

URBAN SPACES, RURAL SPACES, AND “OTHER SPACES” IN INDONESIAN FILM FLYERS (1966-1998)

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine some three hundred Indonesian film flyers released between 1966 and 1998. I identify three categories of spatial representation: urban spaces, rural spaces, and what I term “other spaces”. Urban spaces utilize depictions of high-rises, landmarks, sexuality, crowds, and/or technology as markers of a (Westernized) modernity. Depictions of rural spaces, conversely, emphasize the beauty or dangers of the natural world, as well as strong emotions and primitivism. These depictions suggest the prioritization of an orderly urbanity over a disorderly rurality, with more orderly rural spaces only being locations for travel. “Other spaces”, meanwhile, present and/or combine markers of urban and/or rural space, thus forcing viewers to differentiate between place and space and recognize both the constructed nature of space itself and the possible benefits of disorder.

Keywords: *advertising, urban space, rural space, Indonesian cinema, representation*

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the United Nations reported that 54 percent of the world’s population, some 3.9 billion people, live in urban centers, a more than five-fold increase since 1950 (United Nations, 2015, p. xxi). People have abandoned their primarily agrarian rural lives in incredible numbers, moving to and living in settlements of sizes never before imagined. Twenty-eight cities are now home to more than ten million people each, and the world’s largest, Tokyo, has a population of almost 38 million in its metropolitan area (United Nations, 2015, p. 93). This holds true

in Indonesia as well. The urban area including the country’s capital, Jakarta, now boasts a population of 10.1 million, a number growing every year as thousands migrate to the city in search of work (United Nations, 2014, p. 93); a similar phenomenon can be found in Indonesia’s smaller cities.

Urban spaces, as well as the urban cultures which have developed within them, have affected all aspects of life: economics, sports, recreation, healthcare, fiction, etc. It is thus unsurprising that depictions of urban spaces in fiction, particularly that fiction produced since the Industrial

Revolution which paved the way for this urbanization, has drawn considerable attention among academics and the general public. In an Indonesian context, studies of depictions of urban spaces in fiction are common, both those focused on literature (Rosidi, 1972; Fuller, 2012) and films (Sasono, 2008; Author, 2015). Such studies often position these depictions in their historic context, though the time frame covered may vary significantly.

These studies have another common thread tying them together: the works examined are those which are of sufficient length (novels, poems, feature films, etc.) to allow for the possibility (even if unrealized) of a multifaceted depiction of urban spaces. The studies do not ask what happens when depictions of urban spaces are limited, by their media, to more monolithic understandings. In such limited media, film posters or flyers for instance, which only have one or (at most) two sides that can be used to reach potential audiences, how are urban (and other) spaces depicted?

To answer this question, this study examines depictions of space in Indonesian film flyers produced and published during the New Order period, between 1966 and 1998. More than 250 Indonesian film flyers have been consulted, covering a variety of genres, including horror, action, romance, drama, and comedy, and advertising films produced by more than thirty companies. Although textual aspects of these flyers are considered, this research focuses on the visual representation of space (and spaces) in the flyers.

Through this research, three categories of spaces presented through Indonesian film flyers are identified.

The first two of these categories, those of urban or city spaces and rural or village spaces, are commonly positioned, both by academics and by the general public, in a state of binary opposition; stereotypes abound, for instance, of the sophisticated urbanite and the simple villager. The third category, which we term “other space”, is a dynamic space which offers the potential for a deconstruction of the urban–rural opposition and challenges to expectations of order. This “other space” separates the concept of space from that of place, guiding viewers to recognize markers of urbanity and rurality outside of their normal context while also allowing for a direct combination of these markers.

WHAT IS (in a) SPACE

Before examining the depictions of urban spaces, rural spaces, and “other spaces” in Indonesian film flyers, it is first necessary to understand the concept of space itself. Though long assimilated within the concept of place (Agnew, 2011, p. 321), the two concepts are not equivalent. Space is more general, a conceptualization or abstraction which includes within it both places and concepts attached to them, whereas place is understood as a specific, fixed, physical location. Space can be understood as being similar to Soja’s concept of *thirdspace* (1996, p.57), including “subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history”.

