might not necessarily be obvious as such to the viewer. Some were initiated by the participants and some by the filmmakers, as the example just described; some were put to film purposes and others' greatest impact was beyond the frame. Here we share examples from the other two films.

Confronting Perpetrators

There were two instances of what could be considered interventions in *40 Years*, with different approaches, motivations, and participant involvement.

The first occurred after an interview at the orphanage where Budi stayed; with his parents, Mahar, Ninik, and me present, Budi expressed the desire to return to, or at least see, his home. He above all wanted to live with his parents, but also wanted to go back to the house they had lived in three years prior, before it had been destroyed. We were hesitant to bring him there, as we knew he would probably be overwhelmed; there was also the risk of running into the same hostile villagers that had burned down the house. But we realized such a scene could provide a resonant visual representation of the loss that '65 survivors felt (Chapter 5). We brought Budi and his mother to their old house and both of them did indeed have a powerful emotional response. This scene ultimately became a significant turning point in the film, as it allowed Budi to reflect upon his past life and Mini to reflect upon her attempts to morally train her children in response to violence and oppression. While this was a rather minor intervention, and one requested by the participants, it was still not something they necessarily would have done without the film team's involvement.

In the second instance, the film team initially suggested Degung's more direct confrontation of a neighborhood perpetrator, which for him posed a dilemma. On the one hand, Degung had longed to confront this man – who claimed he wanted "reconciliation" – for years, and the film finally gave him the "excuse" and structure for doing so. But Degung also worried his extended family would be enraged; convinced as they were that the man had a hand in the murder of Degung's father and others in the compound, they all had been avoiding him for years. Here, Degung's personal feelings of fear, grief, anger, and indignation conflicted with what he saw as an ethnographic need for objectivity, politeness, and respect.

DEGUNG: This is a hard one … I haven't seen him. I try to avoid talking with him. […] I worry, to be honest with you, my family will be pissed

off with me. That, I try to approach him when my family does not see him – but the thing is, he lives in front of my family.

ROB: I know what's the good stuff and […] some sort of, if not resolution, some sort of change, makes for dramatic tension in the film.

LESLIE (Anthropologist, '65 Expert, and Degung's wife): You know, because it's not just about dramatic tension in the film, Degung. It's about being responsible anthropologists in the sense that you can't write a chapter of a book about the 1965 Park[2] and only talk to [those] who built it and how they think it's a great thing. … You have to also talk to the other side, the people who don't agree with it, and you don't know that they're not willing to talk. You just are scared to talk to them.

DEGUNG: As anthropology, it's important. For the film, it's important. Being polite with him. I have to respect him so he can talk, you know … "The project makes me do it." Just, that should be the title of it … Because we need to talk with him. [But] I'm not reconciled with him at all, I'm telling you.

During the confrontation captured on screen, the man managed to both formally deny any wrongdoing and reassert his dominance over Degung and his family. Degung emerged no less conflicted than he had begun. He said he would continue to avoid the man, and an old visceral anger was reanimated by the exchange. When asked if he felt at all reconciled Degung mused:

> I feel good to talk to him. At least I confront it … Do you think I'm reconciled with him? What do you mean "reconciled"? Because I talked to him, I'm reconciled with him? [Just] because we needed to talk with him, I'm not reconciled at all, I'm telling you. […] To talk with him and then you know, when it [will] happen again, we never know. When there is a chance to punch each other up, anytime. Anytime.

Degung concluded that the intervention elicited both anger and a kind of happiness. Clearly it didn't "solve" anything and it provided

[2] The '65 Park is an installation in Degung's natal compound that is a memorial dedicated to the victims of '65 and a space for artworks, meetings, and performances (Chapter 2). It is featured in the side bar of the closing credits of *40 Years.*

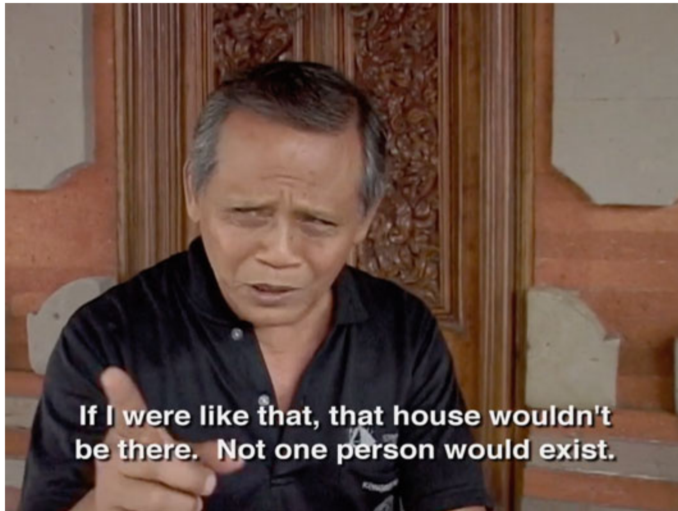

Fig. 9.4 Ketut

no real personal resolution. Still, these two participant-initiated interventions point to the way film might act as a sort of "stimulant" that allows participants to experiment with behaviors that have deep truth or meaning for them but that they would not necessarily undertake or engage with outside the filmmaking process or environment. Like the moments of *curhat* in interviews described in Chapter 7, these film-facilitated interventions allow Degung and Budi to use the filming process to stage a performative reckoning with their past (Fig. 9.4).

Formal Mediation

The intervention in *Bitter Honey* was the formal mediation conducted by a human rights attorney to deal with allegations of abuse (Chapters 3 and 7). Purniasih reached out for help with her abusive marriage multiple times, and we arranged her initial meeting with Anggreni. Once Anggreni recommended an intervention, and the couple agreed to participate, we decided to film it. While again, this intervention was likely to evoke a strong emotional response, we had trust in Anggreni's expertise

and anticipated the encounter could connect the overarching themes of the film.

Several years afterward, during reflexive interviews on the filmmaking process, Purniasih said the mediation had some positive long-term outcomes. She reported that she and Sadra fought less frequently, and when they did the fight was less likely to escalate into physical violence. She felt Sadra truly took to heart the advice from Alit, his boss, to stop beating her. Sadra, in a similar interview, confirmed this assessment: Having outsiders notice and disapprove of his violent behavior made him introspect and reconsider. Sadra greatly values Alit's opinion, seeing him as educated and worldly. Since the intervention, he and Alit have established a relationship that Sadra views as a sort of mentorship, and he thinks film participation and the friendship, guidance, and counsel that followed have given him valuable life experience.

In short, interventions can take different forms, initiated by either the filmmakers or the participants. Participant requests for intervention can be read as assertions of agency in the filmmaking process. While these interventions have been rare, in our filmmaking practice, if done thoughtfully, in collaboration with both the participants and knowledgeable and trustworthy partners, the results can be both a more compelling film, and possibly improved life circumstances for the participants.

Screenings and Malu

In cases of trauma, stigmatization, violence, and loss, the public screening of a film can be itself be considered a form of intervention, as it introduces new actions, roles, and representations into personal experience and public discourse. This kind of intervention might be positive. In cases where the losses of trauma are publicly acknowledged, the ongoing embodied memories of fear may abate and complicated grief resolved. Where acknowledgment of this loss is forbidden, they may continue, along with feelings of shame (Aron, 1992; Douglass & Vogler, 2003; Lusting, et al., 2004). Films that reframe the experiences of those who have been silenced, and thus contribute to public acknowledgment, might support this process. Or, depending on the local cultural context,

audience response, and personal reactions, it might exacerbate feelings of vulnerability, exposure, and shame.

Once film shooting and all associated activities have been completed, there remains to be considered the potential harm that might come from film screening and distribution, particularly the impact on participants viewing themselves on film. Seeing a documentation and/or public presentation of their recounting episodes of traumatization, victimization, or stigmatization again risks triggering painful psychological states or re-introducing these contexts into participants' lives in a new form. This concern is highlighted for us, given Javanese and Balinese psychocultural norms, dynamics, and evaluations regarding the public display of "negative" emotions (see Chapters 6 and 7). While not discounting these harms, we have found that confronting stigma via film screenings, having an open discussion about it with fellow Indonesians, and transforming this difficult experience into the feeling of helping others has added an unanticipated ethical dimension to the films.

Some participants reported feeling shame (B.I. *malu*) at seeing their lives depicted on screen, even when they felt those depictions were accurate. These feelings link back both to original reported reactions to experiences of traumatization and stigmatization, as described in Chapter 6, and to earlier phases of filming, as described in Chapter 7. This culturally shaped sense of "shame" can encapsulate both the "negative" and "positive" senses of shame.

Negative shame arises over losing control and failing to uphold typical norms of emotional expression; over reflecting on personal behavior that one is not proud of; due to internalized stigma; and as a result of feeling like one's bad behavior has been made public for the scrutiny of extended family, community, and even nation. For example, Edy felt ashamed of his own weeping when recounting the episode when his mother, in her shock and fear and grief, beat his little brother for likely causing her husband's capture and death. This weeping was captured on camera and included in *40 Years*, but Edy also wept during screening events when discussing that same episode with American students. He says:

> I told them a lot of stories, you know, and there was no sadness or anything like that. It went smoothly. But when I came to that part, I

> cried uncontrollably. Then I realized – well, I was ashamed that I cried that way, I was indeed ashamed. I was hysterical, you see? From that event, I realized that I had trauma which I wasn't aware of for years, which did not heal for thirty years.

This excess of uncontainable emotion in Edy's case is embarrassing for him (although it might have been moving for others present) but indicates no wrongdoing. Other participants experienced shame upon viewing the films because it led them to confront and reflect on their past behavior, which they felt was wrong. Imam says:

> I felt hurt when I watched the movie. How could I be like that? How could I do it? I was ashamed of myself. Really ashamed of myself, why I did what I did.

Other participants experienced shame that their socially disvalued behavior was made public for the scrutiny of family and community. Sadra said he isolated himself in the aftermath of one screening because he feared others would interpret the film as his tacit encouragement of a stigmatized lifestyle, saying, "[E]ven though in the community there isn't … anyone who says anything, I feel ashamed, and sometimes I'm too embarrassed to go out." Degung was ashamed to watch himself breaking family taboos against speaking to the alleged perpetrator responsible for the deaths in his family, even speaking politely to him.

