People of mixed blood: ethnicity, personhood and sociality in East Java, Indonesia

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is the product of my own work.

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Abstract

The thesis is about the study of ethnicity as a classificatory system and a form of personhood and is based on fieldwork carried out in East Java, Indonesia, between October 1998 and March 2000. Its central concern is the understanding of the symbolism of mixed personhood and the elucidation of the cultural principles underlying the creation of a new ethnic category, that of *orang pedalungan*, in East Java.

Theoretically, it takes issue with both essentialist and constructivist understandings of ethnicity as well as with recent calls for the abolition of the concept from the analytical vocabulary of the social sciences. In particular, it defines ethnicity as the activity of classifying human beings with respect to a culturally determined discourse on origins and growth and argues for an approach that seeks to unravel the meanings of the ethnic classification system from the native's point of view. It proceeds to do so by investigating the interrelationships pertaining amongst the classificatory systems of ethnicity, kinship and potency (in its dual capacity for harming and healing), challenging the tendency in anthropology to treat them as separate, mutually exclusive domains. The links between these three systems are explored through a consideration of three substances, namely, blood, potency and food, and of the place and relevance these substances have in the indigenous system of conceiving and locating difference.

It is argued that although difference is emically conceived as located within the body-person and that each classificatory system is characterised by a pervasive essentialism, neither difference is construed as immutable nor identities as given or 'natural'. Both the historical production of new localities, the creation of new kinds of bodies-persons through marriage and the ritual flow of substances within such places and across distinct categories of bodies-persons are held as imbued with a specific transformative efficacy. Seen from an Eastern Javanese point of view, marital and other spatially based exchanges bring about profound alternations in the ontological make-up of personhood. Such alternations make the displacement of difference, implied by the concept of 'mixed personhood', a real cultural possibility.

On another plane, the thesis suggests that indigenous discourses focusing on blood should be explored in all their metaphorical and metonymical breath and not simply construed as elaborations on bio-genetic material, directly comparable to Western notions of limited genealogy. It is argued that far from being seen as outside the domain of sociality, blood and its transmutations, namely potency and food, register social relations in the body-person while ideas of genealogy form the focus of indigenous understandings of sociality as generalised siblingship.

To Hanafi, Atho, Rushdi, and Muklis,
all 'friends of the heart'

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Glossary

The following glossary gives all the main terms that appear in the text. The language of origin of the terms is indicated both in the glossary and in the main text through the following abbreviations:

Ind. for Indonesian
Mad. for Madurese *ta' abasah*

Jav. for Javanese *ngoko*
Arab. for Arabic

adat (Ind.)	custom, tradition
akad nikah (Ind.)	the ceremony that validates a marriage according to Islamic law
alos (Mad.)	refined, smooth, elegant
anak (Ind., Mad.)	child
asli (Ind.), *asle* (Mad.)	authentic, original, real, pure
babad (Ind., Jav.), *bhabhad* (Mad.)	chronicles/clearing the forest
bala (Mad.)	kindred
batin (Ind.), *bhaten* (Mad.)	the indiosyncratic inner kernel, enabling one to be in contact with the incorporeal aspect of the world.
bhesan (Mad.)	relationship of the parents whose children are married to each other
campur (Ind.), *campor* (Mad.)	to mix, to blend
carok (Mad.)	duel
cocok (Ind.)	fiting, apt, compatible
darah (Ind.), *dereh* (Mad.)	blood
dikir (Ind.), *dhikr* (Arab.)	chanting repeatedly the confession of faith
doa (Ind.), *due* (Mad.)	prayer
doa restu (Ind.), *due resto* (Mad.)	blessing bestowed by human beings
dukun (Ind.), *dhukon* (Mad.)	magic specialist, healer
duwene (Mad.)	spell
elmo (Mad.), *i'lm* (Arab.)	potency/power/knowledge, mystical
gamelan (Ind.)	percussion orchestra
guru (Ind.), *ghuru* (Mad.)	teacher, often referring to a teacher of *elmo*
haji (Ind.), *hajji* (Mad.)	title of person who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca
hati (Ind.), *hate* (Mad.)	heart/liver, the seat of *roh* and centre of of being
Idul Fitri (Ind.)	feast celebrating the end of the fasting
jamu (Ind.), *jamo* (Mad.)	herbal-based remedy
jasmani (Ind.)	the material aspect of the body/person
jenang (Jav.)	porridge, any food which is thick
kamasokan (Mad.)	entry, penetration
kampung (Ind.), *kampong* (Mad.)	neighbourhood
kejawen (Jav.)	body of knowledge associated with Java's pre-Islamic past, Javanism
kemudhung (Mad.)	sorcery
kasar (Ind., Mad.)	crude, coarse, hard
konjengen (Mad.)	ritual rice meal
krama (Jav.)	general term applied to all forms of high Javanese speech levels
kraton (Ind., Jav.)	the palace, the court
kyai (Ind.), *kiae* (Mad.)	Islamic scholar/teacher, usually heading a *pesantren*
lahir (Ind.), *laher* (Mad.)	outward, external, extrinsic

langgar (Ind.)	small prayer-house
nafsu (Ind.), *nafs* (Arab.)	drive, desire
ngoko (Jav.)	the low speech level of Javanese language
orang (Ind.), *oreng* (Mad.)	person, people
oreng laen (Mad.)	non-kin, stranger
pedalungan (Ind., Jav.)	'mixed person'
penyaket (Mad.)	illness/disease
pesantren (Ind., Mad.)	Islamic boarding school
priyayi (Ind., Jav.)	momber of nobility and of high bureacracy
pusaka (Ind.)	heirloom, often believed to possess potency
roh (Ind., Mad.), *ruh* (Arab.)	spirit, soul
rohani (Ind.)	the incorporeal aspect of the body/person
rukun (Ind.), *rokon* (Mad.)	harmonious, in a state of social harmony
salawat (Ind.)	short prayer consisting of verses from the Quran
salawatan (Ind., Mad.)	neighbourhood associations practising *salawat*
santet (Ind., Mad.)	sorcery
santri (Ind., Mad.)	students of Islamic boarding schools, a devout Muslim
satretan (Mad.)	full siblings
semangat (Ind., Mad.)	zest denoting well-being and strength
sesepo (Mad.)	ancestor
sholat (Ind.)	prescribed Islamic prayer
sifat (Ind.), *sepat* (Mad.)	character, nature, temperament
siraman (Jav.)	ritual bath before marriage takes place
slametan (Ind., Jav.)	ritual feast
ta'abasah (Mad.)	the low speech level of Madurese language
tajin (Mad.)	porridge or any food which is thick
tanean (Mad.)	a compound consisting of several houses occupied by relatives, lit. the yard
tetangga (Ind.), *tetenggha* (Mad.)	neighbours
tretan (Mad.)	siblings, generic for consanguines
watak (Jav.)	character, nature, temperament
wong (Jav.)	person, people
yasin (Arab.)	the 37th chapter of the Quran
yasinan (Ind., Mad.)	ritual of remembrance of the dead
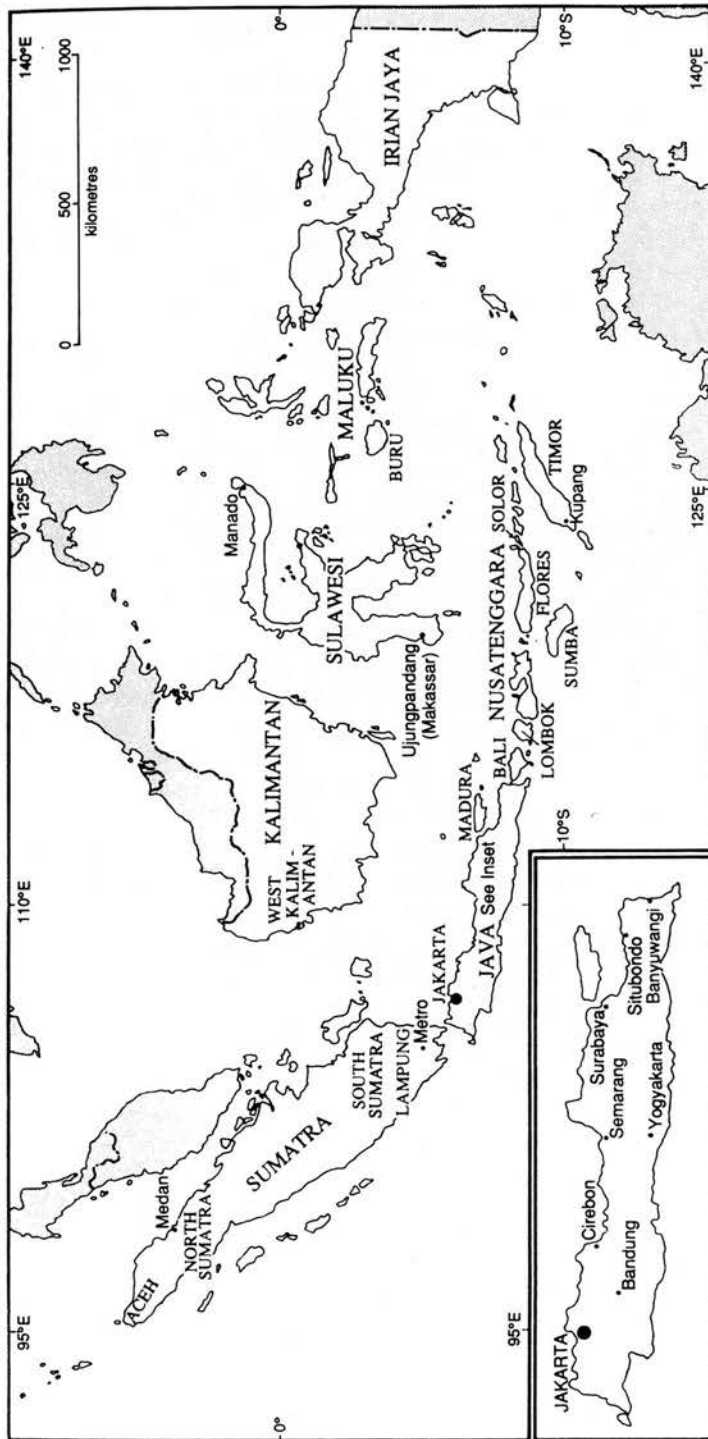
1. Map of Indonesia. Taken from R. Cribb 1990: xix.
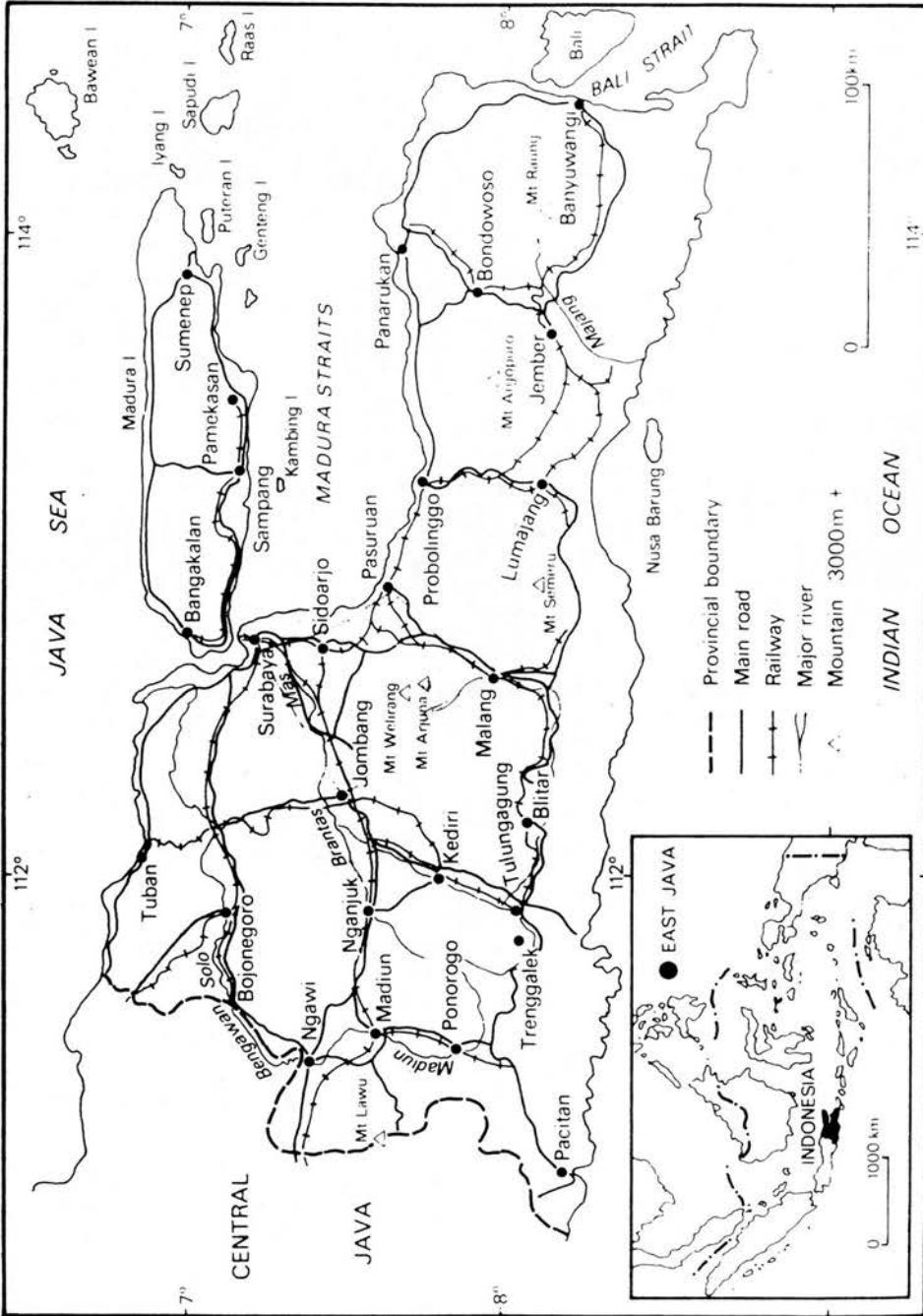
2. Map of East Java. Taken from H. Hall 1991:306.

Prolegomenon: by way of introduction

Intentions

This thesis is an ethnography of the people of Alas Niser, a cluster of three villages located at the periphery of the East Javanese city of Probolinggo in Indonesia. The people of this area frequently assert that they and, more generally, the people who live in a region covering most of the east coast of Java, facing the arid south of the island of Madura, are *orang pedalungan* (Ind.), 'mixed persons' (also *oreng camporan*, Mad). In so doing, they place themselves in-between the two major categories of kinds of people that demographically dominate the area outside the *pedalungan* region, namely the 'Javanese' and the 'Madurese'. Alas Niser locals' self-identification as 'mixed people' indicates a sense of identity founded both on a taxonomic intimacy with their significant Others and a substantial degree of separation. In other words, they identify themselves as neither 'Javanese' nor 'Madurese' but rather as a kind of people produced by the very conjunction and the blending of 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' kindedness.

The idiom of mixed personhood is the central focus of this thesis. As such, the thesis is intended not only as an ethnography about a 'different way of life', but primarily as an exploration of cultural perceptions of difference and indigenous systems of classification of humans into different kinds. Thus, the thesis aims at describing the historical emergence and cultural making of mixed personhood 'from the native's point of view' and in relation to a series of cultural practices and discourses. The questions that have guided my exploration of these themes were basically formulated during my fieldwork in Alas Niser that took place between October 1998 and March 2000. In Java, as much as in this text, I was particularly pre-occupied with the following: Why do locals define themselves (and their Others) in this and not in any other way? What are the historical conditions and cultural principles that make such a definition the predominant one? What does such a definition say about identity, personhood, the body, agency and sociality? These were the questions that guided my fieldwork and these are the questions this thesis tries to answer.

The category of mixed personhood and the local people's assertion of being mixed persons rests on the evocation of blood and land, genealogy and locality, in a complementary and integrative fashion that transcends contextual discontinuities and discrepancies of a more personal, indeed individual, level of identification. Blood and land, the indigenously identified sources of origin and growth, are held to shape or 'kind' (see Astuti 1995) living persons in fundamentally essential and corporeal ways. Kindedness and, thus difference, is construed as bounded by the body and its enactive constitution from the

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moment of conception until the time of death, through a myriad of ways that in the course of this thesis, will be outlined, reflected upon and analysed.

The thesis aims to shed some light on the irreducible, empirical and universal reality of human corporeality as it is emically conceived. As such, it might be said to bear unwelcome resemblances with the primordialist model of ethnicity as far as it centres on blood (and its transmutations), the substance of life. Yet again, it can equally be seen as taking a social constructionist standpoint, derived partly from the Barthian tradition and partly from ethnohistory in so far as it starts from the premise that ethnic categories are defined as such only in relational terms and that such definitions have a profound historicity that informs and delimits them. In general, the approach adopted in this ethnography stems largely from a synthesis of the abovementioned theories and focuses on ethnicity both as lived experience and as the product of specific historical conditions and discourses.

The discussion that follows places personhood and embodiment at the heart of analysis and seeks to unravel the cultural embeddedness of ethnicity in East Java. The constant evocation of blood and place as the basic supports of ethnic classification in Alas Niser necessitates an analysis that traces their appearance in one form or another in divergent domains of the local social life. The thesis proceeds to look into local conceptions of difference and personhood by investigating the interrelationships pertaining amongst the classificatory systems of ethnicity, kinship and power (in its dual capacity for harming and healing). Thus, it challenges the tendency in anthropology to treat these systems as separate and mutually exclusive domains. The links between these three systems are explored through a consideration of three substances, namely, blood, potency (elmo, Mad.) and food, and of the practices that accompany their movement between people. Substances, their circulation and their bodily incorporation, have profound effects on the indigenous system of conceiving and locating difference, be that within the realms of ethnicity, kinship or power. In this respect, ethnic difference is thought of as a phenomenon of the same order as the difference that demarcates empowered from disempowered persons, as well as the kind of difference elaborated in the distinctions that organise local kinship categories. The argument put forward is not intended as a functionalist one though. It seeks to demonstrate that, as well as actually having a history, ethnicity has also a culture in which it is inescapably enmeshed and of which it is a direct product.

Local commentary on human diversity focuses on the body, and as such, it can be said to be characterised by a ubiquitous essentialism. Yet again, corporeally registered kindedness is locally conceived and experienced as fluid and, indeed, transformable. The displacement of difference that the concept of 'mixed personhood' so acutely conveys means that the difference between 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' kinds of bodies is not thought of as absolute and immutable. Rather, their difference is construed as being subjected to both mediation and negation. In this respect, the emergence of the category of 'mixed personhood' will be explained with reference to an array of kinship and potency related

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processes. Such processes are locally construed as instrumental in effecting metamorphoses of this or that category of persons into another.

The thesis will consider the possibility of thinking of an essence of the body in fluid and processual terms, and of social life as a continuing process of ontological transformation effected through the performance of appropriate rituals and the generation, distribution and incorporation of relevant substances. To a large extent, local ideas of transformative personhood depend on the efficacy with which blood and its transubstantiations, namely potency and food, are emically perceived and endowed with specific characteristics. Blood's potential for transforming persons is traced to its ability to create social relationships and to convert everybody who partakes in its sharing into a sibling. The thesis suggests, then, that indigenous discourses focusing on blood should be explored in all their metaphorical and metonymical breadth and not simply construed as elaborations on bio-genetic material, directly translatable or comparable to Western notions of 'limited' co-substantiality as the result of direct genealogical links.

Transformative personhood, the efficacy of the flow of substances and of ritual practices as well as the historical production of new localities as spatial conjunctures, lie at the heart of this 'culturalist' account of the makings of 'mixed personhood' in East Java. Without desiring to reveal much of the plot of the story at such an early stage, I will only hint at its solution. One of the most potent images that the locals of Alas Niser construct of their locality and of themselves as 'mixed persons' is that of a newly arrived migrant who marries a local, settles permanently in the area to raise his/her children, builds a house in the village and is eager to create and maintain the state of harmony, people in Java call *rukun* (Ind.), with his/her neighbours through participating in the multitude of ritual occasions that regulate life in the neighbourhood (*kampong*, Mad.). It is an image true of most of the people whose ancestors arrived in Alas Niser from the island of Madura, as well as most of those who descend from people who left their villages in Central and western East Java so as to gain a better living. This is an origin myth that situates their assertion of being '*oreng pedalungan, oreng adereh campor*' ('mixed persons, persons of mixed blood', Mad.) within a history of migration and of successive generations of inter-ethnic marriages as well as within an emplaced ritual economy of sharing food, prayers and ancestors.

On a different level, the thesis puts forward the suggestion that ethnicity, kinship and religion do not form separate aspects of 'society' but are interconnected in fundamental ways (see Schneider 1984; Strathern 1992a). The claim that the analytical fields of ethnicity, kinship and religion do not correspond to a radically different set of social institutions is hardly new in a discipline that is still, to a large extent, founded on the premises of functionalism. Moreover, several anthropologists working on ethnicity and nationalism have repeatedly commented on the religious-like nature of ethnic and national identities and the overpowering effect kinship categories have on ethnic and national imagination (see Anderson 1983; Bryant 2002; Geertz 1973c; Herzfeld 1997; Kelly 1995; Siegel 1998 to name

only a few). However, in place of the functionalist tendency of conceptualising society as a composite of separate institutions the autonomy of which can be ethnographically disputed, and thus, analytically relativised, the thesis concentrates on unraveling the indigenous understandings of 'society', that is, the local ways of conceiving, constituting and transforming social relations. In doing so, it largely by-passes the question of 'society' as a privileged object of knowledge and intervention that has emerged in conjunction to the particular conditions characterising Western modernity with its emphasis on division, fragmentation and specialisation (Strathern 1992a, 1996). In this regard, the thesis focuses on sociality, that is, on the culturally mediated experience of human living. It is one of the thesis' main contentions that as, phenomenologically speaking, 'we' and 'them', Western anthropologists and *pedalungan* informants, live in different worlds, our understandings of the nature of social life are bound to be fundamentally divergent. The concept of sociality as employed in this study, attempts to address this heterogeneity of perspectives and, within the limits of cross-cultural understanding, to give analytical primacy to the 'native point of view'.

In the course of this thesis, it will be argued that *pedalungan* sociality is constructed around the ideas of co-substantiality and co-spatiality. The local emphasis on living on the same land and being made of the same mixture of blood demarcates a field of discourse and social practice that allows for and, indeed, makes possible the ultimate conflation of kinship and ethnicity. In other words, the ideas of co-substantiality and co-spatiality give rise as much to a local representation of social life as a continuos and unified experience, as to a conception of kinship and ethnicity as dialectically co-extensive and co-constitutive processes of belonging. Both processes center around ideas and practices of genealogical connections and spatialised relations that, in turn, reflect and constitute social life as contingent on a culturally specific delineation of the themes of origins and growth, source and expansion.

Issues of power and religion intersect with and condition sociality. Thus, they determine the nature of ethnicity and kinship as locally conceived. In Alas Niser, social relations are construed and experienced as ambivalent and ambiguous and, thus, in need of constant affirmation and renewal. To a certain extent, death, that is, the end of a person's growth, is viewed as much the result of transgressions of social etiquette as a social relation itself. In particular, in cases of sorcery-induced deaths, death is conceived as a reversal of relations of affinity. On the other hand, death's opposite, that is, the condition of being hyper-alive, is conceptualised as dependent on the expansion of a person's field of social relations, itself based on an array of asymmetrical exchanges with otherworldly beings. The theme of expansion and continued growth is reiterated in ritual activities that involve symmetrical exchanges of food, prayers and ancestors among people who inhabit the same place. It will be demonstrated that the expansion of social relations in the context of ritual action has fundamental implications not only for the practice of Islam in East Java but also for the local construction of ethnicity.

In this thesis, analytical concerns over sociality and personhood are intimately interrelated. Culturally and historically specific modes of living, thinking and feeling give shape and inform differential conceptions and experiences of personhood and the body (see Foucault 1979; Martin 1992). In Alas Niser, persons are thought of as embodying social relations in the very materiality of their constitution (see Strathern 1988). To the people I talked to and lived with, the radical distinction between body and mind, individual and society is largely absent. Similarly, differences in terms of the field of social relations a person is entangled, are thought of as reflected and manifested in the kind of body one is conceived as endowed with. In other words, *pedalungan* sociality is conceived as having produced and been marked by a specific kind of body, distinct from all others in terms of its senses, dispositions and sensibilities. In the regard, the thesis' tracing of the native logic of embodiment necessitates for an oscillating interpretative strategy that moves forwards and backwards between the Western logic of social relations and the socially constituted bodies as persons of Alas Niser.

The indigenous fusion of corporeality and kindedness will be conveyed in this thesis through the use of the concept of the body-person (see Elvin 1989; Tsintjilonis 1997). This concept does not correspond to a literal translation of the indigenous concept of *oreng* (Mad.; *orang*, Ind.). Rather, it is a concept that is ethnographically informed by what the people of Alas Niser and Probolinggo say and do in connection with a discourse that assigns persons into different categories or kinds of being. Central to this discourse is the idea of personhood as a process and a state of corporeal being. Transitions from a state of illness to a state of enhanced consciousness, from a state of being somatically unconnected to a state of co-substantiality, from a state of being 'Madurese' or 'Javanese' to a state of being 'mixed' are effected through the undertaking of specific bodily practices and the realisation of certain actions. In this regard, social action fashions and shapes persons in a corporeal manner. Ritual activities and the performance of exchanges are the primary techniques for the creation and maintenance of social relations and for their ultimate registration in the materiality of the persons entangled within them.

The indigenous logic of embodiment does not reserve for the body the place of a representation. As Green (1996: 486) has commented, practices centering on the human body should not be mistaken as referring to the body as a symbol of the social order. Rather than construing bodily practices as privileged instances of the articulation of metaphoric statements about certain political and economic realities, local concerns about the body are quite literal in their scope. Their focus is on the physical composition of the person with reference to its origins, growth and kindedness. Issues of origins, growth and kindedness are coterminous with the social relationships which have generated and continue to sustain particular bodies while they are alive. In this respect, the indigenous logic of embodiment sees persons not as semiotic referents of society but as the corporeal product of social

relations. By being mediated through the exchanges of substances, social relations are seen as constitutive of differential corporealities.

The thesis' distinctive aim is to make a case for the importance of issues of personhood, body constitution and processes of embodiment to the study of ethnic difference in contemporary East Java. Such a focus has been inspired and informed by a variety of anthropological studies, most notably M. Strathern's (1988) seminal account on Melanesian ethnography, M. Lambek and A. Strathern's (1998) broad comparisons between Melanesian(ist) and African(ist) models of objectifying the relations between persons and bodies, M. Marriot's (1976) transactional model of caste difference in South Asia, and J. Carsten's (1997) account of processual kinship in Malaysia. With the exception of Carsten, all the above mentioned studies correspond to regions other than South-East Asia. As a result, their primary modes of addressing issues of personhood and the body are realised within specific 'regionalised' traditions of anthropological thought - i.e. caste for India, exchange for Melanesia, lineage for Africa - and with respect to modes of thought and action which are prevalent among the peoples of these regions. However, the insight the current thesis has drawn from the work of ethnographers of other regions is the eliciting of a certain problematic: the relational construction of personhood according to which persons are culturally configured through their reciprocal engagement with others and 'the [analytical] impossibility of divorcing body from person, [and] embodiment from relationship' (Boddy 1998: 278).

For Marriot, Indian epistemology is devoid of the burdens of Western dualisms. Instead of postulating the separation of the mind from the body, Indian epistemology is resolutely dialectical, thus, highlighting the embodiment of persons and the personification of bodies. As Marriot puts it himself, in India, 'varied codes of action [...] are thought to be naturally embodied in actors' (1976: 109-110) with the concomitant result that different repertoires for action to be thought as the manifestation of actors' different 'natures'. For Marriot, single actors' - i.e. persons - 'natures' are established in and through transactions. The idea of a fixed, 'biologically' given identity, his argument continues, is alien among the peoples of the subcontinent. Instead, persons are thought to be 'made' and 'kinded' in ways that correspond to the caste hierarchy through their engagement in 'transfers of bodily substance-codes through parentage, through marriage [...], and through services and other kinds of interpersonal contacts' (1976: 111). In this regard, Indian persons are thought to be 'dividual', housed in unbounded, connected bodies, made of essences they have (and haven't) received and which they will pass on (and won't) to others. 'Dividual persons', Marriot argues, 'who must exchange in this way are therefore, composites of the substance-codes that they take in' (1976:111).

Marriot's insights into Indian ethnosociology have formed the starting point of Strathern's (1988) account on Melanesian conceptions of gendered personhood. Strathern has also followed Marriot in proposing that societies differ according to the way they

predicate relationships among society, bodies and persons, contrasting normative Melanesian 'dividuals' to ideologically delimited Western 'individuals'. The contrast she comes up with can be presented here in a simplified form as based on a double axis: while in the West, society and individuals are thought to be distinct entities, defined in terms of an incommensurable opposition, in Melanesia, society and persons are homologous categories for persons 'are constructed from the vantage point of the relations that constitute [them]; [a person] objectifies and is thus revealed in those relations' (1988: 273). Moreover, while in the West, the disjunction of the body from the person is founded on the imagining of social relations as existing between autonomous and bounded entities, endowed with clear-cut physical boundaries, in Melanesia, the conjunction of the body and the person is founded on persons being thought of as physically embodying, through encompassment and exchange, parts of others. Such Melanesian persons, Strathern argues, are both 'plural' in the sense of being composite sites of the relations that produce them and 'partible' in the sense of being divisible into their constituent and detachable parts. Melanesian partibility means that the internal substances a person consists of, such as semen and blood, are no different from valuables and thus, that they both contain the capacity for detachment from the person so as to enter into a series of exchanges.

In writing this, I do not mean that I am going to use here the same dualistic models that inform Marriot's and Strathern's writings since such models have come under intense criticism more recently (Carrier 1995; LiPuma 1998) which, in turn, have relativised much of the contrast they have been built upon. Melanesian and Indian ethnography as presented by these authors are of interest here for the challenges they represent to Western conceptions of the person, and the emphasis they put on exchange and transaction of substances, objects and persons (or parts of persons) as well as for their understanding of the logics of the interaction among sociality, bodies and persons. My criss-crossing effort of making analysis with other analyses in mind is embedded though, within an awareness of the differences, historical, cultural, political and economic, that separate the respective regions. Thus, while my account's emphasis on embodied exchange is influenced by such writings, it is, nevertheless, shaped also by analytical concerns characteristic of the anthropology of Southeast Asia. In this respect, my analysis is framed within the distinctive emphases on siblingship (McKinley 1981; Errington 1987; Carsten 1997), the centre-periphery model of conceptualising political relations (Tambiah 1976; Anderson 1990; Geertz 1980), and ritual activity that characterises neighbourhood relations (Geertz 1960; Jay 1969; Bowen 1993; Beatty 1996) found in several ethnographies of insular, predominately Muslim, Southeast Asia. Moreover, as far as exchange and kinship in Southeast Asia is concerned, I have also drawn inspiration from Carsten's (1995b; 1997) processual understanding of kinship that calls for the abandonment of the biological vs social distinction in the study of kinship and argues that the sharing of the same blood, food and land creates and perpetuates relationships among the Malays of the island of Langkawi (see Chapter 6).

In East Java, and among the people I worked with, there is a strong tendency towards the substantialisation of attributes of persons. Thus, a person's ethnic identity is thought to be a matter of bodily constitution which is, however, thought of, in turn, as unstable and unfinished. This constitution is manifested and revealed in everyday interaction, in the manner one acts and transacts, in one's capacities for action, dispositions and temperament. Substantial differences between ethnically different kinds of people are considered to be a matter of bodily differences. These differences are performatively manifested and transformed through exchanges of substances which retain a metaphorical or metonymical relation to the body, its origins and growth, expansion and decay. This kind of relationship between the body and the person is captured and denoted in this thesis by the dual terms of embodiment and the body-person which I employ interchangeably throughout.

As Strathern and Lambek note (1998), the term embodiment is key in understanding the interaction of sociality, personhood and the body. Embodiment, they write, 'obviates the issue of relationship by arguing that it encompasses' all three (Lambek & Strathern 1998: 6). In particular, it designates a 'state or a process' of being-in-the-world that results from the 'continuos interaction' of the body as foci of identity and locus of agency and social relationships (see also Strathern & Stewart 1998). The value of such a concept resides in eschewing Western assumptions of the body as inherently pre-social and proceeding instead, from a recognition of its constructedness and entanglement within specific and historically particular systems of meaning and practice. The approach these two authors champion and which I follow here, rests on seeing embodiment as a processual term, focusing on the ways in which both history and 'cultural concepts impact on bodily experiences and practices and likewise [on the ways] [...] [the] embodied condition affects cultural concepts and social practices' (1998:7).

For Lambek and Strathern, the concept of embodiment is not limited to an ethnographic investigation of local ethnotheories of the body and the person as manifested in local kinship systems and procreation beliefs. They rather, reserve for it the status of an analytical perspective that can address anew classical concerns of the discipline such as religious and political disciplines, local and translocal modes of production, mythical fantasies and historical experiences (1998:18). In general, their call for an encompassing study of society from the perspective of embodiment is addressed partly in this thesis through the exploration of the links pertaining between ethnicity, kinship and power related principles and practices of classification.

The dialectics of personhood and embodiment are also conveyed by the term of body-person which Tsintjilonis (1997) uses with respect to the Sadan Toraja of Indonesia, following Elvin (1989) on China. For Tsintjilonis, the concept of body-person arises out of an indigenous logic that postulates that to the extent that 'one's relations are embodied and manifested in one's role, that role [or identity] is embodied and manifested in one's body' (1997:265). In this sense, for the Sadan Toraja, bodies become synonymous with persons

and co-extensive with the social relations they help actualise through 'mediating' social activity. According to both definitions of embodiment, the body is simultaneously both the original object upon which a series of social relationships are registered, the primary tool with which transactions are realised and a media of exchange through which social relationships are created and maintained.

Another thinker who has talked extensively about embodiment, drawing upon both phenomenology and medical anthropology, is Thomas Csordas (1990; 1994). Csordas discusses forms of religious imagery among Charismatic Catholics in North America and his approach to embodiment concentrates on the phenomenological dimension which it has hitherto been neglected. Central to Csordas's approach is the assumption that human beings relate to their social world through their embodied, practical engagement and action within it. According to this conception, the body is the primary site of subjectivity and the 'existential ground of culture' (1990:5), meaning that it is the location from which the social and the cultural are known and understood by the subject. Therefore, for Csordas, embodiment corresponds to a delineation of the analytical space between corporeality defined in terms of the acquired habits and agency. In this respect, he emphasises both the extent to which the body actively takes up conventional schemes of conduct, acquired through socialisation and encapsulated in a series of culture bound repertoires and skills, and the ways in which bodily action and experience applies and modifies such schemes as and when appropriate (see also Bourdieu 1977). For Csordas, it is precisely this embodied activity that form both the basis of our social existence and the primary object of analysis.

My approach in this thesis, though not taking a fully phenomenological position, incorporates several phenomenological insights. Issues pertaining to the lived body are addressed in this thesis through a concentration on an indigenous discourse that endows particular bodies with a specific set of senses and sensibilities which are themselves, related on the one hand, to ethnicity and, on the other, to potency. Moreover, the phenomenological recognition of the body as engaged and active in the construction of social meaning is given due weight in considering identity crossings (see Chapter 3) and its place of prominence in the ritual economy of transacting (Chapter 7).

Conditioning after-thoughts

I found myself in Java in October 1998, six months after Indonesia's New Order's architect, Suharto, had resigned from power amid street protests by pro-*reformasi* students, rapes and murders of Chinese-Indonesians and the looting of shopping malls by Jakarta's

poor. The aura of jubilation among many and the atmosphere of intense anxiety for most as to what post-New Order Indonesia would be like, both of which were covered extensively in the British press at that time, were shattered when, well into the summer of that year, a killing spree engulfed East Java, my planned destination area (see Dijk 2001: 362-366). The killing spree that came to be known as the 'ninja' killings, due to the ninja-like appearance of the violence's perpetrators, lasted for several months, during which I arrived in the provincial capital, Surabaya and, three weeks later, in Probolinggo.

The data on which this ethnography is based were collected primarily in the 'fictional' community of Alas Niser, between January 1999 and March 2000, from the vantage point of taking residence in the local *khalafiyyah* Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*).[1] The generous offer of a place to sleep, to eat and to learn about local life came from the *kyai*'s (Ind., Islamic scholar) family who were to become my hosts and patrons for the remainder of my fieldwork. Their offer as well as the readiness I showed in accepting it without hesitation, had as much to do with my conviction of the centrality of Islam in the everyday life of the people I was there to study as with the unstable, volatile and dangerous political situation. Looking back at the *kyai*'s invitation, I realise in retrospect, that his offer of a place was in accord with his role of protecting locals from all kinds of ills and dangers, both supernatural and material, domestic and foreign. It positioned me, a *khafir*, and a foreigner with an uncertain agenda, arriving in the village at a critical time, under both the surveilling eyes of the most respected family in the locality and within the embrace of the *kyai*'s potency that sees well into the feeling-thoughts of those towards whom it is directed. For my part, it opened up a possibility I could not refuse: a safe haven from which I could pursue my fieldwork and the partial re-fashioning of my identity as a person who can show respect (*hormat*, Ind.) towards other people's creed and system of values. At no point, though, was my presence in the *pesantren* mistaken to mean that either I was a Muslim or that I had the intention of becoming one. For most of the people I came to know, though one can never be totally sure, I was someone in the pursuit of knowledge, religious knowledge included. Similarly, there was no mention or pressure exercised on me to convert, to fast during Ramadan or the like.

My stay at the *pesantren* is partly a particular example of the incorporative tendencies cultures in Southeast Asia are known to be characterised by (see Carsten 1997). It is also a specific case of the cultural emphasis on and processes of displacing, partially or wholly, difference which I am trying to explain, on a quite different level though, in this thesis. In other words, the anthropological dictum of experiencing Otherness through the intimacy of the senses came to meet in this specific conjuncture the Other's notion of embracing difference and turning it into similarity. 'Forced' conversion to Islam is not expounded as an

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1 *Pesantren* are divided into two kinds: *salafiyyah* where only Islamic subjects are taught and *khalafiyyah* with a more diverse curriculum that includes secular subjects. For more on the history, curriculum and organisation of such educational institutions in Indonesia see Jones 1991 and Bruinessen 1995b.

option in this cultural adventure for, as the *kyai* explained, only conversion that comes from the *hate* (Mad., the inner most centre, the 'heart'), that is, through the wilful realisation of Truth, counts as sincere and authentic. In all other respects, however, I was very much expected to participate in the everyday and ritual activities of the *pesantren* and the neighbourhood, such as wearing a *sarong* and occasionally a *kopiah*, abandoning eating bread and consuming instead generous portions of rice mixed with corn, and teaching the *pesantren*'s pupils (*santri*), the *kyai*'s son and other children from the neighbourhood, English. I was also urged and assisted to learn to converse in Madurese, the everyday language of the locality, help in the preparations of major Islamic festivals, participate in neighbours' life-cycle rituals, even though my illiteracy in Arabic could generate no merit for them.

For the *santri*, life in the *pesantren* centered on praying, eating, sleeping and working together, with different arrangements for male and female pupils. These were the sons and daughthers of poor but pious peasants, coming from villages further to the south and the east, and from as far as Lumajang and Bondowoso. The majority of the *santri* were in their early or mid-teens, having joined the *pesantren* after finishing a secular, government-run primary school in their locality of origin. To them and to their parents, religious education was of the outmost importance in leading a good life, and the pursuit of Islamic knowledge was seen as a religious obligation, the performance of which is said to bring about future well-being and prosperity. While the majority of the *santri* were to spend three to four years in total in the *pesantren*, leaving usually after getting engaged with the aim to establish their own family and to work their parents' land or pursue a vocation or trade, some of the brightest pupils usually stay for much longer, becoming *ustadz* , that is, senior *santri* who teach the junior ones the precepts of the faith. Depending on circustances, some of the *ustadz* progress further and become *kyai* in their own right, officiating at major ritual occasions and establishing their own *pesantren*.

For all the *santri*, myself included, the day would start before dawn and the sound of the drum, located next to my room's wall, announcing the first of the five obligatory daily prayers. *Solat subuh*, the daybreak prayer, was followed by the preparation and consumption by small groups of three to five *santri* of the first daily meal, cooked in makeshift hearths at the back of the complex that overlooks a small river. The meal would consist of rice mixed with corn and some vegetables which the *santri* had collected from the rivers' banks the previous day. After finishing eating my breakfast together with the *santri*, our ways would part. The *santri* would carry out a series of allocated tasks that aimed at maintaining the compound and the *kyai*'s family house and property in good order, while I would watch the news' broadcast on television, usually together with one or two of the *kyai*'s sons. In Java, *pesantren* are owned and run by the *kyai*'s family and the labour performed by *santri* is conceived as a return for the gift of knowledge they receive while in residence. In a similar manner, my daily news update was followed by teaching the *kyai*'s elder son and future successor, the basics of the English language.

Plate 1. *Santri* have their meal

After having completed their tasks, the *santri* would start leaving the complex to attend lessons at the *madrasah*, the graded day school which offers a mixture of religious and secular courses drawn primarily but not exclusively from the government curriculum. The *madrasah* in question was located a few hundred meters away from the *pesantren*, near the periphery of the village, and its impressive by village standards, three storey building was owned by the *kyai*'s family. While for the most part, *madrasah* in Java are both insitutionally and spatially incorporated in *pesantren* complexes (see Jones 1991), that was not the case in this instance. In addition to being physically separate, the majority of pupils of the *madrasah* consisted of non-resident *santri* , that is, of school children from Alas Niser and surrounding villages.

The *santri*'s daily departure would mark a change in my activities too. I would leave the complex's environs, opting for visits to neighbouring houses or for rides on my research assistant's motorbike so as to be present at a marriage I had been invited to or at the rice harvest taking place in the fields nearby. Depending on circumstances, I would rejoin the *pesantren* much later, well into the afternoon, when the *santri*, having returned, would be relaxing, sleeping or conversing jovially under the shadow of the three big mango trees that dominated the sky above our dormitories. Our rest would be interrupted by the preparation of supper which is followed by *sholat maghrib*, the sunset prayer. After the performance of the prayer, the *pesantren* was filled with the echo of the voices of a multitude of primary school aged children. These were children from the neighbourhood who would come to the *pesantren* so as to receive daily instruction in Arabic in sex segregated classes held at the two prayer houses found in the complex. The classes were headed by *santri* who would supervise the younger children's recitation of the Quran, correcting their mistakes and demanding discipline.

The last of the daily prayers, *sholat isya*, was followed by the gathering of the senior *santri* in my rather spacious room for newspaper reading, television viewing, conversing, and story telling. In contrast to the rest of the neighbourhood that went to sleep quite early in the evening, these gatherings lasted for several hours, taking us well into the early hours of the morning. One of the most enduring images I have of my life in the *pesantren* is that of a half a dozen of young men, sitting crosslegged on the floor with their chequered *sarong* wrapped tightly around their bodies so as to protect themselves from the night chill, debating the direction of national politics, exchanging news about the latest developments in neighbourhood affairs and, more importantly, coming to terms with *cinta* (Ind., love).

As a non-Muslim *santri* , that is an anomaly of major proportions, I enjoyed much freedom to wander outside the *pesantren*'s yard and buildings and visit other villages and Probolinggo city centre at will. Supplementary data were collected during such visits to neighbouring communities, all located within the boundaries of the municipality of Probolinggo. The data were collected from people I came to know either through casual encounters initiated during the two months I spent living in the city centre or with people I

was introduced to by my neighbours and hosts, and with whom they enjoyed a kinship connection, a professional relationship or a friendship. Most of them were living in adjacent neighbourhoods and villages. The basic method of fieldwork was simply observing what people did and what they said to me and to each other. I collected as much information on the social history of the area as I could, on economic activities, modes of contracting land and labour and trading goods, but the focus was always on narratives of migration, modes of identity phrasing as well as life-cycle and healing rituals. Although I experienced *pesantren* life, nothing of its social organisation has found its way into this study. It rather forms the background of my interest in potency, an issue delved into later in the thesis. It also informed the way I was perceived in the field and the kind of data, posted here in a fragmentary fashion, that such perceptions generated.

The data was collected both through free conversations and casual talks I had with Alas Niser and Probolinggo residents, in rice and maize fields, in the market place, in the living room of their houses, in *langgar* (Ind., small prayer houses) and mosques, as well as through more structured, informal interviews. The latter were utilised after I had spent several months in the locality and in such a way as to avoid asking leading questions. Informal interviews were conducted with a selection of informants after I had known them for quite some time. These were people who were prized for their willingness to share their knowledge with the odd anthropologist, their articulate nature and the specific significance that their genealogies, life-histories and experiences had for the kinds of things I was interested in. The majority of these in-depth interviews were tape-recorded after I acquired the explicit consent of the interviewee and informed him/her about the purposes and context of its future use.

The majority of the people I conversed with and interviewed were men. The only exception to this, were older women with several grandchildren who, in addition, were economically active, usually working as petty traders. The Islamic ethic of the separation of unrelated men and women means that a whole range of activities and 'voices' associated with and carried out by women in Alas Niser escaped my notice for their spaces, most importantly, the kitchen, were, for the most part, inaccessible to me. In addition to women who had exceeded their reproductive age, I was allowed and thus, able to interact relatively freely with the women of the yard (*tanean*) in which the *pesantren* was situated and who were all relatives of the *kyai*'s family as well as pre-pubescent girls. The time I spent in the latter's company, watching their interactions and listening to their comments has added a significant dimension to my experiences and knowledge that, nevertheless, remain partial and incomplete.

One of the most important problems with the fieldwork concerns language. In the field I spoke mainly *bahasa Indonesia*, the national language as well as the language of the newspapers and of the bureaucracy. It was only much later on that I could manage to understand and utter some coherent phrases in Madurese, the everyday language used by

most of the people in Alas Niser. Learning to speak and understand *bahasa Indonesia* had apparent advantages (and profound limitations) if one considers the multilingualism that characterises East Java. In addition to Madurese speakers who form the majority of the natives of Alas Niser, residents of neighbourhoods (*kampong*, Mad.) near the city centre are socialised mainly in the Javanese language. Although both categories of people, that is, Madurophones and Javanophones, use basically the low speech level of the respective languages, and only very few are knowledgeable of the higher, more 'formal' and 'respectful' speech levels, I did not feel myself competent enough to undertake the task of learning all three of these languages. Thus, I concentrated, during the first half of fieldwork, on *bahasa Indonesia* for it allowed me to talk to most of the people of Probolinggo. Despite the fact that levels of school education are relatively low among the older generation, the majority of both Madurese and Javanese speakers are fluent in the national language. In this context, my conversations in *bahasa Indonesia* were greatly facilitated by local people's general avoidance of using a language in the presence of those who do not understand it and by their willingness to elaborate on words in either Javanese or Madurese that intersected their speech in *bahasa Indonesia*.

In order to improve my skills in *bahasa Indonesia* and start learning some Madurese so as to access monolingual speakers, I used the services of a research assistant who also assisted me in note taking and the translation of the more formal, tape recorded interviews. Yusuf, a part-time English teacher, typified the ideal assistant in this respect, and was a representative case of some of the people in Probolinggo who could speak all three languages fluently. He accompanied me both in visits to other communities and in the *pesantren*, something that he enjoyed as he himself had been a *santri* (pupil in a *pesantren*) for a couple of years to one of the most famous *kyai* in Probolinggo. During the second half of the fieldwork, and very much due to the encouragement of other fellow *santri* and neighbours, I started building up my Madurese vocabulary, although I never felt quite comfortable in speaking Madurese. Though I could follow most conversations conducted exclusively or even largely in Madurese, I did not use Madurese to any great extent myself. Much of the reason had to do with my inability to pronounce Madurese words well, a fact that locals politely avoided bringing up. This worried me as it could accidentally result in insulting the occasional interlocutor. For the most part, I used Indonesian. Moreover, I did not attempt to learn Javanese at any point, since by the time such an exercise presented itself as feasible, I had to leave Java.

My inability to speak all three languages fluently and to attest to the fascinating specifics of multilingualism with all its sensitivity to code and context switching, as well as its implied language hierarchy, have profoundly affected my conceptualisation of life in Alas Niser and Probolinggo generally. To this I must also add the little attention I paid in terms of fieldwork to the Chinese-Indonesians and Arab-Indonesians as well as local Christians who are present in small but significant numbers in the municipality of Probolinggo, living in non-

exclusive *kampong* mainly in the town centre. This drawing of boundaries is itself the unintended outcome of the distinctions locals themselves make between their 'us', the *orang pedalungan*, and their 'them', people whose personhood lies outside the historical and cultural experience of mixed blood. The most overt case of this exclusion is the Chinese-Indonesians. The equation of Chinese-Indonesians with wealth, Christianity and phenotypical differences has meant that the relationships *orang pedalungan* maintain with them rarely go beyond economic transactions. Being situated in the manner I was, this kind of boundary rigidity also meant that I too had little contact with Chinese-Indonesians.

The parallel lives Chinese-Indonesians and *orang pedalungan* for the most part live in Probolinggo is also replicated, to a certain degree, with respect to Arab-Indonesians, that is, descendants of migrants from the Middle East. The latter are much less 'visible' in terms of being the subject of voluntarily supplied commentary on behalf of *oreng pedalungan*. Here, the image of unity and encompassment built around the term *oreng pedalungan* reaches, once again, its limit. Despite the fact that religious difference is not an issue in this case, perceived phenotypic difference, wealth differentials and Arab superiority due to being seen as the direct descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, and partaking thus, to a certain extent, of His perfect nature, means that social distance marks relationships between persons of these two categories. This is also attested to by the difficulties local men are said to have in being accepted as husbands of Arab daughters.

In conclusion then, I want to emphasise my awareness that the account I am presenting is both partial and conditioned by the position I occupied in the field, entangled as it was within local systems of relationships. For reasons obvious enough, I did not attempt to overcome its limitations. This in no way suggests that issues not covered here such as multilingualism or *pedalungan - Arab* relations, among others, do not deserve our serious and full attention.

Alas Niser and Probolinggo

The 'fictional' character of Alas Niser I have alluded to above, is not only due to it being a pseudonym for I have disguised my primary fieldwork area so as to spare it unwanted intrusion. Its 'fictionality' relates firstly, to its literary status as the name of the place in which the events narrated in this thesis have taken place. Secondly, it is also linked to the fact that Alas Niser is not a bounded, administratively demarcated area but rather a loose collection of three *kampong* (Mad.; neighbourhood) that belong to three different administrative villages (*desa*, Ind.) in which I spent most of my time and became entangled

in a network of relationships. The first of these *kampong* is the one of the *pesantren* I was living in. The second is a mere five hundred metres away, in an adjacent village, crossing the highway that links Probolinggo with Jember, immediately behind what used to be a sugar mill in colonial times. Introduced to that neighbourhood by Rushdi, a *santri* of the *pesantren*, I became intimate with his extended family that comprised several of the houses and the local *kyai* who was also a healer. In Chapter 1, the historical links between these two neighbourhoods, links I was unaware of during the time I was introduced by Rushdi, are elaborated. The third *kampong* was located to the west of the *pesantren*. Crossing the small river located at the back of my room, and some irrigated rice fields, walking along a narrow and usually muddy path, I would encounter the back of the houses of two male siblings, Pak Senadi and Pak Sunarto, my 'elder brothers', and those of their neighbours. Here again inter-neighbourhood relations were present in the form of past and current marriages.

The sense in which Alas Niser is a community has as much to do with the way locals speak of the wider locality, the symbols employed in constructing an image of their emplaced relatedness both within and without the *kampong* (see Chapter 1), as with my own fieldwork experiences. Central to both is the idea of locality as a territorially vague unit, lacking the firm and rigid boundaries associated either with lines on an administrative map or with features of the built environment like the engraved stones the Indonesian state plants by the roadside. The local focus is, rather, on places as consisting of relationships; relationships that refer both to features of the physical landscape as shaped by the agency of ancestors and to enacted sociality in the present that comprises a variety of people with whom one identifies.

Located at the southern periphery of the municipality of Probolinggo, all three villages form part of the same subdistrict (*kecamatan*), a relatively densely populated area characterised by an ever diminishing portion of its land dedicated to agriculture and an increasing fragmentation of landholdings due to demographic pressures. In 1997, the population of the *kecamatan* numbered 35,378, covering a 15,854 square km area.[2] As the population has grown steadily during the last couple of decades for which there are reliable statistical data available - in 1984, the *kecamatan's* population numbered 29,289 - the land was converted from *tegal*, that is unirrigated fields, to *sawah* (Ind., irrigated field). This conversion was effected through the introduction of water pumps which were rented out or purchased, and the building of wells. In 1982, the year the *kecamatan* was administratively incorporated into the municipality, for previously it was part of the district (*kabupaten*) of Probolinggo, *tegal* land accounted for 45 hectares in the village of W., the administrative centre of *kecamatan*. In 1998, all 45 hectares were irrigated. Similarly, *sabeh* (Mad., irrigated field) has steadily been transformed into residential land, as it is passed down to daughters mainly as inheritance. In the same village, *sawah* land accounted for 12 hectares in 1982,

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2 These figures, as well as those in the following paragraphs, are taken from data gathered and supplied by the *Kantor Statistik Kotamadya* and *Kabupaten Probolinggo*, that is the statistics agency of the municipality and district of Probolinggo.

while in 1998, only 9 hectares were left, the remaining were now part of new compounds located at the eastern tip of the village.

Agricultural land is mainly situated between villages, though it does not mark inter-village boundaries in all four cardinal directions. A variety of crops are cultivated, mainly, rice and maize as well as cassava, soya beans, green pea and peanuts, both for domestic consumption and for the market place, while onion cultivation is directed basically to market demands and exports to other Southeast Asian countries, such as Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Till the mid-1990s, the area also produced sugar cane, processed in the Wonolangan factory, a few miles away. Under the *T.R.I.* (*Tebu Rakyat Intisifikasi*, Ind., smallholder's sugarcane intensification) programme, *sabeh* was handed over to the state which would administer the cultivation of sugar cane, while *sabeh* owners would receive cash as rent plus a percentage of the produce in the form of processed sugar. When the programme collapsed due to a sharp drop in prices, villagers reverted to the cultivation of onions. This move was extremely successful if one is to judge from the number of new houses erected, house renovations undertaken, new motorcycles and domestic equipment purchased during the couple of years between the abolition of forced cane cultivation and the rupiah's collapse that precipitated the economic and political crisis of 1997-8. Although, the economic crisis did affect locals significantly as far their consumption of imported and domestically manufactured products is concerned, it did not generate the kind of phenomena such as massive unemployment, extreme poverty, and numerous cases of malnutrition encountered in major industrial and urban centres of Indonesia, such as Jakarta and Surabaya.

Employment in the local agricultural sector accounts for a substantial portion of the population of the area. The majority of landed peasants are small-holders with holdings rarely exceeding that of 0.3 hectares. Because of their small holdings, both landed peasants and landless workers complement their agricultural income by enganging in commercial activities. Two major markets are situated in Alas Niser. The first is the animal market, taking place every Saturday with the gathering of traders from a variety of villages both within and without the municipality of Probolinggo, selling their oxen, goats, sheep and chickens. The animal market attracts other related kinds of travelling traders too, such as people selling animal skins, whips, thongs, rope, sickles, etc.. In contrast to the animal market which is dominated by men, the market proper consisting of a closed section of mortar and brick shops and an open section of stalls, is dominated by women. With the exception of two shops only, one selling fertilisers and pesticides and the other providing spare parts for bicycles, *becak* (tricycles) and motorcycles, which are owned by Chinese-Indonesians, all other shops are owned by *pedalungan*. General purpose stores alternate with cloth and repairs shops in the closed section. The open section is marked by wooden stalls in which a variety of vegetables, raw meat, fish and spices are sold by petty traders with less capital. These stalls give their place to food stalls where delicacies such as *nasi goreng* (Ind., fried

Plate 2. Harvesting onions

Plate 3. Female villagers selling vegetables

rice), *sate* (Ind., meat roasted on skewer) and *soto* (Ind., soup) are prepared by females from sunset till well into the evening.

In addition to these traders, one has to mention also agricultural produce traders, some of whom come from the locality and whose capital exceeds the small investment managed by those of the informal sector. Land owning peasants sell their surplus rice or maize, after they have kept the amount they estimate they would need so as to meet their annual domestic consumption. Villagers prefer to sell their produce to individual traders, rather than to the *K.U.D.* (*Koperasi Usaha Desa*, Ind., village cooperative), a government organisation. This is so for individual traders offer higher prices and the payment is immediate rather than made after a delay of several months. Secondary crops such as peanuts, and fruits such as mangoes and grapes for which Probolinggo is famous, are also transported from the locality to other places in Java, Sumatra and Bali.

Government services and factories form additional sources of income and employment. Since its inception as an *onderdistrik*, a subdistrict, in late 19th century, the area has witnessed a proliferation of state administrative departments, state enterprises, military, health and educational institutions, manned primarily but not exclusively by an influx of migrants from Central and western East Java (see Chapter 1). According to official statistics, in 1997, 1,918 *kecamatan* residents were registered as deriving their primary, but not sole, income from employment as civil servants or military personnel. In Alas Niser, the military headquarters which is also home to military personnel, occupies an imposing building located at the heart of the area. Civil servants staff the local health centre opened in mid-1980s, as well as the twenty-six primary schools, the two lower secondary (*S.M.T.P.*) and one upper secondary state school (*S.M.T.A.*) operating in the *kecamatan*. In addition, civil servants are employed in the local branches of the highly specialised and fragmented municipal administration that regulates everything from art and religion to telecommunications and electricity.

The *kecamatan* is the locus of a two small industries which although situated outside Alas Niser, stimulate the economy of the area. The first is a *tempe kedelai* (Ind., fermented soya bean) industry, the second is an embroidery factory, employing 132 and 55 workers respectively. Major factories of which the area has quite a few, are also located outside Alas Niser. By far the two most significant industries in employment terms are the PT Eratex, a weaving and ready made cloth unit that produces exclusively for foreign markets (principally, the U.S and Europe), and PT S.T.I., a plywood factory the products of which are directed both to internal and external markets, employing 3,917 and 2,001 workers in 1997, respectively. Other smaller factories, including a soy sauce and fruit flakes unit and a formaldehyde (an adhesive used as disinfectant) factory, also attract natives of Alas Niser, mainly women, as workers who commute to these locations every day. With the exception of an embroidery factory that went bankrupt during the early phase of the economic crisis in late

1997, some of the other factories not only survived the upheaval but partly due to the reduced labour costs, were able to attract more global contracts.

Due to its location on a major tourist route, the Jogjakarta-Bali one, and its proximity to mount Bromo, the town centre of Probolinggo sees quite a lot of passing tourists, and the development of the tourist industry is one of the primary concerns of the municipal government. During the time I was there, however, Indonesian tourism had plummeted, primarily because of the political instability and ethnic and religious fighting that ravages the nation-state to this day, and the restaurants and hotels in town were, according to their owners, badly affected. The occasional sighting of a foreign tourist was complemented by the presence of a few other foreigners, from Germany, the US, the UK, Japan and South Korea, who had rented houses around the town centre. All of them were working in Indonesia's biggest power station, located an hour and a half's drive away, in Paiton. But on the whole, tourism and foreigners have impinged little on the lives of the people I lived with in Alas Niser. Villagers would visit the town centre when facing administrative or legal problems since all central government offices as well as financial institutions are located in the old Dutch *kampong* there. They would also ride their own motorcycles or get on the public transport vans that connect the area with downtown Probolinggo so as to buy goods not available in the local market or, more often, for sociable aims: to visit family and friends, participate in life-cycle rituals, funerals, marriages and births.

The steady flow of goods to and from Alas Niser and Probolinggo to destinations in Java, the rest of Indonesia and beyond is accompanied by a flow of people.[3] Alas Niser is described by locals as a community of descendants of migrants, converging there from divergent places in Madura and Java, but during the last thirty or so years, the area has experienced a growing out-migration, the rate of which is very difficult to estimate. The movement of people is partly intra-provincial, from one district to another following post-marital residence and university level studies. Demographic movement also follows inter-provincial routes. Locals are encouranged to participate in the transmigration programme that sees people settling in the Outer Islands of Sulawesi and Kalimantan under the auspices of the state. In addition, quite a few local people have been attracted by the better employment opportunities to big urban centres such as Jakarta and Surabaya. Others, however, seek a better living through migrating temporarily to countries such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. Malaysia is the primary destination of young men, both unmarried and married, who find work mainly in the construction sector. Saudi Arabia is the preferred option of young women who seek work as domestic servants. Regular remittances and savings for a varying period of time, ranging from several months to several years, are dedicated to

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[3] To this I must also add the fishing industry, located at the northern section of the municipality and centred around the port. The fishing industry is also directed to outside markets and fish processing factories in Malang and Surabaya that export their produce. Chinese-Indonesian middlemen are particularly active in this sector, providing capital and access to these markets.

affording better living conditions though building a house and setting up a shop or a small industry after returning to the place of origin.

Pedalungan in the region

Alas Niser and Probolinggo are located at the mid point of the east coast of Java, facing the island of Madura to the north-west. They thus, can be said to have their history and culture shaped by the historically varied, and often bloody, relation between their two more powerful neighbours. The linguistic situation to which I referred earlier, only highlights this point. However, concepts such as 'Java' and 'Madura' have received and are continuing to receive contesting formulations by a multitude of actors whom this section will attempt to delineate along with a consideration of the conflicting classifications of the inhabitants of Probolinggo from within and without.

The present thesis is not conceived as a regional study in the sense of aiming to address issues of thematic variation of interpretation and practice of *pedalungan* culture. In other words, it does not seek to conceptualise *pedalungan* culture as the product of derivations and hybrid configurations of themes associated with the categories of 'Javanese' or 'Madurese' culture as singular entities. However, the thesis is situated within academic and indigenous discourses which are very much preoccupied with mapping difference, be it social, cultural or ethnic, onto space.[4] Nevertheless, a rather detailed discussion of these discourses is necessary so as to clarify the thesis' approach to *pedalungan* culture and make apparent its differences from other studies.

The tendency to map culture and difference onto space is very much at the heart of older academic approaches to the ethnography of the region. According to them, Central Java, with its early Indianised kingdoms and its more recent Muslim courts of artistic and ceremonial grandeur, has provided the stereotypical image of a space marked by its centre. For anthropologists and historians working in the colonial era and the period immediately after independence, as well as for modern day tourists, the New Order state and some of the people I came to meet, Central Java stands for everything that is quintessentially 'Javanese'. It is also the yardstick against which regional diversity can be evaluated and explained. For researchers of this generation, such was the power believed to be exercised by the centre that 'Madurese' culture was considered to be a branch or an outgrowth of Central Javanese themes. Due to a history of political subjugation of 'Madura' to the Central Javanese kingdoms, Central Javanese culture was thought to have crossed the sea straits and to have

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[4] An obvious exception to the tendency of mapping difference onto space is, of course, John Pemberton (1994b).

infused 'Madurese' society, converting it into a cultural appendage of 'Java' (see Dijk *et al* 1995b). In this case, objective cultural difference between 'Java' and 'Madura' was considered to be only a matter of degree.

As the ethnographic and historical evidence accumulated, 'Java' assumed less and less the appearance of unified cultural space revolving around a singular centre. A closer attention to regional variations weakened the validity of the rather diffusionist in inspiration centre-periphery metaphor. At the same time, 'Java' too came to be deconstructed as a discursive rather than a geo-cultural category. With respect to the latter development, John Pemberton (1994b) has persuasively argued that the idea of 'Java' as a cultural region marked by its courtly centre is the product of the colonial encounter. According to Pemberton, colonialism prompted the native Javanese aristocracy to articulate a discourse on difference. In this regard, 'Java' was the result of an inwardly directed gaze that amounted to delimiting what constitutes Javanese culture by the aristocracy in a world where difference did increasingly matter for reasons of political authority (see also Beatty 1999:10). Therefore, in the place of what were perceived as divide and rule colonial strategies, the native aristocracy counterposed an image of Java unified by its palace and of itself as the epitome of 'Javaneseness'. Pemberton argues that such a construct was at the very heart of much of the legitimacy managed by the New Order state as the latter modelled itself as the protector and re-invigorator of everything that stood as authentically Javanese. Although Pemberton's ideas cited here are part of a larger argument which I cannot discuss here as fully as it would merit, the implication for my own purposes is that the commanding metaphors early anthropologists and historians used to conceptualise their field of study was, to a significant extent, a reconfiguration of themes already prepared for them by native literati devoted to defining 'Java' (see also Pemberton 1994b: 24).

Problems with the category of 'Java' were, however, recognised before approaches such as Pemberton's were devised. Cultural diversity was acknowledged by anthropologists on another level, that of 'factual' evidence. The fragmentation of the field of research was attested to in Ron Hatley's (1984) account, in which he argues that there is a vast diversity of 'Javas' away from the *kraton*, or palace. The ethnographic recognisition of this plurality, Hatley's argument continues, rests on the variety of ecological systems, staple foods, languages and dialects, arts, temperaments and dispositions, even, bodily postures and ways of carrying things that are present in the island, as well as on the existence of diverse ethnic groups. By using a loose combination of emic and etic criteria, brought together in a rather inconsistent manner, Hatley comes up with four major 'Javas', that of south-central *kejawen*, of north *pesisiran*, of eastern *arek Surabaya* and western *ngapak*. In addition, he identifies four other 'regional isolates' in the cases of Banten, Cirebon, Tengger and Osing and while he subsumes all the people who live in these regions as ethnically Javanese, he delimits the 'Madurese', the 'Balinese', the 'Sundanese' and the 'Betawi' as 'Java's' significant Others.

The new focus on fragmentation that has challenged the centre-periphery model but which has hardly problematised the tendency of mapping difference onto space, has had clear reverberations on conceptualisations of 'Madurese' society. A volume titled *Across Madura Strait* (Dijk *et al* 1995a) marked the coming of age of studies devoted to Java's neighbour. The volume took issue with earlier approaches, stating that 'Madurese culture is wrongly perceived of as an extract or branch of the Javanese culture' and that instead, it 'has to be studied in its own right' (1995b: 3). As is obvious enough from the title, the sea straits separating Java from Madura, came to represent a geographical as well as an ethnic and social boundary. The majority of anthropologists and historians currently working on this insular society draw several contrasts so as to effect this kind of analytical closure, some of which refer to the absence of 'Javanese' distinctions such as the *abangan/santri* one in 'Madurese' society, the distinctive 'Madurese' pattern of settlement with its emphasis on descent rather than neighbourhood, and the significance of fishing and unirrigated agriculture for the 'Madurese' economy in contrast to the irrigated one characterising most of 'Java' (see for example, Kuntowijoyo 1981; Jonge 1989; Bouvier 1995). This is a conceptualisation that is both reminiscent of pre-Barthian understandings of ethnic difference as well as one that is challenged by those that see 'Madurese' society as extending beyond the sea strait, carving out a big part of the island of Java for itself.

It is within this frame of reference that Niehof (1982) states that 'Madurese society exceeds by far the physical boundaries of the island while at the same time it has weak internal integrative structures' (1982: 255). As far as the first is concerned, she points to the centuries-old Madurese out-migration to the eastern, and mainly coastal, part of East Java - an area stretching from the far north region of the environs of Surabaya to the southern tip of East Java's Situdondo region - as evidence of the historical networks that connect and assimilate this area into 'Madurese' society and culture. According to this classification, Alas Niser and Probolinggo, located at the very heart of this culture area, are part of 'Madura'. In addition, Ron Hatley (1984) designates this same area as '*Madura ndalung*', a sub-division of the greater 'Madura' region, which has its centre in the sea straits that connect its two parts. Demographic movement is once again called upon to substantiate such claims, as Hatley argues that 'of the ten or eleven million Madurese, only a quarter live on the island of Madura itself; most are found on Java across the straits' (1984: 5).

The classification of coastal East Java as part of 'Madura' has received a firm grounding in Husson's (1995) study of Madurese migration and in her claim that migrants from Madura who have 'colonised' in a demographic sense coastal East Java, have 'barely integrated into Javanese society' (1997: 91; see also 1995: 345). Husson's claim, mainly focused on first-generation migrants who live and work in the provincial capital of Surabaya, a highly urbanised and industrialised setting, will be refuted in the course of this thesis.[5] This

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[5] Husson's depiction of a Madurese migration that is profitable but without integration and the occurrence of inter-ethnic exchanges is based on the observation that in the urban centre of Surabaya,

is so for far from seeing themselves as 'barely integrated' and having their 'Madurese' identities frozen in time, descendants of successive waves of migrants from Madura (and from Java) in the municipality of Probolinggo consider themselves as *oreng pedalungan*, 'mixed persons'. By pointing to a historically dynamic and transformative conception of identity, they, thus, challenge this academic version of their status as 'Madurese' and that of their land as 'little Madura across the sea'.

The idiom of mixed personhood as understood by the natives of Alas Niser is based on a conceptualisation of the land which mixed persons inhabit, work on and are buried in. The image of their land which they themselves construct is, first and foremost, that of a third and hybrid place that is neither part of 'Java' nor part of 'Madura'. 'Mixed land' is, instead, made out of the spatial conjuncture of ancestors of diverse kinds of people, namely 'Javanese' and 'Madurese', and of the relationships these ancestors have created through their actions, inclinations, judgements and dispositions. These kind of relationships are thought to be reproduced by their descendants in the multiplicity of exchanges that have taken place both in historical times and in the present day. Thus, in reserving for themselves the status of a separate ethnic category, people in Alas Niser also reserve for the land that shelters and feeds them an equally unique and irreducible status, that of *tanah pedalungan*, the 'mixed land'. The analogy locals draw between personhood and land can only be maintained in so far as the one is a refraction of the other, a refraction based on a type of perspectivism in which the two terms can be exchanged easily and unproblematically for one another. Much of my explanation of the makings of mixed personhood rests on this refraction.

The designation of the east coastal area of East Java as *tanah pedalungan*, meaning the area where 'mixed persons' live, is, to the best of my knowledge, challenged not only by foreign researchers but by Indonesian natives from without. Several of the people that I met in Jakarta, Surabaya, Malang and other places in Java outside *tanah pedalungan*, made references to my field area as laying outside 'Java' proper and inside 'Madura'. To them, *pedalungan* designates a kind of a region that is heavily 'Madurised' in terms of *adat* (Ind., 'customs and traditions'), while the term *orang pedalungan* is used to describe, as one informant put it, 'Madurese who live outside [the island of] Madura'. This was confirmed by the experiences of several of my informants in Probolinggo who, while travelling or residing for longer or shorter periods of time outside Probolinggo for reasons of work or study,

Madurese migrants tend to cluster around a specific range of economic activities, mainly associated with the informal sector, which sets them apart from the wider society, a phenomenon she calls 'ethnicization' (1995: 333-347). While this might be true for Surabaya, in Probolinggo neither can such a clear cut employment structure be objectively identified nor does 'ethnic' employment appear with any considerable force of argument in conversations with locals. In addition, the assumption of the primacy of economic infrastructure for the determination of symbolic forms is rather simplistic and reductionist (see Sahlins 1976). Moreover, Husson fails to notice that identities are far from being unproblematic both in contextual terms and in the longe duree, and of other types of exchanges, mainly marital and ritual, which can take place among people who belong to different ethnic categories.

claimed to be hetero-categorised either as 'Madurese' or *Madura pedalungan*'. Hetero-categorisations of this kind were explained to me as following naturally after information as to the place of their birth was acquired by their interlocutor and a certain distinctively 'Madurese' accent was said to be discerned in their Javanese or Indonesian speech.

As far as the Indonesian state is concerned, the term *tanah pedalungan* as found in official documents that I came across, exemplifies this ambiguity and unresolved indeterminacy of meaning embedded in the perspectives from within and without. Thus, in a document published by the Department for Tourism of the provincial government of East Java, the Indonesian state has adopted Hatley's classification of cultural regions with the result of the east coast of East Java being labelled as '*Madura pendalungan*' and, thus, classified within 'Madura'. On the other hand, in a guide containing information about the economic activities dominant in East Java's many districts and municipalities, made available from the provincial office for development (*pembangunan*, Ind.), the municipality of Probolinggo is classified as '*mendulangan*' (?) area. The justification given refers to its inhabitants being said to consist of a mixture (*campuran*, Ind.) of many ethnic groups (*suku bangsa*, Ind.). '*Mendulangan*' land is described as laying outside of both 'Madura' and 'Java'. To the best of my knowledge, the state has never taken an interest in imposing either of the term's meanings, thus attempting to standardise it and as such, its treatment of it reflects an issue negotiated outside its control.

The strategy I have adopted in this thesis in writing of the *orang pedalungan* of Alas Niser and Probolinggo concentrates on the perspective from within. This is not to be taken as meaning that I accord a higher truth value to it, reifying the taken-for-granted nature of my informants' classifications at the expense of ignoring what is a field of knowledge that is highly contested. Rather, my concentration on it is the direct result of my fieldwork experiences, emplaced as they were within the spatial confines of meaningful and long-term relationships that rarely extended beyond the boundaries of Probolinggo and, thus, of *tanah pedalungan*. As such, my research and, by implication, this thesis are limited by the territory my field networks occupied. A multi-sited approach, better suited to bringing to the surface this contestation of meanings, could well have been adopted but I feel that this would have been achieved only at the expense of richer, more detailed and in-depth information one can collect by being more firmly rooted, or at least as firmly as one's subjects consider themselves to be.

Ethnicity talk

The present thesis is as much an ethnographic exploration of the historical and cultural emergence of the category of 'mixed people' in East Java as an attempt to reflect on

this category in terms of the concept of ethnicity. I use the term ethnicity in this context both cautiously and deliberately. I employ it with caution because it can be said not to exist as such in East Java. It is most often thought to correspond to the Indonesian terms of *etnis* ('ethnic group'), *suku* ('tribe') or *suku bangsa* ('tribe', 'nation'). All these terms are taken to define a collectivity that, although not exactly a nation (an unqualified *bangsa*), it is rather like it. However, these terms rarely appear in everyday conversations outside a more official, state or academic, context. Yet, I have decided to use ethnicity as one of the analytical centrepieces for this thesis for I think that no other concept in the terminology of social sciences comes close to capturing the kind of difference and classificatory scheme that is conveyed by both the category of 'mixed persons' and the kind of discursive practices that produce it. As with every case of cross-cultural translation, the appropriateness of the term chosen is to be set against the term's distillation of referents. This involves a process that necessitates an awareness of and a series of reflections on the predicates subsumed in its original, Western and academic form.

Over the last thirty years, sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists have increasingly sought to define ethnicity as a phenomenon and to abstract its meaning (Eriksen 1993; Banks 1996). In spite of all the unbridgeable differences among scholars of diverse theoretical inclinations, the position that ethnicity employs culture as a resource in the sense of consisting of the 'subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people of any aspect of culture' in order to claim, create and mark similarity within and difference from without (de Vos 1995: 24) has received wide recognition (see Jenkins 1997). This position which was first advocated by Barth (1969) in his famous introduction to *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, has provided the basic model for subsequent investigations on the matter.[6] In particular, this position advocates that ethnicity as a form of social organisation is centrally concerned with cultural differentiation in the sense of implicating a consciousness of culture in the form of diacritics (see Jenkins 1997). Diacritics such as language and dress, are employed by people so as organise themselves in categories and groups. Such a consciousness, Barth advocates, is produced and reproduced in the context of social interaction, meaning that ethnic categories and groups are defined as such only in relation, and often in opposition, to one another. According to this standard mode of thinking, objective cultural diacritics of difference relate to ethnicity 'if and only if such differences become relevant in social interaction' (Eriksen 1993: 38).

Both Barth and this model have been rightly credited with breaking away from the simplistic view of treating ethnic groups as identical to cultural units. Such a view which was

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[6] Leach's (1954) study of the Kachin of northern Burma was certainly the most important precursor of this approach. More than a decade before Barth, Leach had emphasised the variety of headwraps and modes of dress in terms of which Burmese highlanders distinguished themselves in different categories, refusing at the same time, to reduce such ethnic categories to distinct culture groups. For him, as for Barth, such categories were primarily produced through subjective processes of ascription, meaningful only as cognitive contrasts, rather than as reflections of objective cultural discontinuities.

dominant before Barth's contribution, assumed that ethnic differentiation stems naturally and unproblematically from the persistent fact of cultural variation and relative isolation between respective groups of people. In this respect, Barth's position attacked the absolute isomorphism of ethnic groups and cultural units and invited us, instead, to focus on the particularities of the 'communicative' activity taking place across ethnic groups. For Barth, language, religion, descent and dress codes are thought to provide the main glosses for the articulation of social boundaries. His disentaglement of the study of ethnicity from the study of culture was based on the premise that, instead of listing culture traits as defining ethnicity, one should focus on what is significant for the people themselves. The crucial criterion that Barth's analysis insisted upon was the categories of ascription the subjects themselves embrace. This new model's adoption of subjective, as opposed to objectivist criteria, is intimately tied with its focus on the interactional or relational aspect of ethnic group formation. This means that ethnic identity presupposes the existence of an Other in relation to whom a sense of self is achieved and maintained, that ethnicity is a relationship based on an us/them dichotomy.

Barth's relational model with its emphasis on the subjective meanings the actors themselves hold and social processes of distinction and boundary maintenance was an important early constructivist approach to ethnicity. By opening up the way to view ethnicity sociologically and more particularly, as a 'socially effective form of organisation' (Yeros 1999: 112), it forms the precursor of instrumental constructivism. The latter focuses on ethnicity as a form of political organisation. For exponents of the instrumentalist approach, ethnicity 'is essentially a political phenomenon, as traditional customs [that is, culture] are used only as idioms, and as mechanisms for political alignment' (Cohen 1969: 201). Instrumentalists see ethnic groups primarily as interest groups whose emergence and continuity are tied to specific material conditions. For them, ethnicity corresponds to the symbolic vehicle of informal political organisation and corporate action. In this regard, ethnicity's *raison d' etre* is the performance of an economically-driven political function, namely the co-ordination of the competition for the acquisition of an ever larger share of control over scarce resources (Cohen 1974; Despres 1975). By seeing ethnicity as the elaboration or symbolic expression of 'more fundamental relations, even of the infrastructure itself' (Nagata 1981:89), instrumentalists view ethnicity from the perspective of the exercise of political agency. At the same time, they assert that ethnic identities, far from being immutable and fixed, change over time for they are malleable and flexible. Social actor's evident boundary crossings and identity changes are explained by instrumentalists as contingent on valuations of interest in given material circumstances.

For instrumentalists like Cohen (1974) and Hechter (1976), the formation of ethnic groups is a calculated response in the pursuit of power and wealth in conditions of rapid economic change, mainly in the context of urbanisation and modernisation brought about by colonialism and globalisation. In these conditions, people who find themselves in similar

socio-economic positions, like the Hausa in the city of Ibadan (Nigeria), consciously draw upon and manipulate 'some customs, values, myths, symbols and ceremonials from their cultural tradition' (Cohen 1969: 2). Cohen is adamant that they do so in order to create anew and celebrate ethnic commonality and solidarity so as to advance their control over resources (in this case, long-distance trade in kola nuts and cattle). The point Cohen makes, is that had it not been profitable to be Hausa in Ibadan, then Hausa identity might well have disappeared from the city (Eriksen 1993: 46). In situations where members of the same ethnic group hold different position in the socio-economic system and they, thus, can not be said to share the same material interests, instrumentalists assign to ethnicity the role of an ideological screen erected by ethnic elites (Paterson 1975; Brass 1994). According to this version of instrumentalism, ethnicity is a tool of class exploitation for it works so as to mask and mystify such a divergence of interests, ensuring the attainment and reproduction of systemic equilibrium. Moreover, ethnicity's manipulation by specific ethnic elites, which consciously promote ethnic identities and ethnic-based action, means that these elites also come to be the beneficiaries of this emphasis in terms of political support and higher status. In the latter case, ethnicity does not represent the product of a strategically conscious collectivity but rather an ideological artifice of some class conscious political entrepreneurs furthering their interests.

Instrumental constructivism was one of the early approaches in social anthropology to address issues of human agency and to focus on social action as a creative enterprise to be grasped in relation to the operation of normative, structural constraints. It also brought into our attention the contingencies of class and ideology and the latter's interaction with ethnicity in the late colonial and post-colonial era (see Comaroff & Comaroff 1992). Despite its apparent merits, instrumentalism has been recently criticised for a number of reasons. In particular, Williams (1989) and Yeros (1999) point out that, by attributing a similar and singular function to ethnicity, instrumentalism makes it analytically difficult to differentiate between ethnic groups and other political organisations (see also Heusch 2000). Moreover, as Banks (1996) notes in his seminal review of ethnicity theories, instrumentalism's singular focus on politics has failed to account for all expressions of ethnicity found in the world since there are several instances where ethnic dichotomies persist despite the absence of any real and objective, be they economic or political, advantage for ethnicity to assert itself. In addition to these criticisms, Bentley (1997) has argued that the major problem of this version of constructivism is related to its method of reasoning and in particular, to the systemic congruence it postulates between the consequences of individual and collective agency and the intentions of individuals and groups respectively. In this context, Bentley reminds us of an aphorism by Foucault who argues that, 'people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does' (Foucault quoted in Bentley 1987: 48).

Inventionist constructivism has largely sprung from an attempt to overcome some of these criticisms while retaining the emphasis on agency. Thus, the focus has now been on ethnic groups not as a form of political organisation produced out of a coalition of interests but rather, as the largely unintended consequence of long-term historical processes associated, among other things, with colonialism, hierarchical social orders, ethnic divisions of labour and missionary activity (Ranger 1983, 1989; Roosens 1989). In this version of constructivism, the problem of competition for material prizes has been substituted by an analysis of ethnicity as a historical phenomenon. Furthermore, the analytical emphasis on investing certain agents and institutions with the ability to construct categories, boundaries and consciousness is imbued with concerns over legitimacy. In this respect, Yeros comments that inventionists 'have sought to 'unmask' ethnic ideology, establish its historical novelty and fictitiousness, and lay bare the social hierarchies it conceals [...] interpreting invented traditions as the ideological instruments of colonial administration and social control' (1999: 117).

Inventionist ethnohistory has primarily focused on Africa, outlining the effects of the intervention of the colonisers and missionaries who, by introducing European bodies of knowledge to the continent, defining and formalising 'tribal' political and judicial institutions, creating artificial territories for administrative purposes, standardising local dialects and languages and promoting an ethnic division of labour, have, in effect, constructed ethnic groups. For example, Chanock (1985) argues that in Malawi and Zambia, colonial administrators have created the idea of the correspondence of tribe, chief, custom and judgement, an idea around which ethnic consciousness has successively crystallised, reifying principles of association. In turn, Roosens (1989) claims that the Luba from Kasai are largely a colonial invention grounded in the context of administrative territorial units and place in the overall structure of employment. In this scheme of things, native participation and agency is accorded a definitive place too. Ranger (1983, 1989) notes that local entrepreneurial elites, that is elders, men and chiefs, have drawn heavily on European invented traditions in order to maintain and extend their authority while, within an inter-ethnic context, indigenous populations have used 'tradition' to combat the political ascendancy of migrants.

The focus on invented traditions, terms of ascription and bodies of knowledge as a form of analysing ethnicity and nationalism has had a profound influence outside Africa. In the case of Greek nationalism, Herzfeld (1982) has equally shown that the idea of a Greek nation has been the invention of expatriate literati who created a whole science of folklore studies to give legitimacy to aspirations of national self-determination. In a similar vein, Karakasidou (1997), unravelling the complex social, political and economic process though which the initially diverse population of Greek Macedonia has currently come to identify itself as a homogeneous part of the Greek nation, has emphasised the words and deeds of local elites and national activists in shaping this identification and consciousness. The efficacy of local elites is also attested in Honig's (1992) study of ethnicity in China where the

construction of the Subei category is attributed to the historical amalgamation of migration, ethnic division of labour and the hierarchy of power. The same can also be said as far as pre-colonial times are concerned for the ethnic categories of the Sulu archipelago (Bentley 1981) and the Batak of Sumatra (Kipp 1993: 15-38) for Southeast Asia. In addition to all this, the post colonial nation-state has also featured increasingly in this kind of literature. Through its concrete policy attempts at creating national homogeneity out of ethnic heterogeneity, the nation-state has been analysed as inventing, creating, shaping and effacing local 'traditions' so as to fit its rhetoric of a unified national culture (Handler 1988; Liddle 1988).

