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 "nonnormative") 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.

[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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