But some shame can be considered, at least by some to be "positive" or instructive shame. Some of the wives from *Bitter Honey* say the film process and screening "taught shame" to their husbands. Rasti reports that Darma has learned to control some of his more violent impulses. Purniasih says that "Since Rob filmed us, Sadra is not as harsh as before – he feels ashamed to fight now." For his part, Sadra is not sure whether the film spurred him to this change or whether it was part of a maturational process:

> First, this film brought me shame, I thought to myself, "Oh, how bad I am that a Westerner should stop me from doing such things." That's why I feel like I should change […] But actually I shouldn't learn that from other people, I should learn by introspection […] I should ask for advice

> from friends. […] Yes. Well, [even] if this film didn't exist, I would have changed my violent behavior through growing up. I am old now, when I was violent let's say I was thirty years old, and now I am fifty years old should I still do it? Won't I change myself? If this film did not exist, I would have changed anyway.

While we want to avoid eliciting painful feelings such as shame with our films, this shame may not always be felt to be a bad thing – instead it may indicate to the participant, for themselves, a need for further thought, change, or even healing (Fig. 9.5).

The above dynamics of shame are primarily internal, but shame might also arise in relation to audience reactions. While narrative and stylistic devices are intended to guide interpretation, filmmakers have little control over how audiences view their films – sometimes films have actually had the opposite effect on viewers than what was intended, such as reinforcing instead of combating stereotypes (Ruby, 1995). The general American audience reaction to *Bitter Honey*, for example, seemed to engender a blanket condemnation of polygamy.

Fig. 9.5 "Women only" screening of *Bitter Honey*, attended by mothers and daughters, and facilitated by psychologist Livia Iskandar

Now there are even more opportunities for diverse communities to watch ethnographic films, and by extension such films now have the potential to play some role in influencing individual or community understanding of a particular issue, event, practice, or experience – for better or for worse. When we made *Thorn* available on YouTube, we were disheartened to see negative commentary on the family from fellow Indonesians, such as one who commented (English translation), "This is crazy, bro, I'm a native Javanese myself but I never thought that such a screwed-up demon like this could ever exist" (January 17, 2020, comment by Paket Wisata Samalona Kodingareng Makassar on *Thorn*). With such negative feedback, there is a danger of a "looping effect" (Hacking, 1995) where the meaning and interpretation given to the expression of suffering onscreen by local and national audiences might compound that suffering by impacting the participant's own interpretation. In cases of shame, conflict, and unauthorized screenings, as discussed above, this loop might be quite negative. But if the participants are met with positive audience reaction that helps them feel that their experience has been acknowledged and understood by the film audience despite having been previously disvalued or silenced in local contexts, or if they find a greater purpose in their film participation, as advocacy or activism, this loop has the potential to be positive.

Films as Advocacy, Participants as Advocates

A reaction that has arisen in us at times, in participants, in viewers: What can be done to address the violence and stigmatization depicted on screen? As described above, we have sometimes been moved to initiate, or asked to facilitate, more direct intervention. And as described in Chapter 8, via highlighting of emotional personal stories, the films we make are explicitly trying to invite this kind of engagement in viewers.

But what is our ethical responsibility as filmmakers? In the case of films like the ones we have discussed in this book, where emergent accounts reveal troubling stories of violence, abuse, stigmatization, suffering, and vulnerability, do we have a responsibility to engage in broader advocacy, activism, and/or on the ground interventions related

to the issues the films raise (Pink, 2013)? Some ethnographers might say yes, although then there is further debate as to whether such activism should be separate from the more dispassionate research collection (e.g., Scheper-Hughes, 1995) or whether the two are inseparable since anthropological knowledge arises from the anthropologist's active participation in the observed scene (Rechtman, 2017, pp. 133–134, on anthropologist Veena Das). Ethnographic filmmakers past and present, such as John Marshall with the Kalahari Bushmen (Durington, 2004; Fischer, 2018) and Jean Marie Hallacy with Burmese military rape survivors (Agrawal, 2018; Hallacy, 2018), have seen themselves as advocates and/or activists and partnered with local organizations (and indeed, in the contemporary politics of film funding that some ethnographic films might qualify for, grantors often ask about the film's envisioned real-world impact and/or any associated outreach activities).

I see the tasks of an anthropologist to be documenting, analyzing, and representing the ethnographic realities I am presented with and embedded within in as comprehensible a way as possible and sharing these with as wide an audience as possible – in America, internationally, but increasingly and especially, in Indonesia. As discussed in Chapter 1, films made with VPA methodology can be a most effective medium to achieve these goals, especially when considered alongside their public presentation and dissemination with formats such as small- and large-scale screenings, discussions with the audience, panel presentations with characters and project collaborators, and associated publications. There are multiple forms and forums in which the films and associated activities and ethnographic products can address issues of key social and societal concern.

While the goals of each film may differ, there has been a common pathway toward activism in the making and usage of all three films. All three films depict individuals not just undergoing personal development, but grappling with issues that are part of larger social changes in Indonesia. Each film's personal narratives and chronologies of trauma, violence, and stigmatization have ultimately been situated in relation to Indonesian movements that seek to shift the focus from isolated story to political engagement. The narratives of all the films are emergent and iterative and, in response to participants input and our experiences in the

field in Chapter 8, so have the films role in advocacy and activism been emergent, and the participants have had a large role to play in that.

For example, *Thorn*'s evolution into an activist film was quite unexpected. It began as a study of Imam, increasingly focused on Tri, but once the team became invested in Lisa's story and life outcome, the film eventually was put to use in a way that might protect and empower girls like her. Its use as an anti-sex trafficking awareness raising tool by NGOs and other organizations in Indonesia to advocate for vulnerable girls and women was a surprising development.

40 Years, which was theoretically oriented to illustrate links between childhood violence and oppression and adult outcome, quickly evolved into a political intervention offering an alternative history of 1965 and its aftermath. This had clear activist implications, which have been taken up enthusiastically in Indonesia, where open discussion and accurate information about the events of 1965 remains quite restricted.

As described in Chapter 2 of this volume, the last twenty years have witnessed radical changes in Indonesian public culture surrounding 1965, changes that have amplified since the film's release, and that I experienced firsthand. Shortly after the film's United States release, it was unofficially banned in Indonesia. Soon after this in 2009, I was denied a film permit to continue my work there. When an Indonesian employee of Elemental Productions went to the consulate to enquire about this, the information officer said that he thought I was a "communist" and political agitator. They would issue a tourist visa for me but if I did anything other than tourist activities (such as filming, meeting with Indonesians associated with the film projects, or doing any presentations, talks, or screenings) I would be arrested. It would take two-and-a-half years, multiple inquiries, and significant advocacy by my Indonesian colleagues to obtain permission to work in Indonesia again (although the proviso, off the record, was that should I continue the *40 Years* project or research any other politically sensitive topics, I would be banned from returning to Indonesia for life). However, a new Consular General came to LA the following year. He was sympathetic and understanding about the purposes of the *40 Years* project and even hosted a screening of the film at the LA consulate. This was attended by over 300 Indonesians, and the discussion following the film was lively and wide ranging, pointing

to a glimmering of change in the pall of fear and silence over '65 in the local Indonesian community.

In Indonesia, proper public screening and dissemination of the film have ultimately proved useful for those seeking to open up dialogue about the events. The first large-scale public screenings of *40 Years* occurred at Atmajaya University in 2013, when I first returned to Indonesia after having my visa denied. Other screenings at various state and private universities, community and human rights venues were well attended. One screening was hosted by the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission, Komnas HAM. Screenings at university campuses were mostly attended by students, but the public (including survivors of '65) often joined them as well. Another special screening was held in Solo, in the city hall, and was attended by students and more than 200 elderly survivors. When the first strains of *genjer-genje*r played in the film, there were audible gasps of shock, followed by tears. As in the LA screening, there were lively and engaged discussions following the film.

The questions and comments that audience members posted provided a fascinating view into how Indonesians understood the events of 1965 and their aftermath. We had one noteworthy exchange with a psychiatric resident at the prestigious Gadja Madah University who was also a Lieutenant Colonel in the army. He introduced himself in a friendly manner, then continued:

> First, there's a saying that we're all familiar with, that "revolution eats her or his own daughter or son." Probably, we are not sure if communists did something bad here. How about in Cambodia? When the communists made a *coup d'état*, how many millions died? What they did was more or less the same as what happened in Indonesia. It was a tragedy and my deep respect goes to all survivors that are here. However, we need to have a broader perspective. How about America? When I was sent to East Timor – America said that East Timor had to be overcome and, so, we were sent there. But when we were there, we were blamed for committing human rights violations. So, how about that? Actually, what has America learned after committing so many mistakes?

In the brief discussion that followed, I and historian Baskara Wardaya acknowledged American culpability but resisted the troubling comparison of Indonesia to Cambodia and asserted the difference between "being pro-communist" and acknowledging that violence done to Indonesian alleged communists was a human rights violation. After this exchange the respondent concluded:

> I don't know. I'm confused myself. As a soldier, I might have been indoctrinated about it, but I also notice – although I may be wrong – that communists cause a lot of damage … What is the true history? I don't know either, but I think reconciliation is an alternative … We should forget the past and wisely move forward with our lives.

This commentary underscored the ongoing need for first-person testimony, despite the resistance to modes of response alternative to the psychoculturally and politically supported desire to "forget." This exists in tension with questions at other screenings that bespoke an openness to exploring topics previously forbidden, such as, "So, what were the communists *actually* like"? The juxtaposition of these comments and orientations shows Indonesians struggling to understand the history around 1965, and the moral and ethical positions they subjectively take to understand this history and see its relevance for the future (Fig. 9.6).

The most interesting of the screenings have been the ones the participants attended and joined in a question-and-answer process with the audience as well as presenting statements about their involvement in the project and its meaning for them personally. For example, at a screening at Lanny's school, Budi was asked, "Do you still have revenge in your heart?" Budi responded by illustrating his internal changes and understandings of both his life circumstances and how these were shaped and influenced by the socio-political climate in Indonesia. He further said that as a result of this emergent political consciousness, he was no longer interested in revenge but rather wanted to use his experience to help Indonesians "open their eyes" about 1965 and its implications and impact.

Fig. 9.6 Ninik, Rob, and Budi answering questions after screening at Lanny's school

Some *40 Years* participants, such as Degung and Lanny, were activists per se before they began the film. Others would not identify as activists, yet many have developed what could be considered an activist orientation toward their participation in the film. In other words, they realize that through the films, they may be able to educate or empower others in similar situations or contribute to what they see as meaningful social change. While Mini does not see herself as an activist, she does see her participation in the film as a contribution to justice and posterity. She says, "I have hopes that people who used to hate those who were seen as PKI, and who also believed the empty words of Suharto, they see the truth."

