



Waiting for Karila: Bending Time, Theory and Gender in Java and Bali (With Reflections for a Documentary Treatment)

Josko Petkovic

Java. Downtown Jogjakarta. I am about to meet Karila, my transvestite film contact. All afternoon I have been trying to imagine what s/he will look like when I finally met her. In my thoughts I conjure up an image of a face I already know. It is the face of the olive tanned Surabaya 'Elle' I met in Bali. I remember Elle as an extreme mixture of him and her with extra smooth facial skin around the closely shaved hair patches. I imagine watching her on the screen with others in the audience: How will they respond to her in the dark of the cinema hall, I wonder, and especially when they see in her face the combination of him and her? Will they do her justice? Will I do her justice? What about Karila?

I imagine the first moments of our meeting in slow motion, in images that pan across the guarded half smiles as we check one another with an occasional glance for signs of trust or mistrust. Will s/he be nervous? Perhaps the slow motion should be staccato instead. Staccato movement is more jagged, anxious, less romantic, it can catch an unguarded moment of vulnerability and freeze it into a frame.



Figure 2. "Elle"

My thoughts drift to antiquity, from Karila to Kali: Kali - the source and the cause of time and movement, animated Kali, Kali of the tantras, yantras, mantras, but more specifically Kali the copulating consort of Shiva, Kali of the cross-dressing transvestites, Kali-Shiva, Kali-Shakti, Kali of the Kundalini serpent, pulsating black Kali, Bali-Kali, Rangda, Durga. I recall a museum image of her in a terrifying manifestation sitting astride the dead Shiva. I ponder on the power of the image and its intentions.

The bell from the passing *becak* driver jars my thoughts. I check my watch. It is too early to go to

the meeting place. There is enough time to walk and think and to orient myself before I get to talk to her and him in that quaint East-meets-West Javanese restaurant with the Dutch facade.

Waiting for Karila has created in me a state of expectation and tension. As I walk along I reflect to myself that anticipation is a curious state. In anticipation we simultaneously embrace both the present and the future. It is the intertwining of the present with the open horizon of the future which gives anticipation that zing of possibilities, excitement and risk. One could describe anticipation as an inclusive 'disjunctive synthesis' of the present and future (to use the term that Deleuze and Guattari made respectable.^[1] With the inclusive disjunctive synthesis both terms of the disjunction are accepted without exclusion or negation. I glide from the present to the future and back again: neither the present nor the future, but both simultaneously. By including both terms of the disjunction, the inclusive disjunctive synthesis makes it possible to move across the disjunctive space between the two terms, in a way that converts the conventional Either-Or logic into an inclusive series of endless possibilities: Either ... or ... or ... or ... etc, from the present to the future and back again.

This type of logic is something that western social science has had difficulties in dealing with in the past. Even today, academia in general, prefers the neat and exclusive type of logic such as Either-Or logic: either one or the other, either East or West, true or false, good or bad, male or female, but no copula, no Kali, to conjoin the two. And yet, so much that is interesting in life can be found in the conflation of different things rather than in their exclusion - as with anticipation. The most interesting things reside on the crest of ambiguity, along plateaus of intensities formed between intertwined differences. 'Things only begin to live in the middle' - Deleuze and Guattari would say.^[2] Here in this mixing of opposites one can find Shiva and Shakti, Kali and Karila, Yin and Yang, and just about everything else.

In the present time, the notion of a disjunctive synthesis is no longer a matter of idle philosophizing or fantasizing. Conflating oppositions and creating a middle space of existence has become the most outstanding characteristic of the world in which different cultures have been and are being tossed together and globalized. I am here in Java and I am not here in Java. In this context, conflating cultures is a little like my present state of anticipation: I am in both the present and future simultaneously, anticipating all the possibilities, all the exhilaration and all the risks. Kali. Karila. I notice the spring in my feet. In anticipation of our meeting, everything around me, everything about Java and Jogjakarta, now has a heightened sense of presence. This is vital to a filmmaker. I check my bearings and gather my impressions of the place. The first impressions are important. Often, they define the tone of the film itself.

The city is bustling but has seen better days. At the Royal Palace the sound of the gamelan music emanates from somewhere. As I look around I feel a sense of *deja vu*. I put this feeling down to the museum-effect of the old buildings and artifacts I see about. Another disjunctive synthesis, another Kali effect, I tell myself (this time of the present and past. All around, time has inscribed itself into the present, doubling the sense of place with impressions of days long past. I once associated this ghost like feeling with a sense of wonder, but now I merely put it down to the effect of folding and doubling of time and I usually seek out objects by which this temporal effect is created. The effect is very much like the mood in the quaint East-meets-West Javanese restaurant with the Dutch facade, where I finally sit down to wait for Karila.

I make a mental note of some other factors that cast my present experience in a liminal flow. Here I am in Jogjakarta at sunset, a stranger, displaced in time and space twice over at least: I am a filmmaker from a foreign country, researching a project that is located elsewhere in Java, in Ponorogo. And as the day gradually intertwines with the night during the 'magic hour', I am

waiting to talk to a man who wants to be known as a woman. In different circumstances all these oppositions, contradictions and displacements would give rise to a feeling of vertigo, to a sense of doubt and disorientation but today, here in Jogjakarta, at sunset, I let it all flow and wash over me like the rays of the setting sun. This after all, I tell myself, is the magic, intoxication and romance of travel.

As I wait, I write film notes to myself that mock spontaneity. I write to myself in the first person of events that are happening all around me, even though these events are yet to happen or have happened already, while in my head I rummage through the debris of contemporary western theories to frame it all. This attachment to western theorizing is perhaps the most risky element of my present enterprise in Java and one which will undoubtedly find me walking the cultural tightrope. But it is the tightrope which is the focus of my present project - a tightrope which conflates all kinds of different things, a disjunctive synthesis type of tightrope: a tightrope of sunset-light, of displaced space and place, of conflated memory and time, of transverse identity and gender, and above all, of theories which are in flux between East and West, between fiction and actuality, between cause and effect, between meaning and experience.

In my carry-bag I have a travel-worn copy of *A Thousand Plateaus* and some notes.^[3] It is a companion volume to the earlier *Anti-Oedipus* in which the concept of the 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis' was first introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in 1972. In *Anti-Oedipus* 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis' is a mere three words expression and a whole new universe. *A Thousand Plateaus* reworks that universe again in what seems to be a very eastern orientation.^[4] I am hoping that on this project the concept of an inclusive disjunctive synthesis can serve as a conceptual bridge between East and West, but it is an assumption that is not without risks. Since its publication in 1980, *A Thousand Plateaus* has been proclaimed by some to be the bible of postmodern-theorizing, while for most it has been yet another dead end book to follow in the wake of many other dead end western theories. For me its is my rope, my tightrope for this project. With a subtitle like *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Volume II*, I also carry it to remind myself that nothing can be taken for granted in the Humanities and Social Sciences these days. Nothing. Nothing except Kali. In the distance, large cumuli-nimbus clouds gather around the high mountain tops but it does not feel as if it will rain.

