

The Spirit of Indonesia: *Rasa, Reason, Religion**

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The Ghost

Once upon a time in a faraway land, there was a child who lived with ghost stories. She lived in a stone house that was built by the giants in the colonial time. (The house was planned by big white people and meant for their family, even though the labour was provided by small skinny brown people, at a time when there was a big difference between being white and colored.). For reasons that the little girl didn't understand, the white people left the land. A Chinese owned that house for a couple of decades. Then, in the year she was born, her father took over the house. Her father belonged to the "government people". He had a gun, which he kept in a steel chest in his bedroom. The Chinese was probably a businessman who had committed some wrongdoing, or maybe he was a communist. The girl really didn't know. What she did know and strangely got fond of was ghost stories.

Listen, there are different kinds of ghost. *Gendruwos* live in the jungle. *Silumans* guard the rocks and caves. *Kuntilanaks* stay in tall bamboos groves and like to fly from tree to tree while laughing like crazy. *Kolongwewes* look out for a chance to kidnap little children. *Pocongs* hop around cemeteries like giant cocoons. But, alas, all those exotic ghosts reside in nature: in forests, on trees, at graveyards; places and spaces where men are not in command. They are not really part of us.

But, hold on, now there is one ghost. A city ghost. Beware, the grownups liked to tell the little girl. Beware when you hear the echoing sound of a peddler's slitdrum in the middle of the night. He may sell *satay*, or *mi goreng*, or *mi godok*, or *mi toktok*, or meatballs. If it is very late in the night, you better beware. There have been reports about people going up to a midnight street seller and asked for a plate of *satay*, or *mi goreng*, or *mi godok*, or *mi toktok*, or meatballs. The seller wore a hat and would prepare the order without comment. After a while he would come with a strange dish, and only then you would realize that... he has no eyes, no mouth, no nose. His face is flat. He is called *Setan Murat*. *Setan Muka Rata*. The Flat Face Phantom. When most ghosts are nature's beings, this ghost is the phantom of civilization. He is part of us.

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I was the girl who lived with ghost stories. I didn't make up those stories. I just try to interpret them. The Flat Face Phantom seems to have made its debut during the military regime's era. It continues to appear in different versions from town to town. You may come across it in a conversation when erudite discussions have finished. Some foreign friends of mine raised this question: why, in Indonesia, do we so often end up talking about ghosts?

Are Indonesians modern people who live with half their head in the mythological realm? Now, as the girl who grew up with ghosts stories, I want to invite you to see ghosts not as mere superstition. Let's be more appreciative of ghosts, (because I love them), because our modern visions are not so different from apparitions of ghosts.

Ben Anderson, especially in *Imagined Communities*, has explained beautifully and insightfully about how imagination has shaped a nation. Indonesia is a vision made true. Republik Indonesia started with the "ghost of meaning". If we don't want to call it ghost, we can call it spirit. Let's talk about spirit...

The Spirit

What is the spirit of Indonesia? We can talk in length about this, but let's make it short. In a number of crucial crises in Indonesia's history—for example: the 1965-66 turmoil, the 1998 Reformasi and its following consensus—Indonesians tend to read the outcome of the crises as the triumph of Pancasila and *bhineka tunggal ika*. (Of course history is written by the winner, and—please—that doesn't make it necessarily bad). I want to call the union of these two formulas—Pancasila and *bhineka tunggal ika*—as the very spirit of Indonesia.

But, what is a spirit? Am I not being unfair to those who don't belief in the spirits? I grew up with ghost stories. Can I have a common language with those who lack ghosts in their life?

The spirit is, technically, the ancient codes that pass through time (I am inspired by Richard Dawkins' meme.) The spirit is not only an energy that moves people at a certain time, it is also a set of codes that replicates through the centuries. Like language, it has synchronic and diachronic aspects. Interestingly, the Indonesian language has several words for giving birth to a newborn; one of them is "*per-salin-an*", which also means copying, duplicating, replicating, transcribing. From root word "*salin*"; when a woman *bersalin*, she gives birth to a baby, when a person *menyalin*, he or she copies something.

The social copying of codes happens in a formal as well as an informal way, through individual will as well as communal pressure, through practice and through law. Indonesia's founding parents gave birth to a nation with a set of particular codes for its existence. The

smallest particles, or the basis of the set, is likely the one sentence *bhineka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity); and next to is Pancasila. Both are the nation's slogan and foundation.