The development or activation of an advocacy orientation in film participants in reaction to the film process was also seen in *Bitter Honey*. Originally intended to illustrate the subjective experience of marriage and kinship forms and male domination, the film has come, in Indonesia at least, to be seen and used as an activist film bringing awareness to women's experiences.

We did not originally intend to use the *Bitter Honey* film for advocacy purposes. After extended field research, we did engage with partnerships on the ground, with Anggreni's organization LBH Apik Bali, which works in the area of women's protection and empowerment.

But we originally saw this as separate from the film proper. Throughout editing work on the film, we did debate what kind of a film we want to make but decided against an earlier cut, which highlighted the wives' perspectives, because we felt it was too one-sided to be considered ethnographic. We were trying to avoid taking sides on the cultural practice ourselves, while still demonstrating the subjective experiences of polygamy and its associated behavior and beliefs. Despite desiring a balance that attempted to accurately, if not dispassionately, depict the lives of these families – wives, husbands, and children – some participants still felt committed to using the films in advocating for greater protections for women.

This impetus came from the wives and from Balinese human rights lawyer Luh Putu Anggreni, whose career was devoted to advocating for women's rights, and who had been invited to participate in the film due to her expertise with the legal contexts of marriage law and later, as a mediator. But it also came from the wives themselves, as over the course of filmmaking they were introduced to more activist or empowerment models for their situation, through conversations with Anggreni and others. This is reflected in the wives' gradual shift in attitude toward screenings of the film in Indonesia. If, in the early years of consent negotiations, they were opposed to the idea, by the end of filming some were enthusiastic about it. For example, Suciati, once so reticent, now embraced the idea of showing the film in Bali saying, "This film indeed needs to be shown to the society. Yes, for the future, for the women who come after us, so that they don't experience what we are experiencing now." Murni agreed the film could have a beneficial social impact for women like her:

> I am grateful for it, because […] people might think about it … and it could be a lesson for the men, what it feels like to have your husband take another wife. For both women and men, it could help to prevent it, to limit it.

This participant investment in the film's distribution and use could be seen as a quite positive development from an ethical perspective. As Pink says:

> If ethnography is seen as a process of negotiation and collaboration with participants, through which they too stand to achieve their own objectives, rather than as an act of taking information away from them, the ethical agenda also shifts. By focusing on collaboration and the idea of creating something together, agency becomes shared between the researcher and the participant. Rather than the researcher being the active party who both extracts data and gives something else back, in this model both researcher and participant invest in, and are rewarded by, the project. (Pink, 2013, p. 65)

But *Bitter Honey*'s use for activist purposes, based on participant investment, caused ethical concerns and problems with consent, which had not been granted for that purpose, with other participants – namely, the husbands. The lean toward a more instrumental use of the film by some in Balinese society to shame violent husbands or share the wives' perspectives had a significant impact on the women's and men's relationships with their families, surrounding communities, and took on a new significance in the context of political women's rights activism.

The trajectory and conflicts over how *Bitter Honey* was used by different collaborators points to larger debates about different film participants assuming a sense of collaboration and partnership while maintaining their own ideas about what the project "means" in their lives. The ways *they* work to "widen the frame" for its use are ways that we, as filmmakers, may not anticipate or intend, and the resulting feelings of empowerment or vulnerability bring new insights into the dynamics of living with and responding to violence, stigma, and trauma. The results of this use, both exciting and troubling for ourselves and our participants, add a new and final ethical dimension to our films.

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10

Epilogue

As we were making these three films, we had different anthropological issues we wanted to investigate for each, and different goals for what we wanted to express. At the same time, we were exploring the lives of our participants and the forces that acted on them and through them. While we came to the projects with a range of historical, psychological, developmental, visual, and critical medical anthropological models as our internal "etic grid," we ended up settling on the major or main focus of any VPA project: visually representing the life-worlds, concerns, and meanings – taken collectively, the subjectivity – of participants, predominantly from their point of view.

By utilizing a person-centered interviewing approach, we believe we were able to get at, to various degrees and in various ways, what was most phenomenologically salient to our participants. This includes the participants' personal experiences of complex and individualized sets of contexts that act upon them, such as historical and political processes in *40 Years* (Lemelson, 2009), kinship structures in *Bitter Honey* (Lemelson, 2015), or gendered social mores and violent social sanction in *Thorn* (Lemelson, 2012). At times these findings supported our original focus

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on the primary concepts of trauma, gendered violence, and stigma in the lives of our participants, but just as frequently overflowed or upended our original ideas about the central themes for each project. By embracing this overflow, we believe we were able to "widen the frame" for each in analyzing interactions between culture, history, and personal experience.

This is not to say that the initial focus on trauma, gendered violence, or stigma was misguided. On the contrary, they were deeply significant and personally salient constructs for framing and understanding our participants' subjectivity. These issues were also "good to film with." Inherently imbued with tension and conflict and attached to a range of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and social processes, they each made a good basis for a compelling storyline about suffering and resilience. But of course, as this book demonstrates, none of the constructs – trauma, gendered violence, or stigma – can be extracted from the complex matrix of subjective participant concerns. Ultimately, participant subjectivity was as deeply impacted by local contexts, such as culturally shaped reactions to suffering, loss, and adversity, as it was by discrete episodes of fear or violence.

These contexts carried over into filming process – similar culturally shaped responses to episodes of trauma and stigma were echoed in the retelling of these experiences for the camera, as seen in psychocultural strategies of avoiding conflict or masking shame. In Part III, we tried to account for the reflexive effects of being researched and filmed – both in participants' perceptions of that process and its outcome and their relationship with me and the film team. Given the subject matter, the cultural and historical contexts surrounding this sensitive and difficult material, and the intimate nature of VPA, there was a danger that filming itself could expose participants to a negative loop of shame, social sanction, and potential exposure to more violence – a risk of reproducing exactly what were we trying to understand, but our participants were understandably reluctant to reexperience. Fortunately, the combination of ethical practices and protocols and VPA's longitudinal, reflexive, and responsive methodology resulted in participants becoming, for the most part, invested in the films. They found different ways to assert their agency throughout the process. In the end, what we found most interesting were the similarities and differences in how individual participants

were affected by and interpreted the wider field of forces arrayed against them, and the similarities and differences in how they were affected by and interpreted the filmmaking processes.

Visual psychological anthropology (VPA) aims to explore individual subjectivity so that audience members can relate to and empathically understand those portrayed onscreen and then situate this representation within the complex and multi-leveled forces that are differentially salient and relevant to their individualized experience. Because it is not just the cultural or psychobiological or temperamental or cognitive processing or even historical or structural conditions that are of directed persistent interest to us, it is how these individualized constellations of psychobiological and cultural processes are situated within an array of forces that interact in complex ways to shape an individual's subjectivity.

A pointed effort of VPA is generating a sense of identification or empathy in the audience. Ethnographic filmmakers always craft their work for a particular audience. Early in my career, my envisioned audience was composed of mental health specialists, anthropologists, and their students. But it has ultimately turned out that, even as demands of ethnography and the films' engagement with the theoretical concerns of anthropology push the film narratives in directions that may make them less accessible to general audiences, one of the most engaged audiences for these films has been Indonesians themselves. Students, academics, mental health professionals, activists, and groups directly connected to and invested in the subject matter of each film (i.e., '65 survivors and activist members of the younger generation for *40 Years* and women's rights and human rights groups for *Bitter Honey* and *Thorn*) have responded enthusiastically. Perhaps this should not be surprising, as our VPA method is designed to be responsive to what matters to participants – and by extension, their communities. Furthermore, the character-based stories that focus on individual lives and struggles, and the emotional resonance characteristic of VPA, may inherently have some universal dimensions that non-academic audiences can relate to.

We have discovered that VPA has a transformative potential to disseminate anthropological models, epistemologies, understandings, and insights to the general public. Indeed, this may be one of its most important aspects. In its translation of anthropological frameworks and

understandings to an audience beyond college and graduate students and our colleagues, it can be used to educate and enlighten general audiences, both at home and in the communities in which we work. It can help recapture the public space where, in recent decades and to a certain extent, anthropology and anthropologists have been sidelined. VPA provides multiple avenues for a more engaged and relevant anthropology for the twenty-first century.

Given the unanticipated reach of the films, the Internet has become a crucial site of engagement. Indonesians are among the most avid consumers of social media globally, and, for example, the community count for the *40 Years* Facebook page is over 40,000. Discussion about the film is lively on Facebook and YouTube.

The Internet offers additional promise as we conceptualize new formats and outlets for research in another way, which takes us back to Chapter 1, contemplating films not made. When making VPA films, much valuable research and footage cannot be included. For example, for the film that became *40 Years*, we interviewed many survivors of the '65 violence, including a group who lived in an old-age home for long-term political prisoners in Jakarta. These remarkable individuals, many of whom had held prominent positions as members of parliament, writers, doctors, and union leaders, shared narratives of horrific and persistent violence and trauma. They also described their strategies of survival, resistance, and astounding persistence under circumstances of continued surveillance, stigmatization, social pressure, and political oppression. While the images of their advocacy and testimony accompanied the closing credits, we ultimately could not include more of their stories in the film because we were focusing on family stories that could say something about child development within adverse developmental circumstances. Much like the initial research on trauma and gendered violence that was the inspiration for *40 Years* and *Bitter Honey* but never became part of any finished film, this supportive research footage deeply informed the film. With the promise of multimodality, such footage might yet find a home; there are many issues and domains ripe for exploration in such footage, and there are multiple ways to express the ideas and directions of VPA that extends the reach of a standard ethnographic film.

For us, the idea of a VPA-oriented multimodality increasingly goes beyond making complementary books and films to producing a series of interrelated products in different formats: books, articles, and films movies, but also graphical approaches, and supplementary websites or even interactive digital interfaces. There are a number of directions we have taken to actualize this. One we first explored with one of the films in our *Afflictions* (Lemelson, 2010–2011) series was creating an interactive eBook about Kereta (also in *40 Years,* Lemelson, 2016). This interactive interface grew more sophisticated and accessible with our interactive website *Tajen: Interactive* (Elemental Productions, 2018), designed to accompany *Tajen* (Lemelson, 2017), our sensory ethnography on the Balinese cockfight. With short films and written pieces, the website addresses multiple cultural, psychocultural, and historic aspects of the cultural practice and aims to engage learners and viewers in exploratory, non-directive ways. We have been thinking that such a multimodal project for *40 Years* might be a way to present some of the footage and tell some of the stories we couldn't fit into the film; we even talked to a video artist about the possibility of making part of this website open-access and user-generated so that viewers/users, particularly those from Indonesia, could share their own stories or artworks.