What are we to make of this not so-new strain of theory/postmodern theory? How useful is it as theory and as explanation? Where and how can we begin to test its validity? I reflect briefly on the state of western scholarship and feel an overwhelming desire to dissolve and melt into the crowd. Only thoughts of Karila keep me in place. Cut.

I am here to talk to some local transvestites - *bunci* as the locals call them - regarding the sexual orientation of a group of men in Ponorogo known as *gemblak* and *warok*. The topic is certainly salacious enough by today's publishing standards. Too salacious I suspect, especially as it involves old, powerful men relating to much younger men and boys in what may not be exactly a fatherly fashion. Can I deal with this, I ask myself? Can I write about this? What ethical standard and whose ethical standard do I bring to bear on this topic? It is so easy to judge and moralize on such an issue and for many of us dialectical judgements seem to come as second nature. So many of us love to judge and moralize, even when we know that it is not our place to judge and moralize.



Figure 3. Gemblak - Ponogoro (Pak Ermar)

If I am to avoid this tendency towards divine judgement, I will have to search my mind for Kali again, for that nomadic 'middle' space that swarms with possibilities, the conceptual space that avoids extremes but does not negate them. I tell myself that my place in all this is to listen, to write and to show in ways that let others judge.

If and when all this finally comes out in a story with words and images, it will no doubt be another inclusive disjunctive synthesis in which it will be necessary to play the double game with oppositions that is customary with so many public narratives today: namely, to negotiate all the 'judgements' that arise with such an explicit topic, on the one hand, while holding fast to and foregrounding its content, on the other. In my thoughts I rehearse a summary of my official and ethically detached position.



Figure 4. Gemblak - Reyog Ponogoro Festival



Figure 6. Gemblak - Reyog Ponorogo Festival



Figure 5. Warok - Ponorogo (Pak Haji Irandaru Mardi)

Gemblak are young men in the town of Ponorogo that participate in a masked dance known as *Reyog* as the hobby horse cavalry. *Reyog* is one of the best-known folk dances in East Java and each year there is an annual *Reyog* Festival in Ponorogo which attracts much attention.^[5] At the centre of the *Reyog* dance is *Singa Barong*, the mythical half-man, half-animal, Lord of the jungle. The *Singa Barong* dancer carries in his jaw a huge headdress consisting of a tiger's head surrounded by peacock feathers. Symbolically, *Singa Barong* combines the characteristics of three royal animals: the peacock, the mythical lion [*singa*], and the tiger. Other dancers may be present, masked as dwarfs clowns, king and demons.



Figure 7. Reyog Ponorogo Festival Parade: Singa Barong



Figure 8. Reyog Ponogoro Festival - Singa-barong and Rider



Figure 9. Reyog Ponogoro Festival Parade - "Kilisuci"

The narrative of the Reyog performance revolves loosely around the struggle between Singa Barong and King Kelono Sewondono for the hand of Princess Kilisuci of Kediri. As with Balinese Rangda/Barong ritual drama, the struggle between the king and Singa Barong may involve supernatural powers, trance and spirit possession. After a long battle, and with the support of his cavalry of soldiers and his loyal, if somewhat crude and clownish looking friend Pujangganom, the king prevails over Singa Barong. His victory is celebrated with the Reyog parade during which Singa Barong is led captive through the crowd by King Klono Sewondono and his supporters, with Princess Kilisuci riding in the Singa Barong's peacock plumes in some of the parades.



Figure 10. Gemblak - Reyog Ponogoro Festival

The leader of the dance troupe and the person that usually carries the Singa-Barong mask is the warok, renowned for his strength. But, undoubtedly, one of the most spectacular elements of the Reyog dance are the warok's companions, the handsome gemblak soldiers, riding their hobby-horses to the rhythm of the accompanying music. If warok bring to Reyog connotations of

excessive masculinity, *gemblak*, in contrast, bring to their military role connotations of grace and femininity. In popular discourse *gemblak* are often described as being transvestites and *warok* as homosexual, which they politely deny. Instead, they claim their relationship to be a part of a long-standing tradition, which has little if anything to do with transvestitism or homosexuality. Some of this tradition is narrated in the literary version of the *Reyog* story itself.

The story of *Reyog* usually commences with the son of the king of Ponorogo (*Kelono Sewondono*) leaving home and going to one of the temples up on Mt. Lawu to learn all about martial arts under the guidance of a holy man. Here he meets (*Pujangganom*) the son of the king of Kediri and the brother of Princess *Kilisuci*. Subsequently, the two young men become trusted friends.

This type of filial and sexual exile within a religious and martial arts context, is a common and a recurring element in Javanese and Balinese narratives. The exile of *Arjuna* in the *Mahabharata* is a good fictional case in point, as is the near-fictional and much quoted story of the millenium Javanese king *Airlangga*. Both *Arjuna* and *Airlangga* end their exile and abstinence with a military victory over their enemy, and both do so by using supernatural powers. [6]



Figure 11. "Kelono Sewondono" - Reyog Ponorogo Festival



Figure 12. Mt Lawu - Candi Suku

In broad terms, *warok* follow the same tradition. It is said that the *warok* accumulates his power by abstaining from sexual activity with women. [7] *Gemblak* help the *warok* maintain the state of abstinence by providing companionship and a kind of woman substitute. For this reason, *gemblak* are selected for their grace, pose and beauty. While, publicly, sexual activity between *warok*

and *gemblak* is not condoned, some petting and kissing is allowed. There is usually an intense relationship between *warok* and *gemblak* and there have been many instances when different *warok* have fought one another over the possession of their favorite *gemblak*. This reputation has given *Reyog* performers and performances somewhat risqué, anarchical and rebellious connotations.

The flamboyance and expressiveness intrinsic to the *Reyog* tradition and performance stands in contrast to the reserve normally practiced by Javanese and, in a wider Indonesia context, *Reyog* tradition is considered to be crude and unsophisticated. It is certainly held to be crude compared, for example, with *kebatinan*, the mystic tradition which exhibits some similarities with *Reyog* and

which is popular with the better-educated urban middle class. Kebatinan is a sophisticated regime of Hindu and Muslim mystical traditions, which aims at emotional self-control and flattening of desire. As with the warok tradition, its purpose in the end is the acquisition of spiritual power and worldly influence.



Figure 13. Jaranan Dancer in Trance - Kediri

For all its perceived crudity, the complicated mixture of mystical traditions which underpin the Reyog performance permeate much of Javanese and Balinese culture. Elements which constitute the Reyog tradition are widespread throughout Indonesia. For example, trance possession, which often accompanies Reyog performances and which, in many ways, forms an essential part of its mystic tradition occurs throughout Southeast Asia. The same can be said of the ubiquitous *Jaranan* performances which incorporate many elements of Reyog and which are often associated with trance possession. *Jaranan* is commonly found throughout Java and its spread confirms the extent of the tradition which gives rise to it and to Reyog.

