

Family Victim: Encountering Deviance and Representing Intersubjectivity



Photo 6.1 Estu Wardhani

6.1 STORY SUMMARY

Estu Wardhani is a Javanese man in his early thirties living in Gunung Kidul, a rural area on the outskirts of Yogyakarta. Intelligent and charismatic, Estu is married with two young daughters and runs a small business selling mobile phones. But there is another side to Estu, who calls himself the “bad coconut” of his Central Javanese family, and feels he is the victim of all

of his family's karmic debt. His family and community have seen that his disruptive and aggressive patterns of conduct have stressed his interpersonal relationships and threatened his marriage.

Estu has been "different" ever since he was a young boy. Over the course of his life, this difference has manifested through behaviors that range from the mildly unusual to the deeply distressing. These behaviors include physical tics; chronic restlessness and an inability or unwillingness to carry out daily tasks; failure to complete his expected educational trajectory or hold a steady job; participation in underworld activities such as gambling, stealing, and theft; and aggressive and at times outright violent behavior toward friends and family. Estu describes himself simply as a "caged bird who longs to fly free," but his disruptive patterns of conduct deeply distress others and interfere with his ability to follow the path of normative Javanese development. Family members and healers struggle to determine exactly what is ailing him: Is he possessed by an evil spirit, is he a psychopath, or is he simply not yet willing or able to "be Javanese"? Relatives and healers carry out a search to find the root of Estu's problems and the corresponding treatment. This mobilizes culturally salient models of deviance, culpability, and rehabilitation informed by Javanese beliefs about development and maturity, family roles, spiritual practice and power, personal initiative, and collective responsibility. Estu's case questions the boundaries of what can be considered normative experience and documents how troubled or troubling behavior can be understood or interpreted in multiple ways outside the confines of Western psychiatric diagnostics.

Estu was born in 1975, the seventh of eight children, to one of the most well-respected families living in Gunung Kidul, a mostly impoverished rural region of southern Central Java. His father was a well-educated local schoolteacher. Since he was about eight or nine years old, Estu exhibited a series of odd physical tics and occasionally fainted, a disorder locally labeled as *saradan*. Despite his evident intellect, he seemed unable to complete even basic chores and rarely helped around the house. Because his mother felt sorry for him, she refrained from disciplining his misbehavior. As he got older, however, this misbehavior became more marked. When he was ten, he engaged in petty theft. In middle school his best friends were street kids (B.I. *anak jalanan*), and by high school Estu was skipping class, engaging in minor crime, and getting drunk, all practices very negatively sanctioned in rural Java. These experiments with deviance stood out in stark contrast to the rest of his siblings who were all driven and focused academic achievers. One by one these siblings went on to college,

moved away from Gunung Kidul, got married, and launched successful professional careers, but Estu still seemed lost.

At the same time he was possibly making forays into the world of criminality, Estu became interested in the spiritual world. Like many young Javanese men he strove to improve his personal power by studying with various healers (B.I. *dukun*),² traditional healers revered for their mystical prowess. He developed a particularly close relationship with Irah, a female *dukun* who ritually adopted Estu as her spiritual “son.” While friends and family distrusted Irah and suspected her of practicing black magic, Estu felt she was a protective force in his life and was deeply upset when she passed away a number of years into their relationship.



Photo 6.2 Estu consults with one of his traditional healers

Estu attended college in Yogyakarta and there he fell in love with Ana, the younger sister of a friend. Despite frequent squabbles and different religious backgrounds (Ana is Muslim and Estu is Christian, and such intermarriage is still very uncommon in Indonesia), they decided to marry. When Estu consulted with another trusted *dukun*, Arjo, on the matter, the man predicted hardship because they were “not a good match.”

Until a certain point of time your life will always be full of quarrels [. . .] If you can’t endure it, it’ll be like hell. But if you can endure your married life, the time will come for you to live happily.

This grim prediction proved accurate. Estu and Ana had frequent violent domestic disputes, usually triggered by Estu's unpredictable behavior and the couple's ongoing economic challenges. One of their main struggles was Estu's gambling; his parents and siblings frequently loaned the couple money to start their own business, but Estu gambled it away. In order to support his habit, Estu forged fake lottery tickets to collect rewards, feigned illness to collect charity, and on more than one occasion stole and pawned off other people's motorbikes. He sometimes resorted to direct coercion or threats. The birth of his daughter, Mega, while bringing joy, did little to calm Estu or unite him with his wife. Ana became so depressed and desperate that she would bang her head against the wall while fantasizing about leaving Estu. She even contemplated suicide.