In addition to experiments that attempt to push the boundaries around different forms of representation and storytelling, we have also tried to find ways to make our material more embodied. Our most recent project, a multi-year exploration on autism in Indonesia, following Annie Tucker's dissertation research, borrows from and builds on sensory ethnography. Sensory ethnography attempts – through sight, sound, kinesthetic, vestibular, and proprioceptive senses – to bring in an audience into different sensory and cultural worlds and create a sensorially based, empathic understanding of the people who inhabit them. As opposed to previous visual sensory ethnographies which were about practices (such as deep-sea fishing, Castaing-Taylor & Paravel, 2012; or sheep herding, Barbash & Castaing-Taylor, 2009), what we envision, in relation to VPA, is to bring internal worlds and perceptions and sensations therein, to the awareness of the audience in a more person-centered form of sensory ethnography. We are finishing two case-study, character-based films exploring the lives and challenges of neurodiverse youth

from Java and Kalimantan and plan a multimodal project similar in structure to *Tajen: Interactive*, which will allow us to address numerous aspects of neurodiverse subjectivity in the Indonesian cultural context. In our exploration of this issue, while addressing similar issues of stigma, suffering, resilience, and resistance addressed in this book, we also repeatedly return to the distinct perceptual worlds that neurodiverse people inhabit.

In our now decades-long effort to combine elements from both visual anthropology and psychological anthropology to craft narratives that are person-centered, emotionally evocative, psychologically insightful, and culturally relevant, we hope to chart a new direction for both fields. This would involve increasing use of a range of multimodal and sensorial approaches, in addition to more classical approaches of ethnographic film and still photography, to come up with new ways of knowing and understanding our participants, their worlds, and ourselves as researchers, filmmakers, and fellow human beings.

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Glossary

abangan syncretic Islam/practitioner of syncretic Islam

adat customary law

ajawera secrets, do not reveal/divulge (B.B.)

alpaka guru rupaka Stories and folklore told at an early age to illustrate and socialize in children the concept of karma phala (B.B.)

anak luh mule tongosne betenan, tusing dadi nglawan anak muani A woman's place is below [the man], she should not oppose him (B.B.)

anak PKI children of the communist party

balian Balinese traditional healers

bangkit Revitalize or recover in the wake of illness or disaster, literally "get up again"

banjar hamlet, housing settlement or unit within a larger village

beban burden

berani brave or confident

bohong lie, deceive

caru animal sacrifice

community marriage Unregistered or not legally recognized marriage

curhat diminutive of mencurahkan isi hati, outpouring what is in your heart; share feelings/confide

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dadia ancestral clan
dendam revenge, grudge
depresi depression
dukun traditional healer
etok-etok dissimulation or deception in social interactions (B.J.)
gamelan percussion orchestra indigenous to Indonesia, consisting primarily of metallophones and gongs
gendam Javanese process where one person takes control of the other, by hypnosis, black magic, or other supernatural or metaphysical means, so that they do their bidding
genjer a type of water spinach that grows in Java and can be eaten in times of hardship
Genjer-genjer an East Javanese folk song originally recorded as encouragement during the hardships of Japanese occupation and later appealed to the communist party for its message of peasant perseverance
Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Indonesian Women's Movement
Gerwani diminutive of Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesia Women's Movement
ibuism housewifization; during the New Order, a legal codification of women's duties as wives as mothers, subordinate to the men of the household
ikhlas Sincerity
ikhlas ngalah sincerely surrender to divine will, fate, or the desires of others
ilmu hitam black magic
iri hati jealousy (B.B.)
isin shame due to social transgression
janda widow; divorced woman
jilbab alternative spelling of *hijab*, head covering
Ju diminutive of *Setuju*: I agree
kamaduang made into a co-wife in a polygamous marriage (B.B.)
karma diminutive of karma phala (B.B.); philosophy of cause and effect in some Indian religions, e.g., Hinduism
karma phala your actions, either in this life or a past one, will beget a fitting fate, either in this life or the next (B.B.)
kasihan pity, loving sympathy
kawin kontrak translates to "contract marriage" – temporary marriages, e.g., for a week or two, for the purposes of sex
kawitan natal ancestors (B.B.)
kecewa disappointed
kejawen Indigenous Javanese religious tradition

kerenan ane lemuh soft and submissive, "ideal" characteristic of a Balinese wife, mother, and daughter-in-law

keroyokan local small-scale violence or "vigilante justice" carried out against someone for allegedly violating local morality or norms

kesaktian mystical power

keturunan karmic, temperamental, and/or related inheritance of ancestor's qualities or fate

kewajiban obligation, duty

kodrat a religiously inspired code of conduct based on women's intrinsic "nature" prescribes that women be meek, passive, obedient to the male members of the family, sexually shy and modest, self-sacrificing and nurturing

Komnas HAM diminutive of Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, or National Commission on Human Rights (Indonesia)

Komnas Perempuan diminutive of Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan, Indonesia's National Commission on Violence Against Women

kreasi baru new creation (innovative and contemporary forms of traditional theater, such as shadow puppetry)

kumpul kebo translates to "living like buffaloes" – living together without being married

lek shame (B.B.)

ludruk waria transgender comedic theater performers in East Java

madu all wives taken after the first; literally, honey

magelohan soft and submissive, "ideal" characteristic of a Balinese wife, mother, and daughter-in-law

malu shame, embarrassment

marah anger

mawak luh (men) placed in a feminine position within their family (B.B.)

Meju bullshit

melamun daydream

memfitnah slandering

mencurahkan isi hati outpouring what is in your heart; share feelings/confide

menggerebek local small-scale violence or "vigilante justice" carried out against someone for allegedly violating local morality or norms

nakal literally, naughty; can be suggestive of sexual transgression

nerima peaceful acceptance, alternatively spelled nrimo (B.J.)

ngaben Cremation ceremony (B.B.)

ngamuk aggressive anger that indicates an outburst or loss of personal control

nganten maksa forced marriage (B.B.)

nganten merangkat melaib elope (Balinese)
nganten ngejuk marriage by capture or abduction (B.B.)
nganten ngidih marry by request, based on mutual attraction and affection (B.B.)
ngeb an illness caused by witnessing something horrific or bizarre, characterized by muteness and a lack of participation in the social world (B.B.)
ngemong gently care for and guide one's child with full affection (B.B.)
ngerti isin learning to feel a proper sense of shame and propriety
nikah bawah tangan village marriage or unregistered marriage
nikah siri village marriage or unregistered marriage
niskala supernatural justice (B.B.)
nyentana a marriage for a woman from a family with no male heir; she assumes the role of a typical son (patrilineal system)
Orde Baru Suharto's New Order government
ormas also known as *organisasi massa*, or "mass organizations" diminutive of *organisasi kemasyarakatan,* "community organizations"
Partai Komunis Indonesia Indonesian Communist Party, the PKI
pasrah surrender to God
pasung physically restraining or confining a mentally ill individual
pecalang Balinese members of *ormas*
pegawai negeri civil servant
pencak silat Indonesian martial arts
Pengkhianatan Diminutive of Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI, The Treachery of the September 30th Movement of the PKI
Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI The Treachery of the September 30th Movement of the PKI
pesugihan charms or supernatural agents / used to help people become wealthy
phala consequence, result
preman a "tough" or hoodlum
pulih recovered (as from illness)
purusa patrilineal descent (B.B)
Putra Bangsa Child of the Nation (name of a school)
Putri Bali Sadar Balinese Women Aware (movement)
rakyat kecil working class Javanese
Reformasi Reformation
rukun harmonious integration with family and society
sabar patience
SekBer'65 Joint Secretariat on the 1965 Tragedy

sentana a man who marries into a woman's family and take on the role of the son of the house
Setuju I agree
stres stress
subak collective water management system in Bali
sungkan reluctant to do something for fear that it may offend others
tajen cockfight (B.B.)
tapol political prisoner, diminutive of *tahanan politik* (political prisoner)
tulah guru rupaka Stories and folklore told at an early age to illustrate and socialize in children the concept of karma phala (B.B.)
wayang shadow
wayang kulit shadow puppet theatre
wirang disgrace (B.J)
wis njawani achieves/fulfills the criteria as Javanese (B.J.)
wong samar spirit beings, only visible to some or in certain instances (B.B)

Index

A
abduction
  integration and 5
Abdurrahman Wahid 53
abortion 96
abuse
  intergenerational transmission 235–236
Abuse Assessment Scale 192
abuse, experience as child 95
acceptance (*nerima*) 76, 122, 245, 250, 251
Aceh
  tsunami 181, 244
The Act of Killing (Oppenheimer) 18, 19, 55, 183, 315
activism 353, 388
  Bitter Honey 392–394
  class and 252
  consent 394
  Degung Santikarma 69
  film participation and 254–255
  40 Years 389
  gender roles and 253
  Thorn 389
adat law 131, 147, 192
affairs, extramarital 104
Afflictions (series of films) xii, 317
afterlife
  Hinduism 96
agency 383
agency of women
  trigger for male anger 232
agent provocateurs 6
ajawera (secrets) 359
A Joking Relationship (Marshall);Joking 331
Alex (Lanny's father) 63
  prison 64

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R. Lemelson and A. Tucker, *Widening the Frame with Visual Psychological Anthropology*, Culture, Mind, and Society,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79883-3

A Life Without Words (Isenberg);Life Without Words 15
Alit (Degung's brother)
Degung's promise to children 252
Sadra and 103, 123, 287, 372, 383
The 65 Park 83
amok 230, 239
anak PKI 61, 235
Budi 73
Degung 69
stigma of label 83
anger
Budi 85
deflection into idioms 237
dominance display 229
hypocognized 230
in ethnography 230
Lanny 85
looping effect 231
ngamuk 230, 239
recalibrational theory 229
Anggreni, Luh Putu
advocacy and mediation 382, 393
changes in divorce 131
collaboration 27
communication 120
film screenings 236, 366, 367
LBH Apik Bali 371, 393
participants' lived experiences 296
polygamy context 102
Purniasih and 103, 110, 131, 287
Sadra intervention 103, 110, 287
Suciati and 255, 278, 366
Anoman (puppet) 252
anthropologists
embodied responses 299
reflexivity 297
sharing with audience 388
subjectivity 298–299
visibility in films 304, 305
anthropology
colonialism 16
positivistic view 329
post-WWII shift 17
power imbalances 25
pre-Boasian framework 328
psychological anthropology 10
Aoi 377
arranged marriages
Degung's parents 67
Driving with Selvi (Paloschi) 14
historical use 128
Kereta 72
Mini and Mudakir 60
Asian economic crisis 74
atheism 247
attachment
Javanese models 200
relationships 200
attachment loss 202
autism xv, 403
The Ax Fight (Asch) 14