Inventionist constructivism has convincingly argued that ethnic identities, rather than being primordial or primeval in the sense of something that has persisted from the beginning of time, are historically conditioned and socially created out of the structures of power and economy in which they are embedded. As such, inventionism has demonstrated that ethnicity does not have an 'essence' or stem from primordial sentiments, but is a process to be captured in historical terms. However valuable its contribution to the study of ethnicity, inventionist literature is, nevertheless, limited to the unravelling of an objective historical reality which often falls short of encompassing the subjects' own version of history, their own conceptualisations of their past. Theorists who adhere to inventionism have often laid their hands on only one part of History. What is largely missing from such accounts is an analytical engagement with the actor's own understanding of the past and the conceptual structures, affects and everyday experiences that inform our subjects' memories, actions, and sense of belonging in the present.

In the ethnicity literature, constructivists of all persuasions have generally emphasised history, choice and power and have been reluctant to address issues of experience and identity (Kipp 1993). Indeed, the main theoretical division in the respective literature has often been cast along these lines with primordialists been commonly associated with the study of ethnicity 'from the natives' point of view' (see Banks 1996). However, as Blu (1980) and Jenkins (1997) accurately observe, the line of demarcation of these divergent perspectives is less clear cut and more obscure than it is commonly assumed. In what follows, I will argue that the differences between primordialism and constructivism stem from different understandings of the concept of culture and that primordialism with its focus on ethnicity as lived experience does not necessarily run counter to a broad definition of social constructivism.

For primordialists like Shils (1957) and Geertz (1973c), both originally writing some forty years ago, ethnicity is not simply a variable dependent on historical conditions and economic interests. It is rather, seen as 'emanating out of a corpus of basic, elemental, and irreducible ("primordial") loyalties' (Nagata 1981: 89). These same scholars point to people's assertions or assumptions that ties of religion, kinship, language, place and culture have an overpowering quality that binds them together as well as to the intense passions and emotions that such ties frequently involve. This position is commonly understood as saying,

firstly, that primordialism inheres in these ties and that such ties have an overpowering determinism of their own, and, secondly, that ethnicity is an attribute of the person which he/she has in and of itself and, thus, that ethnicity is 'natural', given, biologically fixed, pre- or a-social (see Tonkin *et al* 1989; Banks 1996; Eller & Coughlan 1993). Such an understanding actually amounts to a misrepresentation of the primordialist position, for what primoridalists say is that ethnicity is experienced as 'primordial', 'natural' and 'given' by the actors themselves. They thus, employ primordiality as a close-to-native category analytically adopted in order to primarily evoke and only secondarily to explain. Both Blu (1980) and Jenkins (1997) clarify that this approach to ethnicity is actually based on a formulation of culture as ultimately defining the givenness and naturalness of ethnicity. In particular, Geertz construes primordial attachments as stemming

> from the "givens" -or more precisely, *as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens"*- of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the giveness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and of following particular social practices. The congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, *are seen* to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves (1993: 259, my emphasis).

In his treatment of ethnicity, as in the rest of his work on politics (1983), Geertz makes the case that what matters analytically is the native terms in which (ethnic) relatedness is lived and thought of, and that culture as a system of symbols is 'inevitably involved' in generating the way it is conceptualised and acted out. In this respect, we deal with a notion of culture that is very distinct from both the Barthian model of ethnic culture as diacritics, of custom as the outcome of conscious manipulation and of tradition as historical invention. Here, the issue at hand is culture as structures of significance, webs of symbols, that construct and delimit reality, our apprehension and experience of it.[9] In this respect, the whole logic of analysis has been inverted; ethnicity's definition as the social construction of culture difference, the constructivist dictum, has been converted into the cultural construction of social distinctiveness. In this respect, it seems to me that primordialism, far from being the exact opposite of constructivism, relates to it in a complementary fashion.

It is true that primordialists do not deal at great length with questions of history and choice. However, the primordialist position does not amount to an essentialist one in the sense that it assumes an unchanging ontology to what are the products of human history and particular forms of agency. Rather, the starting point of any primordialist investigation is the fact that essentialist understandings of identity form 'an interesting aspect of ordinary social relations' (Herzfeld 1996: 189), an aspect manifested most acutely in nationalist and ethnic discourses that relate homogeneity to the sharing of symbolic substances such as blood. In

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[9] This of course should not be taken to mean that such a view of culture necessarily excludes the proposition that members of a culture are the witting or unwitting participants in the production and reproduction of their realities.

this sense, primordialism invites one to recognise the existence of a significant relationship between ethnicity and culture as the symbolic context within which ethnicity discourses can be intelligibly and 'thickly' grasped. It thus, points to the social significance that shared genealogy, place, religion, and so on, might take in specific contexts without necessarily excluding a recognition of the historically complex and often contested ways in which such symbols are employed by differentially positioned social actors at any given time.

The division in the ethnicity literature is not an exclusive one according to which one must choose between the study of ethnicity as lived or experienced and as historically inscribed or acted upon. The value of both approaches lies in illuminating different aspects of a single phenomenon. Their basic assumptions and conceptions are mutually informing. In this thesis, therefore, I have adopted a broadly synthetic interpretation of 'mixed personhood' ethnicity. I have thus, sought to distil its historicity through a consideration of local memories of demographic movements in conjunction with written sources that locate these memories and movements within the specific political and economic structures operating in East Java during colonial and post-colonial times. The emergence of 'mixed personhood' in East Java is thus, described as the product of historical ruptures and discontinuities predicated, on the one hand, on migration and, on the other, on emplaced agency and a series of everyday actions and practices which people in my fieldwork locality engage themselves with.

With respect to the latter, I have sought to identify the specific significances and symbolic practices that have led the people of Alas Niser over the last one hundred and fifty or so years to conceptualise fundamental aspects of who they are and how they relate to one another through what Hutchinson calls 'substantive vectors' (2000: 55). Substantive vectors, such as, in my case, blood and its transmutations, i.e. potency and food, allow us to re-examine critically the relation between ethnicity, religion and kinship for they act as the main means and metaphors of sociality and identity creation. Blood and its alternative forms are locally infused with the efficacy of creating and maintaining social relations, as well as destroying them, due to an emphasis on their function as key exchange media that flow between people. Such substances allow us, then, to think of social relations as mediated ones and focus our attention on the indigenous system of sociality that classifies persons according to their degree of corporeal co-substantiality and residential co-spatiality.

In the case of Alas Niser, ethnicity is only one among several systems of classification in which the ontological make-up of persons is at centre stage and where, despite the pervasive essentialism of such systems, identities are neither construed as 'natural' in the sense of biological givenness nor as fixed and immutable. On the contrary, the very givenness and taken-for-granted aspect of ethnicity is argued to be based on its evocation of siblingship. Siblingship is itself founded upon a culturally specific discourse that converts difference in the form of affinity and neighbourliness into sameness through the practices of sharing the same place, children, ancestors and food. The conversion of difference is itself contingent on ideas of the human body as permeable and open to the

world and its surroundings. Ideas of corporeal permeability form part of local understandings of man's relation with Allah, dead ancestors and invisible spirits. In this sense, ethnicity is informed by religious practices. Common to both is the idea of corporeal transformability effected through one's engagement with one's significant Others. Such engagement metamorphosises the Other as much the Self.

Structure and effect

As I have already outlined the general approach adopted in this thesis, let me now give an indication of its overall structure. Chapter 1 concerns the history of the locality as narrated from a diversity of perspectives held by an array of differentially positioned locals. I have intentionally begun with a consideration of the history of the locality as constructed in the ethnographic present (1998-2000) so as to avoid commiting the sin of 'methodological fetishism' in the sense of mis-recognising the historicity that informs symbolic systems and the practices on which they rest. Furthermore, oral history accounts of the origins and further growth of Alas Niser form a crucial source of local identification and as such, lie at the centre of the makings of mixed personhood. The notion of place they construct links land, history and personhood through the establishment in narrative form, of two parallel processes, namely that of creating a new place and that of the emergence of a distinct kind of body-persons. In the very centre of these acts of remembering lie successive waves of demographic movement. The discursive construction of locality focuses on it being construed as the place of convergence of migrants originating both from the island of Madura and from Central Java. Local historical narratives emphasise the multiplicity and diversity of the paths that brought these migrants to the area as well as the transformation of the area from an uninhabited and dangerous place into a prosperous and secure one. This spatial transformation is coupled with the transformation of the people inhabiting Alas Niser into mixed persons.

Chapter 2 takes the theme of transformation one step further, focusing on the ontological metamorphoses entailed by the category of 'mixed people'. It discusses ethnicity as the activity of classifying persons according to a socially determined disourse on origins and growth, and it shows how ethnic kindedness is emically conceived in terms of an isomorphism - glossed as 'purity' - between genealogy and place as the two most important principles for the social engendering of persons. In this respect, mixed personhood represents a case of classificatory hybridity, predicated on the disjunction of ancestral place from ancestral blood due to the social memory of demographic movement. Thus, the idiom of mixing encodes this historical severance as much as the process of creating sociality in

and through the place of the migrants' final settlement. In the latter sense, mixing refers to the importance attributed to marriage and co-habitation as gradually displacing difference with a newly created correspondance of blood and place. This correspondance is born out of the exchanges of blood, primarily in the form of people and food, that take place between what are thought to be initially different kinds of people. Chapter 2 also sets the stage for an investigation of difference in corporeal and ontological terms as it draws attention to the fact that, from an emic perspective, ethnic difference is located in the body-person, the type of substances it is made of, its sensory capacities, sensibilities and internal states.

Chapter 3 discusses mixed personhood as the unfinished product of history. Its project of creating ontological homogeneity through the joining of contrasting principles of being-in-the-world is, at once, celebrated and negated as provisional and incomplete. It is argued that *pedalungan* personhood is susceptible to de-composition and internal partition. This is so for one finds the very Others out of whose mixing *pedalungan* is described as having emerged, still present within *pedalungan* identity as two somewhat disjunctive entities. While on the one hand, 'mixed personhood' presents itself as composite, i.e. the combination of Javanese *halus*-ness and Madurese *kasar*-ness, on the other, it appears to be internally fragmented. At the centre of this fragmentation lie the tensions produced by the *halus-kasar* distinction and its differential distribution in the space covered by the municipality of Probolinggo. The chapter also throws light on the divergent meanings that *pedalungan* takes for locals and non-locals alike and of the politics of self-making that such a divergence produces in the context of the biography of a woman from Alas Niser. Finally, the chapter offers an occasion for a consideration of the limits of mixing, looking at the ways that the boundary between Chinese, Arabs and *pedalungan* is constructed and maintained.

In Chapter 4, I move from politics and the limits of mixing to a consideration of the body as a kind of place. The chapter draws on Errington's observation that in Luwu (Central Sulawesi), 'the body [..] is constituted in the same way as other sorts of places [...] like 'house', 'kinship grouping', and 'kingdom'. These different sizes of places share a common organization: each has a 'navel', a source of power or point of origin, around which peripheral matter are oriented' (1983: 547). I demonstrate that this homology is equally true for East Java through an analysis of sorcery and counter-sorcery rites. Though primarily construed as an illness, sorcery concerns and practices are also about difference and sociality, for encapsulated in the images locals construct of the violated body of sorcery's victim and of the poisoned blood that it carries in its veins, are social relations of power, inequality, enmity and conflict. Such relations are further conveyed by the metaphor of cannibalistic marriage, a metaphor that organises sorcery rites, culminating in the termination rather than the regeneration of life. In the case of sorcery as in that of ethnicity, kindedness of blood registers difference while the oscillation of bodies-persons between the states of illness and health is seen as effected by the incorporation of substances that move between people.

Chapter 5 depicts the opposite of sorcery and illness, namely potency that heals. The chapter is basically an elaboration and critical re-examination of Anderson's (1990) seminal contribution to the concept of power in Java as an essence, a substance and 'divine energy that animates the universe' (1990: 22). Potency's accumulation and incorporation by the body-person is construed in relational terms, as its acquisition is said to take place within the context of hierarchical relations of authority and voluntary submission partaking between potency's giver and potency's receiver. Moreover, rather than flowing from a homogeneous source, potency's different degrees of efficacy are locally differentiated according to the position of its source in the overall hierarchy of beings which has Allah at its top, succeeded by ancestors and teachers of various kinds of mysticism. In the same way that the blood of sorcery's many victims is said to be weakened, corrupted, polluted and poisoned as the result of the body's violation by a mystical agent, the embodiment of benevolent and protective potency is marked by the transformation of the respective person's quality of blood that is now construed as being purer, whiter, cooler and more powerful.

The relationships among substances, body-persons, blood, social relations and transformations are futher explored in Chapter 6 with respect to the local kinship system. The chapter deals with kinship in the light of recent studies that emphasise the significance of acts of feeding, exchanges of blood, milk and care, the sharing of the same space in the form of the house and the hearth in creating kinship relatedness (Schneider 1984; Gow 1991; Carsten 1997). It focuses on the body-person as a social microcosm, 'composed of the specific historical actions of social others' (Strathern 1988: 132). In this context, the act of conception is taken as shaping the living person in essential and embodied ways, while genealogy is construed as a social relationship that connects body-persons along a historical path of vertical bonds. Blood, as the genealogically transmitted substance of life, inscribes such relationships in the very materiality of human form. Embedded in this model of essential kindedness is the idea of siblingship as co-substantiality and almost perfect similarity. The chapter analyses the centrality of siblingship in the light of ideas expounded by other Southeast Asianists. It draws on McKinley's (1981) argument that in 'centrist archipelago' societies, same-sex siblings epitomise the unity and identity of cognatic systems, and on Carsten's (1997) argument that marriage partially transforms affinal alterity into consaguineal similarity by symbolically concentrating on the body-person of the offspring. It is argued that the difference between affinity and consanguinity collapses when the body-person of the offspring is composed of blood which is contributed equally by both sides of the marital equation which, in turn, become in this way indirectly co-substantial.

Chapter 7 follows much of the same logic. Here, I move from tracing the importance of blood transactions for the genealogical and marital engendering of persons to transactions of food and prayers within the horizontal network of neighbourhood ritual occasions. In this respect, the displacement of difference between consanguineal relations, and relations predicated on co-habitation is attributed to the flow of substances and the appropriation of

other people's dead ancestors as one's own. Neighbours are partially transformed into siblings on the basis of a rotating reciprocity that allows for and, indeed, effects a sharing of lives, children, dead ancestors, merit, blessings and blood in the form of food. Ritual exchanges between siblings and among neighbours of the same *kampong* largely follow the same pattern. Thus, recognition of this homology directs our attention away from defining siblingship as the sharing of the same biologically construed substance towards paying attention to the symbolic processes and ritual means through which the very idea of siblingship is socially constructed. In this context, the notion and relevance of substances need not necessarily be eliminated from such a consideration on the basis of their putative evocation of a theory of biological connectedness directly commensurable to Western notions. In East Java, substances are objects of exchange and thus, wholly cultural, mediating social relations and the central components of personhood's transformative kindedness. Moreover, the imagery of people who share the same place as people who are co-substantial has wider implications. It means that blood and place, as principles of identification and classification, far from being distinct, share a fundamental similarity and mutual inter-convertibility.

MADURA AND THE NORTH COAST
OF EAST JAVA PROVINCE

0 10 20 30km

MADURA: REGENCIES
--- Regency boundary
1.BANGKALAN 3.PAMEKASAN
2.SAMPANG   4.SUMENEP

HB '85
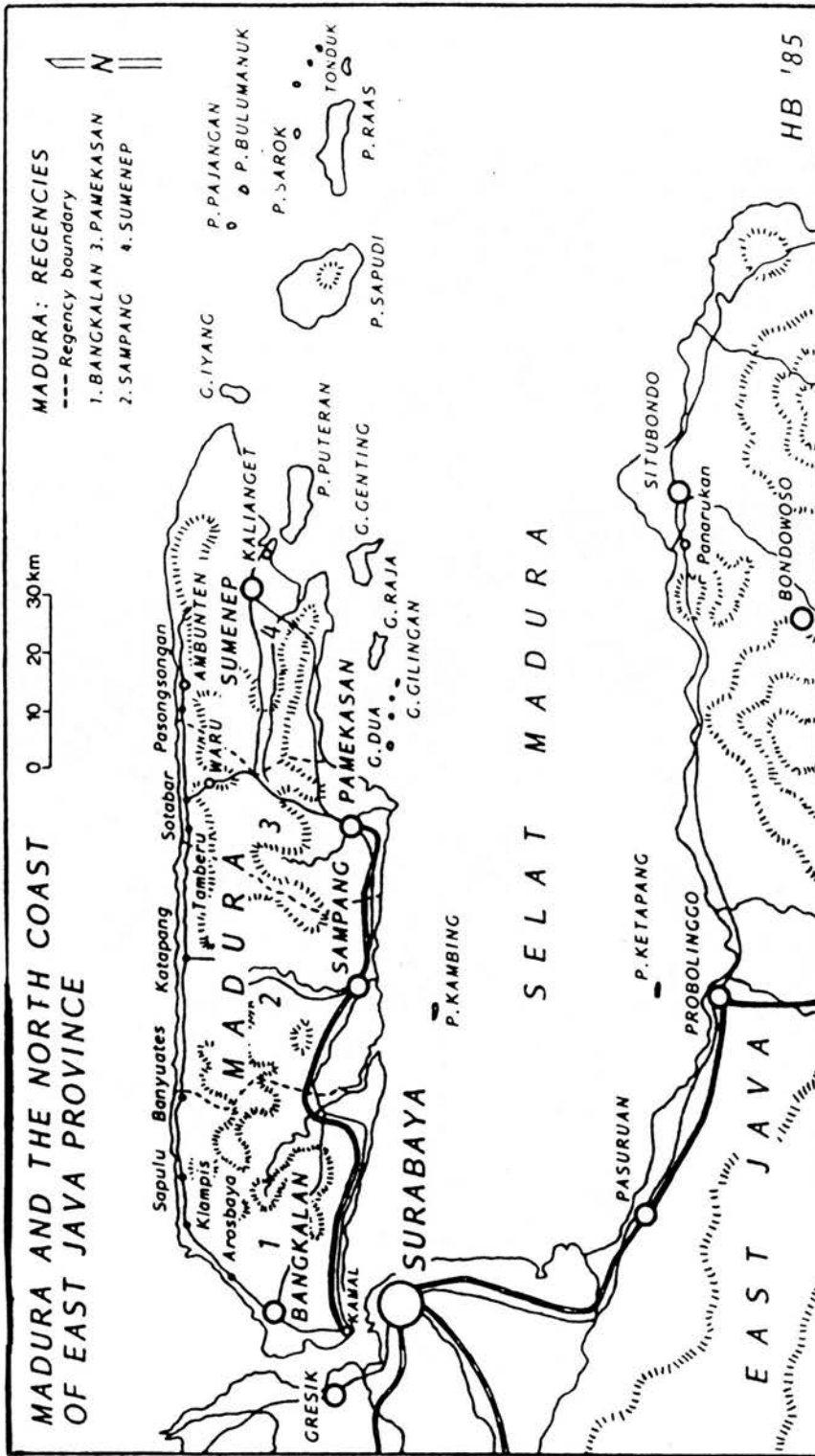
3. Map of Madura. Taken from A. Niehof 1985:22.

Chapter One. Creating place:
land, movement and sociality

The unity of the beginning

'all locality building has a moment of colonisation,
a moment both historical and chronotypic'

(Appadurai 1996: 183)

I visited Alas Niser, for the first time, during the *Ramadhan* month of 1998. It was early in the afternoon, just after the mid-noon prayer, and the village seemed drawn to itself, quiet and almost vacant of life as if its inhabitants had totally disappeared from the face of the earth. One could only hear an unidentified mix of several voices chanting in Arabic, all coming from some distance away and from various directions. Most of the shops in the market were closed and those still open were empty of customers. There was no sign of that vibrant intensity and vitality that any sojourner in Southeast Asia usually encounters at open markets. My assistant and I had just got off the tiny van that had taken us there from Probolinggo city centre, to the south and along a one kilometre-long stretch of irrigated rice fields with newly planted seedlings, interspersed here and there with few white-washed brick houses in the process of forming new compounds. We had gone to Alas Niser with some preliminary queries about the possibility of taking up residence in the village after we had secured the approval of the headman and, of course, the local Islamic scholars (*kyai*, Ind.). Without any hesitation, we headed towards the compound of such a venerated figure only to find out that he was away on important business in Surabaya and that he would not be back before dark. The young man who greeted us in the *kyai*'s house was a distant relative, neighbour and disciple of his who asked us rather warily but politely, who we were and what we wanted. With the help of my assistant, I explained in a formal way my origins and project, stressing the purpose of the visit and my interest in local history and Madurese migration. Then, the young man who was destined to become one of my most valuable and close friends for the whole duration of my stay in the village, took us to the house of an elderly neighbour of his who he considered to be an authority on these issues. That was the first time I heard about the founding of the village by a set of siblings.

Pak Mattasan, the man in question, was said to be over one hundred years old or as locals put, 'to have his skin changed like a snake over seven times'. Despite his old age and his frail health, he went on to offer a narration of the village founding that I encountered several times in subsequent conversations I had with locals. The story starts with the arrival of a set of siblings who, sometime in the past, crossed the Madura Strait, separating the

island of Madura from East Java by means of a boat and headed further inland from the coast in a desperate attempt to find or actually 'make' land. Pak Mattasan explained:

> In the *jhaman krajaen* (Mad., the period of the kingdoms, that is before the arrival of the Dutch) my ancestor came over here from Madura. His name was great-grandfather Renten. He came here not alone but together with his five other *satretan* (Mad., full siblings) from Omben [a village in the hinterland of *kabupaten* Sampang]. If all of them were to gather today, together with their descendants, my compound's space would not be enough. Their names were great-grandfather Renten, great-grandfather Siang, great-grandfather Banjir, great-grandfather Sayanten, great-grandfather Sermatija and great-grandmother Sumi, who was the only female. These were the first to settle in the area for before their arrival it was not populated... it was covered by thick forest and only animals and evil spirits lived here. Beginning from the Probolinggo city centre, the whole area was covered by forest...that was in the past. These siblings were the first humans (*oreng*, Mad.) who 'made' (*aghabay*, Mad.) the village, 'made' houses, 'made' land. Although they came here as a set of siblings (*setretanan*), they later spread out and each chose a spot of the forest to clear. They 'made' the village through clearing the forest (*dudu alas*, Mad.). By doing so, they created *talon* (rain dependent fields) and built the first *tabing* (huts) and *langgar* (small prayer houses). Except for great-grandmother Sumi, there was no other female accompanying them. When they 'made' land and huts, their wives followed (*nototin*, Mad.) them here from Madura...and they all gave birth to a lot of children...all of them were born here (*lahiran dhinna*, Mad.). Children and clearing the forest...It takes four generations to reach my generation...Here, it is big Omben. Starting from the area further away from the bridge, to the west and to the south, we are all descendants of these 'first people' (*oreng situng*, Mad.).

Other versions of this founding myth narrated to me by other locals at various times during my fieldwork contained elements that did not fully coincide with Pak Mattasan's narration. Sometimes the siblings were said to be five, sometimes four. There were also disagreements about their precise names. Some people also maintained that the first settlers had arrived together with their wives from the outset. All the versions though shared a common theme, insisting on the siblingship ties that connected the village founders, their place of origin being Omben and their successful efforts at forest clearing, referred to by the phrase *dudu alas* or *bhabhad alas* (Mad.). The narratives were arranged similarly too, that is along generational lines proceeding lineally towards the present till they reached the present generation. The time span of these genealogical memories reached back four generations, sometimes five but rarely more. After that level, memories became blurred as ancestors were transformed from named ones, one had probably lived experiences with, to unnamed and unidentified ones, designated as *sesepo* (Mad.), that is ancestors. Genealogical narration structured time in a progressive mode and succumbed history to kinship. To cite Peter Gow, 'history is not experienced [...] as a force which enters from outside to disrupt a timeless structure of kinship duties and obligations. Kinship relations are created and dissolved in historical time and historical time draws its meaning and power for native people by being structured by kinship relations' (1991:3).

In these narratives, genealogies and ancestral acts of clearing the forest (*dudu* or *bhabhad*, Mad.) were inter-linked. In this context, the term *bhabhad* is particularly significant. As Giambelli (1999) has shown for Bali, the Old Javanese term *babad*, cognates of which are found both in the Balinese and Madurese languages, carries two different meanings. Within the context of the indigenous literary tradition, it refers to a genre of historico-genealogical chronicles narrating the founding of new royal dynasties and/or significant events. Within the context of agriculture, it designates the creation of cultivable fields through the chopping down of trees, the levelling of the ground and the preparing of the soil for planting. What is common to both, is firstly, the idea of a beginning, a point in history where the current situation originates from, and secondly, the idea of transformation, that is 'the emergence of a new situation from a given existing situation' (Giambelli 1999: 498). In the case of Alas Niser, *bhabhab* stories not only emphasise the transformation of the landscape and its domestication by the force of ancestral agency, but they also highlight the centrality of siblingship as precipitating such a transformation.

The imagery of siblingship is a potent one. It establishes a particular and culturally specific form of continuity between past and present. Furthermore, it portrays the present population of Alas Niser - that according to official estimates reached that of 3,354 souls in 1997 and was spread over an area covering almost one and half square kilometres - as having sprung up from a set of closely related people who, by being siblings, shared the same substance. Irrespective of whatever value in terms of their historical accuracy one is willing to attribute to such oral accounts,[1] narratives of this kind are primarily myths of origin that employ basic symbols, persons and events so as to convey meanings and, in particular, so as to construct specific images of locality and identity in the present (Bloch 1977; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Tonkin 1992). Siblingship is, thus, one such symbol and its evocation displaces difference among the diverse inhabitants of the village by registering their fundamental similarity in the unity of the first settlers of the village. Moreover, this remembered and often cited version of locality, establishes vague kinship connections among the present population. By being portrayed as descendants of these 'first people', they are all constructed as consanguines. However, the precise content of these ties remains unelaborated. Multiple and vague kinship links transform the space the community occupies into an imagined and interconnected one, itself founded on a behavioural system of values of harmony, mutual help and sharing, most commonly associated with kinship.

I went on to collect several such accounts, paying due respect to the genealogies accompanying them, and through what Rivers (1971) calls 'the genealogical method', I came to identify some of the descendants of three of these initial siblings. They are living in the residential compounds (*tanean*, Mad.) founded by these ancestors and while located in what are today three different villages in administrative terms, are not more than 700 metres away

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[1] I do not imply here that written and authoritative accounts are to be treated in anyway differently from oral ones since both are equally socially constructed and thus, subjective and selective.

from each other. My good luck led me to take up residence in one of them. My residential *tanean* is the most prominent of the three both in terms of status since it is headed by a *kyai* who owns a *pesantren* and in terms of the property the *kyai* commands. The second compound is located to the north-west and not very far if one was to cross a rather shallow river, instead of following the asphalt road. The third *tanean* is located further to the south-east, just behind what used to be a Dutch-owned sugar mill early in the twentieth century. Around each of these 'metropolitan' compounds there are other *tanean* established in later times by the mushrooming effect of population growth of the 'metropolitan' *tanean*'s inhabitants. At certain times of their histories, and in particular, when the residential land a *tanean* commands is filled with houses, compounds spread and one or more new *tanean* are established nearby by converting and dividing the agricultural land surrounding them to a residential one and the erection of a house which is to be occupied by a new couple.[2] Kinship relations between members of the old and the new *tanean* are remembered and enacted depending on the time span that separates the current older generation from the one preceding the *tanean*'s founding. The further away in time the division has taken place, the more kinship tends to be thinned out and forgotten since genealogical memories in this part of the world are rather short.[3] As a result of this, precise kinship connections between the first three *tanean* are not elaborated or emphasised, the only exception being the sibling story.

The employment of the genealogical method through the bringing together of several genealogies and other scanty information I have collected from descendants of these 'first settlers', allows us to hypothesise that their demographic movement out of Central Madura and into East Java took place sometime between 1830 and 1850. I have come to this conclusion through gathering information from people who were older than 75 years old, among whom Pak Mattasan was the eldest, and allowing for 25 years to mark each generational succession. This figure is the most appropriate since in the past, people tended to get married in their mid- to late teens and infant mortality was a common occurrence.

Historians and anthropologists of the island society of Madura have repeatedly pointed out that around that time the island experienced an unprecedented rural exodus, precipitated by the combined effect of rapid population growth and the excesses of the local aristocracy (Husson 1995:149-154, 1997; Niehof 1982; Jonge 1989: 23-26,44-78; Kuntowijoyo 1989; Tjiptoatmodjo 1983: 302-319). In the second half of the 18th century, the principalities of Madura transformed themselves from vassal states of the Mataram kingdom of Central Java to vassal states of the VOC, the Dutch East Indies Company, through the signing of a series of contracts that placed them under the military and political protection of

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[2] For a similar process in Madura see Jonge 1989:15-16.

[3] Examples of what is usually termed as 'genealogical' or 'structural amnesia' are to be found in Borneo (Freeman 1961: 208), Malaysia (Carsten 1995a), Java (Jay 1969:171), and Bali (Geertz & Geertz 1964).

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the VOC (Jonge 1982). Madurese princes were granted the right to govern their polities without the supervision or direct control of the Dutch and in return for the latter's protection, they were to make annual contributions to the company in money, kind and troops. The aristocracy in order to find adequate funds to pay the tribute, placed new, heavier taxes on the island's population. Another reason that accounted for the rapid increases in taxation is traced to the adoption of an increasingly lavish life-style on the part of the aristocracy which tried to compensate for its gradual loss of legitimacy through indulging in conspicuous consumption of imported goods from Europe and elsewhere. A third and equally important reason was the increasing practice of tax-farming according to which appendage holders would rent out their rights of collecting taxes to third parties, usually Chinese-Indonesians, for the payment in advance of an agreed amount of money. In the early 19th century, tax-farming had an inflationary effect on taxation as tax-farmers not only rented out their rights to third parties but all those involved increased the amount to be collected so that their profit margin could be improved.

Taxation increases imposed a further burden on the population and on the scarce resources of the island economy. Geographically, Madura is an offshoot of the north and east Javanese limestone hills and it is characterised by aridity, scarcity of good soil, deforestation, soil erosion and extended period of droughts (Husson 1995:61-75; Jonge 1989: 5-10). With the exception of the alluvial soils where irrigation is possible and which are concentrated around the then principalities and today's major urban centres of Pamekasan, Bangkalan, Sampang and Sumenep, the rest of the island consists of rocky low hills which are difficult to cultivate and do not contribute to the formation of big rivers. The barrenness of the soil is further exacerbated by the absence of volcanic elements and the low levels of rainfall. The dominant mode of agriculture practised on the island both today and during the centuries preceding it was that of *tegal* (Ind.) or *talon* (Mad.), that is of rain dependent fields which in contrast to *sabeh*, that is irrigated agriculture, produces only one yield a year and is extremely sensitive to droughts. Along with rice, Madurese peasants grew maize, cassava, peanuts, sweet potatoes, soya beans and tobacco. Despite the presence of other secondary economic activities such as animal husbandry, trade, salt production and fishing undertaken by the island's inhabitants, colonial commentators assigned to Madura the status of economically poor island that could barely grow enough crops to feed its mushrooming population (see Dijk *et al* 1995:2). In the period between 1815 and 1867, Madura experienced an almost tripling of its population which went up from 218.659 in 1815 to 254.123 in 1845 to 595.841 in 1867.[4] This increase was very much a consequence of the pacification of the area brought about by the expanding VOC, the Dutch East Indies Company, and later by the colonial state and the low incidence of disease. This increase led both to a rapid deforestation of the island's hinterland, as peasants tried to expand their

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[4] The figures are taken from Jonge 1989: 21.

holdings and to an exodus which saw thousands of Madurese leaving the island en masse for the frontier areas of eastern East Java.

Madurese responses to the dual pressures of population growth and abuses of the autonomous local government, set against the background of unfavourable ecological conditions, were twofold: revolt and flight. During the period between 1820-1850, several revolts took place. The revolts which aimed at substituting local lords with new ones and were lead mainly by Islamic religious scholars, were, for the most part, unsuccessful. But by far the most popular response was what Adas (1981) has termed 'avoidance protest' which, in turn, is to be found all over Southeast Asia in both precolonial and early colonial times. Protest avoidance characterises the tendency of peasants to transfer allegiance to alternative rulers or simply to move away from the polity's centre to frontier areas when they felt that they were the object of excessive extractions in the form of corvee labour and other taxes. Such an option, Adas emphasises was predicated as much on low levels of bureaucratic efficacy and poor communications as on low population densities and the existence of refuge zones or unoccupied areas in which those in flight could settle.

The Madurese peasants' flight took a specific form as they migrated to areas of East Java which are more or less opposite their area of origin (Jonge 1989: 24; Husson 1995:92-99). Thus, Madurese from Bangkalan migrated mainly to Tuban, Surabaya, Jombang, Pasuruan and Malang; those from Sampang, to Surabaya, Pasuruan, Probolinggo and Lumajang; those from Pamekasan to Probolinggo, Jember and Bondowoso; while those from Sumenep, to Bondowoso, Situbondo, Jember and Banyuwangi. The volume of this demographic movement is astonishing. According to Tjiptoatmodjo (1983: 315), the Madurese population of Surabaya increased from 12,376 in 1822 to 15,724 two years later. The same author cites colonial records that estimate that the population of the Besuki regency (*afdeeling*) increased from 41,555 in 1828 to 59,792 in 1845 out of which the Madurese formed the majority with 58,256 souls counted (1983:274-5). To the north of Besuki, in the residency of Pasuruan out of a total of 264,519 souls in 1832, the Madurese were counted as 92,463 and the Javanese as 170,049 (1983: 268, 315; see also Husson 1997: 85). In between these two areas lay the regency of Probolinggo, which in 1845 had a population of 18,456 Javanese and 56,317 Madurese (Tjiptoatmodjo 1983: 317). Whatever the accuracy of colonial statistics, a very forceful image emerges out of them, namely that of the flooding of East Java with dislocated and poor migrants from Madura.

This influx slowly but steadily transformed the frontier character coastal East Java had assumed during the 18th century as a result of the expanding interests of the Dutch East Indies Company and its attempts at creating a stable Java with its centre in Mataram (Elson 1984: 2-3; Nagtegaal 1996). As the VOC along with its local allies eliminated all their enemies through a long and bloody series of campaigns like the one against Surapati in 1706 and the rebellion of 1741, it converted East Java into 'a cauldron of warfare' (Elson 1984: 1), devastating and depopulating much of its countryside, as peasants would flee away from
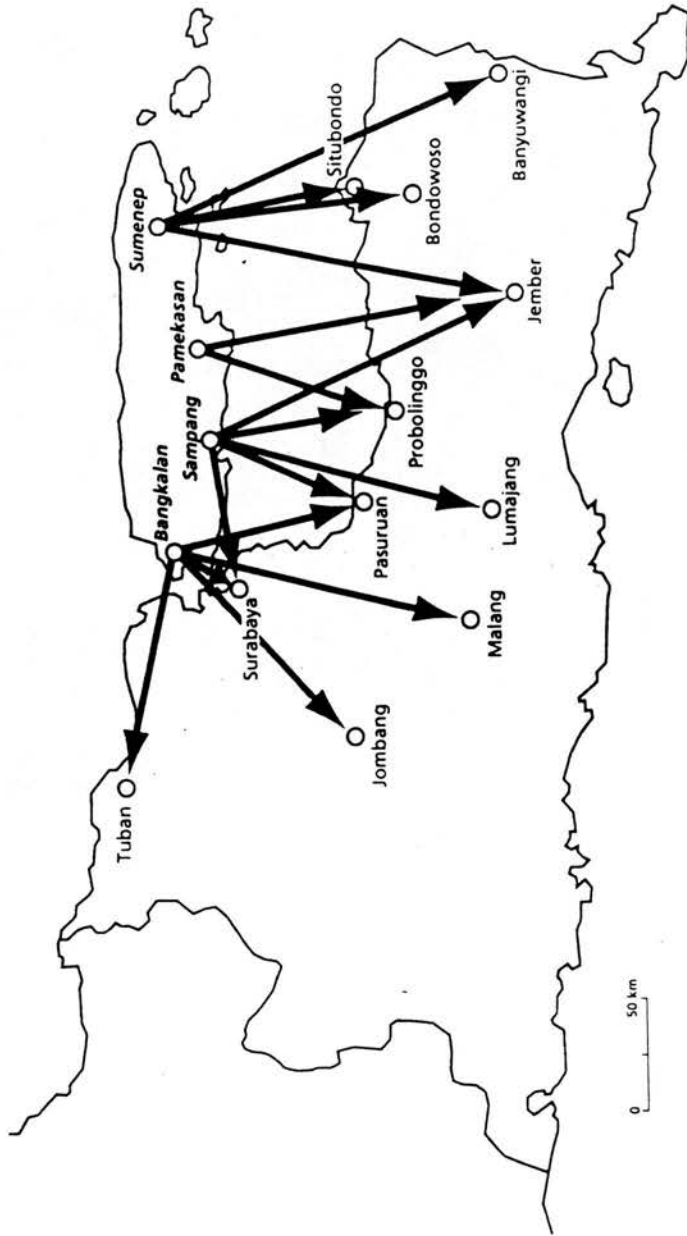
4. Map of Madurese demographic movements (19th and early 20th century). Taken from L. Husson 1995: 93.

recurring strife in search of security. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the most thickly populated areas were those of the environs of the towns of Surabaya, Pasuruan, Bangil and Probolinggo and the land around them was said to be well cultivated. But outside the administrative and commercial centre of these towns lay areas that were sparsely populated and mostly uncultivated. Citing colonial sources, Elson argues that by 1820, 'only 6 per cent of the land area of Probolinggo regency was *sawah* [Ind., irrigated fields] and 87 per cent remained uncultivated' (1984: 6). Further inland, Malang was still an area filled with rebels and bandits while the far south which met the Indian ocean was uninhabited and full of crocodile-infested swamps. The pacification of the area through the consolidation of colonial rule and the arrival of migrants from Madura who settled in large numbers, brought about the rapid repopulation of the area and the expansion of the land under cultivation. As Elson writes,

> as people grew in numbers, they set to the task of reclaiming the forests and marshes of the frontier with industry and resourcefulness. When peasants cleared the land, they generally constructed flat dry fields (*tegal*) for growing grain and vegetables (1984: 5).

In Alas Niser, the initial 'making' of land out of forest is attributed to the mystical powers of the first settlers who were designated as *oreng sakte*. Since I will be talking about this category of people in Chapter 4 more extensively, it is sufficient for current purposes to say that *oreng sakte* are those who have acquired or inherited (or both) divine or mystical powers by means of sustaining extreme ascetic regimes and are, thus, able to perform extraordinary deeds such as healing or, as in our case, of entering dangerous and haunted (*angker*, Mad.) places such as forests in order to make clearings. The descendants of *bujuk* Banjir, one of initial siblings mentioned in the story, remembered him as having used a *keris* (dagger) he had made himself by mixing together soil, chopped banana leaves and fragments of *kapok* tree bark for cutting down the big trees that were covering Alas Niser at that time. Due to his magical powers, *bujuk* Banjir's *keris* was said to be stronger than iron blade ones and able to cut a several metre high *jati* tree with a single stroke. This miraculous aspect of the community's founding associated with powers that are said to emanate from Allah and bestowed to his most pious believers only, was stressed several times in villagers' accounts which attributed the spreading of Islam in the area to the efforts of their ancestors. 'The people of surrounding villages did not know Islam at that time', an informant contented, 'they were all Buddhists'. With the use of his*keris* and its superior powers that extended to generating prosperity and wealth, *bujuk* Banjir is said to have converted many of these Buddhists and to have founded several *langgar* in the area.

A mixture of destitute people

In contrast to the vertical encompassment sense of locality embedded in the story of the siblings, another sense, this time one of horizontal encompassment, emerges out of accounts of other local people. The latter were descendants of migrants from Madura who mostly came to the area at different times during the decades from 1850 to 1950. Their narratives, conditioned as all knowledge is by the social position and biography of the speaker, stressed not only the diversity of origins of their ancestors who were said to have come from all four corners of the island but also marriage at the expense of siblingship. In these accounts, affinity was the primary idiom used for the transformation of what was a foreign, potentially hostile, space into a familiar and safe one, mediated by horizontal networks of sociality founded on inter-marriage. Thus, while descendants of the first settlers emphasised the 'production of locality'[5] through a 'unity of descent' (*situng toronan*, Mad.), claiming it to be an extension, if not a 'colony', of Omben, narratives of descendants of people who entered the area at later times produced an image of Alas Niser as founded on a great mixture of origins bridged through marriage. That was also the case with narratives of people who had arrived in Alas Niser coming from Central and Western East Java, that is from areas locally associated with Javanese people and culture. Since I will be talking about Javanese migration in the third part of this chapter, I will concentrate only on accounts of Madurophones in this section.

Despite this apparent difference in the mode of locality's conceptualisation, they all shared a common sense of a relatively newly-founded locality out of the demographic movement of destitute and poverty stricken ancestors who, in turn, were said to continue to 'make' land through forest clearing and claiming the land as their own up to the first decades of the twentieth century. The availability of land and the fertility of local, Javanese soil (*tana Jebbeh*, Mad.), defined in opposition to the barenness and scarcity of land of *tana Madura*, were a constant feature of the orally transmitted experiences of their ancestors. These portrayed Java, in general, and Alas Niser, in particular, as a newly discovered heaven and a land of plenty waiting for people who would work hard enough to make it habitable and productive. In the process of appropriating this land, these ancestors and their descendants seem to me to have been also appropriated by it since a process of forgetting has been institutionalised in the sphere of memory and enacted sociality (see also Carsten 1995a).

Migration constitutes a sharp break in people's genealogies which, in most cases, stop short of incorporating the names of ancestors who lived and died in Madura, having never crossed the sea strait to Java. People confessed themselves ignorant of the names of the ancestors of the settlers from whom they were descended and in a lot of cases, they did

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[5] I have borrowed the term from Appadurai who stresses its strong connotations of 'agency, sociality, and reproducibility' (1996: 178). I have retained though, its spatial aspect because it is emphasised by the accounts of my informants.

not know the exact name of the settlers' villages of origin. Narrations were thus constructed with a sense of a history starting from a zero point, that of migration. Vague references, instead, as to the settlers' wider area of origin, phrased in terms of *kabupaten* (district, Ind.) was what I most readily encountered. This was the case with people who were third- or fourth-generation migrants. In their case, memory depth was conditioned by demographic mobility, rendering kinship connections with people in Madura out of memory's reach. Moreover, the latter's self-identification as *oreng dhinna* (Mad.), that is people of the place (Alas Niser), or *lariran dhinna* (Mad.), that is born of the place (Alas Niser), was accompanied by negative responses as to whether they had ever visited relatives in Madura. While they all presumed that they had family connections with people in Madura, they had never actually met them for they had never travelled there. Their indifference to tracing and maintaining kinship with ancestral places of origin in Madura as well as the lack of 'deep' memory marked the long term dissolution of cross-strait sociality and the creation of a new one focused on the present locality in Java.

While the account of Madurese migration I presented in the preceding section as precipitated by avoidance protest seems to conform to what secondary scholarly sources reveal as to the conditions on the island society at that time, descendants of the first settlers as well as people arriving at later times maintained that the main motivating force behind out-migration had been poverty avoidance. Significantly, this poverty was not attributed to either population or taxation increases but to the difficulties of earning a living in Madura as a peasant. As such, it was the poor quality of land that was stressed. As one informant said,

> my ancestors came over here in search of a living (*nyareh nafkah*, Mad.). Life in Madura was not easy... the land was infertile and arid... so they migrated (*onggah*, Mad.) to Java, they came here as poor migrants. Over there it was difficult to find a job besides being a farmer...There was some fishing and trading done but actually the situation was desperate...even drilling wells for finding water was hopeless. So, one had to wait for the rains to come. If there was no rain, one could not plant. It was far better being a farmer here...land was plentiful and we get three yields a year while over there they got only one.

The search for living, compounded with land considerations and detailed knowledge of ecological conditions, was echoed by several comments locals made. Another one, speaking in Indonesian, said: 'the land nearby the coast, was extremely infertile and the water was not enough. Elsewhere [in Madura], in the hinterland, the hills contain so much calcium (*kapur*, Ind.) that makes the soil loose (*gembur*, Ind.)...so yields are extremely poor'.

The consistency with which people talked and thought of migration was revealed also in terms of poverty calculation. In this respect, the infrequent consumption of rice meals and substitution of rice as a staple with corn and cassava was evoked extensively in narratives to characterise life in Madura and to mark the boundary between here and there, past and present. The sense of poverty in Madura was embedded in indirect recollections of people

eating one rice meal a day or having to make do with corn and cassava for extended periods of time, and especially before the rice harvest. Both these foodstuffs are locally considered as of secondary nutritional value, lacking in taste and the food of poor peasants. Extreme poverty was also claimed as the main motivation of people arriving in Alas Niser during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). In this case, they claimed to have fled the Japanese forces which were portrayed as having devastated the countryside, confiscating produce, livestock and arresting people to work as forced labourers (*romusha*, Ind.).

This collective text of a shared past founded on pre-migration poverty has to be set against the background of the diverse origins today's inhabitants are very conscious of. While the majority of them were aware of descending from people who headed from Madura, it is not shared 'Madureseness' that is stressed but rather diversity both within and without. Or as a Madurophone informant put it,

> we may have come from Madura...yeah but you have to know that there is Madura Sampang, Madura Pamekasan, Madura Sumenep, Madura Bangkalan; there is Madura east and west; Madura north and south...we came here from all directions and our ancestors were strangers to each other (*oreng laen*, Mad., literally 'other people'), they were not kin previously; they just met here...the same goes for Javanese...there are Javanese from Jojga and Blitar, from Jombang and Kediri... they did not know each other before but they are all living here today.

The heterogeneity of the locality was a constant theme during the conversations I had with locals who would readily point to the different origins of some of their affines and neighbours. While strolling along a narrow street, I remember a man speaking to me about his neighbourhood along these lines: 'here is the house of Pak Indang who heads from Malang, [then pointing to the opposite side], that's where Pak Hosein lives, his family descends from Madurese from Sampang but they have been living here for a long time; beside his is Pak Sugeng's house whose grandfather was from Sumenep [east Madura]'. Thus, the sense of locality these and other numerous voluntary comments constructed was one of people converging to the same place over a long period of time. They and their descendants were identified as sharing this place while living interspersed, that is, scattered randomly over the territory. This sense of interspersion that conveys meanings of both past difference in terms of origins and present immediacy and tense interaction is linguistically encapsulated in the concept of *campor* (Mad.; *campur*, Ind.).

The term *campor* is very significant. It can mean 'mixed', 'mingled' and 'blended'. When used interchangeably with *akanca* (Mad.) or *bergaul* (Ind.), it connotes processes of befriending, association and joined participation. In this context, it refers to the conscious self-representation of the locality as a mixed one, and the creation of a shared space out of people of different origins who have been mixed through co-habitation. Phrases like 'we are mixed people' or 'we have been already mixed here' were partly made in the context of

discussions on the local community's make-up and were preceded by considerations of diverse origins. Thus, past heterogeneity is cancelled out by an emphasis on the spatial mixing of people in the present.

Campor has other connotations too. It is used with reference to the mixing of liquids as in the case of phrases like *mennyaq tak' campor abhareng aeng poteh* (Mad.; oil and water do not mix) or *aeng soso ecampor aeng poteh* (Mad.; milk mixed with water). It is also used to describe children born of inter-ethnic marriages for their designation as *oreng camporan* or *orang pedalungan* is thought of in terms of a mixing of different kinds of blood. As I will make clear in the next chapter, the difference between ethnic categories is conceptualised in terms of differences of blood. Thus, offspring of inter-ethnic marriages are said to be of mixed blood, that of their father blended together with that of their mother. As I will try to demonstrate throughout this thesis, the overlapping of spatial and kinship idioms is far from a coincidence, for the image their conflation constructs is a potent one. Its potency reflects the significance locals attribute to both co-spatiality and affinity, which together with siblingship, form the substratum of cultural assumptions behind their self-identification as 'mixed people'. What I want to stress here is only that such self-identification is ultimately the product of a history of migration and of the remembered heterogeneity of origins.

The fact that migration into the area was a long process, starting from mid-nineteenth century and still continuing to this day (though, currently with lesser intensity), and the lack of a consciousness of belonging to an imagined community associated, in turn, with the 'Madurese' or the 'Javanese', have worked against the possibility of migrants clustering around distinct residential groups of 'Javanese' and 'Madurese'. The long history of migration meant a slow but steady process of incorporation of newcomers while the stressing of diversity within the ethnic categories of 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' was the result of specific conditions characterising the island society of Madura during the preceding centuries. These conditions include the fact that Madura never formed a single, unified political entity but was politically fragmented in various principalities since at least the 17th century, the poor condition of internal lines of communications and the fact that communities of the form of either the kinship-based *tanean* or its slightly more heterogeneous spatial extension, that of the neighbourhood, form the principal components of identity in this island (Niehof 1982; Jonge 1989:17,48; Dijk *et al* 1995: 1). Similarly, both the long history of migration and the cultural emphasis on internal ethnic diversity as well as the lack of pre-established relatedness among the in-coming migrants, have also discouraged the formation of other groups based on same area of origin, say for example Sampang or Pamekasan origin groups. Even in the case of the initial settlers of the area, that of siblings, their prior kinship connections are somewhat counterbalanced by being remembered as having spread out over a quite wide area instead of forming closed quarters. Similarly, the descendants of these 'first people' are said to have been married to un-related people. To all these reasons, one has also to add the general availability of land and the rather rare occurrence of chain

migration.[6] The fact that there was plenty of unclaimed land (probably, till early last century) meant that there were no material grounds for the emergence of competition that could lead to the formation of exclusive groups fighting for control over resources. The relative absence of chain migration also means that there was no sustained or institutionalised effort to privilege kin at the expense of non-kin.

Out of a total of 534 households making up Alas Niser, some organised in *tanean* ranging from three to eleven houses, some standing alone, the great majority were made up of descendants of migrants who originated from *kabupaten* Sampang and *kabupaten* Pamekasan in Madura. Though, as I have said, most of the members of these households actually do not retain any knowledge of their migrant ancestor's village of origins - a case applying mostly to people whose grandparents were born in Alas Niser- names of Madurese origin villages occasionally did appear in conversations I had. These names were gathered from people who had either travelled to Madura as children accompanying their parents to visit relatives there or from people who had migrated themselves as children together with their parents to Java. The identified origin villages were those of Propo and Palengaan in *kabupaten* Pamekasan and Jrangoan and Patapan in *kabupaten* Sampang as well as the city of Sampang. In addition to these, there were locals who traced their origin at other villages in Sumenep and Bangkalan such as the members of two large *tanean* located to the northern part of Alas Niser who originated from a couple from the city of Bangkalan, a small *tanean* made up of three households of descendants of a couple from Cargkreman, *kabupaten* Bangkalan and two households located nearby the market which were descendants of two unrelated Sumenep traders and local women. Moreover, there were several households which traced descent from either a parent, a grandparent or both parents originating from Central Java and Western East Java. As far as Madurese migration is concerned, its diversity is reflected in the last census to be taken in Indonesia that incorporated ethnicity as a variable. The 1930 colonial census lists a total of 238 Madurese born in Sumenep, 1,375 Madurese born in Pamekasan, 2,577 Madurese born in Sampang and 237 Madurese born in Bangkalan as living in the regency of Probolinggo that year.[7]

Migration patterns show an extreme fluidity. Some migrants arrived in Alas Niser as single men and women; some others, though married, came alone in the first place and brought their families over at a later date. Some came together with their spouses and children from the outset. Some arrived with a sibling of the same or the opposite sex. In some cases this sibling settled permanently in Alas Niser, then, moved to another area in Java, usually after he/she had married, or returned to Madura after some time. I encountered four cases of chain migration in which either the migrant moved to Alas Niser after a relative or acquaintance of his from Madura had already settled in Java, or it was he who motivated others to follow him to Java. Some had made several seasonal trips back and forth before

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[6] I encountered only four cases of chain migration out of a total of sixty-seven.
7 Taken from Husson 1995:374.
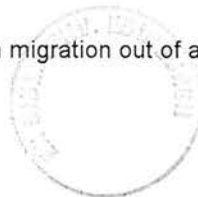
they decided to stay permanently, some others left with their minds already set on this matter. As is obvious from the above, people of both sexes and of variable ages participated in this demographic movement, though in the latter case it was mainly young people, below thirty years of age, who formed the bulk of migrants. In addition, although the majority of migrants came without having secured employment, there were a very few cases of people who arrived from Madura with a job earmarked for them in the sugar mill that operated during colonial times in the area.

The way locals have dealt in self-representational narrative terms with this fluidity is similar to their responses to diversity. Speaking from the perspective of a non-Alas Niser-born male child of Madurese migrants from Propo, Pak Putro summarised the place of affinity and marriage in local imagination in the following terms: 'the people living in this area in the past, that is the female ones, rarely had a fiance (*juduh*, Mad.). So a lot of newcomers from Madura, like myself, got married with local women. Then, it is mainly women who inherit land...so it is easy...the man, the newcomer, gets (*ngaolle*, Mad.) a woman, gets land and a house...it's nice to get married, isn't it? you should do the same'. To get married with a local woman, to have children, to have land and a house is to acquire new roots, to ground oneself in a new place. Time and time again, people would point to marriage between a local woman and a foreign man or the opposite as the primary means though which sociality was established between successive waves of migrants and those already living in the area. The relative severance of relations to people and the land that migration creates as far as the interaction between a permanent out-migrant and his locale of origin is concerned, is the opposite side of the coin of the creation of new social relations in the locale of destination. This is so, for getting married embodies and manifests the acquisition of new relatives and a specific place in the kinship terminology and structure people locally use to identify each other. As Carsten (1995a: 323) has shown, these kinds of marriages also have a more specific content in Southeast Asia for the general modelling of the spouse relation on siblingship results in the displacement of affinal difference in favour of consanguineal similarity. This also extends to parents-in-law who are thought to consider and treat a child-in-law as their own child.

The data I collected readily attests to the regular seeking of spouses among migrants from either Alas Niser itself or from other surrounding villages, that is places located in East Java and not in Madura. Though I do not have precise statistics, it seems that the population of the area was sufficient enough to allow for it. Out of twenty-seven interviews I contacted with first-generation migrants who arrived as single men or women, all but two had married people who had either been born in Java, themselves descending from migrants, or were migrants themselves. The remaining two had sought a wife in Madura and had brought her to Java. First-generation migrants who arrived as couples had also had their children and grandchildren married to (*ejuduhaghi*, Mad. 'to arrange a marriage') people living in the area. All eighteen cases confirmed their commitment to becoming fully locals. This kind of sketchy

statistical data only confirms what people of Alas Niser reiterated through statements such as 'we are all kin [here]' (*sengkok kabbhi tretan*, Mad.). Despite its stereotypical tone, it points to a mode of self-representation that assumes the primacy of kinship, in this case of affinity, as generating a place out of a previously alien and fragmented space. Affinity is, thus, conceived as endowed with the agency of transforming space into place and ensuring the production of sociality through the human reproductive capacities that marriage and the sharing of offspring entail.

Thus, spatial interspersion and mixing in Alas Niser are coupled with a sociality founded on affinity. Marriages between locals and migrants, and among newly arrived migrants themselves were described to me as the beginning of a long process of transformation, the full extent of which I will explore in the next chapter. While this process can be said to end with the burial of the migrant in his/her new place rather than the place of origin, the production of children and the ownership of land and houses form both points along this continuum and the mechanisms for its perpetuation. It is to the 'making' of land I want to draw our attention now. The reason is that this process of transformation, of becoming local and a mixed person, is ultimately related to the transformation of forest into cultivable land.

As I have said, the initial set of siblings are credited with the first opening of the land. Successive migrants into the area were remembered as ancestors who took part in this process and my data suggests that forest clearing was a common practice till the early decades of the twentieth century. There were several other locals who traced their present *tanean*'s foundation to the efforts their ancestors put into getting rid of the high trees and the thick, tropical vegetation.[8] The stress local narratives put on this process points to a spatial symbolism in which the human settlement is opposed to the forest with the first being the abode of humans, their domestic animals and food produced from gardens and fields while the latter being the abode of spirits, demons, wild plants and animals. Narratives also point to the fact that locality is thought of as 'made out of the forest' through human labour (Gow 1991: 76). While some of the ancestors involved in this activity are said to have done so through employing supernatural powers, the majority made clearings and built houses through hard work and unmatched skill. These ancestors' deeds in creating inheritable property are partly commemorated in rituals of remembrance called *yasinan* (see Chapter 6). Though usually seen as merit generating acts for the dead, *yasinan* rituals also re-enact the community's development in the long run through triggering memories of ancestors and the possessions that they have passed down.[9]

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[8] I was not told of any rituals ancestors had to perform before claiming a portion of the forest to appease the spirits such as those that Sakai (1997) mentions for the Gumai of Sumatra, Adimihardja (1991) for the Kesepuhan communities of West Java, and Giambelli (1999) for Bali.

[9] Inherited possessions are generally termed as *pusaka*. *Pusaka* is thought of as retaining part of the *semangat* (spirit) of its owner and serves as an indexical sign of his/her identity.

Land ownership is deeply embedded in narratives of the locality's creation. In these, forest clearing is seen as an act that generates full rights of freehold tenure. In opposition to cultivable land, forest is described as having no specific and named owners, being but a vast area inhabited by spirits and animals which occupy rather than own it. Though both extremely feared, they are thought to have fled away when brave and strong humans arrived, without asking for rites of propitiation and appeasement, a form of tribute, that would have recognised them as the ultimate owners of the place. Forested areas are also described as free from the direct control of state agents in the past. Located in the periphery, if not readily outside, of appendage holdings, cleared forest land is said to have instantiated a more or less fully individualised style of landholding according to which, as an informant put it, 'he/she who chops down [the trees], gets the land' (*siapa yang tebang, itu yang dapat tanah*, Ind.). This kind of land tenure stressed in local narratives is contrasted to the dominant mode of land ownership that characterised much of Java and Madura before and during most of the nineteenth century (Elson 1984: 10-16; Jonge 1989:64-75). According to the appendage system, peasants were granted rights of usufruct rather than ownership over the land they cultivated and such rights were tied to corresponding obligations to perform labour and deliver produce to supra-local authorities which were the ultimate holders of land. In addition, the majority of peasants were rather tenuously attached to specific plots of land due to a variety of mechanisms that from time to time, redistributed land among a village's population in response to demands from above. While, according to Elson (1984: 14), the introduction of the land rent system in the 19th century signified for Java a long process towards the full abolition of the appendage system that was only completed during the early twentieth century,[10] in Alas Niser such a process towards individual land ownership is described as the result of the ancestor's agency, precipitated by their migration and vigilant efforts.

Having left Madura to escape the abuses of the local aristocracy, the ancestors are credited with creating a community relatively free from heavy extractions, a frontier haven of equality, fleeing initially to the forest and appropriating its land as their own. Historical circumstance also worked in their favour as the local aristocracy of Probolinggo regency was at that time lacking both in legitimacy and control over the population (Elson 1984:15). The fact that the local aristocracy was more recently established than in other areas of Java and the brief intermission of reign by a Chinese merchant who acted as regent and culminated in internal elite strife and popular rebellion, meant that the local aristocracy's claims over land were not as effective (see also Bastin 1954). In contrast, the more particular and direct claims to specific plots of land the ancestors established must have had a direct effect on

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[10] In Madura, both the appendage and tax-rent system were abolished after the introduction of a direct system of government by the colonial state, at the second half of nineteenth century (see Jonge 1989:77).

imbuing a sense of emplacement and rootedness both among themselves and among their descendants, the heirs of this land.

Diversity enlarged

The newly opened land attracted the attention of a Dutch entrepreneur in the late nineteenth century who proceeded to capitalise both on its existence and the opportunities arising from the slow abolition of the forced cultivation system of cash crops and the opening up of the sugar industry to the private sector.[11] The establishment in 1882 of a sugar mill forms the point of convergence of official, state sponsored narratives as to Alas Niser origins and of informal topostories as told by otherwise poorly educated locals. Such narratives form a third text of the production of locality that incorporates another, equally historic and mythic, persona, that of a Dutch man, elevating him to the status of *oreng sakte* (Mad., potent person). The tracing of the name of the biggest village comprising Alas Niser to the activities he is described as having carried out, marks not only the transformation of forest into a fully man made and named place but also the incorporation of the locality into the colonial and, later, the nation state. This is a case of double domestication; as the locality forcibly became part of a larger political community, so it sought to accommodate this larger entity and its forces into its own universe.[12] The prominence given to the figure of this Dutch entrepreneur in the local imagination serves to highlight this point. At the same time, the locality's interaction with the state, initiated by the establishment of the sugar mill and the sub-district level of government (*kecamatan*) headquarters in the very geographical centre of Alas Niser, meant a constant influx into the area of *wong Jawa* (Jav., Javanese). Throughout the twentieth century, the diversity of origins was enriched by the arrival of skilled, professional workers and civil servants, the majority of whom originated from Central and eastern East Java, that is areas classified as the homeland (*daerah asal*, Ind.) of Javanese people, language and culture.

In 1998, one of the three villages' headman's office was dominated by a huge poster. Written on it, within the space of inverted commas, was the following: 'The origins of the term W [name of the respective village] as the name of the village W, of sub-district W, of Probolinggo municipality, is related to the foundation of the sugar factory W by Tuan [Ind. for

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[11] For a full account of the fortunes of the sugar industry in Java see Kolff 1953; Geertz 1963; Elson 1984. The mill in question closed down during the Japanese occupation after the Japanese dismantled it. The area continued to produce sugar cane though till the mid-1990s which was processed in another factory nearby.

[12] For an imaginative account of the inter-domestication efforts brought about by the colonial encounter in Java in the fields of ritual, literature and politics see Pemberton 1994b, chapters 1-3.

Mister, a term reserved for foreigners] Ardih who was of Dutch nationality'. The quote, disseminating to all visitors the official version of W's origins, is taken from a report written for the local branch of the department of education and culture (see Warsito 1994) by Pak Warsito, a middle-aged civil servant and head of the local branch. The investigation into W's history, Pak Warsito explained to me at the first meeting we had, was in partial fulfilment of a directive he had received from Jakarta as to the importance of collecting information about 'sejarah dan nilai traditional' (Ind., history and traditional values). Such information, he said, was valuable so that Indonesians (orang Indonesia, Ind.) resist the process of acculturation and Westernisation through being made aware (menyadarkan, Ind.) of their ancestors and their distinctive adat (Ind., customs). Acting as a true historian and dutiful civil servant, Pak Warsito had put together an account of Alas Niser's origins out of the oral narrations of elderly locals who served as first hand informants, having worked for years in the sugar mill. His account though, it made no mention of either the sibling or the mixing story, was an accurate edition of 'Tuan Ardih' topostories I heard from some of the same (and other) informants over the period of my fieldwork. While, from the perspective of locals, all three texts co-exist amicably, surfacing at different settings and presenting different aspects of the historical creation of sociality, the decontextualisation and elevation of one of these texts into an authoritative account meant that, from the state's perspective, it is not to be read as much as a comment on becoming a local and mixed person but more as providing the historical raison d'etre of the village as an administrative entity.

Despite this apparent difference as to its purpose, Pak Warsito's document has some basic themes in common with the stories locals tell about the sugar mill. These concentrate on constructing Tuan Ardih as an oreng sakte. His kasaktean (Mad., potency) was manifested in several ways; in the fact of digging the land to create a lake, '3-metre deep and 150-metre in diameter' or 'as wide as the sea itself'; of erecting a mountain, the 'ringgit mountain' (ringgit being synonymous for a gold coin), from the soil of the excavation process; of sacrificing a water buffalo and using its skin so as to make a tape-measure for delineating the factory's land boundaries; of actually building and operating the factory using 'hundreds of workers' as a kind of entourage, and of finally naming both the factory and the place as W. Seen from the villager's perspective, the establishment of the sugar mill did not so much integrate the locality within the colonial and global economy, transforming it to what was termed by the Dutch as a 'circle', that is a land area encircling a factory and comprising the immediate villages and the agricultural land under sugar cane cultivation (see Elson 1984:72), as it endowed the landscape with monuments one can still see today, and providing it with a name. Tuan Ardih's actions are in this respect homologous to ancestral deeds. Though un-related by both descent or affinal lines, Tuan Ardih stands as an ancestor to today's inhabitants in the sense that his actions were a triumph of hyper-human activity over unnamed, poorly marked and only partially socialised space.

Neither Tuan Ardih, his family nor the other Dutch working in the factory and living in Alas Niser during colonial times are thought of as part of the moral community of mixed persons. Nor did his *kasaktean* in any way originate from Allah since he was an infidel. Quite the contrary is true since the iconoclastic memories of locals speak of a fence of tall trees encircling the houses of the Dutch, making them inaccessible to both gazes and visits by the lower strata of the community, comprised by what the Dutch called 'the natives' in a pejorative fashion. Despite being migrants in the same place, the degree and nature of the difference, that is the very power resting with the Dutch and the importance attached to the religious boundary, was never actually fully blurred. The same goes for a small minority of Chinese-Indonesians (*oreng Cina*, Mad.) said to be living in the area at that time, as shop-owners and wholesale merchants. Out of four Chinese-owned shops in colonial times, in 1998 there was only one still in place while the family running it was totally absent from the community's life, going instead to Probolinggo city centre to visit other co-ethnics and to participate in Christian mass. The reasons for this double separation are explored in Chapters 5 and 6 where I analyse both the cultural content of affinity and of rituals of food and prayer exchange.

Simultaneously with the establishment of the sugar mill, the area witnessed the foundation of the headman's office (*kantor kepala desa*, Ind.) and the sub-district (*onderdistrik*, Dutch or *kecamatan*, Ind. after independence) office of W. (see Warsito 1994). The three buildings which still stand today, dominated the centre of Alas Niser and co-operated fully for the production of sugar cane, allocating parts of the agricultural land to its cultivation, authorising contracts, overseeing payments and disputes. The area they covered was also dispersed with the residences of the Dutch managers of the factory which according to oral sources totalled five families, the temporary residencies of some 'native' high-skilled workers, mostly engineers and administrators, and the residencies of the 'native' sub-district head (*wedono*, Jav.) and his assistant. Those belonging to the latter two categories are remembered as migrants and newcomers (*pedeteng*, Mad.) from various localities of Central and eastern East Java and because of that, are categorised as Javanese. Thus, narratives focusing on Tuan Ardih serve another purpose too, namely that of accounting for the beginnings of Javanese migration into the area, forming the background of the mixing that was to follow. Far from providing actual rates of migration but rather an indication, my own research into local genealogies confirms such a picture and attests to close relationship between the influx of Javanese migrants and the expansion of state bureaucracy and services in the locality.

At the root of this in-migration lie education differentials, as the Probolinggo regency at that time was one of the less developed areas of Java as far as literacy is concerned. Elson, citing colonial sources, observes that 'at the time of 1920 census, for example, only 4.4 per cent [of the Pasuruan Residency's, of which Probolinggo formed part] native males over 15 years of age could read or write, and only the Residencies of Madura and Besuki had

lower levels of literacy' (1984:212). As such, the inauguration of the 'Ethical Policy' by the colonial state in the beginning of the twentieth century which was based on the premise of a growing availability of formal schooling for 'natives', did not have much success in Probolinggo. But in other areas of Java, and especially in Central Java, this availability was marked by a growing enthusiasm as the graduates of government schools were to find employment in either the lower and middle ranks of the colonial bureaucracy or in foreign enterprises (Benda 1958:25; Sutherland 1979). Both capitalism and colonialism necessitated the creation of an educated middle class of skilled professionals. In the case of Alas Niser, these were 'imported' from afar.

Pak Sugeng's and Pak Sunarman's family histories exemplify this point. Pak Sugeng, a frail man in his seventies, talked at length about his forebears: 'My father and my mother were from Jogjakarta. While, they were born and raised there, they never returned to Jogjakarta after they moved here to work in the sugar mill. My father was a graduate of the Dutch primary school. He was actually brought here by Tuan Ardih, together with his brother, to start work in the factory as mechanics. He was a smart man, a graduate, and it did not take him long to learn his job. He liked living here. So he bought land, built a house and raised all five children of his here'. Pak Sunarman's grandparent was from the other principality of Central Java, that of Surakarta. Described as of aristocratic descent, he was said to have attended an exclusive school for upper-class children in Solo and to have been forced to flee Surakarta because of his involvement in the independence movement. 'He sought refuge here and took up a new identity', Pak Sunarman continued. 'Because of his education', my interlocutor added, 'he found a job at the sub-district head's office; he could read and write in three languages, Dutch, Javanese and Indonesian. Later on, he took a loan and built the animal market, married with my grandmother, a Madurese newcomer from Sumenep, and erected the house we live now'.

This dominant but in no way, exclusive pattern of Javanese in-migration appears to have occurred in a more or less continuous stream throughout the twentieth century and to have picked up in the decades of the New Order state as the latter sought to both combat Indonesian underdevelopment and to create a political power base through a crusade against illiteracy and an overgrown bureaucratic sector, respectively. The number of civil servants employed for the *kabupaten* (district) administration of Probolinggo increased from 684 in 1978 to 1,764 in 1980 while the number of those working for the *kotamadya* (municipal) administration of Probolinggo increased from 1,293 in 1984 to 3,410 in 1994.[13] Accordingly, the number of residents of the sub-district of W. who were officially registered as civil servants/military personnel went up from a total of 1,535 in 1990 to 1,918 in 1997.[14] Though

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[13] The statistics are taken from the respective years' annual reports produced by the *kantor statistik kodya Probolinggo* and the *kantor statistik kabupaten Probolinggo*. While one might have valid reasons to contest their accuracy, I think that they do show strong indications of the phenomenon I describe.
[14] ibid.

official statistics are lacking both as to their areas of origin and ethnic identity, a great number of these civil servants, I hypothesise, were newcomers in the area since the local population was still lacking in terms of education. This is confirmed by official statistics which show that only 1,608 individuals out of a population of 31,158 had progressed further than primary school in the sub-district of W. in 1987.[15] In contrast, the newcomers were graduates of teacher's schools, other technical/vocational institutions of secondary and further education while a good number of them had received university degrees.[16]

In 1998-2000 I collected detailed information about this type of migration in Alas Niser and the figures I obtained, though quite far from the strict requirements of statistical analysis, do convey a clear picture of its main characteristics. The majority of in-migrants originated from places in Central and Eastern East Java, and in particular from Jogjakarta, Surakarta, Semarang, Madiun, Kediri, Blitar, Tulung Agung, Banyuwangi, Surabaya, Malang and Jombang, though there were also three cases of migrants from Bali, Sumatra and South Sulawesi. There were also some new arrivals from Madura and from Probolinggo city centre, working too as civil servants. Although the overwhelming majority of them were employed in the state sector, there were few cases of self-employed Javanese migrants, involved in trade and construction. Due to their employment in civil service, their situation was marked by constant movement, following appointments at different localities. Thus, for some, Alas Niser was a stop of a couple of years along a long trail of movement that was hoped to bring someone back to the locale of origin. However, for others, it was the end of a journey, having decided to stay there permanently. Stereotypical phrases like 'we stayed for we like living here' or 'people here are nice so we felt like staying permanently' were the usual reasons cited as marking the difference between leaving and staying. Though the situation was somewhat different for those who, after arriving as single men or women, had married a person from Alas Niser, no simple correlation between in-marriage and residence is to be found since I came to know several already married couples, some with children, who had made Alas Niser their home for the last forty years and had decided to die and be buried there.

A reference to two cases, both neighbours of mine, will exemplify the situation. Pak Danang was a forty year old primary school teacher, originating from Kediri, a town in the western part of East Java. He had moved to Alas Niser 16 years ago, after having taken part in an all-East Java provincial examination for the appointment of teachers. He said that he had opted for provincial exams, and not intra-provincial ones for he found the idea of having to live in a far outlying area like Irian Jaya (now renamed as West Papua), a distressing one as he would be too far from his natal area and, thus, it would be difficult to visit his relatives

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[15] ibid.

[16] A similar situation is recounted by Berstein (1990) for West Kalimantan where low levels of education have resulted in the government sending teachers from far-flung areas of the country such as Sumba, Flores and Central Java to staff local schools. Once again, inter-marriage is counted as the principal means of incorporation.

in Java. Initially, he took up residence in Alas Niser in one of the three boarding houses (*kos-kosan*, Ind.) which serve single men and/or women but he moved to a new house after getting married. His wife was a local girl who he had initially seen in a marriage celebration. After getting married, he moved to a newly erected house his wife's father had built and offered as inheritance to his daughter. Pak Danang was a regular participant in all kinds of neighbourhood rituals and activities and recently had been voted treasurer of a rotating credit association. When asked whether he ever thought of returning to Kediri, he replied negatively saying that he was 'compatible' (*cocok, Ind.*) with the people in Alas Niser and it was enough for him to visit his ageing parents in Kediri once or twice a year. After all, he added, Alas Niser is where all his 'siblings' now lived, using *tretan*, a Madurese word, to describe his relationship to fellow villagers.

Pak Mu'allim lived in the same neighbourhood. Both he and his wife originated from Tulung Agung, another town in western East Java. They both had been employed in the civil service, he in the local branch of the department of agriculture, she as a nurse in the local health centre. Though Pak Mu'allim had come to Alas Niser as a bachelor, some thirty eight years ago, he had managed to escape from all kinds of proposals by locals to get married to a local girl. Instead, he got married to a girl from Tulung Agung whom his parents had insisted he marry. As a couple, they returned to Alas Niser and initially lived for four years in rented accommodation. That was before they went to buy the land on which their current house stands, an impressive by village standards two-storey house with an additional building where they kept three pairs of oxen they rented out during the ploughing months, their security since they retired, as they put it. Asked whether they had thought of returning to Tulung Agung, they both replied that such a move would be too difficult since it would necessitate a process of re-adjustment (*adaptasi*, Ind.). They had lived for so long in Alas Niser that their fluency in the Javanese language was somewhat compromised and their accent was already too much like that of Madurese in which both were extremely fluent. Moreover, most of the people they knew in Tulung Agung, they noted, had either died, a reference to their parents, or had migrated elsewhere, a reference to their siblings. In addition, they said, neither had any property left there; all their belongings, their house and business had been in Alas Niser. Finally, their children, three in total, had all been married here, one living in Alas Niser and the other two in the city centre.

The collection of several life stories like the above ones, stressed a similar process of acquiring new roots in the place of destination; a process of emplacement which involves in-marriage and the production of children, land and house acquisition, the establishment of meaningful relations of co-residence founded on neighbourhood participation, and of a parallel process of distancing from the locale of origin as visits grow less frequent and parents and other senior relatives die.[17] This process is also manifested in learning another

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[17] This is true, though, for those only who decide to stay permanently in Alas Niser. For those who decide to move on without establishing firm roots a variety of reasons ranging from acute nostalgia of

language, some Madurese for the Javanese newcomers, some Javanese for the Madurophone locals, as people seek to interact cordially and respectfully with each other on an everyday basis. The diversity of origins is thus, counterbalanced by a cultural discourse placing emphasis in the here and now of the convergence of these diverse paths of movement across Java's terrain, and in the present and future represented by marriage and the production of a shared generation of descendants who are fully and simultaneously born and bred in Alas Niser as well as by 'making' land, building houses and involving oneself with one's neighbours. As we have seen, this cultural discourse can not be associated with either of the categories of 'Madurese' or 'Javanese' migrants, but is actually the background against which the self-identification of locals as 'mixed people' has been constructed. In this regard, I suggest that mixed personhood is the product of a history of lived experiences of sharing the same place with equally dislocated, equally uprooted people. According to this discourse, the locality is comprised of persons who are mixed, that is persons 'who are neither Javanese nor Madurese but both', as an informant put it. It is obvious then, that migrants are not simply thought of as incorporated in the locality and assimilated to it but, rather, that their spatial interspersion and in-marriage has a profound effect in localised forms of personhood, creating a new category of persons.

The situation in Alas Niser thus, differs markedly from those that Blu (1996) and Lewis (2001) discuss in their papers on identity and place in relation to ethnographic cases from other parts of the world, namely the United States and Mexico, respectively. Blu (1996: 221-224) notes that in north Carolina, U.S., different ethnic groups, namely 'Lumbee Indians', 'Whites' and 'Blacks', conceptualise the locality they all occupy in different ways, and that, although, these conceptualisations are not based on 'exclusivity of use or ownership or habitation', they do reflect a certain social separation operating among the different groups as far as the central cultural idioms used are concerned. As we have seen, in Alas Niser the horizontal encompassment model of the production of locality that focuses on affinity is the one adhered to as much by long-term migrants as by descedents of migrants, as much by people originating from Madura as from Java. I suggest that the reason accounting for this difference is that while in Blu's case one has to do with discrete social groups with more or less clear boundaries and limited interaction, in my case the labels 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' refer to social categories with a lesser degree of internal cohesion and more fluid boundaries. These categories are also contextually ambiguous within the community of Alas Niser, intersecting in the self-designation of locals as being of 'mixed blood' (see Chapter 2). Alas Niser's case also contrasts with Lewis's (2001) Mexican case in which a history of uprootedness and migration in an area of 'racially' diverse people has resulted in conflicting claims of indigenousness. The marked absence of laying conflicting social, territorial and material claims to the locality in my case is the product as much of a relative lack of a

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the natal village and particular marital histories to the emergence of better economic opportunities elsewhere and the prospects of joining a relative somewhere else accounts for their decision.

historical discourse locating 'native' difference in terms of race[18] as of a cultural stress on common uprootedness, past poverty and a difficulty with distinguishing 'Madurese' from 'Javanese' due to mixed ancestry and spatial interspersion.

I have already commented on indigenous oral accounts that depict Madurese migration as precipitated by poverty and the way these function, as a collective text that constructs local homogeneity out of a heterogeneity of origins. The same holds true for some accounts of Javanese migration. What they all share is a way of talking about migration and locating it in the unfavourable economic circumstances facing either themselves or their ancestors. In the case of Javanese migration, it is once again the unavailability of or inaccessibility to land in the locale of origin that is mostly stressed. This is the primary reason cited for explaining their decision to 'get educated' and, thus, set themselves free from the 'vicious circle of poverty, inequality, underproductivity and population growth' (White 1976: 286) that has engulfed Javanese society for more than two centuries.

The consistency of direct and indirect recollections focuses on the inadequacy of family land holdings in Central and eastern East Java to support the large number of descendants Javanese are famous for favouring. Time and time again, people would point to the small amount of land their ancestors owned, ranging according to my estimates from 0.3 to 0.5 hectares of *sawah*, and the dire prospects facing them if they were to make a living only on the basis of the fraction of it that they would receive as inheritance. Thus, when asked as to the reasons for becoming civil servants, a great number of respondents referred to it as the only viable alternative open to them. To become a civil servant was equated with 'looking for work' (*cari kerja*, Ind.) and 'stable income' (*gaji stabil*, Ind.) in the face of relative poverty and the outcome of an investment on the part of their parents into their education. Such an investment required a substantial amount of money spent on school fees, uniforms and books and formed part of a discourse on the sacrifices parents are obliged to make so as to ensure a better future for their offspring (see Brenner 1998). Thus, the majority of the Javanese migrants were descendants of what Geertz has identified as the economic category of *cukupans* (1963: 97), that is of people who have 'just enough' to get by and who are far from being part of a small minority of big landowners. Issues of land surfaced also in discussions I had with other newcomer civil servants who were themselves descendants not of peasants but of civil servants and other professionals such as small storekeepers, tailors etc. In their case, formal schooling was a way of retaining rather than advancing one's social position, of avoiding falling into poverty as their ancestors had rather limited access to agricultural land and knowledge of cultivation techniques.

Here, I have employed the term shared poverty as the point of convergence of stories locals tell of their ancestors and of migration and not as an explanatory theory of

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[18] Colonial discourses on difference between 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' relied less on race and much more on character traits and temperament, elaborating a quasi-ethno-psychological theory of difference. For a detailed discussion see Jonge 1995 and Husson 1995: 37-42.

Java's economic history as the latter is to be found in the writings of Boeke (1953), Geertz (1963), Wertheim & Giap (1962) and their critics (Alexander & Alexander 1982; White 1976; Stoler 1977). However, certain elements of the 'agricultural involution' or 'shared poverty' theory can help us understand better and situate historically these collective memories. The starting point of this theory is the amazing rate of population growth in Java that has made it into the most populous island in the world. Estimates of this growth report that the population grew from a mere 5 million in early nineteenth century to 80 million in 1976 (see White 1976: 267). This population increase was largely absorbed by an intensification of the irrigated type of agriculture (*sawah*)- 'plots of land previously yielding one crop a year were made to yield two; where two crops were usual a third was added' (Wertheim & Giap 1962: 228)- and an increasing fragmentation of the size of landholdings that reduced the average farm size from about one hectare in 1830 to half a hectare by 1930 (see Alexander & Alexander 1982) so that *sawah* agriculture could sustain more and more people. Where interpretations of this process diverge is related to the factors, 'ideological' or 'structural', that have led to the relative absence of a large landholder's class and to the current success or not of the reduction of both land tenure and labour rights of access to land to sustain an ever growing population. White, by looking at the labour activities of Central Javanese villagers, concluded that 'the rural population as a whole is increasingly squeezed out of rice cultivation and into a large variety of other activities' and that this was even more pronounced among landless peasants and small landholders (1976: 281). For those who could afford it, obtaining higher education certificates and salaried jobs is both a secure and prestigious way out of agriculture.

A number of other studies which have focused on rural-urban demographic movements in Java have made the same point (Kano 1981; Harris & Speare 1986; Firman 1991; Hugo 1983; Jellinek 1978). Employing the push-and-pull model of migration (see Jackson 1986), they point to the complex interaction of a number of factors, including high population pressures on rural land, limited or no access to land and alternative employment, low wages and population increases acting as the push factors that force people out of their rural homelands. These studies indicate too that 'shared poverty' rural arrangements have long reached their limit and are breaking down (White 1976: 282) as Javanese poor peasants seek employment both in urban centres in Java as unskilled or lowskilled, self-employed or factory workers, and outside Java as transmigrants (Ardnt 1988; McKenna 1990). In the first case, both the concentration of industries in urban centres and the mushrooming informal sector of the urban economy act as the pull factors due to the cities having been turned into the primary location of new job opportunities and higher wages. In the second case, the incentives given by the state, including free land, transportation, tools and seeds to transmigrants, promise them a better living outside their locale of origin. While the bulk of circular migrants, commuters and transmigrants is made up of quite poor, older, married and not well-educated peasants, a substantial number of permanent migrants to cities is

comprised of well-educated, single and younger people. In the case of Alas Niser, the latter's rural or urban to semi-urban movement did and still does inform the articulation of the self-representation of locality as a mixed one.

Sociality and place

Reflecting on Heidegger's concept of dwelling, Keith Basso states that 'dwelling [or in my case, locality] is said to consist in the multiple "lived relationships" that people maintain with places, for it is solely by virtue of these relationships that space acquires meaning' (1996: 54). Here, I have tried to trace these meanings to narratives of dislocation, movement and subsequent emplacement, to stories that begin with a somewhere else and historical events of power struggles and scarcity of means of living, and end up with a new-found here and the active creation of a new spatial belonging. These narratives are made out of a recounting of lived or told experiences of diaspora and dispersal, mobility and movement but contrary to expectations, they do not lament a 'paradise lost' but celebrate a 'paradise gained'. This is so for those people residing in that tiny piece of Java's land, Alas Niser is the best place to live in the world and its people the best ones to have as kin and neighbours.