The concept of space thus “encapsulates not only physical location, but also abstract conceptual space” (Upstone, 2009, p. 3). It is both real and imagined (Soja, 1996), including actual physical locations (Jakarta, Surakarta, etc.) alongside generalized conceptual categories of locations (urban, rural, etc.) and socially constructed concepts which are identified with these categories (urbanity, rurality, etc.). These socially constructed concepts include within them specific markers of space, including architecture, codes of dress and conduct, economic systems, etc. Unlike place, space is shifting and indeterminate. Spaces are open to the possibility of transformation as they interact with each other throughout history; codes of fashion, of music, of entertainment, etc. may be identified as urban in one era, but as time passes become increasingly identified with rural spaces. Owing to the inherently important role of time in determining the boundaries of particular spaces, space “must be read alongside temporality as a factor of equal significance” (Upstone, 2009, p. 3).

Space may cover numerous classes of place and even more specific locations. Upstone, for instance, identifies five types of space, based on the scale of place covered: nation, journey, city, house, and body. The most important of these for the current research project is what she terms city space, a subnational space which is better identified here as a “settlement” space, one which is commonly recognized in terms of both urban space and rural space. The settlement space includes not only the physical locations themselves, but also stereotypical abstractions of the cultures they contain, including but

certainly not limited to codes of dress (baseball caps, woven bamboo hats), of architecture (skyscrapers, barns, etc.) of comportment (politeness, character traits, etc.), of technology (minibuses, shuttles, monorails, etc.), of sources of livelihood (office work, farming, etc.), and of physical appearance (white skin, dark skin, etc.).

Subnational settlement space “is often seen to be represented so as to act metonymically as a reflection of national tensions”, but may also “be seen to offer its own specific geopolitics” (Upstone, 2009, p. 85). In other words, though these spaces are often viewed as metonyms of the nation(-space), such that (for instance) the fictional Duckburg and its despotic leader Uncle Scrooge of “Paman Gober” (Seno Gumira Ajidarma, 1994) can be understood as a criticism of Indonesia under President Soeharto (Anwar, 2001, p. xix), they also have the potential to offer their own geopolitical narratives or representations which can be viewed separately. Both metonymic and specific spatial considerations shall be examined in this article.

URBAN SPACES: IMAGINING THE CITY

Urban spaces are frequently depicted in the film flyers examined. This is not surprising, given the Soeharto government’s well noted prioritization of development and construction. These flyers delineate urban space through their depictions of cities as places and locations, depictions of human factors and interactions, and depictions of cities as sites where technology is used and developed.



Figure 1: Depictions of idealized skylines in *Tahu Beres* (1993) and *Gadis Malam* (1993)

Several flyers depict the city space by emphasizing the physical city itself. Jakarta, the main setting (albeit often implicitly) for most Indonesian films, is a common subject for flyer backgrounds—particularly the city’s skyline (Figure 1)—though it is not reproduced faithfully. In *Tahu Beres* (1993), the physical contours of the buildings depicted resemble those along Sudirman Street in the early 1990s. Forefronting this skyline, but still hidden behind the main characters, is an apparently unpopulated hillside—quite unlike the actual topography of the area—dominated by a sign reading “JAKARTA WOOD” in large white letters. This playful reproduction of the Hollywood sign connects modern Jakarta, which was then undergoing a period of great construction,¹ with

modern Los Angeles, which was already recognized as a global city and was a hub of international film production. *Gadis Malam* (1993), meanwhile, combines the nighttime skyline of a bustling urban center with an image of a rolling sea to create a modern seaside urban center suggestive of Hong Kong or New York. In both of these cases, the buildings which make up the skyline are obscured in shadows, drawing attention away from individual buildings’ features. Furthermore, the distant views of the city’s buildings are suggestive of an order not apparent in the interactions of the films’ main characters (the shocked faces of *Tahu Beres*, the promiscuity of *Gadis Malam*).

under construction on all sides, people busy from dawn till dusk, and business people with attache cases hurrying from one destination to another.” This trend towards the construction of skyscrapers continued through much of the early 1990s.