When reflecting on his fraught marriage and his other problems, Estu thinks that he is spoiled and gets bored too easily. He also thinks there might be a malevolent being who takes possession of him. When he was around twenty, about the time he met Ana, he started hearing voices that would get angry, insult him, and encourage him to do bad things. Certain family members and *dukun* feel that this other being is actually Irah, working her black magic through him from the afterlife. Estu hates these voices and the things they make him do. He has considered committing suicide if he cannot rid himself of them and free his life from its frustrating cycle of deviant behavior, low self-regard, emotional outbursts, and attempts at rehabilitation. He describes at times feeling so worthless or so directionless that he does not even want to get out of bed in the morning, saying, "Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, [I think] 'Why should I get up? There is nothing I must do.' It's better for me to go to sleep again; I can have a dream, to be this, to be that." Yet, these periods of low motivation and low self-regard alternate with feelings of potency and possibility, fantasy, and grandiosity. This is expressed in his belief that he has achieved mystical powers to predict the future or read people's minds, that if he keeps playing he will win at gambling, or in his extended revenge fantasies.

Estu was subject to a range of frequent spiritual, behavioral, and pharmaceutical interventions in the face of his actions. On more than one occasion, he was temporarily imprisoned in a local jail, a known recourse for Javanese parents who want to discipline their disruptive children. Additionally, different *dukun* tried to entice or enable Estu to live a better life; some prescribed various religious rituals to right past spiritual errors, while

others counseled Estu on practical matters such as financial management. In one memorable event, Puji, a *dukun* and one of Estu's closest advisors, took Estu to a cemetery at night and knocked him unconscious. When Estu awoke he was prompted to write a letter pledging to live a better life and was forced to sign this pledge in his own blood.

In addition to traditional Javanese healing practices, Estu was medically evaluated for his troubling condition. He was diagnosed with psychiatric disorders including attention deficit disorder, dysthymia, TS, and most troubling, anti-social personality disorder, and psychopathy. He was prescribed Haloperidol, a potent antipsychotic, and Fluoxetine (Prozac), a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor. These medications reportedly made him feel better and more in control, but after a short while he stopped taking them.

Despite all these efforts, by 2003 Estu's situation completely deteriorated. He had scrawled angry graffiti on the walls of his house and business, threatened the lives of his family members, and was no longer welcome at the houses of any of his siblings. His parents had moved out of their home along with all of their belongings to avoid his destructive wrath.



Photo 6.3 Estu, his wife, Ana, and their daughter, Mega, under graffiti in his stall which reads “Life without hope”

Then in 2004, when it seemed like things could not get much worse, something changed. Estu's second daughter was born, and he adjusted to the rhythms of fatherhood in a way he had not when Mega was young. At around the same time, his father fell ill with cancer. Estu became his prime caretaker, nursing him and staying at his bedside. The two talked about everything that had happened, expressed their love for each other, and found resolution before his father succumbed to his illness and passed away. This experience was profoundly important to Estu, who felt proud that he could ease his father's suffering and gratified that this labor was acknowledged and valued.

By 2006, Estu retained the sense of calm and purpose that caring for his father had given him. While he still wrestles with feelings of restlessness and low self-worth, he holds down a steady job as a driver, saves money, and started his own cell phone business. This financial stability has positively affected his relationship with Ana, and their marriage has blossomed. Estu no longer hears voices or has suicidal thoughts. He also claims to have noble aspirations, saying he wants to use his life for the good of others. Locals now greet him on the street with calls of "Hello, Boss!" and he is among those neighborhood family men invited to participate in village meetings and contribute to ritual celebrations. This stability and social position is a new chapter in Estu's biography, a hard-won if still tenuous success for himself and his family that follows a decade of confusion, false starts, and personal strife.

However, as Estu seems to be settling in and settling down, his family is hesitantly beginning to consider that he has truly changed; however, they also warily acknowledge that this might be just another temporary reprieve.

6.2 DEVIANCE, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND INTERSUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

The issues that emerge as central to subjects' lives in the *Afflictions* films (Lemelson 2010–2011) are, perhaps surprisingly, rarely their symptoms *per se*. For Gusti, the social stigma and ensuing low self-concept she suffered were much more upsetting than her tics. For Kereta, the culturally inflected personal and social outcomes of traumatic experience were more upsetting than the phenomena of visual and auditory hallucinations. For Estu, the core issue was ultimately the interpretation of and response to deviance.