Those who studied Indonesia's history know that the consensus on this set of code has not been without challenge since its inception. The challenge came from the Islamist groups who wanted to include the syaria into the state's principles. Aware of future complications, the Christian groups chose to withdraw from nation building if the syaria was to be included in its foundation. The consensus was, finally, to keep no mentioning of any specific religion in the Pancasila as it had been proposed. However, there was a compromise about the order of the five principles. As we have it now, "the belief in one God" became the first principle. The earlier versions of Pancasila did not put faith as a first priority, and when they did mention "*ke-tuhan-an*" (technically would be "godity" or "godism", but we better translate it as the belief in God), they did not mention "the one God". Now we see that the monotheistic faith has transmitted part of its code into the set of codes that becomes the DNA of Indonesia, for better or worse.

(To be frank, I don't know the benefit of having "the belief in one God" in my state's foundation. So far I can only see the complication of a monotheistic will of power, which I will talk about later. I think it's better to have "spirituality".)

The formal coding of Pancasila is worth examining for a moment, because it shows how translation or recoding to other language proved to be not very easy, and this difficulty relates to another complexity. The Five Principles in English Wikipedia are: 1) belief in the one and only God, 2) just and civilized humanity, 3) the unity of Indonesia, 4) democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives. 5) social justice for all of the people of Indonesia. (To tell you the truth, it doesn't feel the same in my language.)

I have lived with ghost stories, I grew up with the formula of Pancasila in my native tongue, I don't find them strange until I'm outside those languages: the language of ghost, the language of Indonesia. Once you are in the exterior, you start to lose the interior comprehension. This is the complexity I want to explore a little further. It's like when you wake up from a dream; you no longer understand your dream. Looking from the exterior I begin to cry: how come they sound so weird now: this "just and civilized humanity" (is there an unjust and uncivilized humanity?), this "democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity blah blah blah", this "belief in the one and only God"... How come most of the things now appear to be in weird shapes?

There are several intricacies relating to this matter, but I want to stress the difference in the capacity to understand when you are inside or outside. When we concentrate on the

replication of codes, we see things from the outside. We tend to lose the capability to comprehend the meaning. We only know the structure, but we lose the meaning.

From the outside the spirit of Indonesia is the replicating of certain codes by which there will be a continuing identity. The replicating process takes place through daily practices, discourse and law; and through regular political consensus. An example from last year's presidential election, the winner was the group that refrained from religious fanaticism. The national consensus, once again, opted for the side that doesn't exploit religious sentiment. In a sense, it replicated the set of codes agreed by Indonesia's founding parents.

The threat of "Pan Islamism" keeps lurking. That means, technically, the competition between the replication of Pan Islamic set of codes and the set of codes of Pancasila-*bhineka tunggal ika* keeps going on.

However, to see the subject from a distance, and to look at it as a matter of code replication, our understanding is doomed to be devoid of meaning. But, now, what is meaning? What is the *meaning* of *bhineka tunggal ika* and Pancasila?

For this moment, I'll start with a simple thing: if something has a meaning for you, you will have a feeling for it. It will have a feel. It will have an interiority in you. It is not just an exterior codes, it is an interior experience. Indonesian language has a word for the sum of feeling, sense, sensitivity, empathy, intuition, capacities alike with which we know something through our experience and existence: "*rasa*". The Javanese pronounced it differently and regard *rasa* very highly in their art and daily life.

I shall define *rasa* as an interiority of the set of codes. *Rasa* is through which we feel the spirit. But, before we talk about *rasa*, let's talk about one other thing:

Syncretism

Jokowi is now the president of Indonesia. People has began to get disillusioned by the economic sluggish, the execution of capital punishment, his being undecisive on the battle against corruption, his weak position against his party's elite.

However, relating to our topic, the current minister of religious affairs is worth our attention. Unlike many of his predecessors, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin fights corruption in his department, he tackles religious disputes wisely, he doesn't exploit fanaticism. In one Islamic celebration in the state palace a few months ago, he led a reintroduction of the Koran recital in a Javanese style. The local style of Koran recital is not new; it's a centuries-old practice in the religious boarding schools known as *pesantren*. It became less known

with modern standardization during the Soeharto era, and it is really marginalized in the democratic era that coincides with the trend of globalization (but globalization in Islam is read as Arabization.)