What is interesting and different about Reyog Ponorogo, with its *gemblak* tradition, is that it invokes the gender elements of the Tantric-Buddhist cosmology which supports it, elements which are often rendered invisible in other, related performances such as *Jaranan*. These pre-Islamic attributes are certainly made explicit in temples of the nearby Mount Lawu, which figures prominently in the Reyog narrative. Although not specifically mentioned

in Reyog stories, the two best known temples on Mt Lawu, Candi Ceto and Candi Sukhu are among the most sexually explicit temples in Indonesia. In somewhat different ways these gender attributes are implicit in all the ancient Javanese temples, of which Borobudur and the temples in the Prambanan Plain are undoubtedly the most outstanding examples.

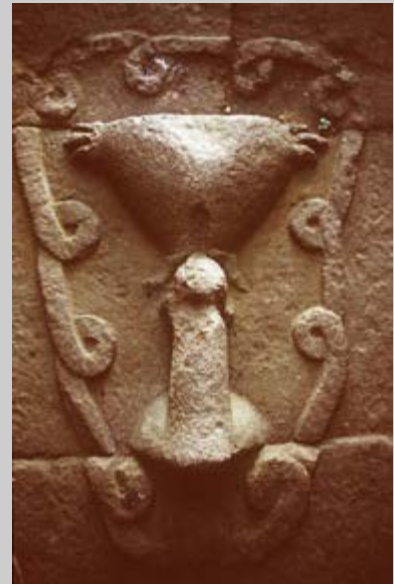


Figure 14. Candi Sukuh - Entrance

Figure 15. Candi Sukuh - Entrance Detail: Yoni - Lingga

Figure 16. Candi Sukuh - Yoni - Lingga

Candi Sukuh (Mt Lawu)



Figure 17. Candi Ceto Entrance



Figure 18. Candi Ceto - Stone Mosaics with Lingga



Figure 19. Candi Ceto - Lingga

Candi Ceto (Mt Lawu)

The Reyog performance usually involves some dancers going into a trance. The presence of the trance confirms the supernatural dimension of the performance to participants and audience alike, as it confirms the presence of spirits. Entranced dancers may behave like horses and eat grass, glass-bulbs or occasionally swallow razor blades. Some are whipped but show no pain. Onlookers may also fall under the spell of spirits and they, in turn, may cause others to do the same. The most interesting trance performances are those in which the entranced dancers seem as if they are about to run *amok*. The risks associated with such a possibility help maintain the whole performance at an intense state of tension for both the participants and audience. Gemblak perform a similar function. Pulsating rhythmically and suggestively on their hobbyhorses, they help create an atmosphere in which anything could happen. What are we to make of all this exotic activity, and can it help us understand the warok-gemblak relationship? One way of approaching this whole matter is through the concept of inclusive disjunctive synthesis introduced earlier.

Reyog performance typically presents us with a series of conjoined oppositions such as male-female, animal-human, human-demonic, high-low, sacred-profane, crude-sophisticated, country-city, life-death, order-chaos, conventions-spontaneity, illusion-reality, pain-pleasure to name just a few. Disjunctive arrangements of this type may not seem all that helpful as an explanation, in the first instance, especially as in the western rationalist tradition conflating oppositions of this kind is likely to signify nonsense as in the case of the *reductio ad absurdum* argument. This is because a disjunctive synthesis in the West normally comes to us as a simple logical proposition, located symbolically in space, on some page somewhere, seemingly outside time and directed mostly at the reader.

By contrast, in many eastern mystic traditions, a disjunctive synthesis comes to its participants as a range of actions and experiences associated with specific events such as the Reyog performance. These experiences usually arise from, and are supported by, the underlying

cosmology which, in turn, is validated by the experiences. For example, in the case of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, these experiences are likely to involve the flow and circulation of male and female energies within a particular individual. The experience itself may involve a stage in which oppositions such as male and female principles, lingga, yoni, Shiva and Shakti are conceptually thrust together until they cease to exist as separate entities but become a unity. This is a typical example of a disjunctive synthesis becoming an inclusive disjunctive synthesis.

In general terms, to unify oppositions within an experience of a disjunctive synthesis requires a two-fold process. The first requirement in this process is the inclusion of both terms, for example male and female. This is straightforward enough. A copulating metaphor, while not necessary, may be helpful here. What, however, is not as straightforward is the fact that to achieve this inclusion of opposites there is a need for the individuals in question to de-centre themselves conceptually and detach themselves from both terms. When we de-centre and detach ourselves, it is possible for us to 'suspend disbelief' and to put up with contradictions. This detachment is the second element of the inclusive disjunctive synthesis process. In the Tantric-Buddhist tradition, this type of unity through detachment can be discovered during meditation, starting at the base chakra '1' and then moving upward to chakra 2,3,4,5, etc. until a 1000 flowers bloom, in a 1000 temples. This unity and detachment is Kali territory, here Kundalini serpent plays.

If we were to simplify this description still further, then the prescription for an inclusive disjunctive synthesis would read something like this: take a set of oppositions and conflate them and keep them together until it is possible to conceive them as a unity. This may seem like an impossible task at first but it is not. There is, however, almost a trance-like quality of detachment associated with the conceptual process which attempts to unify oppositions. As a conflation of opposites, an inclusive disjunctive synthesis creates a feeling of hyper-reality, of anticipation, of *déjà-vu*, of vividness, intoxication, and otherness. It is a process which may be experienced as a feeling of displacement, disorientation, suspension of disbelief, disassociation and detachment from the ordinary sense of space and time, including one's own sense of self. We achieve unity in detachment whenever we surrender to otherness, when we as readers surrender to fiction, when an artist surrenders to the landscape, when an actor surrenders to a role, when a devotee surrenders to God and spirits, when we fall into love, when we are on cloud nine. It is not difficult to conceive that, in an appropriate cultural context, this surrender to otherness could also be associated with the notion of spirit and animal possession.

This phenomenological movement outward from our own sense of self is, in actuality, a very common occurrence. The experience of cinema offers an elegant case in point. We experience cinema as a unity when we forget the contradictions between the experience of cinema and our own reality, when we suspend disbelief, when we detach ourselves from ourselves and surrender ourselves to the action on the screen. When we do this we may become oblivious to our own sense of self as we dissolve ourselves in the action on the screen. The experience has many similarities with trance possession and magic - we seem almost possessed by the action on the screen. We tend to explain all this away with the enigmatic 'suspension of disbelief' or simply with cinema 'magic' but it could well be argued that at the level of experience, the familiar experience of cinema is as 'exotic' as anything one can find in the indigenous Oceania. [8]

Perhaps the most profound experience of the inclusive disjunctive synthesis can be found when we detach ourselves from the contradictions in our actuality and we surrender to the hallucinatory 'cinema' in our heads which we call thinking. This is another way of saying that an experience of an inclusive disjunctive synthesis, in so many ways, is a very ordinary state of existence, as ordinary as thinking itself. All that has been done in the above passages was to conceive thinking in a somewhat different way.