The discursive construction of locality analysed here through the three texts locals use to represent their world to themselves and to others, occasionally to the odd anthropologist too, form 'projected externalization[s] of memories that can be lived as well as thought about' (Fox 1997:8). As such, they represent thick and composite sites of meaning and experience the deciphering of which is what the rest of this thesis is about. In their semantically condensed form, the narratives of the locality's creation and further growth reveal the parallel creation of a new category of persons, that of *oreng camporan* (Mad.) or *orang pedalungan* (Ind.). Both processes of creation are conceived as having been brought about by the convergence in the same place of a diversity of people from Madura and Java. As such, they are specific instances of what Fox (1997) calls topogeny, that is of a variety of forms, the commonest of which is that of the image of journey or migration across a poorly charted domain, people in Austronesia employ so as to domesticate their landscape, 'turning space into place', in myths of origins and in rituals re-enacting them. In this context, the particularity of Alas Niser narratives rests on the fact that the journeys recounted are said to be multiple and diverse as to their starting points and specific paths. In this regard, diversity is conceived to inhere in history and the origin point of a plurality of movements. The plurality of paths ancestors are said to have inscribed in the landscape, is, however, conditioned by the singularity of spatial belonging in the present. Historical paths are imagined as linked up and as forming permanent 'nodes' and forging localities and persons

out of their temporal juncture. Alas Niser is situated comfortably at the nodal centre of this diversity of demographic movements.

Narratives of place also describe what Winn (2001), writing for another society of the Indonesian archipelago, namely that of Lonthoir of the Banda islands, calls the 'dynamic mutuality of inscription intrinsic to dwelling - place inscribing people, and people inscribing place' (2001: 25). The making of place as a cultural process is intimately related to the transformative agency of ancestors who, by means of, their mystical powers and labour, have converted a forested and previously uninhabited area into cultivated fields and houses that, in turn, have provided for and sheltered an expanding community of humans. This stress on the shaping of the topographical features of the landscape is intimately related to the historical transformation of the kindness of these humans and of their descendants. In local ontological terms, both *wong Jawa* (Jav.), that is, 'Javanese', and *oreng Madura* (Mad.), that is, 'Madurese', are said to be different kinds of people. However, 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' who have arrived in Alas Niser as migrants and have settled there permanently, are described as entangled in a long process of becoming locals. Getting married with a local man/woman, acquiring property, having children and being active in neighbourhood and other public affairs, that is, getting involved in the very commonplaceness of established situations and dimensions of local social life, has fundamental consequences for forms of identification and the production of personhood. Over a period of successive generations and waves of in-migration, such a process of localisation has resulted in the common designation of the people of Alas Niser as *orang pedalungan* or *oreng camporan*, that is, 'mixed people'. As it will be argued in the next chapter, 'mixed people' are conceived as fundamentally different in corporeal terms from both *wong Java* and *oreng Madura*. In this regard, localisation in Alas Niser is coupled with the emergence of a new kind of body-persons who are conceived as being distinct from their remote ancestors, despite the acknowledgement of having derived from them.

For locals of Alas Niser, the sense of placeness and, by implication, the expression of ontological transformation, are culturally mediated by a discourse on sociality. Placeness does not correspond to an abstract consciousness of identity but, is rather, enmeshed with local understandings of particular forms of social immediacy and intentional activity (see Appadurai 1996) which, in turn, produce specific effects. In this context, the process of creating place and creating people in place is conceived as contingent on a specific set of culturally significant forms of social relations. In this instance, creative agency is shifted away from the personae of specific, named ancestors and attributed to siblingship and marriage as well as to hierarchy and ritual action.

Narratives of Alas Niser's creation are metaphors resting on top of other metaphors as they appropriate a variety of symbols from other domains of social life so as to effect their message. Thus, they call in the co-substantiality of siblings and the unity of descent, the cross-relatedness of affinity and the equally uniting conjugal bond, the imagery of hierarchy

and power as embodied in persons classified as potent (*sakti* Ind.), and the ethic of sharing of the same place and the same neighbourhood as exemplified in the ritual system of food, prayers and ancestors exchange. What follows is a detailed examination of each of these relations and of their metaphorical significance. Before I engage myself, though, in such an undertaking, I wish to concentrate further on the meanings associated with the category of mixed personhood, its connections with ideas of blood and blood's interaction with place.

Chapter Two. Partial difference:
blood, temperament and the senses

Performance and substance in Southeast Asia

In a much celebrated article on space, culture, and identity, Gupta and Ferguson (1992) argue for the necessity of creating an anthropology grounded in the realities of boundary erosion, diaspora and movement, as historical forces have done much to erode past analytical certainties.[1] They imagine this anthropology as defined in opposition to the presumption of the overlapping categories of culture, peoplehood and territory, according to which distinct categories of people share equally distinct cultures, while living in geographically bounded territories. The new approach is claimed to be "beyond culture" as we know it, founded on 'spaces' characterised by a disjunction of the above three concepts, and thus, to be placing the emphasis on identity fluidity, place indeterminacy and cultural hybridity. While the authors' interests lie with re-shaping anthropological analysis, my concern here is with indigenous systems of classification of human beings, analysed from the natives' point of view. Despite this apparent difference in aims, I intend to show that the way people in Alas Niser think of themselves and others both converges and diverges from the above authors' claims.

In the heart of such a system of classification lie the experiences and memories of demographic movement as recounted in the previous chapter. These suggest not only a great mixture of origins and the active construction of similarity in the present, but also that the greater geographical area was bound into a regional network of historical flows of people, goods and ideas, as well as of economic and power structures that extended beyond it, at least since the middle of nineteenth century (and certainly for much longer, as historians have shown (see Nagtegaal 1996; Reid 1988; Ricklefs 1981)). In these specific circumstances, people were relatively mobile, moving away from overpopulated and resource scarce areas towards others where land was more abundant, job opportunities greater and relatively free from power abuses and political unrest.[2] In Alas Niser, movement and displacement not only form a collective text underpinning a sense of shared history in the midst of diverse origins but have also given impetus to a new sense of rootedness and of profound experiences of 'mixing' and, thus, of hybridity.

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[1]The same point is made by Appadurai (1996) who proposes a variety of terms like ethnoscape, ideoscape, mediascape, fianancescape etc. so as to bring anthropology up to the globalisation era and make it sensitive to different kinds of flows that detteritorialise culture production (and consumption).

[2] For other cases from Southeast Asia see Carsten (1995a) on Langkawi, Malaysia; Lineton (1975) on the Buginese diaspora and Eder & Fernandez (1990) on the 'frontier' island of Palawan in the Philippines.

In the previous chapter, I tried to describe the historical construction of the locality in terms of a process that paid due attention to migration influxes, and was characterised by the performance of certain activities. Activities such as in-marriage and inter-marriage, spatial inter-dispersal and neighbourliness, land and house acquisition and the production of a shared generation of descendants as well as a growing distancing from the locales of origin were all seen as crucial in the process through which newcomers were, and still are, incorporated in Alas Niser, forging relationships, becoming local and mixed persons.[3] While this picture is an accurate one, certain difficulties arise from it. These have to do with the fact that the boundary erosion such a terminology describes, emphasising process and performance, that is the very language I have used to delineate the displacement of difference between 'newcomers' and 'locals', people of 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' origin, is partly at odds with the way people in Alas Niser themselves cast it. In order to make myself more clear about this incongruity between the outsider's and the native's point of view, let me take another route.

It has become a commonplace in social anthropology to state that identities are socially constructed and not given, that is that they emerge out of a set of imagined relationships, articulated on the basis of an us/them taxonomic dichotomy which takes place within particular historical, economic and political contexts and not fixed, 'natural', 'primordial' or 'essential' (Barth 1969; Cohen 1978; Comaroff & Comaroff 1992: 50). This conceptualisation is based on an idiom of exteriority of personhood according to which persons are conceived as discrete, physically bounded entities that have between them absolute boundaries. They are thought, though, to live in interdependence but such interdependence is seen as extrinsic to their corporeal identity and as existing between them, consisting of 'networks of relationships' and 'shared webs of significance'. This idiom of exteriority, which social sciences share with political ideologies of the West, both liberal and socialist, underpins, then, the imagining of persons as individuals, that is as unique bodies endowed with unique attributes, desires, statuses, and biographies. In this way, individuals are conceived to exist prior to any relationship and in the course of their interactions with others, they are thought to perform relationships and to be influenced or affected and shaped by them, and not to be corporeally constituted by them (Strathern 1988: 12-13, 273; 1992: 25-26). Such performances are considered to construct persons in several ways. Children are transformed into social persons through socialisation, that is through accumulating identities in the course of their life, acquiring experiences and building relationships. Gendered bodies are theoretically differentiated into female and male ones on the basis of rites de passage and the roles undertaken from puberty and throughout adult life. The emergence of new and the muting of old ethnic categories are explained as the result of

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[3] Myers had put it thus: 'it is activity that creates places, giving significance to impervious matter' (1991:54). 'Historical, mythological or contemporary' narratives of the sort I analysed in the previous chapter can be thought of as activities too.

shifting economic and political contexts in the course of a society's history (Honig 1992; Kipp 1993; Karakasidou 1997).

Processual becoming, as opposed to the assumed immutability and fixity of being, has also been attributed to the Other as the basis of indigenous conceptions of personhood. Several studies focusing on the Austronesian world (Astuti 1995; Tooker 1992; Kammerer 1990; Carsten 1995a) and beyond (Slaney 1997; Canessa 1998) argue that from an emic perspective too, difference is understood from a processual and performative standpoint. Rather than being seen as 'rooted within', in the body and other interior states and/or substances such as blood and/or bone commonly associated with genealogy, identities are described as emically conceived in terms of activities and practices, themselves taxonomically distributed into different categories. Personhood is acquired 'from without', that is from interaction with the social environment in its widest sense, and identities, be they religious, local, ethnic or kinship-based, are predicated 'not on what one is but what ones does' (Canessa 1998: 241). Vezo identity, for example, is construed as a contingent result of one's activities, mainly fishing as opposed to agriculture (Astuti 1995), Langkawi personhood as moulded and shaped 'gradually through life as [people] acquire different attributes derived from the activities in which they engage and the people with whom they live' (Carsten 1995a: 329), Tarahumara ethnicity results from the undertaking of both fire and water baptism (Slaney 1997). At the same time that different ways of doing emically classify humans in different categories, constructing thus, persons of this or the other kind - say, women and men, Madurese and Javanese, Christians and Muslims -, indigenous conceptions of personhood are depicted as sharing with the above mentioned version of Western culture the same stress on exteriority, processuality and a non-essential basis of differentiation. All three elements are present in studies dealing with cases of religious conversion which have actually led the way for such a conceptualisation of Southeast Asian identities (see also Bowen 1995: 1060). Thus, both Kammerer (1990) and Tooker (1992) argue that the unproblematic status of conversion to Christianity among the Akha people of northern Thailand is grounded on an indigenous understanding of identity as a bundle of practices. Since practices can be both easily discarded and adopted and are dissociated from bodily states and issues of belief, becoming a Christian is a matter of being baptised, following the Sunday mass, receiving communion and disregarding ritual practices embedded in the traditional religion.

My claim is not that identities in Alas Niser are 'primordial' or 'given'. They are too the unfinished products of an ongoing classificatory discourse inscribed in culture and history. As with all acts of classification, ethnic taxonomies emerge out of the necessary condition of all social existence, namely the meaningful construction of the world (Durkheim and Mauss 1963). Such a discourse, however, as articulated in Alas Niser has as both its locus and focus the human body and explains human diversity in terms of an ontology of being (see also Tsintjilonis 1997). In Alas Niser, ethnicity is equated with corporeal diversity,

as bodies are thought of as differentially constituted 'from within'. In other words, it is not what one does that matters but what kind of body one is. Thus, the difference between 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' is emically perceived as constituted not in terms of practices and activities but primarily as deriving from substances, namely blood (*dereh*, Mad.), itself associated with a discourse about origins (*asal*, Mad.). Thus, the indigenous notion of humanity rests thus, on an idiom of interiority and embodied difference. I use the term idiom to refer to culturally and historically specific ways of constituting and expressing difference and similarity. For this reason, I avoid translating such notions, founded partly on ideas of shared bodily substance and its transmission, as referring to what we in the West commonly construe as biological.[4] As I will try to show in Chapter 5, the extent to which ethnicity is understood as the effect of genealogy has to be contextualised within an emic understanding of genealogy as a socially constructed way of establishing relations between bodies, and, thus, persons, rather than the transmission of genetic material.

However, the pervasive essentialism of this discourse does not mean either that identities are conceived as immutable or fixed. The destabilisation of the isomorphism between any notion of substantial or essential identity and the articulation of difference that the above mentioned studies advocate should not necessarily lead to the analytical equation of identity fluidity with performance and practice. With respect to the study of gender, Battersby (1998: 6-7) has warned us against such easy correspondences, noting that we should not lose sight of the possibility of an essence of the body cast in fluid terms while arguing for 'a metaphysics of fluidity and mobile relationships' (1998: 7). This very possibility is materialised in the self-designation of people in Alas Niser as persons of mixed blood, mixed genealogy and mixed space, that is of mixed bodies, that the terms *oreng campuran* or *orang pedalungan* semantically encapsulate. This, in turn, points to an emic conception of bodies made out of the circulation and exchange of substances such as blood and its transmutations and thus, of substances as registering on and inscribing in the body the histories, both past and future, of such exchanges and of the relationships which they produce. So, the process of becoming a mixed person which locals refer to is thought of as an embodied process, a series of ontological metamorphoses of one kind of being into another kind of being. Delineating the cultural principles on which such an ontological transformation rests, necessitates an investigation into a seemingly disparate array of phenomena, ranging from sorcery affliction to rituals of food exchange. At the moment, though, I only wish to explore the full meanings of this specific taxonomic 'innovation'. A comment, however, on the place of performance is needed before I proceed so as to put what follows into the right frame of analysis.

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[4] Carsten has questioned the validity of thinking along such dichotomies when she argues that 'it makes little sense in indigenous terms to label some [...] activities as social and other as biological' (1995b: 236).

According to the people I met and talked to, sat down and ate with, essential differentiation classifies bodies into different categories; performance both emerges out of and stems from bodies (see also Tsintjilonis 1997; Middleton 2000). The indigenous distinction drawn between *lahir* and *batin*, that is between what is external, extrinsic and material and what is internal, intrinsic and invisible, underlies the signification of the performative aspects of difference articulation as the manifestation of a core of substance. In other words, corporeal signs such as acts, gestures, speech and more generalised culture enactments or 'traits', far from being seen as simply marking the boundary and constituting the reality of difference as a mere conscious display, a theatre of identity, are basically construed as reflections of embodied difference. Thus, instead of producing the appearance of difference on the surface of the body, practices and the way these are carried out are understood to reveal differential dispositions of the body and different ways of being, traced to a person's substantial making. This is marked in Alas Niser by a discourse on temperament and its actualisation through bodily acts and the senses.

These claims aim neither to refute the importance of performative means as a communication device nor to underestimate the production of bodies in a processual manner. It is only to say that as different kinds of blood are thought to be implicated in the generation of different kinds of bodies, so too different kinds of bodies manifest their distinctiveness through giving rise to different kinds of behaviour. In so doing, however, bodies also come to realise substance in performance. In other words, it is through interaction that differences are perceived and bodies exhibited. As Viveiros de Castro (1998), in his discussion of Amazonian societies, has commented, 'the body is the subject's fundamental expressive instrument and at the same time the object *par excellence*, that which is presented to the sight of the other' (1998: 480).

In addition, in the same way that *lahir* (Ind., exterior) and *batin* (Ind., interior) constitute a set of terms the meaning of which is to be found in the dialectics of their mutual signification, so performative means are instrumental in not only revealing the person but also, fashioning and shaping it in an embodied manner. Central to this is a conception of the body as socially informed and performatively produced. As such, it can be said to have its senses and sensibilities, ethical and emotional capacities conditioned by concrete social practices and cultural discourses (see Hirschkind 2001; Mahmood 2001). Following the indigenous logic of body formation, expansion and transformation, I address issues relating to the cultural experience of the body with reference to the undertaking of certain acts in specific localities and in relation to specific sets of social relationships. The term of embodiment as employed in this thesis, aims at encompassing the problematic of social relationships and their enactment and the problematic of body constitution within a single analytical frame.

In the case of Alas Niser, the dialectics of substance and practice is conveyed, first and foremost, by a certain conflation of space and genealogy that permeates the whole

system of classification. That is, relations predicated on locality are given equal standing to genealogical relations as far as the definition of one's identity is concerned, opening the way for the possibility of an analysis of the former in terms of the latter that I undertake in the last two chapters. The impinging of performance on the body and the substances it includes is also apparent with respect to a series of issues that pertain to sorcery and potency I examine in the following chapters. In both cases, difference is seen partly as the result of an array of practices that bring about substantial alterations in the body's interior states and, by implication, to forms of personhood. As such, they make for a strong case according to which being and becoming are not to be distinguished in any radical way but, since practices involving the body are granted the efficacy to change it, being and becoming, substance and performance are seen as dialectically co-extensive (see Green 1996).

Engendering persons

The inhabitants of Alas Niser recognise various kinds of persons. They gloss the category of person with the noun *orang* (Ind.), *oreng* (Mad.) or *wong* (Jav.) Rarely, though, does *orang* appear unqualified in conversation. It is usually followed by an epithet designating a particular and relevant attribute of the person addressed or refered to. Thus, *orang kecil* (Ind.; *oreng kenik*, Mad.; *wong cilik*, Jav.; 'a small or minor person') designates a commoner in opposition to *orang besar* (Ind., 'a big or major person'; *oreng tinggi*, Mad.; *wong gedhe*, Jav.), designating, in turn, a dignitary or a V.I.P.; *orang kaya* (Ind.) defines a rich or well-to-do person in opposition to *orang miskin* (Ind.) a poor or of meagre means person; *orang dagang* (Ind.) a trades-man in opposition to *orang petani* (Ind.) a farming-man; *orang sedapur* (Ind., 'a person of the same hearth') a kin person in opposition to *orang jauh* (Ind.; 'a person of the afar'), a stranger. Linguistically, *orang* is also the most common term used to describe 'kinds of people' in an ethnic sense too. Thus, the categories of *orang Jawa* ('person of Java'), *orang Madura* ('person of Madura'), *orang Bugis* ('person of Bugis'), *orang Banjar* ('person of Banjar'), *orang Dayak* ('person of Dayak'), to name only a few, are used on an everyday basis in reference to what can be construed as ethnicity so as to map linguistically Indonesia's overcrowded ethnic landscape. Other terms such as *suku* (Ind., tribe) or *etnis* (Ind., ethnic group), though part of the official discourse on ethnic difference, rarely appear in everyday conversations.

It is on this basis that, along with Levine (1999), I define ethnicity as the activity of classifying people with respect to a socially determined discourse on origins. Although the term 'ethnicity' is itself a term drawn from the vocabulary of social sciences, thus, loaded with

the historical and cultural specifics of its use within that analytic tradition, I maintain that it remains nevertheless, a useful one for the purposes of cross-cultural translation. Its validity reflects the fact that it is referring to 'something ubiquitous and empirically available' (Levine 1999:168), namely to a particular taxonomic activity. Both the precise principles applied and the specific content of the resulting categories of this activity form the object of anthropological investigation. These, like all other things anthropologists examine, are to be deciphered from the native's point of view (Geertz 1993). Thus, rather than calling for either its total effacement from our analytic arsenal that Just (1989) proposes, or for its treatment as solely a textual device in need of post-modernist de-construction that Banks (1996) advocates, I agree with Levine who states that its usefulness rests with capturing 'an activity we all engage in frequently' (1999:177).

In the ethnographic context of Alas Niser, indigenous classification schemes centre around different kinds of personhood, different kinds of *orang*. The various classification schemes that emerge are not confined to ethnicity as origin. Wealth and status, profession and kinship proximity are also employed so as to create order and give meaning to experience. As perceived by my interlocutors, these different kinds of *orang* correspond to social categories and not social groups, for ethnic identity in Alas Niser has neither ever been the basis of the formation of any kind of solidarity, nor has ever led to any form of collective social action. In a place where solidarity and collective action rest more with the neighbourhood and the family, and historical circumstances have given rise to hybridity and identity multiplicity, the co-substantiality and co-emplacement evoked through ethnicity has a rather limited application with respect to providing the basis for solidarity.[5]

As much as they assert the existence of different kinds of people, the inhabitants of Alas Niser identify themselves as 'mixed people', that is as *oreng camporan* (Mad.) or *orang /wong pedalungan* (Ind. and Jav., respectively). The idea of 'mixing' refers to the collapse of 'pure' and 'original' categories of people in the locality and asserts that personhood is composite and plural rather than fragmented or singular. In this way, it draws on the history of demographic movement as a conjunction and transposes the image of inter-marriage and of new settlements to the level of the person and the body. In other words, to be a 'mixed person' means to be of different kinds of people simultaneously (see also Gow 1994:252). Quite early in my fieldwork, an informant gave me the following definition of 'mixed people': 'Alas Niser and Probolinggo as a whole do not have their own pure people (*oreng asle* Mad.; the term also bears the meaning of authentic, real and native of a place). Unlike other places in Java such as Banyuwangi which has its own pure people that is, the *oreng Osing*, or West Java with its own pure people of *oreng Sunda*, Probolinggo consists only of mixed people (*oreng camporan*, Mad.). The meaning (*maksot*, Mad.) of *oreng camporan* is that a person is

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[5] This became amply apparent by the general indifference the inhabitants of Alas Niser showed to recurrent instances of conflict involving 'Madurese' and 'Dayak' in Sambas, West Kalimantan during the time of my fieldwork.

both of Javanese descent and Madurese descent (*toronan*, Mad.), that one is not exclusively of Javanese descent or Madurese one, that one is both a person of Java and a person of Madura (*awaq-duaq oreng Jebbeh-Madura*, Mad.)'.

This definition of *oreng camporan* as a composite and plural form of personhood was repeated to me in one form or another, with greater or lesser eloquence, on several occasions during the period of my fieldwork. Despite contextual and personal variations, all these definitions centred around two antithetical pairs of concepts. The first of these pairs is that of *asle vis-a-vis camporan*. The primary meaning of *asle* (*asli*, Ind.) is original, genuine and authentic as juxtaposed to fake as in the sentence '*ini tandatangan asli*' (Ind.), meaning 'this is a genuine signature'. Combined with a another set of notions, it construes human diversity as coextensive with different types of being organised into different degrees of genuineness or purity. This purity is negotiated on the basis of a discourse on *asal* (Mad. and Ind.). The notion of *asal* can be translated as origin and beginning point, as well as source and basis, cause and reason. As the point at which growth and expansion originates, *asal*, and by implication the purity of *asle*, acquires connotations of both genealogical and spatial significance. It is, thus, precisely at the points of the disjunction of genealogy from space as well as at the points of fusion of two different types of genealogies and/or spaces that hybridity and mixing is conceived to take place.

The meaning of *asli* is contextual. It refers to place as well as to blood. In its spatial capacity, the self-identification *oreng Madura asle* means that a person was born and bred *of* the island of Madura. Similarly, the hetero-categorisation *oreng Jebbeh asle* carries the connotation of being born and raised *of* the island of Java. The isomorphism of personhood and land is not confined to treating geographical units such as islands as ethnically uniform. As the above quotation makes clear, intra-island diversity is recognised at the same time that an emphasis on land is maintained. Thus, from the perspective of a person who lives in East Java, *orang Dayak asli* would designate a person who has been brought up in the Dayak dominated sector of the island of Kalimantan, that is in the Dayak 'homeland'. The idea of 'homeland' is partly conveyed by the term *dhere'k* (Mad.) which designates a territory, its inhabitants and its natural environment. From this perspective, *asle* is used interchangeably with *lahiran*. *Lahiran* refers to place of birth and socialisation. Linguistically, *lahiran* consists of the verb *lahir* plus the suffix *-an* which transforms the verb, meaning 'to give birth to', into an noun. Thus, the self-designation *lahiran Madura* or *lahiran Jebbeh* construes a person as being born of Madura or Java, that is as beloning to a place. In this sense, one is a genuine or authentic Madurese or Javanese only to the extent that one is the product of such a continuously emplaced process of engendering.

Lahiran is juxtaposed to *pedeteng* (Mad.). *Pedeteng* classifies one as an newly arrived person, a person born of another locale who has moved though, recently to a new settlement, living and working there. *Pedeteng* thus, captures linguistically the rupture that demographic movement entails with *asal*, the discontinuity between personal growth and a

particular land. The re-positioning of the subject into another land, another environment in its widest sense, is mostly used as a term of hetero-categorisation, that is to classify from without rather than identify from within. Recent migrants to Alas Niser and Probolinggo commonly refer to themselves as *orang* of this or the other locale, as *orang Jember* if they originate from Jember and the context of the discussion calls for the precise town/village to be indicated or *orang Bali* or *orang Madura*, if one comes from Bali or Madura and the context of the discussion makes the wider locality relevant. In the process of creating lasting and solid relationships both with and within the place of destination, *pedeteng* construes persons as in-between two places. In a quite similar vein with the situation of Chinese women in Thailand that Bao (1990) studied, their *asle*-ness refers to a past that is emotionally evoked in narratives recounting a loss of relationships, while their present is very much tied up with being involved in the local economy and society.

Asle 's other meaning refers to the genealogical engendering of persons, that is to the process of conception, reproduction and growth. *Asle* is, thus, contingent on the substantial link between generations, the transmission of shared substance, the vertical flow of blood (*dereh*, Mad.). Thus, a person who identifies himself/herself as *oreng Madura asle* maintains that his blood is pure or original Madurese in the sense that both his/her mother and father were of pure Madurese blood, that they were themselves *oreng Madura asle*. Similarly, the hetero-categorisation *oreng Jebbeh asle* is mostly taken by people in Alas Niser to mean that a person is of pure Javanese ancestry, that his/her blood is supposed to be an unadulterated Javanese one. This is based on the premise that persons are conceived as the embodiment of a relationship of affinity, objectified as the undifferentiated mixture of blood that both one's father and one's mother contribute to one's formation. The father, and through him the father's side, is thought of as contributing blood in the form of sperm (*aeng lake* or *peju*, Mad.) while the mother and through her the mother's side, as contributing blood both in the form of uterine blood during gestation and breast milk after childbirth.[6] In this respect, the assertion of *keaslian* or genuineness is itself the effect of the purity of genealogy, grounded on ascending acts of procreation realised by one's ancestors.

The cultural making of the category of *oreng camporan* rests on the same premise. To the extent that it refers to the kind of blood that persons of this category carry in their veins, mixing and hybridity registers the multiplicity and composite nature of their personhood to ancestral intermarriage of people of pure blood. Thus, the narrowest definition of *oreng camporan* I encountered during fieldwork, centred on children produced of unions of either a pure Javanese man and a pure Madurese woman or of a pure Madurese man and a pure Javanese woman. This simple and minimalistic definition, I was often offered by informants in response to my rather unrefined, at times, insistent questioning, privileges neither sex as to the significance their contributions in blood make to their offspring's

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[6] For a detailed discussion of procreation 'beliefs', focusing on a description of the role of blood and its transmutations, see Chapter 5.

embodied identity. In this respect, it is different from the definition that Husson (1995) provides in her monograph. In particular, she notes that 'sometimes, this term also describes the children of a Madurese father and a non-Madurese mother, born as a result of migration' (1995: 20, my translation). Such a definition would seem to me to rest on a view of procreation according to which children belong to their father for semen solely creates children. As will become more apparent in Chapter 5, such a 'mono-genetic' conception of procreation is lacking in my area of fieldwork.[7]

A person's identity is predicated on his/her parents' and grandparents' kind and 'purity' of blood. In this respect, the logic of mixing transforms a view of history as a process of inter-marriage and spatial interspersion that I described in the previous chapter, into a dimension of an embodied process in time which is corporeally registered by means of genealogy. In this sense, bodies are both created and marked by transactions of blood, carried out by one's ancestors. While the primary referent of *oreng camporan* is that of people of mixed Javanese and Madurese genealogy, there are times when its meaning is widened to encompass people of other kinds of mixing. Thus, sometimes children born of unions between an *oreng Cina* (Mad., Chinese-Indonesian) and an *oreng Jebbeh* or *oreng Madura* are described as *oreng campuran* too, although a more exclusive term, that of *oreng blasteran* (from *blaster*, Ind. which means to cross-breed), is also available. Similarly, children born of marriages between an *oreng Indonesia* (Mad., Indonesian) and an *oreng turis* or *oreng asing* (Mad., a non-Indonesian, a foreigner) are qualified as *oreng camporan*, although the more particular category of *oreng Indo* is also used. What is common in all these cases of mixing is the boundary erosion and collapse between different kinds of people, each endowed with its distinctive and 'pure' kind of blood, and the creation of new kinds of persons and bodies out of the latter's intersection.

As is the case with the qualification of *asle*, *camporan* too has a spatial component. This is apparent in the term *pedalungan*, itself a synonym for *campuran*. The term *pedalungan* or *medalungan* is composed of two distinct lexical items of Javanese language origin (see also Husson 1995: 20, fn. 26). The first of these is that of *medal*, a lexical item of the higher language level (*krama*) which means to emerge, to take a route, to leave (the *ngoko* for *medal* is *metu*) (Horne 1974: 369, 378). The second is that of *lunga*, a lexical item of the lower level (*ngoko*) which means to depart, to go, to be out or to have gone (the *krama* for *lunga* is *kesah*) (Horne 1974: 352). As a category, *pedalungan* designates those of Madurese genealogical origin who live outside the island of Madura, most commonly in East Java. It thus, describes the disjunction of blood from space, the introduction of a discontinuity between the genealogical and emplaced ways of engendering, the creation of the taxonomic possibility of hybridity since persons of these category are imagined as not being *asle* any more. This is the meaning that Javanese speakers living outside Alas Niser and Probolinggo,

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[7] An example of what I call here 'mono-genetic' conception of procreation is provided in Delaney's (1986) article on Turkey.

people I have met in Jakarta, Solo and Surabaya give to the term. Its linguistic origins and usage indicate that it is one of these categories that Ardener (1989) has characterised as 'hollow' and 'constructed from without', cases of hetero-categorisation. Though the inhabitants of Alas Niser and Probolinggo have adopted the term, they have given it a quite different meaning, wholly synonymous with *camporan*. To them, then, it stands for both children of mixed (Madurese-Javanese) marriages and for the kinds of persons who are born, live, work, produce, reproduce and die in the wider locality, irrespective of their precise genealogy. In this sense, *pedalungan* retains a refashioned spatial referent, designating a space occupied by ethnically diverse people and the category of persons who are of that space. *Pedalungan* and, by implication, *camporan* designates a place of mixing and a mixed place. Though mostly used by persons whose first language of socialisation is Javanese, rather than Madurese, *pedalungan* defines an Us and not a Them, not a disjunction or a loss but a conjunction and an accretion, a replenishment in the double meaning of mixed space and mixed blood.

To recapitulate, then: the inhabitants of Alas Niser and Probolinggo recognise various kinds of persons; the closest are the *oreng Madura* and *oreng Jebbeh* (*wong Jawa*, Jav.), more distant ones include the *oreng Sunda, oreng Osing, oreng Banjar, oreng Dayak, oreng Cina* while the most removed ones are the *oreng asing*. Kinds of people are classified according to a culturally constructed idea about origins (*asal*) which conflates place and blood. To the extent that *asal* is predicated on place, each kind of people is associated with a particular area: *oreng Madura* with the whole of the island of Madura, *oreng Jebbeh* with a section of the island of Java, basically with Central Java and the western part of East Java, *oreng Sunda* with the westernmost part of the island of Java, *oreng Osing* with the south-eastern part of Java, *oreng Banjar* with the south-eastern part of Kalimantan, *oreng Dayak* with the central part of the same island, *oreng asing* with the lands outside Indonesia while *oreng Cina*, having descended from Chinese migrants to Indonesia, are hetero-categorised as belonging to in-between places, that of China and Indonesia. In addition, each category of persons is construed as having its own distinctive kind of blood. Madurese blood is conceived as different from Javanese blood, Javanese blood as distinct from Sundanese blood etc.. Although my informants could not elaborate exactly in what sense these kinds of blood were different from each other, as we shall see in the following sections of this chapter, they pointed to embodied ways of being as manifesting these differences.

Against this background, people in Alas Niser and Probolinggo as a whole, identify themselves as *oreng camporan* or *wong pedalungan*. In this way, they assert that they are the corporeal product of a history of interaction between different kinds of people, primarily Javanese and Madurese, whose excessive degree of purity is no longer present in the locality. Purity is equated with other places, other kinds of people, and other times. In other words, their very sense of Otherness is articulated against long dead ancestors, the homogeneity of places they moved away from and the singularity of blood they and people

living in these places, were and still are made of. Their Other, namely 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese', is construed, though, not as being absolute and far removed, the antipode of Self, for the symbolism of mixing is based on the corporeal and spatial incorporation of alterity. By giving rise to a synthetic and composite form of personhood, in turn, predicated on 'being both Madurese and Javanese',[8] mixing constructs difference as only partial but still significant. At the same time, by embodying both 'Javanese' and 'Madurese', mixed personhood is both distinct and unique.

The Others within

As a system for classifying people, criteria of place and blood can be used unambiguously to define particular persons only as long as the two are in total correspondence with each other. Thus, one can be unambiguously classified as *oreng Madura asli* only to the extent that one is both of pure Madurese ancestry and of pure Madurese soil. But, the actual practice of identification of particular people always involves ambiguities and elements of indeterminacy, contextual shifts, and cases of situational choice. This is so for a quite high degree of demographic mobility has introduced the disentaglement of blood from soil, leaving thus, room for negotiations. Thus, I remember talking to Pak Suher, a *pedeteng* and an *oreng Madura asle* in both senses, about his children. Pak Suher had been married to another *oreng Madura asle* from his home village in Madura and they had migrated together to Alas Niser some twenty years ago. There they had two children. Pak Suher insisted that his children where *oreng Jebbeh*, that is persons of Java. When I asked why this was so, he pointed to the fact that they were born in the island of Java and not in Madura. Some months later, when I accompanied him in a series of reciprocal visits to the house of his daughter's prospective in-laws, a family originating from Tulung Agung in the western part of East Java, he referred to the marriage as the union between an *oreng Jebbeh*, the suitor, and an *oreng Madura*, his daughter. Her identity had clearly changed from being a 'person of Java' to being a 'person of Madura' according to whether the circumstances make either place or blood more relevant. In this case, as in general, relevance is predicated on relationality, that is with reference to an Other in terms of whom the self is grasped and rendered meaningful.

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[8] Studies from another part of the world are useful in this context. Both Tarahumara (Mexico) and Bajo Urubamba (Peru) personhood, as analysed by Slaney (1997) and Gow (1991) respectively, exemplify this point. Tarahumara's practise of both fire and water baptism, while dissociating them from both native ancestors and other non-Tarahumaran Mexicans, constructs them as 'partially embodying both' (Slaney 1997:279). Similarly, Gow's Bajo Urubamba natives who describe themselves as 'of mixed blood', locate their distinctiveness in being the synthesis of diverse kinds of blood simultaneously.

Similar ambiguities arise not only in relation to cases of recent migration but also to memories of it. The following is an extract from an interview in which I was trying to determine the identity of a neighbour's wife. While seated on a rattan mat, drinking coffee, and otherwise feeling relaxed, I inquired about his late partner:

> "Who were you married with, Pak?
> Ibu Siti...from Pakistaji (a village nearby).
> Was she of Madurese descent (*toronan Madura*, Mad.)?
> She was a 'person of Java' (*oreng Jebbeh*, Mad.). A person
> of Madura actually (*oreng Madura*, Mad.) but she was already a
> 'person of Java'.
> So, you were married with a 'person of Java'.
> No. She was of Madurese descent. She was a 'person of
> Java'. Her ancestors were from Madura but they and their
> descendants have been living in Java for a long time. So, she belonged
> to Java (*masok Jebbeh*, Mad.; 'enter Java')."

Not only do identities in Alas Niser shift from one context to the other, but they also oscillate in an inclusive fashion in a single context. The logic of mixing, as Gow notes for a completely different part of the world, means that people in Alas Niser, as in the Bajo Urubamba region of Peru, 'do not expect each other to conform to one and only one' kind of people (1991:254). The unproblematic status of this inclusive manner of identity negotiation can also be traced to the fact that the term *oreng camporan* or *wong pedalungan* is rarely used as a term of self-identification in interpersonal contexts but is reserved as reference term, designating in a general manner a locality and its inhabitants. Even children of inter-ethnic marriages would rarely identify themselves outright as *oreng camporan*. Instead, and as far their genealogy is concerned, they would point out the blood of their father and that of their mother, either refraining from further articulation or choosing one as more dominant. To give a concrete example of how complex the situation is in everyday life, I recount another case from my fieldnotes where, significantly, place is given a more restricted sense than that I have so far given to it.

> Yudiono Sarwisoto was living in downtown Probolinggo, in a neighbourhood close by what used to be the Arab quarter in colonial times, and which is dominated by Javanese speakers, many of whom described themselves as *orang Jawa*. Yudiono, a factory supervisor for a subsidiary of a large multinational company, said that his father was a 'pure Madurese' from Sampang and his mother was Javanese from the neighbourhood. Without mentioning anything related to *pedalungan*, he asserted that he was an *orang Jawa* (Ind.), 'a person of Java'. This is so, he added, because his mother was a Javanese, and his father had left her when he was still young for another woman. It was also because he was brought up in a '*kampong Jawa*' (a Javanese neighbourhood). As a result, he was fluent in Javanese while he could speak little Madurese. Then, in a rather disgruntled manner, he commented that whenever he asserts that he is an *orang Jawa*, his neighbours correct him by saying that he is actually a *pedalungan*, meaning 'not a pure one' (*bukan asli*, Ind.).

Yudiono, like other inhabitants of Probolinggo, often employed a spatial division of the area covered by the municipality into more heavily 'Madurese' areas and more heavily 'Javanese' ones. The former are located in the periphery of the city centre, in places where

large numbers of migrants from Madura settled a long time ago, places like Alas Niser. The latter are all around the city centre, where few Madurese migrants settled during the nineteenth century exodus. His assertion of being an *oreng Jawa*, then, reflected this more particular and internal spatial orientation, rather than the more general association of Central and western East Java with 'persons of Java'. Numerous other cases such as the one recounted here, rather than cancelling out the everyday validity of the idiom of mixing, actually reinforce it. The reason is that situational choice is conditioned by locality (and blood), though this locality is of a more restricted kind. On another level, this further division, however, indicates that mixing is thought of as unequally distributed in internal space and that categories like *orang Jawa* and *orang Madura*, as we have seen in the other two examples, are maintained and extensively used.

I remained totally bemused during my fieldwork with the insistence and alacrity people would identify particular persons as of particular kinds of people, that is as *orang Madura* or *orang Jawa*, and at the same time, they would quite unequivocally and incontestably assert that they were all of mixed blood and space. The reason for my bemusement was that while on one level difference was displaced, on another level it was re-articulated and reproduced. Thus, I felt that either the whole system of classification was powered by a central contradiction between the inclusivity of mixing and exclusivity of being of a particular kind or that what seemed to be a contradiction was itself the product of the classificatory principles. I have come to believe that in certain cases like the ones mentioned above, ambivalences stem from the system itself, that is from the disentangling of blood from soil and the specific definition place situationally receives. Furthermore, a distinction between the levels of reference could also provide a complementary answer. This is so, because *camporan* and *pedalungan* are primarily employed by locals to describe themselves as a distinctive community both to outsiders such as myself, visiting civil servants and tourists interested in local culture, and to themselves as a whole. However, when a specific person's identification is in question in internal contexts of association like affinity, friendship, economic transaction or a casual meeting, the further elaboration needed on one's origins so as to position one's interlocutor more firmly in the history of this mixing, creates relative difference in a pool of generalised similarity (see Gow 1991: 256). Since personal identities are predicated both on the highly varied histories of one's ancestors and one's own distinctive biography, the labels *orang Madura* or *orang Jawa* come merely to reflect and organise this variety. In opposition, *camporan* defines what they all have in common, namely a shared and embodied sense of 'non-purity'. Less than a contradiction, then, the combination of the idiom of mixing and of labels designating persons as particular kinds of people rests on the dynamic tension between the specifics of personal histories and a history all the inhabitants of Probolinggo and Alas Niser share and embody.[9]

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[9] Similar tensions pervade the classificatory system of another society, namely that of the Bajo Urubamba region of Peru, which, in other respects, is very different from that of Alas Niser.

Since personal identification is always negotiated within interpersonal contexts and with reference to multiple criteria, and not only to ethnicity, disagreements over one's identity often arise. A case in point is that of Agus. Agus, a twenty-four years old man, was the child of a male teacher from a village of eastern Probolinggo and a nurse from Malang, living in a neighbourhood where the majority of people made a living from fishing and were speakers of Madurese. As a result of his mother being an *orang Jawa asli*, Agus was fluent in Javanese while because of his experiences with socialising with other children from his neighbourhood, he was also fluent in Madurese. To his neighbours, Agus admitted, he was mostly an *orang Jawa*. Both his fluency in Javanese, the fact that he and his family, spoke mostly Javanese in their household, and his parents' profession set him apart from the rest of neighbourhood. He was, though, an *orang Mayangan* too, a 'person of [the village of] Mayangan' and, thus, similar to them. Once, during the early part of my fieldwork, I asked him to act as my translator for an interview in Madurese. To my surprise, the second time I visited the same interviewee, he inquired why it was that this time I had come alone and not with my '*oreng Madura*' friend. The interviewee who had, during the first meeting, asked Agus about his village of origin in the usual way of inquiring (i.e., *dheri demmak, cong*?, Mad. 'where from, son?') and had conversed with him in Madurese, had classified him as an *oreng Madura*. It is, thus, not only that labels of particular kinds of people refer to the specifics of personal histories of mixing but also that such labels are employed on the basis of partial encounters where knowledge of personal biographies is far from comprehensive and context bound. Moreover, the classifying Others are also multiple and diverse in terms of their own disparate biographies. Because of that, hetero-categorisation is based as much on the Self's biographical elements available and mode of self-presentation as on the setting and the classifying Other's biography and standpoint.

The power of the senses

Though, people in Alas Niser constantly discuss who is or who is not 'Madurese' or 'Javanese' in their midst, I have suggested that such a pre-occupation has to be contextualised within an overarching discourse on mixing and hybridity according to which the internal diversity of personal identification(s) is rendered as of secondary importance to the properties of the overall classification system itself. This is so for the significant Others in reaction to whom the category of 'mixed persons' is articulated are kinds of persons not

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Nevertheless, with respect to our problem at hand, Gow writes that actually such tensions do not amount to contradictions for 'what people are talking about [when they designate a person as a particular kind of person, to the exclusion of the idiom of mixing] are the positions of particular people in kinship and how kinship has been constructed historically' (1991: 256).

present in the locality and thus, of pure bodies and personhood. As I made clear above, these Others are the 'pure Javanese' (*orang Jawa asli*, Ind.) and the 'pure Madurese' (*orang Madura asli*, Ind.). Their alterity though partially embodied in the process of mixing, forms the central core of the construction of difference. In this way, partial incorporation of Otherness, instead of effacing difference through stressing the element of similarity, provides the ground for the establishment of a cultural distinction. The reasons this is so relate not only to the binary distinctions of purity versus mixing, or singular versus plural forms of personhood that I elaborated above as underpinning the whole system but also to the way the difference between 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese' is constructed from the 'mixed persons''s point of view.

The mixed people of Alas Niser encode disparate ways of being by means of employing a variety of epithets organised along a cultural hierarchy of modes of sensing the world and conducting oneself in it. This disparity, often thought as a manifestation of genealogical and emplaced essences (blood and land), describes three distinct ways of being, namely a 'pure Javanese', a 'pure Madurese' and a 'mixed' one. 'Pure Javanese' personhood is construed as *alos* (Mad.; *alus*, Jav.; *halus*, Ind.) while 'pure Madurese' personhood as its very opposite, that is, as *kasar* (Mad., Jav. and Ind.). 'Mixed personhood', being the conjunction in both spatial and genealogical terms of the two, occupies the middle ground, striking a balance through the merging of otherwise sharply juxtaposed characteristics. It is my contention that such a merging is not free from hierarchical considerations as the latter form an implicit but significant part of the discourse. This is clear when the political implications of the terms *alos* and *kasar* are taken into consideration.

Both in Java and Madura (Geertz 1960:232; Jordaan 1980:25-26), *alos* and *kasar* are extensively used to gloss what can be termed as 'class' differences, that is the difference between aristocrats and commoners or the difference between manual and non-manual labourers. With *alos* being superior to *kasar*, 'pure Javanese' personhood receives a more elevated position in relation to 'pure Madurese' personhood. 'Mixed personhood', though, is thought of as the most potent of all since it bears the mark of one of the most important attributes of the local concept of power. As Anderson (1990) has made amply clear in his seminal contribution on the subject, one of the most obvious signs of a man of power is 'the ability to concentrate opposites' (1990:28). While the classic iconographic symbol of this is 'the simultaneous incorporation within a single entity' (1990:29) of images of masculinity and femininity, mixed personhood rests on the simultaneous embodiment of equal amounts of *kasar*-ness and *alos*-ness. By containing both elements in a balanced way, mixed personhood is construed as not only unique but transcendent too.

Both the system of classification and the meanings on which it rests, index the major dimensions of human diversity according to a range of ways of being in the world, typified by the concepts of *kasar* and *alos*. While most of the literature on the topic treats these concepts as either part of key metaphysical and ethical stipulations associated with a specific

'class' of Javanese society, namely the *priyayi* (Geertz 1960; Anderson 1990) or as part of Javanese linguistic etiquette and relative status negotiations (Errington 1988; Keeler 1987), I wish to demonstrate here that they too have a strong relevance for the expression of ethnic classification as essential differentiation.

In contrast to much of what is considered as a kind of orthodoxy in theories and studies of ethnicity, cultural differences in Alas Niser are of minor importance in the construction of the ethnic boundary. I rarely heard commends about the difference between 'pure Madurese' and 'pure Javanese' or between 'mixed people' and 'pure people' phrased in a way that suggested that ethnicity can either be thought of as a meta-culture in the sense that it refers to a consciousness of culture in terms of which difference is construed or that ethnicity is about the use of culture traits as markers of a cognitive distinction that most constructivist theories taking their lead from Barth (1969, 1994) advocate. As I explain below, to the extent that language and issues pertaining to *adat* (Ind., customs, traditions) such as dress styles, dietary habits, dance and modes of vengeance occasionally appeared in conversations I had on this topic, rather than being used to elaborate and justify the distinction at hand, they were mere points that highlighted the *kasar*-nesss or *alos*-ness of specific kinds of personhood. Moreover, the relative unimportance accorded to what has been termed as the social construction of culture difference was accompanied by an equal lack of a discourse on difference articulated with respect to phenotypic or physical appearance. As such, criteria commonly associated with the concept of 'race' such as skin colour, facial and other bodily features were totally absent from indigenous conceptualisations of the difference between 'pure Madurese' and 'pure Javanese' or between 'mixed persons' and any of other two 'pure' types.[10]

The main way that ethnic difference is described in Alas Niser is through the concept of *sepat* (Mad.), *sifat* (Ind.) or *watak* (Jav.). *Sepat* means character and identifying characteristic, attribute and quality, disposition, nature and temperament. As with the case of the concept of *orang*, it qualifies personhood, as in the sentences *sepat niser* (Mad.), of charitable or merciful temperament and *watak gemi* (Jav.) of thrifty disposition. Although humankind is believed to emanate from the same source, namely Allah's creation of Adam, humanity comprises a variety of disparate manifestations, culturally encoded as *sepat*. Ethnic classification is itself embedded in this wider discourse with the result that Madurese *sepat* is contrasted in every way possible to Javanese *sepat*. The identifying characteristics of the former are quite invariably and incontestably depicted through epithets describing 'pure Madurese' as coarse, crude, hard, and lacking in refinement, in short as *kasar* (*sepat kasar*, Mad.). In contrast, 'pure Javanese' are construed as the epitome of gentleness,

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[10] This is not the case though with difference as described in relation to Chinese-Indonesians whose fair skin and eyes' shape was seen as setting them apart from other locals, to *orang Arab* (Ind., 'Arabs', descendants of migrants from the Middle-East) whose long noses and almond shaped eyes were a constant topic of discussion and of course, of *orang Barat* (Ind., Westerners) whose skin complexion, long noses and tall bodies informed local conceptions about them.

smoothness, endowed with subtlety of expression, ethereal mannerisms and exquisite refinement, in short as *alos* (*sepat alos*). Being of *kasar* or *alos* disposition and temperament includes also a number of other qualities. Thus, 'pure Madurese' temperament is depicted as brave (*berani*, Ind.), daring, adventurous, hard (*keras*, Ind.), hard working (*kerja keras*, Ind.), tough (*teguh*, Ind.), loud, arrogant and stubborn (*keras kepala*, Ind.), touchy, vengeful, hot-tempered and violence prone (*cepat marah* or *cepat panas*, Ind.), but also loyal, generous and fair. 'Pure Javanese' temperament is depicted as soft, tender and delicate (*lembut*, Ind.), timid and cool-tempered, avoiding open conflict, agreeable and reserved, lacking in desire for adventure and capacity for hard manual labour.

The contrast between *kasar* and *alos* as qualities of personhood can be demonstrated from the following statements of informants. Pak Idris, the man who later in my fieldwork, I would address as *aba* (Arab. for father), gave me an early lesson in how people in Probolinggo perceive their universe, saying that

> The *sifat* of human beings is diverse. There are some [people] who are honest and, then, there are those who are not. Because humans are not all the same, we have to be alert. The *sifat* of Madurese is different from the *sifat* of Javanese. Madurese *sifat* is *kasar*, *keras* (unpolished, hard); more emotional (*emosi* Ind.), more hot (*panas*, Ind.); it is easier for Madurese to become angry (*marah*, Ind.) than the Javanese. If a Madurese feels offended for whatever reason, his/her blood will soon start rising (*naik darah*, Ind.), making it difficult for him/her to control the emotions and, then, there will be a fight (*carok*, Mad.).

Pak Idris went further to cite a Madurese proverb that encapsulated this: '*angor pote tolang tembeng pote mata*' that can be roughly translated as 'death is preferable to shame'. Then, Pak Santoso, a man in his late fifties who was also present, joined in, saying that *sifat Jawa* is, by contrast, *halus* and *lembut* (refined and gentle, Ind.), calm (*tenang*, Ind.) and assured/quiet (*ayem tentrem* , Jav.), to the extent that insults are not to be avenged through open, public violence but rather through avoiding further contact with the other party or through employing mystical means (i.e., sorcery).

The violent and the non-violent approaches to disputes and conflicts arising from social interaction are traced to innate dispositions, *kasar* and *alos* respectively, themselves imagined as a difference in the propensity of one's blood remaining cool or becoming boiling hot. *Kasar* and *alos* refer to specific courses of action and behaviour as dictated by one's inner temperature. In this sense, outward behaviour is thought of as a manifestation of a process taking place within the body, the causative extension of corporeality to a social world constituted by performative means.

The direct association people in Alas Niser establish between *sifat Madura* and violence was a constant feature of the discussions I had in trying to decipher personhood from the native's point of view. When a Madurese was shamed (*malo*, Mad.), he was constantly depicted as ready to pull the sickle (*arek*, Mad.) he was carrying in his waist and

covered by his trousers, an act that would cause a duel (*carok*, Mad.) to take place between him and the offending party, often culminating in the death of one of the two, thus, settling the dispute. In contrast, *sifat Jawa* is construed as extremely successful in restraining emotions of vengeance from becoming overt and public, keeping them hidden in the bodily centre of *hati* (heart and liver, Ind.; see Chapter 3 and 4) while maintaining both an interior and exterior of calmness and security. In this case, *alos-ness* draws its superior ontology from an innate disposition of exercising control over unsettling and socially disturbing emotional states. The corporeality of the discourse is apparent in that, in both situations, the body is the focus of such sentiments. In the case of *alos*, internal control is mapped onto the body and exercised within the *hati* while in the case of *kasar*, lack of internal control means that anger finds satisfaction in delivering fatal blows to the enemy's body.

Kasar and *alos*'s thermal connotations interact with other sensory material such as certain chromatic attributes of *sifat*. Pure Madurese dress habits are seen as involving a certain taste for colours which are gleaming and dazzlingly bright (*cemerlang*, Ind.; *nyolok*, Jav.) worn in combinations which are supposed to have a contrasting effect. 'Madurese women like bright coloured clothes', commented an informant. 'They usually rely on red and other reddish colours, such as yellow and orange. Light blue and green are also their favourite', he added. The female attire, usually consisting of a *krudung* (headcloth, Mad.), a *kabaya* (upper body cloth, Mad.) and a *samper* (a *batik* cloth wrapped around the waist and covering the lower body, Mad.), is described as mixing and mingling several of these colours for the purpose of appearing beautiful and attractive. The disposition of Madurese femininity is further elaborated with comments on the application of beauty products and the choice of jewellery. 'Pure Madurese' women are described as unwise in their choice of lipstick since their opting for too bright a colour is seen as unsuitable for the 'brown' (*coklat*, Ind) skin complexion of Indonesians. In addition, they are construed as wearing gold earrings, bracelets and necklaces on an everyday basis which are 'too big' (*terlalu besar*, Ind.). The imagery of Madurese male dress habits is conjured up in the evocation of what is classified as 'traditional dress' (*perpakaian adat*, Ind.) by the Indonesian state.[11] The disposition of Madurese males is equated again with a certain chromatic contrast conveyed by the combination of *klabih pesa* (Mad.), a black two part cloth consisting of a short jacket and a pair of trousers, the latter wrapped around the waist rather than buttoned up, and a *kaos dalem*, a red and white striped T-shirt. In contrast, 'pure Javanese' dress is classified as calm (*tenang*, Ind.) and soft (*lembut*, Ind.) in terms of the effect the radiance of its colours has on the sense of sight. Softness is seen as a quality of 'dark' (*gelap*, Ind.) colours such as white, black and brown as well as of the way these are combined in the decorative *batik* designs

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[11] For an informed and thorough discussion on the 'management' of ethnic diversity with respect to the policies of invention, revitalisation, classification and exhibition of 'ethnic culture as art' undertaken by the Indonesian state, as well as, of the consequences of such policies on popular imagination see Kipp 1993:105-114; Acciaioli 1985; Pemberton 1994a.

and themes produced in the principalities of Jogjakarta and Surakarta of Central Java, the heartland of Javanese authenticity (*keaslian,* Ind.).

Thermal and colour dispositions and tastes are interrelated for the blood's hotness is represented by the colour red, the colour *par excellence* of Madurese *sifat,* construed as a sign of Madurese bravery too. Reddish colours and gleaming combinations come to manifest the turbulent tensions imagined to inhabit the Madurese body-person, its particular uncontrollability of emotions and a certain extrovert disposition, seen also in the way it exhibits wealth and status. Similarly, the coolness of 'pure Javanese' blood is denoted by the neutrality of selected colours which are said to be highly harmonious or highly suitable to each other. Coolness is associated with not only introversion, but also with timidity and refraining from public boasting.

Issues concerning the sense of taste are also incorporated in the discourse on ethnic difference. The land of the island of Madura, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, is construed as arid, dry, infertile and of hard (*keras*) soil. Extreme conditions of drought and the limestone composition of the land make the practice of irrigated agriculture unsuitable and thus, necessitate the cultivation of unirrigated fields (*talon,* Mad.). Due to these ecological factors, rice cultivation is complemented with the cultivation of maize and cassava, as well as other crops. Both maize and cassava are seen as characterising the diet of 'pure Madurese' and are both classified as *keras* foodstuffs. In particular, 'pure Madurese' are seen as maize eaters in the sense that their staple diet consists of rice mixed with maize, while cassava is consumed in periods of marked shortages of rice, usually during the months preceding the new rice harvest. The quality of *keras* in this case is seen as a quality inherent in the texture of the foodstuff, the direct result of the quality of the land on which it grows and of which it is an extension. *Keras* is perceived through the sense of taste, conveying a certain hardness and firmness felt by the teeth and the tongue. To the extent that human growth is attributed to the continuous consumption of food, 'pure Madurese' corporeality is constituted as *keras* for 'pure Madurese' bodies grow out of the incorporation of *keras* food.

By contrast, the staple diet of 'pure Javanese' that consists of rice only, is designated as *alos.* The Javanese soil which is rich in volcanic elements and the general high level of rainfall that ensures a greater availability of water in Central Java, are seen as the primary reasons behind the fertility of Java and, probably, the softness of the produce. Though none of my informants established a direct link between irrigated agriculture, humidity and food texture, it is obvious nevertheless, from the way these issues were raised within a single context, that an underlying causative chain ties them all together. 'Pure Javanese' diet is construed as *alos* for it consists of rice which is soft (*lembut,* Ind.) and juicy (*banyak airnya,* Ind.) in taste. In turn, 'pure Javanese' persons are thought to exhibit a similar softness for they, and their bodies, have matured through the consumption of *alos* substances. Rice is also thought to be far superior to any other foodstuff in terms of its contribution to human growth and health. Babies are fed rice as soon as they stop being breastfed and generous

portions of rice, consumed three times daily, are seen as absolutely essential to ensuring an adult's strength and well-being. Similarly, healthy bodies are said to be soft in the sense of having muscles which are flexible and elastic. By contrast, hard or hardened bodies bear the signs of illness, usually related to bad blood circulation and the formation of blood clots. In cases such as this, a series of massages performed by local specialists are said to reconstitute the body's texture and its healthy state.

As in the case of thermal and colour dispositions, the *keras-ness* and *alos-ness* of particular body-persons are thought of as manifested through certain acts or gestures, that is, ethnically classified embodied modes of behaving. In a series of discussions I have had with the members of the only active dance troupe in Probolinggo, the *Sangar Bayu Kencana* led by Pak Imron, both the corporeality of *sifat* and the imagining of external behaviour as stemming from innate dispositions was stressed. In particular, Pak Imron explained the differences between Madurese dance and Javanese dance as founded on different ontologies.[12] 'Madurese dance, he explained, is characterised by *leter* (Mad.; *entel*, Jav.) movements, [that is] movements that aim to attract somebody's attention. This is so for *sifat Madura* is proud (*bangga*, Ind.) and likes showing off in public'. Madurese dance movements are also described as marked by spontaneity for *sifat Madura* is 'outspoken', by sharp and rapid movements for *sifat Madura* is 'brave', accompanied by a percussion orchestra producing 'loud' (*kasar*) sounds in a frenzy of rhythm. The *kasar-ness* of sound is traced to the dominant role of an instrument called *gendang*, a kind of drum made of animal skin. According to the local theory of art, that sees it as the direct expression of what is inner and otherwise hidden from view, Javanese dance movements are equally conditioned by the temperament of 'pure Javanese' personhood. 'Javanese dance is full of movements that show indecision for *sifat Jawa* is shy (*malu*, Ind., also reserved) and thinks a lot before acting (*fikir panjang*, Ind.)', Pak Imron added. Javanese choreography is also seen as founded on the smooth (*alos*) transition from one gesture to the next, involving a lot of secondary transitional movements which have a 'decorative' effect, accompanied by a percussion orchestra producing sounds that make one 'feel calm' (*tendrem*) and 'satisfied' (*puas, Ind.*). *Alos* sounds are basically attributed to the *gambang* instrument, similar to xylophone, which is dominant in Javanese music.

The different kinds of auditory ontology that a consideration of music modalities seems to suggest in the earlier comments, comes out in full force when the local

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[12] According to Hughes-Freeland (1997) *alos* and *kasar* distinctions are central among the elite of the Javanese court city of Yogyakarta as far as art, and dance, in particular, are concerned. For this elite, *alos* is equated with art, the palace, tradition and morality while *kasar* with the peasantry and its lack of elevated aesthetics and morality. The association of the *alos-kasar* distinction with hierarchy is also quite clear in my case. As far as morality is concerned, see chapter 4.

Plate 4. Members of the dance workshop posing after a performance

understandings of language are examined. Language is first and foremost approached as speech, a communicative activity taking place in a world created, animated and classified through sound. Sound is evaluated according to its musicality, melody or euphony, in short to the pleasure it brings to the ear. Madurese language is, therefore, classified as *kasar* for it is sensed as cacophonous and lacking in the delicate tonalities and wavy intricacies pertaining to the *alos-ness* of Javanese language. In this sense, the superiority of Javanese personhood rests on the greater degree of oral refinement and auditory perfection of Javanese *sifat*, exhibited through the sounds its language produces. This hierarchical mode of classification pertains not only to the differences between languages but also to a single language. Thus, the different speech levels comprising each language are equally construed as *alos* and *kasar*. *Kasar* is a quality of the *ngoko* (Jav.) and *ta' abasah* (Mad.), the lowest speech level used among people of equal social standing, people who have intimate social relationships as well as from a social superior to a social inferior (Geertz 1960; Errington 1988; Keeler 1987). Bland and coarse sounds are marked by the use of *ngoko* in situations of joking as well as anger. Both situations contrast with the elegant and stylised sounds of *krama* (Jav. & Mad.), the highest speech level, employed in formal occasions and when speaking to people one hardly knows or to whom one owes respect and deference. The capacity to use the most refined of the speech levels efficiently and fluently is seen as a demonstration of the inner refinement of the character of the speaker (Keeler 1987). According to this scheme, aristocrats are considered to be marked by a different and higher type of ontology for their command of *krama* speaks of their inner smoothness, sensitivity and self-control in avoiding undesired emotional excitement. People who master *ngoko* only are construed as lacking these qualities, as being crude and unrefined. Though both languages, Madurese and Javanese, share different speech levels, the sounds of Javanese *krama* are classified as more *alos* than the *krama* of Madurese and, similarly, the Madurese *ta' abasah* as harsher than Javanese *ngoko*.

Though the *kasar*/*alos* distinction is applied to various social contexts and has a variety of meanings ranging from issues of culturally-specific ideas about politeness and civility to modes of political action, I only wish to draw attention here to its convergence with the culturally-specific ideas about the senses and the types of body-persons they exhibit. Ethnic classification in Alas Niser not only focuses on the body through a discourse on origins as traced to blood and land as the sources of bodily constitution, but is based also on an elaboration of distinctive corporealities through classifying the senses.[13] For the mixed people of Probolinggo, the senses are seen as an outward materialisation of a person's ethnic identity. They, thus, mark the boundary between what is the person's exterior, the *lahir* (Ind.; *laher*, Mad.), and the person's interior, the *batin* (Ind.; *bhaten*, Mad.) (see also

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[13] I have not had any conversations, though, in which the sense of smell was directly implicated in marking ethnicity.

Tsintjilonis 1997; Middleton 2000). It is precisely because the senses are construed as a boundary and revealing interface that they receive such a signification.

Bhaten is constituted by the genealogical and emplaced principles of engendering particular kinds of people, making it the embodiment of blood and land. 'Pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese', thus, differ in the type of blood and land they are made of. Their difference is essential but not immutable, as different kinds of blood and land do mix producing new kinds of *bhaten*, so to speak. *Bhaten* diversity gives rise to body-persons with distinct qualities, dispositions and temperaments. These are thought to be located on the senses of taste, sight, touch and hearing. It is precisely because 'pure Madurese' and 'pure Javanese' are endowed with differential qualities of vision, temperature, body texture, gestural habits and orality, that their *laher*, that is their modes of behaving, are so different. According to this mode of conceiving human action and intentionality, different ontologies give rise to different modes of behaviour, for the interior extends to the world through the senses. In other words, *laher* is to be read as a sign for *bhaten*, action for disposition, agency for substantial embodiment.

Far from being a simple activity in stereotyping, as de Jonge (1995) argues in an article that, otherwise, makes explicit the historicity of such cognitive schemes, the activity of classifying engulfs personhood and the diversity of the ways of being in their totality. As seen from the perspective of locals of Alas Niser, difference is the body itself, the type of substances it is made of, the kinds of sounds it produces, the sort of colours it involves, its degrees of heat and dryness or hardness... Moreover, sensing does not involve the interaction between an external world of objects grasped by the mind, but the constitution of an external world by the potency of an interiority traced to genealogy and place.

Causalities of difference

Alos and *kasar* are not only mapped on the body, transforming it into a meaningful place, but also on culturally shaped space. When people in Alas Niser comment on *alos* and *kasar*, they always point to the Central Javanese principalities of Jogjakarta and Surakarta as the spatial epitomes of *alos-ness* and, in particular, to the mannerisms and code of etiquette thought to permeate social life in the court circles of these two cities, among the three royal families and the rest of the aristocrats, and to a lesser extent among the cities' populace of commoners. Good manners such as table manners and appropriate modes of sitting, respectful forms of body gestures and deferential speech as well as all the multiple details constituting a protocol of social interaction, that some liken to ritualised behaviour, were described to me as the essence of 'Java' and of a culture (*adat*) that is said to have its origin

to pre-Islamic times. The *kraton*, that is the palace, is held to be both the spring and the very centre of such a culture of *alos*, providing not so much political leadership in the sense of authority but, rather, a programme for living. This programme is construed as radiating out from the *kraton*, engulfing those living in close proximity with people of 'blue blood' (*berdarah biru*, Ind.), that is those of aristocratic descent, and extending further to encompass people and communities in the western part of East Java, like those of Jombang, Lamongan, Malang, Madiun and Kediri.[14] The further *alos-ness* extends outwards and downwards from the *kraton*, the less comprehensive the knowledge of the multitude of its constituent elements and the less intensive the adherence to them, are thought to become. Thus, the highest degree of authenticity of 'pure Javanese' personhood is entangled with the perfection of *sepat* aristocrats are thought to represent, encoded as 'blue blood'. This authenticity is conceived as contagious, spreading over the landscape of the island and demarcating a vague border that cuts mainland East Java in two halves.

Beyond the sea straits lies the island of Madura, and what remains in living memory from the various royal houses making up the aristocracy of the island in the nineteenth century, is the *kraton* of Sumenep, at the far east end of the island. The *kraton*, which is linked both through marital ties and political ones of subordinate order, to the *kraton* of Surakarta, is classified as of lesser *alos-ness* to the *alos-ness* of Javanese royal houses. The links which are mostly remembered and narrated in Probolinggo by people with an acute interest in national history and local cultures, that is people who have received formal education, portray the *kraton* of Sumenep as being overshadowed by its Javanese counterparts. It is also conceived as being unable to radiate its refinement and perfection to the rest of the populace, never gaining control over an often rebellious countryside. As such, the land of Madura and the authenticity of 'pure Madurese' is traced to conditions pertaining away from the *kraton*. The centre of gravity of 'pure Madurese' *sepat* is described as located in the dry, limestone hills of the island's hinterland and in the sea that surrounds it. If then, 'pure Javaneseness' is thought of as stemming from an emulation of blood of an ascending order of being, 'pure Madureness' is thought to be the result of an almost acephalous land. *Kasar*-ness is explained as much as an absence of a potent centre as of what living entails in such a place.

The formation of *kasar* body-persons is conceived as the direct result of living experiences of interaction with the environment. I have already commented on the

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14 Indigenous anthropologists' mapping of Javanese culture onto space corresponds with non-anthropologists ideas of culture space. For example, Kodiran (1976) writes that the culture area of Java, named as *kejawen*, covers the whole area of 'Banjumas, Kedu, Jogjakarta, Surakarta, Madiun, Malang and Kediri. The area lying beyond it is called *Pesisir* [the coast] and *Udjung Timur* [the far east]' (1976: 327). By contrast, foreign anthropologists of post-modernist inclinations, like Pemberton (1994b), argue that the very idea of 'Java' as culture is the product of the political history of the island society, traced to the competition for the exercise of legitimate authority between the Central Javanese royal houses and the colonial administration. He extends his argument, showing how the New Order state, following this historical trajectory, has in turn, invested much of its political rhetoric and source of legitimacy in emerging as both the direct 'offspring' of Javanese courts and the promoter of 'Java'.

symbolism that ties land quality, food properties and body together in the previous section. What I intend to do here is to expand on this by introducing informants' comments that make this kind of causation more tangible, and, hopefully, more clear. The 'pure Madurese' body-person is derivative of fishing activities, for their *keras* sounds, an informant explained, is the result of having to communicate in loud voices when speaking to each other while in the sea. 'It is the influence of nature (*alam*, Ind.). The people living in the coast have a more *keras* voice than those living in Malang, for example, for when they are at the sea they have to speak loud so that the others can hear what is being said', Pak Ismail commented while linking 'pure Madurese' personhood with the reputation Madurese have as brave seafarers and successful fishermen. On another occasion, Ibu Suhartini traced *keras* to agriculture. Reflecting on the dry and barren quality of Madurese hinterland, she contended that *sepat keras* is due to the hard (*keras*) work 'pure Madurese' have to perform in order to ensure that their harvests are plentiful. 'In Madura, one has to work harder than here in Java, if one wants to feed his/her family. Because, in Java, the land is much more fertile, Javanese can be *ayem* (Jav.; calm, assured) that they will have enough without too much effort', she added.

Striving to make a living in unfavourable, hard conditions is taken to shape the disposition of body-persons also with respect to inner temperature. The exercise of hard manual labour is thought of as making one's blood more prone to heating up. 'Manual jobs are tiring, so one gets angry easily. Because this kinds of job requires one to apply oneself fully (*banting tulang*, Ind.), one can easily lose control', Pak Slamet explained. Manual work and Madureseness are identical in Probolinggo for new migrants from Madura are widely perceived as doing all kinds of *kasar* (manual) jobs such as tricycle drivers and coolies, which locals avoid doing. Such jobs are seen also as 'dirty' (*kotor*, Ind.) and are juxtaposed to the cleanliness of white collar jobs such as a job in the civil service or a bank branch, mostly associated with people originating from Central Java. Finally, the hot and dry climate of the Madurese countryside is also used in explaining differential temperatures of persons. The high degree of heat of the Madurese hinterland and of the sea is thought of as informing the inner heat of persons, stored in the *hati* and animating the whole body through the veins. In contrast, the more cool and more wet climate of Javanese lands, especially those away from the coast, located further inland and in the mountains, is held to account for the inner coolness of the 'pure Javanese'.

What this and numerous other similar comments reveal is the certain interconnectedness postulated between kinds of persons and kinds of land. This interconnectedness is more literal than metaphorical as persons and their bodies are not mere representations of ecological realities but rather come to be constituted and produced in the process of their engagement with their surroundings. This type of engagement is an embodied one, for relations to land are predicated on the incorporation of its qualities through living in it, working with it and assimilating it through food. The identification of kinds of

personhood with ethnic homelands, as I commented on in earlier sections of this chapter, rests on the cultural recognition of personhood as an emplaced way of being and of land as the origin point and source of growth. Land and personhood, thus, do not remain in a relation of exteriority. They exhibit a fundamental convergence and identity in a fully ontological sense. I will explore this major theme further with respect to the makings of 'mixed persons' in the penultimate chapter when rituals of food exchange taking place within the spatial domain of the neighbourhood will be examined. For the time being, it will suffice to say that, from the native's point of view, persons are of land to the same extent they are of blood.

The causative links traced between body-persons and lands means that the relations between different kinds of land are perceived of being as hierarchical as relations between different kinds of persons. The relative superiority of *alos* of 'pure Javanese' to the *kasar* of 'pure Madurese' is refracted in linguistic use that marks movement in space. Several first generation Madurese migrants in Probolinggo who return to their villages in Madura for a short period of time to visit family and friends during Islamic festival and life-cycle rituals, refer to their movement across the Madura straits with the verb *'toron'* (Mad.) which means to climb down, to descend, to move in a downward fashion. Equally, their return trip to Java is denoted by the verb *'ongghe'* (Mad.), meaning to move upwards, to ascend. In-between the uplands of 'pure Java' and the lowlands of the island of Madura, lie the land of *oreng camporan*. To my informants, this land covers all the eastern coast of East Java, from the north of Pasuruan down to the south of Situbondo and Asembagus, and from the fertile mountains of Jember and Lumajang in the southern hinterland of East Java to the southern regions of Malang, with the exception of a small portion of space designated as *tanah Tengger*, the home of the Tengger people, around mountain Bromo.[15] Such a land is construed as both *alos* and *kasar*, less *kasar* than the land of Madura and less *alos* than the land of Java. By being more fertile, less hot, less dry and more humid than the island of Madura, *camporan* land is thought to be giving life to persons with more melodious voices, of more smooth visual tastes and more balanced amounts of heat and cold than those characterising 'pure Madurese' persons. Seen as being less fertile, more hot, more dry and less humid than Central Java, *camporan* land is conceived as engendering persons with a more volatile temperament and more colourful appearance than that of 'pure Javanese' persons.

If emplacement accounts for personhood, genealogy and the flow of blood across generations are also reflected upon for their role in transmitting qualities, dispositions and temperaments. A foetus is thought of as made up of the father's semen, which is actually male blood transformed in the lower parts of the spine, and retained female uterine blood, mixed indiscriminately together. The foetus is conceived as growing through being fed by the mother's blood during gestation while after delivery, blood in the form of breastmilk continues

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[15] Hefner (1985) has provided an insightful ethnography of Tengger society and the interactions between its Hindu religious basis with the wider Islamic context.

to ensure its development and growth (see Chapter 5). After the baby is old enough, roughly at the age of one to one and half years old, it is introduced to rice and other foodstuffs appropriate for adults. Food provided by the parents on an everyday basis and by the local community in both ritually marked and un-marked occasions is thought of as being transformed into blood in the interior centre of *hati*, and as such to continue to stimulate growth. When a young man and a woman reach marriageable age, which for city-dwellers starts with completion of high school or university education while for villagers begins with completion of three to four years of religious education in a *pesantren*, one has one's blood lines scrutinised for their meaning. Information about the ancestors of prospective daughters and sons-in-law are collected meticulously by the interested party so as to assess the suitability of the suitors not only in terms of the social status of their families but also so as to read 'in' one's interior states. It is believed that to a large extent, qualities exhibited in one's ancestors' works and deeds are 'descending' (*etoronaghi*, Mad.), passing down to generations through the blood ancestors have inherited. Thus, ancestors' behaviour is scrutinised for the absence or presence of moral qualities of goodness, generosity, pity for the poor and the needy, politeness as well as rudeness, selfishness and aggression. In a similar mode of thinking that links genealogy with ethnicity, the presence or absence of the array of dispositions encapsulated by the *kasar/alos* distinction is thought to be predicated on the type of blood that makes up one's totality of being. In other words, *kasar* and *alos* modes of behaving are explained by recourse to the genealogical principle of engendering persons, making blood as much a conduit of dispositions as a metaphor of historical relations. In other words, as an informant put it, when asked why Madurese act *kasar*, replied that 'it is in their blood' (*bede ning dereh*, Mad.).

Mixed personhood's balance of *alos* and *kasar*, of heat and coolness, of dryness and humidity, of soft and gleaming colours, of loud and gentle voices, of crude and eloquent speech, of sharp and slow gestures, are, thus, explained as the product of mixing of two equally potent but different in 'nature' substances of life, that is distinct kinds of blood. To the people I lived with, blood is more than a mere biological substance as it points to a conception of personhood according to which genealogy is the means for the inscription of relations of engendering and of ways of being in the sense of attributes in the very materiality represented by the human body.

Of blood and place

I have analysed the creation of mixed personhood as a historical process that began with the establishment of new localities and the production of new kinds of persons born out

of inter-marriage. I have also hinted at the fact that mixed personhood goes beyond both of them, as its category encompasses all those living in a specific area, the *pedalungan/camporan* land of East Java, irrespective of precise ancestral biographies of marital exchange. The making of mixed personhood as a classificatory 'innovation' is predicated on a certain disjunction between the genealogical and emplaced principles of engendering and growth, a disjunction precipitated by demographic movement. This disjunction has given impetus to new, hybrid and plural forms of personhood, founded on the substantial and spatial conjunction of previously 'pure' kinds of people. Neither Madurese nor Javanese, mixed personhood describes boundary collapse and potency, balance, historical innovation and categorical uniqueness.

I have also argued for the validity of grasping this historical process from the point of view of embodiment since difference as described by my informants is about essential distinctions, themselves embedded in the body. Practice and performance do feature in the discourse on ethnic difference, but rather than being seen as constitutive of classificatory distinctions, they are construed as derivative of embodied dispositions and attributes. In other words, practice is to be treated as a sign that reveals differential interiorities and bodily states of being, themselves stemming from relations with the land on the one hand, and ancestors on the other. My ethnographic exposition has proceeded through a framework that integrates issues of land and genealogy. If anthropology is about the attempt to meaningfully render the world from the Other's point of view, our analytical distinctions have to be continually reconstituted so as to fit the Other's own. I will proceed thus, to investigate the makings of mixed personhood on the premise that genealogy and place rather than being autonomous and mutually exclusive domains of social activity and principles of sociality, are interconnected in a series of transformations. This is so for the ontological metamorphosis of beings of one kind into another, mixed personhood seems to suggest and to entail, rest on the inter-transformations of soil and blood.

I will now move from a consideration of the principles of the ethnic classificatory scheme to an investigation of the ways these are revealed, played out and negotiated in the everyday life of the community of Alas Niser and Probolinggo. I thus, intend to concentrate on how mixed personhood and its significant Others are produced and contested through an examination of more specific cases rich in ethnographic detail. This move is designed as a compensation for the rather abstract and distilled nature of the present chapter which only purpose was to provide the wider context against which the following data has to be understood and assessed. The new focus on the everyday production of the bodily repertoire of mixed personhood will also serve to highlight the place and relevance people in Alas Niser accord to practice and performance for the shaping and the transformation of one's personhood. Central to this is also the political implications of the *kasar-alos* distinction that position these negotiations and contestations within the frame of specifically culturally conditioned politics of elevation.

Chapter Three. A design for life:
biography, negotiation and hierarchy

A distinction too far, a life too close

The story of my acquaintance with the term *pedalungan* began early in my fieldwork, and more precisely several weeks before I was to take up residence in Alas Niser. When I was still in Surabaya, the provincial capital of East Java, and I was still in search of a fieldwork site that resembled more the ideal of classical anthropology, that is of a small scale community, I was the guest in the house of a lecturer in the city's biggest university, *Universitas Airlangga*. Budiono, my host, who was originally from Blitar in western East Java, upon hearing that my research topic focused on Madurese migration, gave me an early introduction in the categories that *orang Surabaya* (Ind.), the people of Surabaya, hold to as most meaningful. He thus, went at great length to explain that for *orang Surabaya*, who in his terminology belonged to the category of Javanese (*wong Jawa*, Jav.), there are two kinds (*macam*, Ind.) of Madurese living in the province of East Java. There are, he said, the Madurese *asli* who live in the island of Madura and the Madurese *migran* (Ind.), the migrants, or Madurese *pedalungan* who live in the island of Java. While people of the second category, he expanded, were of Madurese ancestry (*turunan*, Ind.) and thus, similar in genealogical terms with people of the first category, the important point of distinction, he continued, was that Madurese *pedalungan* lived not in isolation but in contact with the 'Javanese'. Due to their spatial proximity and frequent interaction with persons he qualified as *halus* and as the most 'civilised' in Indonesia, Madurese *migran* were of slightly different temperament than their *asli* counterparts, he added.

For Budiono, the term *pedalungan* designated persons of an unmistakably Madurese make-up. These persons were to be subsumed within the general and more encompassing category of *orang Madura*. However, the fact that they lived not in the Madurese heartland but rather in an area that borders the more 'elevated' lands of Central Java had such an effect on them that constitute them as somewhat distinct to *asli*. He pointed out that *pedalungan* distinctiveness was due to an awareness of the fact that '*adat Jawa*' (Ind.), the Javanese way or custom, was inherently 'superior' (*lebih unggul*, Ind.) to any other 'way' of life within Indonesia and that this made its emulation irresistible and rewarding. To him, *pedalungan* was the result of an imitation, if not partial acculturation, that was, however, limited in its application by the assumed force of ancestry.

I refer here to Budiono because his comments on the ethnic landscape of East Java exemplify an understanding of the term *pedalungan* that I encountered several times while speaking to people who, living outside Alas Niser and Probolinggo, categorised themselves as 'Javanese'. To them, *pedalungan* temperament was embedded in the hetero-tracing of origins to ancestors who originated from Madura and was related to *pedalungan* persons' conscious attempt to get rid of character traits construed as *kasar*, and thus, of lesser value. My interlocutors who, at that time, comprised people belonging to Surabaya's middle- and upper-class, that is professionals who had received high-school and university education or successful businessmen and highly placed civil servants, pointed out that *pedalungan* were persons caught in a process of mimetic transformation.

Pak Soepinto, a 72 year old man who was born in Semarang, Central Java and had been the sub-district head of the *kecamatan* Lekok in the Pasuruan district (*kabupaten*) for a good eight years, described the Madurese *migran* of his administrative area as in a process of shedding a whole bundle of practices commonly associated with being an *orang Madura asli*. To this, he furnished a multitude of examples. While, he said, *orang Madura asli* live in compounds made up of several houses of families related through kinship, the *Madura pedalungan* slowly abandon using this residential pattern and adopt the 'Javanese way' (*adat Jawa*, Ind.) which is the building of houses along narrow streets shared by an array of un-related families. In addition, they built toilets besides their houses and they stop defecating in small rivers or at sea which not only contributes to un-hygenic conditions in villages but is also a sign of lack of modesty. They too, enrich their diet with the frequent consumption of rice and vegetables and they visit bio-medical doctors more often than in the past. More importantly, they send their children to state schools to learn Indonesian, arithmetic and other *moderen* (Ind., modern) subjects. This new tendency for secular, modern education was contrasted by Pak Soepinto with the situation in the island of Madura where its inhabitants are said to prefer religious education such as that offered in *pesantren*. Secular education was held to be instrumental also in Madurese *pedalungan* abandoning practising *carok*, the duel of honour, he added. He construed *carok* as the basic manifestation of the coarseness and hardness of Madurese character and praised Madura *pedalungan* for refraining from killing in an extra-judicial context and thus, behaving in a un-*halus* way.

Pak Soepinto's talk conflated signs of modernisation as espoused by the New Order state in its drive for development and literacy with things associated with the embodiment of Javanese temperament. The point of their confluence was situated in both being taken to represent a state of affairs that approximates perfection and achievement of which is a goal that should be shared by all. In this scheme of things, Madura *asli* stands not only as the antipode of Javaneseness but also of national aspirations. It corresponds to a peasant way of life, akin to the past, and characterised by insecurity, fear of Others and relative isolation. In contrast, the category of *orang Madura migran* is taken to stem from an awareness of

backwardness and inferiority, instigated by contact with the *halus* Other and an envisioning of the ideals of modernity.

The adoption of a new set of practices that regulate everyday life by the *pedalungan* people of East Java is taken by non-*pedalungan* outsiders to represent a partial rupture of their affiliation with *asli* and an effort in approximating the 'Javanese' and the goals of development (*pembangunan*, Ind). Such an approximation is embedded in the refashioning of their body-persons by adopting Javanese and modern standards of behaviour. Re-arrangements of residential patterns, education and health orientations together with the regulation of conflict in accordance with state law are interpreted as giving rise to a slightly distinct category of persons. However, this new category is hetero-classified as part of *orang Madura*. Though, not an emblem of what authentic Madurese-ness stands for, *pedalungan* is construed by non-Alas Niser natives as the version of Madura in Java.

The limits my 'Javanese' interlocutors identified with respect to the efficacy of the performative and creative aspects of *pedalungan* personhood are related to ideas about genealogy and place of birth. In this context, the biography of Ibu Siti as it was narrated to me by herself, and of the tensions and strategic manipulation of facets of her identity, are instructive.

Ibu Siti is the eldest daughter of a well-to-do family living in Alas Niser. Her mother was the daughter of a trader from Sampang, Madura while her father was originally from the city of Jogjakarta, Central Java. The latter had arrived in Alas Niser as the appointed head of local branch of the department of agriculture in the late seventies. Ibu Siti, along with her siblings, had been raised in a fashion typical in Alas Niser and Probolinggo for children of inter-ethnic marriages. They were all fully bilingual, employing both Madurese and Javanese, mostly the lower speech level (*ngoko*), in the context of their household and most specifically, they were to speak Madurese to their mother and their maternal relatives and Javanese to their father and paternal relatives. While in this respect Ibu Siti and her siblings' socialisation exhibited quite common concerns and practices in the locality, their father's contribution to their upbringing made them quite atypical. Her father who was himself the son of a lower ranking civil servant with some putative distant kinship links with Jogjakarta's royal family, was an ardent admirer of *wayang* (Jav., shadow theatre) stories and a fervent supporter of the idea that social advancement in modern-day Indonesia is tied with educational and professional achievement. So he pushed and supported financially all his eight children to attend state schools all the way from primary up to university level. Concurrently, he employed his fondness for *wayang* stories to instruct his children in the higher speech levels of Javanese language, namely these of *krama* , or high Javanese, and *madya*, or middle Javanese.