Deviance is a slippery term—socially constructed and to a significant extent relative. In other words, deviant behavior is basically what a majority of a group believes constitutes deviant behavior (Becker 1963; Goffman 1963). Often a matter of degree or intensity, deviance is contingent on factors such as the size and organization of the society, the social identity of the person engaging in deviant behavior, the intent or capacity of the deviant person to understand and uphold rules and norms, the circumstances under which the deviant act occurs, the visibility of the act, etc. All of these determine who or what will be labeled as deviant and if so labeled, what degree of deviance is viewed as immoral or pathological, and how this will be sanctioned. There are multiple, at times competing, accounts of how this concept should be theorized, from the classic conceptions of structuralism/functionalism (Durkheim 2014; Merton 1964) to anthropological concepts of deviance (Edgerton 1976) to contemporary notions such as the “subaltern” (Said 1979; Spivak 1999; Gramsci 1988). Deviance—including criminality, sexual abnormality, and mental illness—was of inherent interest to sociologists and anthropologists of the 1950s–1960s (Freilich et al. 1991; Edgerton 1976; Becker 1963), and a number of ethnographers have used participant observation fieldwork to study criminals and addressed some of the “experiential tangles” and issues that arose therein (Ferrell and Hamm 1998; Bourgois 1995).

Both milder forms of social deviance and more extreme episodes of reported violence occurred on multiple occasions during the shoot for *Family Victim*. A detailed retelling of this fieldwork provides an opportunity to discuss not just local understandings of deviance or the representation of deviant behavior on film, but also to explore how deviance is constructed dialogically and how shifting intersubjectivity can impact an ethnographer’s understanding of what counts as deviant.

Estu says of himself that he has some form of “invisible disease,” an ineffable problem whose source cannot be located and yet whose symptoms seem to manifest in his thoughts, personality, and behavior. One of the first explanatory models that could be applied to these “troubles” is a psychiatric one. Estu’s brother-in-law, Mahar Agusno, is a well-respected Javanese psychiatrist and long-term collaborator on *Afflictions* and related projects. A number of competing psychiatric diagnoses and frames were discussed with Mahar. Following is a psychiatric exegesis, based in part on Mahar’s evaluation, and a further analysis of “The Troubles with Estu” (which was the working title of *Family Victim* [Lemelson 2010]).

Because of his repeated anti-social behaviors and seeming lack of remorse, viewed through the lens of both a doctor and a family member who has experienced the repercussions of his actions firsthand, his psychiatrist considered whether Estu might be a psychopath or a sociopath. While both these terms are used in “folk” parlance and mental health discourse, neither are in the *DSM* system, which provides a related diagnosis, “Anti-social Personality Disorder.”

Estu’s symptoms of hearing voices might suggest psychiatric disturbance. Estu reports “inner voices” which appear when he is angry; they give him orders, criticize him, and encourage him to engage in problematic behavior.

It seems that there’s something alive, which can’t accept it if it’s treated rudely. They can’t accept mean treatment, they rebel, [saying], “Don’t accept it. Take revenge, when possible.” If in fact inside here [points to heart] there is another being that is separate from myself, maybe it is that being who is working.

On another occasion, Estu reiterated:

There are voices that speak in my heart . . . they are so soft, sometimes with feelings and sometimes with voices, which repeat inside myself which protest and tell me, “you have to do this . . . this . . . this . . .”

Estu sometimes talks back to these voices, asking what they want with him, yet he cannot make them go away. He says, “I ask the voice to shut up, but it keeps talking.” Sometimes the voice seems like an alter; Estu says, “I feel there’s another ‘me.’ Now I hate him so much. The one who is bad. Who is coward. If only he was in the form of a human being, I’d fight him. He makes me unsuccessful, a failure. Not like what I want.”

It is difficult to tell whether these voices are auditory hallucinations secondary to a formal diagnosis of thought disorder (Tschoeke et al. 2014), a function of a “personality disorder,” a depersonalization of Estu’s anger, a part of himself from which he disassociates, an aspect of his personality that is split off and not integrated into his ego, or even a form of malingering. Estu is very bright and would understand how a diagnosis and the “sick role” (Parsons 1951) could deflect responsibility for his behaviors away from the purely volitional.

Estu’s cycles of low motivation, low self-esteem and self-regard, and occasional suicidal ideation might indicate dysthymia, depression, or a

related mood disorder. His apparent cycling between low mood and at times agitation appeared to point toward a further psychiatric diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Given his history, his dreams, and insistence that he is going to be a “big man” might be an indication of a distorted perception of the world, or what he is capable of in it.

Finally, Estu exhibited symptoms of TS, which can be co-morbid with ADHD, and is associated with poor impulse control and difficulty focusing for extended periods of time. An argument could be made that the effect of these disorders plays a role in Estu’s problematic behavior and compulsions.

Each of these potential diagnoses seemed a plausible psychiatric explanation for Estu’s troubling behavior. Yet, a textured understanding of local Javanese spiritual beliefs and models of human development and social interaction complicates the apparent simplicity of a psychiatric categorical model and gives a nuanced analysis to the expression and interpretation of Estu’s non-normative behaviors and perceptions, accounting for the layers of culture that infuse and shape his experience.