To reiterate and rephrase some of the things that have already been said, one could summarise this new conception of thinking as follows: when we think, we create ourselves across disjunctive terms in an act which conflates and combines the two terms of the disjunction. This synthesis of the two terms creates a 'nomadic' type of experience associated with the simultaneous inclusion of both terms of the disjunction. That is to say, 'nomadic' thinking entails a de-centring process for its participants, which is also felt as an effect, and specifically as an experience of detachment.

These detachable characteristics of thinking tend to get lost in the western ego-centred tradition. It is therefore important to remember that it is experience and time which support the phenomenon of an inclusive disjunctive synthesis. Without Kali, and time, the inclusive disjunctive synthesis means nothing (just some logical mumbo-jumbo. According to the broad thrust of Deleuze and Guattari's thesis in *A Thousand Plateaus*, this detachable and 'nomadic' conception of thinking is a more appropriate model of thinking than the prevailing western model based on signifying practices and on an Oedipal type of ego. They frequently note that this nomadic type of thinking is very much part of the broad Eastern tradition as I will indicate below.

Performances like Reyog and Jaranan aim at creating an extreme existential state in which this type of 'nomadic detachment' can be felt by the participants as an intense experience full of possibilities. In the Reyog performance, this unity in detachment is achieved, in part, by creating risk, danger and by causing actual pain (or by creating the expectation of pain) such as accompanies whipping. Whipping initiates flows of adrenaline, which counteract the effects of pain and may even lead to exhilaration. The combination of the two results in a most intense synthesis of pleasure and pain. To accept, invite and welcome a situation in which one feels pain with exhilaration is to invite one of the most extreme forms of an inclusive disjunctive synthesis, and one that is expected to have physiological and psychological consequences, many of which are quite unpredictable. The participants in such a situation could be described as being suspended in a plateau state, characterised by disassociation from pain and intoxication with a kind of pleasure. The dancers may well feel that they are possessed by spirits. Through their trance performance, they often raise issues which are pertinent to them socially, issues that negotiate the prevailing conventions, such as gender categories, and the expression of desire associated with them (even when possessed by animal spirits, or perhaps because they are possessed by animal spirits.

The person who usually presides over all this is the warok or a warok-like *gambuh* (shaman) figure. In everyone's mind it is the warok's power which makes it possible for the Reyog participants to endure pain without feeling it. There is also a general belief that warok are practitioners of black arts (although often the notion of black arts merely signifies the pre-Islamic mystic tradition). Ponorogo is considered to be one of the main black magic centers in Java. Because of their supernatural powers, warok have been courted by various political factions. In times of political and social crisis, however, such as the 1965 upheavals, warok are likely to be the first to be eliminated even though it has been reported that they are extremely difficult to kill. [9]



Figure 20. Warok - Ponorogo (Pak Kamituno Kasni)



Figure 21. Reyog Expert - Ponorogo (Pak Sarbani)

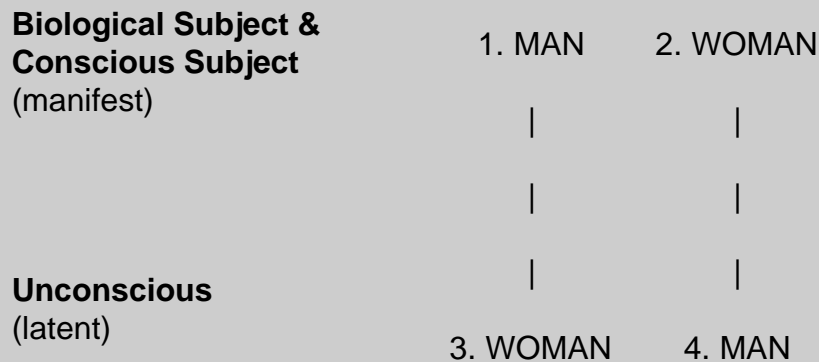
These reflections bring up more questions than certainties, especially about power and the nature of black magic. I again notice the mantra like sound of Ponorogo: pO-nO-rO-gO but at this particular moment the repeated 'O' sound reminds me only of 1998, of sirens wailing, of towns burning, of shooting, looting and rapes. I think of the mess that this country is in at the moment and wonder what its corporate 'leaders' are doing now. Will they do the honorable thing, as some did in the 1929 stock market crash and jump off window ledges? Should we not help them and their hired-gun professors to the ledge? I imagine that a warok would say something like this.

I reminded myself of my first and fleeting trip to Ponorogo when I thought that warok and gemblak were figures in history and no longer to be found in Java. I recalled my surprise when, on the second trip, I came across living individuals who identified themselves as gemblak and warok (not one or two, but an entire culture. During the interviews I held with them, I was told, time and time again, that gemblak are not transvestites and warok are not homosexuals. I listened politely but remained sceptical. The combination of old, powerful men and poor, but handsome young men and boys seemed like a questionable combination of power. They, in turn, talked to me patiently on what must have been a difficult topic. On this trip to Jogjakarta I intended to seek information from a source away from Ponorogo itself. I wanted uninvolved and uninhibited informants who would not mask their message by some kind of implicit or explicit repression. Talking to a cosmopolitan Jogjakarta buncu seems like an appropriate move.

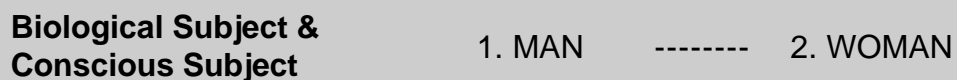


Figure 22. Reyog Administrator and his Gemblak - Ponorogo (Pak Haji Achmad Tobroni (right) and Pak Agus Supriadi)

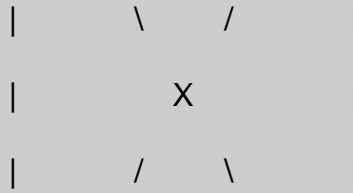
As I wait for my meeting with Karila, I rehearse in my thoughts the salient moments in the prehistory of western theorising of gender roles. It always begins and ends with the biological man and woman. It seems as if one cannot get away from it, like a curse, biology always follows you around in the West. And as I look on to the busy streets of Jogjakarta I am again confounded by the seemingly unquestioned validity of this proposition. This is in spite of the fact that biological certainties are small comfort to us humans since we primarily define ourselves not by our biology, but by our self reflection. We are above all conscious subjects, and, as such, biology can only be an element in a whole range of categories by which we think of ourselves as gendered selves. Conceptually our 'masculinity' and 'femininity' is always modified by our knowledge of the other gender category. In each man there is (a conscious and) an unconscious element of femininity and in each women there is (a conscious and) an unconscious element of masculinity. To each Shiva a Shakti, and with each Yin a Yang. We owe this insight to Sigmund Freud's friend Wilhelm Fliess who used his biological knowledge to restore this old piece of Eastern wisdom to intellectual respectability as far back as 1897. [10] When a man meets a woman there are at least four people present in his scheme of things:



In any interaction between a man and a woman there are as many as six people interacting as the following relational and 'desiring' lines indicate:



(manifest)



Unconscious
(latent)

3. WOMAN ----- 4. MAN

It is clear that in the above scheme every relationship has a homosexual dimension, albeit on an unconscious level. To that extent it makes us all implicitly bisexual, which in turn validates any and every twist and turn in the above scheme.