Wayang stories, that is episodes taken from both Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Hindu epics, are commonly held to constitute the central core of Javanese values and ways and to exhibit during their renderings in the shape of puppet theatre performances, all that

which is quintessentially *halus* (see Geertz 1960: 263-278: Keeler 1987). Their *halus*-ness is presumably tied to a variety of elements ranging from the employment of *krama* by the puppeteer in the context of dialogues to the rhythm and pitch of his voice and from the evaluation of certain central characters along the *kasar-halus* continuum to the *gamelan* music accompanying the play.

When Ibu Siti was eighteen years old, she enrolled at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in Jogjakarta where she joined the household of one of her father's sisters. There, as well as being a brilliant student, Ibu Siti was active in attending Koranic lessons in an all women's religious association that promoted women's rights (*hak wanita*, Ind.) from an Islamic perspective. She was also helping her aunt in the *batik* home industry the latter had set up in one of the narrow streets behind Jojgakarta's main market. Looking back at her days in Jogjakarta, Ibu Siti construed her apprenticeship as a *batik* worker in terms of the contribution she was expected to make to the household of which she was then a member, adding that her aunt was 'like a mother' to her and that it was her duty to help her with all kinds of chores and work. She also grew very fond of *batik* work for, as she explained, it exemplified the necessary self-discipline and inward concentration any 'useful person' (*orang berguna*, Ind.) should cherish and develop for his/her own well-being. To Ibu Siti then, as well as many other 'pure Javanese', the manufacture of *batik* was both a manifestation and a technique for the promotion and acquisition of certain character traits. Woven into the careful and painstaking application of melted wax on a piece of cloth, the meticulous drawing of a design and the cloth's dipping into a vat of dye were certain attitudes as well as bodily and mental disciplines as unique to Java and its people as the colours and the designs of the finished cloth.

Her period of untroubled stay at her aunt's house came to a close when well into the third year of her studies, both her uncle and her aunt started planning to betrothe and finally marry her to the son of one of her uncle's business associates and close friend. The bridegroom who was a economics student at that time, was set to succeed his father into managing a garment industry with contracts linking it to both national and international markets. However, Ibu Siti did not like the young man and found repulsive the thought of a 'traditional' marriage in which she had to succumb to the wishes of her senior relatives. Her dream, she said, was to marry out of love, *cinta* (Ind.), a concept associated with romance as portrayed in Western movies and modernity and progress in general. In the following weeks, Ibu Siti made her displeasure felt towards her aunt through refusing to eat and staying indoors, mostly in her bedroom, where she would pray to Allah for help and direction. Under intense pressure from other relatives, including her own family in Alas Niser, she finally gave in and agreed to meet her prospective in-laws. Pre-betrothal meetings between the bride's family and the groom's family are always treated with extreme caution and an elaborate and 'hyper-correct empty formalism' (Geertz 1960:53) is usually employed so as avoid embarrassing or, worse even, offending the other side. While such meetings are

usually contacted without the presence of the bride- and the groom-to-be, Ibu Siti insisted that they were both present.

What exactly happened in that meeting is far from clear. One thing is certain, though: any plans for marriage were abruptly brought to an end. In this, Ibu Siti's behaviour was of major significance. She recalled that she refused to serve the boy and his parents tea without speaking to them, insisting on making eye contact with both her prospective in-laws and the boy, that she refrained from using the honorific speech level (*krama*) of Javanese one customarily employs when addressing one's seniors as well as people one hardly knows and that she sat on the couch with her legs crossed. In the meeting, she insisted on addressing directly her future in-laws, showing along with disrespect, a total lack of those feminine qualities of shyness, hesitancy and reserve 'Javanese' women are expected to display. Her most uncharacteristic behaviour was accompanied by the employment of the lower speech level (*ngoko*) one employs when talking to one's juniors as well as close relatives and friends and by her refraining from sitting with her legs folded on one side.

Several weeks after this unfortunate event that caused her relatives in Jogjakarta to lose face, and led to a series of quarrels between herself and her hosts, the family received a formal letter describing the match as unsuitable (*tidak cocok*, Ind., also incompatible, disharmonious). The implication was not only that Ibu Siti's behaviour was inappropriate but primarily that it was *kasar*. That impression was confirmed by the gossip surrounding the whole event which wanted the groom's family to construe Ibu Siti's *kasar*-ness in terms of her parentage and place of upbringing. The inability thus, of Ibu Siti to behave according to elevated 'Javanese ways' was explained through recourse to her mixed ancestry, in particular, her 'Madurese-ness' as passed down from her mother, and to the place of her early socialisation which according to her 'pure Javanese' in-laws was an offshoot of Madura, and thus, synonymous with coarseness. It goes without saying that the letter and the gossip that surrounded the whole affair put an end to all social relationships between the two families which thereafter avoided each other in an attempt to erase painful memories.

Ibu Siti returned to Alas Niser after finishing her studies in Jogjakarta and got a job in a bank as a cashier. When I came to meet her, she was already married to a colleague of her, a newcomer from Lamongan, had four children, two of them already married, had divorced and re-married to a third cousin who was a construction contractor. Though she remembers with fondness her student days in Jogjakarta, she has grown to view her behaviour with a certain degree of embarrassment, pointing out that her actions had brought shame on her aunt's family. However, the time passed has healed the wounds her behaviour caused as she slowly became reconciled with her relatives in Jogjakarta who these days visit her regularly in Alas Niser. Though, since leaving Jogjakarta, Ibu Siti never have had the opportunity to dye *batik*, she is considered by other villagers to be an excellent story teller and she often acts as a translator of televised *wayang* performances to an audience of mystified young people, including the occasional anthropologist.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this story. Ibu Siti father's emphasis on his children mastering the full spectrum of Javanese language levels demonstrates the force of language ability in constituting one's ethnic identity. Fluency in a specific language, familiarity with its intonation and rhythm and the accompanying rules that govern its employment in specific social contexts serves as the basis on which membership in a particular ethnic category can be claimed. Within this conceptual model, virtually anyone who can properly display mastery of particular linguistic and social codes of conduct can qualify as a particular body-person. Thus, someone born as *pedalungan*, that is as a person of mixed parentage, can pass as a 'Javanese' in a very real way. The weight attributed to language, voice and speech was demonstrated to me in other cases when young, primarily Javanophone, men from downtown Probolinggo would venture outside the city, going for day trips to Surabaya and Malang. There, quite surprisingly, they would employ Madurese when speaking to an array of people ranging from bus conductors to market sellers. When I asked them why they reverted to Madurese, they replied that speaking in Madurese safeguarded them from being robbed. The implication was that Madurese speech associated them with the fierce reputation Madurese men have as hot tempered and ready to do battle with their sickles hidden beneath their trousers. The conscious production of such images of self was taken to keep certain travellers safe from the evil intentions of social others.

The emphasis on the importance of language ability is equated with the creative and performative agency of the speaker in constituting his identity vis-a-vis an Other. In this context, linguistic competence in both Madurese and Javanese is one of the most important criteria in the local conceptualisation of mixed personhood. Along with genealogy and place identity (see Chapter 2), mixed personhood is creatively constructed in the learning and employment of a double linguistic competence. Moreover, the ability to speak both Javanese and Madurese is a necessary condition for the acknowledgement of a double, bifurcated genealogy. A person's incorporation into specific kinship networks is renewed and reconstituted through visits to the places that grandparents, uncles, aunts and other senior relatives live. Such visits that take place during important Islamic holidays and other life cycle events are vehicles for ensuring the migrant's continued participation in the social and economic life of their villages of origin and of their kinsmen. During such visits, migrants and their children are expected to show deference to their senior relatives through the use of honorific and formal language. Failure to do so puts one outside the sphere of kinship. Several people in Probolinggo who were themselves third or fourth generation migrants admitted that they had stopped visiting distant relatives to villages in Madura and Java for they were incapable of using higher language levels. Their inability to renew kinship, they said, gave rise to feelings of acute embarrassment and shame (*malu*, Ind.). In this sense, linguistic predicaments are also predicaments of kinship.

Ibu Siti's active construction of a 'Javanese' identity was predicated not only on language competence but also on a demographic movement that saw her emplacing herself

in the centre of royal Java and her social incorporation into the 'Javanese' side of her kindred. She repositioned herself as 'Javanese' daughter and took to learning *batik* manufacture. The choice of *batik* is telling for the mixed people of Alas Niser it stands as one of the most significant signs of being 'Javanese'. A taste for the ink-blue or brown, or sometimes reddish brown and white, colours of *batik* clothes is inexorably tied with 'Javanese' temperament and aesthetics. It is my contention that Ibu Siti's apprenticeship into *batik*, her learning of drawing designs through the application of wax and dye corresponded to a conscious refashioning of her personhood and an attempt at emulating and acquiring those qualities that her father, a 'pure Javanese', Budiono and Pak Soepinto think that *orang Madura* lack. Her fondness of *batik* was furthermore coupled with her quest for becoming a 'modern woman' (*wanita moderen*, Ind.), that is, an educated woman who would marry out of love.

At the very centre of Ibu Siti's strategic adoption of a place to stay, language, education and activities lie the *halus-kasar* distinction and the hierarchical world in which it is embedded. I have already commented in the previous chapter that one of the central dimensions, possibly even the fundamental dimension, of the imagining of of differential ways of being-in-the-world refers to the relative and relational statuses of *halus* and *kasar*. Anthropological analysis of Javanese culture (Geertz 1960; Anderson 1972; Keeler 1989; Hughes-Freeland 1997) make clear that the distinction at hand points to a conceptual nexus which equates high with *alus* (Jav.) and low with *kasar*. Socio-economic status, moral worth, potency and power as well as aesthetics and concerns over control over unacceptable emotions and social conflict are expressed through this duality. Moreover, I have argued that in the case of Alas Niser, *alus* and *kasar* correspond to a conceptualisation of differences between ethnically construed bodies which are apprehensible from the vantage point of a continuos comparison with significant Others. Thus, behind Ibu Siti's active construction of personhood was her desire to create for herself a new, more elevated position, a more 'refined' self. The associations she was creating between her notion of herself and this particular hierarchical anthropographic design were founded on the choices open to her given the constraints posed by her genealogy and place of birth.

With respect to local understandings of body-persons, the condition of being *halus* and being *kasar* correspond neither to a fixed edition of identity nor to an essential understanding of personhood that construes bodily states as immutable. As I will show in chapter Six, neither the employment of the criteria of genealogy and place of birth can be said to point to a local definition of identity comparable to our commonsensical notions of ethnicity (or nationality, or gender, for that matter) as innate, even genetic. Rather, genealogy and origin place are construed by the people I worked with as both the medium and outcome of social interactions. Similarly, *halus* and *kasar* correspond not to ideational schemes or metaphysics but to resources inexorably tied up with social relations, activities and practices which actors draw on, reproduce or change in their daily lives. In the course of

these activities, people make themselves into persons of this or the other kind by means of authoring their bodies and the social relations in which they are embedded.

Revisiting the Others within

In the previous chapter, I have tried to throw light on local understandings of personhood from the vantage point of a discourse that situates 'mixed people' at the crossings of two opposing ways of being-in-the-world. Ibu Siti's biography and remarks, however, compel a more careful reading of mixed personhood's categorical distinctiveness in light of ideas and practices of identity shifts. The exploration of ideas that significant Others, namely 'Javanese' outsiders, have of *orang pedalungan* and of the hierarchical nature of distinctions they draw provide in specific cases the impetus for a politics of emulation and imitation. The mimetic desire of Ibu Siti for Javanese *halus*-ness calls attention to what Brenneis (1987) calls social aesthetics. The term corresponds to a focus on performance 'as the means through which sense-making, self-making, and experience coalesce as a strategised and consequential event' (George 1996: 136). At the same time, the formulation of a *halus* design for her life destabilises the claim that mixed personhood constitutes a desired and uncontested aspect of everyday life in Alas Niser as embedded in narratives of the locality's foundation (see Chapter 1). In this sense, the potent images of marriage and siblingship such narratives conjure up in an attempt to conceptualise the origins and nature of 'mixed personhood' is contested by a life animated by the erasing of that part of one's being considered as of lesser value, thus, casting doubt on the positive regenerative power of marriage and the similarity implied by siblingship. The contestation rests, therefore, on the rhetorics of a life that counteropposes to the idea of 'mixed personhood' as a heterogeneous in terms of origins but internally balanced human entity, the dilemma, and the choices dilemmas' entail, of 'mixed personhood' not being *halus* (and *moderen*) enough.

I am using here Ibu Siti's biography as a case that highlights the tensions and uncertainties hidden beneath the broad self-identification of the villagers of Alas Niser and of Probolinggo town-dwellers as 'mixed people'. Though her case is an extreme one and represents in vivid fashion the complex negotiations facing 'mixed people' when migrating to the Javanese heartland as well as those of young, educated women facing the possibility of an arranged marriage, it captures the semantic and pragmatic negotiations of signs and the contests waged over them in the context of encounters that take place outside my primary area of fieldwork. At this point, I have to add that similar tensions are also to be found within the wider area of the municipality of Probolinggo. In the previous chapter, I emphasised that, within Probolinggo, the actual practice of identification is extremely complex. The complexity

rests with the fact that the assertion of 'mixed personhood' sits uneasily with the alacrity of identifying people as being of specific kind, in particular, as being *orang Madura* or *orang Jawa*. While no apparent contradiction can be said to permeate the simultaneous assertion of 'mixed personhood' and the assigning of particular people to one of these categories, it, nevertheless, constructs 'mixed personhood' as internally varied. This has a de-homogenising effect which I wish to relate here to a series of phenomena ranging from cultural geography and versions of local history to patterns of language use and the associated systems of constantly shifting meanings.

Within Probolinggo, inter-personal encounters between strangers are characterised by the use of *bahasa Indonesia*, the ethnically neutral language of the bureaucracy and the press. In such a context, inquiries as to the other person's identity follow a quite similar pattern which revolves around the initial question of *dari mana* (Ind.), 'where from'. To this, the interlocutor has to provide the name of the locality in which he/she resides, saying that he/she is from Kanigaran, Mayangan, Jati etc., that is specific name places associated with particular administrative units of the municipality. It is often the case that one is asked to qualify further one's relation to the place named through clarifying whether one was born and brought up there, that is, whether one is *asli* of that place, or just resides there (a newcomer, *pendatang*, Ind.) while he/she is really from some place else. Information of this sort is employed in classifying one's interlocutor in the cultural geography of the municipality that rests on a double axis. While no direct question is asked about one's parentage or ancestors' place of origin, place of upbringing is commonly associated with one being a Madurophone, an *orang Madura*, or a Javanophone, an *orang Jawa*, one's primary employment and one's degree of *halus*-ness.

Seen from a local perspective, the municipality is divided into its centre and its periphery. Situated to the east and near by the sea, the city centre is the administrative and economic heart of the area. The centre is imagined as a loosely uniform space comprising the *kelurahan* (administrative unit equivalent to *desa*, village) Sukabumi, Tisnonegaran, Kebonsari Kulon and Jati. The centre is very caught up in the political and mercantile dynamics of the wider area, serving, both in colonial and post-colonial times, as the point in which commodities from the agricultural periphery converge. From the southern, northern and western periphery come corn, rice, onions, sugar cane, and vegetables while from the eastern parts of the municipality come dried and salted fish. Big commercial ventures are located in the centre, most of which are owned by Chinese-Indonesians and Arab-Indonesians, known also as *hadrami*. Ventures of this kind provide the necessary economic networks for the channelling of produce to regional, national and international markets. Through them, a wider range of other commodities enters the periphery, most importantly, manufactured goods ranging from pesticides and clothing to motorcycles, refrigerators and other prestige goods.

The critical role of the centre in trading patterns is coupled with its furnishing of jobs to those living in the periphery. Everyday a fleet of mini vans transports people from all four corners of the municipality to work in the city centre's shops and industries, most often as unskilled or semi-skilled workers. A major part of these workers is made up of young, both unmarried and married, women whose labour as sales assistants, hotel cleaners and loom operators makes a significant contribution to household budgets. In addition, a substantial number of men make the daily trip to the city to work as coolies, street vendors, factory supervisors and tricycle drivers. Income from formal sector jobs is greatly appreciated in Alas Niser for its steady, monthly flow in contrast to agricultural income that depends on the cycles of agricultural production, the vagarities of the weather and the supply-and-demand equation in international markets.

Periphery-to-centre labour trips are accompanied by trips for knowledge. It is a common practice for the brightest secondary level pupils of the periphery to travel to the centre since the municipality's best schools, both state-owned and privately established, are located there. Due to a system that allocates pupils to specific schools in terms of academic performance, and not of residence, children from the periphery with very good marks are called to attend junior and senior high schools situated far from their homes. Riding a mini van, a bicycle or a motorcycle for the older and more wealthy ones back and forth to the city centre is part of their daily routine. Additionally, the city centre is the location of several schools offering instruction in the English language and the use of computers. Both skills are increasingly considered as essential for a successful professional career.

In Probolinggo, the spatialisation of knowledge is coupled with the spatialisation of authority. The mayor's office (*kantor walikota*, Ind.), the assembly rooms of the municipal parliament (*DPRD II, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah II*, Ind.), the headquarters of the District Military Command (*Kodim, Komando Distrik Militer*, Ind.), and the police headquarters are the unmistakable loci of regional power. Situated in old *kampong Belanda* (Ind., the Dutch neighbourhood) and sheltered either in impressive colonial mansions or in modern two or three storey buildings, themselves surrounded with several alleys and auxiliary buildings, the institutions in question portray themselves as the local sources of law and order. Except for the municipal parliament whose members are directly elected, the mayor and the heads of military and the police are all appointed by power holders located further up in the hierarchy such as the governor of East Java and cabinet ministers in Jakarta. The rhetorics of the bureaucratic chain of authority that stretches from Probolinggo city centre to the periphery through the establishment of branches at the sub-district level, anticipate obedience and deference. In the local imagination as espoused by such senior citizens, bureaucratic hierarchy, the outward dissemination of directives, and the obligation to protect, lead and guard one's peripheral juniors constitute the *raison d' etre* of power.

Patterns of authority, trade and knowledge set the basic terms for the articulation of relations between centre and periphery. The centre's claim to higher status is embedded

within a perspective according to which complementarity and hierarchy go hand in hand. Therefore, in Probolinggo taken as a whole, the sense of sharing the same place and being of the same kind, namely 'mixed people', is conditioned by the ineradicable strains existing between the agricultural outlying areas and the elevated inside ones. To city dwellers, the peasants of the periphery are *kasar*, coarse and uneducated, used to perform menial jobs that require physical strength, outspoken, rough and less refined. City dwellers look upon their neighbours as exchange partners and possible affines but claim higher status for themselves by virtue of their place in the geography of power, knowledge and trading. They also claim to be more *halus* by virtue of the position they occupy in the local historiography and its daily reproduction in the act of speaking Javanese, albeit *ngoko* mainly. In order to explicate the nature of the claims made, I refer here to a very common version of local historical consciousness.

A frequently recounted myth traces Probolinggo's foundation back to the days of kingdom of Majapahit, the larger and most famous of all the Hindu kingdoms that dominated Java and the Indonesian archipelago before the coming of Islam. According to the story, Probolinggo's original name was Banger, itself the name of a river that sprang from the potent blood of one of the main protagonists of the battle for the crown of Majapahit. In the years 1401-1406, the kingdom of Majapahit was ravaged by internal strife associated with the *adipati* (governor) of Blambangan, Minah Jinggo, who led a rebellion against Damar Wulan, the ruler of the realm. Minah Jinggo had a fierce reputation as a very skilled strategist and a powerful governor whose main claim to the throne rested on his possession of *keris*, a dagger filled with otherworldly potency. Such was the mystical potency of the dagger that it is said that it made Minah Jinggo invulnerable to all kinds of attacks. The only way he could have been killed was to separate the *keris* from its rebel owner. According to the story, Damar Wulan emerged as the winner only after he conspired with both of Minah Jinggo's wives to that end. The rebel's wives took away the *keris* while Minah Jinggo was asleep and thus allowed Damar Wulan to capture him. Minah Jinggo's fate is said to have been sealed in what is today Probolinggo for it was here that Minah Jinggo was decapitated. From the rebel's blood, the story continues, a river was miraculously formed with its headwaters situated in the mountains in the direction of the capital of Majapahit while the river's delta, stretching further to the sea, became the focal point of a new settlement. Today's downtown Probolinggo is said to sit on the very spot of Minah Jinggo's decapitation and of this original settlement.

The story situates the foundation of the city centre within the history of Majapahit, the most celebrated of Javanese kingdoms. It is a story that elder town dwellers often told me in conjunction with the division of the wider area into a centre, the *kota*, that is the town proper, and its periphery. That is to say, historical accounts such as the one presented are often offered as explanations for distinctions internal to my area of fieldwork. Central to this centre-periphery distinction is both past history and current linguistic dichotomies. A feature of social

life that locals frequently comment upon has to do with language. While the city centre is primarily inhabited by people who use the Javanese lower speech level (*ngoko*) in their everyday interactions in the context of the house and of the neighbourhood, those living in the periphery employ most usually the corresponding level of the Madurese language. In this context, language, geography and history as culturally significant criteria and resources people use to make sense and to position themselves within their living environments, intersect and mutually reinforce each other in a way that renders the claims of being 'mixed persons' as unstable, internally varied and in need of constant affirmation.

In the previous chapter, I argued that, in Probolinggo, claims to mixed personhood co-exist with the use of the categories of *orang Madura* and *orang Jawa* . These are primarily employed as linguistic categories and tropes of hetero-categorisation that situate particular persons in the local cultural geography. Everywhere in the municipality, the categories *orang Madura* and *orang Jawa* are used interchangeably with the assertion of 'mixed personhood'. The fact that my interlocutors sensed no contradiction in asserting that one was both an 'mixed person' and a 'Madurese' or a 'Javanese' has to do with contextual specificity of such claims. While 'mixed personhood' is aimed at asserting difference from without, that is in the context of encounters with 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese' and other outsiders, such as myself, the categories of 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' are employed so as to denote difference within. Therefore, in the previous chapter, I argued that there is no contradiction between the inclusivity of the discourse on 'mixed personhood' and the relative exclusivity of hetero-categorisations along the 'Madurese'-'Javanese' distinction. However, the force with which the categories *orang Madura* and *orang Jawa* are internally employed and their production through a discourse on residence, history and speech calls for our attention to a series of phenomena that de-homogenise 'mixed personhood' and qualify the power of its assertion.

Hierarchy rests at the centre of this de-homogenisation. Movements from the periphery, the *desa* (Ind., the village), towards the town centre (*kota*, Ind.) are denoted with the verb *masok* (Mad.), meaning entering or going inside. The phrase is apt in several senses. Going inside involves more than leaving behind rice fields and gardens, one's primary kin and close neighbours. Movement, real or imagined, into the terrain of the town captures something of entering a domain associated with authority, knowledge and seniority. Seniority rests with historical precedence, potency and the source of prosperity. The myth of Probolinggo's foundation which villagers in Alas Niser are very aware of, constructs the town and its inhabitants as the descendants of the first settlers in the area. Though their ancestors were not autochtonous in the sense of existing there from time immemorial, they are claimed to be the original inhabitants of the place. Their movement into what used to be called Banger preceded by several generations the opening of land in Alas Niser. Acknowledgement of historical seniority is coupled with claims to the town centre being potent, animated with the blood of a famous rebel, and the source of regional prosperity since the original spring of the river is located there and not in the direction of the southern

periphery, where the closest mountains are to be found. In this version of local dynamics, the town dwellers are the guardians of the regional prosperity because of their close association to water, the most valued element for the successful application of agriculture and for plentiful harvests.

Though residents of Probolinggo centre are quite unsure about the origin place of the people who first came to make Banger an inhabited area, pointing out that 'they came from all directions' and adding that 'most [of them] must have come from nearby', the river's headwaters are said to be located in the 'direction of [the kingdom of] Majapahit'. The privileged connections they draw with one of Java's most famous kingdoms that came to dominate an area as wide as today's Indonesia, along with emphasising an event that consolidated Majapahit's ruling dynasty power in East Java, is reproduced in their assertion of being *orang Jawa*. To this, they point to speaking primarily Javanese, in contrast to their neighbours of the periphery who speak primarily Madurese, and being more *halus* in their ways, avoiding open, public conflict and violence, being smooth in their interaction and educated, preferring white collar, non-menial jobs. They also point to different dietary habits. People of the periphery are associated with eating rice mixed with corn, a staple which is considered as of lesser value than plain rice, the food of the more affluent and educated town-dwellers. Everyday, lived language, along with all the bodily and performative repertoire associated with it (see Chapter 2), brings internal difference into being. Moreover, it imposes the replication of difference associated with kinds of people living outside Probolinggo, namely the 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese', as a difference within. By treating themselves as 'mixed persons' who are closer to a real or imagined sense of Javanese-ness and their internal others as 'mixed persons' who are closer to an embodied Madurese-ness, the centre vs periphery discursive practices institute a lasting difference. Such a difference consecrates and reproduces the very distinctions that 'mixed personhood', in other contexts, attempts to transcend.

The *kasar-halus* distinction that permeates the evaluation of 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese' kinds of persons is applied internally. The internal politics of history, geography, employment and language as espoused by those identified as *orang Java* are counteracted with a discourse from the periphery that draws on various sources. While villagers in Alas Niser do not explicitly deny the *kasar*-ness of their ways, and especially their lack of formal, secular education and the loudness and roughness of their everyday language, they are quick to point at what they see as the undesirable qualities and moral faults of *orang Java*'s temperament. Mas Soleh, a young man from Alas Niser who worked as factory supervisor, mocked the courteous and overly filled with pleasantries and formalities way that town dwellers conduct themselves in public. 'The *orang Jawa* who live here [in Probolinggo]', he said, 'are *halus*. For example, if an *orang Jawa* finds out that his children were involved in an argument with some other children, he will try to settle the issue in an amiable fashion, saying that there is no problem (*tidak ada masalah*, Ind., nothing wrong has

been done). But, in reality, though he insists that he has no bad feelings towards the other families, in his heart he does feel very upset (*di hatinya awas*, Ind.)....when he says that nothing is wrong, he does not mean it with all his heart, he is not sincere (*tidak ikhlas dirinya*, Ind.)'.

Mas Soleh's comments centre, on the one hand, on the idea of inner control and the necessity for restraining turbulent emotions and, on the other, on the value of honesty and sincerity. While, *orang Jawa*, the persons of the elevated city centre, are granted with a greater disposition towards the smooth handling of situations of conflict in which one's honour and status are always at stake, suspicions are raised with respect to the extent to which outward behaviour corresponds to inner feelings (see also Wikan 1990; Howe 1999/2000 on the Balinese). There is a certainty that hidden away from public view lies *rasa dendam* (Ind.), feelings of revenge. The tendency for restraining such feelings of revenge through polished and standardised patterns of interaction, i.e. 'nothing wrong has been done', is equated with hypocrisy, '[one] is not sincere'. Concerns over sincerity feature with great evocative power in Islamic sermons, delivered by *kyai* on numerous occasions, in which hypocrisy (*kemunafikan*, Ind.), along with other vices such as envy and arrogance, rank very high indeed in the scale of mortal sins (*dosa*, Ind.). The religious exaltation of honesty and sincere forgiveness reverberate in comments I often heard in Alas Niser about *orang Jawa*. From the perspective of villagers, to claim that refinement has a dark side which is relatively inaccessible to public gaze is to cast doubt about the Islamic credentials and piety of town dwellers. In this sense, villagers reserve higher moral grounds for their kind of temperament which, although *kasar*, is permeated by transparent intentions. 'When an *orang Madura* says the matter is settled, then it is settled for good...there is no *rasa dendam*...just a handshake', added another informant.

The inversion of the loudness and outspokenness associated with the *kasar* quality of personhood into a positively valued straighfowardness and frankness runs along major Islamic themes. The same tendency of emphasising the positive aspects of *kasar*-ness and of rooting them in an Islamic framework was also at work in Pak Rohim's commentary. Pak Rohim defended the dispositional hot-temperedness and toughness of his co-villagers as manifested in their readiness for hard work, in contrast to the physical weakness of the town dwellers who are not strong enough to undertake manual jobs such as ploughing the fields and harvesting. 'Hard work (*bekerja keras*, Ind.)', he added,' is a man's duty according to Islam. Looking for money through undertaking any kind of job irrespective of whether it is manual (*kasar*) or office based (*halus*) is the part of the man's responsibility to his family...to provide for it. The same goes with being 'quick to anger' (*cepat marah*, Ind.).' *Cepat marah* is a widely shared allusion to the inner disposition of *orang Madura* , both *asli* and those of the periphery, for fierceness and combativeness, that is, of those qualities that make one want to *carok* , to fight. To Pak Rohim as well as to other people from Alas Niser, the quality of sensing one's blood becoming boiling hot (*darah panas*, Ind.) is integral in defending one's

family honour. 'If a man wanted to visit my house while I am not in', he continued, 'he would have to stay waiting outdoors till I arrive. If he was to go in and start chatting with my wife, the neighbours would suspect that something is wrong. In that case, suspicions are enough to ruin (*rogi*, Mad., break up) my family'. A reputation for bad-temperedness is thus, construed as instrumental in the enforcement of an Islamic code of ethics that calls for the segregation and avoidance of unsupervised interaction between unrelated men and women. In other words, *kasar*-ness and its associated quality for fighting is approved for its working against committing the sin of adultery, keeping away strange men and preventing families from breaking up.

While movement out of Alas Niser and towards the town centre is, as I described above, entangled within a hierarchical system resting on practices associated with specific loci of bureaucratic power, secular knowledge and trading networks, the moral discourse as articulated from the periphery reverses the order of things. This is so because, for the locals of Alas Niser, the town centre is also the place where the corrosive and corrupting influences of modernisation are most acutely felt and manifested. Villagers would comment that while life in Alas Niser is characterised by close, everyday contact and great intimacy among neighbours, life in the city is too *individu* (Ind.), 'individualistic'. By that they meant that city neighbours rarely undertake any co-operative tasks such as those of sharing labour during harvests, the building of houses and major life-cycle ceremonies, having to depend, instead, on the little help they could get from close relatives and domestic stuff. They would also point to the relative freedom young boys and girls enjoy in the town in associating with members of the opposite sex, to young city women being 'brave' (*berani*, Ind.) enough - a euphemism - to wear rather short skirts and T-shirts with very short sleeves and the existence of places where drinking, gambling and prostitution are rampant. They would also be rather vocal about the corruption, nepotism and collusion of the bureaucracy and its factionaries which, in the era of *reformasi*, were the objects of much scorn and mockery as well as of anger and frustration.

Acts of subversion

In Probolinggo as elsewhere, identities are context dependent, relational and wrought with hierarchical overtones (Clifford 1988; Okamura 1981; Proschan 1997). The multiplicity of the contexts of their articulation calls forth an ethnographic designation of those processes of Othering in terms of which claims to a particular identity rests and a critical description of the uncertainties and tensions revealed through a comparison that spans across contexts. 'Mixed personhood' is imagined as the encroaching homogeneity brought about by a variety

of histories, namely these of demographic movement, ancestral inter-marriage and co-habitation (see Chapter 1). Moreover, its emergence is considered as predicated on the engendering of a new kind of body-persons, capable of joining two opposing ways of being-in-the-world (see Chapter 2). However, this envisioning of the self as distinct from its Others in terms of its lesser degree of 'purity' or 'authenticity' (*keaslian*, Ind.), is not a completed process for 'mixed personhood' is internally partitioned. Probolinggo's 'mixed people' divide themselves spatially and linguistically in terms of an embodied proximity to their specific set of Others. Concerns over one being closer to 'Javanese'-ness or to 'Madurese'-ness are played out with a unique force. In this sense and context, 'mixed personhood' comes to be 'deconstructed' to its very constituent parts. Therefore, locals' claims to being 'mixed persons' have to be understood against the backdrop of another set of specific practises and contestations which describe this blending as unstable, indeterminate and historically unfinished; a mixing which is always in danger of de-composition.

Ibu Siti's *halus*-seeking agency exemplifies a situation in which personhood is experienced as internally divided, albeit on a different level. I would suggest that her conscious attempts at refashioning her-self through speech, action and place of residence, was a struggle for disjoining her 'mixed personhood''s qualities of *kasar* and *halus*. During an interview, Ibu Siti commended that life in Jogjakarta necessitated a 'forgetting' (*lupa*, Ind.) of her friends, neighbours and habits back in Alas Niser and of 'changing one's behaviour (*kelakuan*, Ind.) according to the place and the people one lives with'. In this case, the process of her becoming more *halus* was predicated on exercising such a high degree of self inspection and self discipline that made possible not to carry *kasar*-ness with her (except for when she needed to as she did so as to avoid an unwanted suitor), but rather to leave it where it belonged to. She also saw her acquisition of *Jawa halus* as an enhancement and an addition of the training her father had given her when she was still young.

While to Ibu Siti 'mixed personhood' was a source of embarrassment in the context of living in Jogjakarta, to most of the people I came to meet in Alas Niser and Probolinggo, 'mixed personhood' was a source of pride. In this context, being a 'mixed person' and living in a mixed place acquired positive connotations through a discourse that relates mixing to potency, on the one hand, and on good citizenship, on the other.

While villagers of Alas Niser and town-dwellers reproduce the *halus-kasar* dichotomy in certain respects, in other cases they aim at subverting it, furthering their position in the imagined hierarchy of different kinds of beings. Exegetical explanation of what it means to be a mixed person as the joining of two opposing qualities is extremely rare. People would comment on what constitutes *halus* and what connotes *kasar* only in the context of processes of Othering, that is by pointing to the 'purity' of Javanese and Madurese. But commenting on what one is not is hardly the same as providing a description of who one is. In this sense, the extensive public discourse on the differences that separate 'pure Javanese' from 'pure Madurese' (see Chapter 2) is accompanied by a relative silence about the fundamental

distinctiveness of mixing and the experiential, bodily and performative uniqueness of balancing of what are commonly construed as differential dispositions and temperaments.

This silence and lack of interest in the articulation of public meanings that demarcate clearly a 'mixed' programme for living is, I suggest in this thesis, directly related with an indigenous emphasis on embodied action (see Strathern & Stewart 1998: 245). Locals of Alas Niser and Probolinggo derive a sense of themselves as distinct through active participation in a series of exchanges that have taken place in the past and continue to take place currently. Exchanges of persons, substances, ancestors, food and prayers among people who inhabit the same place and share the same religion constitute the very basis on which 'mixed personhood' is constructed (see Chapter 6 & 7). Such activities though, do not form the focus of an objectifying discourse. They, rather, constitute the grounds of a linguistically unarticulated bodily practice with an encompassing, expansionist scope. However, exegetical explanations do make an appearance in Alas Niser every now and then. Significantly, the two accounts I am presenting here were offered by people who are highly versed in two different forms of knowledge; the first one was provided by a *kyai* (Islamic scholar) who was also a healer and a mystic, while the second one was offered by a civil servant with a university degree in politics.

Kyai Nyoto explained that *pedalungan* temperament is in the middle (*tengah*, Ind.) of the *kasar-halus* continuum. 'An *orang pedalungan* is both angry and hot-tempered and soft and refined. When he/she needs to be assertive, to show its strength, he/she is *keras* (hard, Ind.)...yet again, when he/she needs to be delicate and refined, he/she is so', he added. He then, went further to establish an analogy, saying that 'it is the same with women and men. Women [have] a soft disposition (*sifat*, Ind.)... they speak slowly, their movements [are] delicate. Men are hard, they have to work, to find money, to feed their families and protect their wives and sisters. Allah created women and men's nature in this way so as to complement each other (*cocok*, Ind., to match, to be compatible)'. In this rendering, the image of *pedalungan* as consisting of two differential qualities was transposed to another domain of social life, that of the conjugal bond that unites another set of opposites. The assertion of the divine complementarity between men and women's *sifat* was coupled with the faith that a similar balancing act lies at the centre of 'mixed personhood'. The evocation of conjugal couple, in this instance, with all the cultural significant notions of compatibility as a necessary condition for the regeneration of life, ascribes to 'mixed personhood' the condition of containing a potency of the same magnitude. 'Mixed personhood' is associated with a divinely ordained union whose power is constitutive of life and society. This power is to be found in the internal mixing of opposite qualities similar to femininity and masculinity. At the same time, *kasar* and *halus* as singular qualities are defined as lacking this potency. In this respect, 'pure Javanese' *halus*-ness's elevated position is contested. Being 'mixed' is described as being endowed with greater efficacy (and repertoire) of action than simply being *halus*.

Kyai Nyoto's comments find resonance with an observation made by Anderson (1990) in his seminal article on the idea of power in Java. Drawing on material from precolonial and colonial Java, Anderson notes that one of the most significant signs of a legitimate ruler was his 'ability to concentrate opposites' and that one of the classic iconographic symbols of this ability was the simultaneous incorporation within the personhood of the ruler of an equal amount of masculinity and femininity (1990: 28-29). Kyai Nyoto's explication reserves for 'mixed personhood' the very same ability. By concentrating *kasar* and *halus*, 'mixed persons' are elevated to a transcendal position, the top of the apex, that defies dichotomies and subverts commonly established hierarchies by means of encompassing them.

While kyai Nyoto's idiosyncratic exegesis rested with mystical understandings of Islam, the nature of humankind and potency, another informant linked 'mixed personhood' with exhibiting one of the sings of Indonesian statehood and one of the country's most desired objectives: *persatuan* (Ind.), oneness (see Liddle 1988; Kipp 1993). The commentary provided by Pak Herianto, a civil servant in his mid-fifties, construed 'mixed personhood' as an exemplary form of life that realises in practice one of the most significant goals of the Rebuplic, namely that of fostering a sense of community and common identity among the archipelago's diverse - linguistically, ethnically and religiously- groups. According to my informant, it was 'mixed personhood' and not *halus*-ness that should be the object of emulation and desire.

Throughout the time of my fieldwork, Indonesia was ravaged by ethnic and religious animosities, usually flaring into violence, destroying lives and property. The cases of Ambon, Sambas, Irian Jaya (now Papua), East Timor, Aceh, Central Sulawesi and Lombok dominated the news bulletins and much of my informants discussions. Within months, the jubilation brought about Suharto's resignation and the successful calls for *reformasi* gave its place to persistent anxieties about the state of the Indonesian polity. The economic crisis of 1997 was followed by a political crisis which is still continuing today. This combination of economics and politics had complicated and mitigated other kinds of differences in the nation state to such an extent that the latter threatened the relatively young polity with ethnic or regional secessions and divisions. The immediacy of Indonesia breaking up was brought home most forcefully in 1999 when East Timor voted for independence, a development that locals lamented through saying that *persatuan Indonesia kalah* (Ind.), 'Indonesian oneness [was] defeated'.

It was against the backdrop of such wider developments that Pak Herianto spoke to me about *orang pedalungan* as being conjoined, that is as 'persons who have become one', *orang bersatu* (Ind.). He associated the erosion of the boundary between Madurese and Javanese in Probolinggo with inter-ethnic marriages and the value of *rukun* (Ind.), harmony, which guides relations between people who share the same place, being either close or distant neighbours. According to Pak Herianto, as well as other locals, Probolinggo was to be

distinguished from such turbulent places as Ambon and Sambas, on the basis of being *sepi* (Ind.), quiet and calm. Calmness and the absence of ethnic conflict were directly related by my informant to residents of the municipality having attained at the level of their locale one of the goals of the Indonesian nation-state, namely that creating of a sense of sameness and unity that transcends differences by joining them together. Pak Herianto's rendering of 'mixed personhood' as predicated on *persatuan* construed Probolinggo as a model micro-polity to be emulated by other locales and portrayed 'mixed persons' as internally indivisible and non-partible.

Pak Herianto's evocation of *persatuan* as daily practice rested on implicit references to *Pancasila*, the Indonesian state ideology. *Pancasila* is the five point doctrine which, according to several commentators of Indonesian national politics, has assumed the status of both a philosophy and a state religion (King 1982; Purdy 1985; Kipp 1993). *Pancasila* is propagated by the state as an ethical position that can provide the basis for the transcendence on a national level of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. Central to the nationalist project, are two terms: *kesatuan* and *persatuan*. While *kesatuan* refers to the formal form of the government, *persatuan* evokes issues of subjective belonging. In particular, *kesatuan* relates to Indonesia being a unitary state, as opposed to a federal state, a political union with a single centre. *Persatuan* is more directly related with Anderson's (1983) idea of nations as 'imagined communities'. It reflects the idea of homogeneity based on the co-existence, permanent balance and final dissolution of differences among the country's diverse groups who emerge out of their intense and committed interaction as single entity, a single united nation.

The limits of mixing

In Probolinggo, ideas and practices associated with 'mixed personhood', its production through affinal complementarity and everyday life harmony in neighbourhood affairs, do not extend beyond the intersection of the categories of 'Madurese' and 'Javanese'. Mixed personhood's encompassing project stops short of incorporating in its ideal state of transcending differences the categories of Chinese, *orang Cina*, and of Arabs, *orang Arab*. As I noted in the Introduction, the municipality of Probolinggo is home to a small minority of people of Chinese and Arab descent whose presence has deep historic roots. Most of the Chinese trace their coming to Probolinggo during the late colonial era and cite the attractions the city represented as it was being developed into a regional commercial and agricultural centre with its own port and extensive irrigation system. However, the presence of wealthy Chinese in Probolinggo can be traced further back to the beginning of nineteenth century

when the town and its land were sold by the British colonial authorities to Han Kiko, a Chinese tradesman, who also owned the adjacent town of Pasuruan (see Bastin 1954). Similarly, the presence of Arab Indonesians is at least a century and half long. Large numbers of Arabs, originating from the Hadhramaut region of what is today Yemen, made the trip to the East Indies during the middle nineteenth century. According to Geertz (1960: 125), their coming to the archipelago heralded a new era in the development of Islam as Arab traders settled permanently in various localities and through their interaction with locals, they transmitted their own more orthodox version of the faith.

Today, both Chinese and Arabs live in large numbers in downtown Probolinggo in neighbourhoods that although, not exclusive in ethnic terms, bear the marks of such a history. Thus, locals often use terms such as *kampung Cina*, the Chinese neighbourhood, and *kampung Arab*, to designate specific sections within the town centre occupied predominately by Chinese and Arabs. Terms such as these recall vividly the colonial era when Dutch urban policies stipulated that racial segregation should form the basis of residential arrangements. In Probolinggo, as elsewhere in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, the *kampung Cina* and *kampung Arab* engulfed the European quarter forming a circle of neighbourhoods around it occupied by businessmen, shop owners and importers. However, during the last decades of colonial rule and certainly after independence, the racialisation of space in Probolinggo started to collapse. On the one hand, the depression of 1930s saw several Chinese and Arab owned business being crushed. As a result, several Chinese sold their houses and shops and moved to other parts of the city, which were less expensive, to live as coolies and petty traders. On the other, the expansion of the civil service in post-colonial Probolinggo encouraged the arrival of an influx of migrants from Central Java as well as elsewhere. The majority of these people took up residence in the old European quarter in houses left unoccupied by their departing owners or in the Chinese and Arab quarters in houses which were newly built.

Relations between non-Chinese locals and people of Chinese descent are characterised by tension and are, for the most part, limited to economic transactions. Peasants and fishermen from the periphery regularly acquire supplies of fishing equipment including nets and boats, pesticides, fertilisers and other agricultural tools from Chinese traders. They too get their cloths, furniture, TVs, stereos and motorcycles or cars from shops in downtown Probolinggo, many of which are owned by Chinese. Chinese businessmen own several large fishing boats which they rent out to non-Chinese, usually on the basis on long term contracts involving the mandatory sale of part of the catch and the lending of large sums of money for the maintenance of the boat and the recruitment of an able crew. In addition, several Chinese wholesale traders rely for their regular supply of fish on independent, non-Chinese intermediaries. Such intermediaries, called *jurangan*, buy the fish at fish market located at the port and then, resell them to their Chinese associates for a small profit margin. In Alas Niser, similar arrangements between Chinese and non-Chinese exist

with respect to agricultural produce such as onions and maize. However, the pervasiveness of co-operation with Chinese traders is far less extensive in Alas Niser than in the fishing villages of northern Probolinggo. Several Madurophone traders have been very successful recently in directing local produce to national markets and as a result, locals prefer to enter into agreements with them.

Non-Chinese and Chinese locals rarely interact and mix outside the context of the market. For non-Chinese locals, being Chinese is associated with the display of certain physical traits and moral characteristics which are deemed as incompatible with both being a *pribumi* (Ind.), that is a native Indonesian and not one of immigrant origin, and a *pedalungan*. Despite the fact that *orang Cina* are likely to have been born in Indonesia, to be fluent in Indonesian as well as Javanese and to be unable to speak Chinese, except for a few kinship terms, they do form a highly visible ethnic category in Probolinggo in terms of the volume of comments locals supply voluntarily. In terms of physical appearance, *orang Cina* are construed as having white skin (*kulit putih*, Ind.). The quality of white skin associates them with *orang Barat* , Westerners, who also have fair skin. In both cases, fair skin is a sign of beauty, denotes attractiveness, power and wealth. Upper class non-Chinese women in Java generally avoid venturing outside their house or when they do so, they always carry an umbrella with them so as to protect their skin from getting darker. Concurrently, they spend large amounts of money on beauty products that promise to make one's skin soft and fair. Despite the obvious attractiveness of *orang Cina's* fair skin, physical appearance and the ambivalence with which it is viewed marks the boundary between those categorised as such and 'mixed persons'.

Moreover, the category of *orang Cina* as used in Probolinggo as well as elsewhere in Indonesia (Mackie 1976) denotes the practice of Catholicism and Protestantism as well as Buddhism and Confucianism. Despite the fact that a small minority of *orang Cina* in Probolinggo are Muslims, the general association of being a Chinese with being a *khafir*, an unbeliever, is asserted in various contexts. Spatially, all Protestant and Catholic churches and schools in the city are concentrated in the old Chinese and European quarters. Chinese professing Catholicism, Protestantism or Confucianism are buried in an exclusive cemetery, located in the northern environs of Alas Niser, with different shapes for graves for adherents of different religions. The practice of religions other than Islam by *orang Cina* minimises the potential for interaction and mixing. Marriages between a local Muslim and a Chinese Catholic or Protestant are considered an anathema by Muslims and Christians alike since both Islamic law and Christian practice allows only for same faith unions. For such inter-ethnic marriages to go ahead, religious conversion is a necessary precondition. In contrast to other places in Southeast Asia where conversion has been portrayed as a more or less casual affair involving mere changes in terms of daily practices (Kammerer 1990; Tooker 1992), in Probolinggo conversion is a rare phenomenon due to the strains it imposes in the performance and reproduction of kinship ties with one's family of origin. This is not to say

that marriages between *orang Cina* and Muslim locals do not take place but rather that they are so few as to have any impact in the larger project of creating and asserting similarity.

Religious differences between *pedalungan* and *orang Cina* mean also that *orang Cina* are excluded from participating in the ritual economy of exchanging food, prayers and ancestors. This ritual economy which is described in Chapter 7 is deeply embedded in Islamic practices undertaken to mark life-cycle occasions, occasions of death and commemoration as well as a body of performances specific to the fasting month. This ritual economy is interwoven with the creation and maintenance of social relationships based on co-habitation and, along with marriage, forms one of the crucial mechanisms for the historical and cultural construction of 'mixed personhood'.

The category of *orang Cina* is also associated with immense wealth (see also Mackie 1976; Siegel 2001). Despite the fact that not all Chinese in Probolinggo are rich entrepreneurs, the boundary between *pedalungan* and *orang Cina* is often phrased as one of unequal access to and command of wealth. To borrow Siegel's apt phrase, in Indonesia, '"Chinese" are somehow [seen] as inherently fabricated' by affluence and monetary prosperity (2001:98). Non-Chinese locals attribute this to a culture of hardwork and the transmission of entrepreneurial skills from father to son but they also comment on the existence of local, national and transnational commercial networks of co-operation between Chinese. Networks such as these are taken to be at the centre of the economic advantages *orang Cina* have enjoyed at least since the colonial era, and to have been perpetuated during the New Order state's drive for development when Chinese investors seized a series of new opportunities for capital accumulation. Commercial networks are also said to be compounded by a strict preference among Chinese for marrying among themselves, thus, avoiding to exchange with local *pedalungan* who, by their standards, are judged as poor.

As far as locals are concerned, the absence of mixing with *orang Cina* is a failure of the latter. *Orang Cina* are charged with living in big houses surrounded by tall fences, a sign of their unwillingness to receive visitors and a device to hide away their wealth from the gaze of passers-by. They are also said to avoid sending their children to state schools, opting instead for private establishments charging very high tuition fees which very few non-Chinese locals can afford to attend. But the primary reason behind the animosity and hostile comments against them are related to the assumed unwillingness of Chinese to share their wealth and to open up on an equal basis their networks to non-Chinese locals. Young educated *pedalungan* feel that they are excluded from a variety of well paid, white collar jobs on the basis of not being Chinese. There was a certainty among several of my informants that *orang Cina* prefer to hand out jobs and promotions to their own kind in their banks and enterprises, thus, discriminating against worthy and usually better qualified non-Chinese. Similarly, local traders expressed anger against Chinese moneylenders' differential credit and interest rates practices for Chinese and non-Chinese alike. While Chinese moneylenders were construed as allowing for better and more flexible credit arrangements and lower

interest rates for their own kind, they were also said to charge exorbitant interest rates to non-Chinese and to be generally unwilling to lend them large sums of money.

The intersection of ethnicity, class and religion in defining *orang Cina* has led to several cases of communal violence against Chinese in Java recently. Though Probolinggo has never witnessed the extension of anger and animosity felt into acts of destruction, the province of East Java was engulfed in a spree of violence directed against Christians and Chinese in the closing months of 1996 and at the beginning of 1997 while the resignation of Suharto in May 1998 took place after several days of rioting in Jakarta that culminated in the destruction of Chinese property, and the rape and death of hundreds of Chinese women. As these incidents of violence have been well documented in other studies (see Hariyanto 1998; Siegel 2001; Dijk 2001: 12-13), it is sufficient to note that violence has to be understood as a 'particular kind of socially meaningful action' (Spencer 1992), entangled within other practices and processes of constructing the Other whose disciplining is deemed as desirable.

The case of *orang Arab*, known also as *hadrami*, both contrasts and reveals certain similarities with the category of *orang Cina*. The similarities have to do with *orang Arab* being associated with a place of origin outside the archipelago, with wealth and a strong preference for marriages amongst themselves. In Probolinggo, persons of Arab descent are categorised as such due to certain physical characteristics such as their almond-shaped eyes, their long noses and their skin complexion which is considered as distinct to the overly brown quality of skin of *pribumi*, that is of persons of Indonesian descent. In occupational terms, *orang Arab* are construed as skilful traders, engaged in practising medicine and law, either as lawyers or judges, and furnishing the locality with renowned Islamic scholars who have spend several years studying Islam in *madrasah* in Yemen. Their maintenance of trading and learning networks with their ancestral place of origin which are renewed in each successive generation through frequent and extensive visits, is both the source of their wealth and prestige. However, in contrast to Chinese wealth, Arab wealth is considered to be dispensed with great generosity for the benefit of the rest of the local community. As pious Muslims, *orang Arab* are endowed with *rasa kasihan* (Ind.), empathy for the poor and needy, a moral quality Chinese are seen as definitely lacking. *Rasa kasihan* is manifested in the annual dispensing of wealth through the payment of *zakat fitrah*, the tithe in rice or money paid on the last day of the fasting month, and *zakat maal*, the tithe paid by the rich, that several Arab men are said to pay regularly. At the same time, rich entrepreneurs of Arab descent contribute large amounts of money for the building of new mosques, the maintenance of old ones, the establishment of hospitals and orphanages through the workings of Islamic organisations. In addition, Islamic scholars of Arabic descent dispense their knowledge and blessings upon the faithful on numerous occasions during public sermons and in the context of life-cycle rituals in which they officiate.

To non-Arab locals of Probolinggo, *orang Arab* are *sayid*. *Sayid* is an Islamic title given to direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. *Orang Arab* claim such a title and

several are said to be equipped with genealogical charts that reach several tens of generations back to the Prophet Himself. To the best of my knowledge, claims to *sayid*-ship remain uncontested or well muted in Probolinggo. Rather, such claims form the very basis of the difference and superiority which other Muslim locals accord to *orang Arab*. Being a direct descendant of the Prophet means that one partakes to His nature, that part of the Prophet qualities of perfect purity and endless mercy are enlived in His descendants. Non-Arab locals associate the strong preference among *orang Arab* for endogamy with the maintenance of this essential superiority. As I have been told on several occasions, issues of descent (*turunan*, Ind.) and wealth differences usually dissuade non-Arab locals from approaching *orang Arab* with a marriage proposal for the probability of being turned down and thus, of being shamed, is all too great.

Relations between *pedalungan* and *orang Arab* are characterised by peaceful co-existence. Islam and its claim to uniting all believers in a single community (*ummat*) brings persons belonging to these categories together. The degree of unity achieved though, through the performance of Islamic acts of worship is not adequate for the creation of *pedalugnan* homogeneity. Islam and its deferential status of *sayid*, Arab endogamy, and concerns over wealth work so as to keep the boundary visible and more fixed.

Ontological instability

Pedalungan personhood as the product of the historical conduction of two different kinds of people and of their spatial and genealogical mixing, strives to assert that past difference has been transcended. Its project of creating homogeneity through the joining of contrasting principles of being-in-the-world is, at once, celebrated - it is said to carry the signs of potency and stately 'oneness'-, and qualified through discourse and practice as provisional and incomplete. At the heart of this incompleteness is the frequent employment of the categories of *orang Madura* and *orang Java* for the purposes of internal self-identification and hetero-categorisation as well as the spatial division of the municipality into 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' areas. In Probolinggo, therefore, one finds present as two somewhat disjunctive entities the very Others out of whose mixing *pedalungan* is described as having emerged. While on the one hand, 'mixed personhood' presents itself as composite, i.e. the combination of Javanese *halus*-ness and Madurese *kasar*-ness, on the other, it appears to be internally fragmented. Spatial divisions, contextual identity shifts, and the pervasive presence of the *halus-kasar* distinction indicate the unstable, incomplete character of the mixing. In this regard, the picture of the 'mixed body' constructed is one centred on its

potential for de-composition as its constitutive elements remain significantly dis-engaged from each other and hierarchically arranged.

The assertion of *pedalungan* personhood is centred on one being of mixed blood, living in a mixed locality and being fluent in both Madurese and Javanese. The capacity for speech is kinded in the sense that knowledge of a language and intimacy with its tonalities and rhythms indicate and constitute a person as of a particular category. To speak is a public act and therefore, to speak in a particular language is a social manifestation of identity. The performative aspect of identity assertion makes possible for the undertaking of specific projects of self-making according to which a person constitutes him/herself anew. In my area of fieldwork, the impetus for such projects is embedded within the hierarchical parameters of the *halus-kasar* distinction as well as within non-*pedalungan* views of *pedalungan* persons who construe the latter as lacking qualities considered both of higher value and desirable. In this regard, re-constitution of one's personhood is mediated through the acquisition of new language skills and, as is often the case, movement in space, i.e. a new emplacement. As I have shown in Ibu Siti's case, her desire of becoming 'Javanese' was actualised through movement to Jogjakarta and the performance of certain acts such as high Javanese speech, *batik* dying and a taste for *wayang kulit* stories. However, such projects of self-making are limited in terms of their persuasiveness as issues of ancestry and place of origin always arise in the context of Others' evaluating one's assertions. It is also true that social actors found in such indeterminate situations and highly aware of Other's views, will negotiate their identity in a manner that better suits their interests, however these are construed.

In Probolinggo, the rhetorics and practice of mixing encounter obvious limits. Persons of the category of *orang Cina* and *orang Arab* are conceptually located outside the boundaries of the community of people of 'mixed blood'. Due to a series of factors mostly associated with wealth differentials, religious difference, ancestral place of origin and genealogical prestige, *orang Cina* and *orang Arab* constitute a small but visible minority. Their often commented upon distinctiveness highlights that, in Probolinggo, not all kinds and degrees of difference are successfully managed and partially displaced.

In the following chapter, I concentrate on bodies and persons of a different category. I shift my focus from bodies construed from the perspective of ethnicity to the making of bodies that display signs of decay and death. My topic is thus, sorcery and counter-sorcery practices and the ways such practices are construed as effecting certain bodily transformations.

Chapter Four. Cannibalistic marriage: sorcery and the body

Sorcery in context

Anthropological approaches to sorcery have for the most part treated sorcery from a sociological or a cognitive point of view. Sociological theories of sorcery, drawn mainly from African and Melanesian material, construe sorcery as an index of social disorder arising from conflicts related to internal contradictions of the social and moral order (Gluckman 1956; Mitchell 1956; Evans-Pritchard 1937). At the same time, sorcery's main function, that of reproducing the political system and ensuring the attainment of social equilibrium, has been strongly emphasised (Gluckman 1956; Stephen 1987). Sociological theories have paid attention to sorcery's relation to externally stimulated social change and conceptualised it within the context of the impact of colonialism and capitalism on pre-existing systems of social relations (Redfield 1941). Sorcery accusations and ensuing witch-hunts, in this case, have been construed as indexing the dangers represented by social change and an act of regenerating local institutions by attacking them (Willis 1968). Concurrently, sociological approaches have made secondary hypotheses. For example, Gluckman (1956) asserts the instrumental uses of sorcery accusations for advancing individual and collective pursuits and interests, while others (Evans-Pritchard 1937) see in sorcery accusations the operation of systems of social control. In the latter case, the fear of accusation is postulated to prevent people from behaving in an anti-social, witch-like manner and, thus, to ensure conformity to societal norms.

Cognitive theories occupy themselves with questions of rationality, on the one hand, and cognition, on the other. Malinowski (1922) and his student, Evans-Pritchard (1937), debunked the assumption that sorcery beliefs were proof of primitive irrationality by showing that sorcery was a pragmatic pursuit; a logical means of dealing with and overcoming the uncertainties of human existence. Sorcery has also been conceptualised as a culture-specific trope by which physically or mentally ill people cope with their predicament. Kluckhohn (1944) treats Navaho witchcraft beliefs as the indigenous equivalent of biomedical language and Levi-Strauss (1963), who takes his lead from Kluckhohn, argues that healing rituals achieve efficacy through providing an expressive mythical image of the patient's condition. In other words, both sorcery beliefs and healing rituals are culture-bound ways of conceptualising and treating illness and misfortune; a language similar in kind to Western science.

Both approaches have a bearing on South-East Asianists' discussions of sorcery. For the most part, Ellen's and Watson's (1993) edited volume, the only coherent attempt to address these kind of issues in South-East Asia, seems to follow the path of sociological approaches with occasional references to cognitive themes (see also Weesing 1996). The volume emphasises what can be termed the 'sociology of sorcery accusations', focusing on the conditions giving rise to such accusations (see Nitibaskara 1993), the respective positions accusers and accused occupy in the social system (see Ellen 1993; Peletz 1993), the structural position of sorcerers and witches in the overall social structure (see Durrenberger 1993; Peletz 1993) as well as the legal implications of such accusations (see Slaats and Portier 1993). On the other hand, Durrenberger (1993) does try to present sorcery in a more cognitive-fashioned way, linking it with the way social exchange systems are structured and, thus, pointing to its language-like qualities. Peletz (1993) too, argues that sorcery objectifies and mirrors societal realities characterised by ambiguity, if not by danger, such as kinship and neighbourhood, Otherness and, more specifically, capitalism and the changes it brings about to the local society (see also Ong 1988).

All these approaches are quite 'literalist' as they subordinate the symbolic content of sorcery either to political and economic processes or cognitive concerns (see Kapferer 1997). Sorcery's meaning or function is relegated to either indexing social disorder, political reproduction, social change or expressing the Other's rationality and tropes of objectification. In other words, sorcery is made to talk only after it is disembedded from other symbolic systems and re-embedded into larger sociological processes. Kapferer's (1997) recent study tries to reverse this traditional analytical approach by placing sorcery practices at the centre of his analysis and postulating that such practices have the power of metaphors. For Kapferer, sorcery practices are concerned with 'the forces of human action', 'the body', 'sociality', 'intentionality' and 'consciousness'. As such, they articulate an indigenous theory of human action that helps him to grasp certain aspects of Sinhalese nationalism and power as exercised by the state.

My own concerns with sorcery are more modest. While I do not see in sorcery any grand theory of human action, as Kapferer does, I do share Kapferer's conviction that 'sorcery is integral to a wider complex of practises and is not merely about interpersonal conflict or the explanation of personal misfortune [and that] sorcery practices articulate cosmological and ontological assumptions' (1997:19). My primary concern is the construction of the body-person as manifested in sorcery and countersorcery practices and the ontological assumptions upon which such practices are based (see also Eves 1995). Sorcerised body-persons are 'kinded' in ways that inform local understandings of ethnicity and identity and it is these homologies that I wish to draw attention to here. As with ethnicity, the body stands out as the place where sorcery as a very particular form of power is exercised while the body's openness to the world lying outside its frame help us to cast sociality in an embodied manner. In this case, relations of enmity and conflict far from being locally understood as

pertaining to relations between people as discrete entities, are construed as inscribed within their very corporeality.

It will be argued that sorcery in East Java is a social relationship for it effects a marriage, albeit an inverted one since it brings about illness and death and not life's regeneration. The performance of appropriate practices and the magical manipulation of substances, culminating in their very incorporation into the body, are held to metamorphosize persons. By working on the victim's *hate* (heart/liver, Mad.), a system of internal organs intimately associated with life, emotion and blood, sorcery and counter-sorcery rites are construed as affecting and ultimately, 'kinding' peoples' blood. In the case of sorcery, just like that of ethnicity, difference is linked, among other things, to blood, while the transformation of body-persons from the state of health to that of illness is traced to the dialectics of performance and substance.

Such an approach also departs from other earlier approaches to South-East Asian sorcery beliefs and practises. Approaches such as Skeat's (1900) and Endicott's (1970) discuss sorcery in the context of the Malay system of thought and metaphysics, as well as with regard to the social role of the *dukun* (magical specialists, Ind.; *dhukon*, Mad.). This emphasis is also found in the anthropological literature on sorcery in Java and Madura. Geertz (1960) and Koentjaraningrat (1979) are both interested in Javanese metaphysics and cosmology and both talk about sorcerers in the context of a typology of magical specialists, arranged according to specialisation and the question of whether such *dukun* locate their powers within an Islamic tradition (*dukun santri*) or within a distinctly Javanese system of belief. In the case of Madura, Roy Jordaan (1985) discusses sorcery mainly in the context of indigenously recognised types of illnesses and the corresponding modes of healing. What concerns me here, though, is neither cosmology nor illness but rather sorcery as a social relationship that creates particular body-persons. However, before I go into that, I would like to discuss some basic concepts and indigenous distinctions relating to the human body so as to put the main argument into the appropriate context.

The inside and its reflections

As is common in other Indonesian Muslim societies, the people of Alas Niser divide the body into two parts, the *jasmani* and the *rohani*. *Jasmani* stands for the physical body and refers to the skin, flesh, bones etc., that is the visible, outer appearance of human beings in the world. By contrast, *rohani* refers to invisible and inner constituents of the body-person. In particular, *rohani* refers to the presence of the life-force, *roh*, in oneself. In contrast to Patani Malays who conceptualise *roh* as an exclusive feature of human beings that sets them apart

from the rest of creation (Endicott 1970: 76), the people I talked to believe that the attribute of life is a function and manifestation of *roh* and, thus, that humans share *roh* with animals and plants. As such, the presence of *roh* differentiates the world into living and non-living things. Indigenous exegetes liken *roh* to something full of life (*sesuatu berhidup*, Ind.) or to something extremely active (*sesuatu yang bergerak dinamis*, Ind.). In general, *roh* is the life-force present in all living things, guiding and co-ordinating their actions. In this respect, *roh* is very similar to what Endicott (1970) defines as *semangat* for the Malays, the force that animates the universe. People in Alas Niser though, restrict their meaning of *semangat* to the outer signs of vitality a healthy person shows in his everyday behaviour and reserve for *roh* a more extensive meaning.[1]

Roh, in qualitative terms, is an undifferentiated entity, meaning that the *roh* of all living creatures is the same. At the same time, locals maintain that there is one *roh* per living creature, though the case of plants, and rice particularly, is less clear cut. Therefore, the boundaries of the *jasmani* form an enclosure in which each separate *roh* resides and constitute the boundaries of the *roh*. However, this does not mean that locals conceive of *roh* as irrevocably joined with the physical body. *Roh* outlasts the human body since it corresponds to the eternal aspect of human beings which receives punishment or rewards in the Hereafter (*akhirat*). Dreaming activity is thought to be produced by the *roh*'s flight from the human body it is attached to and to narrate the experiences it encounters during its flight. Moreover, certain types of mystical knowledge (*elmo*, Mad.)[2] are said to allow their adepts to appear synchronically at two different places meaning that one's *roh* can be mystically dissociated from one's body and transferred to another place while one's physical body has remained behind. In both cases, the *roh* exits the body by way of the mouth which is one of the body's boundaries. *Roh* is said to exit from the mouth for it is likened to breath (*nyabeh*, Mad.).

Generally, despite these qualifications, locals portray the relation of *jasmani* and *rohani* as that pertaining between the container and the contained. The physical body is the container while *roh* is the contained. This parallelism carries certain similarities with the microcosm-macrocosm metaphor, both Sufi mystics and people knowledgeable in what they describe as a distinct Javanese belief system (*kejawen*), employ. The microcosm-macrocosm metaphor is most commonly used in the conceptualisation of the God-man relation and the position of man in the cosmos (see Woodword 1988; Beatty 1999). In this context, the *jasmani* is construed as the macrocosm that mirrors *roh*'s microcosm. Moreover, the *jasmani* is said to be guided by *rohani*. This guidance is paralleled to the obligation of mankind to obey Allah's Revelation as encapsulated in the Quran. Thus, the *jasmani* is likened by native exegetes to *rohani*'s equipment (*alat*, Ind.) in this world or to *roh*'s clothes

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[1] see Chapter 4 for a further discussion of *roh*'s relation to *semangat*.

[2] From *ilm*, Arab (*ilmu*, Ind.; *ngelmu*, Jav.). It also translated as potency and power.

(*klebbeh*, Mad.). As such, *jasmani* is said to be like a car and *rohani* like the car's driver. The point made with this parallelism is that one's physical body, that is a body-person's outer part of existence is both the cover and the vehicle for the manifestation and realisation of one's inner qualities.

The control *rohani* exerts over *jasmani* is only one aspect of the close interaction between the two. The other refers to *jasmani* being the reflection of *rohani* (and *vice-versa*). In this context, one could argue that it is because one's physical body is construed as controlled by one's life-force that one's body is also understood as revealing one's interior emotional states. The reverse is also true for *rohani* does not exist independently of *jasmani* as far as one is still alive. This interdependency and mutual mirroring effect is exemplified most acutely in cases of illness. Illnesses attributed to the intervention of some physical, material agent that disrupts the normal functioning of the body or one of its organs, are conceived as having a direct effect on one's *roh*. So, if one is ill, one's *roh* is said to be weakened and in a somewhat low or bad mood (*asemangat mandhaq*, Mad.). When one's *roh* is in this state, one's movements are described as slow, a sign of lack of internal dynamism and movement. Indigenous herbal remedies applied to these types of illnesses are sometimes accompanied by the recitation of a spell (*duwene*, Mad.) over the remedy. The spell is said to treat the patient's weakened *roh*. Similarly, in cases where people resort to biomedical treatment, they may chose to visit synchronically local healers or religious specialists (*kyai*, Ind.) with healing powers. The argument they put forward for resorting to both is that while biomedicine treats only the *jasmani*, religious and other mystical forms of knowledge (*elmo*, Mad.) treat primarily the patient's *rohani*. Implicit in these arguments is the idea of a balance between *rohani* and *jasmani* as the ideal state of health and their complementarity as manifested in the complementary application of biomedical and mystical bodies of knowledge.

The outside of the body-person reflects the body-person's interior.[3] In particular, it is the body's orifices and posture that is held to display one's feelings and temperament (*sepat*, Mad.) to the outside world. A person's eyes, nose, ears, mouth, as well as, the mode of standing and gesturing are conceived as focal points at which a person's inner emotional states are externalised. For example, red ears are taken to be indications of feelings of overpowering anger and of yielding to the 'drive of anger' (*nafsu amarah*, Ind.). Anger is a socially unacceptable state as it is seen as the very reason that leads to the perpetration of

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[3] Wikan (1990), in her study of Balinese society and self, differs on this point. For her, the distinction between outer appearance and inner reality is of paramount importance as Balinese social interaction is construed as predicated on the concealment of inner thoughts from public view. She exemplifies the point with reference to Balinese reluctance of expressing grief in public, opting, instead, for laughter. For Wikan, outer appearance is a covering that mediates the relation between the inner self and society. The point I am making here is rather the opposite. The body's outside is seen as turned in on its inner kernel and as such as revealing the core which it envelops. On the other hand, the cultural emphasis both Balinese and 'mixed people' share on the regulation of inner life is less, I suggest, about concealment than attaining control over themselves and others. For a discussion of this issue see the following sections of the present Chapter.

violence against others. The ears' red colour is said to be produced by the boiling effect such feelings of anger have on a person's blood, turning them more red than usual. The ears are specifically singled out in this respect for an angry person is thought to be too stubborn to listen to other people's advice who seek to avert violence.

Similarly, an open mouth is taken as an indication of a person behaving under the influence of the 'drive of greediness' (*nafsu aluamah*, Ind.). Greed itself is associated with cruelty, for a greedy person, being unable to live up to the ideals of reciprocity and generosity associated with the production and reproduction of social relationships among neighbours and kin, always tries to put himself on the receiving position of any relation. The nose, in turn, is associated with breathing and through it with the realisation of an interiority of calmness and peacefulness (*ayem tentrem*, Jav.). In this context, the nose is linked with both the drives of kindness and of wisdom and purity (*nafsu mutma'inah* and *nafsu sufyah*, Ind.). An interiority of calmness is said to manifest itself in the social plane in the value of *rukun*, the principle of harmony that should regulate relations among kin and neighbours. Just as a person has to achieve harmonious relations with one's neighbours, a person should achieve a calmness with/in his inner self (*batin*, Ind.; *bhaten*, Mad). In this context, excessively heavy breathing stands for the lack of such calmness and a predisposition to lack of control over one's actions and words. Such lack of control is manifested in a variety of contexts such as violence, gossiping and swearing.

According to locals, the eyes and the sense of sight are associated with feelings of desire and longing. In particular, they are the expressive centre of feelings of jealousy and envy (*iri*, Ind.), feelings associated with *nafsu aluamah*. Such feelings are said to arise from comparing one's situation with the achievements in wealth or status of others. Wide open, startled eyes is a sign of the existence of such feelings in one's inner self. Once again, locals value persons who control such feelings. The very idea of a potent person (*oreng sakte*, Mad.) is partly focused on the display in public of a near absence of desire for accumulating earthly possessions and, thus, of a control over feelings of envy by carrying out a modest living. But it is not only the senses or the sensory centres that are seen as having such a revelatory effect. The whole of one's physical body is taken to be a reflection of one's inner self (*bhaten*, Mad.). Bowing, greeting and using one's thumb to address someone or show a direction are all indications of a polite person and externalisations of the inner ability or feeling of respect (*hormat*, Ind.) one has to show towards one's seniors either in age or status. In this context, bodily gestures are not another form of language comparable to spoken or written language but primarily a reflection of inner realities. As such, bodies are carriers and instruments of moral qualities and reference points for moral evaluations.

Centre and periphery

The corporeal body and the facial orifices in particular, come to reveal one's interiority for they mark the boundary between the inner and the outer of the body-person and as such they form the most important points of the latter two's interaction. As shown above, each facial orifice is intimately related to one of the four drives and corresponding emotions that constitute each person's *bhaten*. It is also the case that facial orifices are linked both to gestation substances and to Islamic themes in ways other than being the nodal points of *nafsu*.

The facial orifices, that is, the nose, the ears, the eyes and the mouth are sometimes referred to as *tretan se pa-empa* (Mad.) or *sedulur papat* (Jav.) *Sedulur papat* literally translates as the four siblings. The term refers to the belief that each person possesses four siblings, though the number is often reduced to two - that is, one elder and one younger sibling. These siblings are held to accompany one throughout one's life and act as one's guardians. Both native interlocutors and foreign anthropologists argue that this belief goes back to pre-Islamic times, when Java was under the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism (see Headley 1987), but many of today's traditionalist Muslims in Alas Niser do hold such beliefs as manifested in their rituals surrounding birth and views on the subject.

A person's four siblings are the four entities encompassing an embryo during gestation, feeding and protecting it (see also Niehof 1985: 222; Geertz 1961). The embryo itself is taken to be the fifth element. The four siblings are said to have both a material and a invisible aspect as human beings do. Their co-existence with the embryo in its mother's womb is held to be one of inseparable unity. This union is transformed after birth with these entities being converted from life-supporting substances into cognitive aides. The amniotic fluid, placenta, blood and umbilical cord, the embryo co-exists with in the womb, are said to come to inhabit, after birth, the outer seats of perception. They, thus, continue to co-exist with the body-person though in an altered form. After birth, the invisible aspects of these four potent substances come to constitute and guard the baby's facial orifices, endowing them with the senses of sight, sound, smell and taste. As for their material aspects, their deposition is ritually regulated. For example, the placenta (*temone*, Mad.) is buried in the back yard after it is placed in an earthenware pot together with foodstuffs and a candle is light on its tomb for forty consecutive nights. The food and the candle's light are held to facilitate the separation and the new role assumed by the essence of the placenta.

After the birth, the four transformed substances are imagined as placing themselves along a north-south and east-west axis, forming the points of a compass and constituting a circle that has the body-person of the new born baby as its very centre. As such, the *sedulur papat* are thought to correspond to the five senses (*panca indera*, Jav.). Once again, the senses accounted for are those of sight, smell, hearing and taste. The fifth sense, that of

touch, goes unmentioned here as a separate faculty for its place is taken over by the body-person, that is the fifth element, as a whole. Although, interlocutors were somewhat vague and contradictory about the specific correspondences pertaining between each of the four siblings and the four facial orifices, they were all quite unanimous on the guarding function performed by the *sedulur papat* and of their links with the senses.

The afterbirth re-placement of the *sedulur papat* underlines the fact that the condition of living is conceived as inexorably tied up with the operation of the senses. The nurturing and protective role of the four siblings during gestation is seen as equivalent to the activation of the senses by the four siblings' re-positioning after birth. This re-positioning construes the senses as the most important faculties humans possess in extending their existence beyond the world of the womb. The guarding tasks of the four siblings point to the special attention people in Alas Niser devote to the senses and sensory centres for it is through them that persons perceive the world and position themselves in it. *Sedulur papat*'s guardianship of the senses is also important here for it draws attention to the close link between the senses and sorcery since it is through the act of penetrating bodily orifices that sorcery is imagined as violating and inhabiting persons to ill-effect. The sensory orifices, then, form the points of vulnerability which, in turn, are inherently linked to the condition of living.

The themes of a cultural anxiety associated with the senses and of an understanding of social life as an exercise in danger are important here. The latter point is made apparent in Islamic funeral ritual practises. Funerals involve the closing of a body's orifices such as the genitals, the armpits and the navel with cotton dipped in perfume while the corpse's facial orifices are covered with a separate larger cotton shroud. Before the burial takes place, the rest of the deceased's body has to be wrapped in a shroud by bringing together three stretches of cotton and tying them all together in three points; just above the head, below the feet and at the level of the lower chest. Seen in this light, the tomb itself can be thought of as the final shroud that encloses the body. The corpse is then, ritually made into a closed body-person, devoid both of senses and the dangers of life.

A different trope employed in the objectification of the body's boundaries and the cultural stress on the potential dangers impinging on them, draws upon the folk history of the coming of Islam in Java (see also Beatty 1999:161). People in Alas Niser accounted for their religion by reference to the nine *wali* (saints). These are legendary figures folk history credits as the bringers of Islam to the archipelago. They are portrayed as persons filled with potency (*oreng sakte,* Mad.) who could perform extraordinary deeds and use their supernatural powers in making Java a Muslim land. The *wali* are said to have achieved that either by converting the Hindu-Buddhist rulers of Java into Muslims after a display of their superior powers or by waging war and winning it. They are also seen as the founders of modern Javanese culture since Sunan Kalidjaga, for example, is credited with founding both the shadow theatre and the *slametan* ritual meal. Both cultural forms are thought to lie at the centre of Javanese culture. Today, the *wali*'s tombs, scattered all over Java, are the centres

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of their veneration with thousands of people visiting them in acts of pilgrimage seeking the granting of favours and the dispensing of blessings.

It is these mythical Muslim culture heroes who are sometimes said to act as guardians of the nine orifices found in the human body. Although one to one correspondences are again difficult to ascertain due to my informants' vague statements, the nine *wali* are believed to guard one's eyes, ears, mouth, nose, navel and rectum and to protect one thus, from either malicious substances the incorporation of which can cause one's decay or death or from morally improper externalisations of internal drives (*nafsu*). In contrast to the four siblings whose guardianship can be traced to their role in personal history, the nine *wali* guard human orifices due to their role in the region's history and their potency (*kesaktian*, Ind.). Potency in Java is most commonly associated with invulnerability against sharp objects and mystical attacks. Such invulnerability is achieved through a myriad of practices based on meditation, fasting or the voluntary incorporation of mystical objects, particularly those made of iron, into one's body. These practices are supposed to effect a closure of the body's orifices. The references to *wali*'s, then, both elaborate on the dangers surrounding human orifices, the need for their protection and the potency of Islam.

Among the body orifices the nine *wali* are thought to guard, the navel stands out as the object of extreme care. Immediately upon delivery, the baby's umbilical cord is cut with the use of a bamboo knife, the baby is bathed and its navel (*bujhel*, Mad.) is tied off with a thread. Then, ashes taken from the kitchen are mixed with salt and tamarind and placed on it. The mixture is kept in place with a cotton shroud wrapped around the baby's waist, the cotton material used being the same with that used for wrapping the dead. Three days after, when the navel's wound has recovered, the shroud is taken off. According to locals, it sometimes happens during one's lifetime, that one's navel gets untied. In these circumstances, that person is said to have regressed to the state of a newly born infant. Consequently, he or she is taken to a local healer to have his/her navel tied once again.

Locals also use to treat their navels when being sick even if there is no obvious correlation between the illness' symptoms, the area of pain and the navel. In cases of heavy coughing for example, one's navel is treated as well as one's throat. The treatment usually relates to rubbing one's navel with kerosene (*minyak tanah*, Ind.). The reason for this is that the navel is thought as the centre and orifice of *tabu'* (Mad.), the term designating that part of the human body that stretches from one's stomach to one's genitals. The *tabu'* is where all organs related to maintaining and creating life are thought to be located. Thus, by treating the navel they treat the *tabu'* and, in this way, perform a holistic treatment along side a more focused one. In the *tabu* the following organs are thought to be located; the *bada'ran* (Mad., stomach), the *lempah* (Mad., kidneys), the *perrok* (Mad., intestines), the *berre* (Mad., lungs), the *kandungan* (Mad., womb), and more importantly, the *hate* (Mad., heart/liver). The *hate* is conceived as performing numerous functions that place it in the very centre of the interaction of the inside of the body and its outside as well as of the world and the body-person.

The liver (*hate*, Mad.) is conceptualised as both 'a clot of blood' (*segumpal darah*, Ind.) and the organ that produces blood from the juices of the digested food. The food is thought of as being 'cooked' (*massaq*, Mad.) and prepared in the stomach in what can be termed as the 'first digestive act'. It is then, thought to proceed to the liver in a liquid form where it is 'cooked' once again and converted into the substance of blood due to liver's unique transformative faculties. The blood produced in the liver, is then, said to be sent to the heart which is also denoted by the term *hate*. The heart functions as a blood pump (*pompa darah*, Ind.) since its flesh is said to be firm and appropriate for this function. Due to the heart's systolic and diastolic movements, the blood can reach all organs and parts of the human body so as to nourish and feed them by way of the veins. The fact that both organs that we see as separate and distinct, come to be locally denoted with a single term has more to do with their shared relation to blood rather than with the inability of Alas Niser natives to distinguish between the two. The fact that they do distinguish between the two is apparent enough in their employment of the term *jantung* (Ind.) to refer exclusively to the heart and of the term *lever* (Ind.) to the liver. The reason for the usage of a single world is, I suggest, related to the interdependent functions both organs perform for the maintenance in life of the body-person. This is so because blood is thought as the substance that animates and nourishes human beings in more than one way. Firstly, it nourishes the human body since blood is food transformed. The *hate* lies at he centre of this both as the source of food's transformation and blood's transference. Secondly, blood is the vehicle through which the *roh,* the life-force, is said to animate the body and all its parts. The pulse (*nyamana oraq,* Mad.) is taken as an indication of a person being alive, that is that one's *roh* is still in one's body. As such, the pulse one can feel in one's veins is conceived as the manifestation of *roh*. The absence of a pulse stands for the absence of *roh*. According to this conception of the human body, the veins are both the highways of *roh* and food-turned-into-blood.

The relation of blood and *roh* is more pronounced in the belief that the *hate* is the seat of *roh*. The *roh*'s nature is said not to be known to humans except for its origin which is Allah. Allah is the only one who knows about the nature of *roh* as He is its source and controller. Allah is believed to send the *roh* to the woman's womb when she is four months pregnant. The in-coming of *roh* to the human foetus is marked by the foetus' movements inside the womb, a sign of the foetus being alive. Starting from that time and throughout one's life, the *roh* resides in the person's *hate*. It is in this respect that the *hate* is conceived as constituting the person's inner self, *bhaten*. The difference between *roh* and *bhaten* is that while *roh* is undifferentiated among living things, it is only humans who have *bhaten* and each person's *bhaten* is said to be different from that of others. *Bhaten*, then, refers, on the one hand, to the individual aspects the life-force takes as it interacts with the rest of the substances forming the foetus, that is the father's sperm and the mother's blood. One's *bhaten* is progressively formed by the events one experiences , the place one lives, the food one eats and the people one interacts with. Seen in this light, the *roh* as an undifferentiated

entity comes to be differentiated in the course of one's life as it interacts with other aspects of one's personhood and, through it, with the world. On the other hand, the rest of living beings are excluded from having *bhaten* since the crucial difference between animals and humans is that the former do not possess the faculty of thought.

Roh's residence in the *hate* makes the *hate* the very core of the human body for it endows it with the faculties of emotions and decision-making. The *hate* in this context refers primarily to the heart than the liver. This is apparent in the preference local exegetes of a strong Islamic background have for substituting the Madurese word *hate* for the Arab-derived word *kalbu* meaning strictly the heart.[4] Local *kyai* divide the heart into two parts with the nipple on the left side of the human body marking the boundary. The upper part of *hate* is denoted with the term *siri*, itself located two fingers distance above the left nipple. *Siri* is the centre of emotions. The other part, called *kolbih*, is located two fingers distance below the nipple and is the centre of decision-making. Together with the third centre termed *fikroh*, from the Arab word for thought (*fikr*), they comprise the inner cognitive system of human beings. *Fikroh*'s seat is the head and is the controller of all the senses. *Fikroh*, that is thought or reason, is conceptualised as receiving and processing all information one gets through the senses and sending them to *siri*. *Siri*'s function is to reflect upon the information by way of the emotions these information give rise to one's heart. Finally, *kolbih*, after measuring emotions and information, decides about the appropriate response and course of action. Then, this decision is described as transmitted to *fikroh* that, in turn, orders the body to respond accordingly. It is in this way and through this cognitive route that the *hate* is said to assume control over the body-person and the physical body to reflect one's inner self. Once again, the centrality of blood through its association with the heart is made manifest. The blood is the element that ties together all these different centres of cognition and the vehicle of their interaction. This means that, along with the food it transfers all around the body, blood is thought to transfer also information, emotions and decisions. It is because of these reasons that both blood and the internal organs associated with it, are the targets of sorcery practises. By attacking them, the sorcerer attacks the body-person in its entirety, that is both one's *jasmani* and *rohani*. The way such attacks are carried out is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

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[4] Javanese mystics who draw their knowledge from what is commonly construed as a pre-Islamic tradition of distinctly Javanese character (*kejawen*) often employ the term *rasa* (Jav.) (see Stange 1984; Beatty 1999). *Rasa* is thought to be located primarily in the heart and is a term applied to sensory experience in the sense of taste as well as to a feeling that encapsulates 'various refractions of God in a human faculty or centre of consciousness' (Beatty 1999: 165). *Rasa* signifies the heart as a cognitive organ and it is the locus of the attainment of unity with God, the goal that mystics aspire to.