1 Mann (1990, p. 83) wrote “Jakarta in 1990 bears all the signs of a boom town with roads, bridges and skyscrapers

Other cities are often identified as well. These tend to be present in both the films' titles and in the actual illustration, either explicitly (by naming the city, such as *Putri Solo* [1974]) or implicitly (by referring to a noted landmark, as with *Jembatan Merah* [1973]).² In these flyers, specific locations within the city space—identifiable to residents or those already familiar with the city—are prominent. The flyer for *Putri Solo*, for instance, includes a street scene framed between the film's two main characters. Central to this scene is a series of large Surakarta-style *gapura*, or gates, harkening to the large gates which welcome visitors in Gladag, the north entrance to the Sunan's palace. The flyer for *Jembatan Merah*, meanwhile, features the titular bridge and its distinctive metalwork prominently, despite being dominated by images of the two main characters. In both of these cases the flyers are illustrated, and the depictions of these landmarks is idealized. Order is introduced to the throngs of people passing through the gates, who walk through the gates almost in file. These people are separated from the only vehicle shown, a horse-drawn carriage (suited for the "traditional" setting, unlike an automobile), by a curb and a streetlight. The Red Bridge of Surabaya, meanwhile, is shown as being empty

2 This tendency to name films after landmarks can be seen as far back as 1951, when Persari released *Sepandjang Malioboro*. The flyer depicted the Yogyakarta street in an abstracted manner, as being full of (unnamed) shops and orderly shoppers (either on foot or in automobiles).

Examples of films from this period named after cities include *Lenggang Djakarta* (1953), *Putri Solo* (1953), and *Putri dari Medan* (1954).

except for one person: the leading actress, who stands under a street lamp as if waiting for someone.



Figure 2: Inem Pelayan Sexy 3 (1977)

As suggested by the dominance of the main characters in the above-discussed flyers, human factors are prominent identifiers of urban space, even in cases where no specific skyline or landmarks are visible. Clothing worn by the characters depicted is indubitably westernized, even in cities identified as "traditional" (contrast, for instance, the clothing worn by the female lead of *Putri Solo* with the depiction of Surakarta itself). Upper-class characters may wear suits or short-cut party dresses,³ the latter often shimmering as if embedded

3 Compare with the suit and long party dress worn by the main characters of *Lenggang Djakarta*; though fashions changed between the 1950s and the 1970s, the tendency to identify the city with "modern" or "Western" markers did not.

with sequins or made from satin. Middle-class youth may be identified with jeans or exercise clothing, a trope spotted in flyers for such varied films as *Gejolak Kawula Muda* (1985) and *Makin Lama Makin Asyik* (1987). Though both middle-class and lower-class characters may wear cotton pants and shirts, more traditional clothing (such as the *peci*⁴ or *sarung*) appears, in these depictions of secular urban space at least, limited to lower-class comic relief figures, a denigration of tradition for the sake of a Westernized “modernity”.

Human interactions—including fighting, running, and playing—are central to these flyers’ depictions of both urban and rural space. One form of interaction—sexual intercourse, or at least the hint of it—is considerably more prominent in depictions of urban spaces. Though depictions of sexual intercourse are generally centered on the bodies of the man and woman (never two men or two women),⁵ as in *Ranjang*

Pemikat (1993), in one instance—the flyer for *Gadis Malam*—the sexual tryst is depicted in front of an urban backdrop. A woman, dressed in a strapless black dress, sits on the lap of a young man and gazes into his eyes. Though both figures are fully dressed and sitting in a manner which precludes intercourse, the act of penetration is still suggested using a symbol which simultaneously represents Westernization, modernity, and sexuality: a tube of red lipstick, a phallic object positioned close to the woman’s genitals.⁶

The flyers surveyed commonly depict urban spaces as being filled with crowds. This is particularly evident in the flyer for *Anak-Anak Buangan* (1979), which starkly contrasts the three main characters and their conformist peers, who are crowded in a group on a staircase. Using a mixture of forced perspective and superimposed images, the flyer depicts the main characters as being some six times taller than their peers. As a result, the main characters’ faces are clearly identifiable, whereas the members of the crowd have indistinct or even inexistent features. The blue jeans of the two men stand in stark contrast to the swathes of

here, homosexuality was frequently depicted as a deviancy, one which often went hand-in-hand with crimes such as rape (*Remaja Lampu Merah*, 1979) and murder (*Istana Kecantikan*, 1988) or mental diseases such as manic depression (*Tinggal Bersama*, 1977). Interestingly, these films depicting homosexuality were often (but not always, see *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh*, 1982) set in the cities.