Figure 23. "Elle"

Binarism like this can be inspiring, for a while at least. It is almost like playing with a Meccano set. I invent an image based on this scheme. It is a close-up image of Elle facing the audience while watching himself/herself in a small Mickey Mouse mirror which s/he is holding in his/her hands. Is she looking at him or her in the mirror, or both, or is he looking at her or him, or both? Can we in the audience tell? What do we as audience see in this image with a mirror? Him or her? There is a whole cascade of disjunctions in the space between the audience and her and between her and the mirror. Mirror upon mirror.

With the structural schemes introduced here there is, however, no elegant way of depicting the relationship between warok and gemblak, as this relationship is professed to be neither homosexual, conventional, dualistic nor transvestite. To resolve this dilemma, one could question the truthfulness of the Reyog informants; perhaps they relate to one another as homosexuals and transvestites after all, in which case the scheme can be saved.

Alternatively, one could reject this structural scheme altogether and do so with a proper postmodern flourish. With writers such as Deleuze and Guattari the gender categories (like all other dichotomies) are still valid but mostly as terms of an 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis'. Dichotomies for them serve only as algebra of difference rather than a base for a value judgment. Gender categories provide a base for a multiplicity of gender positions within an inclusive disjunctive synthesis rather than as a simple distinction, symmetry and inversion of opposites, be it conscious or unconscious. The flux of difference which Deleuze and Guattari create is in many ways similar to the interplay of opposites in the Tantric/ Buddhist tradition as indicated earlier. The parallel becomes even more compelling when one takes into account that both worldviews aspire toward a condition which dissolves the ego-based subject. With Deleuze and Guattari, this surrendering of the ego renders the subject into a schizological nomad wandering across the desiring tableau of capital. In the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, the surrendering of the ego is the ultimate state of enlightenment in which a thousand lotuses bloom and a thousand bells toll. Could this be the same thousand as in *A Thousand Plateaus* I have in my carry-bag? Could it be

that with the influential postmodern writings of Deleuze and Guattari, the western philosophical tradition has made a sharp turn towards the ways of the East?

The answer I have already given myself is a considered yes.^[11] In *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Anti-Oedipus* one can discern a whole sequence of manoeuvres and conceptual shifts which bring western theorizing closer to the epistemology of the East. The significant figures in this shift are the ubiquitous Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, and especially their image-based *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*.^[12] In *Balinese Character*, Mead and Bateson present us with an interesting mixture of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition and western psychoanalysis. In it, one can find thousands of disjunctive plateaus, trance dancing and sexual practices which are as troublesome to the traditional western mind and morality as are those of Reyog Ponorogo. The influence of *Balinese Character* can be traced in the writing of Deleuze and Guattari at a number of levels. The content of *Balinese Character*, in fact, provides the title for *A Thousand Plateaus*. Furthermore it is possible to argue that, through the influence of Mead and Bateson's work, the genealogy of *A Thousand Plateaus* rests implicitly on a cosmology which is similar to that of Reyog Ponorogo. I will signpost some of the main moves in this argument, but to do this it is necessary to go back to Paris, 1968, when, publicly at least, everything theoretical came into question.

In hindsight, it could be said that the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* exemplified the excitement generated by the new post-68 political prescriptions. In the content of these two volumes, it is now the familiar 'grass-roots' notion of the 'rhizome' which stands out as a most elegant metaphor for the politics of the New Left:

Let us summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even non-sign states.^[13]

We are also told that a rhizome is made up of 'plateaus'. One description of plateaus given to us by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* runs as follows:

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word 'plateau' to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities, whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. Bateson cites Balinese culture as an example: mother-child sexual games, and even quarrels among men, undergo this bizarre intensive stabilization. 'Some sort of continuing plateau of intensity is substituted for [sexual] climax,' war, or a culmination point. It is a regrettable characteristic of the Western Mind to relate expressions and actions to exterior or transcendent ends, instead of evaluating them on a plane of consistency on the basis of their intrinsic value.^[14]

The Balinese origin of the title is confirmed by the translator in the translator's 'Foreword':

The word 'plateau' comes from an essay by Gregory Bateson on Balinese culture, in which he found a libidinal economy quite different from the West's orgasmic orientation. In Deleuze and Guattari, a plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated in a climax. The heightening of energies is sustained long enough to leave a kind of afterimage of its dynamism that can be reactivated or injected into other activities, creating a fabric of intensive states between which any number of connective routes could exist.^[15]

The Bateson quote which Deleuze and Guattari refer to in *A Thousand Plateaus* comes from *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*.^[16] In this book, Gregory Bateson, in turn, refers to his and Mead's

work on Balinese Character. Here he argues at some length that the Balinese are trained from infancy to seek 'plateaus' of moderation in their interpersonal interactions, rather than cumulation and climax. The description of this infant training is curious and worth quoting. Like the warok/gemblak tradition in Ponorogo, the type of 'training' he and Mead describe in *Balinese Character* has no equivalent in the West. At the centre of Mead and Bateson's description is the pulsating, copulating and terrifying Kali, re-constituted by them within a simple psychoanalytical framework:

Typically, the mother will start a small flirtation with the child, pulling its penis or otherwise stimulating it to interpersonal activity. This will excite the child, and for a few moments cumulative interaction will occur. Then just as the child, approaching some small climax, flings its arms around the mother's neck, her attention wanders.

At this point the child will typically start an alternative cumulative interaction, building up towards a temper tantrum. The mother will either play a spectator's role enjoying the child's tantrum, or, if the child actually attacks her, will brush off his attack with no show of anger on her part. These sequences can be seen either as an expression of the mother's distaste for this type of personal involvement or as a context in which the child acquires a deep distrust of such involvement. The perhaps basically human tendency towards cumulative personal interaction is thus muted.^[17]

It is possible that some sort of continuing plateau of intensity is substituted for climax as the child becomes more fully adjusted to Balinese life. This cannot at present be clearly documented for sexual relations, but there are indications that a plateau type of sequences is characteristic for trance and for quarrels.^[18]

The accuracy and significance of the above description may well be a source of controversy today. At one level, one could interpret the interaction between the Balinese mother and her child in the above quote as saying nothing more profound than: as they grow up all Balinese children are weaned from their mothers. Not unreasonably, Bateson comes away from this early mother-child interaction with plateaus of moderation, which includes the moderation of the libidinal economy. However, what is different about this particular moderation is that it is constructed by the conflation of extreme opposites. That is to say, Bateson comes away from the mother-child interaction with an inclusive disjunctive synthesis of intense pleasure and displeasure along with a sense of detachment associated with a conflation of opposites.