'Refined' power

Local conceptions of sorcery construct sorcery as both an illness and a murder. As an illness, sorcery is referred to as *penyaket alos* (refined or invisible illness, Mad.). In this context, it is contrasted to *penyaket biyasa* (common illness, Mad.) (see also Jordaan 1985). *Penyaket biyasa* is the term villagers in Alas Niser apply to a wide variety of illnesses thought to stem from the intervention of some material, physical agent that upsets the normal functioning of the body or its internal organs. *Penyaket biyasa* causes are susceptible to indigenous herbal-based remedies (*jamo*, Mad.) and/or biomedical treatment available in the local health centre.[5] In contrast, *penyaket alos* refers to illnesses where no biomedical findings account for the disease and/or herbal cures are ineffective. Since symptoms for both types of disorders are more or less the same they can only be distinguished by the efficacy of the treatment. *Penyaket alos* are attributed to the intervention of a supernatural agent, most commonly an evil spirit, which acts either of its own will or under the orders of a hired *dhukon kemudhung* (sorcerer, Mad.). Spirits are commonly referred to as *bangsa alos* (Mad.), a term that describes them as the incorporeal and unseen entities with whom the villagers share the world. It is obvious then, that the very basis of the differentiation between the two types of illnesses is based on the nature of the illness' cause, that is on the ontology of the agent. It is only logical then, that mystical agency is to be combated with mystical means.

As a type of murder, *kemudhung* (sorcery, Mad.) is linked with that dimension of sociality that locals avoid talking about openly and in public. This dimension is associated with intra-village conflicts involving relatives and neighbours transgressing the value of *rukun* (Ind., harmony) and the feelings of rejection, anger, loss of face and so on, that conflicts generate in the *hate* of those involved. Villagers point out that virtually everybody in the locality is quick to take offence in the face of any contravention of the rules of social interaction. In these circumstances, resort to violent means represents an option that will help one to overcome these feelings and deal with upsetting situations in a manner that, most importantly, will restore his/her loss of face.[6] Injuries of personal and/or family honour (*argah dibhiq*, Mad.) are violently addressed in two ways. One way is to resort to *carok*, a man-to-man (or woman-to-woman) armed duel (see Husson 1990), which usually results in

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[5] Medical pluralism is a pervasive characteristic of local life. Since the mid-80s, a *Puskesmas* (*Pusat Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Ind., lit. Family Health Centre) has been operating in Alas Niser, providing locals with its services and casting their worries and problems in the language of bio-medical modernity. The relationships pertaining between the 'traditional' and 'modern' medical systems as far as their respective assumptions are concerned, is something that locals rarely reflect and commend upon. Though, it makes for an interesting topic, a discussion of medical pluralism goes beyond the purposes of this Chapter.

[6] Despite their differences, both Geertz (1973b) and Wikan (1990) stress the importance of social etiquette in regulating sociality in Bali. Adherence to etiquette is conceived by both as ensuring the maintenance and reproduction of social relationships within an atmosphere characterised equally by fragility and the fear of other people's intentions and motives.

either severe physical injuries or the death of one of the two combatants. *Carok* narratives construe it as a bloody battle carried out by persons blinded by their rage and anger; as the anti-social act *par excellence*. It is for this reason that *carok* is viewed as *kasar*, that is, crude, coarse and unrefined, suitable for brave but 'hard' people.

The other way to rid oneself of an insult is to commit a 'refined murder', a *rajha pate alos* (Mad.). Sorcery that causes death is designated as such a murder. While both ways of seeking retribution can equally generate further animosity - I have never heard, though, of any cases similar to Sicilian type vendettas taking place in Alas Niser or Probolinggo -, resort to sorcery is the preferred option for it wards off the community from the public eruption of violence that the *carok* entails. Sorcery rituals are both secretive and private acts while the actual attack is publicly invisible and extra-sensory. In this vein, sorcery mystical attacks exact retribution in a invisible form for the violence perpetrated is kept at the level of the supernatural. In other words, the very refinement or *alos*-ness of sorcery is due to the invisible nature of the violence committed.

Sorcery's equation with retributive violence verifies from an emic perspective the argument that Kapferer has put forward for the Sinhalese case, namely that, sorcery is power as it 'highlights that truly extraordinary capacity of human beings...to construct and transform their life situations' (1997: xi-xii) (see also Nabokov 2000). Sorcery, that is an action that unleashes mystical, malevolent forces that aim to the elimination or disempowerment of another person, a personal enemy, the injurious other, is basically an attempt to re-balance a relationship experienced as improper and unequal. Unrequited love, adultery, rejection of a marriage proposal, betrayal of a friendship or an economic partnership, frustrations originating from inheritance imbalances are all phrased in terms of an offence delivered and an ensuing loss of face. Resort to sorcery, then, empowers the offended party which by taking command of the fortunes of those who failed to behave according to social norms and expectations, reciprocates in kind and regains face.

Sorcery suspicions and accusations usually involve people whose social interaction is frequent and intense (see also Geertz 1960:110; Weesing 1996). It is thought to be practised against relatives, neighbours, friends and colleagues, that is people one has grown up with and towards whom trust is mostly taken for granted. With relatives and friends, neighbours and colleagues, people in Alas Niser usually feel at ease and relaxed, take pleasure in conversing and working together, playing and bathing, sharing food and clothes as well as ancestors and children. It is among these categories of people that elaborate forms of etiquette and deference are largely absent as the latter are reserved for one's superiors and more distant acquaintances and strangers. Thus, the practise of sorcery is intrinsically linked with both informality and intense sociality as it is in this context that resentments and disappointments often arise. Sorcery suspicions highlight the precarious nature of sociality and the fragility of the trust involved (see also Wikan 1990; Howe 1999/2000).

Considerations over whether resort to sorcery constitutes rightful and just retribution are partly subjugated to the nature of the reciprocation. This is not to say that questions over the morality of sorcery are not existent in Alas Niser, quite the contrary. Sorcery is by definition seen as amoral since it rests on the recruitment and services of evil spirits and its power is destructive rather than regenerative.[7] What I mean by this is that in addition to moral concerns, the *kasar/alos* distinction is of central importance in the local valuation of what is just and right. While morality has to do with the good or bad nature inherent in thoughts and actions, the *kasar/alos* distinction has to do with the manner one is thinking one's thoughts and the way one carries out one's activities. The manner itself is not classified in terms of good or bad but in terms of the degree of its smoothness, gentleness and visibility or corporeality. To say that sorcery is *alos*, that is, 'refined', is to say that it is not exercised in a corporeal, visible manner. Sorcery's power is seen as quite different from a slap in the face or an order shouted out loud, both qualified as *kasar*. To say that sorcery is 'smooth' power means that its power can be exercised in such a manner that makes both its exercise and the person who exercises it, almost invisible. The smoothness of its practise is guaranteed in the secretive ritual it involves, the incorporeal nature of the mystical agent recruited and the way it afflicts its victim. As for the identity of the ultimate power-holder, the one who deliberately ordered and paid for the spell to be cast, he/she remains hidden as he/she is rarely identified publicly, despite rumours and whispered accusations.

A deadly union

The relative scarcity of ethnographic material on sorcery in Java and Madura is unsurprising. Given the secrecy of the act and the public invisibility of its perpetrators, sorcery forms one of the issues about which people are reluctant to speak. I have never heard of anyone admitting to having hired a sorcerer to harm someone else, though I have heard of people attributing the death of a relative, neighbour or friend of theirs to sorcery and

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[7] In this respect, my analysis of potency in Java diverges from studies which, taking their lead from Anderson (1990), construe it as morally neutral (Weesing 1996; Howe 1999/2000). It is certainly true that as a substance and essence, sorcery power is qualitatively of the same nature as healing power since both are *alos*, both emanate ultimately from the same source, Allah, and both are an attribute of potent persons (*oreng sakte*, Mad.) who are often said to be as successful healers as maligne sorcerers. However, issues of morality are intrinsically tied to local ideas of potency, qualifying it according to the intentions of the potent person involved, its consequences for the person directed at, the kind of supernatural agents called upon, its consequences for the potent person itself and the techniques employed. It is believed that sorcerers are condemned to experiencing extreme punishment in the afterlife in contrast to healers who are said to enjoy an afterlife in the gardens of Paradise. Sorcerers are also said to die a violent death and to acquire their potency through breaking social taboos relating to sex, incest and food and to use the Quran in sacrilegious ways (reading its verses backwards, urinating and defecating on it). For a fuller discussion of the relationships between morality and potency see Chapter 4.

alluding to possible perpetrators in private. Similarly, I have never met anyone who would admit to being a sorcerer though some of the *dhukon* in Alas Niser who work as healers, were said to dabble in sorcery. Locals' evasion of the subject is also related to a killing spree that took place in the summer of 1998, that is immediately before I entered the field, and involved the killings of alleged sorcerers all over East and Central Java. As a result of recent memories, then, people were quite reluctant to talk about such issues. In addition to all these, I have never witnessed the performance of a sorcery ritual and what follows is a collection of information I managed to gather through talking to *dhukon* who perform counter-sorcery rites. Their descriptions were made available only towards the end of the research and after I had spend considerable time with these *dhukon* whose moral credentials, in turn, were the least disputed in the locality given their attendance of Islamic schools in the past and public piety in general. However, I was fortunate to have witnessed several counter-sorcery rites performed by them, as well as, to have met and befriend Mas Buhari.

Mas Buhari was of the same age as myself and unmarried at the time of my fieldwork. He had spend several years studying in *pesantren* as well as working the land his late father had bequeathed. At the time we met, he was looking for a bride as well as learning to perform healing by attaching himself to a *kyai* renowned for his potency and visiting several others. Mas Buhari's apprenticeship, combined with the trust he showed to me, were instrumental in deciphering the often enigmatic, piecemeal and riddle-like nature of information offered by an array of healers we often visited together. The discussions we held whispering behind closed doors about healing and sorcery, with both of us involved in understanding what was said to us and what he was learning separately, have shaped the reconstruction of sorcery ritual that follows. It is a reconstruction in the sense that I never witnessed one. What I offer here is mostly a logical arrangement of certain elements the importance of which has been judged on the basis of their re-occurrence in several discussions with informants. None of my informants has, though, offered a description of the ritual sequence nor of the elements' meaning.

The performance of sorcery in Alas Niser as in Malaysia and South India (see Peletz 1993; Nabokov 2000), involves three parties. The sorcerer, the evil spirit and the person or persons who ordered the casting of the spell on the victim. The sorcerer, who is designated by the term *dhukon kemudhung* (Mad.) or *dhukon santet* (Mad.), is said to have acquired his *elmo* (Mad.; mystical knowledge) through learning from an unrelated person rather than through inheriting the necessary knowlegde (*elmo toronan,* Mad.). A person attaches himself as a disciple to a senior sorcerer who passes down his knowledge only after the disciple has proven himself trustworthy and of the appropriate inner strength (*kowat bhaten*, Mad.). One's inner strength is tested in a number of trials one has to undergo, commonly referred to as *tirakat* (Jav.). *Tirakat* refers to ascetic exercises undertaken in order one to fulfil one's wish, in this case the acquisition of 'refined' power. *Tirakat* is practised for the acquisition of other types of knowledge such as healing and invulnerability as well as sacred objects (*pusaka*)

and usually consists of long periods of fasting, sometimes up to forty days, isolation in a forest or a sacred place such as the tomb of a potent person and repeated recitations of formulas, most often verses from the Quran, either in Arabic, ancient Javanese or Madurese.

The practice of *tirakat* (*ngelakoni tirakat*, Jav.) is said to have adverse effects on those who are not strong enough since, being unable to withstand the trials, they are often said to go insane. This type of insanity is attributed to one's *roh* being frightened in its nightmare encounters with the spirits which take the form of either resurrected corpses or fearful animals like tigers and serpents ready to prey on the disciple. To mistake these forms for the thing itself and to attempt to turn away because of fear (*tako*, Mad.) manifests a lack of control and results in letting oneself come under the spirit's power. In this context, insanity is the outcome of subjugation to the spirit. This motif of disempowerment and loss of the natural ability to command oneself is highlighted in attributing failure in the trials to the imagery of a disciple being lured by a spirit which has taken the form of a seductively beautiful woman. To abandon *tirakat* due to uncontrolled sexual drives is held as analogous to fear for both result in the disciple becoming the 'servant' (*khadam*, Ind.) of the spirit. The successful completion of *tirakat*, on the other hand, ends with the disciple having acquired a 'servant', that is a spirit-familiar (*kanca alos*, Mad.; an incorporeal friend) which instructs the disciple in mystical knowledge and is always ready to perform the tasks assigned to it.

The practice of *tirakat* in the case of sorcery is supposed to take place in old cemeteries, pitted with holes, preferably during sacred nights (*malam keramat*, Ind.) such as Thursday nights or the first night of the Javanese month of Sura. These are times during which the spirits of the dead ancestors are said to visit people, asking for offerings and attention. It is also when the frustrated spirits of murdered men are thought of as being extremely potent in attacking innocent passers-by, delivering minor afflictions or, sometimes even possessing them. Such spirits are deemed as inherently malevolent due to their untimely deaths. The person who performs *tirakat* is said to have to sit on the grave of such a violently murdered human, naked and alone, for the presence of anybody else except for him is said to frighten the spirit away.

Tirakat entails the repeated recitation of a *duwene* (spell, Mad.) written in Arabic, ancient Javanese or Madurese which the senior sorcerer has handed over to the novice. The spell is described as an invocation that acts so as to summon the spirits. The disciple is said to have to assert himself in the face of his nightmarish visions and by controlling his fears and /or drives, a sign of his potency, to bring the spirit under his own power. Alternatively, *tirakat* is said to summon a *setan* or a non-Muslim *jin*, namely beings of a malevolent nature whose place in the Islamic pantheon stems from being the sworn enemies of mankind in its struggle to obey Allah's commandments. Both *setan* and non-Muslim *jin* are held to interfere in human affairs either of their own volition or under the demand of their human masters, and as spreading misfortune and disorder, tormenting the faithful with sexual visions and promises of ill-gotten riches. In this case, rather than resisting these visions, the disciple was

described to me as forming an alliance with the demonic spirits that would make him their master for as long as he would be alive. The relationship though, is said to reverse upon the disciple's death, whereupon he will find himself as the spirit's servant in the afterlife domain of Hell (*neraka*, Ind.).

The evil spirit one comes to possess through *tirakat* stands for the acquisition of *elmo kemudhung*, the mystical knowledge to kill. Such a knowledge is put into use either after a request from a third party or at regular intervals by the *dhukon* himself. The relationship the *dhukon* enjoys with the spirit is as ambivalent as any other master-servant relation. The *elmo* makes periodic demands upon the *dhukon* and the continuity of its services depends upon the *dhukon* meeting these demands. In particular, the *elmo* which is described as being fed by its victims and as growing stronger the more victims it has claimed, is said to turn agaist its master and to 'eat' him if it has not been offered a victim for up to a year. If such a case emerges, the *dhukon* is said to proceed to sorcerise someone so as to offer him/her as a substitute for himself. The very anti-social nature of *dhukon kemudhung* stems, then, partly from the danger he represents to neighbours and relatives since it is held that a *dhukon kemudhung* would not hesitate to sacrifice relations of his so as to save himself from the *elmo*'s cannibalistic demands.

In cases where the *elmo* is activated following a request, the *dhukon* asks from the person who orders the killing to reveal the identity of the victim, the kind of misfortune he wishes to inflict upon and the payment of a fee referred to as *mahar*. *Mahar* is the term usually employed in Islamic jurisprudence to denote the brideprice the groom (and his family) have to pay before a marriage can be set off. Its payment marks the transition of the bride from her family to that of the groom in a contractual fashion. Locals of Alas Niser usually refer to such a marriage payment as *mas kawin* (see Geertz 1960; Jay 1969). *Mas kawin* is transferred during the *akad nikah* ceremony when in the presence of a *kyai* and/or the chief official from the local brunch of the ministry of religion, the groom hands to the bride's guardian (*wali*) the payment required by Islamic law, usually consisting of a small amount of money or a full female prayer attire. In the present context, the designation of the fee as *mahar* clearly alludes to sorcery as a kind of marriage. The marriage effected is an inverted one since, instead of being aimed at a symbiosis that regenerates life through the production of offspring, will be consummated in mystical cannibalism.

The payment of *mahar* is construed as compensation for the use of the services of the evil spirit the *dhukon* commands. Clearly this defines the evil spirit or *elmo*, at least initially, as the bribe-to-be and the *dhukon* as its guardian. It is my contention that the person at whom the sorcery is aimed is represented by the groom. In the latter's absence, the sorcerer's client stands for the groom's family the malevolent intent of which is another inversion of local understandings of kinship. In this way, the payment of *mahar* thus construes the client's relation to sorcerer as *bhesan* (Mad.). The term *bhesan* is applied

specifically to the relationship partaking between the parents of the two spouses and is reciprocal in its use (see Chapter 5).

The allusions to marriage are further evident in the sorcery ritual itself. The ritual which is performed during nights only, is said to begin with the *dhukon* summoning the spirit through incense burning and flower spreading in a windowless room inside his house. The flowers spread are of the same kind as those used in different stages of the marriage ceremony to either purify the bride or adorn the newlyweds' bedroom. The flowers are roses, jasmine and leaves of the cananga shrub which are locally classified as flowers. The flower's colours, red, white and green, represent the three elements human beings consist of, namely mother's blood, father's sperm and the *roh*, and to be incorporated in the marriage ceremony as symbols of the unity-in-one-being that is to be achieved through the bearing of children. The incense burned is held to summon the spirit. Therefore, it is as if the evil spirit is invited to attend its wedding to the victim.

The sorcerer, after spreading the flowers, is said to create little effigies in the form of the groom-victim. While my informants confessed ignorance of the materials used in shaping these effigies, they all agreed in the importance of using soil from an embryo's grave to rub the effigy. Embryos older than four months are accorded quasi-funerals since they are wrapped in the same cotton shrouds used for fully social persons and are, then, buried. However, miscarriages are marked neither by any of the communal meals following the death of a relative or co-villager nor does the grave bear a tombstone. Embryo's corpses are considered to be extremely potent and are sometimes buried in the centre of blighted rice fields or close to the water gate with the expectation that they will bring about the field's recovery. The latent potency of the embryo embedded in the soil from its grave is held to be instrumental in animating these effigies by activating them with life-force. The quasi-presence of a dead embryo alludes further to sorcery perceived as an unfortunate marriage since it will not bear any live offspring.

The victim is also made present in the ritual through the sympathetic relation every person is held to maintain with one's bodily substances. The *dhukon* has asked in advance the person who hired him to supply him with objects that belong to the victim such as a piece of his/her cloth or a handkerchief since both are objects which have come into contact with the victim and contain his sweat. One's sweat is also contained in one's footprints and soil taken from the ground the victim has stepped on barefoot. Of high importance are the victim's fingernails and hair, substances much more closely associated with the victim since they once belonged to his body and partake of its identity. All these are said to be placed near the effigy and to be wrapped together in a bundle with sharp and rusty objects such as needles, nails, parts of broken mirrors and iron chains.

The sorcerer is supposed to recite a specific *duwene* (spell, Mad.) over the bundle as it immerses it in a bowl containing the blood of a plain (*molos*, Mad.) coloured chicken that has also been provided in advance by the client. Developing the marriage analogy further,

the immersion of the bundle which stands for the victim, in the bowl of blood seems to me to be imitating the purification ritual bath called *siraman* (Jav.), the bride has to go through the day before the marriage. *Siraman* which involves the bathing of the bride by her parents and senior female relatives using water mixed with the three kinds of flowers referred to above, is a ritual which through purifying her, marks her readiness in undergoing marriage as a rite of passage and bestows on her the blessing (*doa restu*, Ind.) of her relatives. This blessing is supposed to be transmitted through the water a relative pours over the bride, preferably three times, each time pouring water over the brides' head, arms and legs. The blessing the water carries, is structurally analogous to the spell, itself a curse, recited by the sorcerer and transmitted through the chicken's blood to the victim's body, or the objects that stand for it. The fact that water and blood form a pair of oppositions is evident in the practices related to menstrual blood. Menstruating women are considered to be a primary source of pollution[8] and one should avoid having sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman, lest one gets polluted himself. In such a case, purification from the state of *janabah* (ritual impurity, Arab.) is sought in the performance of *ghusl* (Arab.), that is taking a bath, or in the absence of available water, through carrying out *tayammun* (Arab.), that is the cleansing of oneself with soil.

The immersion of the bundle in the blood does more than just carry the spell to its target. It transforms the gender identity of the victim and the evil spirit. As we have seen, sorcery practices rest on the payment of *mahar*, the brideprice. The fact that it is handed over to the evil spirit's guardian makes the sorcerer the bride's father, and the *elmo* or evil spirit, the bride. Its payment also marks the victim as the groom to whom the *elmo* is to be 'married' to. But the symbolic correspondences characterising the immersion of the bundle, the *siraman* ritual and the victim's gender identity mean that the latter is ritually transformed from male to female. This is so for the objects that ritually represent the victim are treated as belonging to a female person. This leaves the *elmo* taking the role of the male and the husband. The significance of this transformation becomes apparent if one considers local ideas about sex and the associated gender roles.

In the few conversations I had with informants about sex, and they were few due to cultural patterns of politeness that prohibit one talking openly about such matters, it was striking that sex was liked to a killing with the man in the role of the aggressor. That was manifested in the euphemisms people employed to refer to sex. I can recall a rather outgoing female neighbour of mine in her late sixties, asking me whether I had a '*moso manes*' (Mad.), that is a 'sweet enemy'. By that she was referring to whether I had a wife or a fiance. On another occasion, a herbal remedy seller who was visiting my *kampung* on an everyday basis, replied to my enquiries about a cluster of remedies for men as dedicated to '*mengisi*

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[8] Both Delaney (1986) Ong (1988) state that women's blood is conceived as dirty and polluting in the Islamic societies of Turkey and Malaysia, respectively. In particular, Delaney refers to rules prohibiting menstruating women form 'touching the Quran, going to the Mosque and from performing the rituals of the Hac' (1986: 499).

peluru' (Ind.), that is filling up [the gun] with bullets. She, thus, alluded to the remedies helping to fill both the penis and the sperm with the necessary potency (*mandih*, Mad.) so as to ensure fertility. Moreover, references to penis as *senjata* (Ind.), weapon, or *senjata tajam* and *kris*, sharp weapon and the traditional dagger, respectively, were common among young men teasing each other while bathing in the pond located behind the *kampung*. The point, though, was made most strongly to me by a young man and good friend who at that period was looking for a suitable wife. Hosen argued that the act of sleeping with one's wife, he had been told, amounted to a killing in which the husband murders his wife. The proof of this, he continued, is that the penis' *kamasokan* (penetration, Mad.) into the female body is similar to one's body being penetrated by a *kris*. This was so, he said, because the penis is one's dagger.[9]

The sexual act, portrayed as the insertion of a foreign object into the female body that causes its death, albeit temporarily, symbolically or emotionally, and its designation as *kamasokan* (penetration), is held to be imitated by the sorcerer in the next stage of the sorcery ritual. Having immersed the bundle in blood, the sorcerer is supposed to untie the bundle and to take out the nails, needles, mirrors and chains. These sharp objects covered in blood and infused with the curse are then inserted into the effigy's navel, the centre of one's belly and the main orifice of one's *hate*, that is the very centre of one's existence and growth, cognition and emotionality. The effigy which has already been symbolically converted into a female body-person is, thus, penetrated by objects whose very sharpness qualifies them as death instruments. Similarly, the effigy's navel and by extension, the victims' *hate* are rendered open to the destructive powers of the spell, the polluted blood and the *elmo*. It is as if the sorcerer by attacking the navel, seeks to untie it and, thus, to force the victim to regress to the vulnerable state of a new born infant. The victim's vulnerability is further enhanced by its female gender and this gender's susceptibility to outside dangers due to having an added orifice. Female genitalia's association with death is quite strong since it is likened to the deadly wounds delivered in the killing act sex is thought to constitute.

On the other hand, the penetration of the effigy by the sorcerer can be construed as a kind of instruction given to the *elmo* or the spirit-familiar of what is expected of it (see also Endicott 1970:174). The insertion of the sharp objects to the effigy that stands in a sympathetic relation to the victim, is not held as efficacious enough so as to bring about the death of the victim. If the manipulation of the effigy was held to be efficacious by itself on a sympathetic basis, then there would be no reason to invoke the evil spirit at all and moreover, to induce it to 'marry' the victim. The insertion then, of the death's instruments into the effigy must be a call to the spirit-familiar to perform the aggressive role of the male

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[9] This particular permeability of female bodies and their lack of successfully controlling both boundaries and erotic urges is commented upon by both Delaney (1986) and Ong (1988). Ong attributes this to women being portrayed in Islam as essentially less moral beings than men. 'Their spiritual frailty, polluting bodies, and erotic nature make them especially likely to transgress moral space, and therefore permeable by spirits' (Ong 1988: 31).

partner. It is this very assertion of masculinity by the spirit, demonstrated in penetrating the effigy's navel that is held to be the efficacious act. Seen in this fashion, the sharp objects are the corporeal equivalent of the spirit's incorporeal penis and sperm.

The difference between a blessed marriage and sorcery-induced does not rest on any qualitative difference between the sexual act that consummates both types. It rather rests on the consummation's outcomes. While in the case of blessed marriages, the temporary killing of the female is deemed as inherent in the reproduction of life, in sorcery-induced marriages, the 'female' is destined to die without bearing an offspring. In this respect, it is no coincidence that both consummations are socially marked by over-grown bellies. Among the most common symptoms of sorcery affliction, together with blood-spitting and unexpected seizures, is a swollen belly. Thus, while in ordinary marriages, an overgrown belly is a sign of pregnancy, in sorcery-induced ones, is a sign of the incoming death of the ritual wife.

The swollen belly is attributed by local exegetes to *elmo*'s penetration of the victim's *hate* and to the placement there of its 'sperm' which is nothing else than the polluted sharp objects the sorcerer is said to have inserted in the effigy in an instructive fashion. Their placement there is said to cause one's *hate* to malfunction, that is, to render it incapable of producing more blood through the second digestion of the food in the liver, thus, making one ill since one's physical body is not fed any longer by the nutrients contained in the blood. The *elmo*'s sperm also contaminates one's blood with the spell the sorcerer has cast and the polluted blood of the chicken. The polluting effect of the penetration and intercourse is made apparent in locally referring to sorcery as *rancon* (Mad.),that is poison. The polluted blood has also a direct effect on the victim's *rohani* and *bhaten* since contaminated blood makes it all the more impossible for the internal centres of cognition, emotion and decision-making to function normally. In other words, sorcery, by attacking the victim's inner kernel through penetrating his/her navel, is ritually un-making it as a person. This is so because the victim's blood, the substance of life, is transformed through the poisonous sperm of *elmo*, into a polluted substance about to cause its death.

The cannibalistic consumption effected through the sorcery ritual can also be performed without the invocation and the making of a mystical male, the use of chicken's blood and immersions of personal objects, albeit some compromises of efficacy. In the case of eating food, and more particularly rice, contaminated with the spell of the sorcerer, the motif of the aggressive penetration of a mystical agent is substituted with that of the passive incorporation of an external object into the body. Locals were quick to point out that the act of eating is not devoid of dangers as malevolent relations could ask a sorcerer to cast a *duwene* on the food they are to offer to somebody. Such a practice could well afflict one with some serious illness, though death is highly unlikely to occur. Thus, food sharing and exchanging requires always some form of trust, especially on the part of the receivers since

it is they who are likely to fall ill in the case the food being adulterated.[10] The very possibility of food becoming the vehicle of sorcery indicates the ambivalence inherent in the ways locals experience close social relationships. As emphasised before, it is usually one's relatives and neighbours, people one shares food most often with, that come to be the primary suspects when one is diagnosed as having been sorcerised. While food generally, endows one with power as one is held to incorporate the properties of the things eaten and to create and maintain meaningful relationships through its exchanging, the eating of mystically contaminated food is held to poison one's blood through the act of ingestion. In the case of food sorcery, the incorporation of poison takes place through the mouth rather than the navel, and the agent involved, that is food itself, is rather corporeal compared to a spirit-familiar.

The centrality of the body orifices in sorcery practises is further manifested in certain forms of love magic. Love magic (*elmo pelet,* Mad.) is generally classified as *elmo sihir* (Mad.; from *sihr,* Arab.), that is malevolent or black 'power', of which *elmo kemudhung* is only a branch. One widely known form of *elmo pelet* is said to focus on the nose as the interface among the world, the body's outer and inner forms. It too, rests on the possession, recitation and finally, burning of a *duwene* (spell, Mad.) in written form over an earthenware pot where incense is burned. One comes to possess such a *duwene* after visiting a *dhukon.* The person is described as having to recite the *duwene* three times a day, preferably before going to sleep, after waking up and before leaving the house while sitting in a prayer position and concentrating one's mind on the name of the person one seeks to cast the spell on. The casting of the spell necessitates the burning of the *duwene* and is said to work through the smoke produced. The spell's smoke mixed with that of the incense is said to travel so as to be inhaled by the man/woman one thinks of when performing this sort of magic. Thinking the name is what directs the smoke to the person in question. Once again, the nose, a body orifice, stands out as the channel through which a body-person's identity can be invaded and transformed. In the case of love magic, the transformative efficacy is only temporary for the spell lasts for only three days, leaving one with no option but having to propose within such a limited period of time.

The love spell has a direct effect on one's identity, tastes and longings, for breathing is intimately related to blood and the *roh. Roh* itself is sometimes denoted with the term *nyabeh* (Mad.), literally meaning breath. In addition, breathing exercises constitute one of the main avenues for assuming control over one's unwanted feelings such as anger and anxiety, through the cooling down effect regulated breathing is supposed to have on one's blood temperature. This is so because the air one breathes is held as being instrumental in rejuvenating one's blood and regulated breathing makes for regulated blood temperature. Thus, the mixing of air and blood recognised as taking place in the lungs, accounts for the

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[10] Eves (1995) reports of a similar connection between sorcery and food in Melanesia. There, as in East Java, food is deemed to exhibit the same ambiguity social relationship are characterised by.

emotional change the victim of love magic undergoes. Instead of polluting one's blood through adulterated food, love magic pollutes one's blood through ritually adulterated air.

On beings and states

The importance of the *sedulur papat* and the nine *wali* as the guardians of the body orifices can be made amply clear in the context of sorcery attacks. Their duty of ensuring that the facial orifices and the nine body orifices are mystically closed to the dangers of the outside world and the malevolent spirits inhabiting it, is a likely guarantee of the impenetrability of the body-person's boundaries and the ritual purity of one's blood. However, sorcery does claim victims which means that the *sedulur papat* and the nine *wali* are not sufficient in guarding the body. What people in Alas Niser claimed to be the best way to safeguard oneself against sorcery is constant awareness (*kaengaqan*, Mad.). This leaves the body-person with the ultimate responsibility of guarding its own orifices.

Kaengaqan stands for that state of being in which one is in full control of one's sensory, cognitive and emotional faculties, that is in control of one's *batin*. To be in control, in turn, means that one is able to bring one's interaction with the world under scrutiny, evaluating the elements of the interaction and regulating one's response to them. *Kaengaqan* finally means that one is not under the power of the outside world, its spirits and other human beings but rather that one can, at least, negotiate, if not, assert oneself in the face of the ambiguities and dangers of the outside. As such, *kaengaqan* makes one invulnerable to sorcery attacks. Full awareness is realised when one is awake and insomniacs are said to be beyond sorcery's powers. The same holds for people who *mele'an* (Mad.), that is perform vigils, staying awake for some nights in a row helping relatives and neighbours to prepare for major feasts. *Mele'an* is also practised by people who perform non-obligatory ritual prayers during the night. If the victim finds him/herself in the state of *kaengaqan* when sorcery is performed, it is said that the victim's items involved in the sorcery ritual will start shaking and will refuse to be immersed in the bowl with the chicken's blood. Another way of portraying such invulnerability is by claiming that the *elmo* send by the *dhukon* to penetrate the victim's body will take the form of a *cecek* [11] animal and it will wait till the victim falls asleep. If the victim does not fall asleep before dawn, the *cecek* will disappear in the form of a cloud of smoke and return to its master.

By contrast, lack of self-awareness is a condition one is in when one is asleep, daydreaming, or 'hot' (*panas*) and all these states are held to make one especially vulnerable to sorcery. In general, hotness is thought to be generated from uncontrolled emotions of

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[11] The only descriptions I elicited for the *cecek* portray it as a dirty and disgusting animal no-one has ever seen.

anger and frustration that make one unable to reflect and respond positively to incursions from the outside. In this context, *kaengaqan* stands for controlled emotionality usually marked by a feeling of inner cool calmness (*ayem tentrem*). Moreover, hotness is equated with a variety of illnesses which most usually relate to women during the menstrual and post-partum period and thus with impurity (see Jordaan 1985:227). To counteract such a hot state, people will resort to herbal medicines of a cool character such as those based on coconut milk or cucumber. Thus, women in general and men in particular, who find themselves in the state of *janabah* due to having coitus with a menstruating woman or having not performed ablutions after coitus, are especially susceptible to sorcery attacks. The point locals make in this respect is not so much that impure states mark points of danger, as Douglas (1984) would have us believe, but rather that religiosity itself assumes the form of a controlled life encapsulated in the performance of the practices of the faith. Such a regular performance results in the same thing one achieves through regulated breathing, that is control over one's body/person and its orifices.   Voluntary insomnia and religious-based regulation of one's daily activities, along with fasting, meditation and rare engagement in sexual intercourse, are interpreted as qualities of potent individuals in Java (see also Anderson 1990; Keeler 1987). All such practises are seen as signs of extraordinary people, commonly denoted with the term *oreng sakte,* that is people endowed with supernatural powers. In this context, invulnerability is conceived as an outcome of one having attained such a state of being. But the very extraordinariness of these kinds of body-persons means that most people are relatively defenceless to outside directed malevolence and that, when sorcerised, they need to seek help from specialists. It is to this issue I am now going to turn.

Purifying the centre

Since sorcery is locally perceived as penetration (*kamasokan*, Mad.), it follows logically that countersorcery rites should focus on the casting out of the mystical agent and the polluted objects. The countersorcery rites I observed can be classified into two broad categories since the means employed in the casting out of the spell of the sorcerer were somewhat different. Despite their differences, though, to which I shall turn shortly, they were all simply glossed as *kalocotan* (Mad.) which means freedom, release or separation and as such they refer to effecting a cure through separating the victim from its ritual 'husband' (see also Bowen 1993: 151-162). Alternatively, they were termed as *kapendaan* (Mad.) which means removal or transference and refers to the rejection of the agent from the victim's body. The efficacy of the rite rests to a large extent on finding a *dhukon* whose *elmo* is more powerful than that of the *dhukon* one's enemy has employed. To neutralise the spell then, a

mystical battle between the *dhukon* is said to take place while the countersorcery ritual is performed. Cure, when achieved, marks the winner. Despite suggestions made by *dhukon* of cosmological confrontations with enemy *dhukon* and the deployment of spirit-familiars in the battle field, ritual practices de-emphasise such readings. Although spirit-familiars do sometimes take part in healing rituals and the extracted *elmo* can be sent back to the person who hired the sorcerer afflicting him with illness, countersorcery practises focus on exorcisms, that is the removal of the polluting objects.

Exorcisms in Alas Niser are neither modelled on a reversal of the sorcery ritual nor are they supposed to effect a cure through enacting a funeral using effigies as is the case of South India (see Nabokov 2000). They either treat sorcery as more or less any other kind of illness, resorting to indigenous herbal medicines and appropriate spells or engage with the source of pollution in a more direct and dramatic manner, seeking to arrest and forcefully expel it. In Alas Niser, there were at least four individuals who were said to be able to counteract sorcery. Each of the healers treated sorcery in his own particular way and their explanations of how their cures supposed to function were quite idiosyncratic. They all, though, tried to ritually reconstitute the sensory, cognitive and emotional kernel of the body-person through purifying the patient's blood. In the discussion that follows I present information on two of these *dhukon* I consider as paradigmatic in treating sorcery and their understandings of the effectiveness of countersorcery practices.

Pak Gaffar

Pak Gaffar, a close relative of the *kyai*'s family I was living with is a renowned healer specialising in treating all kinds of supernatural afflictions, including spirit-possession (*kasosopan*, Mad.), spirit-injury (*kenneng jinn* or *kenneng setan*, Mad.) and sorcery. He claims to have acquired his *elmo* from an Islamic scholar while studying in one of the most famous *pondok/pesantren* of East Java for several years. His *elmo* , he maintains, was a gift given to him by the *kyai* heading that *pesantren* as a reward for being diligent in studying and performing the faith. His *elmo* is limited to treating specific kinds of illness and I have never heard of him or anybody else claiming that Pak Gaffar is commanding a spirit-familiar. His patients, mostly adult males and females, paid visits to his house after *solat magrib*, performed at sunset, and begun the session with a description of the symptoms they were experiencing such as weight loss, recurrent fainting, blood spitting, hallucinations and so on. Pak Gaffar would usually ask his visitors several mundane questions such as if they have children and how many, whether they experience any family problems or not and how they earn a living. While the patient was providing the answers, Pak Gaffar would close his eyes momentarily and when opening them again, he would have a much inward-oriented expression on his face, looking almost totally withdrawn. This is the moment Pak Gaffar says that he activates the *elmo* he possesses. The *elmo* allows him to diagnose the disease the

patient suffers from through concentrating his *bhaten* on the patient and imagining, or actually 'seeing' through the patient's corporeal frame. In the case of the sorcerised patients, Pak Gaffar's *mata hate* (Mad., 'inner eyes') are construed as locating the polluted objects in the patient's body. However, while Pak Gaffar can diagnose in this way the kind of affliction, he can not identify either the sorcerer or the person who hired him.

After having diagnosed the cause of the illness, Pak Gaffar would try to restore the humoral balance of the patient. To this end, Pak Gaffar would withdraw to a back room in his house where he prepares a *jamo* (Mad.), a herbal potion. In case of sorcery which is invariably classified as a 'hot' illness, the *jamo* he provides includes the juice of cucumber since cucumber juice is believed to have cooling properties that counteract the excessive heat of sorcery pollution. The cucumber juice is mixed with boiled water and while in a glass, an incantation is recited and blown over it. As he explained, this is so as to infuse the mixture with the efficacy of the spell. The infusion of the spell in the water is held to transform the latter from *aeng poteh* (Mad.), that is common water, to *aeng cellep* (Mad.), cool water.

The coolness or efficacy of the spell is traced to its links to Islam. The spell is most commonly a verse or a combination of verses from the Quran. Pak Gaffar usually recites verses from the 36th chapter of the Quran, *sura Ya Sin*, verses from the 2nd chapter, *sura Al-Baqarah*, some other incantations in Arabic which he keeps a secret or simply the *Al-Fatihah*, that is the opening chapter of the Quran. The water is imbued with the authority and the sanctity of Arabic which Muslims all over the world regard as the language of Prophet Mohammed and God Himself since Allah delivered the Revelation to the Prophet via the archangel Gabriel, in Arabic. Seen in this respect, efficacy resides with sacredness and sacredness with a state of coolness. It is the words of God via the mouth of the *dhukon*, now reduced to a medium, which transform the essence of the water and endow it with the power to influence the course of events. Such a power is conceived through classifying *aeng cellep* as a *penyoce* (Mad.), that is a purifier. In the case of sorcery afflictions, the purificatory efficacy of *aeng cellep* works so as to counteract the power of pollution.

According to Pak Gaffar, the *aeng cellep* the patient is asked to drink, effects a cure not by forcing the objects or the *elmo* to exit forcefully from the body of the victim. Rather, it works so as to encircle the source of pollution (*tutup rancun*, Ind.) in what is a circle of powerful, cooling words, separating the objects from the rest of the body and making it impossible for the pollution to spread further. It also works slowly so as to purify the blood of the victim and through it of his/her *hate* since *aeng cellep* will be transformed into blood in the digestive function performed by the liver, and from there, it will be transported to the whole of his/her body. The purificatory substance is supposed to attack the pollution itself too, trying to dissolve the sharp and rusty objects, working like an acid (*menghancurkan rancun*, Ind.). If the spell infused in the *aeng cellep* is more efficacious than the sorcerer's curse, Pak Gaffar maintained, the polluting objects will be totally dissolved and will exit the

victim's body in the form of faeces or urine. If not, the protective circle will collapse and the poisonous curse will find its way back into the blood of the patient, effecting his/her death.

Pak Asni

Pak Asni, age thirty-three, treats almost everything from high blood pressure and heart disease to sorcery and spirit-possession. He also has a reputation of finding lost possessions, restoring peace among dysfunctional couples and persuading women or men to accept previously unwanted suitors. At the time I met him, he was already married with a son. We had several conversations over his serial acquisition of spirit-familiars and the ways he came to be their master. Pak Asni claimed to have a total of forty spirit-familiars, insisting they were all benevolent and pious *jinn*. During the occasions I was in his house, people from as far as Jember and Lumajang would come seeking his help which Pak Asni dressed in his *sarung* would be more than happy to give. Due to having several spirit-familiars, Pak Asni enjoyed a reputation as the most efficacious *dhukon* in the area in dealing with sorcery afflictions. His healing arsenal also included an array of spells, both illness specific and general, that he kept to himself, and plain water. He used no *jamo* for his memory for this kind of things, he said, was weak.

The diagnostic means Pak Asni employs for sorcery affliction rest on summoning the spirit-familiars as he moves his right hand palm over the naked body of the patient.[12] He summons his spirit-familiars through incense burning, invocations in mixed Madurese and Arabic and the placement of some rice dishes on the floor of his back room where healing usually takes place. The spirit-familiars which are supposed to come and surround him, let him know whether there are polluting objects in the body of the patient through making him to experience *strum* (Mad.). Pak Asni describes *strum* as similar to the feeling one experiences when one is being struck by an electric current, an overpowering sense similar to touching electric wires with bare hands. The feeling of *strum* is the presence of danger. The part of the patient's body over which Pak Asni experiences *strum* is held as the repository of the sorcerer's pollution.

After having located the malevolent *elmo*, Pak Asni will put his right hand palm on the top of the patient's sick body part and while reciting another, much longer and equally incomprehensible spell, he would start to slowly remove his palm from the patient's body. The removal of his palm is accompanied by bringing his fingers together and attempting to form a tight fist as his whole arm is shaking. While distancing his hand from the patient, Pak Asni will recite his *duwene* louder and louder and there were times that he would have to bring his left hand into play so as to stabilise his arm and close his fist. He would then, direct himself towards an earthenware pot, located to the west of the room, the direction associated

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[12] In the case of female patients, Pak Asni is careful not to touch their body as they stand half naked with all the sensitive areas covered, moving his palm around their body from some distance.

with Mecca. This pot contained *aeng cellep* he had previously made through citing spells over plain water.

The *dhukon* maintains that one has to keep one's fist tightly closed, lest the pollution escapes, and that one can only open it after having immersed his hand into *aeng cellep*. In most cases, after such an immersion, Pak Asni would open up his fist causing the white-coloured *aeng cellep* of the pot to turn into a red-brown substance, itself similar to the one the sorcerer is supposed to have cast his curse on. Thus, the containment of the polluting substance in the *aeng cellep* stands for the pollution's arrest. In this context, *aeng cellep* is not so mush of the purifying antidote of Pak Gaffar that works slowly to dissolve the curse, as a highly powerful substance that reveals the existence of evil and the possibility of its manipulation by malevolent humans. In the dramatic tone of the proceedings, this revelation is accompanied by a demonstration of the possibility of evil's defeat by the power of Allah's words and the mediation of *dhukon*'s techniques and charisma.

As soon as the pollution has been arrested, Pak Asni would join and present the relatives of the patient who are always present in sorcery healings, with a collection of needles, nails or other small sharp objects laying on top of his open palm. The presentation marks the achievement of healing and the *dhukon*'s triumph. It also presents villagers with the material proof of sorcery affliction, a proof which is not admitted in court proceedings since sorcery does not constitute a crime according to the Indonesian legal system (Slaats & Portier 1993). In cases where the *aeng cellep* does not change colour or its red-brownish colour is not considered deep enough, Pak Asni would repeat his countersorcery rite so as to make sure that all objects have been removed and that no polluted blood has been left inside the patient. As a final act, he would present the patient with a glass of newly produced *aeng cellep* for him/her to drink so as to remove all pollution that might be concentrated in other parts of the patient and most importantly, in his/her *hate*. The dramatic gestures of the *dhukon* while seeking to grasp the pollution in his hand, is the outer manifestation of the struggle taking place inside the patient's body between the *dhukon*'s spirit familiars and the sorcerer's ones. Pak Asni's incantations, he said, aim to direct his mystical helpers in battling against the enemy *jin*. Defeat of the enemy results in its capture that allows the *dhukon* to remove the pollution by extracting the non-visible-yet objects from the body of the patient. The best way to ensure victory, according to Pak Asni, was to make sure that one's total number of spirit-familiars was bigger than that commanded by the sorcerer. In cases where the opposite is true, the *dhukon* engaged in a countersorcery ritual runs the risk of being injured (*kenneng jin*, Mad.) by the angered enemy as the *elmo* will pollute him. Thus, in order thus, to avoid this, Pak Asni would concentrate on amassing more and more spirit-familiars and by the time I left from the village he announced that he had a new 'friend'.

The body as a place

My effort has been directed towards providing a detailed account of the body-person from the perspective of practices and substances related to sorcery. The body-person is defined by its centre, the *hate*, and the permeability of its boundaries. As such it is construed as homologous to a polity, itself marked by the centrality of the ruler (see Tambiah 1976: Anderson 1990; Errington 1989; Tsintjilonis 1999). The *hate* has a life-giving and life-sustaining capacity. It is the seat of *roh*, the divine entity present in all living things. It is the locus of life for it is the place where vitality in the form of blood is produced and carried all around the periphery. The *hate* is also the cognitive and emotional centre of every human being. In its invisible aspect, *hate* is also about individual idiosyncrasy culturally encoded as *bhaten*. In its corporeal aspect, it is synonymous with the liver, the heart and blood, the essence of life.

As is the case with South-East Asian conceptions of the polity, the centre is susceptible to intrusion and invasion from the direction of its margins. It is precisely because personhood is not thought as co-extensive with corporeal discreteness, what Busby calls the 'skin boundary' (1997: 275), that the body-person is construed as open. The mouth, the nose or the navel are the sites where personhood opens up to the world and the world is engaged with it. The world, the society of humans, spirits and Allah, is assimilated and incorporated within the body-person. Moreover, in the same way that the polity's periphery is imagined as consisting of potentially rebellious vassals, the body-person's boundaries are seen as the very sites of its vulnerability. The act of engagement with the world is construed as potentially dangerous and harmful. Danger enters through the body, and in the process affects and reconstitutes it.

The insecurity involved in the body's boundaries is dramatically evident in sorcery practices. Sorcery practices construe a picture of an ambivalently experienced sociality. Sociality is not only about the creation of social relationships through acts of sharing life-supporting substance but also about the dissolution of social relationships through acts of exchanging life-inhibiting substance. In other words, the flow of polluting substances that moves between enemies corresponds to relations of conflict and power and of the emotions of anger and loss of face such relations give rise to. This flow is registered in a corporeal manner. The imagery of the body's penetration by malevolent mystical agents and of the incorporation of medicinal 'cool water' speaks, thus, of a sociality conceived in essential and embodied terms.

In the cases of sorcery and countersorcery rituals, substances such as *elmo*, water, words and blood become the means of effecting certain changes on a body-person's identity. Their flow and incorporation is embedded within the performance of particular activities. Ascetic exercises are instrumental in effecting the mastering of spirit-familiars, of assuming

control over one's and other's people's destinies and of creating a closed, relatively invulnerable body-person. In the chapter that follows, the dialectics of substance and performance will be pursued with respect to the makings of a sorcerised body-person's opposite. That is, persons who embody not illness or death but added life-force.

Chapter Five. Embodied power:
the makings of potent persons

Power and personhood

The analysis of the concept of power as part of the conceptual arsenal of social sciences has undergone a radical transformation in the last three decades. Classical political sociology and anthropology viewed power as centred on coercion and subordination, and as such the concept was used to refer to the abstract aspect of a particular kind of relationship (Weber 1978; Radcliffe-Brown in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1987). Its social existence was inferred through observing a wide variety of situations in which men appeared to obey, willingly or unwillingly, the orders of others. The interpretative shift in the mode of analysis with its new focus on the systems of meaning that construe the social reality in which social actors live and act, resulted in a new emphasis. Advocates of this paradigm argue that power is to be understood not as a relationship but as a cultural system, implying that the crucial element in the study of politics is not what people do but what they think they do. The analytical stress is, in this case, on the structures of significance, on the indigenous political epistemologies in terms of which all political activity is produced and perceived. The anthropological accessibility of other people's sense of politics is predicated on the study of the 'traffic of significant symbols' which construe human thought as 'consummately social: social in its origins; social in its forms, social in its applications' (Geertz 1973b: 360).

In the case of Javanese studies, Anderson's (1990) pioneering analysis demonstrated persuasively that the first and central premise of Javanese political thought is that power is 'an existential reality [...], that intangible, mysterious, and divine energy which animates the universe' (1990: 22). As an essence or invisible substance, power (*wahyu*, Jav.) can be looked for, absorbed, and accumulated through a variety of mystical practices, the performance of specific rituals, and the making and exchange of particular objects. Power is believed to be available in the cosmos in a certain quantity and to move from person to person. Such a move is thought as requiring a proportional diminution of its amount elsewhere. Thus, the amount of power a particular person commands is susceptible to reduction and loss. Though in essence intangible and invisible, power is conceived as manifesting itself through its concrete efficacy on the social and natural worlds. Among the outcomes of its concentration through which Javanese infer its existence, the fertility of humans and crops and the prosperity and order of the polity serve as indexical signs of its presence.

Power in Java and in South-East Asia in general (Errington 1989; Tambiah 1976; Wikan 1990; see also Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 225 n.22) is seen as an attribute of potent persons, objects, natural features, ancestors etc.. This kind of body-persons are referred to in Alas Niser by the term *oreng sakte* (Mad.). Because they are thought to possess power, *oreng sakte* can perform superhuman deeds of which ensuring fertility and prosperity are only the most extraordinary. These ideas formed the cultural substratum of many precolonial South-East Asian polities in which the king and, by extension, the capital constituted the potent centre of the state (Heine-Geldern 1956; de Jong 1957). The hierarchical shape of the traditional Javanese polity, for example, was organised along what was seen as differential concentrations of power. The ruler as the ultimate possessor of *wahyu* was both the centre of the polity and the apex of its hierarchical pyramid. Possessors of less *wahyu* constituted both the periphery and the lower levels of the polity's hierarchy that reached down to villages (Moertono 1968; Schrieke 1957).

Both Anderson (1990) and Siegel (1986) demonstrate the relevance of these beliefs in understanding political developments in modern Indonesia during both the Sukarno and New Order era. However, my own concern with power has more to do with the ontological status of the potent person and the ways through which such power comes to be embodied rather than with historical continuities and discontinuities. Since power is conceived as an intangible substance which can be possessed and absorbed by body-persons, the question such a belief raises is how such an act of incorporation is achieved and what consequences it has for its absorber. In other words, I reiterate a question raised by Feher in his introduction to the influential *Fragments for a History of the Human Body,* namely what kind of body and self do members of a specific culture endow themselves with in order to bring themselves into contact with and finally, to absorb that intangible essence (1989: 13).

Locals ideas of power have analytical consequences for understanding both political behaviour and the cultural construction of personhood. In this chapter, as in the previous ones, I argue that personhood has to be understood in relation to local ideas about the human body (Csordas 1994; Eves 1995; Green 1996; Tsintjilonis 1997). This is so for the cultural construction of potent personhood is predicated on a particular fashioning and experience of the body. Potent personhood is an attribute constituted through the performance of practices aimed towards potency's accumulation and experiences of its embodiment. The performance of particular activities and the bodily incorporation of potency as a substance bring about profound transformations in the ontological 'kindedness' of the people involved. Both are held as efficacious in creating *oreng sakte*, metamorphosising ordinary persons into persons endowed with extra-ordinary intentionality and agency.

Potent person's 'kindedness' is premised on the un-bounded, open and permeable condition of living bodies. Potent bodies are construed as embedded within a sphere of sociality that involves both material and immaterial exchanges with an array of beings, ranging from Allah, dead ancestors and one's, still alive, teachers of mysticism. Thus,

potency is imagined as a substance that moves between these categories of beings. Its movement is homologous to the flow of other internal substances such as blood and semen, the transfer of valuables such as houses and land, and the hierarchical bestowal of knowledge, merit (*pahala*, Ind.) and blessings. As in the case of sorcery, social relationships are thought of as being inscribed in the very corporeality of the human body, positing it as their very locus and focus.

Potency's sociality is held to empower one with capacities and abilities ordinary persons lack. This is in contrast to sorcery's sociality that afflicts one with illness and death. Local discourses on potency and sorcery emphasise the act of taking inside oneself that which is external and other. While in the case of sorcery, such incorporation results in the victim's disempowerment, in potency acquisition, it effects a heighten sense of self-consciousness as well as of awareness and control over the imperceptible forces at play in the world. Furthermore, potency is sought intentionally and in a conscious and controlled manner by its recipient. Its incorporation is voluntary. Sorcery's invasion and penetration into the body-person is premised on the opposite.

Morality and potency

In the same way that locals of Alas Niser divide the body-person into two parts, they distinguish between two types of reality or 'nature', *alam dunia* (Ind., the tanglible world, the world of humans) and *alam ghaib* (Ind., the invisible world, the world of spirits). The relation pertaining between these two sets can be represented in structuralist fashion as *jasmani: rohani:: alam dunia: alam ghaib*. This is so for *alam dunia* stands for the visible and tangible aspect of reality as perceived through the five senses of taste, sight, hearing, smell and touch. As such, it is homologous to *jasmani,* the physical aspect of the human body that includes one's skin, flesh, bones and sensory centres. Both *jasmani* and *alam dunia* qualify as crude and coarse (*kasar*) due to their materiality and overtness that makes them clearly perceptible and tangible. In contrast, *alam ghaib* is described as the invisible aspect of reality and the realm of such incorporeal entities as spirits and angels. What such entities share with the nature of *ghaib* and the *rohani* aspect of the person is their in-perceptibility by way of the senses, their in-tangibility and invisibility. *Alam ghaib* and the beings inhabiting it are described as *alos* (ethereal and immaterial) as the *roh* that resides in persons' *hate*.

Far from articulating the relation between *alam dunia* and *alam ghaib* as a pair of opposites, villagers in Alas Niser phrase their relation as one of continuum (see Bowen 1993: 107). *Alam dunia* is held to present the outer appearance of *alam ghaib* much in the same way that acts of *jasmani* are conceived as a direct reflection of the inner reality of *rohani*.

Thus, in the same mode that people's actions are interpreted by others as finely shaded signs of inner states, social and natural phenomena such as disasters, riots, epidemics or peace, tranquillity and general well-being are conceived as direct expressions of their cosmic referent, that is *alam ghaib*. In other words, tangible reality is defined as a system of signs that is constantly monitored and read for what it reveals about the happenings in the intangible and invisible realm (Errington 1989: 46).

This type of metaphysics registers, to a large extent, intentionality and cause in the *alam ghaib* for visible and perceptible reality is its mere container. A person's *hate* is constructed as not only one's vital centre but also as one's source of individuality in the sense of being the locus of drives and desires. *Hate* is the decision-making centre, regulating these drives while a person's physical body manifests this regulation (or its absence) in the form of concrete actions. Similarly, *alam dunia* is brought into being and has its form shaped and determined by what is going on in the invisible realm. In this sense, *alam ghaib*, the beings and powers that inhabit it are said to be potent in the sense of exercising an overpowering influence on the course of events, people's lives and society's history.

Associated with these notions is the idea of a constant and fluid energy that permeates and animates the universe. In peninsular Southeast Asia, and in particular among mainland groups of Thailand, such a power has been variously portrayed as referring to 'good fortune', 'prosperity' and the general well-being (Tooker 1996). Similarly, in Malaysia, the term applied to this energy is *semangat* that commentators like Skeat (1900), Winstedt (1924) and Endicott (1970) have translated as 'soul substance', 'life force', 'vitality' and 'potency'. It is the energy that supports and sustains all things both in the tangible and in the invisible world. In South Sulawesi, this energy is denoted by the term *sumange'* among Buginese and Makassarese (Errington 1983, 1989) while among the Sa'dan Toraja it is known as *sumanga'* (Tsintjilonis 1999). Errington and Tsintjilonis both equate *sumange'* with the mystical and invisible energy that lends vigour to all things and with its concrete encapsulations in the tangible world. *Sumange'* is thought to be attached to specific objects and persons that constitute the 'navel' or 'centre' of collections of objects and social groups.[1] It is in this sense that a person's navel, a house's central post, a kinship grouping's ancestral house and a polity's ruler are conceived as places in which potency is thickly concentrated and deeply inscribed.

In Alas Niser, the concept of *sumange'* or *semangat* is rather de-emphasised and retained only to denote individual strength and well-being. A person's *semangat* is said to augment or decrease according to one's course of health with its reduction seen as a symptom of illness. In this respect, the 'mixed people' of Alas Niser are closer to the Gayo of Sumatra as described by Bowen (1993). In both cases, 'the distinction between spirit (ruh) [or *roh* in Java] and vital force (semangat) is in part a distinction between the cognitive faculties

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[1] Tooker's (1996) Akha material from Thailand, lends further support to such observations.

and general well-being' (1993: 117). In this sense, *semangat* is construed as a sign and outer manifestations of inner vitality and health as exemplified in the zest, enthusiasm and dynamism with which a healthy person carries out his/her activities. *Semangat* is also used in the sense of attitude or mentality. This can be seen in phrases like *semangat kampong* (Mad.), meaning a village oriented attitude or *semangat revolusi '45* (Ind.), meaning the mentality (or 'spirit') of the anti-colonial struggle. Locals make no explicit connections, moreover, between *semangat* and a person's navel or inner kernel, that is one's *hate*. Rather, it is the *roh* that is emphasised as being attached to or being planted in one's navel.

People in Alas Niser relate the planting of *roh* to the creation of human beings by Allah. Allah is said to have made Adam, the original ancestor of humanity, from earth (*bumi*, Ind.) which itself consists of four different elements (*anasir*, Ind.), that is soil, water, fire and air. Allah choose these elements for they are said to 'be a good match for each other' (*cocok*, Ind.) as the properties assigned to them cover the whole spectrum of properties assigned to physical objects. These properties are: hot for fire, cool for water, dry for air or wind and wet for soil. These four elements formed the ingredients of Adam's and, thus, of every human being's physical body or *jasmani*, rendering it with the highest degree of completeness possible.

This initial moment of creation is re-enacted and commemorated during ritual gatherings involving the sharing of a rice meal or, as they are known all over Java, *slametan*.[2] In such feasts, the five coloured rice porridge (*tajin lemah berna*, Mad.; *jenang manca warna*, Jav.) retains a central place. *Slametan* are given on various occasions most often associated with stages in individuals' and crops' life-cycles, the intention being to safeguard the host's health, prosperity and general well-being. During *slametan*, the five coloured porridge is placed at the centre of the congregation of guests which form a circle around it. It consists of five dishes of rice porridge coloured in black, blue, red, white and yellow. The arrangement of the dishes is highly specific. Four of them are placed in a circle defined by the fifth which occupies the centre; *tajin berna celleng* (Mad., the black coloured porridge) is located to the north; *tajin berna poteh* (Mad., the white coloured porridge) is located to the east; *tajin berna mera* (Mad., the red coloured porridge) is located to the south; *tajin berna koning* (Mad., the yellow coloured porridge) is located to the west. *Tajin berna biru* (Mad., the blue coloured porridge) is placed last, located at the centre.

Native exegetes of *kejawen* inclinations mainly, take a liking in linking thefive coloured porridge with the four elements comprising humans. Thus, they ascribe to the porridge collection the character of a text. According to these informants, the black coloured

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[2] Alternative terms for the same ritual feasts are *kenduri* (Ind.) and *kojengen* (Mad.). In Alas Niser, the term *kenduri* is more extensive than either of the other two for it can refer to ritual feasts given in the name of both living and dead persons, i.e. *kenduri meniga*, a ritual feast held on the 3rd day of someone's death or *kenduri kabin*, given as part of marriage celebrations. By contrast, the terms *slametan* and *kojengen* are reserved for feasts marking life-stages. Commemorative rituals for the dead are alternatively referred to as *tahlilan* or *yasinan* (see Chapter 6). Beatty (1996) also makes a similar distinction.

porridge is taken to stand for the soil; the white one for the water; the red one for the fire; the yellow one for the wind. Last comes the blue coloured dish that stands for *roh*, the ethereal, intangible and invisible substance Allah inscribed to Adam's *hate*. The totality of the four plus one elements is perceived as constitutive of human beings as an informant confirmed when commented that 'without each one of these [elements], [the being] is not perfect, it is not human' (*tanpa satu-satunya itu tidak sampurna, bukan manusia*, Ind.). Animals, plants and spirits are thought as created from either one of these elements, like the *setan* which were created from pure fire only, or from combinations of elements the total number of which is less than four, like the fish which were created from soil and water only.

The actual bodily alignment of these substances as depicted in terms of a circle centred around *roh* which is placed in the *hate*, the inner centre, is replicated in other contexts. Native exegetes of a strong Islamic background mainly, interpret the set of four ingredients as designating the invisible drives or *nafsu*. These drives which are thought to play a determining role in human behaviour are: *nafsu aluamah, nafsu sufyah, nafsu amarah* and *nafsu mutma'inah*. In contrast to Schimmel's (1975) account of Sufism that explains these *nafsu* (*nafs*, Arab.) as 'the lower self, the base instincts, what we might render in the biblical sense as "the flesh"' (ibid.: 112), locals do not ascribe to these drives the status of cause of whatever blameworthy actions and sins humans commit, setting thus, the stage for an exaltation of the 'spirit'. They rather see the *nafsu* as integral attributes of what is meant to be human in a processual and empowering manner.

They assign to *nafsu* the role of qualifying the character and temperament (*sepat*, Mad.) of the body-person but not of the nature of *roh*, since the nature of the latter is taken to be known only by Allah. Concurrently, the very existence of *nafsu* is inferred through their manifestation in human behaviour. *Nafsu aluamah* refers to signs of greediness as encapsulated in the desire for accumulating money, property, and food without due respect to the ethos of sharing and generosity. *Nafsu amarah* stands for the loss of self-control and consciousness as exemplified in the state of anger (*marah*, Ind.), a state associated with uncontrollable rage (*ngamok*, Jav.) and acts of violence. Both are seen as transgressions of the exemplary type of life pious Muslims are to lead as set out in the Quran and the Hadith.[3] These two *nafsu* are set thus, in opposition to the other two drives; *nafsu mutma'inah*, the desire to perform morally sound deeds in accord with the precepts of religion, to be good (*baik*, Ind.) to fellow humans and full of understanding (*pengertian*, Ind.). *Nafsu sufyah* stands for a drive towards achieving an internal state of quietness and constant non-disruption (*ayem tentrem*, Jav.), as well as a longing for unifying oneself with Allah, itself a constant theme of Sufism, through observing religious rules and partaking to ascetic exercises that have a purificatory effect.

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[3] *Hadith* refers to collections of sayings and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed, forming a primary source for understanding religious questions and for emulation.

At times, then, the *tajin lemah berna* are interpreted as symbols of the four *nafsu* in the following way: *nafsu aluamah* is said to be represented by the black coloured porridge; *nafsu amarah* by the red; *nafsu mutma'inah* by the yellow and *nafsu sufyah* by the white. The fifth porridge stands for *batin* rather than *roh*. The difference between these two concepts is quite instructive for my purposes here. While *roh* is defined as the undifferentiated invisible substance through which Allah animates all creatures, *batin* is reserved solely for humans. Animals and plants are devoid of *batin* for they lack *nafsu* as defined above operating in their inner kernels. According to locals, animals were given only reproductive and self-preservation desires but no consciousness (*bhaten* or *akal*, Ind., reason) and as such they do not carry responsibility for their acts, including those registered as sinful ones like incest. In addition, spirits due to being either entirely benevolent like the angels or entirely malevolent like the *setan*, lack the gradations of moral character characterising humans. Such gradations are themselves the effect of *nafsu's* existence and of the struggle to control them.

As a quality that is entirely human, *bhaten* is congruent with *roh* both in its invisible and intangible character and in its location, the *hate*. However, *bhaten* is different from *roh* in the sense that *bhaten* is individuated, that is, differentiated from human being to human being. This differentiation is partly, the outcome of what these local exegetes describe as the conscious struggle for harnessing one's evil *nafsu* and promoting and developing the benevolent ones. Such a struggle is defined as both a religious duty and a process in which religious means are the most effective for achieving supremacy and direction.

A person's *bhaten* which is under the influence of unrestrained, immoral *nafsu* is said to be 'hot' (*panas*, Ind.). For example, a *kyai*, during the election campaign period (May 1999), criticised those civil servants who use their positions as personal possessions, to enrich themselves, and not as something entrusted to them on a temporary basis, by saying that their *bhaten* was so hot that they were totally under the influence of *setan*, a being made of fire. In contrast, people who have come to publicly perform acts of religious merit and communal purpose such as giving alms to the poor and needy, and contributing financially or in terms of labour to the building for mosques, schools, hospitals etc. are conceived as attaining a 'cool' and 'white' *bhaten*. This discourse on inner temperatures and differential temperaments we have already seen as central in local understandings of illness as well as of ethnicity, comprises in this case the means through which persons are attributed a certain individuality. Seen from this perspective, persons are recognised and constructed as individuals through the moral authoring of their selves.[4] Such an authoring involves issues of subjectivity, agency and accountability conveyed in the language of both the inner harnessing of *nafsu* and the external conformity to normative piety. Issues of blood are of

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[4] In this respect, I fully agree with authors like Cohen (1994) and Morris (1994) who stress the universality of the concepts of the person and individual, distinguishing between the universal recognition of individuality and Western individualism (Cohen 1994) and emphasising that people themselves differentiate between the acting 'I' , in this case the *batin*, and the cultural construction of personhood (Morris 1994).

central importance here too since different moral temperaments are thought to correspond to different kinds of blood.

Although I never came across any indigenous concepts that could be said to organise such moral gradations, I can recall my Indonesian father's, Pak Idris, comment that humans are to be distinguished as *orang jelek* (Ind., bad or evil persons), *orang baik* (Ind., good persons) and *orang biasa* (Ind., usual or ordinary persons). His comment had been made with reference to a recent spree of night robberies in the neighbourhood during the previous month in which he described the thieves as *orang jelek*. Thieves are said to be under the unrestrained influence of *nafsu almuamah* and of feelings of jealousy (*irie*, Ind.) towards better off others. Together with such evil traits, he listed those of *dengki* (envy, Ind.) and spitefulness, of *hujat* (blasphemy, Ind.) and of *congkak*, *takabur* and *sombong*, which can be translated as arrogance, haughtiness and undue pride. Such character traits are designated as symptoms of illnesses of the inner self (*penyakit batin*, Ind.). Cure from such illnesses is to be found in restraining the respective drives through the practice of religious precepts. In this context, a *kyai* and a local healer had stated during a religious instruction session (*pengajian*, Ind.) that 'religion is the water that is poured over the *nafsu*' (*agama adalah air yang menyiram nafsu*, Ind.).

In contrast, *orang baik*, Pak Idris explained, are those who have come to harness their inner evil *nafsu* mainly through ascetic exercise. Exercises of this type are based on a multiplication and diversification of ritual behaviour as defined in Islam. Regular fasting, preferably on the auspicious weekdays of Monday and Thursday or on designated dates throughout the year that carry the status of *sunat* or *sunatrasul*, that is of the optional but meritorious performance of pious deeds, is such a means. The execution of *dikir*, that is meditation sessions held on a collective or private basis in which Quranic and non-Quranic verses exalting Allah and His divine attributes are recited, is another. The performance of optional prayers such as *sholat malam* (the night prayer) are thought as the primary means for the regulation of the inner temperature and for the attainment of conscious control over the evil *nafsu*. Ascetic exercises are described as 'strengthening one's faith' by demonstrating that 'one does not succumb to being angry or arrogant or jealous' and attaining the inner qualities of being 'patient and calm'. As such, they are held to empower the benevolent *nafsu mutma'inah* and its qualities of empathy and understanding and through the purification effect they have on one's *batin*, bringing one closer to Allah. Here, what is of particular importance is that the imagery of 'pure *batin*' draws on blood. Pure *batin* is equated with pure blood (*dereh bherse*, Mad.), a kind of blood which is 'free from *nafsu*', 'cool' and 'almost white in colour'. By implication, evil persons' blood is as dirty as their *batin*, 'blackened' and 'hot'.

Between these types of blood and in the associated temperatures lie the *orang biasa*, the ordinary persons. Their temperature is unstable, oscillating between the two poles as they have neither fully mastered their *nafsu* nor fully succumbed to the evil ones. Unstable

temperature makes for non-consistent behaviour, for lapses from the ideal behaviour, for the commitment of sins (*dhusa*, Mad.) but also for the realisation of committing immoral acts or having immoral thoughts and for the requests of forgiveness both from Allah and the injured party. What sets such people apart from the other two categories is their very ordinariness as they are thought to make up the majority of humanity, reflecting a normal or average state of affairs. Their ambiguous moral idiosyncrasy sets them apart from the very extraordinariness of people like thieves and 'pure' persons. It is as if their blood is neither wholly pure nor wholly dirty and their distance from Allah neither as close as that of 'pure' persons nor as distant as that of evil ones. They stand half way in a unfinished battle with their inner drives.

Such a discourse on humanity's moral gradations is clearly relevant for an understanding of ideas of potency as articulated in modern East Java. Distinctions of blood kindedness, of ordinariness and extra-ordinariness, of heat and coolness constitute the discursive axis of potency. We have already seen, in the previous chapter, how a sorcerer, an evil and anti-social person by definition, is also potent and full of a magical efficacy due to assuming control over an evil spirit, a *jinn* or a *setan*. The ascetic exercises (*ngelakoni tirakat*, Jav.) he has to undergo in order to subjugate the spirit to his will, exercises similar in form to those 'pure' persons engage with, are said to make his blood 'boiling hot' in the process of contacting the incorporeal realm of *alam ghaib*. Boiling hot blood is instrumental in this case for accessing evil spirits and an indexical sign of a sorcerer' intentions. In contrast, 'pure' persons' regulated deprivation of food and sleep and repeated incantations are construed as having a cooling effect on one's blood, itself a sign of benevolent *batin* and of the benevolent nature of the spirits thus contacted. The potency of 'pure' persons, accordingly, has beneficial and protective for the community outcomes such as healing illnesses, producing merit for others and generating fertility. In this way, both categories of persons are imbued with an extraordinary efficacy, *orang biasa* lack. Such an efficacy is embedded, though, in a moral discourse.

The moral dichotomy people in Probolinggo and Alas Niser draw between 'pure' and 'impure' but equally potent, persons is reproduced in the distinction between 'white' and 'black' efficacy. *Elmo poteh* (Mad., white potency) is that type of supernatural skill or substantive magical power that allows its possessor to locate lost or stolen objects, to effect a diagnosis and to cure a disease, to be in different places at the same time, to protect the neighbourhood from thieves, a wedding ceremony from pouring rain, to shield *padi*, maize and onion fields from pests, to boost business, to alleviate the punishments ancestors undergo after death, to contribute to descendants' well-being and social *sukses*. In contrast, the possession and employment of *elmo celleng* (Mad., black potency) makes possible successful robberies through making the people inhabiting a house fall sound asleep. It also effects deceitful but wholly voluntary transfers of property without any returns, marriage proposals that would be otherwise rejected to be accepted, the causing of temporary illness

or death. *Elmo celleng* acts in such a way as to cause all the agency of the persons against whom it is directed to disappear, render them as the object upon which its possessors' malicious will is enforced. In contrast, *elmo poteh* augments the agency of the persons to whom it is directed and dedicated, multiplying the force of his/her will for good yields and fertility. As such, *elmo poteh* exemplifies the protective notion of potency anthropologists elsewhere identify with efficacy (see Tannenbaum 1991) and it is set in opposition to another kind of potency that is counter-social, highly disruptive and potentially destructive.

What I am trying to point out through these considerations, is not that the discursive making of categories of people such as those outlined above are clear-cut in the everyday life one encounters in the field and that ambiguities about the moral idiosyncrasy of specific persons characterised as potent are totally lacking from my informants' comments. Quite the contrary is true since people who are said to possess *elmo poteh* are sometimes suspected of dabbling in *elmo celleng* (see also Bowen 1998). What the preceding considerations reveal, though, is that power in Alas Niser is morally evaluated and dichotomised, refuting thus, Anderson's aphorism that 'power itself antecedes questions of good and evil' (1990: 23).

Anderson claims that potency in Java does not raise moral questions since such distinctions are displaced by the conception of a homogeneous source of power and by the latter's implication, namely that 'all power is of the same type [...] [that] power in the hands of one individual or one group is identical with power in the hands of another individual or group' (1990: 22-23). While this is true as far as Allah is taken to be the ultimate source of potency and all potency is construed as of the same nature, that is, as equally *alos*, other considerations are also relevant here. Potency is differentiated as to the intrinsic character of its efficacy - malevolent vs. benevolent, protective vs. destructive consequences - which, in turn, corresponds to the inner qualities and intentions of its possessor - pure vs. impure - and the kind of blood produced in his/her *hate*.

The precept of a homogeneous source also has to be accepted with some significant qualification. This is so for the sources of particular human powers are also diverse and this diversity is cast in moral terms. Thus, the spirits a *dhukon kemudhung*, that is a sorcerer, commands and he draws his potency from, belong to the category of evil and malevolent beings. Such beings, locals exegetes insisted, are the *setan* and those *jin* which, despite being Allah's own creation, rebelled against Him when asked to prostate themselves in front of Adam, the first man. These sources of potency are clearly set apart from the sources that 'pure' persons draw their potency from, namely Allah, dead ancestors and Muslim *jin*, that is spirits who obey Allah's commandments. All the latter constitute the sources that possessor's of *elmo poteh* associate themselves with. In what follows, I will show not only that locals recognise a variety of sources of 'white' potency but also that they classify such sources according to differential degrees of efficacy which reflect and embody the degree of purity of the *batin* of the potent person.

Allah's light and favourite animals

Several commentators on Southeast Asia have observed that potency is conceptualised as surfacing or flowing from the invisible supernatural world to this world and that the central issue raised by this conceptualisation, is potency's accumulation and maintenance through a process of tapping into its flow or tuning in its channels (Anderson 1990; Errington 1989; Tooker 1996). Such an endeavour is realised both through the encompassment of human existence within a geography of spatial alignments - the structure of ancestral houses, village and capital layouts, to name a few-, which recreate the cosmic pattern and through ritual behaviour that constructs particular body-persons as some of the means of its flow and points of concentration. It is from such a series of places and body-persons that contain, and indeed embody potency, that *tata tentrem karta raharja* (Jav., order, peace, prosperity, good luck) is experienced as regulated and maintained.

The ultimate source of the flow of life and the communication taking place between the two realms of *alam dunia* and *alam ghaib* is imagined most often, in Java at least, as a radiant glow, a 'dazzling blue, green or white ball of light [*andaru, pulung*], streaking through the night sky' (Moertono 1968: 56). Such a radiant light is held to penetrate carefully mastered bodies produced through ascetic regimes such as those described above, initiating those who are penetrated into forms of mystical knowledge available only to few and infusing their *bhaten* with the potency of a revelatory experience. Two of the native healers I encountered in Alas Niser, one a *kyai* and the other a part-time peasant, part-time *dhukon pejet* (Mad., a masseur), attributed their healing powers to such an experience, achieved by fasting, praying and trial by ordeal in which they came to incorporate the divine light of Allah in the form of the magically charged and invisible substance of *elmo*.

Kyai Salahuddin, a native of Alas Niser, aged forty eight, had a series of experiences, some as early as when he was nineteen years of age. He recounted his repeated penetration by the light of Allah in several interviews I had with him over the period of my fieldwork, as follows:

> When I was still young, studying Islam at the *pondok/pesantren* in Sidogiri, I became aware of my desire to acquire *elmo* which is blessed (*barokah*, Ind.) and useful. My aim was to put it in good use, in the service of the nation and the people; to enhance people's Islamic consciousness, to make them pious, calm their turbulent hearts, turn them from being hot to cold. I did not intend becoming a *kyai*. One can not decide such things for it is Allah the one who regulates human affairs. But my desire was sincere (*ikhlas*, Ind.). I wanted to solve people's problems, ease their difficulties. It was during the night that the *elmo* came to me. It came by itself, it wasn't bestowed to me [by a human]. It arrived the time I was performing *solat tahajut* [the optional midnight prayer] at the small prayer house... I was deep into praying when suddenly, it came... it entered (*masok*, Mad.) me... the *elmo* entered here [puts his hand on his chest]....*nddhuuk*!!! it came. I was praying to Allah and Allah send His light (*senar*, Mad.)... my *batin* [puts his hand again on his chest] became the receptacle of His light, fulfilling my wish. Several days after, a villager arrived at the

pesantren, asking for my help and calling me *kyai*. I was not a *kyai*, I was merely a teacher (*ghuru*, Mad.) at the *pesantren*. His boy was sick, some kind of high fever... Suddenly, I realised that at the time of *sholat tahajut*, it had come... that a *becaan* (Mad., incantation) had entered me. So, I took some water and I recited
the *becaan* over it, breathing out onto it and calling Allah's name. The boy went on to drink the water and recovered immediately.

Several years after this enlightening penetration and while *kyai* Salahuddin had returned to Alas Niser, married and acquired two children, a second and more dramatic invasion took place. He had been spending most of his time teaching the children of the neighbourhood to recite the Quran, occasionally receiving requests for healing, fasting and praying regularly when

I was tortured for 99 days. That happened when I was already married for nine years. The torture involved my *batin*. My *batin* did not recognise my wife, my parents or children. I became oblivious of the world, feeling as if I was to die the very next moment. All I did for 99 days was to stay indoors, being quiet and reciting Allah's name. I was bathing seventeen times a day and feeding myself only with leaves throughout that period. In my *batin* nothing except Allah mattered and His name was active (*bergerak*, Ind.). I had forgotten about my wife or parents. In my *hate*, I could see the way that leads to Allah...I could see all the people. It was then that the light (*senar*, Mad.) struck me again...*struum*!!! like an electric current...it entered (*masok*, Mad.) me...My *batin* became full with understanding and *elmo*. Later on, a lot of people who did not understand what had happened to me were paying me a visit. I did engage them in conversation and their difficulties immediately entered me...in my *batin*, I could sense (*rassa*, Mad.) the difficulties they were facing. They [their difficulties] were there, in my *hate*. That was because of the *elmo*. This *elmo* is called *elmo mahrifat*. It allows me to see their *batin*... to see if they are good, pious people or evil, to see their intentions... their thoughts, their character immediately...*shreed*!!!...enters here [pointing to his chest].

Nddhuuk...struum...shreed!!! are the sounds of an incorporative act through which the body-person is empowered. Empowerment rests on experiential grounds. It is the feeling of a revelation or transfer of a beam of light emanating from Allah Himself which, upon leaving its source, penetrates the confines of the body, reaching its innermost recess, that of *bhaten*. The beam of light carries within it *elmo*, knowledge/power; the knowledge/power to heal, the knowledge/power to gaze into the invisible realm of thoughts and feelings. Nothing is secret anymore to its recipient's gaze; he can see 'the way that leads to Allah', a Sufi theme of the path to perfection, and 'all the people'. *Elmo* is electrifying, tormenting the recipient with spasms and loss of consciousness. We can imagine his body shaking and tightening as it is penetrated by the divine incantation. The body is transformed at this very moment. It becomes a bridge between *alam ghaib* and *alam dunia*, a space taken over by potency that radiates so as to 'make [people] pious, calm their turbulent hearts', bless marriages and *padi* fields, generate fertility and prosperity. This kind of body-person is a place then, inhabited by otherworldly power that re-constitutes it as *oreng sakte*. Such a transformation was also marked, in the case of *kyai* Salahuddin, by changing his name from Yatim, his pre-revelation name to the one through which I came to know him.

I encountered this type of benevolent penetration and transformation in another narrative offered by Pak Uddin, a part-time peasant part-time *dhukon pejet* who was renowned in the area for his abilities to heal any kind of illness that was related to blood circulation problems, ranging from headaches and simple pains in the back to cases of serious arteriosclerosis. Pak Uddin recounted his experience as follows:

> In the past, I was making a living through collecting recycled materials and reselling them. I was praying to Allah to help me to find a way to earn a living. I was praying night and day, wondering whether something would change or not. It was a very hard time for me; there were times I would continue working long after *sholat maghrib* [sunset prayer] or I would be caught in rain and fall sick for several days. I would cry often in my prayers wondering whether my life would always be like this. Then, someone responded... a voice coming from the shadows answered back saying that it would change my situation provided that I would choose between 'open eyes' (*melak mata*, Mad.) and an 'open *hate*' (*melak hate*, Mad.). Where are the eyes? Where is the *hate*? I said that I choose an 'open *hate*'. The eyes are above, it is the sun and the moon. The *hate* is the earth, the earth is the navel (*bujhel*, Mad.), the navel is the *hate*. I checked to see where the voice was coming from. There were no humans around. The voice was sent by Allah. That took place when I was performing *sholat isya* [the evening prayer] at eleven o'clock. I went back to my bedroom but it wasn't long before I heard a rustle coming from outside. As there were a lot of thieves at that period in the neighbourhood I went out to see what it was. Nothing... I couldn't see anything. So, I went back to my bed. There it went again. I went out and I saw a shadow (*bejengan*, Mad.) . I immediately recited a *shalawat* [invocation from the Quran] but the shadow moved towards me and sat in a chair right beside me. I asked it who it was and the shadow replied that 'if you are me, I am you' (*mon engkok kakeh, kakeh engkok*, Mad.). Then it asked me 'Do you want me to give you something?'. I replied that I did and the shadow disappeared for the second time. The next Thursday night, it came back saying that it was going to fulfil its promise but before that, it said that it had to beat me. 'If you feel pain, I will be feeling it too; If you do not, I won't', these were its words. Then, it started beating me in my back, in my arms and legs, everywhere. I was in great pain but I didn't scream. It reappeared the following week, next Thursday night. It said that this time I should prove myself strong (*kowat*, Mad.). I was put into sleeping position and I was massaged by the shadow. After massaging me, it asked me whether I wanted its *elmo*. I replied that I did. It also asked me if I remembered the way it had massaged me, to which I also said I did. It wasn't difficult to remember, I could repeat it easily. Before it disappeared, it gave me a *becaan* (incantation, Mad.) and it told me to recite it two hundred times every time I prayed and to accompany my prayers with reciting *Surat Fatir* and *Surat Rahman* twice. *Surat Fatir* is about *rezeki* (Ind.; prosperity, blessings) while *Surat Rahman* is about compassion. All these are branches and the tree is Allah. So I was instructed to recite His name two hundred times after each of the daily prayers. I had to perform all these without taking any break, non-stop. I was also told that I had to abstain from eating for forty consecutive days. The shadow revisited me for the last time ninety nine days later. It was then that I was given a snake (*olar*, Mad.). The shadow asked me 'Are you brave enough to receive a long animal? If you are sick, I am sick; if you are bitten, I am bitten'. ' I do accept it'. After a while, I saw a very long snake coming towards me. I was scared. I said to the snake 'Hey! snake, if you are good, please enter (*tore masok*, Mad.)'. The snake came closer and wrapped itself around my body. I felt I was dying for its grip was tightening. At that time, a black cat passed by and the snake set me free. It then moved to my belly...from my belly, it entered me. The whole snake entered my belly from my navel and disappeared, entering inside me. Next day, I went to the *kyai* to ask him what it all meant. 'Yesterday, I saw a cat and a snake. What's the meaning of it all?'. 'The snake is *elmo*...it entered

your body. It is already inside you. The cat is the Prophet's favourite animal. You have to show respect. Do not worry. It was a trial (*ojian*, Mad.) till all the *elmo* was given to you', the *kyai* replied.