Estu and his family think he might be possessed by the spirit of a deceased black magic practitioner or perhaps some other evil spirit. He has a long-sustained interest in black magic and communicating with the spirit world, and has developed relationships with various *dukun* to help him do so. Estu’s family believes that his contact with dark or destructive forces has negatively impacted his behavior and by extension endangered his family. Some of this may have been accidental, caused by the residue of powerful forces contained in some of the accessories of Estu’s studies in magic. For example, Estu had a *susuk*, or charm, implanted in his body by a *dukun* intended to protect him and give him strength, but the family believes it might actually be harming him. Estu’s sister remembers when he brought other powerful magical implements, such as a *keris*, a ceremonial dagger that has magical and mystical powers and has deep symbolic meaning for Indonesians (Frey 2010; Mrázek 2011), into the family home, disturbing their peace and safety.

... when he lived with us a couple of years ago, he brought home some *keris*. And at that time [my son] was still a baby, and he cried all night and day, so we asked, “What is going on with him?” And weeks after that my younger brother admitted that he brought some *keris* and that the *dukun* that he went to already told him that because they might have bad impacts on babies and other people in the house who did not have protection, but he brought

them anyway to the house. And we just knew that [my son] could not stand their influence.

The family believes that beyond the powerful or possessed charms (B.I. *susuk*) and daggers, Estu may become possessed by the spirit of his beloved *dukun*, Mak Irah, and Estu concurs. Spiritual possession is a plausible interpretation for Estu's behavior according to Javanese logics of deviant or disturbed behavior; some family members have even consulted *dukun* to counter the powers acting through Estu with black magic of their own. However, his breaching of social norms is much more disturbing than his interactions with spirit beings or invisible realms. Despite these frameworks of interpretation available in a Javanese cultural context that to a certain extent normalize such interaction, Estu's family feels that his experiences go beyond the norm and threaten not only their own sense of moral order and expected behavior of a family member, but even their physical safety. What is most upsetting to them is his social aggression, which goes far beyond what is culturally normative. It is not, in *DSM* nomenclature, "culturally sanctioned."

For Estu, a historical and cultural analysis of idioms of distress contributes to an understanding of whether his behavior is meaningless pathology or meaningful, albeit upsetting, communication. There is a local idiom of distress that friends and family members use to describe Estu's behavior: *ngamuk* (Browne 2001a, b), which blurs the boundaries between mental illness and meaningful social communication.

Ana says that when Estu demands her jewelry or other things she knows he will use to gamble, "If I insist on not giving it to him, we will just fight. Well, I'd better give it to him rather than seeing him go *ngamuk*." She describes his "*ngamuk*" behavior as explosive lashing out physically at the people and things surrounding him, saying, "He becomes irritated. And when he gets irritated he may curse, ruin things [. . .] I'd better avoid him. I'm afraid that I'll get punched or something."

*Ngamuk*₂, or the more familiar term to Western audiences, "amok," is a much-discussed and fabled phenomenon in Indonesia and wider Southeast Asia (Williamson 2007; Ugarte 1999; Spores 1988; Burton-Bradley 1985; Westermeyer 1972); it has historically been understood by scholars as an episode of intense rage and violence, denoting an altered state where the individual at first appears to be brooding, and then suddenly loses all control. In the most severe cases, the *ngamuk* person may go on a

murderous rampage, followed by an amnesiac lack of awareness of this violent event (Browne 2001a).

Historically, in Indonesia an understanding of amok was imbricated in a colonialist perspective on the Indonesian psychology: episodes of sudden violence against colonial powers was framed as mental disorder rather than protest, interpreted as an unstable individual going mad rather than acknowledging maddening structural inequalities that might push people to their limits. This tautological idea of an “unstable native” was used as justification for further surveillance and control (Good et al. 2008). Contemporary reinterpretations have rehabilitated amok to suggest that it may be a form of social commentary and protest rather than a sign of insanity (Larasati 2013). However, the idea of amok or *ngamuk* as a psychological problem and an expression of mental distress has persisted both in folk idiom and in psychiatric diagnostic criteria. The *DSM-IV-TR* categorized amok as a culture-bound dissociative disorder most prevalent among South-east Asian males (APA 2000). Other mental health researchers have considered *ngamuk* to be an impulse control disorder that may have a relationship to manic states.