B

Baladika (militia) 189
Bali 9
community positions 219
lek 219
marriage importance 96
nightclub bombing 181
patriliny 96
PKI membership 51
Balinese
dramatis personae 276
Balinese Women Aware movement (*Putri Bali Sadar*) 99

bangkit 244
barren fields 326
Bateson, Gregory 325
becoming
  anthropology of 25
  capture of 12
belief systems
  inability to modify 187
bellies, pregnant women's 151
betrayal and family
  fears of 232
Bimo (puppet) 252
The Bird Dancer (Lemelson) 160
Bitter Honey
  activism 392–394
  American response 386
  anthropologist on screen 305
  areas of inquiry, evolution of 317
  audience for 401
  cultural influences 29
  divorcees and shame 225
  early cut one-sided 393
  ending of film 340, 343
  fragility of harmony 360
  gendered violence 8
  inter-cuts of Darma 333
  international vs. Balinese version 366–369
  journalistic style 301
  karma 247
  maternal role 251
  music 335
  positive shame 385
  research team 291
  responses changing over time 278
  risk to wives of retaliation 355–357
  risks for participants 352
  Sadra's two families 333
  screening in Bali 371–374
  sexual transgression 224
  shadow puppet show 102, 319, 322, 328
  shadow puppet show 323–324
  shame and marital status 223, 224
  shame of victimization 227
  skewed research 101
  sound design 337
  stigma internalized 195
  stigmas 194
  surveillance 357
  title cards 325, 328
  trauma not explored 185
  wives' anger 231
  wives' futures 340
  YouTube availability xx
The Blood of Yingzhou District (Yang) 15
bombs 73
brainwashing 152
bright face 32, 122, 277, 295
Buddhism 246
  Lanny 66, 80, 85
  life as suffering 79
Budi Santoso
  anak PKI 61, 73
  anger 85
  as child 376
  brother's beating 61
  childood memories 58
  film participation and activism 254
  future 340
  justice, desire for 74
  Lanny and 76, 80
  lower class 73
  main character for *40 Years* 6, 59

martial arts 74, 226
Ninik and 377
orphanage 62–63, 201–202, 279
overview 57
religion 61, 73, 249
return home 380
return to village 74, 253–254
revenge 62, 73, 85, 242–243, 391
risk and informed consent 355
sense of loss 204
shame 226
somaticized reactions 62
suicidal ideation 6, 62
victim 62, 73, 75
work history 75
burdens, bearing 250–252
Buru Island 52, 61
Pramoedya Ananta Toer 52

C

Cambodia 390
Cambodia, Khmer Rouge genocide 322
camera
psychonalytic stimulant 293
cameras, small 302
Casa Blanca (Maciuszek) 15
caste
lowering of 224
marriage and divorce 125
reaction to violence 86
catharsis 272
celibacy 253
Central Java
PKI membership 51
school 80
charms 152
chastity and family honor 225
child marriage 144
afterlife and 96
children
attempts to defend mothers 235
custody of 97, 108, 112, 115, 126, 127, 131
living with extended family 69
malu 221
village marriages 145, 156
child trafficking 142
Chinese-Indonesians
resentment against 63
Chris (Budi's brother)
"Destiny of My Nation" 336
Christianity 246
Chronicle of a Summer (Rouch & Morin) 292, 304
Churchill, Elizabeth 18
CIA
campaigns against PKI 51
CIPDH (International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights) 54
closure, desire for 340
colonialism 16
The Act of Killing;Act of Killing 19
interventions 379
colonialist/imperialist point of view 300
communism
catch-all label 53
responses to *40 Years* 390–391
communist party. *See also* PKI
"*Genjer genjer*";Genjer 322
Kereta 84
members hunted 51
communists
disappearances 65

revenge against 240
community marriage 137
Tri and Imam 150
community support
resilience 244–245
compassion (*kasihan*) 251
Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder 186
conflict avoidance 122, 220, 275–276, 278, 360. *See also* harmony
consent
activism 394
digital media 369–370
draft film screenings 366–369
multimodality 365
negotiations 365
social pressure 371
constructedness 291
contract marriage 145
control, sense of 246
coping methods
Lisa 282
cosmic justice 248–249
cosmological order 246
counterfeit money 152
co-wives
communication 120
criticism
mindfulness of *malu* 221
Cross, Malcolm 335
cultural models
disclosure 293–294
cultural norms
subjective experience vs. 289
cultural relativism
structural violence and 198–199
cultural violence
definition 198
culture
role in fear 187
curhat 32, 293–294, 297, 382

D

Damai, on circumlocution 276
A Dangerous Son (Garbus) 14
Darma
AIDs and STDs 104, 333, 367
anger 241
attitude toward marital status 223
Baladika 189
brothel 104, 333, 367
caste 125
charges pressed against 192
charisma 101, 103
children 103
divorce from Kiawati 104
extramarital sexual behavior 224
household order 112
instructions to wives 278, 296
lack of financial support 103
loneliness 202
marriage to Kiawati 112–113, 127–128
marriage to Purnawati 115
marriage to Rasti 113–114
marriage to Suciati 114–115, 294–295
marriage to Sulasih 113
polygamy as fate 111, 123
request for money 303, 373
self-control 385
shame 224, 226
tough (*preman*) 112
true consent 372–374
violence 120, 190, 226, 235
violence, threats of 112

wives 333
wives' anger 231
wives' responses in film 278
wives unwilling 118
dating free Indonesia movement 143
Daughter from Đàn˜ăng (Dolgin & Franco) 329
A Daughter's Memory (Pratiwi) 19
daydreams
Imam 151
Dead Birds (Gardner) 14, 331, 332
Debby Nasution 100
defense mechanisms, psychological 283
deflections
Imam 284
Degung Santikarma
activism 69, 243, 355, 392
anak PKI 69, 235
Balinese society 80
beatings by uncle 234
Bitter Honey commentary 102
collaboration xv, 27, 372
confrontation with neighbor 82, 380–382
criticism and harmony 276
discrimination 252
education 69
family 68, 81, 188, 231–232, 242, 380
father 67, 68
importance of interviewer 290
interdisciplinary conference attendee 56
intimacy avoidance 204
karma 123
lust 104
mother 67, 68, 81, 204, 225, 320
ostracism 68
overview 57
reaction to violence 67–68
revenge, moving past 243
risks and consent 359
Sadra's extramarital affair 302
shame 385
summary 57
Surabaya 81
uncles 69
upper-class 66, 86, 252
Dengue Fever (band) 322
depresi (depression) 182
destiny, God-given 250
"Destiny of My Nation," (song) 336
detachment 331, 332
diagetic music 335
"Dimples" (Kurniawan) 160
disappointment
as accusation 239
disappointment (*kecewa*) 238–239
disclosures
about others 359
cultural models 293–294
dependent on interviewer 290–291
indirect disclosures 279–280
performativity 32, 290
shame 302
to community 354
trust and 286
unintended consequences 361
discrimination
women's roles 191
discussion
cultural norms 317
disempowerment
patterns of 49
disengagement 331, 332
distress, idiom of

daydreams 62
weight loss 193
diversity, religious 246
divorce
custody of children 131
Kiawati 112
Kiawati and Darma 127
Murni on 111
nyentana marriage 127–128
polygamy 100
prevalence 124
property rights 125
reincarnation and 125
social networks 160
Suciati on 115
divorcees (*janda*) 225
dobro 335
documentaries, ethnographic films vs 14
domestic violence. *See also* gendered violence
childhood experience 94, 108
family factors 95
harmony, hidden by 122
illegality 131, 287
incidence of 192
lack of discussion 227
not the norm 239
risk for talking 352
Sadra, to Purniasih 108
social factors 95
Domestic Violence (Wiseman) 15
domestic violence legislation 191
The Doon School Quintet (MacDougall) 315
Driving with Selvi (Paloschi) 14
Dunham, Anne 141
Dur, Gus. *See* Abdurrahman Wahid
duty or obligation (*kewajiban*) 251
Dwyer, Leslie 81, 248, 381

E

earthquake 341
East Java
PKI membership 51
East Timor 390
orphans 3–5
editing
consent and 365
ongoing consent 365–369
Edy (Lanny's brother)
disappointment 238
on being Chinese 196
on father 251
on Lanny 65
weeping 338, 384–385
elastic band strategy 192
elopement 96
Sadra and Purniasih 108
Elvina Lisa Ariyani. *See* Lisa Ariyani
embodiment
mirror neurons 21
emic vs. etic narrative 316
emotional displays 338
emotional engagement
Western audiences 330
emotional responses
embodiment 331
emotional response, shared 329
emotions
anger 338
central to meaning 329
close-up and reaction shot 332
constructions 338, 345
contradictory 284
cross-cultural translatability 330
disengagement 330

Indonesian social convention 337
psychological anthropology 22
tears 337
emotions, negative. *See also* anger, *malu*(shame), revenge
disappointment (*kecewa*) 238
karma 249
public display of 384
resignation vs. 123
social harmony and 229, 230, 277
weakness 338
endings
artifice 339
audience and 341
Bitter Honey 343
choice of time point 342
40 Years 341
Thorn 341
Endrin (insecticide) 72
epiphanies 286, 293
equal rights
communism label 53
ethics
agency 394
disclosures about others 359
ongoing consent 366–369
widening the frame 353
ethnographic films
audience 401
funding of 388
metafictions 292
neocolonialism, responses to 17
packaging and presentation 18
written materials and 28, 305
ethnography
activism 388
audience, historical view 364
debate on storytelling style 332
documentary vs. 14
ethical agenda 394
films vs. written works 364–366
obscuring details 363
person-centered approach 7, 328
reciprocal ethnography 364
sensory ethnography 403
shaped by anthropologist 298–299
etic frame 11, 331
etic grid 316, 399
everyday violence 197
evolutionary psychology
revenge 240
expectancy effect 290
experiences
relevance to wider society 254
ex-PKI
scapegoats 74