While the first case involved penetration by the divine light, in this case the person is firstly, visited by a shadow and then, voluntarily invaded by a snake. Pak Uddin was also in a position to converse with the messager/shadow which on another occasion, he claimed, 'should have been an angel (*malaikat*), acting on behalf of Allah'. Local understandings of beings that belong to *alam ghaib* designate angels as being inherently benevolent, consisting totally of light. It is their constitution by pure light that accords them a high place in the moral hierarchy of beings. Before the creation of humankind, angels are thought to hold the highest place among all beings created by Allah due to their degree of inner purity. The angel's appearance in the form of shadow in the narrative, though, can only be explained as being part of the trial Pak Uddin had to undergo in order to prove himself worthy of the divine gift.

The recitation of *salawat* is also very important. It is instrumental in the bestowal of such a gift for it displays both Pak Uddin's piety and the shadow's benevolent nature. Malevolent beings are said to disappear in a cloud of smoke when faced with recitations in Arabic. Instead, when confronted with a *salawat*, the shadow takes a chair beside Pak Uddin, a gesture of good intentions and potential intimacy that is further evidenced in its reappearance after Pak Uddin chose an 'open *hate*'.

Open *hate* here stands for an inner kernel which is not preoccupied with worldly affairs as locally portrayed in images of excessive materialism and un-controlled sexual desires. Open *hate* is a 'pure' *hate*, shaped by a longing for access to invisible realms and of approaching Allah. Moreover, an open *hate* speaks of the harnessing of the evil *nafsu* and the enhancement of good. Thus, Pak Uddin's choice of open *hate* clarifies or refigures his desire for a betterment of his material and social position as a possible outcome rather than the very reason of his request. His request is, then, deemed sincere (*ikhlas*). In this context, sincerity constitutes a precondition for the gift of potency. As in the case of *kyai* Salahuddin, whose sincerity of desire was conveyed in his willingness to work for others and for propagating the faith, Pak Uddin's choice conflates common good with personal advancement.

Pak Uddin's and *kyai* Salahuddin's narratives also converge on the issue of trial by ordeal. Pak Uddin recounts the beatings he received by the shadow, his suffering the pain without complaint, the hours-long recitation of Quranic sections and other utterances and finally, his bravery in welcoming an otherwise much feared beast into his body. This theme is repeated in *kyai* Salahuddin's ninety nine day period of torment. Behaviour of this kind is interpreted by locals as bearing the signs of potency. Such an interpretation, though, is *a posteriori* one, evoked to support or refute claims of *ex post facto* extraordinariness. In the two cases considered here, trials by ordeal constitute the *a priori* conditions of potency's acquisition. They correspond to a system of ascetic ritual behaviour, the undertaking of which

allows the body-person to re-invent itself. Such a system draws upon rules of normative Islamic piety that realise one's total submission to Allah. The successful performance of such activities is held to effect the incorporation of the substance of *elmo* send by Allah as a gift and a reward. According to this conception of the cosmos, the body-person involves the exercise of agency and the hierarchical transfer of substance.

Both informants portrayed themselves as praying deep into the night and abstaining from sexual pleasures and sleep. Night prayer is a valued activity for assuming control over the *nafsu*, while self-induced insomnia is a prophylactic measure against sorcery attacks. Lack of sleep is associated with invulnerability to penetration by evil spirits working for sorcerers. As such, insomnia effects a closure of the body to the outside world and the dangers inhabiting it. Fasting, that is, the regulated incorporation of food as practised by Muslims designates a specific time period as appropriate for eating. Such an activity also makes for a relatively more closed body. While the shadow instructed Pak Uddin to fast for forty days, meaning to abstain from eating during daytime only, *kyai* Salahuddin's trial involved him surviving by eating leaves only, making his case a more dramatic one of extreme ascetic fasting. Fasting is, thus, a practice of the same order with insomnia, both re-shape body-persons as closed and invulnerable. They are also said to be the primary means for achieving *kaengaqan* (Mad.), that is, control over one's sensory, emotional and cognitive faculties (see Chapter 3). Such a state is described by Pak Uddin when despite been beaten by the shadow, he does not scream. Absence of screaming amounts both to an attempt to consciously control emotion and, thus, to regulate one's interaction with the world, and one's endowment with a harder body, a body immune to pain.

The casting of the performative means of religious piety, that is fasting and night prayers, into technologies of potency's inscription is also evident in both informants' abstinence from sexual intercourse. *Kyai* Salahuddin describes himself as unable to recognise his wife, parents and children during the second trial period. He thus puts himself outside a web of kinship relations and the means for the production of human beings.[5] Abstaining from sex not only harnesses the corresponding *nafsu aluamah* but also re-fashions one's body in a double sense. Avoidance of sexual intercourse constitutes a purificatory act in so far as one's body is not polluted by the miasmic liquids sexual partners exchange, keeping himself away from the inherently polluting female substance of menstrual blood and one's own sperm. By refusing, though, to part with sperm, one also avoids diffusing one's bodily substances and self. The retaining of sperm, however, is not to be equated with an attempt to conserve as much inner power as possible, a case implied by Hindu conceptions of celibacy (Obeyesekere 1981:38). The refusal to part with sperm is a

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[5] Keeler (1987) notes that asceticism involves the capacity to disengage from the world at least momentarily so as to strengthen one's position upon one's re-introduction to the society of humans. He also makes the case that such an option 'offers an antidote to the corrosive capacity of [social] interaction' (1987: 46) which, as I have shown in the previous chapter, is wrought with dangers, ambivalence and power struggles.

refusal to open the body to the world, a ritual negation of the functions, or existence even, of body orifices. The closed mouth of a person while fasting makes the same point.

In the narratives of divine penetration, the closure effected on the physical body was accompanied by extensive engagement in *dikir*. *Kyai* Salahuddin performed *dikir* for ninety nine days. It was his only activity during that time with the exception of regular bathing, itself another instance of an emphasis on purity. As for Pak Uddin, his equally long *dikir* sessions were both content-specific as to the Quranic sections he was instructed to recite, and time-specific since he performed *dikir* after having finished *sholat*. *Dikir* is usually performed with the person sitting crossed-legged, facing towards Mecca and moving his head and body according to the rhythm of the recitation. According to local *kyai*, it is practised so that one empties one's *batin* of everything (*mengosongkan diri*, Ind.), forgetting this world and its pleasures and concentrating one's inner self on recollecting and contemplating (*renung*, Ind.) Allah's divine attributes till one is lost in understanding. The practise of *dikir* is a well-known Sufi practice which, along with fasting and regular praying, is recommended for bringing about a quasi-ecstatic state and for obtaining heavenly rewards (Schimmel 1975: 176). The aim of *dikir* is, then, the creation of a state of being in which the recollecting subject experiences a connection with the recollection's object, that is Allah Himself, the highest form of which is the merger of the two (see Schimmel 1975: 172). The establishment of such a connection is founded on the purification effect *dikir* has on one's *bhaten* and the opening up of the latter in its longing for access to the divine. In this way, the practice of *dikir* complements the closure of the physical body with the opening of the innermost recesses of the person towards the invisible and omnipotent.

The performance of rituals of self-deprivation involving food, sex and sleep as means of potency acquisition is founded on local understandings of asceticism as a form of exchange (see Keeler 1987: 44; Brenner 1998: 180). The temporal renunciation of the pleasures associated with being-in-this-world, the realm of *alam dunia*, is conceived as a kind of sacrifice. Persons undertaking asceticism temporarily give up kinship connections, the possibility of producing offspring and relationships mediated by the sharing of food such as relations of friendship and co-residence. Moreover, the sacrifice involves the physical body, the *jasmani*, and its reconstitution as closed and, thus, hard and impenetrable. Hardness implies the negation of taking inside that which is external and other, creating a temporal suspension of social relationships usually mediated by the flow of semen, blood and food. As such, asceticism is a cultural instrument for shaping distinct ontologies and corporealities. It transforms body-persons from having social relationships with other fellow humans to exhibiting the signs of an extraordinariness rooted in the establishment of close relationships with Allah.

This extraordinariness creates the division of humanity into two kinds of persons: *oreng biyasa* (ordinary persons, Mad.) and *oreng sakte* (potent persons, Mad.). The division reflects an intrinsic inequality and essential differentiation, itself registered on the totality of

the body-person. As a kind of sacrificial act, rituals of self-denial rest on the assumption that one offers something in expectation of a return, a gift, the fulfilment of a request. The nature of the return is in turn determined by the intensity of deprivation as encapsulated in its duration, intensity and the sincerity of the wish. The highest form of a return is the gift of *elmo* bestowed directly from Allah Himself. It is held that Allah rewards all the faithful and pious Muslim through conferring upon them merit (*pahala*) and blessing (*barokah*, Ind.; *barakah*, Arab). Minor requests such as success in school exams, job promotion, desirable suitors, plentiful produce are construed as demanding similar deprivations and ritual practises. The intensity of deprivations such requests involve though, is but a fraction of the ordeals *elmo* seekers have to undergo. However, in both cases, an ethic of reciprocity pervades a person's relationship with Allah.

Ascetic practises re-create and extend a person's domain of sociality as much as they re-create a person's kind of body. Through them, one obtains an open *hate* and engages in transactions with the beings of *alam ghaib* that alter one's ontology. The bestowal of the invisible substance of *elmo* through its invasion into the body-person, is conceptualised as resulting in a fusion. The potent body-person is not experiencing itself as distinct from the *elmo* but rather it enters into a symbiotic relationship with it, a relation of indiscernibility. When I asked Pak Uddin how he managed to identify which part of the body of the patient was sick, he replied that he had to start looking for the sickness through touching the patient's body with his fingers. He would start from the lower part of the body moving upwards, waiting for his 'fingers to know'. When the fingers 'meet' the sickness, he continued, he felt as if he was stricken by electric current. 'It is the *elmo* that drives my fingers to "meet" the sickness and to perform massage', he claimed. 'The *elmo* is in my *hate* and from there it flows (*aghili*, Mad.) all over my body; to my head and fingers. I can not explain it to you. Everything happens because that snake is in my body. It is as it said: you are me, I am you'. Similarly, *kyai* Salahuddin's gaze was both that of his pre-revelatory eyes, able to discern colours and objects, and that of *elmo*'s that are sensitive to feelings and thoughts. When I asked him about how he 'sees' other person's *batin*, he was unable to articulate an answer. As he said, it happens 'by itself', 'automatically' (*dengan sendirinya*, Ind.), that is, with the same effort and control one needs to regulate one's heart.

The fusion of *elmo* with the body-person is possible because of the place *elmo* comes to occupy in the local understandings of ontology. As with the case of *kyai* Salahuddin where the light was being 'planted' in his innermost centre, the snake penetrated Pak Uddin's body through his navel, placing itself in his *hate*. We have seen in the previous chapter that the *hate* is assigned the role of the major organ that nourishes human beings through its transformative faculties of turning food into blood. The food and *elmo* share certain similarities as well as differences. The first is material and visible (*kasar*), while the second is intangible and ethereal (*alos*). Both, though, constitute substances originating from outside the body-person and both move between beings, human and non-human, in a reciprocal

manner.[6] The fact that they are construed as incorporated in the bodily centre of *hate*, leads me to suggest that *elmo* can be 'digested' in a manner similar to that of food, dissolving into, mixing with and animating or empowering a person's blood. *Elmo*'s inscription in the *hate* is indicative of its links with blood.

This link is hardly surprising. We have seen in the previous chapter that sorcery works through attacking a person's *hate* and polluting his/her blood. Both types of *elmo* attach themselves to *hate*, which is both a material organ and the seat of *roh*, the invisible life-force. In the case of white potency emanating from Allah, however, the substance that comes to be voluntarily incorporated purifies one's blood and empowers, rather than dis-empowers, one's cognitive and emotional centre. Both *elmo* and *roh* are seen as primarily emanating from Allah, the ultimate source of life, and as being planted in body-persons. While locals attest to the pre-existence of a physical body in the form of foetus before the descending of *roh* in a woman's womb, *elmo* is 'planted' in human beings only as a product of their own volition and effort. The increased efficacy *elmo* receivers are held to be endowed with can be grasped, thus, as an augmentation of their life-force, that is as an addition to the one they already have. Though I failed during fieldwork to present my informants with the suggestion of *elmo* simply as an entity similar to *roh*, I think that the idea of *elmo* as the gift of extra life-force goes some way into explaining the hierarchical difference between *oreng biyasa* and *oreng sakte*. But on the other hand, *elmo*, unlike *roh* constitutes a personal possession which is passed down the generations. While *roh*, is believed to flee the body after death and to be subjected to a trial of deeds and possible punishments first, in the grave (*alam kubur*, Ind.) and then, in the Day of Judgement, *elmo* is a gift dead ancestors bestow upon their worthy offspring.

Ancestor's gifts

In his narrative of divine penetration, Pak Uddin drew a subtle but important distinction between learning (*ajharan*, Mad.) and incorporation. During the penultimate visit of the shadow, he was instructed in performing what was to become his vocation by being treated himself as a patient. Thus, he was massaged by the shadow and asked whether he

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6 In Alas Niser, food is offered from parents to children, from wives to husbands. Children are said to be under the obligation to repay their parents for bringing them up through caring for them in old age (offering them, among other things, food) and praying for them after they die. Wives are said to be under obligation to show their affection and respect towards their husbands through cooking for them. This is also construed as a return for the husband's obligation of supporting his family through working hard. Siblings' co-substantiality is marked by sharing the same food. Relatives, neighbours and friends exchange food as often as labour, news and affection for each other (see Chapter 5 & 6; also Strathern 1973; Carsten 1997).

could repeat what he had experienced. Though learning by example and repetition is a valid and much esteemed procedure for the acquisition of knowledge, in both our narratives, efficacious *elmo* is equated with embodiment. Though he was taught how to perform massage, Pak Uddin's claim to know-how rested not so much on the experience of being massaged but with his bodily symbiosis with an incorporeal agent. The wide currency such a distinction enjoys is evident in the differentiation people in Alas Niser make between *tokang* and *dhukon*.[7] The term *dhukon* is especially reserved for people who claim to have supernatural and mystical powers and to produce results, either benevolent or malevolent, through mediating between the realm of *alam ghaib* and their client's concerns. By contrast, *tokang* are basically men or women who have come to acquire this or that type of knowledge through apprenticeship with a trade specialist. Thus, one finds people who have curative capabilities such as *tokang jamo*, makers and vendors of herbal medicine, *tokang pejet*, masseurs, and *tokang tolang*, bone setters, classified together with carpenters (*tokang kayu*), blacksmiths (*tokang bese*) or tailors (*tokang jhaiq*). In their case, healing is more a matter of technique rather than of innate power.

This distinction was made clear to me most forcefully when Pak Uddin spoke of the time he was approached by a distant neighbour of his who wanted to become his apprentice. Though, initially reluctant to share his knowledge, for it is thought of as a secret to be shared usually only with close relatives, Pak Uddin was finally persuaded to accept his proposal which, needless to say, involved a quite substantial gift of money. The apprentice spent several months observing Pak Uddin massaging his clients, fasting and praying regularly. In the end, he did learn how to massage but, in Pak Uddin's words, 'he could not heal people... his massage was not as efficacious as it should have been'. This was so for, as he explained, 'it is impossible to be taught *elmo*. *Elmo* is in the body and his body did not 'know' (*oning*, Mad.) *elmo*'. All that man had managed to master was the technique. Such mastery was deemed insufficient for producing healing. When I asked Pak Uddin about who could master his *elmo* with the same amount of efficacy, he pointed to his only daughter, a widow with two children, saying that this would constitute part of his inheritance (*warisan*, Mad.) to her.

Inheritance is the gift of relatively 'inalienable possessions' ancestors bestow to their direct descendants. I use the term 'inalienable possessions' after Weiner (1992) to signify those objects that have been, temporarily at least, separated from market circulation and have come to constitute indexical signs of the identity of the people inhabiting a single house. Jewellery, land and houses as well as *elmo* are passed down to generations according to different rules for Javanophones and Madurophones in Probolinggo. While Javanophones will generally divide their material property in equal shares among their children, irrespective of their gender, Madurophones usually favour their daughters, allocating to them twice as much as they bestow on their male descendants. Both Javanophones and Madurophones,

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[7] See also Wikan 1990: 235-6 for a similar distinction drawn in Bali between *tukang* and *balian*.

however, construe inheritance as involving those 'objects', material or 'spiritual', that link people across the passage of time, transferred in a vertical mode of movement.

Inheritance accrues debts to be repaid by descendants through looking after one's parents in old age, holding prayer meals of remembrance that produce merit for dead ancestors (*tahlilan* and *yasinan*), taking care of their tombs and sacrificing sheep or ox during *Idul Adha* [8] on their behalf. These are all conceived as reciprocal acts for the blessings (*dua resto*, Mad.; *pangestu*, Jav.) one has received from one's ancestors. These blessings are thought of as encapsulated in the inheritance one has received, emanating from the trials and tribulations one's ancestors had to go through so as to provide for their offspring and amass wealth to be passed down (see Brenner 1998: 177). There is a strong aversion towards parting with inherited wealth, and selling such land or jewellery is indicative of a loss of social status as it brings shame onto the person. Above all, it is seen as disrespectful towards one's ancestors. The emphasis on the inalienability of inheritance and its figuration as blessing somehow construes it as imbued with the essence or the identity of the ancestor. To part with inherited land, for example, is disrespectful for it amounts to a severance of genealogical links and a disacknowledgement of the debts such links entail.

The classification of *elmo* as *warisan* is in accord with its status as a reward from Allah. In both cases, *elmo* is the gift one receives while partaking of connections within a web of relationships marked by hierarchy and the transfer of valuables. Extreme forms of piety directed towards Allah, themselves a sign of total submission to His authority, are homologous to the value of respect (*hormat*, Ind.) one has to display towards one's elders, primarily parents. Respect constitutes the recognition of the nurture and security one has been provided for by one's parents. Such respect is manifested in one's submission to one's parents wishes and instructions. Submission is rewarded in both cases by vertical flows of blessings.

Merit (*pahala*) and blessing (*barokah*) as well as *elmo* are the sort of rewards which emanate from Allah. While merit is tied to the afterlife, *barokah* is tied to this life. *Barokah* is said to be received in a variety of forms, ranging from finding suitable spouse, having lots of offspring, attaining high social status and acquiring property. In short, *barokah* is an attribute of plenty, denoting prosperity. The things in which it is manifested in reflect and embody their owner's privileged relation to Allah. Similarly, *warisan* flows from ancestors to descendants and ensures the latter's future security and prosperity. Both forms of blessings have a protective capacity. They are dedicated to protecting one's offspring and sincere believers from economic or other deprivation.

Inherited objects embody genealogical connections. Weapons like *kris* or sickles, jewellery like bracelets and rings, houses, the land they are build on and agricultural fields

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8 *Idul Adha* or *Idul Korban* is the feast of sacrifice, commemorating the sacrifice of Ismail by Ibrahim as a testament to the total submission to the will of Allah required by pious Muslims. Sacrificing produces specific amounts of merit depending on whether one offers an ox or sheep and in accordance with the actual number of sacrificial animals offered.

are usually referred to in connection with their owners, both past and present. They function as memory triggers as people readily list the genealogical line these objects have followed down to them. Such a list is short one, though, rarely exceeding the fourth or fifth generation. But it is not only inherited objects that embody social relations. Any kind of gift is described as a *nang-kenangan* (Mad.), that is an object that speaks of a bond in a reminiscent manner, and a reminder of the person of the gift-giver. This is evident in marriage gifts guest supply the newly weds with, migrants offer to relatives, and anthropologists to informants.

Elmo's figuration as *warisan* has a bearing upon its degrees of efficacy and the distinction drawn between simple technique and mystical knowledge. In the case of Pak Uddin's apprentice, the counter-offer of money for *elmo* does account to a certain extent for *elmo's* reduced efficacy. This is so for *warisan* constitutes 'inalienable possessions', that is, possessions kept apart from the market and its central medium, money. On the other hand, though, one should not overemphasise such a distinction since money in Java does figure within the ethic of reciprocity, pertaining relations among relatives, neighbours and friends. According to my informants, money is offered as gift in marriage ceremonies since the late 60s and during *Idul Fitri* celebrations among close relatives.[9] *Elmo's* reduced efficacy, then can not be wholly attributed to money being a totally unsuitable return for knowledge. The reason for this reduced efficacy, as it was explained to me, has rather to do with the fact that the apprentice was not a direct descendant of the *dhukon*. What that means is firstly, that the passing down of *elmo* could not be constituted as inheritance. Secondly, it means that the apprentice and the *dhukon* did not have a corporeality in common, that they did not share a common substance or, as locals put it, that they 'were not of one blood' (*banne situng dereh*, Mad.). As we shall see, both conditions are central in the transmission of *elmo's* full efficacy. This is so for *elmo* as *warisan* is held to inhere in the blood that flows between generations.

I had gone to pay a visit to a neighbour of mine on a Thursday night. I found Pak Selbu', a wood trader owning a shop on the main road that connects Alas Niser with Probolinggo, sitting on a prayer mat and reciting prayers for his dead ancestors. Beside him he had two sheets of paper which I inquired about when he finished the ritual. On one sheet there were several names written in a vertical manner. These were the names of his ancestors, he said, going back eight generations, an extremely rare case. The first five had lived and died in Sampang, Madura, while the sixth one, Pak Bahani, had moved to Java, sometime presumably in the first decades of the twentieth century, where he settled permanently. The other sheet contained a *becaan*, an invocation written in a mixture of Indonesian, Javanese and Madurese, the meaning of which I was unable to decipher. The *becaan* was a *warisan*, Pak Selbu' said, and the list of names begun with the name of his first ancestor who got it as a gift from Allah for his successful struggle against the *nafsu*. The

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[9] Bloch and Parry (1989) have criticised the assumptions that money, due to being produced in the market place can not be refigured as gift and that gift and commodity exchanges form polar opposites. Carsten's (1989) article in the same volume attests to Langkawi women's roles in converting money to food presented as gift both within and without the domestic unit.

recitation of the *becaan* ensured that one could alter the way one's business was doing, helping to attract clients in times of bad sales. He had been reciting it for the past week for he had not sold any wood during the past month and his creditors were asking for their money back. He said that all his ancestors were traders of one or another kind and that the *becaan* constituted 'family property' (*harta pamili*, Mad.). It had been 'passed down' from one generation to the other (*etoronaghi*, Mad.) as a resource for security and prosperity.

I asked Pak Selbu' whether the *becaan* could be given to an unrelated person (*oreng laen*, Mad.; a non-kin) and he replied that though it was not prohibited, its effectiveness would be compromised. This was so for the giver and the receiver were 'not relatives' (*banne pamili*, Mad.). He had himself offered the invocation to a friend of his who was a trader of mangos and sheep-skin sometime in the past but it had failed to save his friend's business from bankruptcy. Somehow mystified by his explanation due to the fact that it contradicted the classification of the *becaan* as a family property, I inquired further, and presented him with the possibility of passing it down to one's adopted child (*anak ngalak*, Mad.; 'taken child') in case one did not have children of his own (*anak kandung*, Mad.; 'child of the womb'). Contrary to my expectations, Pak Selbu' replied negatively, saying that the *becaan* would not 'work' (*tidak laku*, Ind.) for the ancestor and the offspring were not consanguineal kin (*banne pamili asle*, Mad; 'not real family'), because 'they did not share the same blood' (*banne situng dereh*, Mad.). His genealogical list, in contrast, presented an uninterrupted flow of blood between ancestors and offspring, with no adopted children mentioned. Corresponding to this flow was the transfer of potency.

This correspondence, verified by several other informants on different occasions, seemed to me to be partially at odds with the classification of *elmo* as *warisan*. This is so for adopted children in Alas Niser usually do come to inherit their adopted parent's material wealth at an equal footing with 'children of the womb'. Though there are no legal procedures in Islam for the adoption of children and as such adopted children can not be said to enjoy the same rights with 'true/ actual' ones (*anak sungghuan*, Mad.) according to Islamic jurisprudence, inheritance practises in Alas Niser de-emphasise this difference. In this respect, the practice of passing down the generations land, houses and jewellery does not contrast the sharers of blood substance with others who lack the ability to trace the relationship in this way. The particular status and uniqueness of *elmo* as *warisan* is that it makes such a difference apparent. The reduced efficacy of *elmo* when passed to persons one does not share the same blood with is, I suggest, as much the result of a conception of personhood as corporeally constituted as of the belief that *elmo* is inscribed in the *hate* of the initial receiver, the organ producing and transfeting blood.

As we shall see more clearly in the next chapter, it is the very specificity of shared substance that distinguishes as much one's family and ancestors from that of others as one's 'children of the womb' from adopted ones. This shared substance is conceptualised as blood (*dereh*, Mad.). As such, difference from without and similarity within is expressed in terms of

the substance of blood one gets equally from one's mother and father. The 'female liquid' (*aeng binne*, Mad.), that is the blood concentrated in a mother's womb is held to interact with the 'male liquid' (*aeng lake*, Mad.), a euphemism for semen, and together to form the foetus. Blood forms, thus, the origins of personhood. While in foetal form, the person is said to be a clot of concentrated blood.

The passing down of potency to 'real' (*asle*) offspring only seems to me to suggest that blood is construed as a carrier of qualities and its flow as the transfer of attributes across generations.[10] We have already seen with respect to ethnicity the role that genealogy is conceived to play in shaping 'refined' (*alos*) and 'coarse' (*kasar*) kinds of persons, that is persons with distinctive qualities, senses and sensibilities. In the case of ethnicity, relations of blood, together with relations predicated on sharing of the same place, are said to be constitutive of a range of inner temperatures and outer temperaments. 'Pure Javanese', 'pure Madurese' and 'mixed people' are construed as different on the basis of their diverse origins. In the case of potency, 'children of the womb' are conceptualised as different from adopted children with respect to their substantial origins too. Potency's full efficacy can only been passed to 'real children' for potency inheres in the blood of its possessor, circulating in his/her veins, semen and womb. The passing down of potency suggests that along with blood, one's ancestor's degree of purity and piety, inner temperature and outer temperament, that is the qualities that have made him/her into an *oreng sakte*, are also transferable. Piety and temperature as indications of potency are 'transplanted' to new body-persons as a result of conception. Such a quality exits the body-person every time part of it is used to form a new one. This imagery is very vivid in the metaphor *kyai* Salahuddin employed so as to explain the difference between *elmo* that stems directly from Allah and *elmo toronan*, that is potency stemming from ancestors. He likened *elmo* to a mango tree, saying that such a tree might have come from two sources. It may have originated from seeds (*bhibhit*, Mad.) of fallen mango fruits or from a cutting (*canko*, Mad.) of the initial tree, transplanted to a new location.

Despite potency being construed as inherent in the blood, locals of Alas Niser are not at all certain whether *elmo* will become manifest at all in one's descendants and in which ones in particular. It might remain in a kind of dormant, non-active state for several generations and resurface in the person of a great grandchild or great, great grandchild. Moreover, from the total number of children a 'pure' person might have, there is no certainty about whether it is the first child who will display its signs, the second or the last, one or more, a boy or a girl. Despite this fluidity of rules of succession as it were, all of my informants insisted that *elmo toronan* too has to be achieved or re-achieved to a certain extent. They thus, pointed to the performative aspect of its acquisition. The transformation of *elmo* from being inactive, but in no case extinct, to erupting back again into the world rests

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[10] This is corroborated to a certain extent by the classification of a whole cluster of illnesses like leprosy (*gedel*, Mad.), insanity (*gileh*, Mad.) and asthma (*meney*, Mad.) as penyaket *toronan*, inherited diseases, and the tracing of the causative factor to the genealogical flow of blood.

on the ascetic exercises and trials a descendant has to voluntarily undertake. Fasting, meditating, abstaining from sexual intercourse and sleep are to be repeated in much the same mode by a potent person's descendant so as to prove himself/herself worthy of the inheritance. Such ascetic exercises are construed as a request, this time directed to one's dead ancestors. Once again, worthiness is demonstrated through a reshaping of the *jasmani* aspect of the body-person from the ordinary state of being open to the extraordinary condition of being closed and impenetrable. Otherwise, *elmo* can be bestowed unconditionally on a specific descendant soon after the potent ancestors' death by the latter's wandering spirit. In this case, it is the dead ancestor's spirit that delivers *elmo* in the context of a post-death encounter with the descendant, which *dhukon* in Alas Niser describe as a dream-like experience. It is usually the case that such a bestowal amounts to an order, for non-compliance with accepting the potency results in punishments such as severe illness, lasting till one agrees to go along with one's ancestor's wishes.

Capturing spirits

So far I have described potency as an embodied and empowering substance, inscribed in the inner kernel, flowing within and across bodies, an otherworldly entity the acquisition of which results in a symbiotic relationship of indiscernibility with its recipient. I have also argued for its embeddedness within a moral discourse in which different degrees of efficacy and sources of potency correspond to different degrees of inner purity. The highest degree of efficacy is ascribed to *elmo* stemming from Allah. *Elmo toronan*, the potency that stems from one's genealogical ancestors is of lesser efficacy, due to its mediated nature and the lesser status ancestors occupy in the local universe of graded sources of blessings. Ancestor's *elmo* is less potent for the purity human beings can achieve is but a fraction of the perfect purity represented by Allah.

Within this system of human agency and intentionality, knowledge based on mundane learning processes and experiences of apprenticeship and formal schooling, themselves aimed at accessing the visible and the material aspect of reality rather than the invisible, is the least efficacious. Whether this will remain the case in years to come, as increasing numbers of people in Alas Niser recognise the security and prosperity high-school and university certificates bring to their holders, remains to be seen. At the moment, its status as the least efficacious is based as much on the fact that inner purity is not a pre-condition for achieving this type of knowledge as on the premise that a teacher's blessings are less potent than those of dead ancestors. The latter is the by-product of both the lack of teacher and pupil sharing a common substance and of the incorporeal nature of the

inscription of the knowledge bestowed. This type of knowledge is held to be inscribed in books written by humans and not in the very body of the student by Allah or one's ancestors. Such a a type of knowledge retains a relationship of exteriority with its seeker that contrasts with the interiority of the most potent forms of knowledge.

In between these two extremes, there is another culturally recognised type of knowledge that, although bestowed by an un-related person, a *ghuru* (Mad.), offers access to the invisible realm of *alam ghaib*. The *ghuru*, the teacher in question, is construed as an expert on mysticism of either Sufi or *kejawen* background. It is less potent than *elmo toronan* both because the *ghuru* and the adept, called *murid*, do not share the same blood and because it is not incorporated in the body-person of the *murid*. It is more potent though than secular knowledge, for the *murid* is said to come to befriend spirits which reveal to him/her cosmic secrets.

The setting for acquisition of this type of *elmo* might be that of the Islamic boarding schools, *pondok/pesantren*, in several of which some of the more advanced students are instructed in Islamic mysticism (*tasawuf*), the performance of healing rituals (*thibb*, Arab.), martial arts (*ilmu belah diri*, Ind.), invulnerability (*elmo tegghu*, Mad.) and communication with invisible beings, be they *jin* or angels, by charismatic teachers, or *kyai* (Bruinessen 1995b: 169-171). The *kyai* guides the neophytes on an individual basis of consultation in understanding key texts written in Arabic or Indonesian and regulating the ascetic exercises they undertake. Otherwise, the initiation might be carried out within the context of Sufi brotherhoods like those of *Naqsyabandiyah*, *Qadiriyah wa Naqyabandiyah* and *Tijaniyah* which have established branches in Java and in Madura, and which are headed by local figures (Bruinessen 1995a, 1995b).

Other kinds of associations that claim to represent '*agama Jawa*', the religion of Java, which corresponds, according to their members, to an indigenous (*kejawen*, Jav.) belief system pre-dating the arrival of Islam in the archipelago, are also settings in which members are initiated into the secrets of the universe, albeit a 'Javanese' one.[11] Associations of this type like the *Purwa Ayu Mardi Utomo* that maintains a branch in Probolinggo, though formally classified by the Indonesian state as 'belief' (*kepercayaan*, Ind.) and not religious associations,[12] are focused too on the persona of a *ghuru* or master whose

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[11] Geertz (1960) classifies these associations within his *priyayi* variant of Javanese religious beliefs and practices though it is not obvious from his account to what extent *priyayi* mysticism is different from Sufism both in terms of their basic ritual practices and the man-God relationship the two forms postulate. This omission of comparison is repeated in the more recent account of Javanese religion by Beatty (1999). I have brought Javanese mysticism and Sufism together here for the obvious reason that the knowledge they disseminate is thought of as flowing from the person of the master. I am unable though for reasons of space and purpose to pursue the comparison further.

[12] This refers to the Indonesian state's institutionalisation of the distinction between 'religion' (*agama*) and 'belief' (*kepercayaan*). Officially, the state recognises five 'creeds' as *agama*, namely Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. These are described as monotheistic, as having a prophet, a 'book' and an organisational structure as well as being 'world religions'. By contrast, any systems that do not exhibit such characteristics such as *kejawen* or other animistic traditions,

role is to teach the method and the exercises needed to the members/students so that one's inner purity is increased and *elmo* can be gained. Less institutionalised settings involve the attachment of an *elmo* seeker to a particular person renowned as an *oreng sakte*, a *dhukon* of some sort, who is going to lead him through the path of trials towards the goal.

The relationship of the novice and master was explained to me by a *dhukon* who had come to acquire his potency through a *ghuru*, in his case a *kyai*.[13] This relationship is initiated with a period of trial in which the master tests the novice's willingness and determination to undergo the hardships that lead to *elmo* as well as the novice's inner intentions, his *keikhlasan* (sincerity, Ind.). The submission to the authority of the *ghuru* is the first such trial in which Pak Sukoco was put. He had been a *santri* to a *kyai* in the area of Lumajang, south of Alas Niser, for several years and as every *santri* does, performed several labour services for the *kyai* and his family. Working in the *kyai*'s land, helping in the maintenance of his residential and educational compound, cleaning the premises and the *kyai*'s motorcycles and car are some of the mundane tasks *santri*'s are assigned to. Such tasks are construed both as a kind of payment in return for the gift of the religious education and the blessings (*barokah*)[14] *santri* receive from the *kyai*. They are also signs of the elevated status of the *kyai* and his family who are not supposed to perform any kind of manual labour. *Santri* also provide the *kyai* with political support, guarding his compound from thieves and unwanted strangers, forming his entourage in trips outside the locality. Later on, after they leave the *pesantren*, *santri* come to constitute a pool of supporters who continue to furnish the *kyai* with of all kinds of produce, money or labour at times of important life-crisis rites in the *kyai*'s family and other occasions. They also provide him with votes in case the *kyai* enters the arena of party politics. Thus, the relationship between *santri* and *kyai* is reminiscent of patron-client relations that permeate relations of subordination in other areas of the archipelago too (Scott 1985; Gibson 1986; Howe 1991).

Pak Sukoco explained that he had approached the *kyai* who was said to be a specialist (*ahli*, Ind.) in *elmo* concerning befriending and capturing *jin*, and had confided in him of his desire to acquire such an invisible 'friend'. The first step towards attaining the goal involved a forty-one day period of fasting, followed by a night long stay in a cemetery, practising contemplation (*dikir*) with a specific *becaan* the *kyai* had supplied him with. The

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principally associated with 'backward' and 'isolated' people (*suku terasing*), are considered as non-*agama*. In a significant number of cases, however, practitioners of these 'belief' systems are advocating their elevation and full recognition as *agama* (see Kipp & Rodgers 1987).

[13] I did not do any research on Sufi brotherhoods in Probolinggo and had little contact with *kejawen* associations which, needless to say, were quite secretive.

14 The kind of *barokah*, one receives from *kyai*, is qualitatively similar to the one one receives from Allah. The *kyai* acts, in this case, an intermediary between Allah and ordinary humans who redistributes the *barokah* he has himself acquired through being close to Allah to a third party. However, *barokah* originating directly from Allah is locally qualified as *barokah Allah* while *barokah* originating from a *kyai* is called *barokah kyai*.

becaan, written in mixed Arabic and Javanese, was a *jin*-summoning incantation and was the 'family property' of the *kyai*. While in the cemetery, Pak Sukoco continued, he was visited by spirits of dead persons who appeared in physical form and in a state of advanced decomposition. Deciphering his experience years later, he argued that the aim of the trial was 'to teach him to be brave in the face of death' for had he stopped practising *dikir* and run away out of fear, he would not only have proved himself unworthy of attaining *elmo* but he would also have been struck with insanity.

Encountering dead persons was the first step. Having passed it successfully, Pak Sukoco was then, sent to practise contemplation on a small lake, reciting another *becaan* offered by his *ghuru* while being immersed in water. This time he was visited by a huge snake that wrapped itself around his body. He had no reason to be afraid, he maintained, for 'it was not a real snake but just a *jin* in the form of a snake'. He remembered remaining still and focused on his recitation, something that caused the snake to disappear. The *jin* came back though, as a beautiful, half-naked woman calling him from the lake's bank to join her. Pak Sukoco said that he refused to give up his immobile state and to give in to her seductive calls. The third and final trial involved a three day period of seclusion in a hut located deep in the forest of the rural area of Tiris, a forest locals believe to be crowded with evil spirits and wild animals and thus, better avoided. There Pak Sukoco fasted, meditated and remained immobile as instructed by his teacher, while fighting the attempts of the *jin* to scare him off or to lure him into committing dreadful deeds like incest and murder for the sake of promised riches. In the end, Pak Sukoco explained, the *jin* 'was defeated and recognising my superiority (*kelebihan*, Ind.), it became my servant (*khadam*, Ind.). Now it carries out my wishes and instructions'.

One can get an infinite number of auxiliary spirits, the number resting with the times one has successfully completed such trials. Pak Sukoco claimed to 'own' (*endik*, Mad.) several spirits as servants, a sign of his inner strength in completing several times such trials. Each of the *jin* Pak Sukoco had at his disposal had specialised powers and some were stronger than others. Some were male *jin*, 'dressed in long, white clothes and turban', originating from the Middle-East; some were female, coming from Java, Sumatra or abroad. They were the sources of his *elmo* as every time they were summoned through incense-burning and *becaan* recitation, to reveal where a stolen bicycle might be located, the cause of an illness or of a disharmonious relation between spouses, the spirit familiars would let him know through 'whispering in [his] ear'. Invisible to all others, Pak Sukoco described his relation with them as one of exteriority. He was neither penetrated by them since penetration by a spirit stands for either spirit possession or sorcery, nor were they inherent or innate in his body-person. The *elmo* was rather constituted as an external source that was subjugated and used for specific purposes. The *elmo*, that is the spirit familiars, and the *dhukon* did not merge in one empowered body-person but retained their distinct status as separate entities. Though separate, they communicated along a hierarchical axis. Pak Sukoco could summon

the *elmo* and feel the presence of his spirit familiars through their smell. His female *jin*, he said, smelled of flowers while his male *jin* smelled of incense.

Exteriority is equated with a lesser degree of efficacy, for spirit capturing, for one thing, belongs to the grey area of morality and inner purity. Spirits and *jin* in particular, are morally ambivalent beings and are classified into Muslim *jin* and non-Muslim *jin*. While Muslim *jin* are said to submit to Allah's authority and to be friendly towards humans, non-Muslim *jin* are those that have rebelled against Allah and are malicious towards humans. Because of the ambivalence surrounding the very nature of *jin*, *dhukon* who claim that their potency flows from spirits are always the focus of much public contention and suspicion. In Pak Sukoco's case, his claim of having attained this *elmo* as a gift from a *kyai* was one of the ways he safeguarded himself from sorcery suspicions. That people in Alas Niser should ascribe reduced efficacy to this type *elmo* is predicated in the trust they place on the final triumph of pure and benevolent potency over evil and malevolent one. In this respect, their universe is very much like ours.

Exterior sources of potency are also held to be less efficacious due to the lack of corporeality said to be marking the relationships both of the master and the pupil and of *elmo* and its possessor. *Elmo* originating from a *ghuru* is mediated by an invisible being that whispers, meaning that all the access the potent person has to *alam ghaib* is indirect, conditioned as it is by his/her relationship with an otherworldly agent. Moreover, the status the role of the *ghuru* occupies in the hierarchy of sources of knowledge qualifies as below that of Allah, who is the apex, and of ancestors.

Difference, practice and substance

In this chapter and the previous one, I have sketched out local ideas about the body-person as manifested in the social domains of sorcery affliction and potency acquisition. My focus has been on the indigenous articulation of difference as encapsulated in a series of beliefs and practices that construct both sorcerised and empowered body-persons. Both kinds of body-persons are construed as endowed with distinctive corporealities and, by implication, with different kinds of blood. Sorcerised body-persons bear the marks of being mystically invaded on an involuntary basis and have illness and death inscribed in their very constitution, as polluted and poisonous blood is thought to be carried in their veins. Empowered body-persons' corporeal extraordinariness is rooted, to a large extent, in their equipment with a closed and impenetrable material body and an open *hate*. Their blood is construed as distinct both from that of ordinary and sorcerised persons for it is the locus of

the power's inscription that makes it 'white' and 'cool'. As such, both sorcerised and empowered body-persons constitute human beings of different kind and of distinct condition.

This certain substantialisation of attributes of persons should not be construed as meaning that potency in Java is a fixed and categorical bodily difference bound up with an inherited capacity for the miraculous. Potent body-persons are made through the performance of a particular set of activities that correspond to normative rules of religious piety and the incorporation or reactivation of the intangible substance of *elmo*. The performative aspects of potency acquisition include fasting, meditation, habitation in dangerous places, sexual abstinence and lack of sleep. Difference is, in this case, marked out in all areas of the social life of potency's seekers: in the mode of eating, type of place, kind of engagement and interaction with other human and non-human beings. The undertaking of such activities is taken as both a sign of an inner reality, an otherwise invisible idiosyncrasy, and a pre-condition for the attainment of the state of *kesaktian*. In other words, performance is instrumental in bringing about transformations of corporeal forms, preparing ones' blood to be 'kinded' and, thus, effecting a certain metamorphosis of identity.

The makings of sorcerised and potent persons involves the bodily incorporation of that which is other and external. While sorcerised bodies are construed as owning their very distinctiveness to a forced symbiosis and a deadly power within, narratives of potency acquisition stress a relation of voluntary incorporation and *elmo*'s sacred inscription in the body. The themes of penetration and incorporation which are of central importance both in the discourse on potency and sorcery, alert us against equating the carrying out of certain activities with the cultural production of personhood in a straightforward manner. Both themes rest on a cultural recognition of substances as catalysts in identity formation and ontological transformation.

The substances' alterior origins and profound consequences for people's kind of personhood has further implications. It attests to the fact that Alas Niser people's sense of personhood is, as Tylor comments for the Jivaro Indians of the Amazon, 'textured by intersubjectivity, because intersubjectivity is itself created in the context of social relations' (Taylor 1996: 209). Moreover, by being inscribed in the very corporeality of the human body, the movement of substances among humans and between humans and non-humans encodes social relationships in the form of embodiment.

People are connected to one another through the activities they engage in with each other and the flows of substance they exchange. Sorcery and potency constitute social relationships registered in the body. The ailing, perforated and violated body of the victim is the corporeal expression of the hostile relationship pertaining between the victim and the sorcerer's client. The state of enhanced personhood and super well-being encapsulated in potent persons's ontological make-up is the product of interactions with otherworldly beings. Moreover, sorcery power moves between relatives, neighbours, friends and colleagues in the same way that healing potency moves between pious Muslims and Allah, ancestors and

offspring, teacher and adept. While the former's exchanges take place in the context of relationships marked by intimacy and relative equality, the latters' transfers signify a sociality of asymmetrical reciprocity embedded in hierarchical relations.

Potency narratives construe its acquisition in relational terms. Potency is thought of as emanating from authority, be that the authority of Allah, the ancestors or a teacher, while its bestowal is construed as the counter-gift for the performance of services denoting submission, obligation and debt. In the case of ancestors, the transfer of potency is no different from the transfer of blood and material valuables. Their vertical flow is accompanied by an emphasis on the return in the form of material and immaterial provisions a descendant has to present his/her ancestors with, both during their old age and in the afterlife. Potency that stems from teachers is a return for the labour and support a pupil has to perform for his teacher. Similarly, Allah is held to reward generously those who take the pain in undertaking extreme forms of worship. Such exchanges are seen as inherently asymmetrical since potency stands at the apex of the hierarchy of values. Its associations with financial security, material wealth, social advancement, abundance, prosperity, fertility, in short, with all that is desired and wished for, means that there is hardly anything else that could match its efficacy in generating well-being.

Chapter Six. The blood of affinity:
siblingship and houses

Kinship and sociality

Anthropological analyses of kinship have frequently attempted to distil its essence and to determine the basic principles upon which it rests. During the pre-Schneider (1984) period, kinship was seen as the cultural elaboration of the 'natural facts' of human biology and sexual reproduction. This view has been more recently echoed by Gibson (1985) who argues that 'if we are to retain "kinship" at all as a cross-cultural category, we must restrict it to the comparison of the varying social implications of the symbol of shared physical substance' (1985: 409). On the other hand, anthropologists working within a tradition that has been influenced by Schneider's critique of anthropological understandings of kinship (1984), have paid due attention to the tensions and uneasy relations pertaining between what Schneider termed 'blood' relations and relations based on a 'code for conduct' (1968: 21-29). While in Schneider's case the latter category refers primarily to affinity, other anthropologists have sought to extend its referential capacity, incorporating into this category of kinship, relations which, like affinity, are also socially and performatively constructed (see Marshall 1977 on Trukese clientship and friendship).

The attempt to move away from a kinship paradigm which construes kinship as derivative of the transmission of bio-genetic material was initially characterised by a tendency to focus on relations established socially, and through practice, as well as those resulting from procreation and shared substance (see also Holy 1996: 167). However, this conceptualisation of a dichotomised kinship replicates the initial distinction between nature and culture on another level. A more radical attempt towards the same goal, is that of Gow (1991), Bouquet (1993), Carsten (1995b, 1997), Thomas (1999) and Vilaca (2002). What these analyses have in common is a focus on 'relatedness', which Carsten defines as the 'indigenous ways of acting out and conceptualising relations between people' (1995b: 224). Though a shorthand for kinship, 'relatedness' studies claim not to 'presuppose that genealogical relations are necessarily the most important' (Bouquet 1993: 157), and to assess the latter's relative significance not in the context of Western-derived understandings of kinship but, rather, in terms of local orientations and emphases.

This chapter has been structured around the same premise. It aims to analyse the local kinship system from the native's point of view, assuming nothing about biogenetic connections and nature *vs.* culture distinctions. It is rather, premised on a problematisation of such concepts, and wishes to show their limited applicability in the case of Alas Niser kinship.

This is done through a concentration on siblingship and local understandings of marriage. My kinship data as well as its analysis is discussed in the light of debates and arguments made by other anthropologists working in Southeast Asia. It draws upon McKinley's (1980), Errington's (1989), Headley's (1987b) and Carsten's (1997) pre-occupation with the meaning and structuring role played by siblingship, on Errington's (1989) and Carsten's (1997) emphasis on 'House societies' (see also Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995), as well as Carsten's (1997) exegesis of marriage as a process of transforming difference into similarity.

On the other hand, the present chapter is also quite different from 'relatedness' approaches. In their attempt to break away from the Western-derived model of kinship as based on corporeal identity which is transmitted through genealogy, such approaches have over-stressed and prioritised the performativity and processuality of local understandings of kinship over procreation, genealogical connectedness and corporeal consubstantiality (see also Thomas 1999: 39). For example, in his conceptualisation of Amazonian kinship, Gow (1991: 161, 193-195) distinguishes two idioms: the first is founded on caring, nurture and co-habitation and the other on shared biological substance, i.e. blood. He, then, goes on to argue that the first idiom is the dominant one (1991: 159). In a similar but more sophisticated way, Carsten (1997) argues that in the island of Langkawi in Malaysia, kinship in the form of siblingship is extended horizontally from the house's hearth (i.e. the domestic domain), to the wider community through social prestations of food. Food exchanges and visits as well as commensality, intimate living and fostering, are the primary ingredients for the construction of a sense of identity and kinship. What is less pronounced in such accounts is a problematisation of the body and its substantial origins as the site of differentiation of humans into distinct categories, as well as the corporeal consequences acts of nurture and co-habitation have on such bodies and ideas of difference.

The pervasive essentialism we have seen as characterising the ethnic system of classification, as well as conceptions of power in Alas Niser, is replicated in local conceptions of kinship. Kinship as a classification system of distinguishing people into kin and non-kin focuses on the body-person, the substances it is made of and its articulation as a place on which social relations are inscribed. It is my contention that such an essentialism can not be grasped, rendered meaningful and explained by an approach to kinship that stresses performativity at the expense of local ideas of procreation and genealogy. In this chapter as in the rest of the thesis, I argue for a dialectical approach that situates what is commonly understood as the socially determined nature of kinship within a frame that construes kinship as essential differentiation (see also Chapter 2, in particular, the discussion on the 'nature' of identities in Southeast Asia). In this respect, I dispute neither the importance of practice for the configuration of kinship relations nor the social derivation of their meaning.

The discourse on kinship in Alas Niser is approached from the standpoint that acting as kin and being kin neither form opposites nor are they necessarily in any kind of tension. Local notions of kinship centre on ideas of consubstantiality. This consubstantiality refers as

much to genealogy as to affinity. Both are ways of engendering, transfiguring and connecting bodies. Social relations of genealogy and affinity are both performatively and substantially constituted. Their constitution is traced to the efficacy of ritual activity, the incorporation of food, the sharing of the same place and of the same blood either with respect to descending or ascending generations. While genealogical consubstantiality is anchored in past unity, encapsulated in the image of the corporeal unity of ancestral bodies, affinal consubstantiality is anchored in the future, embedded in the image of the physical unity of children.

The present attempt at conceptualising kinship in Alas Niser is also different from 'relatedness' approaches in the sense that it does not reserve for kinship the status of a distinct domain of social life. It rather seeks to unravel the principles on which the kinship system of classification rests so as to bring these principles in line with the issues discussed in the preceding chapters. In particular, it claims that kinship as locally understood, centres around siblingship as corporeal similarity and that as such it is based on the articulation of blood and place. In this respect, it follows Strathern's (1996) comment that kinship is always a hybrid, a way of reckoning connectedness in which one mode never operates alone but rather in conjunction with others. To the extent that kinship is about the intersections of the principles of blood and place, it bears a close resemblance to local understandings of ethnicity. Both systems explore human diversity and are concerned with the origins and growth of human beings. To the extent that both organise human 'kindedness' with reference to blood and place, they can be said to entertain a relation of mutual signification. It is on the grounds of this mutual signification that kinship and ethnicity loose their analytical status as separate domains, dissolving into and supporting semantically each other.

Local understandings of kinship as an embodied process of 'making kin out of others' (Vilaça 2002) are also informed by ideas of power. I have already commented upon sorcery as a likewise embodied process of directing deadly powers against one's kin and neighbours. As such, sorcery can be thought of as a power that makes others, i.e. enemies, out of kin. In this respect, the indigenous logic of social relations privileges neither 'domain' as exercising an overriding structural influence over the other. What I mean by this is that it would be as wrong to claim that sorcery provides the model for the experience of kinship as to say that kinship relations determine understandings of sorcery. Rather, I would argue that understandings of consubstantial bodies and sorcerised bodies mutually indicate and inform one another. While consubstantial bodies are the product of acts of engendering and growth in reference to a common point located either in future (children) or the past (ancestors), sorcerised bodies are the product of acts of decay and death that attempt to efface any such common points.

These specific intersections and mergings of kinship, power and ethnicity delineate what I have referred to in the introduction as sociality - that is, the local ways of conceiving, constituting and transforming social relations. My interests lie with sociality and the making of body-persons. Despite the possibility of regarding what follows as kinship in the conventional

sense, my principal aim is to situate kinship within sociality and to treat it as one instance, among many others, of the cultural production of personhood.

Identical personhoods

Natives of Alas Niser acknowledge what Houseman terms 'the universal presumption of a sexual complementarity in the engendering' (1988: 672) - that is, the combined role played by both sexes in the production of human beings. According to the local theory of procreation, both the mother and the father contribute their own distinctive substances - uterine blood and semen, respectively - to the child's conception and the formation of the placenta (*temone*, Mad.). The role of the placenta is important for it is classified as the child's sibling (*tretan*, Mad.), in particular its younger sibling (*alek*, Mad.). The foetus and the placenta are perceived as forming an indivisible unity while in the womb and exiting it together (*reng-ereng*, Mad). As we have seen in Chapter 3, their post-natal separation is ritually regulated with the placenta acquiring a protective role.[1] A child and its sibling are held to be alike for they are formed out of the conjunction of substances disposed of the parental bodies during sexual intercourse. Moreover, both have shared the intimacy of the womb. According to these ideas of human procreation, siblingship is a relationship formed in life's earliest stages. As such, origins, siblingship and personhood are construed as co-extensive.

The conjunction of male and female body fluids is phrased as the outcome of 'sleeping with a man' (*tedung bik lake*, Mad.). During the marriage ritual, this potent conjunction is elaborated in the presentation of a ritual dish of rice-turned-into-porridge, called *tajin merah poteh* (Mad.). Immediately after the enactment of the formal Islamic ritual (*akad nikah*) and the signing of marriage certificates, the groom and the bride are presented with this dish by elder female relatives of the bride, while sitting on the bridal bed. The dish consists of half of the porridge coloured red due to being boiled with palm sugar (*gula jawa*, Ind.), locally construed as a symbol of uterine blood. The other half is coloured white due to being boiled with coconut milk (*santan kelapa*, Ind.) and it is said to be a symbol of semen. The ritual dish is consumed by the newlyweds through simultaneous and reciprocal feeding. The act is said to symbolise, among other things, the exchange of substances that engenders fertility within the context of publicly condoned behaviour.

Though the ritual stops short of elaborating the indigenous theory of conception further, this does not mean that locals are not, to some extent, articulate about conception.

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[1] Similar beliefs are reported for Java by Geertz (1961: 89) and Headley (1987a; 1987b); for Madura by Niehof (1985: 222); for Aceh by Bowen (1993: 216-226); for Sulawesi by Cedercreutz (1999); for Malaysia by Carsten (1997: 83-85).

Quite the contrary is true since one can readily obtain information, although considerations of politeness in the phrasing of questions are always important. The body of the foetus and the placenta are held to be formed immediately after conception and to be made from a mixture in which the 'man's liquid' (*aeng lake*, Mad., a euphemism for semen, called *peju*) can no longer be differentiated from the 'female liquid' (*aeng binne*, Mad., a euphemism for uterine blood). Thus, the father and the mother contribute not only equally in the formation of new body-persons, but also in an indistinguishable fashion. Thus, it is held to be impossible to identify parts from the body-person of the child that have come from either the father or the mother. The foetus' skin, bones, flesh and internal organs are all said to be made from this undifferentiated and internally balanced mixture. Balance is, in this context, associated with the cooling properties of semen and the heat said to inhere in female blood.

The conjunction of body fluids that produces the foetus and its sibling is also thought of in terms of 'planting'. *Aeng lake enanam ning delem* (the male liquid is planted into the inside, Mad.), was the agricultural metaphor an aged female neighbour of mine employed while trying to provide an answer to my rather embarrassing questions. In this way, semen's encounter with the uterine blood stored inside the womb (*rates*, Mad.) is construed as an act parallel to the transplantation and insertion of young rice seedlings from the nursery to the rice field proper. The metaphor also carries a certain parallelism with the acquisition of potency I have described in the previous chapter, since certain forms of potency are thought of as being planted in the inner kernel of body-persons. As in the case of potency acquisition, a certain transformation is effected through the incorporation of an external substance. In the case of human fertility, the responsible substance is that of semen which is accounted for as *mandih* (potent, efficacious, Mad.) since its incorporation is deemed necessary for the transformation of a female body from being barren to being pregnant. In contrast, uterine blood is described as *kapeh* (Mad.), that is without efficacy, sterile.[2]

Although contributing equally to the formation of the foetus and its sibling, the two sexes' body fluids are distinguished in terms of efficacy. While semen's role is emphasised, uterine blood's role is downplayed. This is so only as far as conception is concerned. The image, locals construct, of the foetus's and its sibling's processual growth in the womb reverses things, and nurture, itself associated with femininity, comes to the fore. Over the course of pregnancy, the foetus is said to be nourished exclusively by the mother's blood, itself originating from a double source. The first source is menstrual blood, which is retained in the uterus immediately after conception. Conception marks the end of the exiting of

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[2] The seed and soil metaphor is pervasive in ideas surrounding procreation in Turkey too (Delaney 1986). Despite this apparent similarity and the fact that both in Turkey and Alas Niser the role of semen in generating fertility is stressed, I would argue that in Alas Niser, this does not amount to a 'monogenetic' theory of procreation, according to which 'the child *originates* with the father' (Delaney 1986: 497, original emphasis). It rather, points to the difference between male and female body-persons and not necessarily to a cultural pre-occupation with origins. As I make clear further in the text, female contributions are acknowledged as of equal importance and not merely as secondary and supportive. For Malay conceptions of procreation emphasising the male contribution see Banks 1983: 67-69.

uterine blood in the form of menstrual blood. Uterine blood is thought to be held back to feed the foetus and stimulate its growth. Uterine blood is of the same nature as the blood that runs through a mother's veins. It is also similar to menstrual blood, the only difference from the latter being that menstrual blood is construed as *keddhaq* (dirty, polluting, Mad.). This polluting quality, though, is not construed as inherent since uterine blood is simply blood that fills a specific part of the female body. The second source of nourishment comes from the food the mother eats that is transformed into blood in her *hate*. Part of this food-turned-into-blood is transported to the womb to increase the supply of blood that forms and feeds the foetus and its sibling. Thus, the mother constantly nourishes the foetus both through her own blood and through the conversion of the food she eats. Moreover, she contributes to the further development of the sibling bond between the foetus and the placenta. The performance of nurture in the form of breast-feeding and cooked food which mothers present their children with after their birth is a continuation of their formative, blood-feeding role during gestation.

The body and the blood of the new-born child, as well as that of its placent-sibling, are made from a disproportionate amount of body fluids originating from the mother. The father's semen however efficacious it is held to be, does not replenish the foetus' blood in any way after conception. This is despite the fact that sexual intercourse does not cease to take place and new semen is being injected to the womb. As far as I can tell, locals do not a have an explanation that accounts for what happens to this semen once inside the female body but readily dissociate it from playing any nourishing role. The embryo that is said to grow rapidly, asking constantly for more 'food' and attention, forms in the beginning, a thickened clot of blood that becomes alive only during the forth month of gestation when *roh*, sent by Allah, animates it with the necessary life-force. *The foetus' quickening and its movements in the womb denote roh's appearance.* The sparking nature of *roh*, which is connected directly with breath, life and movement and indirectly with emotion, cognition and thought, is said to reside in the newly formed *hate* of the foetus. There, it is said to blend with the body fluids of the father and the mother. *Roh*'s inscription in the *hate*, the blood producing and blood transferring organ, speaks of *roh*'s close association with blood. Seen from this perspective, one could say that *roh* is the substance that lends vitality to the undifferentiated mass of blood, a foetus is till this moment, by being planted in it.

Given, then, *roh*'s close connection with blood due to its body locus and motherhood's equally close association with it due to constantly providing the foetus with blood, one could not but wonder about the relation of semen to father's blood. The pairing of blood and semen is related to a rather vague belief in the sequential transmutation of blood taking place in male bodies only.[3] Semen is held to flow from the marrow (*sumsum*, Ind.) of the bones and of the spinal column (*tolang pongkor*, Mad.), in particular. Men complaining

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[3] For a cross-cultural comparison of similar beliefs about semen see Heritier-Auge 1989.

about feeling weak, of back pains and sore joints early in the morning become the target of teasing comments by others who attribute the pains to them having intercourse with their wives the previous night. The transformation of blood into semen seems to take place in the hollows of the male spinal column. I have very little information, though, about the exact nature of this except for occasional references to semen as 'white blood' (*dereh poteh*, Mad.). Semen is referred to as such due to cultural conventions of polite speech that prohibit one from employing a 'coarse' or 'rude' (*kasar*) way of naming. Whether all bone marrow is of the same nature as semen or not is something about which my informants were ambivalent and unsure. The same goes for whether semen, once in the womb, reverts back to its prior state or remains as such. However vague it might be, people in Alas Niser do draw a connection between semen and blood.

Taking my cue from this theory of conception, I would argue that body-persons are locally differentiated and classified on the basis of the diverse blood lines they embody. To the extent that body-persons form nodal points of differential blood contributions, they come to embody as much the current affinal relationships they have sprung from as previous ones that have taken place in the past. A person is construed as having inherited his/her blood from his/her own father and mother, who have received their own initial endowment of blood from their own parents, and who have also produced their own blood through the food they have eaten and exchanged. Similarly, a person's blood traced to both sets of grandparents also connects him/her to the grandparents' sets of forebears. In this way, the unity a body-person represents in the present is the mixture of blood diversity of ascending generations. In the future, that same body-person is to transmit both ancestral blood and new blood he/she has produced through food to his/her own descendants through conjugal unions that, in turn, will replenish and diversify his/her descendants' line and kind of blood. This trope of conceptualising personhood reckons cognatically all blood lines within the range of four to five generations above 'ego'. I say four to five because it is the fourth or fifth generational layer that usually constitute the very limits of genealogical memory in Alas Niser.[4] Above these layers, ancestors fall indiscriminately into the category of *sesepo* (Mad.), that is, of the undifferentiated and unnamed ancestors who are long dead.

At the centre of this system of reckoning kinship, lies not the Western individual or anthropological 'ego' (Goodenough 1955), but the set of full siblings (*satretan*, Mad.) since it is only full siblings who share exactly the same blood lines and by implication, they have identical blood (see Freeman 1960; McKinley 1981; Errington 1987; Carsten 1997: 82-92). Birth marks the beginning of a new kind of siblingship. It terminates the baby's siblingship with the placenta that is buried close to the house, and initiates his/her siblingship with the parents' other children. Full siblingship constitutes the cultural epitome of corporeal similarity

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[4] Madurese language in Alas Niser recognises only four generational levels above 'ego': *embu* (or *ebbu* or *e'mak* or *ibuk*) for mother and *eppa* (or *a'pak*) for father, *embah* for grandparents, *bujuk* for great-grandparents and *grubek* for great-great grandparents.

for full siblings' identity is as absolute as it can get. Full siblings share identical origins and corporealities for they trace relations upwards in a similar manner and are thus, alike in all respects except one. Just like in other parts of Southeast Asia, birth order in Alas Niser introduces hierarchical distinctions among sets of full siblings with older siblings ranking higher than younger ones. While hierarchy indicates relational difference within the sibling set, it is primarily sibling similarity that is stressed from without.

This identity of full siblings is marked in cases where people give their set of children phonetically similar names, like Faisol and Saiful, or Sentot and Gatot. It is also manifested in the cultural modeling of the conjugal couple as siblings (Carsten 1997:92; Niehof 1985: 94; also Kipp 1986). This is done through the use of sibling terms couples employ during the first year(s) of marriage to address each other. Thus, a wife addresses her husband as *cacak* or *cak* (Mad.), that is older brother, and he addresses her as *a'lek* or *lek* (Mad.), that is as younger sister. This is done till the moment their first child is born.[5] Natives of Alas Niser explain this practice saying that it will make the newly established union as stable and enduring as the bond that ties together full siblings. It is this implied notion of similarity that married couples are induced to emulate through addressing each other as sibling that seems to ward off the possibility of separation and divorce since things which are identical can not be differentiated and hence become distant or estranged.

Siblingship either in the form of full siblings or in the form of married couples is mapped on space through the House (see Errington 1989; Carsten 1997: 82-106; Gibson 1995). I take House to correspond in this context to both the material structure and the household as the primary kinship grouping.[6] Such a delineation is in accord with Lévi-Strauss's definition of the House, namely as

> a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and *most often, of both* (1982: 174, my emphasis).

The idiom through which Houses in Alas Niser are construed is somewhat different and more specific though (see see also Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995; Errington 1989;

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[5] From then on, they address each other as *eppa* , father and *embu*, mother. The couple's relationship is thus, hencefore transformed from that of siblingship to that of co-parenthood, the latter traced through the new body/person the couple has jointly produced.

[6] In following sections of the present chapter and throughout the next chapter, my definition of the House changes so as to encompass other, highly spatialised categories of people. As such, it is destined to move beyond what can be construed as the domestic sphere. In particular, my definition is set to expand so as to incorporate people who occupy the same yard (*tanean*) and the same neighbourhood. I adopt here Lévi-Strauss definition as the starting point of my exploration of what constitutes Houses in Alas Niser. The present definition and latter ones converge on Houses being thought of as consisting of siblings. 'Domestic' Houses, *tanean* Houses and neighbourhood Houses, as well as wombs, diverge in terms of the manner in which this relation of co-substantiality and co-spatiality is constructed, articulated and made socially manifest.

Headley 1987b). Houses in Alas Niser are not named social groups and few bear titles, basically only those belonging to *kyai* enjoy such priviledges.[7] Secondly and more importantly, the emphasis on siblingship makes the distinction between consanguinity and affinity, as Lévi-Strauss indicates, a matter of little analytical relevance. What the cultural construction of the marital bond as genealogical siblingship implies is the necessity for us also to analytically unify these two forms rather than keep them separate. Metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) remark, are not about semantic transfers in which the primary referent of a term is extended to encompass a distinct semantic field. Rather, metaphors 'organise a whole system of concepts with respect to one another' (1980: 461), thereby, establishing homologies and revealing unities. They do so, Lakoff and Johnson continue, by hiding those aspects of the terms or semantic fields that are markedly different, and emphasising those aspects that are similar. Moreover, the homology thus established is not 'a matter of language' but of thought and action (see also Jackson 1983). In the case of the two forms of siblingship, that of the marital bond till the stage marked by the birth of the first child and that of the full siblings till the point they start marrying off and establishing separate households, the homology concerns co-habitation and commensality, the sharing of the same place, i.e. house, and of the same food (see also Carsten 1997). It also involves the sharing of all the households' possessions, which include the physical structure, the land and other *pusaka* (inherited objects, Ind.).[8]

If genealogical full siblings are identical with respect to being consubstantial because of sharing the same blood lines, the same house and same food, husbands and wives are thought of as becoming identical due to the latter two kinds of sharing. In Houses defined with respect to full-siblingship, the unitary ancestral source embodied in shared blood is socially manifested, validated, recreated and augmented not only through the sharing of 'material and immaterial wealth' but also through the everyday act of eating together food produced from the same land and cooked in the same hearth (Carsten 1995b). The similarity of the source of food and of its making further reinforces the blood and bodies full siblings have in common as a consequence of being born from the same parents. Husbands and wives are construed as having different blood and different ancestral hearths. Their co-habitation, though, is the start of a process of producing consubstantiality through sharing the same place and food. Their essential heterogeneity is thus, gradually diluted through the performance of acts of caring and nurturing for each other. Such activities have substantial

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[7] Close relatives of the *kyai* are designated as *oreng ndalem* (people of the inside, Mad.). The term *ndalem* means literary the 'house' but it is reserved exclusively for a *kyai*'s house since commoners' houses are denoted with the term *compok* (Mad.). A *kyai*'s sons carries the title of *pintere* or *non* or *gus* (Jav.) and his daughters that of *ni*.

[8] This account of kinship in Java departs from that of Geertz (1961) that posits the nuclear family as the most significant structural group. My account here follows Carsten's (1997) on the significance of food sharing for the definition of the House. Niehof (1985) stresses too the correspondences partaking among hearth, food, and the House. On the other hand, It is also very different from the way Kipp (1983) talks about 'lovers as siblings' for the case of the Karo Batak of Sumatra since my understanding of metaphor is based on different grounds.

consequences for the food they have jointly produced through their labour and consumed, is transformed into blood through the digestive capacities of the *hate*. [9]

Houses are for full siblings, post-natal wombs in which blood feeding continues to take place. Their only difference from gestation wombs is, that this time, blood is presented and consumed in mediated and cooked form. The consumption of this food relates them both performatively and substantially to previous generations of relatives since it usually comes from agricultural fields passed down as inheritance. Married couples too consume blood in mediated form. For them, the House can also be said to constitute another womb since it aims to reconfigure their personhood in performative and substantial ways.

The importance of food for the definition of the House is made overt in another context as well. In the generally uxorilocal society of Alas Niser, among the more well-to-do villagers, daughters, upon their marriage, are given as inheritance a house to reside with their husband, the house itself being usually located within the same yard (*tanean*, Mad.) as that of the bride's parents. However, in cases in which for financial or other reasons, the newly married couple is to reside in the same house with the bride's parents, the couple's autonomy and sense of separation as a distinct unit from that of the bride's parents, is expressed in two ways; either through the construction of a new hearth which is to be used exclusively by the newly weds or the cooking of separate meals in the same old hearth which are to be eaten though, separately (see also Niehof 1985: 147-167). In this case, the hearth and the processes of cooking and eating are metonyms for the House and the sibling bond that lies at its core. At the same time, the construction of a new house or a new hearth marks the inauguration of the division of property the set of full-siblings held in common till that moment. Thus, the construction of a new house or hearth marks the beginning of the dissolution of a particular form of siblingship and its substitution with a new one, that between husband and wife. From that moment on, genealogical siblings would start to trace their relations both horizontally and vertically, that is, with respect to descending generations, quite differently.

The cultural emphasis on siblingship has profound consequences for the articulation of personhood. Personhood is relational from the outset with the person being thought of as 'plural' and 'composite' (though, not 'partible') (Strathern 1988: 13). Its imagining as 'a composite site' and a 'social microcosm' in East Java, is, first and foremost, an attribute of siblingship. Within the womb, the foetus enjoys siblingship with the placenta. Both are created through the efficacy of a relationship, that of the conjugal couple (see Headley 1987a). The foetus and the placenta are thought of as having been conceived at the same moment, through the same act. Furthermore, they are co-substantial, co-habit the same place and are co-fed. Outside the womb, the child is a member of a sibling set. It continues

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[9] In India, Busby (2000) reports that sharing food cooked in the same hearth marks the House too. In her case, the husbands' and wives' closeness and intimacy is manifested and produced through eating food from the same plate.

to grow through nurture and care. Genealogical siblings are not thought of as having been conceived through the same act, save for twins. However, they are co-substantial in terms of blood lines and co-habit the same place, the House. Couples are thought of as becoming siblings due to co-habitation and reciprocal acts of nurture. Their co-substantiality, as we will see later on, will be established with the birth of children.

Measuring bodies

The Madurese language system of reckoning kinship exhibits most of the features Errington (1987) considers as common in societies that belong to the 'Centrist Archipelago'. Since I have already commented on the first one, that of its strong emphasis on siblingship (McKinley 1981), I will go on to show how ideas of conception, blood and place are at the very centre of systems of classifying other categories of relatives. In particular, I will look at kinship terminology and argue that the terminological arrangement of kin is premised on the construction of correspondences between different degrees of shared blood and different categories of shared place. I will concern myself here though only with Madurese terminology since most of the people in Alas Niser speak Madurese as their mother tongue. It is important to note here that Javanese terminology is basically identical with Madurese kinship terminology with respect to its general structural principles (see Geertz 1961; Jay 1969).

Madurese relationship terminology divides people into generational levels.[10] It is, thus, of the Hawaiian type. Reference terminology reckons four generational levels above ego, that is, the sibling set, and four below it. The generation one level above ego's consists of parents and their full siblings reckoned bilaterally. From ego's perspective, parents are distinguished linguistically from their siblings, while gender is also recognised. Thus, the term for father is *a'pak* or *eppa*, for mother it is *ebbu*, *embu*, *e'mak* or *ibuk* (see Table). Siblings of the parents are generically referred to as *majadi*, a term that also does not differentiate them as to their gender. There are though, specific terms of address for aunts and uncles and the same terms apply to both father's and mother's siblings. These terms of address also reveal the birth order of the person referred to in relation to ego's parents. In other words, they do reveal whether the aunt in question is a younger or older sister of the father or the mother. Thus, a parent's younger sister is addressed as *bebhek* while an older sister as *buoning*. Similarly, a parent's younger brother is addressed as *guteh* while an older brother as *obak*.

It is obvious, then, that siblingship also forms one of the central principles of kinship terminology since generational levels correspond to sets of full siblings classified together

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[10] For other accounts on Madurese kinship terminology based on research on the island of Madura see Niehof 1985 and Mansurnoor 1990: 80-89.

(Errington 1989: 409; McKinley 1981: 346). The genealogical level consisting of the parents and their siblings is succeeded in upward movement by that of ego's grandparents and their siblings, all referred to and addressed as *embah*. *Embah lake* is used for males of this generational level and *embah bine* for females. No distinctions are explicitly drawn at this generational level between younger and older siblings of the grandparents, for, to the best of my knowledge, there are no corresponding terms. Birth order does emerge, though, as relevant when terms of address between second-cousins are at issue. Next comes the generational level of great-grandparents and their siblings, all referred to as *bujuk*, although, the term *ja'i* is also used, albeit infrequently. Once again, considerations of birth order among siblings of this generational level become manifest in terms of address relating to third cousins. Above them, it is the genealogical level of the great- great- grandparents and their siblings who are referred to as *grubek*. The further a relative is located from ego the less relevant gender and birth order become in the kinship terminology. I have rarely heard people in Alas Niser making such distinctions when talking about either their *bujuk* or *grubek*.

Birth order distinctions among ancestors are manifested in relations in the present, though. Thus, the terms of address employed among first, second and third cousins all follow from hierarchical distinctions associated with the birth order of the ancestral full sibling set to which related persons trace their genealogy. Younger full siblings address their older full siblings as *cacak* or *cak* if the addressed person is male, and as *iyu* or *yu* if the addressed person is female. Older full siblings address their younger full siblings as *alek*; *alek lake* is reserved for younger male while *alek bine* for younger female full siblings. The same address terms are used among first, second and third cousins. The precise usage, though, is not determined by the cousins' relative ages but, rather, by the birth order of the ancestors through which cousins are related. Thus, ego would call a first cousin of his *alek* only if the parent of ego was older than the parent of his first cousin, the parents in question being full siblings. Similarly, ego would call a second cousin of his *alek* if the second cousin's grandparent was a younger full sibling of ego's own grandparent. Equally, ego would call a male third cousin of his *cacak* if the third cousins' great- grandparent was an older full sibling of ego's own grandparent. It is obvious then, that not only are hierarchical terminological distinctions transported across generational levels and genealogical time but also that kinship is articulated in conjunction to past full siblingship (McKinley 1981: 367; Carsten 1997: 87).

The generations below ego are also classed as sets of siblings. Ego refers to his/her children as *anak* or, simply, *nak*, and to his/her siblings' children as *ponakan*. The same term is also used for the children of ego's spouse's siblings. One addresses, though, one's son with the same term as that for one's sibling's son, that is as *kacong* or *cong*. Similarly, one addresses one's daughter with the same term as that for one's sibling's daughter, that is as *cebbing* or *bing*. Grandparents, great- grandparents and great- great- grandparents address their grandchildren, great- grandchildren and great- great- grandchildren respectively by the above terms as well. *Kacong* and *cebbing* have thus, a wide currency as kinship terms and

grubek

bujuk

embah   embah   embah

majadi   a'pak   ebbu   majadi   majadi

sepopo   tretan   ego   tretan   sepopo   dupopo

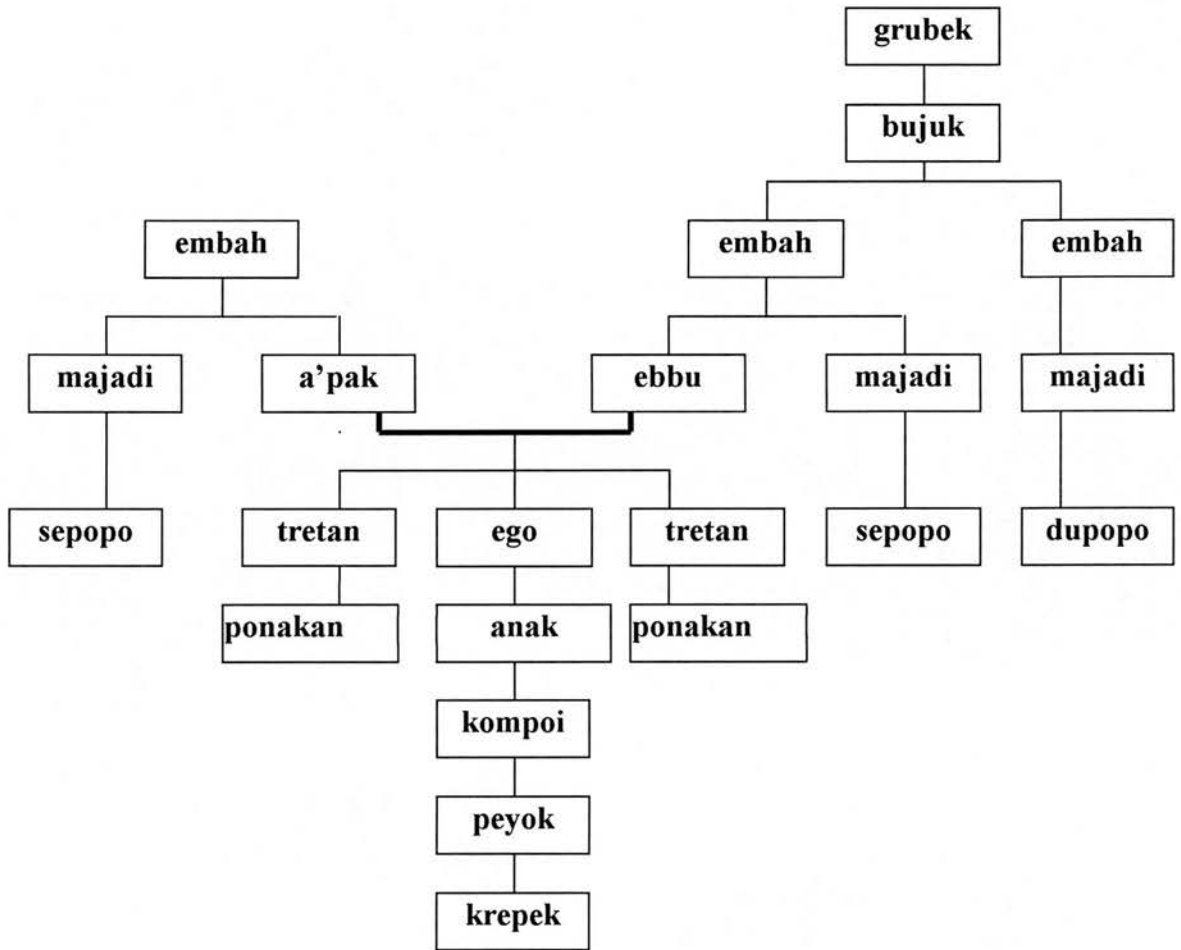ponakan   anak   ponakan

kompoi

peyok

krepek

Table 1. Madurese kinship terminology
(see also Mansunoor 1990: 81-82; Husson 1995: 301)

most often, denote and designate quite young and unmarried members of a kindred. The next generational level, below that of children, is that of grandchildren and their siblings, generically referred to with the term *kompoi*. Great grandchildren and their siblings are designated as *peyok* and great, great grandchildren and their siblings as *krepek*.

The generational level of ego ranges from ego's full siblings to distant cousins. Kinship terminology recognises only four degrees of siblingship with third degree cousins forming the very limit of linguistically acknowledged kinship. The reference term for full siblings is *satretan*, for first degree siblings *tretan sepopo*, for second degree *tretan dupopo* and for third degree *tretan telopopo* (see Table). For those located further away, the generic term *tretan* is used, albeit somewhat vaguely, since people are rarely sure of the exact genealogical level of past siblingship out of which relationships in the present can be traced. Thus, the terminological recognition of four degrees of siblingship in the present is in correspondence with the reckoning of four generational levels of ancestors above ego. Therefore, degrees of present siblingship are thought of as stemming from past full siblingships among shared ancestors (McKinley 1981: 369). According to this mode of thinking, different degrees of siblingship correspond to different generational levels of past full siblingship, meaning that the more removed a past full siblingship is from the present the less close siblings are to be arranged in ego's level. Thus, while twice removed past full siblingship is evoked in relations between *tretan dupopo*, thrice removed past full siblingship accounts for relations between *tretan telopopo*.

It is my understanding that the terminological articulation of different degrees of siblingship in the present forms partly a linguistic reflection of different amounts of shared blood. In this sense, body-persons are measured in terms of their degree of co-substantiality. If ancestral sets of full siblings are conceptualised as being co-substantial and identical, it is only logical that their offspring should be classified according to the amount of ancestral substance they have in common. Shared substance, that is ancestral blood in the form of either semen, uterine blood and food, is conceived as thinning out the further that the sets of ancestral full siblings are removed from the present. This thinning out is itself the result of marrying either out of the kindred or very close to its periphery, for new substances, new blood comes to be introduced in the corporeal making of related persons as an outcome of conception, uterine growth and feeding. While full siblings have identical bodies as they are made out of exactly the same substances, first degree siblings have near identical bodies. Their difference is to be attributed to sharing only half of identical persons as parents, i.e. having only half of their blood in common. Similarly, second degree siblings have even less similar bodies, as theirs have only one quarter blood in common, a result of kinship connections mediated by two successive cases of out-marriage. Third degree siblings' bodies are only marginally similar since their shared corporeality is already too far compromised by three out-marriages.

My aim here is not to provide a kind of kinship mathematics but, taking my cue from ideas of procreation and corporeal constitution, to show their consequences for measuring kinship. The assumption that kinship is locally conceived as thinning out the less blood is shared, that is as a kind of concentric sociality which has full siblingship as its centre, is confirmed by another terminological arrangement. People in Alas Niser, as in Madura (see Mansurnoor 1990: 80-81; Husson 1995: 301), divide the kindred (*bala*, Mad.) into three categories. It is here that incest rules came into play most forcefully. The first category is that of *bala dalem*, the 'inside kindred'. At the generational levels above ego, it usually encompasses that of the parents and their siblings, along with that of the grandparents and, in some cases, their siblings too. At the generational levels below ego, it involves that of the children and their first degree siblings (ego's *ponakan*), along with their own children (ego's *kompoi*) while in some cases, the children of *ponakan* would also be considered as members. At the generational level of ego, it includes one's zero and first degree siblings.

The categories of relatives included in *bala dalem* are all prohibited from inter-marriage. This prohibition rests on a double basis. As Errington notes for kinship in other parts of the Centrist Archipelago, cross-level marriage is 'ungrammatical in this sort of system, on two counts: it could confuse both the classification of people and authority relations' (1987: 411). It is also related to Islamic stipulations regarding incest as cited in the Quran, most notably in *Surat An-Nisaa*, verses 22-23. The prohibitions surrounding *bala dalem* relatives though, were justified to me on grounds of 'descent' (*toronan*, Mad.).