Some psychological anthropologists suggest that rather than a discrete episode of mental disturbance, *ngamuk* is an idiom of distress that refers to a wide range of anger reactions and represents various ambiguous categories of threatening behavior. From this perspective, *ngamuk* is a particularly Javanese mechanism that gives structure and meaning to a spectrum of deviant behaviors existing within a cultural environment that prizes self-control and a smooth presentation of self as a hallmark of psychological health and social appropriateness. Conditions which are commonly understood to cause vulnerability to *ngamuk* include depression, disappointment or unfulfilled desires, economic stress, jealousy, disturbance by spirits, and disputes with family members (Browne 2001a). These terms thus become referents for a constellation of pressures and affective disturbances that link the physical body, personal or subjective experience and the sociocultural demands upon individual and community (White 1994). Significantly, though, when read this way, *ngamuk* is not just a symptom of individual distress but an accusation toward the collective that has put the individual in a distressing position. While Javanese symptoms of *ngamuk* are displayed by an individual, its causes are deeply situated within a cultural and communal context. By labeling Estu’s behavior as *ngamuk*, his wife and family situate his difficulties within a web of socioeconomic relationships.

However, Estu seems to be suffering from an unusual variant of *ngamuk*. *Ngamuk* is usually understood to be a comparatively self-limited and episodic experience; a person might have one episode of *ngamuk* in his or her lifetime and then never again. But Estu's problem is disturbingly chronic. As one *dukun*, Puji, explained:

Estu's case can be classified into very rare. Why? Usually, if someone recovers, he will recover forever. But not him. He recovers, and gets worse again, recovers, gets worse.

Here, Puji's diagnosis appears to be widely agreed upon; such a chronic and recurrent variant of *ngamuk* is a local category of disturbance in Indonesia that is considered rare, severe, and disturbing enough to require hospitalization (Browne 2001a).

Estu's difficulties seem to have stemmed from an almost overwhelmingly complex tangle of conditions. In contemporary Java, there are multiple available explanations for deviance that incorporate Javanist spirituality (Smith 2008; Endraswara 2003), animist beliefs, and karmic retribution, both globalized pop psychology (Hoesterey 2012; Hoesterey and Clark 2012) and localized folk psychology and ethno-theories of balance and self-control (Geertz 1969), brain-based understandings of personhood and illness, and more. Rather than providing any clarity, however, these multiple potential explanations provided by his healers, elders, family, and localized agents of governmental authority and control seem to lead to further questions and complications while *not* providing effective mood or behavior change for Estu or a more harmonious or satisfactory relationship with his family. Ultimately, more important to all involved than finding the specific term or exact etiology of disturbance would be finding a way for Estu and his family to cope and get along on a day-to-day basis, being able to adapt, respond to, and manage his fluctuations in sensory experience, affect, and behavior.

6.3 THE INTERSUBJECTIVE REALITY OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

How does a filmmaker engaged in long-term, person-centered, and one might argue dialogical anthropology represent the intersubjective reality created by participants, and perhaps even more importantly, represent these shifts and conceptualize their finished films in relationship to these

shifts? These intersubjective shifts certainly occur during the making of any film or research project but will be especially important when making films about deviance and mental illness, since the intersubjective work is already such a central part of that experience.

The intersubjective construction of Estu's deviance—a result of evaluations, interpretations, and exchanges between Estu, the lead author, and his family—can be tracked through a detailed case history of the research process, from recruitment to finished film.

After meeting and filming a number of subjects with rather clear-cut symptoms of TS, Ninik mentioned that several members of her family had significant tics, and introduced us to her brother Estu, who was then in his early twenties. During the intake interview, Mahar ensured that the multiple facets of Estu's "troubled and troublesome" personality and behavior were discussed, making it clear that the family found these to be quite distressing; at the same time, he continuously translated Estu's laments into symptoms of TS. It was apparent that Estu did have moderate tics, but his other troubles seemed much more pressing.

During this first interview, Estu seemed honest and direct in talking about his struggles, unlike the Central Javanese "modal personality" (Inkeles and Levinson 1969); he openly addressed things that most other people in this community would be extremely reluctant to discuss. He had a quick and sharp wit. When his "idiosyncrasies" were addressed, the problems that he and other family members described as extremely problematic did not seem all that problematic to me. In fact, many of these problems—such as shifting work interests, difficulty focusing, and a sense of boredom after dating a woman for more than two or three months—would be well within the norm of a young American man.

In American psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, the process of "finding one's identity" throughout adolescence and early adulthood, and the paradoxically normatively deviant adolescent period is a well-established idea (Erickson 1950; see review by Bucholtz 2002; Judd 1967). Feelings of restlessness and periods of "storm and stress" are expected by-products of normative adolescent development (Arnett 1999); even experimentation with substance use, misconduct, and transgressive behavior is to a certain extent expected and even somewhat indulged (Chen et al. 1998; Tisak et al. 2001), although it is acknowledged that this period of freedom may lead to crisis if adolescents don't plan for the subsequent stage of their lives and ultimately "settle down" (Schlegel 1995).