4 Interestingly, the *jilbab* (veil) does not appear in the urban spaces depicted in the film flyers examined here, and is indeed uncommon outside of films with a more explicit Islamic focus (such as *Al-Kautsar* [1977]). Under the early Soeharto government, religious symbols such as the *jilbab* and looser *kerudung* were often repressed in favor of more secular nationalistic symbols; for example, young women could not wear the veil with their school uniforms until 1991. See Effendi (2003: 160–164) for further information. The *peci* meanwhile, remained more accepted, and indeed it was common in official presidential and vice-presidential portraits.

5 Positive depictions of homosexuality did not occur in the Indonesian film industry until 2002’s *Arisan* (Munir, 2011, p.117–119). During the period studied

6 For further discussion of the use of phallic objects in the sexualization of women’s bodies in film flyers from this period, see Author (2016, p.41).

black and white worn by the crowd. Furthermore, the three main characters are ascending the staircase, whereas the anonymous crowd are, as one, descending it. The implication of this contrast is clear: by joining the urban crowds, by conforming to expectations, one faces homogenization and a loss of identity. Those who refuse to conform, as with the titular characters, become exiles.

Meanwhile, in the advertisement for *Inem Pelayan Sexy 3* (1977; Figure 2), the titular character is depicted as speaking at a packed political rally, under a banner reading “Maids Ready to Support Development”:⁷ to support the pro-development and pro-construction agenda of the Suharto government. She speaks in front of a large crowd of people who, though (again) relatively indistinct as individuals, can be assumed to be maids owing to their simple dress and attendance at the rally. Both speaker and audience make full use of (then-) modern technology, allowing them greater interconnectivity. Audience members hold large photographs of the speaker over their heads, presumably rendered affordable through advances in printing technology and the ready availability of materials in urban areas. The speaker, dressed in markers of the upper class (including a boa), stands before them on a podium. She speaks not only to her

⁷ Original: “Babu Siap Mendukung Pembangunan”.

immediate audience, but to audiences around the globe, as indicated by the microphones labeled ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System, from the United States), and NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation).

Urban technology in these flyers is not limited simply to communications technology. Transportation technology, including automobiles (*Sepandjang Malioboro*), motorcycles (*Doea Tanda Mata*, 1984), helicopters (*Inem Pelayan Sexy 3*) and trains (*Demi Anakku*, 1979), is readily visible. Artificial lighting is another common feature in these flyers, being included in such advertisements as *Gadis Malam* and *Jembatan Merah*. Overall, this use of technological markers presents an identification of urban spaces with “modernity”. The technology used is not, however, entirely “modern”: more ambiguous markers of modernity, such as eyeglasses and wooden pipes, as well as traditional technologies such as horse-drawn carriages can also be found. These are generally used in contexts where a non-modern theme is being evoked (for instance, a father wearing glasses has connotations of an older, less modern, generation).



Figure 3: Romanticized fields and forests (Kembang Padang Kelabu [1980] and Seruling Senja [1974])

RURAL SPACES: LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Generally, depictions of rural spaces in the flyers surveyed neglect human elements aside from the characters central to the image. Furthermore, the focus of depictions of rural spaces is consistently not the village as a place of human settlement,⁸ and works of human engineering and technology are rarely—but not never, as indicated by the lighthouse in *Pulau Cinta* (1978) and mountaineering equipment in *Ranjau-Ranjau Cinta* (1984)—shown. Rather, these depictions focus on the beauty of the nature found outside of cities, which offers characters—universally given markers of modernity such as Western clothing—a chance to escape from the

8 This appears to have changed since the 1950s, when *Satria Desa* showed a (single) house located amidst the rice fields and backgrounded by mountains. Further investigation as to the reasons for this perceived shift is required.

distractions of the city and to focus on their emotions or desires.⁹ In most cases this is not untamed nature; order and the human touch are still apparent, such as in the wide wheat fields of *Mencari Cinta* (1979) or monocultivated flowers of *Kembang Padang Kelabu* (1980; Figure 3).