The validity of this description can be questioned. What need not be questioned, however, is the fact that Mead and Bateson's description of early mother-child interaction conveniently reproduces the key characteristics of the Tantric-Buddhist cosmology which is found throughout Bali. For example, a plateau type relationship is found in the Rangda-Barong performance. It is in fact very similar to the plateau type of relationship between Singa Barong and King Kelono Sewondono in Reyog. And as in Java, one also finds in Bali examples of extreme detachment such as manifested in spirit possession and trance dancing. Hence, as long as the mother-child description in *Balinese Character* ends up, as it does, with an inclusive disjunctive synthesis of detachment and moderation, the local cosmology may well do the rest and provide various validating practices.

One should not, however, be too dismissive of their explanation. The fact that Mead and Bateson connect Tantric cosmology with the psychoanalysis of Freud may not be such an inappropriate move, since at a deeper level there may well be links between the cosmology of the Kundalini serpent and the epistemology of id, even if in this particular example it may be difficult to see the force of this connection. One can imagine that Mead and Bateson would support the existence of such a connection with direct observation. In the quote below, they describe a trance dance in which dancers attack Rangda the Witch with their krisses, only to fall under her spell, and as a consequence, turn the krisses upon themselves. This is the most dramatic moment of the

Rangda-Barong trance dance and the moment which gives rise to the extreme conflation of pleasure/adrenaline and pain. Here Mead and Bateson find Kali again:

The writhing behavior of men indicates a close relation between this trance behavior and sexual climax. We have noted that the tendency of children to look for climax of affection and anger is frustrated and probably in some sense repressed. It is probable, therefore, that this conventionalized trance behavior is a return to patterns of behaviour which have been extinguished or inhibited.[19]

Is a consequence of this life long training in moderation and detachment, the Balinese character is summarized in the following way:

It is a character curiously cut off from inter-personal relationships, existing in a state of dreamy-relaxed disassociation, with occasional intervals of non-personal concentration - in trance, in gambling, and in the practice of the arts.[20]

We learn from *Balinese Character* that, compared to the subdued nature of everyday personal interaction, there is nothing subdued about some of the trance performances. Like the trance dances in Java, the Balinese trance dances are also characterized by risk and danger. But even these intense performances are not to be equated with cumulation or climax. For example, the men are saved from harming themselves by the power of the friendly Barong, and the drama continues in this plateau fashion until the end, when the forces of Barong subdue the forces of Rangda, the Witch. Furthermore, no matter how intense the struggle between Rangda, the Witch, and the friendly Barong, at the end of the day both will coexist, even if in somewhat modified form.

Although there is no climax here, there is always a possibility of an explosive action. Consequently, the performance carries with it some risk, and this risk is particularly high during the transition from trance state to normality:

Either just before or during this stage, the men are disarmed by other club members who watch to see that they shall not hurt themselves: and when disarmed, they are carried off either limp or rigid into the temple to be brought back to normality.[21]

It is evident from the trance dances depicted in *Balinese Character* and in the film I made in Java that there is indeed a feeling of risk and tension associated with the actions of trance dance participants, although such action rarely results in major injury to participants or audience. It may be worth bearing in mind that Deleuze and Guattari attribute the same kind of risk factor to the actions of the postmodern 'nomad' which they describe in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. [22]

The next intellectual contribution that Bateson makes on this topic and a contribution which will have a significant influence on Deleuze and Guattari is the transposing of his Balinese experiences to a western setting. We can see this most clearly in his 'double-bind' theory of schizophrenia, which he helped develop subsequently to his stay in Bali. Perhaps one should not be surprised to find that in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Bateson begins to describe the effects of the double-bind by first giving an Oriental example, and in this example the ghost of the Balinese mother also re-emerges:

In the Eastern religion, Zen Buddhism, the goal is to achieve enlightenment. The Zen master attempts to bring about enlightenment in his pupil in various ways. One of the things he does is to hold a stick over the pupil's

head and say fiercely, 'If you say this stick is real, I will strike you with it. If you say this stick is not real, I will strike you with it. If you don't say anything, I will strike you with it.' We feel that the schizophrenic finds himself continually in the same situation as the pupil, but he achieves something like disorientation rather than enlightenment. The Zen pupil might reach up and take the stick away from the master - who might accept this response, but the schizophrenic has no such choice since with him there is no not caring about the relationship and his mother's aims and awareness are not like the master's.

We hypothesise that there will be a breakdown in any individual's ability to discriminate between Logical Types whenever a double bind situation occurs.[\[23\]](#)

In summary form, one could say that the 'double bind' consists of a choice of action in which each option is attached to a negative injunction, which makes the choice untenable and punitive. In formal terms, the double bind consists of a logical paradox attached to a double negative injunction and an additional bind which keeps the participant locked and captured by the double bind. According to Bateson, a chronic double bind condition may well lead to schizophrenia.

The mother in the double bind theory is given a very similar function to the mother in *Balinese Character* who teases her son and causes his tantrums. Like the Balinese counterpart, the schizogenic mother imposes a double bind situation upon her son, in which she acts like the intolerant Zen master in the above quote. The mother in a double bind situation will insist that her son continue playing the impossible game of her making, a game in which her love creates and maintains the bind. The consequences of these early childhood traumas are subsequently manifested in *Balinese Character* as strange psychic states associated with spirit possession and trance. In the West, a child raised in the chronic situation of a 'double-bind', may succumb to schizophrenia. That is to say, with his double bind theory Bateson reconstitutes a version of Kali/Rangda within the western framework.[\[24\]](#)

Double bind theory had a major influence on the development of the anti-psychiatry movement in the West, a movement in which Felix Guattari was an active participant. All contemporary western references to the history of schizophrenia are likely to reference Bateson's work on the double bind theory and, through it, his and Mead's work on *Balinese Character*. This is certainly the case with the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, as the title of *A Thousand Plateaus* given to the second volume unquestionably confirms.

It should also be noted that the plateaus and the 'middle' that Bateson and Mead found in *Balinese Character* were not quite the type one finds in the inclusive disjunctive synthesis introduced by Deleuze and Guattari or that one finds in the Tantric Buddhist tradition. Gregory Bateson, in particular, was mostly interested in the logical Meccano sets which were popular in the West at that time. What Bateson had in mind in the double-bind theory was not an inclusive conflation of opposites, in the first instance, but a paradoxical oscillation between the two terms of the disjunction. This was a natural extension of his interest in Russell's theory of types and his own explorations of progressive symmetrical differentiation within social interactions (or schizogenesis), which he developed in New Guinea, just prior to his work in Bali.

In theorising the relationship between capital and schizophrenia Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* liberate schizophrenia from its double negative injunction which Bateson attached to it in his original formulation and which kept the double-bind paradox oscillating between the two untenable choices:

Double bind is the term used by Gregory Bateson to describe the simultaneous transmission of two kinds of messages, one of which contradicts the other, as for example the father who says to his son: go ahead, criticize me, but strongly hints that all effective criticism (at least a certain type of criticism) will be very

unwelcome. Bateson sees in this phenomenon a particularly schizophrenizing situation, which he interprets as a 'contrary' from the viewpoint of Russell's theory of types. It seems to us that the double bind, double impasse, is instead a common situation, oedipalizing par excellence.