Of course, Estu lived in rural Java, not America. Initially it appeared that Estu's deviance was perhaps a case of a poor cultural fit between Estu and his Javanese surrounds. Goffman (1963) well illustrated the constructed and contingent nature of stigma and deviance; an individual can be stigmatized and thought of as deviant in relation to one group of people yet accepted or normative in relation to another; one could even say that there was a genetic component or neurobiological basis for deviance insofar as certain aspects of temperament might be genetically influenced and present since birth and certain kinds of temperament might be considered "good" and others "bad" or "deviant" by certain cultures (Edgerton 1976).

This bears upon some very fundamental and classic distinctions in psychological anthropology between culture and personality (Sapir and Mandelbaum 1985; Linton 1936; Wallace and Wallace 1970; Hsu 1972). Some aspects of Estu's behavior would not be at all in opposition to Western cultural values. But Java is a place where equanimity, the smoothing over of emotional highs and lows, self-control and containment, and the emotional work involved in the non-expression of negatively balanced emotional states are valued. All these made it difficult for Estu to "fit" in his particular cultural place; yet, his family clearly expected him to "buckle down" and contain himself and follow a path of normative Javanese masculinity and progression, in his family life, his relationships, and his career—none of which he seemed capable of.

In addition to ambivalence about the extent to which Estu could be considered deviant, after this initial interview and at this stage in the process of filmmaking, Estu's relevance to the TS research remained unclear—his tics seemed too mild to provide meaningful information about how they might be culturally shaped. It was only in follow-up interviews with Mahar and Ninik that understandings of the relevance of Estu's case to the research in culture and mental illness shifted.

After spending several weeks in Central Java for research, the team moved back to the original field site in Bali. In an extensive and wide-ranging interview there, Ninik began opening up about her true motivation for proposing Estu as a subject in the collaborative research; she had been looking for some input, advice, and guidance regarding how to deal with him. As it turns out, Estu's "troubles" were considerably more disturbing than anyone had let on in that initial interview in Gunung Kidul. Estu had made explicit threats against the lives of his family members, including his young nieces and nephews. In this interview, the depths of Ninik's despair over her brother became startlingly evident. This interview became a

turning point in the research orientation toward Estu; the conflict within his family quickly took precedence over his Tourette's symptoms and, in fact, became the focus of the research. As with all the other *Afflictions* cases, interpersonal and social contexts of putative mental illness were central concerns. As Estu was positioned as a film participant, some tricky but fascinating intersubjective territory was brought into focus.

From 2000 to 2006, over the course of multiple interviews, the lead author grew increasingly close with the entire family, moving away from what was at first a fairly formal research relationship. The progression in the film, which shifts from focusing on Estu's answers to clinically oriented questions in the first interview to progressively more personal and frankly existential questions about his life, place in his world, relationship with his family members, and the moral quandaries raised by his actions, mirrored the deepening relationship between the lead author, Estu, and his family. Ninik was pinning her hopes on an external counselor or "agent of change," who could give authoritative advice, yet much skepticism remained about how bad Estu's behavior "really" was. Ninik repeatedly sought feedback and assessment of how the family should understand Estu and what they should do. Remaining neutral and reframing different aspects of Estu's behavior, so as not to isolate and further stigmatize him in the eyes of his family, was possible but the situation created an involvement and intimacy far beyond the typical role of a "participant observer."

In the middle of this growing intimacy and familiarity, however, the family conflict also seemed to be escalating, and was perhaps exacerbated by the presence of a foreign researcher, or at least, an outsider. By the shoot in 2003, Estu owed a large amount of money in gambling debts and was searching for a way to raise these funds to stave off his bookies. He requested money, or at least access to other family resources, and was denied. Estu then proceeded to his natal village on the rural plateau of Gunung Kidul, where his family still had land, planning to cut down a grove of valuable teak trees, which his father had planted several decades earlier, and sell the wood. Anticipating these plans, his father preemptively cut down the trees himself and hauled them away. When Estu arrived and discovered this, he became furious, and according to neighbors pulled out a knife and vowed to kill his father. The film crew arrived approximately a half hour after this outburst, and filmed Ninik and her elderly neighbors consoling one another after witnessing Estu's threats of violence and believing he was on a mission of attempted murder.