As I have shown in the previous chapter, *toronan* is a shorthand for genealogy and the vertical flow of blood. Its occurrence here, provides us with an explanation for the avoidance, rather than prohibition, of marrying first degree siblings, which people in Alas Niser readily acknowledge.[11] This specific avoidance is of central importance here for it is absent from Islamic rules of incest since in the Quran first cousin marriage is allowed and in certain Islamic countries this type of marriage is sometimes preferred. When I repeatedly asked locals about the reasons for avoiding this type of marriage, the evocation of *toronan* was coupled with the fear that such a marriage would possibly produce mentally and physically 'defective' offspring.[12] Similar images of monstrous offspring were also offered as explanations of the prohibition against incestuous full siblings' unions. In the latter case, the production of 'defective' offspring is accorded the place of a certainty. It is clear then, that incest rules both define *bala dalem*'s boundaries with respect to ego's layer and further articulate degrees of corporeal similarity. The substances first degree siblings are made of

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[11] I have recorded only two cases of first degree sibling inter-marriage which confirms the fact that it is more of a case of a strong avoidance rather than strict prohibition. It is also worth noting that the people concerned were in both cases members of the religious and landed local elite and justified the marriage in terms of its permissibility with respect to Islam. Non-elite villagers consider such marriage as relating to the protection of 'family' property from further divisions and, thus, as a strategy for the perpetuation of economic status.

[12] Banks (1983) reports that Malays interpret incest prohibitions in a similar manner, emphasising that 'too much shared "blood"' between the spouses would be detrimental to the moral and physical improvement of 'the lineages of the believers' (1983: 54).

are thought to be too similar and so intensely shared that necessitate their near exclusion from forms of desired physical reproduction. The belief in the engendering of 'defective' offspring thus, speaks as much of first cousins' identity as it does of marriage requiring a higher degree of difference so as to be appropriately fertile.

Outside the circle of the 'relatives of the inside', lies the *bala dibik*, the 'close kindred'. It is however, far from clear which categories of relatives are part of it. Second cousins at ego's generational layer do form part of *bala dibik* since incest prohibitions and avoidances cease to operate among second degree siblings. Some people would incorporate third degree siblings in *bala dibik* while others would most definitely disagree with this. The latter would assign third degree siblings to *bala jauh*, that is to distant kin, while others would consider only unspecified categories of *tretan*, more distant than third cousins, as members of this category. The fluidity and permeability of the boundaries of both *bala dibik* and *bala jauh* with respect to ego's generational layer, has partly to do with the irrelevance of incest for regulating relationships among siblings of the second degree and beyond. The same fluidity is encountered with respect to generational levels both above and below that of ego, despite of the fact that cross-generational marriage is avoided. While grandparents are always designated as member of *bala dalem*, their siblings were sometimes construed as laying outside *bala dalem* and within *bala dibik*. Similarly, great grandparents and their siblings would be presented to have alternate memberships in the categories of close or distant kin. The same was also true for younger persons of the categories of *peyok* and *krepek*.

Part of the reasons that can account for the fluidity of these successive concentric categories of kin is a certain spatialisation of kinship effected through the institution of *tanean* (Mad.).[13] If, as I have shown above, genealogical and affinal siblingship find their spatial reflection in the household, i.e. the 'domestic' House, degrees of more distant siblingship are equally spatialised in the form of the residential compound (*tanean*, Mad., literally, yard). *Tanean* are made up of people whose ancestors, being full siblings, shared a common house in the past. That house, designated by the term *patobin* (or *compo' toa*, Mad., the old house) and normally situated at the northern side of the yard, forms along with the *langgar*, the small prayer house, usually situated at the north-west part of the compound's land, the focal points of the residential cluster. A *tanean* consists of other houses too, inhabited by the offspring of that initial set of full siblings. These houses are located both to the west and the east of the *patobin*, as well as opposite to it, forming another line of houses. These two parallel lines of houses are spatially 'joined' at the top of the *tanean*, designated by the *langgar* 's position.

The *tanean* does not hold either material or immaterial wealth in common. Nor does it possess a distinctive name or title. Thus, it can not be thought of as a House in Levi-Straussian terms (1982). The *tanean* does not form a hearth-unit either, since everyday cooking and eating is carried out within the separate houses making up the *tanean*.

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[13] For accounts of similar residential patterns in Madura see Niehof 1985: 149-171, Jordaan 1985:112-118, and Jonge 1989: 13-17.

Moreover, food exchanges within the *tanean* do not follow qualitatively different patterns from food exchanges taking place within the neighbourhood (*kampong*) (see Chapter 6). In addition, *tanean* does not constitute a worship community, Errington's (1989) criterion for the definition of the House, since, as we shall see in the next chapter, *tanean* depend on the ritual services of a wider network of sociality. This sociality is based on relations of physical proximity beyond the *tanean's* boundaries.[14] However, residential compounds in Alas Niser do exhibit a series of characteristics that construe them as co-extensive with the idea of the House.

Tanean are a spatial manifestation of the shared substance embodied by its living members. The tracing of this embodiment leads to the ancestral house, out of which the *tanean* sprang. *Tanean* is also to be identified with the land on which it stands. However, this land is not corporately held since divisions of property follow shortly after marriage and the establishment of new households. On the other hand, the land on which the *tanean* stands connects, through its co-occupation, all the *tanean's* members. Furthermore, it connects them with a specific set of ancestors they all share. These are the ancestors who first built the *patobin* and established the yard as a residential space. Place and blood, the sharing of substance and the sharing of place, are the organising principles of kinship, manifested once again in the correspondence of *tanean* with degrees of siblingship.

There is quite wide variation as to *tanean* membership in Alas Niser. Except for tracing relations to an initial set of siblings, *tanean's* residents' kinship connections are usually mediated through women. Because of a strong preference for uxorilocality in Alas Niser, daughters inherit houses. This means that the different houses comprising a *tanean* are all related through females, in their different capacities as daughters and granddaughters, sisters, first cousins or second cousins and so on. Here, we find manifested, once again, the idea of the House as a womb, and of femaleness' pairing with feeding and growth. The raising of the young offspring is carried out within the *tanean's* environs, at least during childhood, as its yard forms the primary meeting place for both the different houses' offspring and mothers who attend to their children collectively from their overcrowded front porches. If for Houses, sharing the same food on an everyday basis is partly what maintains and augments kinship, then in the case of *tanean*, it is the sharing of the immediate space outside the house as the centre of activities that achieves the same thing. Child rearing is one such activity as well as other tasks involving labour and support networks. In this case too, it is women who are construed as the primary agents of kinship connectedness.

These women are usually siblings of different degrees. Among the most recently founded *tanean*, these women are full, first or second siblings. Such was the case with a *tanean* in an adjacent neighbourhood to mine, which consisted of a total of seven houses. The older couples of this *tanean*, comprised the married children (one female and one male)

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14 It thus, does not conform either to Errington's definition of the Houses in insular Southeast Asia as 'worship communities unified around the pusaka [inherited wealth] they hold' (1987: 406).

of the ancestral couple that founded the *tanean*, shared their separate houses with one of their married daughter's families. Each older couple had erected a separate house for the rest of their married daughters (three in total, two from one couple and one from the other) who were living there together with their in-married husbands and young children. Two of these women who were first cousins, had one married child each (the rest were still too young). These married children, who were second cousins, lived also in the *tanean* in separate houses. Among the more remotely founded *tanean*, the siblingship of the members is more distant. As in the case of the *tanean* I was living in, siblingship among the female heads of houses extended beyond the fourth degree, as the *tanean* traced its establishment to a couple situated six generations back in time and long dead. The *tanean* was made up of only nine houses, meaning that only a very small fraction of the female offspring of the ancestral couple were currently members of the compound. Due to unavailability of land for the erection of new houses, circumstances having to do with the economic status of female offspring's parents-in-law, and intra-*tanean* disputes, the majority of offspring were living in other *tanean*, some acting as founders in their own respect.

It is my understanding that there is a correlation between *tanean* kinship composition and kindred boundary articulation. Though difficult to demonstrate in a straightforward fashion, I think that the fluidity of the boundaries of the kinship categories of *bala dibik* and *bala jauh* as exemplified by the ambiguous statements of my informants, reflect the spatial character of kinship (Errington 1987: 417-418; Carsten 1997). Siblings of the third degree and beyond can be thought of as 'close kin' in cases where they co-habit the same space. Alternatively, they may be thought of as 'distant kin' if they live in different *tanean*. As such, the intimacy with which degrees of siblingship are accorded is the outcome of complex histories of residential arrangements, which are highly varied. The same goes for people of both descending and ascending generations. Siblings of the grandparents would be classified as *bala dalem* relatives, if they have been sharing the same compound with ego. Moreover, in cases where great grandparents were living in physical proximity with my interlocutor, he/she would assign them the status of 'close relatives'. This particular interaction of genealogy and place is also confirmed by the fact that the two cases of first degree siblings marriage I know of, involved siblings who lived in different compounds. Despite of the strong avoidance, their marriage was deemed as relatively 'safe' for their close genealogical connection was dissociated from close spatial interaction.

Kinship terminology and usage reveals an important aspect of how locals of Alas Niser think of categories of kin and of the principles applied to their classification. Kinship in Alas Niser is an attribute of relations predicated on genealogy and place. Furthermore, it is culturally epitomised in the relationship of siblings. Different degrees of siblingship are construed as corresponding to different amounts of shared blood and to different spatial categories organised in concentric circles. These categories begin with the womb, extend to the domestic House, then, to the *tanean* House and, as we shall see in the next chapter,

encompass the neighbourhood. Similarly, different degrees of blood trace degrees of corporeal identity to ascending generations of ancestors. In this system of reckoning kinship, siblingship is doubly determined. Blood and space rather than being distinctive idioms of kinship, as Gow (1991:161) argues with one being more dominant than the other, interact, articulate and reinforce one another. At the same time, they allow room for terminological adjustments reflecting the particularities of specific case histories.

Milk siblingship and adoption

The practices and beliefs surrounding breastfeeding and adoption further corroborate my contention that kinship is contingent upon ideas of blood and place. In Alas Niser, three *slametan* (Jav.; *konjengen*, Mad.) are held around the time of birth (see also Wessing 1974: 230-244). The first is held at the seventh month of pregnancy (*tingkeban*, Jav.), the second forty days after delivery (*tasmian*, Mad.; *keto rikno*, Jav.) and the third when the baby is seven months old (*toron tana*, Mad.; *pitonan*, Jav.).[15] While the first, as Geertz notes, 'represents the introduction of the Javanese woman into motherhood' (1960: 39), the second informs the baby's kinship status. In turn, the third introduces the child as a member of the locality through the ritually regulated first contact it has with the soil. For reasons of space, I will concentrate on the *tasmian* and ignore the other two for it is the second ritual that is most revealing for my purposes.

The holding of the *tasmian* ritual meal involves a name giving and a hair-cutting stage, amid Quranic recitations and Allah-glorifying exhortations. The *tasmian* also involves commensality marked by the presence of a collection of specific ritual dishes such as cakes of sticky rice wrapped in banana leaves (*lepat,* Ind.), rice wrapped in diamond-shaped coconut leaves (*ketupat*, Ind.) and a cone of rice with a whole chicken in it (*rashol*, Mad.), along with the five coloured rice porridge (*tajin lemah berna*, Mad.). The name of the child is first announced to the guests who will number 30-40 in most cases, the majority of whom are male relatives and neighbours. The child's name is announced by the presiding *kyai* in a

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[15] For an account of birth related rites in East Java during the 1950s, see Geertz (1960: 38-50). My delineation of birth rites here is somewhat different from these reported by Geertz in the sense that in Alas Niser fewer stages of the child's development are ritually marked. This might be due to the impact of modernisation. I also suspect that it has also to do with the fact that I conducted research in a more Islamised millieu than Geertz. This has a bearing because Geertz classified such rites as within the *kejawen* tradition. For an account of the rite marking the seventh month of pregnancy (*rasol pellet kandong*) in Madura and the rite celebrating forty days after delivery (*molang are*) see Niehof 1985: 231-234, 245-248. Geertz reports that the naming of the baby takes place in a *slametan* held five days after delivery, while another one might be held a month after birth. In Alas Niser, naming takes place during the fortieth day gathering. In Madura, Niehof reports that while the baby is ritually bathed and has his/her hair treated on the seventh day after delivery, his/her kinship status is defined at the fortieth day gathering.

speech that opens the ceremony, while the hair cutting ceremony follows the recitation of the appropriate Quranic sections. The child, who is introduced to the congregation by his/her father wrapped in red cloth, has its hair cut with a pair of scissors first by the *kyai*, and then by the other participants. After every cutting, the scissors are ritually cleaned by being sprinkled with water that has been mixed with three kinds of flowers. Immediately afterwards, the baby, still in its father's arms, is placed in front of the *kyai* who recites a prayer and announces for the second time the child's name. A collective prayer follows, and the short ceremony finishes with the presentation of food, cups of tea and cigarettes to everyone present.

This simple ritual marks the end of the forty day period in which the mother has been secluded in the house due to being in a state of ritual impurity (*nifas*, Arab.). It also marks the baby's transformation into a more fully social person through the name it is given. Among the several things the ritual achieves, I wish to concetrate upon one, which is related to the establishment of a set of kinship relations for the child. This aspect is related to the fact that this same ritual is also the one traditionally employed in the adoption of children.

While Islam does not recognise the legality of adoptions having no such concept (Schacht 1964: 166), *tasmian* was referred to by several informants as a Muslim ritual. At the same time, while legal procedures for the adoption of children have been put in place by the Indonesian state in recent decades, people in Alas Niser in most cases still opt for performing adoptions through ritual means. Rituals of adoption do not involve 'the signing of papers', as they put it. Part of the reason for the persistence of this practice relates to the fact that in most cases childless couples look for sons and daughters from either close relatives or close neighbours. In this case, the high degree of trust involved in such social relationships both legitimises and guarantees the validity and relative future incontestability of the transfer. In the two cases I know where adoption took place through state procedures, the couples involved were unrelated and thus, in need of the authority of a third party that could sanction the agreement.

The stress on ritually performed and sanctioned adoption is accompanied by a desire for prior relatedness and a strong preference for babies who are less than forty days old. The latter is achieved through the agreement being made while the baby is still unborn, and most often after the seventh month of pregnancy. In such cases, the *tasmian* is held at the house of the 'adoptive parents' (*sepo angkak*, Mad.) with the responsibility for the expenses falling to the adoptive mother's parents. During the proceedings, no mention is made as to the rituals' status as an adoption ceremony. Everything takes place as if the baby is the outcome of the undifferentiated mixture of the paternal and maternal substances contributed by the 'parents'. The baby is named, has his/her hair cut and is presented to the community in the arms of his/her adoptive father. The couple from which the baby has been 'taken' (*ngalak*, Mad.) are present at the ritual as either relatives or neighbours, depending on the specific circumstances. From this point, it is the adoptive parents who are held responsible for

performing the main duties of parenthood, such as nurturing and caring for the baby, providing the baby with all the material and immaterial necessities for leading a good life. Also from this time onwards, the child stands to inherit part of its adoptive parents' property, a practice supported by custom though not by Islamic law. The child is also under an obligation to provide for his/her adoptive parents in their old age and pray for them after their death.

The unmarked status of the ritual would, thus, lead us to believe that locals draw no distinctions between adopted and non-adopted, 'real' (*asle*, Mad.) children, as both ritual proceedings and practices seem to negate such difference. This assumption is underlined by the preference for adopting children from close relatives, that is people one shares a certain degree of corporeal similarity with. However, in other contexts, the difference between adopted and 'real' children is stressed. I have already commented on the non-inherited character of *elmo* in the previous chapter. In this case, corporeal difference between parents and children stands in the way of the transmission of valuable knowledge/power.

This distinction also appears in classificatory terminology. *Anak ngalak* (Mad.), that is 'taken' or 'raised' children, are differentiated from *anak kandung* (Mad.), that is 'children of the womb'. The fact that the distinction is not a mere linguistic one became apparent to me while I was interviewing people on a variety of topics. Among the standard questions I would ask respondents was whether they had children and how many they had. In most of the cases of adoptive parenthood I came to know in this manner, the interviewees neglected to mention that they had adopted children, at first, replying that they had none (*tak endik*, Mad.). In several cases, their reply was accompanied by stating that they were *rogi* (Mad.). *Rogi* carries the meaning of loss and damage and is most often used in relation to financial loss, as when the money and labour one has invested in an economic activity has not paid off enough to, at the very least, recoup the initial investment. In this context, *rogi* refers to a marriage that did not bear the expected fruits, and conveys the shame (*todus*, Mad.) that is associated with being childless. Shame is still experienced by adoptive parents as their inclusion in the category of being full social persons, a category basically dependent upon being an *eppa* (father) or an *ebbu* (mother), is somewhat based on 'borrowed' ground and the general unease they seemed to feel when talking about this issue.

The uncertainty and ambivalence with which adopted children and adoption, in general, are viewed in Alas Niser is partly related to the absence of formal Islamic rules and procedures sanctioning adoption. This is compounded by the lack of guidance in the Quran in regards to whether or not a relationship between either an adoptive parent and a child or between siblings through adoption would constitute incest. However, people in Alas Niser found the idea of such marriages unthinkable. This is possibly related to the symbolic connections established through the House, like performative parenthood and everyday commensality, according to which people who share the same place are also construed as co-substantial. Local Islamic scholars pointed out that Islamic incest rules clearly and

unambiguously covered only full siblings, or as one of them put it, 'absolute siblings' (*saudara secara mutlak*, Ind.) and 'absolute children and parents' as well as step-children (*anak tiri*, Ind.) and step-parents. While the first two categories, they claimed, were prohibited from marriage on grounds of direct descent (*toronan*), the marriages of the third category were forbidden on the grounds of the nature of the bond (*musharah*, Arab., generally standing for sexual intercourse) existing between the step-parent and the 'real' parent of the child.[16]

While such issues seem to fall into an unmapped, grey area in which local custom, world religion, state laws and kinship symbolism are in a process of negotiation and ongoing semantic rearrangement, kinship established through shared breastmilk is an uncontested and wholly unambivalent fact. This is exemplified by the avoidance of breastfeeding a child who is not one's own direct descendant. In cases where the rule is broken, children who have been breasted, even for a moment, from the same woman are designated as *tretan sosoan* (Mad.), that is as milk siblings. Marriage between milk siblings is as forbidden as that between full siblings.[17] Such a prohibition, which effectively makes milk siblings identical with full siblings, is phrased in terms of common descent (*toronan*). This relates once again to local ideas about blood, specifically the pairing of blood with breastmilk.

For women, the period following childbirth, and especially the first forty days, is marked, amongst other things, by the consumption of large quantities of herbal medicines (*jamo*, Mad.). While some of these are easily found in industrially processed form (*jamo pabrik*) at the roadside stalls or general purpose stores, some others like *jamo kepuh* and *jamo sere* are still prepared by the women themselves. Each *jamo* is endowed with a specific efficacy. For example, *jamo sere* (from *sere*, Mad., for betel vine) or its industrial substitute, *jamo slapan*, is thought of as instrumental in cleaning unwanted gestation and childbirth leftovers from a woman's womb. Similarly, *jamo kepuh*, made from the leaves of the *kepuh* tree (*Pangium Edule*) is consumed so that the mother generates large quantities of breastmilk to feed the baby.

The most important *jamo* though, is *jamo pejjeen* (Mad.). This *jamo* consists of a variety of ingredients from the *Curcuma* variety of spices and plants. In particular, it is made from *temo labek* (*Curcuma Xanthorrhiza*), *temo ereng* (*Curcuma Aeruginasa*), *temo jrengok* (?), *temo konceh* (*Gastrochilus Pandurata*), leaves of the *mem'beh* tree (*Endospermum Malaccense*), *acem* (tamarind) and salt, all boiled together. It is a strong, dark-coloured and

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[16] However, in cases when no sexual intercourse has taken place between the married parents, the marriage of a step-father to his step-daughter, for example, is allowed. According to Islam, marriage between step-siblings is permissible.

[17] Geertz reports that the Islamic restriction prohibiting people who have suckled from the same breast was observed in Java during the fifties (1961: 59). Both Banks (1983: 67) and Carsten (1997: 126-127) stress this Islamic prohibition as well as the fact that such a prohibition is related to Malay ideas that construe breastmilk as a form of blood. The general notion of milk sharing generating kinship due to its connections to blood is also present in the Middle East (see Altorki 1988; Eickelman 1984: 97-98), the Muslim South Asia (Rao 2000) and the Christian North Sulawesi (Cedercreutz 1999: 103).

thick drink that is supposed to be consumed throughout the first forty days after childbirth, three times a day by the mother. This herbal potion is held to be endowed with the efficacy for turning the mother's blood into breastmilk. As *ebbu* Salmah, a mother of five and a midwife herself, explained to me: 'breastmilk is blood; the breastmilk that [resides] inside the mother is blood but it comes out white' (*aeng soso reah, dereh; aeng soso ning delem ebbu, dereh tape kalowar poteh*, Mad.). *Jamo pejjeen* is the substance that, once incorporated in a woman's body at an appropriate time metamorphosises her blood in the same way that male semen does. While semen merges with uterine blood to generate the foetus, *jamo pejjeen* merges with the blood residing in a mother's breast so that it generates breastmilk, or as the same informant put it, 'the outcoming blood is not red' (*sopaya dereh kalowar tak' merah*, Mad.).

New-born babies are held as continuing to need to be fed by blood in a mediated form. Such feeding is both related to the performative aspects of motherhood and its contribution to child's growth, through the love, attention and the care the child receives, and to the continuous transfer of bodily substance. In other words, nurture and caring as signs of love of the parent are closely integrated with a cultural focus on the transmission of bodily substance, which become indistinguishable as idioms of kinship. In cases where no *jamo pejjeen* is consumed by the mother, it is held that she will be incapable for producing milk. Alternatively, it is believed that the substance that comes out of her breasts, though white in appearance, will be poisonous and might cause the death of the ingesting child. Thus, a mother's first obligation is the preparation and consumption of *jamo pejjeen* which renders her 'white blood' harmless and appropriate for the baby's food. This is significant for human beings, who unlike certain spirits and animals, are not supposed to consume blood. As feeding on blood directly is an act inappropriate for humans, the baby's growth rests on a mediatory act performed by the mother. Such an act reinforces further the corporeality a mother shares with the child.

The idea that breastmilk is actually transmuted blood helps explain both the avoidance of breastfeeding babies other than one's own and the formation of the category of *tretan sosoan*. The avoidance is locally explained by the fear that the blood-turned-into-milk of another woman will not be 'compatible' (*cocok*) with the baby's own, causing the baby to fall sick. Since people are thought of as being made from different kinds of blood, in kinship, ethnic and political terms, it logically follows that some kinds of blood are construed as being so heterogeneous as to be incompatible. Moreover, the idea of compatibility is central to local practices concerned with the selection of appropriate marriage partners. It is held that spouse incompatibility is usually the cause behind cases of divorce, severe illness and/or the death of a spouse. Though I was unable to have my informants specify exactly who is deemed inappropriate for breastfeeding another's child, the parallels existing between marriage and breastfeeding imply that the blood of only some categories of women is thought of as appropriate.

With respect to kinship, the formation of the category of milk siblings is quite straightforward. Babies who have sucked from the same woman come to share her blood and, therefore, to have blood in common. Milk sharing establishes kinship between previously unrelated persons. Kinship relations predicated on breastfeeding are thought of as similar to kinship relations characterising genealogically connected persons. This is underlined by the strict prohibition on the inter-marriage of milk siblings on grounds of shared descent. Such a prohibition is sanctioned not only by local ideas about the origin of breastmilk and its connections to blood and genealogy, but also by local understandings of the Quran and the Hadith.

Kyai Salahuddin, the potent healer of our previous chapter, translated for me the corresponding section of verse 23 of *Surat An-Nisaa* as relating to the prohibition of marriage between 'you and the woman who gave you suck at her breast' (*kakeh ban binne se berriq aeng soso*, Mad.). He added that 'such a woman is like a mother to you' (*binne reah pada ban ebbu kakeh*, Mad.). *Kyai* Salahuddin also refered to the prohibition of marriage between 'you and your breast suckling sister' (*kakeh ban alek binne aeng soso*, Mad.). On another occasion, the same issue came up while conversing with another local *kyai*, *kyai* Abdul Rohim. He made the same point but this time with reference to the Hadith. *kyai* Abdul Rohim got his book of Bukhori and Muslim, a much revered collection of stories relating to words and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed and a major source for the understanding of religious issues throughout the Muslim world, out of his small library and, having found the relevant page, he recited: 'milk siblings are forbidden from marriage because of suckling, in the same manner as it is forbidden because of direct descent' (*anak susuan haram dinikahi karena susuan, sebagaimana yang haram dinikahi karena nasab*, Ind.; *nasab*, Arab. for *toronan*).

What full siblings and milk siblings have in common, so as to be included with the same force in the same category of incest prohibition, is blood. Blood incorporated into one's body through suckling at a woman's breast is held as reason enough for establishing genealogical connections between a woman and a suckling baby. At the same time, it establishes sibling connections between that child and the woman's other 'children of the womb'. Procreation is not locally construed as merely a natural phenomenon and a biological process in terms of which genetic material is transmitted. Equally, genealogy and kinship are not necessarily imagined everywhere as the cultural elaboration of the natural facts of procreation.[18] In Alas Niser, procreation is seen as only the beginning of a long process of growth leading to maturity and death and is also seen as registering social relationships in the very corporeality of persons. Procreation establishes connections between body-persons who are thought of as similar due to being made from the same kind of blood. Such connections extend vertically, registering history in the flow of blood. Growth and the

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[18] Schneider (1984) and Strathern (1992b; 1995) have criticised the assumption that people everywhere see procreation and genealogy as natural in the sense of belonging to the biology of the species.

establishment of relationships continues after procreation in a similar manner. As Carsten (1995b: 236-237) notes, there is no presumed discontinuity between the 'biological' and the 'social'. The co-substantiality of genealogy is also established through the activities of caring and nurturing marked by the transfer of breastmilk. Corporeal sameness is, in this case, related to taking inside oneself that which is external and other. Relations predicated on shared breastmilk extend horizontally, registering sociality in the human body and making kin out of others.

Milk siblingship's equation with full siblingship contrasts with the ambivalence and uncertainty with which relationships predicated on adoption are experienced. Though this has much to do with Islam, it also has consequences for local understandings of kinship as performatively and substantially constituted. I would suggest that this ambivalence has partly to do with the relative lack of a shared corporeality between the parent and adopted child. Their relationship is not mediated by the sharing of blood and milk. The only substantive vector that moves between them is food. However, food is also said to be transformed into blood. In the case of adoption, everyday commensality, along with co-habitation, create the corporeal and spatial links on which kinship is predicated.

Compatibility and mixing

Marriage is premised on the social recognition of a certain degree of corporeal and spatial difference to allow for the lifting of the incest taboo. We have already seen that marriage between first cousins constitutes the contested limit of socially permissible unions and how its very permissibility is founded on the disjunction of kinship based on space from kinship based on shared substance. As a result, people in Alas Niser look for marriage partners from categories of consanguines beyond that of first cousins, but always within the generational level of ego, and more often than not, from the category of 'unrelated' or 'other people', the *oreng laen* (Mad.).

'Other people' stands for people who are thought of as different not only in corporeal terms, but also in spatial terms. Schematically, 'other people' are those who reside outside the neighbourhood (*kampong*), in other parts of the same village or in different villages or towns. In Alas Niser, there is thus, a marked avoidance of marrying people who inhabit the same safe and ritually demarcated place, and this avoidance is manifested both linguistically and through practice. Discussing a forthcoming marriage between the children of two neighbours, a group of men commented that actually these kind of unions were 'not permissible' (*tidak boleh*, Ind.) for, as one of them explained, 'neighbours are like siblings' (*tetangga seperti saudara*, Ind.). Despite the concern they aired, the men added that this

particular marriage could go ahead as the groom's family originated from the town of Blitar, in western East Java, and had only recently arrived in the neighbourhood. Moreover, from the data of a total of 85 marriages I gathered, the majority (68) were phrased as contracted with an *oreng laen*. Of the remaining sixteen, two involved first cousins residing in different villages, three were with third cousins and eleven were co-villagers from different neighbourhoods, some of whom were already affines. As the implications of the conflation of close consanguinity and neighbourliness that this avoidance entails are worked through in the next chapter, it is sufficient to state here that the category of neighbours (*tetenggha*, Mad.) contrasts in this context to that of *oreng laen*. The contrast is highlighted by the avoidance, though not a strict prohibition, of neighbours' inter-marriage.

However, like elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the very corporeal and spatial alterity of *oreng laen* is not absolute. Marriage is the very process through which this non-absolute alterity is transformed into similarity (see Carsten 1997: 220). Once again, the cultural ideal of siblingship and the emphasis on ritual activity and the exchange of substances, come to play a pivotal role in this transformation. The institution of marriage achieves this transformation on a number of different grounds. Firstly, it is the primary means for producing co-substantiality in the form of siblingship. Secondly, it is itself, as we have seen already, a form of siblingship. But most importantly, marriage effects the displacement of specific kinds of difference for it focuses on the imagery of new body-persons as blended entities. Thus, while consanguinity is based on measuring corporeal similarity in terms of the flow of blood incurred by past siblingship, marriage and affinity establish co-substantiality in the future. They do so in reference to the body-person of the offspring (McKinley 1981: 354). In what follows, I will concentrate both on the offspring and the marriage ritual. The latter has been construed by McKinley as 'a step by step construction of the married couple represented by an almost superhuman person whose bodily oneness can be interpreted as siblingship a generation before the fact' (McKinley 1985 quoted in Kipp 1986: 638).

In the context of marriage, the degree and kind of otherness of *oreng laen* is of primary concern. This is manifested in the key concept of *cocok* (Ind., Mad., also *juddhu*, Mad.) that informs the process of the selection of a marriage partner. Being *cocok* entails that the bride and the groom have certain attributes in common and that it is this similarity that will make the marriage stable, prosperous and fertile (Geertz 1961: 57; Carsten 1997: 193). As one informant put it, '*cocok* means to be the same (*sama,* Ind.). If the spouses are not similar, they will not walk side by side but one will be in front and the other will be following from the back'. In contrast then, to Western ideas of a compatibility stemming from the complementarity of opposites, locals of Alas Niser, along with other Southeast Asian societies (see Strange 1981: 110, 114; Banks 1983: 152), hold that suitability in marriage follows from like marrying like. In this sense, corporeal and spatial difference between the spouses and their respective kindreds is held to be mediated and complemented by the presence of certain other similarities.

Two methods are employed in assessing marriage suitability. First comes the numerological divinations (*elmo falak*, Mad. or *petangan*, Jav.) made by local *dhukon*. These types of divination takes the intended spouses' dates of birth, themselves based on the five-day week of the Javanese-Madurese year, as their starting point and, through the consultation of manuals (*prembhun*, Mad.) readily available in bookstores, determines whether the intended match is auspicious or inauspicious.[19] Inauspicious unions are believed to result in few offspring, if any at all, financial difficulties, regular disagreements, fights and, sometimes, even with the death of one of the two spouses.

Marital compatibility also relates to the perspective spouses' backgrounds in terms of wealth and status. Husson (1995) has argued that Madurophones living in East Java are stratified in four different levels; that of *se soghi* (the notables or important persons), comprising big landowners, successful traders and entrepreneurs and *kyai* of translocal reputation; that of *se andi* (the ones who have, the possessors), made up of primarily small landholders, traders and *kyai* of local magnitude; that of *prakapra* (the ordinary ones), whose means of living are not adequate and who have to perform various secondary labour activities so as to complement their income, and that of *se ta andi* (the have nots), who have nothing except their labour. My own fieldwork notes support the validity of such a stratification with the addition of civil servants and factory workers who, depending on their level of education and salary, also fall in one of these categories.

In general, marriage takes place within the confines of each separate category, with both hypergamy or hypogamy being avoided on the grounds of incompatibility. Here, the perception that human beings are kinded and thus, qualitatively different from each other is compounded with the notion that marriage should take place among equals, i.e. people who belong to the same socio-economic category. This type of equality is founded not on notions of jural equality as in the West in itself originating from a univarsalistic definition of humanity, but on the notion that a fundamental corporeal and social similarity between the couple and the prospective parents-in-law must be operative for a marriage to be stable and fertile.

Wealth and status information about a potential spouse and her parents are carefully gathered before more direct but informal 'asking' (*nyelabhar*, Mad., literally to spread or disperse) of the bride by the groom's side takes place. When I was enquiring about the kinds of attributes a spouse must have and the way one finds out about them, two things were stressed. One was the inquiries the groom's (and the bride's, in turn) side undertake. Inquiries of this sort involve a close relative of the groom gathering information about the wealth as well as the behaviour of the girl and her parents. This information is gathered by people who are related to both sides, be they friends, colleagues or distant kin. In the absence of such intermediaries, the groom's relative is usually expected to visit the neighbourhood of the girl and her parents, and, pretending to be a passer-by, to find out about the family's background

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[19]   Both H. Geertz (1961: 60) and Jay (1969: 37, 40) report the wide use of similar methods in Modjokuto, while Jordaan (1985: 126-137) offers a wider account on divination in Madura.

from neighbours. The second, following from the first, is that the quest for a suitable wife is as much a quest for suitable *bhesan* (Mad., the term is applied specifically for the relationship between the parents of the two spouses). This is because marriage is conceptualised as involving as much the two sets of parents as the couple. Because marriage is conceived as a union of *bhesan*, the latter's suitability is as much an issue as that of the individual bride and groom.

Like in other parts of Southeast Asia, the *bhesan* are expected to be generally similar in terms of behaviour (*kalakoan*, Mad.) or character (*sepat*, Mad.) (see Carsten 1997). An appropriate quality of perspective *bhesan* is to be 'good people' (*oreng bhaghus*, Mad.). 'Good people' in this case means people who are not haughty (*ria*, Ind.), or proud (*congkak*, Ind.), arrogant (*sombong*, Ind.) or envious (*dengki,* Ind.), quarrelsome or spiteful and jealous. 'Good people' designates those who are on good terms with their relatives and neighbours (*rukun,* Ind.), are polite and able to show respect (*hormat*, Ind.) to social superiors, are generous, and merciful. 'Good people' must also be pious Muslims, performing the five daily prayers, observing fasts and giving alms. They also have to refrain from gossiping, gambling or drinking. These are the primary criteria upon which further action from the groom's side depends and the kind of information that is gathered. Health and political allegiances also appear as relevant in this context. Ideally, the *bhesan* must be supporters of the same political party, as was explained to me during the campaigning period before the June 1999 election as party differences might stand in the way of the stability of the union. I have even witnessed the case of a friend who went to great lengths to check on prospective *bhesan*'s political biographies so as to avoid having his son married by accident to a descendant of a P.K.I. (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*) supporter. In this context, as I have already mentioned, health concerns also arise. Information about the medical history of the *bhesan* will be gathered so as to make sure that they are free from any cases of diseases such as leprosy or madness, commonly attributed to hereditary factors.

The quest for *bhesan* who have to be, by definition, similar in terms of character ensures the compatibility of the couple along the same terms. This is so for character (*sepat*) is assumed to be partly transmitted genealogically, embodied in the blood one gets from one's parents and their ancestors. People in Alas Niser phrase the character inquiry in terms of *toronan*, implying that the kind of blood children and parents have in common, means that the children are of the same character as their parents. '*Cocok*', an informant commented, 'means to be the same; wealth, status, descent; they all have to be the same so as to be compatible'. So, while different in corporeal terms relating to consanguinity, and in spatial terms relating to residence, both the two sets of parents and the couple are ideally held to be in a relationship of fundamental suitability and compatibility. The quest for the appropriate spouse is thus, the first step towards the establishment of similarity. It involves a screening process out of which the few selected will be approached.

The concerns over spouse selection are important as much for what they address as for what they omit as secondary or irrelevant. One thing they omit is the question of ethnic identity. I have never heard ethnicity mentioned as intervening in any case of marriages going ahead, save for marriages with Chinese-Indonesians. Similarly, I have never heard of ethnicity being mentioned in the context of spouse inquiries. Even when *toronan* is an issue, it always involves descent from extraordinary person (*oreng sakte*) such as a *kyai*, or it refers to character as delineated above. In this context, *toronan* does not concern blood 'kindedness' in the ethnic sense nor the character traits associated with *alos* and *kasar*, 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese'. The aspect of character in question is about piety and harmonious relations with others rather than about the degree of refinement of mannerisms.

On the other hand, concerns over marrying with a Chinese-Indonesian centre around ethnic difference. Issues relating to the equation of Chinese-Indonesians as an kind of body-persons with affluence, economic dominance, arrogance, lack of compassion and Christianity are of overriding importance. Affluence presents a problem for the two sets of parents could not be seen as equal, while marriages with persons who are not Muslim are prohibited from taking place as they are explicitly categorised as *haram* (forbidden, Arab.) in the Quran. The situation is similar for marriages with foreigners who are not Muslim, and commonly construed as superior in status and wealth, arrogant, and shameless (*ta oning todus*, Mad.). However, conversion to Islam opens the way as it is taken as a sign of the convert's desire to be incorporated and adopt local values, abandoning his/hers arrogance and lack of compassion.

Marriages with both Chinese-Indonesians and Euro-Americans are problematic for their otherness as *oreng laen* presents an extreme case, located on the other side of the boundary marked by *haram*. Religious difference as manifested in character is seen as too much of a difference for the marriage to be able to overcome and finally displace. In this sense, marriages between 'pure Javanese' and 'pure Madurese' are seen as compatible due to religious homogeneity. That this is so is corroborated by the stress on common religion, my informants emphasised when I inquired about these issues. As Pak Uddin put it, 'Muslims are instructed to look for wives who are suitable in terms of beauty, wealth, descent and religion'. Inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages with Chinese-Indonesians and Euro-Americans are also problematic because Chinese-Indonesians and Euro-Americans are not construed as belonging to the imagined community, in Anderson's (1983) sense, of the Indonesians nation, itself founded on the notion of *bumiputera*, that is of 'the sons of the soil'. As such, their otherness is too pronounced, since they are located beyond a similarity that is imagined to tie together all those who have sprung from the Indonesian soil.

The unproblematic status of inter-ethnic marriages other than those mentioned above, is thus, based on shared religion and a common, trans-local co-spatiality. Within these constraints, ethnic otherness is treated as an irrelevance for the simple reason that is subsumed under the alterity of *oreng laen*. While analytically distinct, ethnic and kinship

difference become, from a local point of view, interchangeable. In this sense, ethnic difference becomes another instance of the otherness of 'other people'. Once again, it is wealth, rank and a specific set of character traits that are evaluated and sought after, the latter not phrased in ethnic terms. As such, marriages between 'Madurese' and 'Javanese', 'Madurese' and 'Batak', 'Javanese' and 'Sundanese', 'Madurese' and 'Buginese' etc. are addressed with the same criteria in mind as that for *oreng laen*.

While marriage postulates a certain degree and kind of difference as essential for its taking place, it also postulates certain degrees and types of compatibility between the two sets of parents and between the bride and groom as fundamental for the longevity and fertility of the union. It is as if everything depends on striking the right balance between difference and compatibility, alterity and similarity. While this is the image of marriage constructed in the initial stages of spouse selection, another image emerges with the birth of the offspring. However, before I explore this image, I wish to elaborate further on an aspect of the category of *oreng laen*.

If siblingship, as defined in the preceding sections, is the general term that conveys the qualities of co-substantiality, co-habitation and sharing of place and blood, *oreng laen* is defined as its very opposite. It mostly means 'strangers', 'outsiders', 'people far off', 'enemies', 'the ones with whom no relationship exists'. Here, corporeal and spatial otherness are coupled with concerns over safety as the space laying outside the confines of the neighbourhood is construed as potentially hostile and dangerous. People, especially men, from Alas Niser who venture for business or family reasons outside the village usually carry their sickles with them, hidden beneath their clothes, and some have a talisman, usually an Arabic inscription, tied around their upper arms. Women too, carry talismans such as a piece of iron inserted in their hair bundle. Thus, marriage is to a large degree a venture into an unmapped territory inhabited by potentially harmful others. These others are under no obligation to offer help or support since the absence of shared corporeality and spatial identity is equated with the absence of solidarity. In this respect, the concept of *cocok* and the practices associated with it are a codification of the care one has to exercise in approaching the Other, and choosing the one appropriate as an affine and ally.

Affinity, that is the transformation of *oreng laen* into kin, is a gradual process, ritually regulated and marked by formality, avoidance, return visits, gift exchanges and commensality (see Geertz 1961:30; Jay 1969: 149-150; Niehof 1985: 98, 115-135). Affinity starts with the kind of inquiries I have already mentioned. It moves to *nyelabhar* (Mad.), the visit of an envoy of the boy's family (*pangada*, Mad.) to the girl's house to convey their interest in the most subtle way possible. This is followed by a more formal 'meeting' (*menta*, Mad., literally meaning asking) in which the date for the betrothal is set through intermediaries, and the betrothal (*lamaran*, Mad.) proper.

It is during the betrothal that affinity begins to be established. Affinity is marked by the bestowal of the promise from the boy's family representative that marriage will follow suit

and the presentation of gifts. Wealthy families present the bride-to-be with gold jewellery but, more commonly, it is a complete set of clothes, along with cosmetics, which she is presented with. The girl is obliged to wear these during the reciprocal visit (*balesan*, Mad. to return or to reply) to the boy's house, some weeks after. Then, it is the boy's turn to receive gifts from the girl's family. These consist similarly of a set of clothes, that is a *kopiah*, the rimless cap, a *sarung* or a pair of trousers, a shirt of Muslim design and shoes. As in the case of *lamaran*, in *balesan* too the parents of the betrothed couple take no active part in the ceremony. Rather, it is the intermediaries who stand out, mainly through formal and standardised speech making. The gifts exchanged and, in particular, the gifts the girl is presented with are described with the term *penyengset* (Mad., *peningset*, Jav.), a term carrying the meaning of pledge.

Penyengset also consists of a tray of three kinds of flowers, a tray of delicacies made from sticky rice, a bunch of bananas of the *raja* (royal) kind and a tray with betel nut (*sere*) leaves of the kind which has 'its veins met' (*urat daunnya bertemu*, Ind.). These *sere* leaves, designated as *sere raddhin* (beautiful *sere*, Mad.), an informant commented, 'symbolise the unity of intent and will between the two sides' (*melambangkan bersatunya kehendak dan bersatunya takat bhesan*, Ind.). The exchange of gifts, which is characterised by a certain asymmetry as the girl's side is presented with more gifts than the boy's side, is accompanied by symmetric commensality in the respective houses, with each set of parents acting as the provider and recipient of food in alternating occasions. Such food exchanges become somewhat more regular between the two houses in the months to follow with food circulating between them in a balanced way.

The betrothal is followed by another meeting between representatives of the two sides in which the date and hour of the wedding is decided. Once this has been achieved, the *siraman* ('bathing') ceremony takes place in the house of the bride. There, the bride is 'purified' by having ceremonial water mixed with flowers poured over her by older female relatives who bestow their blessings (*pangestu*, Jav.; *due resto*, Mad.). This ritual is not witnessed by anybody from the groom's side. A similar ceremony is supposed to take place in the groom's house, but it is rarely practised and I have never witnessed it. The purification ritual is held to prepare the bride, especially, for assuming her new role as a wife and the female head of a new house-to-be.

It is usually the case that the wedding is performed the very next day after *siraman*. Early in the morning, the formal Islamic *akad nikah* ritual takes place in the midst of male neighbours and male kin of both sides, seated cross-legged outside the house of the bride and officiated by a *kyai*. It is the performance of *akad nikah* that is held to legitimise a union as marriage as it is carried out according to the precepts of Islam.[20] These include: the giving

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[20] Although the marriage law stipulates that all marriages have to be registered with the *penghulu*, the subdistrict official of the Ministry of Religion, so as to be considered valid, people in Alas Niser give primacy to Islamic procedures rather than state ones. The p*enghulu* is, most of the time, asked to attend the ceremony, but his role is thought of as less important than the one played by the *kyai*.

away of the bride by her guardian (*wali*), that is her father or a person acting as his representative, most often a role played by the *kyai* present; the presence of more than two witnesses; the *shighat* (*ijab-kabul*, Arab.), that is the speech of offer and acceptance by the guardian and the groom respectively; and the *mas kawin*, the brideprice the bride's guardian and then, the bride herself, are presented with. *Mas kawin* consists most often of money or an Quran, the white dress appropriate for praying (*mukenah*), a ritual string of 100 beads (*tasbeh*) and a prayer rug (*sajadah*). The ritual concludes with the groom visiting the bride who awaits him in the house and presenting her with the *mas kawin*. The bride is expected to kneel before the groom in an apparent gesture of submission and homage, and to kiss his right hand. Outside, the participants are presented with food, cigarettes and tea, provided by the girl's family in return for the bestowal of their blessings on the couple.

Both *siraman* and *akad nikah* are centred upon the couple, the girl's transition, her incorporation into the husband's side through the *mas kawin* and the hierarchical nature of the conjugal bond and, by implication, of the *bhesan* relation. The two sets of parents play no significant ritual roles and remain in the background. Even in the *akad nikah* ceremony, which validates their new status as *bhesan*, what villagers stress is the blessings bestowed by the *kyai* and the witnesses and the *kyai*'s acting as the girl's *wali*. In the preparations of the ceremonial space and of the food provided, the girls' parents are almost invisible as all the work is carried out by their neighbours and relatives. So, the avoidance patterns we have seen as operating in the pre-marital stages are also present during the wedding itself. However, the stakes of the exchange have been raised; this time it is not only visits and food, but people that are being exchanged. The allusions to hierarchy between the two sides and the bride's incorporation into the groom's family as manifested in *akad nikah* are negated by a series of ritual statements enacted in the *tamu manten* ceremony that follows.

Tamu manten begins with the groom's entourage, consisting of two male relatives of the bride accompanying the groom, followed by his parents' representatives and other relatives, among whom are his parents, arriving at the bride's house. At the house gate, the groom is met by the bride and her parents. It is only he who enters the yard, stepping on an egg, having his feet subsequently cleaned by the kneeling bride, who then kisses his right hand for the second time. At that moment, the father of the bride steps in and embraces both of them, one in each of his sides, wrapping around them a red cloth called *singep sindur* (Jav.). With the bride's mother following behind, the father leads the couple into the house, towards a sofa decorated in the colours of royalty, namely red and gold. The incorporation of the groom as their own child is further manifested by the father seated on the sofa with the boy on his right thigh and the girl on this left. At this point, the mother asks: 'How does it feel, father?' (*baramma prasaan been, pak?*, Mad.) and the father replies: 'It feels like they are of the same weight' (*prasaan kule keduaqne padhe-padhe beraq*, Mad.). With downcast eyes, the groom, who has already being construed as a child the father has raised in the same way

Plate 5. Newly weds sit in state

Plate 6. Parents bestow their blessings upon the new 'siblings'

he raised the bride, is called finally, to perform the *sungkeman* act of submission.[21] This involves the groom, together with the bride, kneeling first in front of the bride's father and then in front of the bride's mother, and pressing his face to their knees. To do so is a way of saying that he recognises them as his parents, submitting to their authority. The *sungkeman* gesture confers upon them the blessings of the parents, bestowed from a superior to an inferior, from parents to a child. In other words, the groom is treated as an addition to the bride's family and as a son.

While the above has been taking place, the groom's parents and their representatives are still waiting outside, not having witnessed this ritual statement. Their absence is to be understood in terms of avoiding observing their son's incorporation and his, and by implication, their own submission, to their in-laws. Shortly after the *sungkeman* is performed, the parents of the bride call the groom's entourage to enter the house, formally greeting them, and asking the groom's parents or their representatives to take their turn on the sofa. Now, the bride and the groom will press their heads to their second set of superiors' knees, asking for their blessings. This act has to be taken as generating and restoring the affinal symmetry and equality that was disturbed during earlier stages of the marriage ritual.

After the blessings have been transferred, the two sets of parents move to take seats on different sofas; the groom's parents take their place to the right of the enthroned couple and the bride's to the left. The picture of the couple engulfed and placed in the middle of the two sets of *bhesan* encapsulates all that marriage is about; that is a double paradox.

The two sets of parents-in-law have claimed each other's children as their own. The bride is thus the child of her in-laws by means of *mas kawin*, while the groom is a child of his in-laws by means of *sungkeman*. The newly weds are, thus, ritually construed as full siblings, sharing the same parents. The two sets of parents are ritually presented as distinct, for the couple is construed as full siblings during different ritual moments, which do not involve the simultaneous presence of both sets of *bhesan*. In other words, the couple's status as children of the same parents and as siblings, is alternating and exclusive. The first paradox is that human fertility is made to appear as predicated on the sexual union of full siblings, a union that is otherwise classified as incestuous and forbidden (see also Errington 1987:437). The second paradox is related to another picture emerging out of the ritual construction of relations of kinship. At the same time the couple is construed as siblings, they are also construed as affines, children of different sets of parents. This image is related to the simultaneous presence of both sets of parents and the couple's placement in the middle. Like the *sere* leaves that have 'their veins met', the couple's origins are construed as diverse but their fate and future are portrayed as common.

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[21] Bloch (1978) refers to a similar gesture performed in marriages in Madagascar which construct the groom as a 'super son'. Incorporation through submission is in his case signalled by the presentation of the 'backside of a sheep'.

I would suggest that it is through the posing of this double paradox and of its conflicting statements that affinal difference is displaced and transformed into consanguinity (see also McKinley 1981; Carsten 1997: 220). We have already seen a blurring of categories of affinity and consanguinity with respect to the House and the terminological use of address terms for spouses till the birth of their first child. What we find here is another refraction of the same idea that consanguinity and affinity are basically different ways of saying and doing the same thing, i.e. constructing co-substantiality. It is exactly this underlying homology that is, in the first place, ritually constructed that allows for the transformation to take place.

Marriage presents a double paradox only if one is to radically differentiate between affinity and consanguinity. The purpose of the ritual is to initiate the displacement of such a distinction. If one was to resolve what appear as paradoxes by bringing together the ritual statements, the following picture would emerge. If full siblings are thought as identical persons, then the bride and groom who were each other's Other until the wedding, are transformed into each other's mirror image, *padhe*, the same. By association, the people from whom these two siblings have sprung, the *bhesan*, are also constructed as each other's icons, wholly similar, forming an indivisible unity. This is because, by having produced siblings, the two sets of parents stand as a husband and a wife to each other, as only marriage can generate siblingship. The couples' siblingship is then moved to encompass the *bhesan* relationship and define it as siblingship in the ascending generation, and one established through marriage. At the root of this displacement is a ritually constructed equivalence: marriage stands for siblingship, and siblingship for marriage. Furthermore, as siblingship is extended in concentric circles around ego to define consanguineal relatives of the same generation, so marriage is extended in an upward movement to incorporate the two sets of parents. In other words, affinal exchange is turned on its head and made into *toronan*, genealogy.

The mutual incorporation of the couple as siblings of different sets of parents is played out spatially too. The couple is expected to spend the first week of their marital life in the house of the wife's parents and then, move for another week to the house of the husband's parents. This takes place before the couple takes up permanent residence in the wife's house or *tanean* for Madurophones, and, most often, in a new house in another neighbourhood for Javanophones. Spatial oscillation establishes symmetry between the two sets of parents as much as co-parenthood. The couple thus, share the same house and food in the same way siblings share the parental house and food. They gradually become co-substantial through this sharing.

The tendency to establish homologies between affinity and consanguinity through the idiom of siblingship is reflected, to a certain extent, in kinship terminology (see also Carsten 1997:221). Affines are referred to by the addition of a suffix to the respective consanguineal term. Thus, an elder brother-in-law is *cacak epar*, an elder sister-in-law is *iyu epar,* a younger brother-in-law and a younger sister-in-law are *alek epar*. The mother and father-in-law are

referred to as *ebbu* or *e'mak* and *a'pak mattowa*; the child-in-law as *mantoh*. While reference terms do draw on consanguineal terms, the addition of the suffixes does imply that affines and consanguines are different and thus, that they must be distinguished. This is expressed very strongly in the fact that the *bhesan*, despite ritual statements to the contrary, do not use sibling or other consanguineal to either refer to or address one another; in both cases, it is the term *bhesan* that is employed. On the other hand, reference terms are rarely used and only when further elaboration is needed by an uninformed interlocutor (see Carsten 1997: 221; Niehof 1985: 95). In address, only consanguineal terms are used amongst in-laws. Thus, an elder brother-in-law is simply a *cacak*, a mother-in-law an *e'mak*, a daughter-in-law a *nak* or *bing*. It is considered highly impolite and improper to add the differentiating suffix to either address, or refer to affines. The case of married couple exemplifies this tendency most forcefully since, until their first child is born, husbands and wives address each other as elder brother and younger sister, respectively.

After the birth of their first child, husbands and wives both refer to and address each other as *e'mak* and *a'pak*, that is as a mother and father, although occasionally the siblings terms are also used (also Geertz 1961: 137). Couples are terminologically transformed from siblings to co-parents. The stress their initial relationship has put on the past, ritually constructing them as people who share the same parents, has now been substituted with a stress on future generations and the tracing of their relation through their shared offspring. As Geertz (1961) notes for the case of Javanese terminology, 'by using such terms of kinship, husband and wife refer [...] to the consanguineal link between them through the child' (1961: 137). Moreover, though people in Alas Niser practice teknonymy only in this limited sense, they do share with the Balinese a 'downward-looking' attitude to kinship as described by Hildred and Clifford Geertz (1964). *Bu* Noer, a mother of four and a grandmother, recounting her life story, said that after the birth of children, a woman's 'feelings of love' (*rasa niser*, Mad.) are redirected from her husband to her children. It is the children who become the centre of one's attention, she contended, adding that after these have married, one's *rasa niser* focuses on grandchildren whom, in turn, one comes to love more than anyone else.

The birth of a child thus, converts the spouses' consanguineal co-substantiality from being ritually and terminologically related to the past to being traced through the future. The spouses' co-substantially is established through the corporeal unity of the body-person both its members have engendered. Both children and grandchildren represent, for parents and grandparents alike, living embodiments of kinship relationships, for they are created out of the crossing and mixing of the diverse but complementary substances each side contributes to the union. The father's semen, itself originating from his own parents, and the mother's blood, itself originating from her own parents, 'meet' in the same way that the *sere* leaves presented as *penyengset* imply, and mix with each other in an undifferentiated way so as to produce a body-person. This person is not a mere biological entity but something more. It is primarily a relationship phrased in terms of mixed blood. As such, it becomes the focal point

through which affinity is 'reckoned "procreatively"' - that is, through specific body-persons and the substances they are made of (Weiner 1982: 18).

The birth of a child transforms affinity into co-substantiality. While consanguines are co-substantial for they share the same blood, affines are cross-substantial amongst themselves through reference to marriage and co-substantial in reference to the constitution of the body-person of the child. Affinal difference is effaced in the corporeal constitution of the offspring in reference to whom they become one and the same body, the same person.

Siblingship and the displacement of difference

Writing about another culture area, Weiner observes that 'what marriage seems to do in Highland [New Guinea] societies is to systematise a set of related idioms concerning siblingship that are predicated on [..] procreative concepts [...] and which in conventional terms comprise the classificatory aspect of terminological usages' (1982: 18). Weiner's statement is made in relation to the limited analytical validity of descent and alliance theories in accounting for Melanesian kinship phenomena and has thus, the status of a counter-proposal. In bringing marriage and siblingship together, mainly through procreative theories and exchange patterns, he argues in a convincing manner that shared substance is what underlies kinship, affinity included. From the preceding discussion, it seems that the same holds true for East Java too, even if East Java lacks the patrilineal social groupings so characteristic of Highland New Guinea societies.[22]

Siblingship is of major cultural importance in Alas Niser. It is the primary mode of classifying people in generational terms, thus, encoding hierarchy, and in terms of marriagiability, encoding potential affinity. Siblingship is also about corporeal identity and the fashioning of personhood as a social relationship. The idea of the person in East Java rests on relational and 'composite' grounds in the sense that the person is only conceptualised as part of something, a larger whole, a relation of fundamental ontological similarity and indivisibility. The person is construed to exist only as a member of a pair (or a triad or a quartet), though the forms this pair takes during a person's course of life changes. To the extent that persons as siblings are the undifferentiated mixture of their progenitors substantial identities and given that a person's body parts are not said to be associated with specific contributions made by either the father or the mother, body-persons in East Java are

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[22] I have found no evidence of what either Headley (1997) and Sairin (1982) call *trah*, a genealogically outlined corporate group that bears some resemblance to lineages, during my fieldwork. Literature on Madurese society also makes no mention of the existence of such groups.

non-partible, internally non-divisible and thus, different from those found in Melanesia (see Strathern 1988; Busby 1997).

The equation of personhood and siblingship has wider implications. Siblingship is a way of conceptualising genealogy, the latter corresponding to historical relations of engendering registered in the very materiality of the human body (Tsintjilonis 1997: 264; see also Strathern 1995: 102-104). In this sense, personhood acquires historicity as each body-person inherits particular kind of blood and character. But, personhood is neither given nor fixed; neither 'natural' nor immutable. This is so for genealogy is to the past what marriage is to the future, that is ways of relating body-persons and establishing kinship through constructing degrees of co-substantiality. In other words, if genealogy refers to exchanges and the mixing of blood that have taken place in past times, marriage and affinity refer to exchanges and the mixing of blood that take place in the present and will take place in the future. Body-persons form the agents as much as the nodal points of such exchanges, since they are the exchanges' instigators, objects and outcomes.

Siblingship's co-substantiality, with respect to the historical past is replicated as a process with respect to the future. Couples are constructed as siblings with respect to ritual performance, terminological practices and acts of procreation (Carsten 1997). This process is to be seen as the gradual establishment of co-substantiality between the spouses. During the wedding ceremonies, their alterity is blurred through their being shown to share the same set of parents. Within the house in which they co-reside, the spouses come to practise commensality sharing food grown on the same land. This food, which is transformed into blood, further displaces their difference. But it is primarily the engendering of children that defines the couple as co-substantial persons since they become, in the face of their descendants, one body-person.

The homology between genealogically defined and affinally derived co-substantiality rests on a number of culturally emphasised themes (see Headley 1987b). These are: the efficacy of ritual action, the performance of commensality, the sharing of the same place and of the same blood either with respect to the same or descending generations. The cases of milk siblingship and of adoption offer additional support for arguing that kinship in Alas Niser is both performatively and substantially constituted. This is because, from the locals' point of view, there is no sharp distinction drawn between the two. As I have shown when dealing with the concept of the House, place and genealogy, caring as food providing and the transmission of blood, indicate and reinforce one another.

It is the very conceptualisation of the House as centred on siblingship that allows and effects the conflation of consanguinity and affinity. Marriage as a process of incorporation and transformation of 'other people' into consanguines, that Carsten (1997: 216-218) so astutely describes, is only possible on the grounds of this conflation. In what follows, I will explore the implications of this conflation with regard the social construction of relations

predicated on neighbourhood. Once again, the dialectics of genealogy, space and ritual activity will be shown to underpin the sociality of the neighbourhood.

Chapter Seven. *Slametan* sociality: prayers, food and siblingship

Slametan in focus

One of the central themes of Javanese studies and the focus of considerable debate, is the *slametan* (Jav.-Ind.), or ritual rice meal (*konjengen*, Mad.). Anthropologists take the view that the *slametan* lies at the heart of Javanese religion, the imagined sense of locals as Javanese, and the category of the neighbourhood (*kampong*, Mad.). Ceremonial food exchanges commonly taking place at *slametan* are perceived as sanctifying and symbolising the most central Javanese values, namely the mutual dependence of neighbours, maintaining and reproducing the value of *rukun* (Jay 1969: 237). *Rukun*, the appearance of social harmony and the assumption of a certain degree of equality and similarity among neighbours, is regarded by Hildred Geertz as the basic moral principle guiding everyday Javanese behaviour (1961: 47). In a similar vein, Koentjaraningrat describes the *slametan* as the ceremonial expression of the *gotong royong* (mutual assistance, Jav.-Ind.) ethic that permeates Javanese culture and society, serving to build and instil in symbolic fashion the sense of solidarity and equality among the ceremony's participants (1985: 146-7).[1]

In a review article Hawkins (1996) notes that the integrative function the *slametan* is assigned by these anthropologists is an important point in a substantial debate in Javanese studies. The debate relates to the consequences of social change and, more particularly, of urbanisation. Writers such as Geertz (1973a) and Peacock (1968) assert that the *slametan* has lost its solidarity enhancing efficacy with the increasing levels of urbanisation in Java, as a sense of belonging phrased in terms of co-residence gives way to other modes of association. For both authors, the *slametan* is a village ritual of declining functional importance in modernising urban Java, as people create more meaningful relations on the bases of club membership and occupation. For these urbanised Javanese, Peacock (1968) argues, the value of *rukun* is substituted with the value of *maju* (Ind.), literally meaning 'progressive' and 'modern' and carrying connotations of being educated, middle-class and subscribing, to a certain extent, to values associated with the West.

Such views have come under close scrutiny and criticism by an array of more recent studies which argue that both the *slametan* and the associated value system are 'retained not, pace Geertz, as the urban remnant of a rural tradition, but [...] as a vital principle in

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[1]Bowen (1986) writes, though, that 'although the term *gotong royong* is generally perceived by Indonesians to be a long-standing Javanese expression [...], it is more likely an Indonesian construction of relatively recent vintage' (1986: 546). His article explores this construction from the point of view of politics of tradition at the level of the nation state.

urban society and culture' (Hawkins 1996: 228). In particular, Guiness (1986), who has studied an urban neighbourhood in Jogjakarta, asserts that *slametan* are regularly held among urban neighbours and that the obligation to give, attend and reciprocate such rice meals is as strong among town-dwellers as among villagers. My own research experience in Alas Niser and Probolinggo, as will be shown below, manifests the continuing relevance of *slametan*-centered and place-bound sociality that characterises both semi-urban and urban neighbourhoods in this part of East Java. Neighbourhood sociality is conceived by locals as founded on co-spatiality and consubstantiality. It is thus, marked off as a form of siblingship. This is not to say that locals of Alas Niser do not differentiate between kin (*tretan*, Mad.) and neighbours (*tetenggha*, Mad.) but, rather, that in particular contexts, consanguineal and affinal kinship do not exhaust the set of relationships that locals experience and think of as siblingship.[2] *Slametan* ritual action, its form and content, is constitutive both of the neighbourhood as place and of neighbourhood relations as a form of siblingship. Ritual action that focuses on exchanges of prayers, food and ancestors, manifest in practice, a phrase I often heard while in Java, namely that 'neighbours [are] like siblings' (*tetenggha pada ban tretan*, Mad.).

Before I turn my attention to these issues, a second debate has to be briefly discussed here. The controversy relates to the place of Islam in Javanese culture and, by association, the extent to which the *slametan* constitutes an Islamic ritual or not. The controversy dates back to Geertz's monumental monograph on the religion of Java (1960) and has been currently reopened by Beatty (1999).

Geertz's (1960) thesis is that Islam has never really taken hold in Java except for among a small minority of merchants living in northern coast cities and that it has assumed the role of a counter-tradition in the face of what is actually a religion and culture very much dominated by the doctrines of Hindu-Buddhism. In particular, he defines the *slametan* as a whole sub-religious system in itself, lying comfortably at the core of one of the three variants of Javanese religion. The variant in question is associated with the rural communities of *abangan* (nominal Muslim, Jav.) peasants, occupying the place of a low tradition. The high tradition upon which much of *slametan* symbolism draws its central concepts from is that of the Hindu-Buddhist inspired mysticism, Geertz associates with the court and the nobles-turned-bureaucrats or *priyayi*.[3] Geertz thus sees the *slametan* as of marginal relevance, if not in direct opposition, to both the ritual and everyday lives led by pious Muslims in Java, called *santri*. He associates Islam with the mosque and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and

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[2] Marshall (1977) makes a similar point with respect to friendship in the Trukese society. However, I do not follow his analysis here. According to his theory, one is to radically differentiate between neighbour siblingship and genealogical siblingship on the basis that the former represents a case of socially created kinship while the latter corresponds to 'natural' or 'biological' relations. In this thesis, I am arguing that such culture-nature dichotomies do not have universal applicability.

[3] *Abangan* and *priyayi*, low and high tradition, are integrated in what is described in the literature on Java as *kejawen*, that is a body of practices and beliefs that originate from Java's pre-Islamic past.

maintains that Islam is actually of little consequence in the configuration of Javanese religion.

Geertz's classification scheme has come under criticism and several commentators have found both internal inconsistencies in it and all kinds of different subvariaties (Bachtiar 1985; Ricklefs 1979). The major criticism, though, has been made by Woodward (1988; 1989). Woodward reclaims Javanese religion for Islam by arguing that what Geertz identifies as a Hindu-Buddhist court culture is actually a Javanese adaptation of central Sufi tenets and practices and, thus, a localised form of Islam (1989). He, nevertheless, recognises cultural variation within Javanese Islam and attributes this variation to divisions within the faith itself, in particular regarding normative and mystical understandings of the Revelation. According to Woodward's interpretation, the *slametan* is basically an Islamic ritual, 'the product of the interpretation of Islamic texts and modes of ritual action shared by the larger (non-Javanese) Muslim community' (1988: 85). Moreover, the *slametan*, the argument continues, corresponds to a village ritual modelled on the state cult of the courts of Central Java, which he regards as Sufi in inspiration (1988). As such, *slametan* symbolism is nothing more than a re-contextualisation of Sufism as a state cult at the village level.

Despite their outward differences, what Geertz and Woodward have in common is a view of the *slametan* as an activity reflecting thought, that is, texts and doctrines originating from beyond the confines of the community of its participants. Both of them see it also as one of the main institutions that come to link together the hierarchically organised native society in both pre-colonial and colonial times. They thus emphasise the integrative function of ritual, a theme which dominates the work of other anthropologists who I have commented on above. Moreover, as Beatty (1996) comments, both portray 'Javanese religion as one' (1996: 273); while for Woodward, 'the unifying factor is Islam', for Geertz, it is Java.

The issue of the religious diversity of Java has recently been taken up by Beatty (1996), however, this time from a different perspective. Beatty's interlocutors in the religiously diverse area of Banyuwangi in East Java represent a whole spectrum of *abangan* pantheists, *kejawen* mystics, Muslim puritans and Hindu converts. Each of these categories of people, Beatty maintains, interpret *slametan* and its constituent elements in markedly distinct fashion. Yet, they all participate in each others' *slametan*, reciprocating in the process. The question Beatty aspires to answer is: given the plurality of interpretations Javanese themselves ascribe to certain *slametan* symbols, how is it that a sense of commonality and shared belonging is achieved in this ritual occasion? For Beatty, the answer lies in *slametan*'s structure and basic appeal. The *slametan*'s structure, though centred around differentially construed symbols, effects a silence over such divergent interpretations which are, in turn, confined to the privacy of less public meetings. As such, the public eruption of differences during *slametan* is kept to a minimum. At the same time that it attempts to erase, temporarily at least, religious difference, the *slametan*, Beatty's argument continues, appeals to the participants' common humanity, the need for *rukun* and

shared identity as people of the same place. The *slametan*, he writes, 'brings together neighbours as fellow men and women, not as fellow Muslims or Hindus' (1999: 50).[4] So, for Beatty, the unifying factor is neither Islam nor Java, but rather the neighbourhood and corresponding forms of ritual action characterised by flexibility, accommodation and efficacy at muting discordant thoughts.

Alas Niser and Probolinggo are quite distinct from both the well-known heartland of Java with its courtly centres and elaborate etiquette Geertz and Woodward have in mind and from the diverse cultural mix that Beatty's case represents. Although not totally homogeneous in religious terms, since there is a small minority of Catholics and Protestants residing around the town centre, the area is perceived by locals and non-locals alike as strongly Islamic (*kota santri*, Ind). In Probolinggo, as in the island of Madura (Koentjaraningrat 1972), the Central Javanese conceptual distinction between *abangan* and *santri* which forms the basis of Geertz's analytical distinction, is not internally applied and very few people even admitted to having heard of the term *abangan*. Nominal Muslims are designated by the term *orang Islam KTP* (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*), 'identity card Muslims', i.e. Muslims who are not preoccupied with performing the faith and not as a category of people whose practices and beliefs date from pre-Islamic times. However, one may also come across people who could fit in either Geertz's or Beatty's categories of animists and *kejawen* mystics (see Chapter 4). There are, though, very few *kejawen* associations in Probolinggo and the number of their followers is limited.

The religious framework prevalent in both Probolinggo and Madura (see Mansunoor 1990: 120-124) is that of traditionalist Islam, roughly corresponding to *Nahdlatul Ulama*'s interpretation of the faith. Modernist Islam and its association, *Muhammadiyah*, with its attempt at purifying 'the religious practices and belief system from accretion and superstition according to the concept of the Qur'an and the Hadits' (Alfian 1969: 130-131) has not had a major impact on Alas Niser, yet. The Probolinggo branch of *Muhammadiyah* claims a membership of eight thousand people, drawn mainly from the middle class of civil servants and teachers, most of whom live in the town centre and not in peripheral villages such as Alas Niser. Nevertheless, locals of Alas Niser are aware of modernist arguments relating to Islamic orthodoxy and can, and do, point to differences between the modernist and traditionalist versions of the faith.

One of the recurrent themes of such a differentiation as expounded locally, is that traditionalist Islam recognises the authority of ancestral custom (*adat*) and the authority of

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[4] Bowen (1993) shows how differences between modernist and traditionalist Muslims regarding what constitutes Islamic orthodoxy are downplayed during ritual meals (*kenduri*) among the Gayo of Sumatra. Resort to 'a compartmentalization of the ritual [that] allows people to acknowledge some of its components and ignore others' (1993: 241) is one such strategy of maintaining *rukun*. In addition to that, there is usually no public discourse about the meaning(s) of *kenduri* and its elements during such gatherings, allowing for people to draw their own conclusions from the proceedings (1993: 232) (see also Beatty 1996: 279). Issues of Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy are central to the construction of mortuary practices among the Sasak of Lombok (Telle 2000). In this case though, no such accommodating stratagems have been invented in what appears to be a hotly contested issue.

the Islamic legal schools, particularly the Sjafi'ite one, in defining Islamic practice and belief in addition to the Quran and the Hadith. In contrast, the modernist position is strictly scripturalist in the sense that it relies only on the Quran and the Hadith, denying absolute authority both to other written texts and to ancestors. 'Commentaries on scripture, no matter how venerated their authors, are valuable to modernists only to the extent that they clarify what is already in scripture' (Bowen 1993: 22). It is on this basis that modernists call for the purification of the faith from historical innovations and accretions, including the *slametan*. Moreover, modernists espouse an understanding of the scriptures based on the exercise of reasoning, emphasising the translation of the scriptures into local vernaculars. In contrast, traditionalists focus on religious experience and the performance of religious rituals that are held to generate merit and blessings (see Geertz 1960: 148-161; Federspiel 1970). Among the various other dichotomies drawn, it is also worthwhile to note here, that modernists emphasise the moral responsibility of the individual in observing religious stipulations in contrast to the traditionalists who focus on the obligations a person as a member of a community has towards others (Bowen 1993: 21-23).

What follows is an analysis of *slametan* or *konjengen* rituals given for the living as instances of a particular form of reciprocity characterising relations between neighbours. Because I approach *slametan* from the perspective of exchange, I do discuss within the same context, rituals for the dead, in particular the *yasinan* gatherings, and rituals undertaken during the fasting month.[5] What unites them all, is first, the fact that they draw from the same category of people as for their participants, and second, that their elementary structure revolves around the circulation of food and prayers, the generation and distribution of merit and blessings among neighbours and their ancestors. As such, they form an integral part of traditionalist Islam as practised, elaborating on its communal character and scope which contrast with modernist understandings.

My descriptions bear the mark of traditionalist Islam for the reason that I witnessed most such feasts as a participant and a co-neighbour in what was a strongly traditionalist neighbourhood, dominated by the presence of the *pesantren* in which I was living. Moreover, the symbols I will try to decipher are quite different from those that Geertz, Woodward and Beatty have in mind, and which refer to the spirits and deities evoked and placated in *slametan* as well as to the food offerings these entities are presented with. I take the liberty to switch the analytical focus from an anthropological and native discourse alike preoccupied with such symbols and their divergent meanings, to a discussion of ritual as a way of doing things. In this respect, I am interested not in what people say they do, but in what they do

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[5] An alternative term for ritual feasts is *kenduri* (Ind.). In Alas Niser, the term *kenduri* is more extensive in the sense that it refers to ritual feasts given in the name of both living and dead persons, i.e. *kenduri meniga*, a ritual feast held on the 3rd day of someone's death or *kenduri kabin*, given as part of marriage celebrations. In contrast, the terms *slametan* and *konjengen* are reserved for feasts marking life-stages for the living. Commemorative rituals for the dead are alternatively referred to as *tahlilan* or *yasinan*. Beatty (1996: 274) also notes a similar distinction made in Banyuwangi.

accomplishes. In other words, I am concentrating on ritual action, the unreflected consequences of conventional acts and the ontological transformations they bring about to the body-persons of the ritual's participants.

Generating vitality

Konjengen feasts in Alas Niser are a neighbourhood affair, involving either male or female representatives of nearby houses, although sometimes mixed gender feasts are held as well. The people invited are all close neighbours. 'The basis of selection, as Geertz writes, is entirely territorial: relative or not, friend or not, anyone who lives within a short distance from one's own house in any direction must be invited and must come' (1960: 12). In Alas Niser, invitations to a *konjengen* are delivered orally among neighbours and it is usually one of the children of the host family who goes around the neighbouring houses, usually early in the morning or the previous night, to make the call. This casual and almost haphazard procedure is coupled with the ordinary way guests are dressed for these occasions, since they appear in chequed patterned *sarong*, T-shirts or shirts and *kopiah*, the rimless black velvet cap. The informality of the proceedings is further stressed in the small talk guests engage in one another upon entering the main living room of the host's house, located at the front, and taking a place on the floor on mats specially laid for the occasion as well as in their mode of sitting. They usually sit with their legs crossed in front of their body and folded inwardly while their upper body forms a slight curve to the front, a sitting posture also encountered in small groups of men gathered in the front porches of houses or at small prayer houses for casual talk early in the evenings.

The guests usually sit with their backs to the house walls, forming a circle around the food which has been prepared by the women. Depending on whether the feast given is small or large in terms of the number of guests, the category of females who do the cooking can extend from those resident to the host's house to other female kin and neighbours. The food presented during *slametan* in Alas Niser is different from that comprising the meals people take on an everyday basis. Despite the fact that the type of food placed at the centre of the congregation varies from occasion to occasion, it most often comprises a large cone of yellow rice set on a bamboo tray and decorated with young coconut leaves. Javanophone locals refer to this as *tumpeng robyong*, literally meaning the 'mound of approval' and Madurophones call it *rasol*, for it is similar to that which is included in the celebration of Prophet Mohammed's birthday. It also includes a whole roasted chicken buried in another mound of rice, side dishes of various vegetables, packages of sticky rice wrapped in banana

leaves, several fruits like bananas, mangoes, Nephelium and Zalacca tree fruits and home-made cakes (*jhajhan*, Mad.) of seven colours (*joh pettoh*, Mad.).

The food will be served to the participants towards the end of the ritual by one or more of the guests and certainly not by the host. Those serving will move to the centre of the circle and then fill the various dishes with food that is to be presented to the guests who, in turn, will eat it quietly. At the same time, hot tea will appear from the kitchen, located at the back of the house, the place where the women are gathered while the male *konjengen* takes place. Once again, the women will not enter the main living room but will pass the tea on trays to male kin for them to distribute to the guests. After the guests have finished eating, they will also receive clove cigarettes that they will smoke while having a casual conversation with those sitting next to them. In the meantime, more food wrapped in black plastic bags will arrive from the kitchen and be placed in front of each guest. This food, which is designated as *berkat*, literally meaning blessing for it derives form the Arabic word *baraka*, is to be taken home to be eaten by the guests' wives and children, that is those neighbours who did not attend the *slametan* in person. The *berkat* is usually made of white rice, noodles and pieces of chicken in addition to which various home made cakes are also included. The *berkat* is also different from everyday dishes consumed in the house among parents and children, which usually consists of rice mixed with corn, vegetables and small pieces of meat or fish.

This communal meal forms the culmination point of the ceremony that opens with a speech delivered by either a relative or neighbour of the host who acts as his representative. While both Beatty (1999) and Geertz (1960) note that this speech is delivered in very formal high Javanese, in Alas Niser the speech delivered is in low Madurese. Similarly, in neighbourhoods in Probolinggo dominated by Javanophones, Javanese *ngoko* is most often employed. Indonesian, the national language, is sometimes also used especially in *slametan* dominated by civil servants or in cases where guests from further away are included and who do not speak the language dominant in the neighbourhood. The choice of the low language level is necessitated by the fact that the vast majority of people in Probolinggo are fluent neither in high Javanese nor high Madurese. While both Geertz and Beatty argue that the use of high Javanese in *slametan* marks the occasion with a certain formality, the employment of the *kasar* language level in Alas Niser suits the casual and ordinary character of the affair. It, moreover, effects and symbolises the equality and familiarity characterising relations among the participants/neighbours. While high Javanese or high Madurese emphasise in themselves the sense of distance and status differentials between interlocutors, as they are spoken up the social hierarchy in the court cities of Java and Madura, the use of low level which is the language *par excellence* of everyday life among family and friends and spoken down the social hierarchy, stresses both the intimate and without overt status pretensions sociality of neighbourhood relations. The same effect is achieved with the employment of Indonesian since the national language has no language levels. In this case,

though, the speaker connects the locality to the national plane, reminding the guests that they are as much neighbours to each other as members of a larger, imagined community.

The speech begins by stating the purpose of holding the ceremony. As *konjengen* are usually given for a variety of reasons, most commonly associated with life-cycle stages, agricultural tasks or other more mundane activities, the purpose stated can vary from a celebration of the host's daughter's seventh month of pregnancy, the inauguration of harvest, the move to a new house or the acquisition of a new motorcycle or car. The speaker expresses the sincerity and purity of the host's intentions and his wish for the participants to act as witnesses to both the host's intentions and life changes. Next, he expresses his gratitude to the guests for attending. This is done for it is held that the guests' collective prayers are instrumental in contributing to the host and his family achieving the state of *slamet,* meaning secure, content and in good-health.[6] The guests' prayers are also held to mediate so that the host's intentions (or wishes, *hajat*) will be granted by Allah. Unlike elsewhere in Java, the speaker petitions no spirits, either village, ancestral or those dating back to conception. He also makes no references to the symbolic foods such as the five-coloured rice porridge (*tajin lemah berna*, Mad. or *jenang manca warna*, Jav.) or the glass with the three-coloured flowers which are, nevertheless, laid on the mat next to the rice cone, and explains nothing of the reason for these being present or of their symbolism. The speaker will only mention the names of the Prophet and Allah in closing his speech.[7]

People in Alas Niser are quite wary of the *syirik* connotations of certain of their ritual activities and extreme care is taken so as to avoid committing *syirik*. *Syirik* or *shirk* (Arab.) stands for the contravention of the central Muslim precept of monotheism and accrues from actions that can be interpreted as regarding other entities as equally divine with Allah. The preoccupation of locals with *syirik* was described to me by local *kyai* as of recent origin, dating back to the early 1960s. Most people clearly remembered dead ancestors of theirs placating village spirits during the *slametan*, making long references to the symbolism of the five-coloured porridge and, in cases, of ritual meals held for dead ancestors (i.e. *tahlilan*), of laying down on the mat several personal belongings of the deceased that could attract his wandering spirit (*roh*). The purpose of burning incense during *slametan*, I was told, was mistaken by their ancestors as a spirit-summoning device while today it is held that incense is burned as a visualisation of the ascent of the prayers to the sky. Similarly, the on-going Islamisation which the greater area of Probolinggo has undergone during the second half of the last century is also manifested in the elimination of all ritual references to the rice goddess, *Dewi Sri*, in recent times. The rice goddess who was held as the ultimate, supernatural owner of rice fields and the very source of rice fertility was placated during

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[6] While the Javanese term *slametan* refers to the condition of *slamet*, the Madurese term *konjengen* refers to the condition of *konjong*, which is cognate of the Indonesian term *kunjung* and means to visit, to call on, to meet, to attend.
[7] This contrasts with the speech of dedication Beatty reports from Banyuwangi (1996: 275) and with the general portrayal of the *slametan* proceedings Geertz classified as animistic (1960).

agricultural *konjengen* dedicated wholly to her. Such rituals while still practised today, make no mention of *Dewi Sri* whose personage is of obscurity among young, educated people.[8]

In conjunction then, with the general tenor of the speech which sees Allah as the ultimate source of fulfilling wishes, the *konjengen* community presents Him and His prophet with its piety and worship. This is manifested in the second part of the ritual which is dominated by the recitation of prayers. In Alas Niser, unlike other places in Java, all *konjengen* necessitate the presence of a *kyai* who is to lead the recitation. The *kyai* begins with a recitation of *Surah Al-Fatihah* which is the opening part of Quran and is held to provide an alternative to the confession of faith. The recitation is in solemn and clear voice and is followed by the recitation of other parts (*surah*) of the Quran, this time in unison by all the participants. Though the majority of the guests have only a vague understanding of Arabic language in terms of grammar and lexical meaning, they are able reciters for they have spent their childhood afternoons learning to read Arabic in classes held in mosques or *pesantren*. The recitation of Quranic verses is followed by a collective *dikir* with the *kyai* giving and alternating the rhythm of the recitation. The *dikir* or *dhikr* (Ar.) practised in Alas Niser comprises of a collection of specific formulaic utterances that mention the divine names with which Allah is described in the Quran, the most usual being *la ilah illa Allah* ('there is no deity but God') (see also Bowen 1993: 102, 113, 266-267).

The glorification utterances are recited rhythmically and in unison by the participants, who recite them while moving their heads backwards and forwards looking increasingly withdrawn into themselves. It is often the case that *dikir* sessions are followed by *salawat* prayers, especially if the host has a reputation for being an extremely pious Muslim. The *salawat* session is addressed to the Prophet Mohammed and most commonly comprise Quranic verses dedicated to him, although non-Quranic praises to the Prophet, available in books included in the *pesantren* curriculum and sold at book shops, can be readily incorporated. After the *dikir* and *salawat* sessions end, the *kyai* proceeds to recite a prayer to be followed by commensality. The prayer recited is in Arabic and despite the fact that there are special prayers to fit all occasions, the most generally recited prayer is *doa selamat* (the prayer of well-being, Ind.). The *kyai* petitions Allah to provide the host and his family with good health and prosperity as well as to show mercy when the day of Judgement comes and to forgive them for their sins. While the *kyai* prays, the participants sit with their palms turned upward towards the sky, eyes closed, bringing their palms occasionally to their faces as if they were to splash it with fresh, purifying water and uttering '*amin*' in every pause of the *kyai*'s chant.

In Alas Niser, the presence of a *kyai* in *konjengen* feasts is held to be instrumental for the ritual to achieve its full efficacy. The *kyai* posesses the expert knowledge of the

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[8] This kind of data suggests that *slametan* and other similar rituals are the subject of constant revision as social conditions and views of what constitutes Islamic praxis and doxa change over time. I would also suggest that such recent revisions are related to the criticism levelled against traditionalist Islam by the modernists.

occasion-specific prayer, that is the prayers' content which has been memorised, its lexical meaning and the appropriate way of its recitation in Arabic. A *kyai* comes to acquire such expertise through long education in Islamic schools. The occasion-specific prayers are included in the *al-kitab* (religious books) taught in these schools, forming part of *ilmu ladani*, that is, powerful knowledge that despite being extra-Quranic, is divinely inspired (Bowen 1993: 93). Prayers are also acquired through *murid-guru* ties since they are handed down orally by charismatic teachers to their trusted students and partake in the sacredness with which such bonds are imbued in the mystical traditions of the faith (Schimmel 1975). According to the local understanding of Islam, the *kyai* is also held to be a very potent person who, by virtue of his knowledge and publicly performed piety, stands closer to Allah than other people do, acting thus, as an intermediary. All three elements, that is, the purity and potency of the reciter, the intrinsic power of Arabic language, and its correct recitation, form part of the prayer's efficacy (see also Bowen 1993: 98-102). When one of the three is lacking, villagers are quick to point out that the prayer will not reach Allah (*tidak sampai Allah*, Ind.) but will stop halfway to heaven. As a result, the collective petition will not be granted.