In short, the 'double bind' is none other than the whole of Oedipus. It is in this sense that Oedipus should be presented as a series or an oscillation between two poles: the neurotic identification, and the internalization that is said to be normative. On either side is Oedipus, the double impasse. And if a schizo is produced here as an entity, this occurs for the simple reason that there is no other means of escaping this double path, where normality is no less blocked than neurosis, and where the solution offers no more of a way out than does the problem.[\[25\]](#)

Hence, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the schizophrenic withdraws to the 'body without organs' which for the moment we can translate as the logical space between the two terms of the impasse. This is the space of the 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis', in which both terms of a disjunction are possible without negating one another. Here Either-Or transmutes into an inclusive series: Either ... or ... or ... or ... etc. With the inclusive disjunctive synthesis, one is no longer condemned to the punishing effect of one double bind or another; rather, one discovers the creative effect of semiotic inversions and transgressions (semiotics of difference) without the judgment of God. Deleuze and Guattari indicate what such a series may be like by quoting Nijinski:

I am God I was not God I am a clown of God; I am Apis. I am an Egyptian. I am a Red Indian. I am a Negro. I am a Chinaman. I am a Japanese. I am a foreigner, a stranger. I am a sea bird. I am the tree of Tolstoy. I am the root of Tolstoy.... I am husband and wife in one. I love my wife. I love my husband.[\[26\]](#)

The inclusive disjunctive synthesis is a major part of the logic which dominates the vision of idealised capital in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Hence, it must also be the major element of the logic which Deleuze and Guattari attribute to Bateson's 'plateaus'. It is very much the logic which is implicated in Reyog performances as indicated earlier and as others have also noted in the past. In her article on Reyog, Margaret Kartomi quotes an insightful passage from Benedict Anderson, in which he describes the conflation of maleness and femaleness in Javanese performances such as Reyog Ponorogo:

Benedict Anderson argues that an important sign of political power is '[...] the ability to concentrate opposites. The classical iconographic symbol of this is the combination of male and female. In ancient Javanese representation this combination does not take the form of an ambiguous transition between the sexes (such as the Hermaphrodite of the Hellenistic world) but rather the form of being in whom masculine and feminine characteristics are sharply juxtaposed.

The essential combination of this combination of opposites is not their merging but their dynamic simultaneous incorporation within a single entity.'[\[27\]](#)

And Margaret Kartomi further comments:

Javanese visual and performing arts have been suffused with eroticism of various types and associated with rites of fertility. Not only are the many forms of sexuality regarded as forming a unity, but every person is in fact bisexual to a degree, combining both feminine and masculine characteristics. Given the connection between bisexuality, sexual power and fertility in the Indonesian tradition, the performance of transvestite art forms such as Reyog as fertility symbols at weddings is not as anomalous as it may at first seem.[\[28\]](#)

One could augment the above quotes from Kartomi and Anderson with a similar one from Deleuze and Guattari:

Schizophrenic is not man and woman. He is man or woman, but he belongs precisely to both sides, man on the side of men, woman on the side of women.

Schizophrenic is dead or alive not both at once, but each of the two as the terminal point of a distance over which he glides. He is child or parent, not both, but the one at the end of the other, like the two ends of a stick in a nondecomposable space, This is the meaning of the disjunctions where Beckett records his characters and the events that befall them: everything divides but unto itself. Even the distances are positive, at the same time as the included disjunctions.

It would be a total misunderstanding of this order of thought if we concluded that the schizophrenic substituted vague syntheses of identification of contradictory elements for disjunctions, like the last of the Hegelian philosophers. He does not substitute syntheses of contradictory elements for disjunctive syntheses; rather, for the exclusive and restrictive use of the disjunctive synthesis, he substitutes an affirmative use. He is and remains in disjunction: he does not abolish disjunction by identifying the contradictory elements by means of elaboration; instead, he affirms it through a continuous overflight spanning an indivisible distance. He is not simply bisexual, or between the two, or intersexual. He is transsexual. He is trans-alive, trans-parentchild.[\[29\]](#)

Deleuze and Guattari often resort to other eastern paradigms to indicate the thrust of their argument. For example, one can discern the logic of the inclusive disjunctive synthesis in the 'logic' which underpins the plateaus of Yin/Yang, male/ female, innate/transmitted energy in the following quote:

A great Japanese compilation of Chinese Taoist treatises was made in A.D. 982-984. We see in it the formation of a circuit of intensities between female and male energy, with the woman playing the role of the innate or instinctive force (Yin) stolen by or transmitted to the man in such a way that the transmitted force of the man (Yang) in turn becomes innate, all the more innate: an augmentation of power.[\[30\]](#)

with the mother/child, Randga/ Barong interaction in Balinese Character, this dynamic can be maintained and amplified only by avoiding culmination and climax. Specifically in male-female union, 'The condition for this circulation and multiplication is that the man not ejaculate.'[\[31\]](#)

The same type of dynamic can also be discerned in the professed lifestyle of the warok, the leaders of the Reyog dance troupe, and especially in the manner in which the warok relate to the gemblak, their dancing companions. From the interviews which our film crew carried out in Ponorogo and from previous writings on the subject, it is clear that abstaining from sexual intercourse and masculine prowess go together and involve a similar type of plateau intensification to that described in the Taoist quote above.[\[32\]](#) The warok's relationship with their gemblak companions is amplified by their 'sexual games' on the one hand, and moderated, in the end, by professed abstinence. In this relationship, gemblak take on an ambiguous gender role which conflates masculine and feminine characteristics, and this conflation is such that the role of gemblak cannot be equated either with Western homosexuals/bisexuals or with banci transvestites which have their own specific social status in Indonesia.

It is thus along this circular route, Mead & Bateson - Bali-Hindu-Buddhism- trance - double-bind - schizophrenia - anti-psychiatry - *Anti-Oedipus* - *A Thousand Plateaus* - Mead and Bateson - Hindu Buddhism, that we end up with a philosophical discourse which conflates many old fashioned East and West philosophical traditions, in a way that includes both and potentially serves as a bridge between the two. The one additional move that Deleuze and Guattari subsequently make with this conflation of East and West epistemology is to draw away from the notion of schizophrenia. This is more less what they do in the transformation from *Anti-Oedipus* to *A Thousand Plateaus*. In *A Thousand Plateaus* the notion of plateaus replaces the concept of

inclusive disjunctive synthesis and schizophrenia is replaced by the notion of nomadic thought.

The main thrust of this new discourse, which bends time, theory, gender and almost everything else, is its resistance to the powerful (anti-Oedipal) and its embrace of all things different (rhizome). How useful such a discourse is in the world of all-powerful global capital is something that yet remains to be evaluated. Perhaps the overriding use of postmodern theories in general has been to create a milieu of moderation and tolerance - a characteristic that would be much appreciated by all local and global tyrants and oppressors. However, as the authors of *Balinese Character* and of *A Thousand Plateaus* recognise, there are risks in this moderation, perhaps even extreme risks.