The lead author never personally witnessed these threats or acts of violence nor filmed them. However, respondents did report on these violent episodes almost as they unfolded, and their repercussions were witnessed and filmed. We went searching for Estu in the hopes we could discuss the issue, calm him down, and determine how much of a danger he was to others, considering the possibility that this outburst was primarily a performance aimed at the local community as a way for Estu to assert that he was still a man to be reckoned with. The police were contacted and they were quite familiar with Estu by this point; they picked him up, detained him briefly, and counseled him about his rash behavior.

When a subject threatens the lives of your colleagues' family and engages in activities that could result in extreme violence, this of course changes the way to understand, interpret, and perhaps represent him. At this point, Mahar's suggestion that Estu might be seriously disturbed, or even a psychopath, seemed more plausible. Estu frequently blamed others for problems that were a result of his own conduct. The episodes of violence against his family were troubling and alien to me, and ultimately called into question whether an empathetic connection to the other aspects of his experience was misplaced. Was Estu purposefully emphasizing those aspects of himself most likely to evoke sympathy, and setting them against the much more socially destructive, or even pathological, aspects of his narrative? Was he consciously playing on empathy to convince the anthropologist of what he perceived to be his family's unfair and unjust treatment of him, so that his desire for revenge and his acts of retribution against them might be overlooked or downplayed? The literature on psychopathy, going back at least to Cleckley's groundbreaking study (Cleckley 1941), frequently notes the ability of the psychopath to feign responses that he or she thinks are expected, in a socially normative sense, that is, to instrumentally "put on an act" in order to gain some desired outcome.

My personal and intellectual quest to understand Estu's deviance that emerged during research mirrored a process that Ninik had been undergoing for years. Aside from her research interests and investment in the film project, Ninik admits that the underlying reason she allowed her family to be filmed and interviewed was the hope that somehow, someday, along with the process, she could gain new insights into what her family should do with Estu. However, over the course of the film, Ninik also experienced a shift, from thinking the problem lay solely in Estu himself to thinking that her family played a role in his behavior, and hence, could be empowered to influence it.

As a member of the research team, and as a family member, participating in the film project led Ninik to rethink her options in terms of how to respond to Estu. In this way, the “clinical” research and film objectives became intertwined with her personal goals. She explains:

I had expected that [through our participation in the research and film project] I would understand my brother better, really understand why he was like that, why he had so many troubles with his own life . . . it might be because of the symptoms that he had, the Tourette that he had.

In my family, we protected each other very well, so anything wrong that he did, we tried to make [amends]. But then it just happened too often. Eventually, along with the process of making the film, I came to the certain understanding that, “oh, maybe I should change this.” I should not protect my family’s dignity the way we had done before, by giving these people money to [make up] for the damage that my brother had caused them . . . But then I came to a certain understanding that we needed to do a different strategy. And so I started to tell my mom, my siblings, ‘I think the only thing that will teach him lessons is to contain him. We can support his family, but not him. And if he does certain things that are wrong to other people, let him be responsible for what he has done.’

We set limits. [. . .] And, things got much better . . .

Ninik’s perspective seems to have undergone a shift in relation to the film production, incorporating an element of cultural relativism that underpinned the work.

While Ninik began fieldwork thinking that the problem lay solely in Estu’s disturbing behavior, but after engaging in fieldwork, filmmaking, and the conversations around it, she also began to think that part of the problem might lie in the culturally conditioned responses she and her family were using to cope with it; perhaps if they used less “Javanese” means of reacting to Estu, they might get different results. Meanwhile, when the extent of Estu’s violent and unpredictable behavior continued to emerge, there came the realization that the problem was more than just poor cultural fit.

The original evaluation was that Estu and his behaviors were at odds with normative rural Javanese culture—or at least, in local parlance he was not yet “fully Javanese,” meaning he had not crossed the cultural barrier to becoming an adult in contemporary Javanese society—and this was compounded by a combination of personality characteristics, aspects of “mental illness,” and specifics of family structure and processing which led

to Estu being isolated and stigmatized by his own relatives. As the interviews with Estu and his family members began to lengthen and deepen, there were subtle shifts in how he should be viewed. This was turning into a somewhat more serious situation than just a young man at odds with his family and local community. The family felt deeply threatened and disturbed by this possibility; their perception of him seemed validated by numerous negative actions on his part.