Fields and forests are common representations of rural space in the flyers surveyed. *Mencari Cinta* and *Tak Seindah Kasih Mama* (1986), for instance, have panels depicting a young man and woman holding hands as they

9 The city, here, should be understood to refer predominantly to Jakarta. The city was narrated by the New Order government as being central to all aspects of an Indonesian national identity, with other areas, no matter how populous, being referred to as *daerah* (‘the provinces’). This carried over, as noted above, into the film industry. Sen and Hill (2007: 156) write that, of the 124 films released domestically in 1977, only two dealt with regional communities from outside Jakarta. Even then, the national language Indonesian was used instead of the appropriate regional language.

move through a well-cultivated field, their smiles a stark contrast to the melancholy of the central illustration. Another flyer, *Seruling Senja* (1974; Figure 3), features a close-up shot of a woman resting her head on the shoulder of a mustached man. Their faces and bodies are superimposed over two images of forests; in the top image, the bare trees hint at a troubled future, whereas the in the bottom image a lush

tropical forest awaits, a future of hope. Some variants of this theme introduce further elements: a tidy footpath, upon which two lovers are depicted as both walking and sharing an umbrella (in the upper position) and running through the rain (in the lower position), separates two parts of a forest in *Pengantin Remaja II* (1982), and in *Secerah Senyum* (1973) a pair of lovers stands on the steps of a waterfall, a line of trees behind them.



Figure 4: The dangers of disorder in rural spaces: sexuality in *Pengantin Pantai Biru* (1983) and cannibalism in *Primitif* (1978)

The consistent portrayal of apparently urban youths, travelling to rural forests or fields (or being superimposed therein by the flyer designers) speaks of a romanticization of these locations, understood here as both idealizing forests and as depicting them as places for romance. The urban residents of Indonesia have long vacationed in the mountainous forests or fields, seeking beauty and cooler, less polluted air. Travel guides dating back to the 1960s, such as *Pedoman Tamasja Djakarta & Sekitarnja*, speak of urban couples renting bungalows and enjoying beautiful views, and destinations such

as Puncak, Kaliurang, and Bandungan remain the site of considerable domestic tourism.¹⁰ Drawing in part on Indonesian experiences and in part on Hollywood tropes, these flyers depict orderly forests and fields as offering the opportunity for true romance and emotional bonding between lovers. It is thus unsurprising that, even in cases

¹⁰ Significantly, the more sexual connotations of these forests and fields—the fact, for instance, that bungalows are often used for forbidden sexual trysts—are not apparent in the flyers examined. This suggests that romance is more closely identified with forests than beaches (discussed below).

where the film itself is predominantly set in an urban environment (such as *Ranjau-Ranjau Cinta*), flyers for romantic films tended to emphasize rural (forested) spaces.

However, a much different connotation is offered by another form of rural space: beaches. As with representations of forests, depictions of beaches identify characters as modern through their clothing. Characters do not carry, for instance, fishing nets or wear clothing appropriate for fishing at the sea. Rather, they are clad in apparel—often bikinis, considered to be Western bathing attire—which is more suited for recreation, such as wading, swimming or sunbathing. These markers again show that the characters depicted are persons from urban locations who do not live at the beach, but rather visit it; indeed, the publication of these flyers is contemporary with the rise and growth of beach tourism in Indonesia, particularly Bali (Hampton and Hampton, 2009). Some flyers, such as *Senyummu adalah Tangisku* (1980), maintain a romantic atmosphere, focusing on fully clothed couples playing hand-in-hand in the water, suggesting that the persons depicted have come to enjoy the beauty of nature with a loved one.