F

Fajar Merah 19
family matters, off limits 121
family support
resilience 244–245
fate as resignation 123
fathers
feelings of revenge directed at 240
fear
climate of 54
culture’s role 187
embodied memories 54
responses to in *40 Years* 183
feelings, masking 277
female circumcision 328
filmmakers
participants and 12
Filmmaking

as process viii, xii
ethics 33–34
film media, availability of 292
film participation
activism increased 254–255
films
accessibility of 364
activism 388
archival footage 321
as process 31
assumption of pay 360
audience xvi
close-up and reaction shot 332
constructions 25
digital availability 366–370
documentary vs. ethnography 19
editing and person-centered approach 33
endings required 345
engagement 387
ethnography vs. documentary 14
etic grid 316
feedback with looping effect 387
footage not used 402
intended response not seen 386
juxtaposition of imagery 333–334
longitudinality 20
narrative focus 317, 319
permanent record 303
person-centered approaches 20
psychological anthropology 20
sensory evocation 21
subjective vs. objective shots 332
timelines 339
unintended consequences 361
weighted perspectives 317
Western take privileged 330
wide-angle shots 331
YouTube availability xviii
first-person narration
The Woman's Olamal 328
first-person voiceover
Daughter from Đàn˜ăng 329
flashbacks
Budi 62
foot, cultural context of 334
40 Years
activism 389
anthropologist on screen 304, 305
archival footage 320
areas of inquiry unchanged 316
audience for 401
Balinese lullaby 335
banned in Indonesia 389
blacklist 57
Budi 377
Budi as starting point 6
childhood memories 58
connections 29
democracy 58
didactic context 327
empowerment and resilience 195–196
ending of film 340, 341
enduring impact of political violence 8
extrajudicial killings 58
family reactions 360
G30S and karmic suffering 248
gendered violence 9
group stigma 194
music 335
narration 319
naturalistic group interview style 301
New Order 58
opening montage 334
proposed multimodal project 403

public responses 390–391
release 57
research team 291
revenge 241–243
risks for participants 351, 355
sexual transgression 225
social media 402
soundtrack 321
state-directed surveillance 357
Suharto's regime 58
title cards 319
tribal stigma 139
university screenings 390
YouTube availability xx

40 Years of Silence. See *40 Years*
Freeman, Derek 284
Friends of Mother Theresa 77

G

G30S. *See* September 30 kidnapping and murders
gamelan 70, 336
Gati 105
Geertz, Clifford 340
Geertz, Hildred 325
gender dimorphism 18
gendered violence. *See also* domestic violence
American patriarchy 15
contemporary Indonesia 9
ecological perspective 94
films related to 14–15
Gerwani members 58
impetus for *Bitter Honey* 101
interviews with skeletal crew 375
Jakarta 6–7
local contexts 7
normalization of 198
polygamy 317
reluctance to discuss 190
victim-blaming 190–191, 193
gender norms, shifting 297
gender politics 58, 188, 294
gender roles and *malu* (shame) 221–222
"*Genjer genjer*" (song) 321
Gerwani 52, 58, 82
Degung's mother 67
film of 321
Giriastiti 105
Girmus, Dan 16
Glodok 6
Goffman, Erving 139
Golkar (political party) 72
Good, Byron 199
The Good Woman of Bangkok (O'Rourke) 377
grudges
dendam 240
Gruelle, Kit 15
Guardians of the Flutes (Reddish) 14
Gulabi Gang (Jain) 15
Gunungkidul 140
child marriage 144
conservatism 143
setting of *Thorn* 148
sex work 141
suicide prevalence 142

H

Hallacy, Jean Marie 388
Hamzah Haz 100
happy endings 340
Hari (Lanny's brother), on father 203
harm

personal dignity 362
potential for 351
psychological protection 377
harmony
essential vs. pseudo-harmony 275
social harmony 277
threatened by film 360
harmony, social expectation of 122
head
cultural context of 335
healers (*balian*) 108
healer tropes 160
Heider, Karl 362
Heidi 329
Herdt, Gilbert 14, 18
Heryanto, Ariel 18
hierarchies
shame and 195, 220, 222
social pressure and 371
stigma and 139
Hinduism 246
Balinese 96
Bhairawa 104
Javanese code of conduct 143
Kodrat 143
polygamy 98
reincarnation 126
historians 327
historians, Indonesian 320
history through biography 56
holism 304, 327
hope 246
housemaids 141
housewifization 191
The Human Pyramid (Rouch) 292
human trafficking 342
husbands
feelings of revenge directed at 240
hypogamy 224

I

Ida (Tri's first child) 150, 157
identities, devalued 194
I Gusti Ayu Rapeg 99
Imam Rohani
at peace;peace 343
burdens 250
community marriage 137, 150
conflict with Tri 231
daydreams 151
disappointment 238–239
divorce not finalized 151
early retirement 160
fatalistic 336
financial situation 151, 154
first wife 150
fixer 152
healer 160
individual story 317
marital status 223
marriage 148, 160, 250, 342
marriage legitimacy 150, 153, 162, 280
mental illness 145, 160, 280, 317, 326
mocked as cuckold 167
moral norms 194
no reunion 205
pursuit of spiritual power 150
revenge on father 240
self-justification 223
selling Tri 151, 155
sexual appetite 154, 163
shame 223, 225, 226
stigma internalized 195
trauma 183–184
Tri's gang rape 228
Tri's sex work 225, 283, 299
Tri staying with 225

wandering 150, 153, 154, 157, 161
indoctrination programs 52, 53
Indonesia, Japanese occupation of 322
Indonesian Communist Party. *See* PKI
informed consent 303, 352, 353
inheritance by sons 98
institutionalization for mental illness 146
integration, harmonious (*rukun*) 244
integration of abductees 5
intentionality and truth 273–274
International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights (CIPDH) 54
intersectional limitations 253
interventions
backfiring 377
Budi 380
Degung 380–382
ethical issues 352
Lisa 378–379
interviews
journalistic style 301
naturalistic group interview style 301
reluctance to do 7
small cameras 302. *See also* PCE (person-centered ethnography)
isin 219
Iskandar, Livia xv, 27, 355, 367, 375
Islam 246
abangan 143
headscarf 335
polygamy 99
refuge for Tri 165

J

Jaguar (Rouch) 292
Jakarta
mass rapes 6–7
janda (widow or divorcee) 125, 225
Japanese occupation 322
Java 9
divorce 124
isin 219
jealousy 116, 120, 335, 360
Joblar Tum Bak Bayun Troupe 323
Joko Widodo 54
Juli, on screening *Bitter Honey* 368
justice, vigilante 352

K

kamaduang 118
karma
as excuse 123
earthquake 341
fate as resignation 123
inheritance 108, 288
Lanny 80
polygamy 324
sublimated revenge 249
karma phala 247
kasihan 251
kecewa (disappointment) 238–239
Kereta
childhood 70
daughter's death 72
death of father 71
exploratory interview 56
interactive iBook 403
lower-class 86, 252
marriage 84
massacre witnessed 70
ngeb 84

overview 57
risk and informed consent 355
social withdrawal 83
somaticized reactions 72
spirits 72, 84
violence of ’65 55
keturunan 235–236, 288
Ketut 82
Khmer Rouge 322
Kiawati 112–113
agency 343
Darma’s anger 233
empathy for other wives 367
marriage to Darma 128–130
nyentana marriage 104, 111, 112, 343
on husbands’ reactions to film 356
kidnapping 224
killings, extrajudicial 58
Kink (Paperny) 361
Klaten (Chinese-Indonesian community) 63
Komnas HAM (Indonesian National Human Rights Commission) 342, 390
Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women) 191
kreasi baru 323
Kris (Budi’s brother)
anak PKI 61
beating 61, 242
distraught 249
employment 76
Mudakir’s violence 235
Kung Fu Grandma (Park) 15

L

land tenureship
violence of 1965 240
Lanny
activism 355, 392
anger 65, 85, 234, 338
Buddhism 66, 85, 246, 253
Budi and 76, 80
Chinese-Indonesian 63
cosmic justice 341
family 196
father 63, 64, 203
gender identity 234, 253
intimacy avoidance 204–205
karma 80, 248
model characters 252
on grief 78–79
outlook, unemotional 78–79
overview 57
responsibilities 65
revenge 65, 243
sadness as weakness 338
school founding 80
schooling 65
somaticized reactions 65
spiritual awakening 65
Srikandi comparison 77
trauma, moving past 79
upper-class 63, 252
Lanus 122
Latitudes (magazine) 80
LBH Apik Bali (NGO) 371, 393
lek 219
Lemelson, Rob 381
labeled communist 389
LGBTQ people, stigmatization 15
Lisa Ariyani
abandonment 153, 167, 202
accused of being sex worker 166

as child 376
birth 150
birth certificate 156, 337
boarding house 158
chances of marriage 157
coping methods 282
danger of sex trade 378
family reunion 205
financial support of 159
focus of film 389
future 340, 342
intervention 378–379
jobs 167, 379
left with Imam 152
loneliness and grief 157, 158, 326
losses 199, 205
marriage 167, 343
model 166, 342
mother 158, 159, 165, 166
narrator 137, 318, 325
Ninik and 378–379
parents 148, 156, 282, 334
parents not married 156
patience 250
research team and 377
schooling 149, 155, 159, 166
shame 223
subjectivity emerging 318
sung prayer 337
trauma not used 185
violence, experience of 184
Wiji and 155, 157–159, 166
Llewellyn-Davies, Melissa 328
longitudinality 11, 340
films 20
importance of 285
PCE 270, 333
subjectivity and 24
VPA 23–24, 339
Lono, Gabriel Roosmargo 141
loss
generational ripples 199
of father 199, 200
rage at 204
reactions to 203–205
structural violence 199
loss of appetite 222
Ludruk waria xv
Luh Ketut Suryani
interdisciplinary conference attendee 56
lust 104
lying
as truth 275–276
masking conflict vs. 278