As the researchers' and family members' estimations of Estu were changing, Estu simultaneously contributed to the shared understanding of his self and his predicament. While he has been a somewhat unreliable respondent, he has consistently traced his problems back to his family. His sense of himself was not that he was troubled and troublesome but that he was wronged and misunderstood. Early schools of sociological deviance theory provide evidence for the dynamic Estu may have been experiencing. Lemert (1967) suggests an escalating pattern of "primary" and "secondary" deviance, where being labeled as deviant and suffering the associated social penalties and stigma after a "primary deviation" leads to an internalized self-image as deviant and snowballs into growing resentment and hostility on the part of the deviant, and rejection and criminalization of the deviant by his surrounding community. This increases the chances of "secondary" deviance, which leads to stronger penalties against the labeled deviant and a growing resentment and hostility, and ultimately the solidification of self-identifying as deviant or criminal. In Estu's case, this was apparent over the course of his development as his behavior escalated from poor school performance to petty thievery and recreational drug use to domestic violence and threatened murder as he felt his family continually refused to listen to his attempts to change and get help, and his identity as a "bad" person solidified.

There were clearly significant differences between how Estu was clinically framed for research purposes, his own personal motivations for participation in the research project, his family's motivations, perceptions of him as a person, and professional interest in the family situation as an ethnographic filmmaker. Yet, each of these contributed to a shared—and sometimes contested—intersubjective understanding of Estu and the representation of his person and his narrative development on film.

There are explicit parallels to other cases. For example, Gusti's problems were clinically framed for research (TS symptoms), her own personal motivations for participation in the project (a cure, but more importantly a sympathetic witness), her family's motivation (a cure to ease their burden),

the researchers' understanding of her as a person (a miserable and victimized woman who was bravely trying to better her situation), and professional interest in her as a film participant. Similarly, throughout the process of making both films, there were shifting senses of our selves and the work together; yet these dynamics took a particularly troubling turn in response to Estu's situation. The intersubjective reality that participants shared and contested impacted approval and consent about what was an "accurate" depiction of the family's life acceptable to be included in the film, as access to the film footage grew more immediate and widespread.

Deviance elicits labor and negotiation as people try to minimize its impact. "Trouble" is the sign that the limits of acceptable variation have been exceeded, and an "account" of that trouble, which explains why the deviant behavior occurred and the motives behind it, will determine what needs to be done about the trouble. Such "accounts" can exacerbate, justify, or excuse the deviant behavior, and the ensuing interpretations are dialectical and transactional. In the case of mental illness, for example, deciding whether someone is "mentally ill" or not, and therefore whether they should be held fully responsible for their actions "is always a social transaction with moral and jural features, and the outcome of this transaction is essentially negotiable" (Edgerton 1978, 463).

Estu's case seems to invite a return to thinking about deviance in a way that bridges multiple categories of unusual or disruptive behavior. Because the motivation for his troubling actions is so nebulous, his control over them debatable, and the cultural components of their interpretation so significant, his case hearkens back to earlier theories and proves them to still be useful for analysis. For example, there are multiple and sometimes conflicting accounts of his deviant behavior that are weighed and negotiated, leading to extensive interpretive, emotional, and attempted reparative work on behalf of Estu's immediate family, community, and healers. These different accounts of Estu's troubles lead to very different responses, and enable different outcomes. Accounts that suggest Estu has been unduly influenced by dark spiritual forces require rituals and a concerted effort on behalf of the entire family unit to purify their relationships and re-establish balance with the help of traditional healers and wise men, for example, while accounts that suggest he has a brain-based neuropsychiatric disorder call for medication and professional psychiatric help and behavioral, and developmental accounts require he grow up and take responsibility for his life and his actions or else face sanctions.

The finished film ultimately explores the multiple ways one can evaluate and attempt to understand a complex story like Estu's. In this way, the film demonstrates the forms of analytic consciousness an anthropologist goes through in attempting to make sense of a very complex situation, in this case a situation made more difficult by the ethical, moral, and legal implications of the actions of the protagonist. In effect, the film replicates the anthropologist's stance toward his subject and the subject matter: striving for some degree of neutrality and giving similar but at times differential weight, in a contextualized manner, to different explanatory models and modes of understanding. The film attempts to balance these different models, interpreting Estu's case using a psychiatric explanatory model, a traditional Javanese model of maturity and development, a criminological or even forensic analytic model, and finally a model based on interpersonal and personal insight and understanding. In this way the film attempts clearly to render a process that may not be particularly evident or familiar to those who have not yet engaged in extended fieldwork, where such conundrums and complexities abound.

6.4 LAST ENCOUNTERS

With Estu, unfortunately, there were no last encounters, no summing up. Estu withdrew from the film and research project, much as he ultimately withdrew from his family and community. He left Ana, his devoted but wounded spouse, and their three children. He married another woman, had two more children and moved to Bali as an itinerant laborer. He rarely speaks with his family, nor comes home. In 2015, the lead author, in conjunction with Ninik, reached out to Estu to do a final closing interview, to tie together the complex threads of the story that became *Family Victim*. Estu wanted \$1000 to do the interview, so he would have "capital for his new business." That was not proffered, and the meeting never took place.

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