Other flyers, meanwhile, hint at an open sexuality offered by beaches. This can be limited to the exposure of skin or (clothed) intimate contact, such as in *Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pelayan* (1977). Central to this flyer is a woman in a black bikini, viewed from behind, the skin of her back, arms, and upper thigh exposed. Underneath her is a scene showing a man massaging a woman in a red, v-backed one-piece bathing suit—an intimate act which few

rural residents would consider doing in public—on a white sand beach with calm waters. More explicit depictions of humanity’s carnal desires, however, are also possible. *Pengantin Pantai Biru* (1983; Figure 4) offers the best example of this, depicting a young man and a young woman wading waist-deep in a coastal area. Both are clad only in bikini bottoms; the woman’s bottom is nearly the same color as her skin, and her breasts appear to only be covered by her flowing hair, giving the illusion of nudity. Though these youths are, in this scene, depicted as merely embracing each other, their surroundings offer a glimpse into their future. Unlike the orderly beach scene presented in *Tuan, Nyonya, dan Pelayan*, the coast of *Pengantin Pantai Biru* offers chaotic action: waves crash over a rocky shore and their powerful white crests—suggestive of ejaculation—rise next to the soon-to-be entwined couple. This image speaks of the primal, primitive, and often uncontrollable power of nature—and sexuality—which is repressed in more orderly, romantic depictions.

Expressions of the raw power of nature appear in these flyers when order is lost. Whereas the orderly beach offers potential sexuality, this potential is more clearly realized at the disorderly beach. Likewise, though orderly hills and forests offer the opportunity for romance to bloom, the loss of order—the loss of human control—offers only the potential for disaster. The frothy, churning waters of the river in *Saur Sepuh III: Kembang Gunung Lawu* (1989) partially obscure a bank of ravenous crocodiles, which the hero can only avoid through an almost superhuman backflip. The rugged cliff

face of *Ranjau-Ranjau Cinta* leaves a young man hanging, upside down, for his life. In *Primitif* (1978; Figure 4), perhaps the most exploitive variation of this trope, vines snake around a woman whose shredded shorts and shirt barely cover her breasts and genitals. Human skulls and ribs lie at her feet, offering a grim look at her possible fate. Elsewhere, a man dangles upside-down from a vine, his feet bound, as long-haired, nearly naked “primitives”—cannibals, according to illustration and text on the flyer’s reverse—look on. These “primitives” bring with them further disorder, poking their spear-like weapons at the dangling man and eating a crocodile raw.

These depictions of chaotic disorder as inherently dangerous suggests that modern, Westernized, human-instituted order is considered necessary for ensuring successful interactions between humans and nature. Humans, having the ability for rational thought and for easing their lives through technology, are given primacy over the untamed natural despite cultural heritages discouraging such an approach. This is reflective of the narrative of order conquering disorder at the center of the Suharto government’s portrayal of itself as “the nation’s savior ... restorer of order, truth and national unity” (Tan, 2012: 64), a narrative which was so important that, in contemporary domestic films, it subsumed the theme of good versus evil of the Hollywood films which inspired many local filmmakers (Heider, 1991; Sen and Hill, 2007). As individuals were expected to conform with the nation narrative of identity and politics and thus implicitly allow themselves to be narrated by the State, so too was nature

expected to conform with an idealized and orderly notion and to be controlled by those in power;¹¹ to not do so would, as these depictions argue, bring nothing but danger.

“OTHER SPACES”: CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

Three further types of space have been identified in the flyers surveyed. These are here referred to collectively as “Other Spaces” and are realizations of the potential of flyers as a medium. Unlike film, which by default includes all that is seen by the camera (be it a film camera or still camera) and thus requires special techniques such as *décollage* or careful framing to achieve the effect of emptiness, flyers, in their default form, are blank pieces of paper upon which images must be printed. They receive their images only after these images have been illustrated or arranged in a specific manner; the camera captures all, whereas the flyer includes only what the designer(s) want to include. This allows flyers to be used in a manner be difficult to realize with conventional film, and thus present alternative narratives of urbanity, of rurality, of order, etc. by presenting markers of space bereft of place, blurring the lines between urban and rural spaces, and showing disorderly montages without showing said disorder as dangerous.