Postscript: Meeting with Karila went smoothly. We arranged to film an interview with her. That was many years ago. [\[33\]](#)

Endnotes

[1] See, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Vol.I, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, London: The Athlone Press, 1984, p. 75 ff.

[2] Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, Paris: XX, 1977, pp. 66-9.

[3] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Vol.II, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

[4] The use of the term 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis' in this paper is somewhat more fluid than in *Anti-Oedipus*. My use of the term is usually intended to be consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's use of it. However, Deleuze and Guattari use three types of synthesis in *Anti-Oedipus*, of which the inclusive disjunctive synthesis is the second one. The other two are 'connective synthesis' (of production) and 'conjunctive synthesis' (of consumption-consummation). For a good summary of the three syntheses see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 17-18, or Charles J. Stivale, 'Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: Schizoanalysis and Literary Discourse', in *Sub-Stance*, vol. 29, (1981):57.

My use of 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis' tends to encompass all three syntheses in question. I do this, in part, because Deleuze and Guattari themselves abandon the reference to the three types of synthesis in the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In *A Thousand Plateaus* the term 'nomadism' appears to replace the functions performed by the various syntheses associated with desiring machines in *Anti-Oedipus*. The same can be said for my use of the term 'inclusive disjunctive synthesis'. Eastern references also come with this transformation.

Also, my use of the term is intended, above all, to invoke a simple image of conflated oppositions which give rise to an unpredictable synthesis. This, in turn, reflects the specific genealogy of my version of the inclusive disjunctive synthesis which, one should mention in passing, arose from Rene Thom's writing on catastrophe theory, on the one hand, and from my attempts to come to terms with the dynamics of Yin-Yang and Tantra, as well as Lacan's Imaginary, on the other.

[5] For a good description of Reyog see Margaret J. Kartomi, 'Performance, Music and Meaning of Reyog Ponorogo,' in *Indonesia*, no. 22, October (1976):85-130). Also see Ian Wilson, unpublished Honours Dissertation, *The Politics of Possession: Community Arts in New order Java*, Western Australia: Murdoch University, 1997.

[6] 'The Wedding of Arjuna' [*Arjuna Wiwaha*] is one of the most popular stories from The Mahabharata cycle. Arjuna is tempted by seven divine nymphs during his ascetic devotionals on Mount Indrakila as he seeks guidance for the forthcoming battle against his enemies. Arjuna resists and in time defeats his enemies. *Panji* cycle has many similarities with *Arjuna Wiwaha* and both are often seen in mask plays [*wayang topeng*]. For Airlangga's story see D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, London: Macmillan, 1968, pp. 59-71.

[7] Josko Petkovic, East Java Reyog project (archive), video, Perth: Murdoch University, 1991, Tape no 5, 24, 25, #18B-20B. Also see [Ian Wilson's article in this issue of Intersections](#).

[8] The objectifying and trance like characteristic of ocular experience may be lost on us today, given the ubiquitous presence of images in our society, but it was not lost on the early image-makers. So many of the early photographs and films depict individuals in a trance-related state: hysterics, sleep walkers, hypnotists and hypnotized. So much so, that discourses of trance and image making often intermingled as if they were the same discourses. These intersecting and overlapping discourses can be considered as a causal chain, linking the pre-photography activities of Mesmer with the image related activities of Diamond, Charcot, Freud, Dali, Bunuel and Lacan, just to mention a few. Also see Petkovic, 'Letter to Eros: Background Notes and Throwaway Theories', *In the Picture*, Western Australia: Film and Television Institute, 1994, pp. 15-17.

[9] Petkovic, East Java Reyog project (archive), video, Murdoch University, 1991, Tape no. Beta #2.

[10] For a good account of Fliess's notion of human bisexuality see Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind*, UK: Burnett Books Ltd., 1979, pp. 158-83.

[11] In my Ph.D. thesis I have argued this point in a somewhat more sustained way. See Petkovic, 'Rhizome and the Image: The Genealogy of the Film "Letter to Eros"', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Western Australia: Murdoch University, 1997, ch. 3-6. The argument which follows is made up of extracts from my thesis.

[12] Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*, Special Publication of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 2, New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1942.

[13] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 21.

[14] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 21-2. A similar point is reiterated on page 158. Also, see note 20, p. 520. This note refers to Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1972. In this note, Deleuze and Guattari also point out that the word 'plateau' is used in classical studies of bulbs, tubers, and rhizomes. See entry for 'Bulb' in M. H. Baillon, *Dictionnaire de Botanique*, Paris, Hachette, 1876-1892. We should also keep in mind that 'plateau phase' is a standard term in sexological accounts of erotic arousal.

It should be noted that the conception of 'plateaus' in the above quotes has much in common with the conception of the inclusive disjunctive synthesis outlined earlier, and for all practical purposes they can be held as equivalent.

[15] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. xiv.

[16] Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp. 112-13.

[17] In Bateson's text this note refers to *Balinese Character*, plate 47, and pp. 32-6.

[18] Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp. 112-13.

[19] Mead and Bateson, *Balinese Character*, p.47. For 'unresponsiveness' also see Plate 7, 27(5), 39, 50 and 75.

[20] Mead and Bateson, *Balinese Character*, Plate 57, 'Trance: Attack on the Self', p. 168.

[21] Mead and Bateson, *Balinese Character*, Plate 58, 'Trance: Ecstasy and Recovery', p. 171.

[22] See the reference to 'black holes' in Deleuze and Guattari, '1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity', in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 227-31.

[23] Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp. 159-338 and p. 208.

[24] It should be noted however, that this parallelism between trance phenomena and schizophrenia was not something that arose from Mead and Bateson's work in Bali. Rather it was the very motive for going to Bali in the first instance. The U.S. based, Committee for the Study of Dementia Praecox (schizophrenia as it is sometimes called) was one of the initial patrons for Mead and Bateson's Bali project. See Ira Jacknis, 'Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: Their Use of Photography and Film', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 3, no. 2, (1988):160-1.

[25] Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 79-80.

[26] Vaslav Nijinsky, *Diary*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936, pp. 20, 156, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-*

Oedipus, p. 77.

[27] Benedict Anderson, 'The Idea of Power In Javanese Culture', in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Cornell, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972, p.14, quoted in Margaret J. Kartomi 'Performance, Music and Meaning of Reyog Ponorogo', p. 108.

[28] Kartomi 'Performance, Music and Meaning of Reyog Ponorogo', p.108.

[29] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 76-7.

[30] Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 157.

[31] Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 157.

[32] Petkovic, East Java Reyog project (archive), video, Murdoch University, 1991, Tape no. 5, 24, 25, #18B-20B

[33] All photographs in this article are from the East Java Reyog project and *Letter to Eros* (Western Australia, Video Education Australasia, 16mm, 56 min, 1995) film project, which were produced and directed by Josko Petkovic. The actual photographers on these two related projects were Lezly Herbert (photo 2, 13); Tereza Rizzo (photo 3-11, 19-22); and Josko Petkovic (photo title, 12, 14-18, 23).

MAIN

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