M

MacDougall, David 21, 315
madu (honey) 118
magic and witchcraft 232
Mahabharata 78, 323
Mahar Agusno
Budi and 6, 62, 380
colleague 3, 27, 358, 375
Lisa and 149, 379
Mariana and 4–5
medical framing of *Thorn* 291
Mai Thi Kim 329
male camaraderie 302
male domination 29, 317, 392
male privilege 103
Malinowski, Bronisław 364
malu (shame)
embodiment 32
malu (shame)
film screenings 384
gender roles 221–222

marital status 224
negative shame 384–385
positive shame 386
silencing of women 222, 227
social conformity 220
Manis 105, 122
Marching, Soe Tjen 320
Mariana 4–5, 291
marital abuse, illegality 131, 287
marriage
arranged marriage 14, 60, 67, 72, 128, 224
child marriage 144
community marriage 137, 150
contract marriage 145
forced marriages 145
importance of in Bali 96
legitimation of certain forms 198
marriage by capture (*nganten ngejuk*) 97
nyentana form 111
nyentana marriage 97, 104, 112, 127–128, 343
pressure for 97
structure and expectations 116
village marriage (*nikah siri*) 144
Marriage Act of 1974 144
marriage ceremonies 144
Marshall, John 388
martial arts 74, 253
masculinity
malu and 222
spiritual power and 226
mass grave site, memorial 54
May 1998 riots 182
Mayun (Degung's sister) 188, 248, 252
Mead, Margaret 284, 325
meaning and truth 273–274
meditation 85
Megawati Sukarnoputri 191
memorials 54
memories
construction of 283
framing in context 283
reconstruction of 282
repression of 286
trauma and 49
Memories of a Penitent Heart (Aldarondo) 15
mental illness 145–146
Afflictions (series of films) 317
bangkit 244
caring for family members 166
mercenaries 5
Merdah (clown puppet) 323
metafictions 292
methodology, person-centered vs. holistic 304
#MeToo movements 10
middle class 253
military officers, murder of 51, 322
militia 189
mind blank 65, 66, 72
Mini
activism 254
arranged marriage 60
Catholicism 62, 246
children 380
father accused of communism 59
gender norms 253
justice 392
karmic retribution 249
lower class 252
motherhood and 189
ongoing stigma 76
on patience 250
personal outcome 360–361

sexual harassment 61
shame 224
mirror neurons 21
money, sending home 141
montage 334–335
moral status 140
Morgan, L.H. 328
mothers
attempts to defend children 235
gendered role 189
single mothers 198
unwed mothers 96, 97, 145, 198
motivation 246
Muada, I Ketut 323
Mudakir
estranged from society 76
ex-political prisoner 61
violence and victimization 235
multimodality xvii, 28–29, 365, 402
Murni 190, 333
abused by Sadra 344
divorce thoughts 111
empowerment of women 393
excommunication 126
financial support 117
husband's reaction to film 356
independence 344
jealousy 119–120
job 111, 343
marriage to Sadra 108
on violence 227, 241
relationship with Purniasih 110
music
diagetic music 336
emotional resonance 335
soundtracks 335
mysticism 140, 246

N

N!ai 332
narrative arcs as constructions 345
narratives
character-centering 330
rehearsal 293
Western audiences 330
narrators 319
first-person narration 325
number of participants 325
researchers 319
National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) 191
neocolonialism 331
neocolonial pathologizing 198–199
nerima (acceptance) 76, 122, 245, 250, 251
neurodiverse subjectivity 404
New Order
civil disorder and violence at end 6
downfall 56
inception of 52
Pengkhianatan G30S PKI (Betrayal of the Nation by the Communist Party) 321
polygamy 99
public memory suppression 236–237
"timeless" culture;timeless 323
Ngaben (Lemelson) 340
ngamuk 230, 239
nganten ngejuk (marriage by capture) 97
ngeb 84
Kereta 84
nightclub bombing 181
Ni Luh Gede Sri Pratiwi xiv

Nimmol, Chhom 322
Ninik Supartini
  Budi and 377, 380
  colleague xvi, 3, 27, 375
  film screening 367
  Lisa and 149, 378–379
  Sadra and 371
  Suciati and 278, 296
nonattachment 246
non-verbal gestures 338
nyentana marriage 127–128
  custody of children 97, 112
  Kiawati 343
Nyoman Asub, father's cremation 341
Nyoman Candri 335
Nyoman Kereta. *See* Kereta

O

obligation (*kewajiban*) 251
Ogden, Perry 16
Ongka's Big Moka (Nairn) 331, 332
Operation Babylift 329
Oppenheimer, Joshua 18, 55, 315
ormas (militias) 189
orphanage, Central Java 3–5
others, being strong for 251–252
outmigration 142
overseas work 141
Oyate (Girmus) 16

P

paintings, themes of 314, 325
Pandemic, coronavirus xvii
pantheism 246
Paperny, David 361
Parisadha 67
Park, Jinhee 16
Partai Komunis Indonesia. See PKI
participants
  agency 365, 376, 383
  aided by collaboration 27
  audience opinions 368
  children 376
  close up filming 304
  compensation 372
  construction for camera 292
  emic influence on film 316
  filming experience 301
  filmmakers and 12
  manipulation of research team 299
  psychological risks 352
  reflexivity 26
  risks faced 351
  subjectivity 11
  widening the frame 394
pasrah (surrender to God) 76
patience (*sabar*) 250–251
patriliny 96, 97, 108, 112, 115, 126, 127
PCE (person-centered ethnography)
  depth of narrative 274
  destabilizing 297
  emotions 333
  Indonesian language 303
  interactions with participants 298–299
  interrogation of norms 289
  intersubjective factor 32
  longitudinal interviews 270
  narrative structure 326
  performativity 290
  pre-interviewing 375
  results dependent on interviewer 290–291

setting 271, 272
similarity to psychoanalysis 271
pencak silat (martial art) 74
Pengkhianatan G30S PKI (Betrayal of the Nation by the Communist Party) 52, 53, 321
performativity 290, 292, 294
person-centered ethnography (PCE). *See* PCE (person-centered ethnography)
"Person, Time and Conducti in Bali" (Geertz);Person, Time and 276
Pink, Sarah 28, 394
PKI
atheism 246
"*Genjer genjer*";Genjer 322
political surveillance 197
size of 51
poisons 73
politics
film funding 388
local politics and state-sanctioned violence 54
national vs. gender politics 188
polygamy
as fate 105, 111, 123
children 103
communication between co-wives 120
courtship 103
cultural history 324
difficulty rejecting 236
disinclination to perpetuate 130
divorce 104
economic and political alliances 98
financial support 103, 105, 116, 118, 324
history 93
inherited destiny 223
Islam 99
jealousy 116, 120
kamaduang 118
karmic burden 324
lust 104
male privilege 103
opposition to 99
perceived fairness of 113
prevalence 98, 100
sexism 100
sisters as co-wives 105
wives' written consent 100
younger generations 118
posttraumatic stress disorder. *See* PTSD
post-Vietnam War 329
Pramoedya Ananta Toer 52
pregnant women's bellies 151
premarital sex 96, 143
Private Violence (Hill) 15
privilege 17
propaganda 320, 321, 334
property rights 125
prostitutes, Degung cared for by 69
Protestantism 246
pseudo-harmony 275
psychoanalysis 271, 298
psychocultural convention
curhat and 294
psychological anthropology 404
emotion as guide 22
films 20
longitudinality 11
visual practice 10
PTSD
clinical model not all-encompassing 84
focus on single incident 49

symptomatology 9
time-bound causal event 182
Pulih Center for Trauma Recovery and Psychosocial Intervention xv, 6, 27
puppetry 76
puppet theatre (*wayang kulit*)
Bitter Honey 102, 319, 322, 323–324, 328
cultural functions 322
male-dominated discourse 324
new creation theater 323
polygamy 98, 323
puppet characters 252, 292
Purnawati 115, 192
Darma's anger 234
job 115
leaving Darma 124
return to parents 119
Purniasih 190
abuse by Sadra 120, 287, 337
children 120
domestic violence 122
elopement 107
empathy for other wives 367
family support 333
financial support 117
hope for future 110
husband's reaction to film 356
illegality of marital abuse 131
intergenerational violence 241
jealousy 119–120
job 110, 131
leaving Sadra 124
mediation outcome 383
relationship with Murni 110
Sadra's shame 385
shame 227
purusa 96, 120
repercussions for wives 97
Puspo Wardoyo, Haji 100
Putra Bangsa ("Child of the Nation") 80

R

racism, anti-Chinese 6–7, 196
Ramayana 323
rape
Chinese-Indonesian women 6, 100
gang rape of Tri 151, 155, 228, 326, 375
marital rape 191
marriage by capture 97
mass rapes 6–7, 182
trauma 186
victim-blaming 190–191, 193
violence of '65 188
Rarad (Kereta's brother) 72
Rasti 113–114, 121
anger toward 231
Darma's self-control 385
defense of children 235
fighting 226
jealousy 119
job 114
on apologies 236
on husband's reaction to film 356
reciprocal ethnography 364
re-education programs 52, 53
reflexivity 12, 20, 25, 297
film participants 26
research team 300
reincarnation
divorce and 125
patriline dependency 188
rituals necessary 96

wives 97
relationship, ritualized 332
religion 246, 247
research team
authoritative narration 320
foundation of trust 286
historical commentary 327
reflexivity 299–300
resilience
bangkit 244
definition 244
family and community support 244–245
gendered resources 245
rukun 244
social position and 85
spirituality 247
survivor accounts 74
retribution
fear of 354
retribution, fear of 192
revenge
Budi 62, 85
displacement 242–243
justification for 240
political violence 242
propaganda against communists 240
roads, as visual motif 326
Robinson, Geoffrey 58
Roman Catholicism 246
Budi 73
Mini 62, 76
Romo Wardaya 358
Roosa, John 58
Rosaldo, Renato 332
Rouch, Jean 292
Ruegara, violence against 235
rukun (harmonious integration) 244

S
Sadra
abuse of Murni 344
abuse of Purniasih 337
abusive behavior 287
affair 302
Alit and 103, 123, 287, 372, 383
attitude toward marital status 223
children 103
control of Purniasih 131
courtship 104
coworkers on truth 276
economic strain 101
epiphany 287
families juxtaposed 333
financial strain 120
financial support 117–118, 344
intercession 103
intergenerational transmission of violence 235–236, 241
karma 108, 123, 124
karmic inheritance 288
lack of financial support 103
living arrangements of wives 119
loneliness 202
marriage to Murni 108
marriage to Purniasih 107
middle class 107
Murni and 110–111
Purniasih and 108–110, 120, 121
shame 226, 385
sister's comments 121
true consent 372
unfamiliarity with Internet 370
violence 108, 110, 120, 123, 124, 190, 226
witness to domestic abuse 287
wives unwilling 118
Sadra's son, support for father 288