11 Real-life manifestations of nature being forced to conform with the State’s interests include the creation of the Kedung Ombo reservoir in Central Java, in which the interests of both the environment and local villagers were subjugated by the State’s interest in providing irrigation, as well as increased logging and mining activities for sale and for use in construction.



Figure 5: Spacial identity without place: *Ateng Kaya Mendadak* (1975) and *Gadis Telepon* (1983)

The first form of “other space” found in the flyers surveyed is that in which markers of urbanity and rurality are presented without showing specific locations. A suit, pipe, wheeled office chair, and fan of thousand-rupee bills is sufficient to identify the main character of *Ateng Kaya Mendadak* (1975) as being in an urban space despite him being backgrounded by nothing but a block of yellow. Viewers likewise are able to understand the urban setting of a young woman depicted as being dressed in a pink dress and draped over a red leather couch, with a telephone base on her lap and receiver in hand (as in *Gadis Telepon* [1983]). Similar tendencies can be seen in—among many, many others—*Assooi* (1977, through the use of fashion markers), *Buah Terlarang* (1979, through the use of fashion markers and an illustrated apple), and *Untuk Sebuah Nama* (1985, through the use of fashion markers and a microphone). In such depictions, the intended space is readily recognizable even though the physical locations

have been replaced by a void. There is no objective reason why, for instance, someone cannot take a wheeled office chair to a rural bungalow (or even to the forest), dress him- or herself in an office suit, and sit on this chair. However, these markers are so firmly entrenched in understandings of urban space that they cannot be readily imagined as being located anywhere else. Through these voids, viewers are led to realize that urban and rural spaces are not identical to urban and rural places. Rather, they are social constructs created by embedding markers with specific spacial identities. The firm delineation of urbanity and rurality is not simply a matter of location, but also of markers: one does not become urban simply by living in a city, just as one does not become rural simply by living in the countryside.



Figure 6: Blurred lines between urban and rural spaces: *Tahu Diri Dong* (1984) and *Bebas Aturan Main* (1993)

The second type of “other space” found in the flyers surveyed is that in which the lines between urban spaces and rural spaces, and between rural and urban places, are blurred through the subversion of expectations of the places shown. This is best realized in flyers for comedy films, particularly those which combine animation and photography. In the flyer for *Tahu Diri Dong* (1984), for example, photographs of the actors’ heads are overlaid on an illustrated scene showing a jalopy—unfit for even city roads, the loose tire tells viewers—driving through a field which also features a cane-wielding dancer and a trio of bicyclists. The passengers, including a chimpanzee, are all dressed in urban clothing (though one is in the act of removing hers). The flyer for *Bebas Aturan Main* (1993), meanwhile, depicts seven characters as wearing urban clothing: one man wears a suit jacket, a woman is dressed in high heels, and all three women

wear large jewelry and heavy make-up. These people are found not in a city, but in or near a hammock strung between two palm trees and set against a swath of blue, strongly suggesting a beach scene. Similar subversions can be seen in flyers for other comedy films such as *Pintar-Pintar Bodoh* (1980; in which well-dressed men drive a truck through the air as a frog wonders what brand of shoes they are wearing) and *Ali Baba* (1974; in which a woman wearing a checkered skirt parachutes), as well as flyers for films of other genres, such as *Anggur Perkawinan* (1994, in which two people, fully clothed and waist-deep in water, kiss, as the same two people drive past on a motorcycle).

If the use of the void leads viewers to separate place and space, blurring the lines between urban and rural offers the possibility for alternative interpretations of these spaces. No longer is it certain, for instance, that a woman

wearing high heels is sitting in an urban location located at a fancy night club or office; she may, these flyers suggest, be found in a hammock on the beach. As such, viewers are not only guided to recognize the constructed nature of space, but also shown the potential for overlap and mixing between spaces. The orderly constructions of urban and rural spaces are deconstructed, revealing disorder. Importantly, this disorder is not dangerous, as commonly seen in standard constructs of space, but liberating, offering possibilities unimaginable within the urban-rural dichotomy.¹²