The prayer recited by the *kyai* forms the peak of the collective recitation preceding it. The collective recitation of Quranic verses and the *dikir* session are to be understood as other instances of potent words and speech that have intrinsic power in and of themselves. All around the Muslim world, certain verses of the Quran are considered to be imbued with special efficacy and are used in appropriate contexts and for specific purposes. Moreover, it is held that recitation of any portion of the Quran entices Allah to grant favours to the petitioners. This is so for the Quran is the word of Allah. It is held that every time Allah hears somebody uttering His word and chanting praises of Him, He gets emotionally moved and takes a liking to that person. People in Alas Niser read the Quran in private as much as the fulfillment of a religious obligation as a way of enticing Allah to notice them. Such practice is believed to produce specific results for the reciter, namely the generation of merit (*pahala*) which one stores for the day of Judgement. Quranic recitation often accompanies private prayers/requests and is said to contribute to the latter being fulfilled. In the context of public gatherings such as that of *konjengen*, the participants' collective recitation is a service performed partly for the benefit of the host. Although the *pahala* generated in this way is said to remain tied to the individual reciter, collective recitation presents Allah with a more powerful request since it is supported by not just one person but many. It, thus, augments the possibility that the host's wish for *slamet* will be granted. This potency of numbers, as it were, is cited by locals as the very explanation for *konjengen*'s collective character. As an informant put it, 'if a person recites the Quran (*ngaji*, Ind.) by himself, his request may or may not reach Allah, hence... may or may not get fulfilled but if all his relatives, and neighbours and friends gather and *ngaji* together then I am sure that he is to receive what he asked for,

God willing'. Similarly, the *kyai*'s services are also dedicated to the benefit of the host, for he helps to transmit the words to Allah since he stands closer to Him.

Konjengen feasts provide occasions in which neighbours share the most important moments of each others' lives. All major life-cycle and agricultural stages are marked by invitations for participating and witnessing events related to growth and fertility. The gathering of humans not only celebrates such a vitality but in effect generates it. Food and prayers are the media of the production of vitality and well-being as well as the means of transaction among neighbours. The *konjengen* participants help with their prayers to safeguard the host's family from all kinds of dangers, invoking Allah's and the Prophet's names and asking them to grant the host's wishes. Their ritual services are reciprocated with food, the indexical sign of growth and well-being. Sharing lives, in this context thus, carries the connotations of living in a world of inter-dependency. In this regard, neighbourhood sociality is predicated on exchanges that ensure and promote life.

Praying for the dead

The obligation to participate in *konjengen* amounts to the obligation to share vitality and to contribute to its production. The same holds true for ritual meals dedicated to dead ancestors. It is the obligation to share death and misfortune as well as to contribute to the well-being of each other's dead that is emphasised on such occasions.[9] Ritual meals for the dead are generically referred to as *tahlilan* when they mark the recent departure of a deceased, and as *yasinan* when they form the basis of associations among neighbours who pray for each others' dead on a rotating basis weekly or bi-weekly. The difference between such meals and *slametan* is that the latter are only for the living. This difference is marked by the absence of the five-coloured rice porridge from the ritual offerings while the food laid on the mat does not include the rice cone, but constists simply of rice, and meat and vegetable side-dishes.

The ritual opens with a short speech delivered by the *kyai*. The speech states the purpose of the meeting and gives the name(s) of the dead ancestor(s) to whom the ritual is dedicated. The dead ancestor(s) is designated as the sole beneficiary of the merit (*pahala*) which the collective recitation of *Surah Yasin* (chapter 37 of the Quran) and *dikir* are to

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[9] Modernists in Probolinggo object to the holding of ritual meals for the benefit of the dead on the grounds that the living can not be thought of as able to assist and aid the dead in any way without contravening basic precepts of Islam. Moreover, as Bowen observes for the Gayo purists, the very idea of producing merit for the dead 'radically undermines the moral accountability of the individual to God' (1993: 269), stressed by Muslim puritans. For the most part, modernists argue that death severs all ties and that no relations can be maintained after it.

Plate 7. Scene from a rite of passage marking the baby's first contact with the soil

Plate 8. Neighbours pray for the dead

generate. The neighbours, thus, pray neither for the benefit of the host, as is the case with *konjengen*, nor do they retain 'ownership' of the *pahala* they produce on an individual basis. Rather, they forfeit such ownership, transferring the merit to the host's dead ancestor(s) while their request involves petitioning Allah to show mercy (*rahmat*, Ind.) by reducing the punishment the ancestor(s) is to receive in the afterlife (see also Bowen 1993: 266-267). The names of the dead commemorated in *tahlilan* are read out aloud by the *kyai*, and in the case of *yasinan* gatherings, more than one ancestor is mentioned. Sometimes the ancestors commemorated reach the fifth or sixth generation, more usually though, only the third or fourth above the host's generation is commemorated, including relatives from both the father's and mother's side as well as that of a spouses'. Furthermore, the dead ancestors commemorated are usually lineal. Collaterals such as dead uncles or aunts, close or distant, are rarely mentioned on these occasions. The transfer of merit, itself a type of ritual service, is reciprocated immediately with the food prestations participants are presented with upon finishing the recitation.

Yasinan gatherings are also occasions for the propagation and teaching of the faith. After the recitation and the prayer, and before the food is served, the *kyai* presiding over the association is expected to deliver a sermon, referred to as *pengajian* (Ind.). The sermon is a commentary on either certain socio-political issues dominating the current national and local situation, or an explanation of central tenets of the faith. During the period of my fieldwork these sermons were dominated by the news of violence erupting in various parts of the archipelago such as Ambon and Sambas, the economic plight Indonesians were facing due to the economic crisis, and the national elections (June 1999). The *kyai* would comment on these issues, providing guidance as to the position Muslims should adopt. This guidance is founded on the teachings of Islam, such as the exercise of restraint or the need for philanthropy. At other times, the speech would be wholly dedicated to the faith, filled with segments of Islamic history and folk stories that would highlight the points the *kyai* was trying to make. The issues under consideration would be man's relation with Allah, the correct and consistent performance of the obligatory and non-obligatory rituals, the relations of the sexes, etc.. However, the *pengajian* session was always underplayed by my informants when asked about the reason of participating in *yasinan* associations. What they stressed was the benefit it generated for each other's dead ancestors.

According to the dominant, traditionalist understanding of the faith, the commemoration of the dead forms a central obligation for all Muslims. Such an obligation falls upon both the descendants of the deceased and his/her neighbours. Modernist Muslims maintain that it is only the children of the deceased who can pray for their dead parents, though children can not produce and transfer merit to their parents. Thus, for modernists, this obligation is limited in a double sense, both in terms of 'numbers' or the categories of people

it involves and in terms of its efficacy.[10] In contrast, for traditionalists, this obligation has assumed the nature of an institution with the establishment of *yasinan* associations. *Yasinan* associations are formed on the basis of common residence in the same neighbourhood, the neighbourhood commonly defined as the residential space shared by all those living in the same *gang* (Ind., narrow street) and adjacent dead-end streets. Despite its assumed voluntary character, membership of such associations is almost obligatory once an association is founded, since all houses in the neighbourhood are strongly expected to send a male or female representative, for membership in all such organisations is gender specific. Omission to fulfil this obligation is accompanied by accusations of arrogance and undue pride by one's neighbours, and puts a lot of strain on one's position in the local community.

Yasinan, and other similar associations, such as *salawatan*[11] and *khataman*[12], all have a formal structure with elected chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, attendance lists and books in which a record of the financial contributions of the members is kept. It is often the case that such associations have at their disposal electronic sound equipment, musical instruments such as tambourines, and mats. The financial contributions each member has to make are both for the acquisition of this equipment, the amount reaching that of a couple of thousands rupiah per meeting, and as an aid offered each time to the house where the meeting is taking place, the amount not exceeding that of one thousand rupiah. The latter is a kind of compensation for the expenses, such as for the food, cigarettes and drinks the household presents the guests with. The meetings are held on a rotating basis among the members with the turns determined by the drawing of a lottery, consisting of the names of the members written on pieces of paper. When each household has had its turn, the *yasinan* association temporarily disbands, though in most cases, it will soon start up again with the same membership.

Yasinan gatherings involve the neighbours in a circle of exchanges. Food and prayers circulate among the body-persons of neighbours on an equal, rotating basis. As neighbours come to share food and prayers, they also come to share the same ancestors. From the perspective of each separate body-person, transacting with the dead involves the generation and transfer of merit as a return for the gift of life, nurture and property, which

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[10] In Probolinggo, very few modernists were vocal about opposing both *slametan* which they see as remnants of Java's Hindu-Bhuddist past and rites for the dead such as *tahlilan* and *yasinan* which they see as misguided practises. Avoidance of bringing up such controversial issues is tied to maintaining the general tenor of social life, revolving around the establishment of relations of *rukun*. Thus, some modernists have opted for holding *slametan* rituals themselves. These people refashion *slametan* as a proper Islamic ritual through calling it *sedhekah*, an almsgiving rite, even though no almsgiving is involved. As for those modernists who would not hold *slametan* themselves, they would, nevertheless, participate in such a ritual if a neighbour or relative held one. Similarly, they would participate in *tahlilan* but they would deny that such activity has any relevance for the deceased. I have never heard, though, of any modernist participating in *yasinan* associations.

[11] *Salawatan* associations are dedicated to the chanting of Quranic and non-Quranic verses in praise of Prophet Mohammed. Such verses also commemorate Mohammed's return to Mecca after his flight to Medina, a major event in Islamic history that is equated with the establishment of the faith.

[12] *Khataman* associations' meetings revolve around the recitation of the Quran from beginning to end, completing a full reading in every meeting. The Quran is divided into 30 parts (*juz*). Each member is allocated a specific part and all members recite their different parts synchronically.

ancestors have furnished their living descendants with. From the perspective of the neighbourhood, transactions with the dead implicate neighbours in transactions with each other. Neighbours pray and generate merit for each others' dead in the same way that an ancestor's direct descendants are required to do. In the process, neighbours treat one another's dead as their own.[13] The end result of such a moral economy of merit based on inter-dependency and rotating exchanges is the expansion of the range of ancestors any specific body-person has. Such an expansion is predicated on that aspect of his/her existence which construes him/her as firmly rooted in a web of spatial relations.

Yasinan gatherings have fundamental implications for the definition of the *kampong*, the neighbourhood. This particular mode of caring for the fate of ancestors in the afterlife adds another dimension to the *kampong's* overt spatial character. This is so for it constructs a notion of the neighbourhood as having sprung from the same set of progenitors. In this regard, spatial unity is conflated with genealogical unity. In other words, place and genealogy become conjoined through ritual actions whose purpose is as much to create place as to create specific kinds of body-persons in that place.

Epitomising sameness

Exchanges between neighbours are intensified during the fasting period. *Ramadhan* occupies a very special place both in the Muslim calendar and the social life of the neighbourhood, as food prestations, the performance of non-obligatory prayers, the night long chanting and the daylight fasting both intensifies and reverses the general pattern and rhythm of everyday life. Fasting during the ninth month of the lunar year is prescribed as one of the five pillars of the faith[14] but Muslims in Alas Niser go beyond this in elaborating its purpose and meaning. It is seen as a test of religiosity for the believers, and one often hears *kyai* extolling the prophets and the saints for the patience and strength they showed when Allah put their faith to test. It is also conceived as a practice that develops the 'feeling of care' (*rasa kepedulian*, Ind.) towards the needy and deprived in the believer so that he/she can empathise with their troubles and act so as to alleviate them. The payment of *zakat*, the religious tax, towards the end of *Ramadhan* exemplifies this point. Moreover, the

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[13] Formoso (1996) reports a similar, albeit more complex and ambiguous, relationship articulated between Chinese and Thai in Thailand with respect to the ritual adoption by Chinese of ghosts belonging to Thai dead who have no one to care and pray for them.

[14] The other four are: the confession of faith - 'there is no deity but God and Mohammed is His Prophet' -, the performance of the five daily prayers, the pilgrimage to Mecca and the payment of *zakat*, the religious tax.

Plate 9. Food collected for the purposes of a ritual gathering

Plate 10. Scene from *sholat Idul Fitri*, the prayer of the feast celebrating the end of the fasting period

performance of the non-obligatory evening prayers, *taraweh*, and the night-long group recitation of the Quran, *tedarus*, are the main activities through which one can accumulate *pahala* and avoid heavy punishment in the afterlife. But the main meaning attributed to fasting is its purificatory effect. This internal catharsis is often phrased in terms of a born-again idiom since locals say that after the *Ramadhan* one is as pure and free of sins as a new-born baby.

Both the start and the end of the fasting month are marked by food prestations. The night before the first day of the month, women cook a special cake, *kue apem*. The cake takes its name from the word *apem* (Jav.), meaning forgiveness. The offer of the *kue apem*, which is distributed to and eaten by one's neighbours, is held to petition Allah to show mercy and to give strength to the cake-giver to withstand the fast. Similarly, the night that ends the fast - that is the night before the first of the next month, *Sawal-* is marked by the cooking and exchange of dishes of yellow rice, noodles and chicken pieces among neighbours. This takes place at the same time that *takbiran*[15] celebrations are held after the performance of the penultimate prayer of the day -*sholat maghrib-* in the city centre, by youths chanting religious songs in Arabic on top of trucks and motorcycles, while beating drums and carrying torches and banners.

In between these food prestations, and in particular during the last ten days of *Ramadhan*, neighbours exchange, on a rotating basis, dishes of glutinous rice. These exchanges, together with the *konjengen* held for the birthday of the Prophet (*maulid*, Ind.), are one of the most important caledrical celebrations. Since eating is forbidden from dawn to sunset, the exchanges take place right after the performance of *sholat maghrib*, early in the evening. The exchanges, collectively referred to as *konjengen maleman* - from *malem* (Mad.) for evening- are practised at specific dates, and in particular, only on odd-numbered ones. Neighbours are free to choose any of the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th day of *Ramadhan* to send out food. It is often the case, though, that neighbours meet beforehand and come up with a schedule for regulating the exchange. The total number of houses comprising the neighbourhood is divided into five groups, each group having to cook and distribute food on a specific date, the cooking done on a household and not group basis. In this way, neighbours exchange on a symmetrical basis, assuming both the role of gift-giver and gift-receiver.

The designation of this circulation of food as *konjengen* was to me somewhat misleading for there is no human gathering taking place and thus, commensality is absent. The food is taken to neighbours either by children or women who would drop by for a quick visit and consumed after the gift-giver has departed. When I asked about this discrepancy, people in Alas Niser noted that in the not too distant past, commensality was an integral part of *maleman* and that it was during the late 1960s or early 1970s that commensality gave way

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[15] From *takbir*, the proclamation of *Allahu akbar*, 'God is great'.

to distribution. Without lamenting the possibly negative implications of the change, they commented that it too exemplified the *gotong-royong* (mutual assistance) ethic of neighbourhood relations which had remained intact but somehow altered in form.

Food and prayers go together in Alas Niser. The non-obligatory *taraweh* prayers, held every night during *Ramadhan* just after *sholat isyah*, the final prayer of the day, has assumed the status of an obligatory ritual in terms of practice. All the men I came to know during my fieldwork would rush to *langgar* and mosques to perform *taraweh* at the prescribed time. As for the women, who customarily do not pray either in *langgar* or mosques except on special occasions, such as the day after the end of *Ramadhan* (*sholat Idul Fitri*), they would perform *taraweh* in a room of their houses. The performance of *taraweh* prayer which according to traditionalist practices, consists of 20 *rakaat* (essential units of all prayers, consisting of bows and prostrations, Arab.) plus another 3 *rakaat* designated as *rakaat witir*, and confers merit upon believers, was accompanied in the *langgar* and mosques by commensal consumption of coffee or tea and cakes. Both the drinks and the cakes are provided on a rotating basis by neighbours, that is those who live nearby the prayer house and perform *taraweh* together every night. All members of this ritual community have been informed days earlier by the caretakers of the *langgar* about the dates each member had to provide drinks and cakes through the dissemination of lists of names or word of mouth.

Taraweh is followed on a daily basis by *tedarus*, that is group recitation of the Quran by taking turns. *Tedarus* groups too are gender exclusive and while men hold *tedarus* recitations in *langgar* and mosques, women gather in the living rooms of domestic houses, the exact location rotating among female neighbours every night. Male *tedarus* groups are likewise made up of neighbours, that is, people who share the same *langgar* or mosque, people who invite each other to *konjengen*, people who pray for each other's dead ancestors, people who have grown up together and have seen their own children growing up in the same place. It is these people's voices that come to dominate the evening sky as each person takes its turn in chanting. The chanting sometimes lasts for several hours, usually from around eight o'clock at night till just before dawn. The recitation is conceived as generating merit (*pahala*) both for those who recite and for those who listen. Since this time the recitation is dedicated neither to a host nor to a host's dead ancestors, as the place in which the recitation is held is a public one, and the rotating basis of female gatherings transforms houses to public spaces, the merit produced is shared by the neighbourhood as a whole. Similarly, the neighbourhood is defined as a place filled with chanting. Chanting and listening defines the boundaries of the neighbourhood. The night-long recitation is transmitted through several loudspeakers, standing on the roof of the *langgar*, transferring the merit produced around the neighbourhood. It is in this way that the neighbourhood as a unified space tries to secure visions of Paradise for the afterlife of all its members.

The sharing of merit is underlined and reinforced by the sharing of food. Every time the *tedarus* group completes a full reading of the Quran (*khataman*), a *konjengen* is held to

celebrate the event. This time though, the food is cooked in the same hearth (*dapor*, Mad.) by all the female members of the neighbourhood. This food is, moreover, not only the outcome of a collective effort, but it is also made from the raw substances each neighbour contributes prior to cooking. The *konjengen* that takes place in *tedarus* gatherings is based on the raw rice (*bherras*, Mad.), raw chicken and raw vegetables each household in the neighbourhood offers separately. These raw materials are transformed into nourishing substances for commensal purposes by the collective labour of women and they are cooked together in a single hearth. The food is transported from the hearth to the *langgar* and placed in the centre of the gathered males with the rice cone surrounded by side dishes. There the food is distributed to all the male participants, who will eat as much as they desire and take portions of the remaining food back to their houses for the women and children to eat. Thus, the collective generation of merit and its sharing on an equal footing are re-elaborated in the production and consumption of food.

Tedarus *konjengen* take place more than once during *Ramadhan*, depending on the pace with which each neighbourhood group recites the Quran. Some *tedarus* groups operate by reciting one *juz* (section) of the Quran every night, which leaves them with one complete recitation of the scripture for the whole of the fasting month. These groups hold only one *konjengen*. Most neighbourhoods, though, opt for reciting three *juz* a night. These neighbourhoods hold three *slametan* during *Ramadhan*, once every ten days, since the total number of *juz*, which is thirty, corresponds roughly to the total number of days of the fasting month. In the case of my neighbourhood in Alas Niser, the *tedarus* group had opted for a 24hour non-stop recitation which meant that the group completed a full reading every two and half days. All in all, eleven *konjengen* were held for the fasting month of 1999. The proliferation of the number of *juz* recited rests on the belief that the total amount of *pahala* generated depends on the number of complete readings. Despite the fact the no one can exactly calculate the amount of *pahala*, that either an individual or a group will generate, the point made is that the larger the number of complete readings the greater the amount of *pahala* the neighbourhood will receive. As such, the duration of the recitation and the number of *juz* recited are points of competition among neighbourhoods, since *tedarus* amounts to a public performance of collective piety. The larger the number of *tedarus konjengen*, the more pious the neighbourhood presents itself to be in the eyes of other neighbourhoods.

Rotating reciprocity

All the rituals I have described in the preceding sections, that is the *konjengen*, the *yasinan* and the *tedarus*, have been construed as ritual activities through which the category

of the neighbourhood (*kampong*) and of neighbours (*tetenggha*) is socially constructed. I have argued that neighbours are specific types of body-persons who, on the basis of co-habiting the same place, come to share food, ancestors and merit by ritual means. As far as the form of exchange is concerned, I have analysed food prestations as returns for the generation and distribution of merit. In the case of *konjengen*, the food offered was portrayed as a reciprocation for the benefits accrued to the host by the participants' recitation services. Seen from this perspective, *yasinan* food prestations are similar to *slametan* ones, though, in *yasinan*, the participants also make financial contributions to the host. Such contributions are modelled on gifts of 'empathy' (*niser*, Mad.), which neighbours are expected to present to the family of the deceased. In the case of *tahlilan*, another ritual for the dead, neighbours offer raw rice or sugar to the deceased's family. Monetary contributions in *yasinan* rituals, then, both follow from and constitute transformations of the contributions in kind made at other mortuary rituals.

Both *konjengen* and *yasinan* rituals are held on a rotating basis. They are, thus, similar in form to the rotating credit associations (*aresan*, Mad.) described by Geertz (1962). The rotating mode is more obvious in the case of *yasinan* since the structure of the meetings is founded upon the members taking turns both in praying for each others' dead ancestors and the corresponding offerings of food. In *yasinan* gatherings the food offered can be seen as an immediate reciprocation for the participants' services and the merit they transfer. The food for prayers equation is true though, only if we see *yasinan* gatherings as separate and discontinuous events, that is as events outside the logic of rotation. Seen within the logic of rotation, food and prayers do not form a dyad of gift and counter-gift. This is so for the obligation to attend *yasinan* is embedded within the obligation to hold *yasinan* when one's turn is due. Rotation means that the previous gathering's host will be transformed into a guest, who will pray for the dead ancestors' of the current host and who will receive food similar to that he has himself offered previously. Thus, the acceptance of food which one has been offered constitutes a pledge for the future reciprocation of a similar gift. Therefore, what rotation ensures is that prayers and food move between neighbours in a symmetrical manner. It also effects a distinction between food and prayers as objects of such exchanges, since they are not considered as being of the same kind.

The rotating basis of *konjengen* is not as straightforward. The reason being that the time span within which both food and prayers are reciprocated can extend over several years instead of a few months. Since all members of a *kampong* are expected to hold *slametan* for each of the important life-cycle events, 'the expectation is', as Geertz writes, 'that over a period of time the giving of slametans will balance out among all the families of the neighbourhood' (1962: 245). As such, all the members of a *kampong* can be thought of as taking turns in holding feasts celebrating a daughter's wedding or a son's circumcision. The arrangement of this rotation depends, though, on the separate families' domestic cycles. However, the end result of this is similar to the *yasinan* mode of arranging gatherings.

The host of a *konjengen* finds himself/herself, a few months or years after, praying as a guest for his/her neighbour in the latters' celebration, receiving food as a counter-prestation for the food he/she had provided in the past. Once again, food and prayers circulate around the neighbourhood as distinct objects, moving in opposite directions, while marking a community that shares the things most valued in this world and the afterlife. The rotating nature of the *slametan* is further manifested in the labour arrangements that accompany it in cases where the labour of women who do not belong to the host family is involved. When *konjengen* feasts involving hundreds of people are held, female neighbours of the host are expected to contribute both raw foodstuff and labour. Given that such labour services are reciprocated on future occasions, the total amount of collective labour a neighbourhood can command for rituals is evenly distributed among the houses that comprise the *kampong* on a rotating basis.

The same goes for food prestations that mark the start and end of *Ramadhan* and the *taraweh* sessions as well. Once again, rice dishes, coffee and cakes are distributed among neighbours in a symmetrical way. The rotating basis of neighbourhood exchanges though, seems to me to indicate much more than their delineation as instances of what Sahlins (1972) calls 'balanced reciprocity'. While both rotating reciprocity and balanced reciprocity mark relations of relative equality, rotating reciprocity is different from balanced reciprocity in the sense that there is no expectation of an immediate and exact return. Rotating reciprocity is also distinct from Sahlins' 'generalised reciprocity' (1972: 194) too, the latter being predicated on an indefinite time period allowed for repayment and the non-overt reckoning of debts.

The non-applicability of Sahlins' model for Alas Niser becomes apparent once we try to force it on the data. According to this model, *yasinan* gatherings would be subsumed under the category of balanced reciprocity for debts are counted in records and gifts are followed by similar counter-gifts within one or two weeks. Similarly, *konjengen* ritual exchanges would be subsumed under the category of generalised reciprocity for the expectation of a return is both indirect and implicit and the return itself is not immediate. The problem with this model is that it implies that the category of neighbours in Alas Niser is constructed in two distinct ways. In the first case, neighbours are not in debt to each other and are, thus, equal. In the second case, neighbours owe services and objects to one another and are, thus, unequal. While this can be taken to mean that relations among neighbours are characterised by a certain ambiguity, I do not think that ambiguity registers with these kind of exchanges.

Rotating reciprocity among neighbours is based on the obligation to reciprocate. The time that elapses between the offer of a gift, its acceptance, and the presentation of a return does not constitute a variable that my informants stressed. Time is neither necessarily nor universally a valuable 'commodity'. What my informants accounts and practices emphasised was as much the expectation that one attends a gathering, contributes to the generation of vitality in this life and well-being in the afterlife for the benefit of neighbours, and accepts the

food which one is offered as the obligation to hold a similar gathering and to receive and accept equivalent gifts from one's neighbours next time around. The exactness of 'next time around' is suspended as irrelevant. Furthermore, the obligation to reciprocate like with like in a rotating fashion creates sharing. In the same way that affines establish relations of sameness through joining like with like in the marriage of their children, neighbours establish similarity and equality through exchanging food for food, labour for labour and prayers for prayers. Moreover, in the same way that certain affines come to share grandchildren, neighbours come to share ancestors.

Emplaced and embodied actions

Rotating reciprocity takes place within the frame of ritual activity. As construed by my informants, ritual action of the *konjengen*, *yasinan* and *tedarus* kind is seen as the appropriate response to the precepts of the faith as espoused by traditionalist understandings of Islam, and as the right path towards the realisation of the value of *rukun*, the ideal of harmony said to permeate relations among those who occupy the same place. Thus, activities of this kind are conceptualised as the primary means for the establishment of a ritual community, whose ethical code of internal conduct stems from and is a reflection of the desire to worship. Moreover, such a community is spatially defined, since participation in worship, and the exchanges the latter entail are regulated on the basis of residence. All of the houses comprising a *kampong*, are expected to join in ritual activity, irrespective of whether they are established by people who originate from the *kampong* or by people who are recent arrivals. Such a community is predicated neither upon the exclusivity of genealogy nor on restrictions with respect to place of origin. People are expected to change their *kampong* membership after marriage, a principle that applies primarily to males because of the uxorilocal patterns of marital residence. Equally, long-term and permanent migrants in Alas Niser are progressively incorporated and 'indigenised' through acts of generating vitality for and caring for the dead ancestors of persons with whom they have no prior relationships (see also Carsten 1995a).

The spatial focus of ritual activity means that ritual creates place. It is my contention that in opposition to the delineation of worship communities as a category of people unified around *pusaka* (heirlooms) that Errington (1987) and Headley (1997) have claimed for the cases of Luwu (Sulawesi) and Central Java respectively, *konjengen* communities in Alas Niser and Probolinggo are defined by co-habitation and the ritual exchanges realised within particular spatial confines. Both authors identify worship communities with a series of sacred objects or living persons who are thought to embody and to manifest the origin point of such

collectivities. This origin point, usually an apical ancestor, becomes the core of the temporal constitution of a worship community that anchors its unity in the remote past. While, issues of temporality are extremely important in ritual activity in Alas Niser, nevertheless, as I shall argue in the following sections, temporality and its genealogical dimension are negotiated and constructed in terms of spatial belonging in the present.

Rituals of traditionalist Islamic worship were also conceptualised by my interlocutors as a set of activities that accomplish things. As I have already stated, Arabic speech and Quranic verses, recited collectively and on a rotating basis, are held to be imbued with a special efficacy. The distinctive effects of ritual language at *konjengen* occasions are related to their mediatory role in ensuring the well-being, health and prosperity of the host, his/her family and his/her landed property. Similarly, in *yasinan* rituals, the transfer of merit to the deceased ancestors is said to contribute to the latter's well-being both until the day of Judgement and after its coming. Dead ancestors who have received large quantities of merit are thought to have most of their sins remitted and thus, to be relatively free from confinement and punishment and to be able to enjoy the magnificent gardens of the Paradise. My informants' stated aims for ritual action were thus related to its appropriateness in strengthening, enhancing and promoting the 'vitality' of those towards which it was directed. In this sense, ritual is a means for the attainment of a series of qualities that change and empower the body-person. Such a 'vitality' is also thought to spread and expand so as to encompass all the participants/neighbours, as in the case of *Ramadhan* chanting that produces merit both for those who chant and for those who listen.

To the extent that, in Alas Niser, all qualities are thought of as inhering in the body (or, in the case of the dead, in the *roh*), ritual action is directed at refashioning the person, transforming its bodily state and reconstituting its kindedness. My argument here draws on themes explored in previous chapters, as well as a number of other anthropologists' work. In particular, I have already explored the constitutive role played by ascetic regimes for the production of potent body-persons and the contribution that marriage rituals make in the construction of the husband-wife relation as siblingship. Furthermore, the work of Marglin (1990) and Strathern & Stewart (1998) also stress the transformative effects of ritual action. In particular, Marglin (1990) argues that Indian ritual dance 'has the power to create a culturally specific experience', namely the emotion of *srngara rasa* (devotion), which, in turn, 'refines' the dancers' body and transforms them, albeit temporarily, into an effective vehicle for female divine sovereignty.

In a similar vein, Strathern & Stewart (1998) chart the ways through which ritually achieved cosmic renewal is replicated in the bodies of the participants. In their analysis of Melanesian material, the embodiment of cosmic renewal is mediated by the ritual consumption of a series of specific foods which are used to restore health and fertility in humans. Both of these articles, and Werbner's work (1989) on what he calls ritual passage, trace the theme of embodied transformability in terms of the relationships between the

cosmos as a whole and the human body. What concerns me here though, is not cosmology but rather sociality, and more particularly, the makings of neighbours into siblings and the partial displacement of substantial difference between people who share the same *kampong*. For this reason, I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing Werbner's definition of ritual so as to suit my present purposes. Therefore, I talk of ritual as a process of symbolic action focused on the body. By means of the body, performers find and resituate themselves with regard to the field of social relationships. By means of the body, also, performers embody who they are, and what they intend to become in relation to the classificatory principles that organise the social relations in which they are enmeshed.[16]

As analysed in chapter 5, siblingship is spatially conceived. As the basic idiom through which people in Alas Niser articulate issues of origins and growth, siblingship's spatial referents are embedded in conceptions of the womb and the house. In addition, siblingship as consubstantiality is seen as the outcome of a series of transactions involving the transfer of detachable parts of identity such as substances, i.e. blood and milk, and people, i.e. children, brides and bridegrooms. In Alas Niser, people engage in expanding siblingship ties in the only way possible - by transacting with people excluded from the category of possible affines. In these circumstances, what can be called kinship from a Euro-American perspective takes different connotations. The ritual circulation of food, prayers and dead ancestors among neighbours transforms one set of relations into another. In the process, ritual action reconstitutes the body-persons of the *kampong*, turning them into people who share some of the same substance.

The transformation and reconstitution of neighbours' body-persons is predicated on the expansion and the redefinition of the sources of origin and growth achieved by ritualised exchanges. *Yasinan* rituals expand the set of dead ancestors any given person in the neighbourhood has. The flow of prayers establishes relations with beneficial outcomes and suggests the creation of genealogical connections on the basis of acts of merit transfer. In this regard, *yasinan* rituals can be seen as procreative moments of a reversed order in which living persons appropriate a series of other people's dead ancestors as their own. In the same way that the *kampong* activity redraws genealogy, it also reframes the sources of growth. The collapse of distinctions between different sources of growth represented by the consumption of food that takes place within the separate houses comprising the *kampong* is the work of *konjengen* gatherings, held both during *Ramadhan* and at other occasions. In these gatherings, the *kampong* constructs and reveals itself as a unitary source of vitality, health and prosperity for all the *kampong* residents.[17] The rotating mode of exchanging food

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[16] Werbner's definition of ritual passage is as follows: 'a process of symbolic action focused upon the body. By means of the body, performers of the ritual passage find and resituate themselves in cosmological space. By means of the body, also, performers personify who they are, and what they intend to become in relation to the forces around them' (1989: 1).

[17] I reiterate partly here an argument put forward by Carsten (1997). She notes that on the Malaysian island of Langkawi, during feasts similar to *slametan*, 'the community represents itself [...] in the idiom of the house, [...and that it] takes over the function of food-sharing' (1997:183). However, my analysis

establishes a dependency relations among neighbours while the food's communal consumption and, at times production, identifies the neighbours as corporeal versions of one another. This is so for ritual food exchanges rest on the idea of personhood as open and permeable (see Chapter 3 & 4) and by complementing it with an ethic of communal consumption, they achieve the creating people who share substance.

Any discussion of ritual and ritual efficacy is bound to face several problems. One of the most intractable is related to whether ritual is a particular type of human activity, characterised by formality and prescription, or an aspect of all kinds of social interaction (see Mahmood 2001). The problem with ritual's distinctiveness touches on its relation to the wider world lying outside its frame, and concerns the extent to which ritual mirrors other more informal or mundane activities or is diametrically opposed to them. In what follows, I proceed to discuss the way people in Alas Niser construct and 'deconstruct' the categories of kin and neighbours in settings other than those analysed so far. My purpose is not to claim neither that ritual is a separate category. However, neither it is my purpose to claim that it is not. Rather, my aim is to further qualify the statements made above in relation to ritual exchanges through an examination of their embeddedness within other facets of a spatially delineated sociality.

Neighbours and kin

When I asked Ibu Hotijah, a 47 year old female neighbour of mine, about the correct conduct towards one's kin (*pamili*, Mad.), she defined relations between kinsmen as characterised by the values of unconditional support and care. She said that if one is to build a house one will ask his/her *tretan* (siblings, Mad., also a generic term for consanguines) to come to help by providing their labour. She continued by saying that the labour is not to be reciprocated (*beles*, Mad.) but it will be forgotten, because if it is to be taken into account and calculated, then, this would amount to putting one's *tretan* into debt and such a thing is inappropriate (*tak' bener*, Mad.) between kinsmen. At that moment, her husband, Pak Ismail, appeared in the doorstep. He brought the news of the death of one of Ibu Hotijah's first cousins (*tretan sepopo*, Mad.), living at the other end of the village. When I asked her

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of ritual does not follow the Durkheimian theory that ritual's purpose is to represent society to itself. I take ritual's purpose to be the enhancement and expansion of body-persons and the reconstitution of the relationships in terms of which body-persons are defined and redefined. This is partly achieved by a focus on food as an object of exchange and an indexical sign of growth. Moreover, I do not conceive the conflation of neighbour relations and siblingship that rituals produce as the result of the appropriation of a function. I see the conflation as part of a constitutive process in terms of which the neighbourhood is co-extensive with the notion of the House (see also Errington 406). In this sense, the neighbourhood is not like a house; rather, it is a particular form of a House.

whether her husband was to attend the *tahlilan* ritual for the deceased, her reply was negative for she said her *sepopo* rarely visited their house and that, although he was the son of her mother's sister, he had been living in another neighbourhood for a long time.

Although this example does not concern same neighbourhood kinsmen, it does introduce a discrepancy between the way people talk about proper kinship relations and the way they enact them. It also introduces the idea that kinship ties are conceived as in need of regular re-activation through informal visits and other means such as *konjengen* invitations, especially when kin live in different *kampong*. This is so for when kinship ties do not correlate with close spatial ties, kinship thin out. As for same *kampong* kinsmen, the kind of exchanges taking place among them is not different from those among non-kin neighbours in Alas Niser. This is despite the fact that, in Alas Niser kinsmen come to live in compounds, commonly referred to as *tanean* (Mad.).

As I explained in the previous chapter, *tanean* are made up of people whose ancestors, being full siblings, shared a common house in the past. These ancestors are usually of the third or fourth ascending generation, and rarely beyond the sixth due to the relatively recent history of the areas' habitation. These ancestors are the ones commemorated in *yasinan* rituals. So, it is common for people of the same *tanean* to be first or second cousins amongst themselves. Since houses are usually inherited by daughters, and post-marital residence is usually uxorilocal, the co-residents of a *tanean* are related through females. However, kinship is not what underlies participation in *yasinan* associations.

A collection of *tanean* compounds constitutes the core of neighbourhoods (*kampong*) in Alas Niser. Due to the process of *tanean* expansion, it often happens that members of adjacent compounds are distant relatives. This expansion occurs when a *tanean*'s land is fully occupied by houses. Adjacent agricultural land is turned into residential land and occupied by newly married members of the initial *tanean*. Such distant kinship ties, though vaguely remembered by older members of the community, are not widely recognised in Alas Niser, for people refer to distant relatives of theirs living in nearby *tanean* as *tetenggha*, that is neighbours. As such, they typically do not distinguish between distantly related and un-related neighbours. Rather, they are all subsumed under the general rubric of people of the same *kampong*. The rest of the houses making up a *kampong* are occupied by historically un-related people who have arrived in the area more recently and have bought land there. In the case of my neighbourhood, consisting of three *tanean* and several other houses, two of the *tanean* were related through a common ancestor of the sixth ascending generation, while the third one was made up of two lines of houses of unrelated people who had come to share both the same yard and entrance to it. A total of eleven houses provided the rest of my *kampong*'s population.

The *tanean* holds no property in common. Property is divided among full siblings following their marriage. As such, property is held by households, most usually consisting of a married couple and their children, though in some cases, one or both parents of the bride

are also included. *Tanean* members are not referred to collectively by any generic term.[18] Moreover, the *tanean* compound does not form a ritual community. Rather, as we have seen, *tanean* members depend on the ritual and other services of the wider network of relations based on physical proximity beyond the *tanean*'s boundaries. While some *tanean* do include a *langgar* structure situated at the western-most point of the land they occupy, not all *tanean* in Alas Niser have *langgar* but only those with some of the most prosperous households in the area. In addition, rights of use of *langgar* are not exclusive to the *tanean* members since non-*tanean* male neighbours do perform their prayers there. In cases of Islamic celebrations, such as that of the Prophet's birthday, the *langgar* becomes the focus of neighbourhood activity with all male members of the *kampong* gathering there. What marks *tanean* as distinct units is their spatial visibility, as they form two parallel lines of houses encompassed by a bamboo fence, and the social recognition of the consanguineal links pertaining among the female members of the houses it encompasses.

Relations between same *tanean* houses are qualitatively the same as those between houses of the same *kampong*.[19] Despite locals' statements that *tretan* do not keep accounts of what is given or received and of the absence of the consequent obligation to reciprocate, people in Alas Niser do keep track of exchanges between *tretan* and a like and equivalent return is always expected, though the expectation is rarely voiced publicly. This was made apparent to me on various occasions, two instances of which I will relate.

The first has to do with the written records villagers keep of what they have offered and received in major ritual occasions, such as the wedding of a child or the circumcision of a son. The records include the name of the gift-giver and the amount either of money or of the contribution in kind they have received. Equally, they keep notes of the gifts they themselves have offered and the names of the recipients. Locals explained to me that the purpose of it all was not to forget what has to be reciprocated in the future and, thus, to avoid being ashamed (*todus*, Mad.) in case the return gift is not of equivalent value. They also stressed the obligation to reciprocate with a counter-gift of the same or bigger value. Given that at the time I did my fieldwork, Indonesia was experiencing one of the worst economic crisis in its history with inflation reaching 80 per cent, locals were quite wary of the difficulties of meeting pre-crisis gifts with like, at least, returns. The difficulties related to the fact that the prices of goods had gone up while incomes had remained relatively the same. They did their best to guard themselves from shame though, often through borrowing money.

The expectation of an equivalent return from *tretan* and *tetenggha* alike is manifested in the private records mentioned above. The records I saw included the names of people classified as *tretan* and of neighbours of the same *kampong* as well as of people one

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[18] The only exception being the members of a *kyai*'s *tanean* who are collectively referred to as *oreng ndalem*, that is persons of the inside or persons of the centre.

[19] Massard (1991), writing for the Kampong Kiambang in Malaysia, argues that people there similarly do not differentiate radically between kin and non-kin, kin and neighbours. Her claim, like mine here, is based on an analysis of exchanges.

would designate as friends (*kanca*, Mad). The records of one of my *tanean* families, for example, referred to the recent marriage of one of its daughters, and included a total of sixty-four names. Some of these names I recognised as belonging to the family's same *tanean tretan*, other *tretan* living in other villages and towns and to its *kampong* neighbours. As for the rest, they belonged to people designated as schoolmates or work mates and, as would be expected, affines.

The principle of non-differentiation in the treatment of kin and neighbours is also evident in the institution of *petoran* (Mad.), which can be roughly translated as 'transfer of temporary ownership'. If, as a result of holding a big *konjengen* or *tahlilan*, one has amassed large quantities of raw rice or sugar that one has been given as contributions by guests, one can entrust (*petoro*, Mad.) either all or part of it to somebody else for a short period of time. Primarily, *petoroan* forms a solution to shortages of storing space and provides an alternative to selling contributions made in kind and converting them into money. This money could be used to cover some of the expenses for the staging of a celebration. In *petoroan*, on the other hand, the ownership of the contributions is transferred to a third person, the trustee. Such a person is usually somebody who is going to hold a ceremony quite soon and is in need of both sugar and raw rice. *Petoroan* works on the basis of symmetrical reciprocity with the trustee having to return the total amount of produce entrusted back to the initial owner when the initial owner is to hold another feast at some future point.[20] When I asked several locals about the categories of people that make for good trustees, they readily replied that it can be either a *tretan*, a *tetenggha* or a *kanca* (friend, Mad.). In my subsequent inquiries about these kind of arrangements, I found that none of these categories were given any particular statistical preference, though it was usually people of the same *kampong* that entered into *petoroan*.

To claim that people in Alas Niser do not differentiate between kin and neighbours (as well as friends) is not to say that they consider these two categories as identical in all respects. As we have seen in the previous chapter, consanguines are perceived as different from non-consanguines in terms of blood (*dereh*, Mad.). Moreover, the very residential pattern of *tanean* projects blood onto space. People who share the same blood are juxtaposed to strangers (*oreng laen*, Mad.), that is, unrelated people. Their juxtaposition comes to the fore in issues of incest and marriage. As such, the category of *oreng laen* captures both the danger associated with unfamiliar blood and space and the potential of affinity, the potential for mixing. As shown in the previous chapter, the ritual construction and procreative reckoning of affinity transforms different kinds of people into people of the same kind.

In between the two categories of *tretan* and *oreng laen*, are the people one shares the same *kampong* with, the *tetenggha*. These are the kind of people one encounters daily,

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[20] *Petoroan* involves not only the circulation of agricultural produce but of animals also.

one has grown up with, and with whom one transacts in the *yasinan* and *konjengen* rituals. The *tetenggha* are both too close to be deemed as strangers and quite different in terms of blood. Yet, people in Alas Niser treat their *tetenggha* in the same way that they treat their *tretan*. This is apparent both in the ritual economy of exchanges outlined above and in the fact that there is little intra-*kampong* endogamy practised. Despite the fact that Islam allows for non-full siblings to marry, there is a marked local avoidance of marrying people who belong either to the category of *tretan* other than full siblings, or that of *tetenggha*. Locals phrase this avoidance in relative terms saying that 'it's better' (*lebbi bhegus*, Mad.) not to take a neighbour as a spouse. As a result, spouses are drawn from the category of *oreng laen*, that is people who live in other *kampong* of the same village or in other villages altogether.

The degree of closeness with which relations between neighbours are experienced is linguistically expressed in phrases like '*oreng dinnah odik atetenggha*' (Mad.) that can be translated as 'people here live together with their neighbours' and '*tetenggha pada ban tretan*' (Mad.), translated as 'neighbours [are] like siblings'. The designation of neighbours as similar to consanguines presents us with one of the central problems the discipline faces, namely that of accounting for metaphors. The most common way of dealing with metaphors is for one to say that a category is both constructed and rendered intelligible through its assimilation to a schema taken from another domain of social life which, in turn, is conceived, by the analyst, as being paramount. According to this mode of analysis, exchanges, for example, between spirits and humans are commonly explained as modelled on exchanges between humans. The native metaphorical equivalence of spirits and humans is, thus, conceived as the outcome of the subordination of one of the terms of the equation to the other.

The problem with this kind of analysis is that it places the two terms in a hierarchical relation and that it stresses differences (humans vs animals) where native analogies see fundamental similarities (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Ingold 1996). A way out of this approach which would have us giving undue primacy to consanguineal kinship for the structuring of neighbourhood relations, is to take metaphors as ways of positing fundamental similarities while hiding differences. Such an approach is advocated by both Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Jackson (1983) who argue that metaphors are not just ways of rendering one thing in terms of the other but rather of drawing attention to ontological unities. Seen from this perspective, the metaphorical analogy of spirits and humans could be explained as construing personhood as a shared characteristic of both spirits and humans since they engage in activities necessitating agency (Ingold 1996: 135). By analogy, the fundamental unity which people in Alas Niser construct between kin and non-kin neighbours, rest on their identity as people who share the same place. On the basis of their cohabitation, they come also to share by ritual means each other's potent speech, food, and ancestors.

In *yasinan* gatherings, the appropriation of a series of diverse ancestors entails the possibility that relations of consanguinity and notions of co-substantiality can be dissolved into or expanded into relations of co-residence and notions of co-spatiality. In the course of *yasinan* activities, ancestors who formally belong to separate houses are construed as the sources of origin of the neighbourhood as a whole. In this sense, what the rotating mode of praying for the dead achieves is a reversal of flow of genealogical connectedness. In the Euro-American imagery, genealogical connections follow a vertical path of unilineal direction from the past to the present. This unilineality is embedded within a specific set of notions such the vertical transmission of bio-genetic material and the exclusivity of shared substance between an ancestor and his/her direct descendants. In Alas Niser, *yasinan* rituals stress the vertical flow of prayers from the present to the past and the non-exclusive basis of rights of commemoration and merit transfer. In this sense, they establish acts of caring for the dead as the basis for the creation of relations between living and dead people who are not related by blood.

The statement that 'neighbours [are] like siblings' is partly based on the effects of *yasinan*. In this context, body-persons composed of one kind of relations, that is relations predicated on descent (*toronan*), subsequently appear to take on and be additionally composed of another set of relations, that is genealogical relations predicated on prayers and co-habitation. What the metaphor attempts to hide is the absence of blood similarity between living and dead. What it highlights is the effects acts of merit transfer have for the dead. The latter can be thought of as a type of 'corporeal' tie between the prayer-reciter and the prayer-receiver since merit refashions the state of being of the dead's *roh*.

The *kampong* is ritually transformed into a category of place that consists of people whose genealogical links are delineated from the present towards the past. Accordingly, at the remote end of a *kampong's* history, one does not encounter an apical ancestor or an initial set of siblings but rather a heterogeneity of progenitors, that is people of diverse origins both in spatial and substantial terms. It is true that to the extent that *tanean* form the core of neighbourhoods in Alas Niser, some of which are related by descent, a specific couple of ancestors predominate in rites of commemoration. However, *yasinan* do not constitute mechanisms of re-aggregation for the descendants of this initial couple since those scattered, living in other neighbourhoods or towns, do not reconvene at their origin place so as to re-enact their unity. Rather, *yasinan* constitute mechanisms of replenishment of a body-person's ancestors, achieving a redundancy of origin points. Furthermore, the links they posit between living and dead reconfigures relations among neighbours. By means of potent speech, the body-persons of neighbours are construed as related to a variety of ancestors, all of who are claimed by the *kampong*. Neighbours are, thus, construed as being co-substantial.

The partial displacement of difference that *yasinan* accomplishes is complemented by a further collapse of distinctions related to and created by ritual commensality. Whereas full siblings and siblings through marriage (see Chapter 5), practice commensality on an

everyday basis, preparing and consuming ordinary meals made of rice mixed with corn and vegetables, neighbours share more lavish meals during ritual occasions. As we have seen, commensality marks all three types of rituals examined in the chapter. Because part of ritual action in Alas Niser focuses on exchanges of food, ritual as a analytical category can not be thought of as a type of behaviour that is sharply juxtaposed with so-called mundane and routine activities. In this respect, the whole atmosphere of informality and casualness that charasterises ritual gatherings in Alas Niser which I commented upon in the preceding sections, further reinforces my avoidance of setting up such a dichotomy. To the extent that ritual action is dialectically embedded within the world that lies outside its temporal and spatial setting, it parallels the embodied effects of other, quite similar activities.

In Alas Niser, body-persons are thought of as composed of internal relations and these relations are equated with stimulating growth (see Chapter 5). Growth's indexical sign is located in acts of feeding in the context of the womb and the house (see Chapter 5). The food exchanges realised by the category of people described as neighbours means both that *kampong* relations are conceived as generating maturity and that they are seen as corporeally registered. In ritualised exchanges, the source of growth has alterior origins. The gifts of food circulating in the *kampong* refer back to those who produced them in the first place, that is, to sets of siblings and their separate houses. Yet, as Strathern (1988) notes, gifts are simultaneously differentiated from the gift-givers in the sense of forming objects which are detachable. The circulation of detachable and indigestible gifts links gift-givers and gift-receivers in an embodied manner. The bodily incorporation of food is the primary mechanism for the corporeal appropriation of alterity that transforms the identity of the food-receiver. In the context of the rotating mode of exchanges, ontological metamorphoses mediated by food are reciprocal and alternating.

The intense circulation of food among neighbours constructs the *kampong* as a womb and a house, and the people inhabiting it as siblings, in the sense that they share some of the same substance in the form of food. The latter is the vehicle for the continuous expansion of the body-person beyond the confines of its corporeal separateness and the exclusivity of the flow of the blood. The body-person's continuous expansion and reconstitution is equated with its continuous growth. In this sense, expansion in Alas Niser does not necessitate a moment of dis-aggregation and consequent re-assemblage that some of the Melanesian material seems to suggest (see Battaglia 1990; Strathern 1988: 247). Rather, it is contingent on processes of addition of new material. These processes are spatially delineated.

The makings of neighbours into siblings is partly related to the collective consumption of food offered as gift in alternating fashion. However, in *tedarus konjengen,* the collapse of these two categories is accomplished at a deeper level, namely that of the mixing of the raw substances and their transformation into food by a collective endeavour. Thus, in *tedarus*, the food consumed can not be seen as a gift related back to separate sets

of siblings. The mixing of the raw substances transcends the dichotomy of the gift-giver and the gift-receiver at a more fundamental level than the rotating mode of transacting. While in the case of the latter, difference is negated on the grounds of alternating consumption, in the former, difference is effaced on the grounds of both of the elements of production (raw materials), the production process itself (labour) and consumption (commensality). In *tedarus konjengen*, neighbours construct their siblingship on the basis of having common rights to an undifferentiated collection of the means of growth and vitality, namely produce, labour and food. Full siblings and siblings by marriage enjoy similar rights to an equally undifferentiated collection.

On food and metamorphoses

In Alas Niser, as elsewhere in Java and Madura, ritual activity involves food prestations and transactions of potent speech. Transactions of this sort have ontological consequences for the substantial make-up of the body-person of the participants. In other words, ritual activity is not a mere 'theatre' of identity in which difference is displaced and negated through the performance only of certain acts. Acts of collective generation and sustenance of vitality implicate the sharing of substances, that is the taking into one's self that which is external and other. In particular, ritual exchanges of food have both a performative and substantial component which work in combination so as to reconstitute particular categories of people. In other words, doing is not constitutive of being in an disembodied manner. Rather, doing constitutes particular kinds of being through the corporeal incorporation of alterity.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, people in Alas Niser conceive of food as a potentially dangerous substance for it can be adulterated and used for sorcery purposes (see also Fischler 1988; Eves 1995). Sorcery accusations focus on one's relatives and neighbours since it is these categories of relations which have direct access to the food one consumes. Adulterated food marks the dissolution of sociality, effecting death. In the preceding description, food has been construed as the vehicle for the creation and maintenance of sociality, itself associated with harmony and well-being. Moreover, it is through commensality that neighbours are constituted as siblings. The ambiguity of food indexes the very ambivalence with which locals experience social relations. Thus, food has the potential for both transforming one into victim of another's malevolence and to the other's sibling. This transformative value attached to food is related to its bodily incorporation and its capacity,

like mother's milk, to be turned into blood.[21] Seen from this perceptive, transactions of food embedded within the logic of rotating reciprocity amount to transfers of blood on an alternating basis. Thus, in Alas Niser the obligation to receive and to reciprocate food creates the obligation to exchange blood.

As we have already seen in previous chapters, food, once incorporated into one's body and digested, is transformed into blood. This transformation takes place in the *hate*, the centre of one's personhood. *Hate* which is thought of as a clot of blood, is made up of the combined blood of one's mother absorbed while in her womb and the blood in the form of sperm of one's father. Not all of one's blood and thus, one's personhood is 'given' or 'fixed' at the moment of one's conception (see also Carsten 1997: 109-115). Breast feeding contributes to a person's growth through supplying one with more blood. Moreover, breast feeding from a female who is not one's 'real' (*asle*, Mad.) mother transforms one's personhood through establishing relations of co-substantiality which are underlined by incest taboos. In the same way that breast milk transforms one's personhood, food exchanges also bring about changes in one's identity. The digestive functions performed in one's *hate* during what locals refer to as 'second cooking' (*massaqan keduaq*, Mad.) turns the gift of food into the gift of blood.

Personhood is, thus, conceived as contingent on growth and growth as we have seen in this capter, as contingent on sociality. Food exchanged in rituals continues to build one's body-person and to supply one with vital substance just as one's father's semen and mother's blood and milk (see Strathern 1973: 29). In the same way that the flow of blood and milk creates relations of bodily identity, ritual flows of food mark neighbours as co-substantial. Neighbourhood ritual food exchanges make it imperative for neighbours to consume each other's food, taking in themselves that which is an index of their differential identities. As such, neighbours share in each other's corporeality and blood through consuming one another's food. The degree of co-substantiality of neighbours is conceived as very high indeed. The marked avoidance of *kampong* endogamy is the clearest evidence of this. By designating neighbours as too similar in corporeal terms to be married to each other, food prestations can be said to dilute significantly one's kind of blood given by one's ancestors. As such, persons of the category of *tetenggha* are thought to develop and change throughout their lifetimes through further transfers of food and the mixing of blood. Such a mixing is, moreover, underlined by the ritual sharing of ancestors.

Andrew Strathern, writing about the people of Highland New Guinea, observes that eating food makes possible the fusion of the principles of descent and land (1973: 31). Strathern postulates such a fusion on the basis that ancestral life-giving spirits, called *korova*, are believed to inhere not only in the bodies of offspring but also particular territories. In that

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[21] Fajans (1988), summarising work on food in Melanesia, writes that food is not simply transformed, i.e. from raw to cooked, but it is primarily transformative. 'It acts as a transformative agent, constructing or changing the entities between which it mediates' (1988: 145).

part of the world, his argument continues, agnatically un-related people do establish kinship relations with one another through co-habiting the same land and eating food grown on the same land. Co-habitation and eating constitute alternative ways to descent for establishing relations of corporeal similarity among people who do not trace their origins from the same apical ancestor (see also Weiner 1982: 27; Knauft 1989: 223; Green 1996: 490). While Alas Niser lacks both the agnatic categories of Highland New Guinea and concepts which describe clan territory as impregnated with ancestral spirits, I suggest that the belief in the transformation of food into blood also makes the fusion of genealogy and place a real cultural possibility.

In Alas Niser, food, ands rice in particular, is grown on fields which are themselves associated with particular ancestors. These ancestors are, initially, those who cleared the forest and 'made' land out of wilderness. The first set of ancestors is succeeded by their offspring who continued to clear the forest and to make the land fertile through their labour. The passing down of agricultural fields through successive generations to the present residents of Alas Niser constitutes a metonymic elaboration of the principle of genealogy. Food grown on such fields is also a metonym of genealogy since food and its production constitutes the material extension of the land and the manifestation of a history of labour activities undertaken by genealogically related people. Food and, through it, fields and ancestors form also metonyms of the House and of the relation of siblingship that defines it (see Chapter 5). The association of food and the house is present in unhulled paddy (*gebah*, Mad.) being stored either inside the house, on top of a bed, located close to the house's centre or in granaries (*lompung*, Mad.) located at the front yard. The transformation of *gebah* into *bherras*, hulled rice, and the further metamorphosis of *bherras* into *nase* (Mad.), that is, cooked rice, is performed by female members of houses.

Rituals, rotating reciprocity, and *tedarus* commensality ensure that all the houses/sets of siblings making up a neighbourhood have their distinct genealogical histories conjoined. At the centre of their conjunction is the exchange of food. Food is the blood of ancestors passed down in the form of fields. Food exchanges and commensality effect a mixing of diverse ancestral blood, initiated some time in the past, carried out over successive generations and continued in the present. The historicity of food exchanges ensures a greater degree of mixing and co-substantiality in each successive generation. Genealogy and land are thus, different modes of transferring blood, the essence and substantive vector of sociality. Furthermore, rice's successive transformations from *gebah* to *bherras* to *nase* is another elaboration of the local imagining of the life process as a route to maturity and death predicated on the metamorphosis of body-persons.

Epilogue

In a recent article, Andrew Beatty (2002) has argued that the most important question anthropologists working on Java should continue to address is that of the cultural diversity of the island society. Taking his lead from Geertz's (1960) famous treatise on contrasting Javanese religious orientations, Beatty's work is aimed at unravelling the culturally complex ways in which the inhabitants of Banyuwangi, an area on the south eastern tip of the island, come to terms with internal religious differences as an 'immediate and intimate fact of daily life' (2002: 469). In this area, orthodox-leaning Muslims, nominal Muslims, pantheistic mystics and Hindu converts, he suggests, deal with their differences in mainly two ways. The first is related to the categorical ambiguity of common ritual action and the multivocality of the symbols it employs which allow for the establishment of a diversity of meaning within a common frame (see Beatty 1996). In this context, difference is culturally relativised by participation in a common set of rites, a shared way of acting. The second way of coping with difference stems, to a certain extent, from the first, and is related 'to the widely shared view that rival interpretations may be true, given different premises' (2002:480). This local version of moral relativism, Beatty argues, is founded on and generated by a specific set of processes of socialisation and daily practice. Fluid domestic arrangements as manifested in the high degree of adoption and fostering among locals and a tendency for serial marriage coupled with local endogamy, as well as everyday experiences of growing up and living in densely inhabited and religiously mixed villages, contribute to a situation in which the challenges internal differences pose are met with an appreciation of different perspectives and even with the adoption of new ones. Indeed, in this part of Java, conversion, that is the ability to move from one perspective to another, is as common as the movement of children between different households and the serial movement of people in and out of different marital arrangements. In this regard, it can be said that the social impact of difference is minimised by a high degree of fluidity and flexibility characterising a number of practices, akin to accommodating and changing between different perspectives, and the dense networks of relationships that tie people together over and above divergent religious orientations.

My own case of diversity in Java and of the ways it is managed on symbolic and interpersonal levels is related to ethnicity and to processes and practices of embodiment, rather than to variants of Javanese religion and issues of meaning. However, I think that the historical and cultural emergence of 'people of mixed blood' in Alas Niser and Probolinggo, an area located not so far from Banyuwangi, exemplifies in another register the relativism, both moral, conceptual and social, that Beatty and Geertz (1960: 373) have so eloquently associated with the island's culture. As I have made quite clear in this thesis, this tolerance,

though, or even blurring of social difference is not without its limits. In Probolinggo, as elsewhere in Indonesia, certain kinds of people like those of Chinese and Arab descent have been excluded from the local project of creating homogeneity out of past heterogeneity. Similarly, the factional violence that accompanied the 1965 *coup d'etat* in East Java in which thousands of alleged communists were massacred by pious Muslims who were also their fellow villagers, should make us wary of seeing Java as a place where any kind and degree of difference is successfully managed or blurred and displaced.

In my area of fieldwork, ethnic difference and its displacement forms a topic of acute and sustained interest. The dominant self-identification of locals as 'people of mixed blood' is embedded within a discourse that construes the human body as the location of identity. In this respect, the discourse on ethnic difference in Alas Niser is quite unlike that of Banyuwangi that construes religious difference in terms of divergent sets of beliefs, meanings and practices, that is issues pertaining to the mind and its capacity for thought and the latter's realisation through action. In this thesis, I have argued that, in their designation of Madurese bodies as *kasar* and Javanese bodies as *halus*, locals of Alas Niser do not refer to the respective bodies in terms of their physiological characteristics - as far as that is concerned, locals recognise a basic similarity of bodies between the two categories. Rather, the bodies to which they refer can be conceptualised as an assemblage of dispositions and capacities, a specific set of ways of being and acting which render the body of each category as distinct. What body one is comes to be defined in terms of its genealogy, its place of origin and socialisation, its dietary habits, mode of communication, tendency for violent resolution of conflicts, tastes for clothing and sensibilities.

Given this specific register of ethnic difference, I would argue that locals of Alas Niser have dealt with difference from a similarly relativistic point of view which is perhaps more radical. The prolonged and complex process of daily interaction has given rise to the proper blurring of difference and to the making of a new category of bodies, summed up succinctly in the idiom of 'mixed blood'. *Pedalungan* bodies are distinct in their capacity for uniting the extreme difference represented by Madurese *kasarness* and Javanese *halusness*. In that respect, difference is relegated to the past and is associated with different kinds of ancestors who were made from divergent and singular kinds of blood and were coming from distinct places. In other words, difference is subjected to a process of Othering featuring past generations and past places. In Alas Niser, the present and the future are construed as founded on a basic commonality, associated with locals being endowed with bodies that encompass internally such past difference and by encompassing it, they are thought to be able to transcend it. *Pedalungan* bodies are therefore the meeting place of contrasting dispositions and capacities, characterised by an internal balancing act and a power associated with achieving and maintaining this transcendal unity of opposites.

Seen from this perspective, the relativism of Alas Niser constitutes a significant departure from the relativism of Banyuwangi. In the latter case, relativism is founded on the

facility to 'move nimbly from one perspective to another or even to adopt the other's point of view' (Beatty 2002: 479). In contrast, the relativism of Alas Niser is founded on the facility to exchange one's bodily identity and to incorporate the other's. In other words, while identity in both places is conceptualised and actualised in fluid and flexible ways, Alas Niser's locals are much more preoccupied with the embodied and ontological status of transactions. Such transactions, I have argued, are central in the understanding of the makings of mixed personhood. Before I offer a succinct summary of this making, let me delve a bit more into the problem of the unity of opposites established through mixing.

Shelly Errington (1987), in her seminal treatment of cosmological and social structures of Southeast Asian societies, has persuasively argued that societies belonging to the 'Centrist Archipelago' are characterised by the institutionalisation of unity in the face of duality. The mythological emphasis on the desirability of marrying one's opposite sex twin, the terminological tendency, in certain societies, for modelling husband and wife relations on the sibling set, and the fascination with representing the polity as founded on a single uncontested centre, i.e. the ruler of the kingdom, are, her argument suggests, culturally specific ways of making difference and contestation, be it affinal or hierarchical, disappear. In their sociopolitics of ceremony and marriage, 'Centrist Archipelago' societies strive to represent themselves to themselves, she argues, as unified and all-encompassing wholes. Such a unity has to be maintained in the face of fragmentation institutionalised in the incest taboo, on the one hand, that demands the parting of "brother" from "sister" and, on the other, on the existence of rival royal houses.

The category of 'mixed persons' is similarly fraught with the possibility of fragmentation and partitioning to its constituent elements. Categories such as *orang Madura* and *orang Java* are frequently employed both in terms of self-identification and hetero-categorisation in Alas Niser. In this respect, the power of mixing and the realities on which it is based appear to be only provisional, their outcomes only the half-finished product of an ongoing history of spatial conjunction and substantive transactions. The spatial associations of different degrees of *halus*-ness and *kasar*-ness that divide the municipality of Probolinggo into more 'Madurese' and more 'Javanese' areas, the contextual shifts of self-identification from being a 'mixed person' to being a 'Madurese person' as well as the political implications of the *halus-kasar* distinction in specific projects of self-making, indicate the unstable character of the mixing. In this regard, the picture of the 'mixed body' constructed is one centred on its potential for de-composition as its constitutive elements remain significantly dis-engaged from each other and hierarchically arranged.

The presence of 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' persons within Probolinggo is related to the local assertion that mixed bodies have been created and maintained relatively successfully in opposition to duality. I have suggested that this creation has been part of a process that began with the demographic movement of people out of Madura and Central and western East Java throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Their arrival in Alas

Niser in the form of successive waves was accompanied by spatial inter-dispersal and mixing. In Alas Niser, migrants from Madura and other places in Java did not come to live in distinct parts of the village or form endogamous groups. Save for the first language of socialisation and accent, the descendants of these migrants are today indistinguishable in terms of costume, deportment, house style or cuisine, living intermingled in mixed neighbourhoods. The situation, then, is unlike that depicted by Clifford Geertz (1965) in his study of a small East Javanese town in the 1950s, itself based on the concept of 'hollow town' employed so as to describe a situation characterised by a lack of interaction of various ethnic groups which remain spatially and socially discrete. In Alas Niser as I encountered it in the late 1990s, by contrast, spatial conjuncture has given rise to intense interaction that has, in turn, displaced difference by means, among other things, of ritual action.

Ritual activity in Alas Niser is centred on the transaction of food, prayers and ancestors among people who inhabit the same neighbourhood. I have argued that transactions of this sort have ontological consequences, so far unelaborated upon by other ethnographers of Java, for the ritual participants whose bodies are metamorphosed in the process. In this part of Java, neighbours' exchanges of food in ritual contexts brings about profound alternations in the blood carried in their veins. To the extend that blood registers a person's identity in a corporeal manner and given that food is conceptualised as an alternative form of blood, the consumption of food in a rotating manner involving all households of the neighbourhood amounts to the transaction of blood and an inter-change of bodily identity. Through ritual means that also encompass the reciprocal 'adoption' of each other's ancestors, neighbours in Alas Niser have come, over successive generations, to share, to a certain extent and degree, the same substance. Their spatial mixing has been thus, accompanied by the bodily incorporation of each other's alterity.

Echoing other Southeast Asian societies, locals of Alas Niser assert that their community is composed of kin and stress that all neighbours are 'like siblings'. They have thus been erasing the dangers of duality represented by the non-kinship between different kinds of people by using the assumed efficacy of Islamic rites so as to set up relations of kinship and thus, corporeal sameness among new generations. Islamic rites and thus religion are central both to the ethnic project of mixing and to local perceptions of kinship. In this thesis, I have pursued the connections between religion and kinship in a twofold manner: firstly, in relation to the transformation of neighbours into siblings and secondly, with respect to the transformation of body-persons sharing a certain degree of co-substantiality into unrelated ones. The analysis I have presented has been intended so as to throw new light to Javanese kinship which Hildred Geertz's (1961) study associates somewhat exclusively and thus in rather restrictive manner with the household and the nuclear family. Though I do not consider Alas Niser to be 'typical' of Java, and my ethnography indicates a series of factors such as migration and Islamisation that make Alas Niser quite the opposite, my data suggests that kinship in Alas Niser rather than having a precise structure or a single

institutional locus, corresponds to a way of conceptualising certain social relations that, given the appropriate cultural means, has the capacity to displace difference partially.

Kinship in Alas Niser is centred around the idea of siblingship (*tretan*, Mad.). Although the relationship of siblingship takes many forms and shapes, shifting in terms of its referents in conjunction to different contexts, it is thought of as a relationship involving a certain degree of co-substantiality and co-spatiality between a number of persons. Siblingship's most concrete form is encountered in the womb and in the image of a foetus' relation to the placenta. The growth of the foetus into a proper person is marked by the expansion of the categories of people with whom he/she entertains relations of siblingship. In this sense, growth is predicated on the body-person being a member of a series of differentially constituted Houses. Body-persons of the same domestic unit and the same *tanean* are thought of as corporeally similar due to the genealogical tracing of their origins to a common set of ancestors. The genealogical delineation of the house and the *tanean* is replicated in space in the sense that domestic houses and *tanean* form distinct residential structures. However, local understandings of siblingship are not commensurate with Western ideas of direct genealogy and the transmission of biogenetic material. This is so for relations of the category of the neighbourhood are experienced and conceptualised, in certain contexts, as siblingship. The neighbourhood is defined through spatial and ritual means. The delineation of the neighbourhood as a worship community and the actions that take place within its environs enlarge a body-person's set of ancestors and replenish the kind of blood that runs through its veins.

My analysis of kinship in Alas Niser avoids construing the neighbourhood or the local community as the extension of relationships primarily associated with the domestic unit. Instead, I have focused on the substances and the practices directly related to local understandings of the constitution of the body-person. Such a constitution is, furthermore, I have argued, not thought of as given or fixed due to the 'natural' facts of procreation. I have rather, suggested that procreation and genealogy is a way of engendering and relating body-persons through transactions of substances between different generations and kinds of people. Seen from this perspective, genealogy is a relationship involving ascending and descending generations in a common frame through reference to the substantive makings of bodies. As bodies grow, the relationships into which they enter are constituted and expressed through further transactions of substances, mainly in the form of food. The ritual and non-ritual sharing of food within the domestic house, the *tanean* and the neighbourhood condition and reconstitute one's body at the same time that they register social relationships in a corporeal manner.

The partial conversion of alterity into sameness in Alas Niser through exchanges of substances in the context of the neighbourhood runs parallel with a number of characteristics studies such as Carsten's (1997) on the island of Langkawi in Malaysia, associate with kinship. In both places, the local community is comprised of migrants and descendants of

migrants whose projects of establishing homogeneity is mediated by transactions. However, Alas Niser differs from Langkawi in a double sense. Firstly, Castren stresses that commonality is the product of shared space and activity as well as of widely adhered arrangements of adoption and fostering which have corporeal consequences, the people of Alas Niser place more emphasis on the corporeal consequences of practices of sharing. In other words, locals of Alas Niser are not just preoccupied with the transaction of food, children and labour, but also with the shaping and re-shaping of their bodies through action. Secondly, people in Alas Niser add to the transactionsal potential of making kin out of others, the potential for making others out of kin. This is highlighted in the practice of sorcery.

I have suggested that sorcery, its practice and context, corresponds to a technique for the production of difference. Locals were adamant that sorcery is usually directed against one's kin and neighbours, that is, towards people one enjoys a certain corporeal similarity with. My examination of sorcery practices revealed that their efficacy is held to rest on a process that reverses marriage rituals and involves transactions of polluting substances capable of causing illness and decay, even death. Through sorcery practices, the body of the victim is ritually reconstituted by means of its penetration by a mystical, malevolent agent and the forced acquisition of a different, i.e. polluted, kind of blood. In Alas Niser, conflicts over inheritance, adultery, unreciprocated love and serious contraventions of rules of etiquette entail the possibility of mystical retribution. Such a retribution marks not only a change in the direction of the social relationships of the parties involved which have ceased to be engaged in any other form of interaction, but also a change of the victim's body whose blood is kinded as different. In this respect, the image of de-composition of the body which sorcery induced decay and death conjure up is thought to result from the dissolution of a significant relation of the victim.

A consideration of sorcery in the context of the blurring of difference effected through kinship suggests that practices commonly associated with the domain of religion have wider ramifications. Although the practice of sorcery, and for that matter the acquisition of potency too, are informed by a corpus of beliefs and practices that draw on the mystical traditions of Islam, the local preoccupation with sorcery and potency is not solely religious in character. In other words, I have suggested that practices commonly associated with cosmology, that is the delineation of the relationships between human and non-human beings, have a direct bearing on the way relationships among human beings are conceptualised and actualised. In this respect, I have argued that locals ideas of genealogy can not be understood outside the ritual context of 'adopting' ancestors and that relations with non-human agents involve much of the same transactional logic one encounters with respect to the creation and maintenance of relations among humans.

In the same way that religion and kinship mutually inform and signify one another, ethnicity, the creation of 'mixed people' and kinship are interdependent processes. Several commentators on nationalism (see for example Geertz 1973c; Siegel 1998) have observed

that relationships stemming from belonging to the same nation are frequently conceived of in terms of relationships stemming from belonging to the same family. In Alas Niser and Probolinggo, this is certainly true in a quite literal sense. The assertion that the wider area consists of 'mixed people', I have argued, is directly related to the evocation of intermarriage between different kinds of people both as model for conceptualising the current state of difference and a practice that encounters no institutional or other constraints. The domestication of difference between 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' so acutely captured in the idiom of 'mixed blood', is thought of to be the result of successive generations of intermarriage. Such marriages set up a network of kin ties among people who belong to different localities, spreading outwards from the confines of the neighbourhood and encompassing the municipality as well as areas beyond the latter's formal, administrative boundaries. Indeed, the avoidance of marrying one's neighbours sets the stage for centrifugal marriage politics that have been erasing difference through recourse to marriage and its productivity, i.e. the engendering of children.

I have suggested that the historical and cultural makings of the category of people of 'mixed blood' are mediated by specific conceptions of affinity. Shelly Errington (1987), summarising much of the evidence on this issue from societies of the 'Centrist Archipelago', succinctly observes that

> " in kinship theory, we usually think of a "cognatic stock"
> of people as linked by a common apical forebear to whom
> they trace themselves. Something of this process happens
> retroactively in the exogamic societies of the Centrist
> Archipelago, where the birth of children links people in
> generational levels above. Even with the birth of their
> children, spouses remain nonkin to each other [...], but
> they are linked by a common kinperson in the generational
> layer below themselves. I like to say that affines in such
> societies are linked by "apical children" "(1987: 420).

"Apical children" in Probolinggo are or have been, in most cases, also "mixed children". The local theory of procreation construes children as the undifferentiated and indistinguishable mixture of the substances of semen and blood, the husband and the wife contribute respectively, to the formation of the foetus. Encompassed into the foetus and, later on, into the child's body are a series of dispositions, sensibilities and capacities, themselves thought of as inhering in the inherited substances. With respect to the difference between *kasar* and *halus* kinds of blood, decades of ethnic intermarriage have resulted in successive generations of bodies capable of blending and balancing this opposition. These bodies constitute also nodal points for the tracing of connections and the assertion of identities among people of ascending generations. It is thus, in reference to the joined production of such 'mixed bodies' that affines as well as people of different kinds, have and are still negotiating and displacing their difference.

My account of the 'mixed personhood' in Probolinggo presents a picture of the ethnic process in East Java that is partly at odds with the one present in Husson's (1995) study. She argues that in Surabaya, the provincial capital, poor 'Madurese' migrants, though living in ethnically mixed *kampong* and maintaining good relations with their, equally, lower class 'Javanese' neighbours, remain both distinct as an ethnic category and largely un-integrated in the wider 'Javanese' society. In the ethnic universe of Surabaya, 'Madurese' and 'Javanese', Husson informs us (1995: 344), live in non-exclusive neighbourhoods and co-operate intensively in terms of religious activities, such as the holding of *slametan*, the running of economic associations, such as the *arisan*, and both support the same political party, the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, the only Muslim party in Suharto's Indonesia. The reasons for the non-integration of 'Madurese' migrants, Husson relates to the negative stereotypes associated with the 'Madurese', the latter's assumed close connections with the city's underworld and the certain competition for resources that characterises relations between poor 'Madurese' and 'Javanese' (1995: 347). Given that people of both categories make a living through employment in the informal sector of the economy, the scarcity of jobs and capital in that sector, she argues, contribute to adherence to practices, such as ethnic patronage, that perpetuate and enforce the distinction.

Mindful of East Java's diversity in terms of different histories and patterns of migration, urbanisation and employment, my study of the ethnic process in Probolinggo presents a counter-case to Husson's. My ethnography of Alas Niser and Probolinggo suggests that identities such as 'Madurese' and 'Javanese', though not totally absent from everyday discourse, have given way to a new, non-exclusive mode of identification that is predominant. The emergence of *pedalungan* category in Probolinggo is as much the product of marriage and ritual action as of the relative absence of overt and intense competition for resources among migrants originating from Central Java and Madura. Due to the great availability of land in Probolinggo up to the first decades of the twentieth century and the initial concentration of migrants from Madura and Central Java in different economic niches, i.e. trade, fishing and agriculture for the first and administrative and skilled jobs for the second, the integration or rather fusion of the two categories met no great economic constraints. I have also to reiterate, in this context, that the absence of economic constraints was coupled with a history of dislocation and past poverty that both categories of migrants shared and emphasised in their collective narratives informing demographic movement.

The present thesis has dealt mostly with ethnicity from a cultural perspective and has approached and defined it as a form of personhood. Central in this endeavour has been the employment of the concept of the body-person, I have borrowed from Elvin (1989) and Tsintjilonis (1997). This concept has been used so as to render intelligible an ethnographic situation according to which different types of bodies are thought of as indexical of different kinds of persons. This fusion of corporeality and kindedness is made manifest, first and foremost, in the way locals of Alas Niser construe a person's actions as emanating out of its

substantial and essential core, commonly referred to as *dereh* (blood, Mad.). In this sense, different repertoires for action are thought of as conditioned by one's body, the substances it is made of and the capacities, dispositions and sensibilities that inhere in them. The pervasive essentialism of this mode of thinking about the person has been encountered not only in the context of ethnicity and more particularly, with respect to the *halus - kasar* distinction, but also with respect to potency, that classifies persons according to a hierarchy of differentially constituted bodies capable of distinct degrees of efficacious action. It has also been encountered in relation to kinship that differentiates persons according to the kind and amount of blood and its transmutations they share as well as to the mode of their sharing.

I have argued that the essentialism of local systems of classification is not commensurate with a conception of identities as 'natural', 'fixed' or 'primordial'. In the society of 'mixed people', nothing is. Rather, the essence of the body-person is construed in fluid, transactional and transformative terms. In Alas Niser, body-persons are not conceived as co-extensive with their physical boundaries. Thus, they do not constitute individuals in the Western sense of the term. Individuals, Holy argues, 'are thought of as discrete, skin-bound entities that exist outside each other [...] [consequently, their social life] is regarded as extrinsic to [their] physical discreteness' (1996: 157). In Alas Niser, body-persons are, by contrast, thought of as open, porous and permeable. The way they are connected to their surroundings involves a series of exchanges of substances bearing a metaphorical or metonymical relation to blood, the essence of kinded personhood and the substance of life. The incorporation of such substances through conception, gestation, and ingestion effects certain ontological transformations. Furthermore, a body-person's acquisition of a new ontology is taken to have direct consequences in his/her mode of acting. As a body-person comes to incorporate the new substances, its dispositions, capacities and sensibilities and their realisation in social action are taken to change accordingly.

Writing about Amazonian systems of classification, Viveiros de Castro observes that 'we need not be surprised by a way of thinking which posits bodies as the great differentiators yet at the same time states their transformability', adding that 'bodily metamorphosis is the Amerindian counterpart of the European theme of spiritual conversion' (1998: 481). In the case of my own fieldwork, the indigenous logic of embodiment portrays specific sets of social relations as capable of generating specific kinds of bodies and conveys changes in social relations by establishing images of bodily metamorphosis. Ordinary body-persons are transformed into empowered ones in the same way that affines and neighbours are transformed into siblings. While in the former case, it is the instigation of asymmetrical exchanges with non-human beings that effect such a change, in the latter case, bodily transformation is brought about by symmetrical exchanges with human beings. Similarly, 'Javanese' and 'Madurese' kinds of body-persons transform each other into 'mixed persons' by engaging with one another in a series of transactions. The corporeality of 'mixed persons'

bears the marks of a sociality embedded in acts of sharing ancestors and children, as well as place, food and prayers.

The indigenous logic of conceiving social relations as coextensive with the materiality of the human body transcends the dualities of performance vs. essence, being vs. becoming. Sociality merges with the physical body in the sense that a person's body is seen as a composite site consisting of historical actions of engendering and consequent actions related to a body's own engagement with social others in the present and the future (see Strathern 1988). Seen from this perspective, corporeal being and processual becoming do not form opposites. Neither social relations nor personhood are in a state of stasis. Social relations expand further and/or retract, changing direction and intensity. Changes in social relations refashion a body-person's identity. In the process of a person's life, new social relations are instigated. These relations come to be embodied through exchanges of substances that effect certain transformations in the corporealities of those involved.

The employment of concept of the body-person entails a move away from the dualistic models of Cartesian thought and is grounded on a figuration of the body as the site of subjectivity. In my exploration of the embodied practices that provide the basis of the makings of mixed personhood, I have avoided construing the body as the signifying medium of socio-political realities, an approach akin to reducing the body to a thing or the object of a socially anchored collective consciousness. I have rather, sought to define the body as a process produced through a myriad of practices whose performance moulds and conditions specific kinds of capacities and sensibilities. The set of ethical concepts most central to defining potent bodies, such as tranquillity, humility, and sincerity, as well as the set of concepts that form the basis of ethnic difference, such as refinement, subtlety and exquisiteness, refer essentially to particular modes of existence. I have approached such concepts not so much from the perspective of their semantic or symbolic content but rather from the perspective of what the formation of such particular embodied subjects entails.

It is true that to a certain extent my deployment of the body-person as a way of dispelling the mind-body dualism springs to mind certain phenomenological approaches and in particular, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the subject that focuses on the experience of the body. For Merleau-Ponty, Priest writes, 'the subject is the body: not the inanimate objective mechanical body that I may observe in the external world but the living moving experiencing whole human body that one is: the body, so to speak, I am co-extensive with' (1998: 67). Although, such a formulation is in agreement both with the concept of the body-person and the way I have tried to depict its mode of engagement with the world, namely that the body *qua* subject is basically inseparable from the world and its position in it, Merleau-Ponty's project is ultimately founded on different premises. His is a search for the beginnings of lived experience, located in the pre-reflective, pre-objective is his actual term, indivisibility of existence, a state where the unity of man has yet to be broken down. For Merleau-Ponty, the

distinction between the mind and the body as well as that between the person and the world is the product of reflective consciousness.

As far as my own project is concerned, rather than focusing on the experience of the body and the generative scheme of the preobjective, I have chosen to emphasise the role played by a series of substantive vectors and of the performative traits associated with them in the formation of persons. I have stressed that persons are constituted *qua* bodies through the coalescence of history, genealogy and practices associated with the transaction of detachable parts of bodily identity. I have also suggested that concepts conveying qualitative differences in terms of forms of comportment are linked to action in the sense that their full embodiment is realised in the incorporation of relevant substances and the performance of certain acts. According to this formulation, the body-person is both the subject of historical forms of conduct, inscribed in its very constitution from the outset, and the subject that deploys particular forms of history and sociality. In other words, because of its embodied engagement with the world of social relations, the body-person is both constituted and constitutive of its own identity, both acted upon and active.

My exploration of the problematic of constitution of the body-person overlaps, to a certain degree, with Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus as a 'system of durable, transposable *dispositions*' (1977: 72, original emphasis) is the mechanism that transforms history and society into particular forms of bodies. In its capacity for generating specific practices, perceptions and attitudes that delimit a person's actions and reactions to the world, the habitus mediates between objective, material conditions characteristic of a class condition and the forms of comportment that members of a class share. Habitus, in other words, mediates between existing distributions of political and economic power in a given society and the formation of subjective experience. In Bourdieu's causal scheme, habitus is also credited with giving rise to the '*socially informed body*' (1977:124, original emphasis), which is structured in terms of its senses and tastes, postures and movements according to a specific set of patterns acquired through socialisation and 'practical mimesis'.

In exploring the socially informed body only in relation to material conditions and to their corresponding habitus, Bourdieu's approach leaves unaddressed the extend to which other aspects of society contribute to its formation. In this thesis, I have principally examined the constitution of the body in terms of histories other than that of "objective conditions", and, namely, in relation to a specific tradition of Islamic practice, a system of kinship relationships and a ritual economy of reciprocity and I have suggested that the modes of practice and association that characterise these fields of social interaction can illuminate too the process by which persons come to embody a series of dispositions and capacities and to be endowed with social meanings and values. Such modes of practice and association are of course related to a set of material conditions which they are the product of and they help sustain. However, the modes of practices and association might outlive these material conditions as

the latter change. They can also be renewed and readapted with the direction of adjustment being determined partly from within their own logic and basic tenets.

My elaboration of the concept of the body-person has been, however, limited within the confines of the ethnography I have presented. It has served as an evocative term of local realities according to which different modes of existence are thought to be carried out by differentially constituted people and as an analytical term that conveys the interplay of social relationships and the body. It has also served as a way of engaging positively with essentialist models of social interaction and a local system of symbolic associations between blood and a number of other substances. In these regards, it has helped me to conceptualise the displacement of difference and the makings of the category of people of 'mixed blood' in terms of the formation of a new, hybrid kind of body.

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