scapegoats
  Degung's family 69
  Degung on 81
  ex-PKI 74
  Imam 357
  Mini's family 253
  Mudakir 235
  Suciati 366
schooling
  fees for 65, 117, 159, 279
  Lanny 65
  Lisa 149, 155, 159, 378
schools
  birth certificates 156
  girls 159, 162
  Lanny's school 75, 80, 391. *See* 392f
  modeling school 167
  public schools 279
screenings
  40 Years;Forty Years 360, 384, 390, 391. *See* 392f
  Bitter Honey 225, 236, 255, 343, 355–357. *See* 363f, 366–369, 371–374. *See* 386f, 393
  discussions 315
  emotions 353
  ethics 270
  formats 370
  Forty Years;Forty Years 254
  malu (shame) 384
  metafiction 293
  ongoing consent 366–369
  participant agency 365, 366–369
  The 65 Park;sixty-five park 83
  Thorn 300
self-vindication 251
sensory ethnography 403
September 30 kidnapping and murders 51, 322
sexism 197
sexual assault 6–7, 185, 188. *See also* gendered violence, rapes
sexual harassment 61, 186
sexual purity 143, 162, 336
sex work
  Aoi 377
  domestic violence and 193
  gateway jobs 141, 166, 379
  girls 141
  girls leaving 80, 342
  Lisa accused of 166
  STDs 367
  Tri 148, 151, 154, 164, 195, 225, 280, 284, 299
  vulnerability to 137, 159
shame
  arranged marriages 224
  marital status 224
  mass rapes 7
  victim-blaming 227. *See also* malu (shame)
silence
  bad questions 277
  cultural mandate 236–237
  resignation 236–237
Sisters in Law (Longinotto & Ayisi) 15
Sitti Nurbaya (Rusli) 162
social acceptance 195, 246
social desirability effect 283
social harmony
  negative emotions and 229, 230
  promotion of 277
social homeostasis 240
social media 402
social networks 101, 160, 361

social position, stigma and 139
society, withdrawal from 252
somatization
  Budi 62
  eating disorders 193
  Kereta 72
  Lanny 65
  malu (shame) 222
  PTSD 182, 184
  Suciati 296
  trauma 186
  Tri 184
Song of the Grassroots (Kurniawan) 19
sororal polygyny 105
sound design 337
spinsters 98
spirit possession 62, 72
spirits 57, 72, 84
  Kereta 72
spirituality
  resilience 247
spoiled identity 139
spousal abuse, illegality 131, 287
Sri 27
Srikandi character 77
Standing on the Edge of a Thorn. See *Thorn*
state justice, corruptable 248–249
STDs, risk of 104, 333, 367
stigma
  betrayal by loved ones 204
  coping 195
  empowerment 195–196
  films related to 15–16
  individual traits 139
  internalization of 194
  intersectional vulnerability 159
  physical nature 139
  risk of violence 140
  social context 139
  spoiled identity 139
  tribal stigmas 139
  violence, circular relationship with 180
stigma, Goffman's model 194
stigmatization 10
  anak PKI 83
  LGBTQ people 15
  manifestation of 194
  multiple vulnerabilities 8
  targeting based on 168
stres (stress) 182
structural violence
  cultural relativism and 198–199
  ethnographic analysis 197
  loss and 199
  primary relationships and 180
subjectivity 11
  cultural influences 29
  defined 24
  embodiment 11
  longitudinality and 24
  relational themes 30
  VPA and 400
subjectivity theory 199
Suciati 114–115
  abduction 375
  anger toward 231
  "bright face";bright 295
  caste 125
  children 126
  Darma's violence 190
  Darma's anger 233
  dendam 241
  disappointment and loss 239
  empowerment of women 393
  excommunication 125, 126

fears of discord 360
feelings about film in progress 278
film participation and activism 255
forced marriage 294–295
husband's reaction to film 356
jealousy 119
job 115
karma, thoughts on 247
maternal role 251
on screening *Bitter Honey* 368
origin of marriage 103
public persona 122
scapegoat 366
shame 224
silence 236
suffering
meaning from 245, 246
performativity 330
social position and 85
Suharto
accusations against PKI 51
agents provocateurs 6–7
resignation 53
vs. Sukarno 52
suicidal ideation
Budi 62
Tri 155
suicide prevalence 142
Sukarno
loss of 200
polygamy 99
Suharto vs. 52
Sulasih 113
empathy for other wives 367
job 117
on screening *Bitter Honey* 368
request for money 303
shame 224
sumarah (trust in God) 76
sungkan 220
Surabaya 69, 81
surrender to divine will 76, 250
surveillance 72, 197, 302, 357–358
Surviving Against the Odds (Dunham) 141
survivor accounts 74
survivor movement, legal advocacy and 77
Survivors (Pratt et al.) 14
Suryani, Dr. 83
syncretism 143

T

Tajen Interactive (website) 403
Tajen (Lemelson) 403
talk therapy 272
Tante Hoke 196
tattoos 188, 189
The '65 Park;sixty-five park 55, 83, 381
The Look of Silence (Oppenheimer);Look of Silence 55, 315
therapy, disclosures and 280
The Traveller Girl (Ogden);Traveller Girl 16
The Woman's Olamal (Llewellyn-Davies);Woman's Olamal 328
Thorn
activism 389
anthropologist on screen 304, 305
areas of inquiry, evolution of 317–318
audience for 401

ending of film 341
feelings of revenge 240
gendered violence 9
imagery 326–327
Lisa's sung prayer 337
Lisa watching her parents 334
multiple vulnerabilities 8
naturalistic group interview style 301
participant voiceover 319
research team 291
risks for participants 352, 357
sexual transgression 225
shame and marital status 223
stigma of character traits 194
stigmatization 8
surveillance 357
trauma 183
vulnerabilities 29
wives' anger 231
YouTube availability xviii, 387
Ti!kay 332
title cards
40 Years;Forty Years 319
Bitter Honey 328
Bitter Honey 325
context 328
tourist economy and silence about '65 83
tradition of the victimtradition of the victim 17
trauma
acknowledgement of loss 383
contingent concept 13
emic vs. etic perspective 182
entry into Indonesian discourse 181
ethics 353
feminist perspective 186
films related to 13–14
hegemonic models 183
internal state 13
label invoked by perpetrators 183
memory and 49
multigenerational effects 59
somaticized reactions 62, 65, 72
vernacularization of 183
Tri Suryani
abused by Wiji 282
burdens 250
community marriage 137, 150
conflict with Imam 231
consideration of work 154
disappointment 238–239
distanced from Imam 167
distanced from Lisa 158
fatalistic 336
fending Imam off with knife 164
fending off Imam with knife 154, 282
financial security 164
forbidden to contact family 158
gang rape 151, 155, 228, 326, 375
grief and trauma 149
Imam selling 151
Imam's mental illness 161, 155
leaving Imam 157
losses of 199
marital legitimacy 164
marriage 148, 165, 343
marriage legitimacy 150, 153, 162, 223, 280
modesty and piety 165
moral norms 194
Muslim piety 247
no reunion 205
online romance 165

own house 342
parents' acceptance of 225
partnership with Wiji 152, 155, 157
PTSD symptoms 184
quest for stable family 164
reaction to stigma 195
refuge in Islam 165
refusal to marry Wiji 164
relationship with Lisa 165
self-vindication 251
sexual history 162, 225
sex work 148, 151, 154, 164, 225, 280, 284, 299
shame 223, 224
signs of abuse 152
suicidal ideation 155
tears 337
trauma 183–184
vengeful feelings 240
victim-blaming and 193
trust, broken 286, 373
trust in God (*sumarah*) 76
truth
emergent aspects 286
lack of empirical truth for emotions 284
meaning and intentionality 273–274
psychological truth 285
untruthfulness and 275–276
tsunami 181, 244
Tuaji, Sang Putu
biography 105
children 105
financial support 117
male privilege 103, 189, 325
polygamy as fate 105
shame, source of 223
upper class 101
violence 120
wives 105, 118
Tucker, Annie xv, 403
Twalen (clown puppet) 323
Tylor, E.B. 328

U

unconscious material 286
untruthfulness, truth and 275–276
upper class
activism and 252
freedom of women 143
polygamy 98, 99, 101

V

Van House, Nancy 18
victim-blaming 190–191, 193
domestic abuse 227
shame 227
victimization
Budi 73
malu (shame) 223
re-victimization 236
secrecy and 227
violence and 226–227, 235
vigilantism 146–147
village marriage (*nikah siri*) 144
violence
against those with mental illness 146
class and 86
everyday violence 197
intergenerational transmission 235–236, 241
other shames 227
Purnawati 115

revenge 240, 242
state-sanctioned 54
stigma, circular relationship with 180
stigmatization and 140
victimization and 235
vigilante justice 146, 146–147
violence of ’65 51
alternative history 389
children 103
dialogue 83
discourse increased 55
film montage 334
inequality 252
interviews about 56
karmic justice 248
long-term political prisoners 402
memorials 54
newsreel footage 57
official line 54
perpetrators vs. victims 54
relevance 18
responses to *40 Years* 390–391
silence around 18, 83
survivors 52, 402
trauma 183
Tuaji 105
vigilante justice vs. 147
violences of everyday life 168
visual anthropology 404
genres of 270
power dynamics 17
voiceovers
explanatory voice 331
Voice Unknown (Park) 16
VPA methodology 10–12
activism 254–255
emotions 329
theory and process 31
VPA (visual psychological anthropology)
beginning 56
collaboration 27–28
definition xiv
embodiment 403
emotions 333
etic beginning of projects 316
life stories truncated 345
longitudinality xiii, 11, 23–24
multimodality 28–29, 365
person-centered approach 23, 32, 333
reflexivity 12, 20, 25
sensory and emotional components 20–22
subjectivity 11, 400
time frame 10
unfamiliarity of process 370
widening the frame xvii, 11, 30, 205, 353, 394

W

Wardaya, Baskarya 58, 391
wayang kulit (puppet theatre)
Bitter Honey 102, 319, 322, 323–324, 328
cultural functions 322
male-dominated discourse 324
new creation theater 323
polygamy 98, 323
puppet characters 252, 292
Wayan, on lying 276
Wayan Sadha xiv, 27
weight loss
idiom of distress 193
widening the frame
cultural schemas 205

ethics 353
impacts 30
participants 394
scope of projects xii, 11
widows (*janda*) 225
Wiji 152, 155, 157, 184, 342
abuse of Tri 282
dark side of relationship 164
Lisa and 155, 157–159, 166
physical abuse 158
Wiji Thukul 19
Wild, Nettie 355
Winston, Brian 17
wirang (disgrace) 32, 221
Wiseman, Frederick 15, 314
witchcraft and magic 232
wives
financial support 145
madu (honey) 118
submissive role 129
woman designated "male" heir 97
women
autonomy increasing 129
family of origin 124
financial dependence 144
isolation 121
lack of agency 144
marriage as goal 143
ownership of 121
roles of circumscribed 191
schooling 159, 162
unmarried adults 98
women's choir of survivors 54
women's rights 128
wong samar (spirits) 72
Wonosari 153
wounds, universal 199
writing as subversive act 67

Y

yellow card 155
Yogyakarta
Budi's family 62
Lisa schooling 149
Mudakir 60
violence against Chinese 64
YouTube 368, 370, 387
Yuliantari 113