The third type of “other space” found in these flyers is that which makes use of montages to combine different scenes and possibilities. *Roman Picisan* (1980; Figure 7), for example, positions

¹² That the revelation of the potential of disorder and chaos is often realized with seemingly magical or nonsensical imagery (a frog thinking about shoes, a motorcycle driving on water, a suit-wearing chimpanzee) is no accident. As Upstone (2009, p.20) writes, combinations of realism and magic can “gesture beyond the status quo and call into question the authority of realism and the ... history it has conventionally been used to support, posing ‘an ideological, postcolonial opposition to that linear, imperialist version of history’”. The dominance of flyers for comedy films in this effort is likewise not surprising; comedy, especially that focused on specific comedians (as with the examples above, which were mostly used to promote the group Warung Kopi DKI), has long been recognized as “demonstrating a persistent and fundamental affiliation with those who are socially marginalized or repressed” (Krutnik, 2003, p.15), including through a resistance to the norms of the film industry.

close-ups of the two main characters central to the flyer. Below them are two illustrated film strips which show the faces of various other cast members, as well as their names. Further below this is scene showing a number of characters riding horses against the backdrop of a rural field, emphasizing, as with the orderly fields and forests discussed above, the romance of courtship. The bottom scene of this montage shows a number of racers driving on a go-kart track, a much more modern and technologically oriented scene which makes use of markers of urbanity. Even montages focusing only on the faces and upper bodies of characters, such as those in *Ambisi* (1973) and *Warung Pojok* (1977), or a mixture of faces and full bodies, such as those in *Jangan Membiarkan Mereka Lapar* (1974) and *Kekasih Binal* (1978), offer viewers the ability to glimpse at a number of simultaneously occurring but spatially separated activities and incidents.

The common use of montage in Indonesian film advertisements, which dates back into the 1940s (as in *Rentjong Atjeh* [1940]) and was in wide use by the 1950s (as in *Rodrigo de Villa* [1952] and *Lagu Kenangan* [1953]), has previously been noted by Heider (1990, p.24).¹³ However, the effect montage in these advertisements is not commented upon: though these advertisements frequently maintain some semblance of order, allowing film titles and cast lists to be easily read, they also provide disorder. Human heads can be found in heart-shapes and people can kiss on two different sofas or ride both

¹³ Specifically, Heider (1990, p. 24) writes that film advertisements are “crowded with details” and “chock-full of people, animals, and foliage”.

horses and go-karts simultaneously, thus subverting depictions of disorder as inherently dangerous by providing a positive disjuncture. In the montage space, anything can happen. The strict sense of order promoted by both the government and the urban-rural dichotomy is thus undermined, allowing the multiplicity of reality to be realized.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion indicates that, in Indonesian film flyers produced between 1966 and 1998, depictions of urban and rural spaces are frequently presented as being (almost) diametrically opposed. Where depictions of urban spaces tend to focus on humans in the context of human architecture, of crowds, of human sexuality, and of technology, depictions of rural spaces tend to focus on humans in the context of nature, of solitude, of romance, and of a lack of technology. However, in the vast majority of cases, both depictions of urban spaces and depictions of rural spaces are tied both by their need for order and by the people who move between them: Westernized, modern, middle-class Indonesians who live in urban spaces but travel to rural spaces (for pleasure or otherwise). Thus, though the urban space is questioned (for its effect on morality and individual identity, for instance), the State's narrative of order through development is reaffirmed and a specific monolithic Indonesian identity, centered around Jakarta, is promoted.

In the remaining three spaces, however, the supposedly clear delineation of urban and rural spaces crumbles. Film flyers making use of this space are able to depict urban and rural spaces (or at least their markers)



Figure 7: Roman Picisan (1980)

as coexisting side-by-side, thus blurring the line between the two in a manner that pushes viewers to realize the distinction between place and space. This, in turn, allows narratives of order to be more fully deconstructed than otherwise possible, either by presenting a multifaceted image showing various different situations occurring in a single space or by questioning the need for order by showing disorder as comedic. Flyers' use of these other spaces thus allowed them to best realize the potential of their medium; film flyers were not limited in their narratives by being printed on sheets of paper, but rather empowered.

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