The reintroduction of Javanese style Koran recital created a controversy, and in turn revealed a rather forgotten concept of “Islam Nusantara”. This literally means “Islam of the archipelago”, the subject has been studied in some Islamic universities but has never really gone out from the campuses. Islam Nusantara is welcomed with high optimism as well as with controversy. Its supporters argue that it is just natural and good that Islam is expressed in local cultures. When a religion is expressed in the native tongue, it will touch the *rasa* of people. Its opponents argue that the notion is against the oneness of Islam. They condemn it as another kind of syncretism. Syncretism is another key word to understand Indonesia’s history.

Now, when I was in elementary school, my history teacher spoke about syncretism in a very positive tone: syncretism is our ancestor’s precious capability by which they settled differences and maintained peaceful unity. As a child of the military regime, I always thought that school teaches us what is good and bad; and certainly syncretism is a good thing. We were taught about the Shiva-Buddhist temples of the past that showed the mixture of religious teachings, and we were proud of our ancestor’s “*local genius*”. We learned about the *Negarakertagama*, a book by Mpu Prapanca from the 14th century, in which our modern Indonesia founding fathers got their inspiration for *bhineka tunggal ika*. We read about *Islam waktu telu* (a traditional community that practises three instead of five times prayer) and other sects. We visited cemeteries and prayed according to our religion (it could be Islam, Christian, Hinduism, Buddhism). Syncretism is a pillar of *bhineka tunggal ika*.

I only started to get confused about syncretism when I entered Universitas Indonesia. It was only there that I realized the monotheistic puritanism’s enmity toward syncretism. It caused me to become a bit disoriented. There is rupture in my nation’s history: syncretism was good in the ancient time, but it is not good in the modern time. Why? Later on I realized the opposition, not only among the preaching religions, but of the puritan monotheist groups towards local spirituality usually called “*ke-batin-an*” (in literal translation will be “innerity”). Not being a religion, not being institutionalised, not having fixed identities, *kebatinan* is open to any teachings; therefore it is a mechanism of syncretism.

From an exterior perspective, syncretism is like software that will regulate different or contradicting contents in order that the computer can work and not explode. This is a set of processing codes that has managed to self-replicate for centuries in a massive amount in the body of Nusantara, so that we can call it the spirit of Nusantara/Indonesia. But now, it is opposed by the puritans, especially the monotheistic puritans.

The battle of what seemed to be between syncretism and puritanism made me think. My gut feeling is against puritanism. (European scholars may find this gut feeling only too obvious. Secularism is a given thing in today's Europe. It's a different case in Indonesia, where it's very common that graduating students would thank or dedicate their thesis, in writing, to God Almighty. There are more and more postgraduate students who study on fellowship in Europe or US or Japan and come back home more religiously dogmatic. To the surprise of European secular intellectuals, religious dogmatism is not a Middle Age phenomenon. On the contrary, it fits the (post)modern era very well.)

The puritan's attitude is usually intolerant toward difference. That makes them not nice. But, what's wrong with their arguments? The puritan's arguments have a good level of logical consistency. Their arguments sound more clear than syncretic explanation.

Now, let us examine the competing codes that are reshaping Indonesia's identity: we have syncretism on one side and religious puritanism on the other side. There is also critical mind on one side and dogmatism on the other side. How do they compete?

It is important to note that postmodern ideas have advanced so far as to questioning the idea of universal human rights. Critical reasoning investigates everything and finds that there is no basis for anything, even for truth. The idea of universal human rights is bound to western biases.

Ironically, at this very point, the religious dogmatic mind agrees eagerly: universal human rights is an invention of western (un)civilization. There is no truth if we resort to our reason, and exactly because of that, we have to go back to God's eternal law. With this complicated logic, certainly we can argue that Islam Nusantara is an Indonesian invention, or Javanese style Koran recital is a Javanese invention, and therefore less legitimate if not illegitimate.

The advantage of the dogmatic mind against the critical mind is that its double standard attitude allows it to be critical of others but not of its own basis. In this way it keeps its basis firm. What the secular critical objective scientific (you name it) mind disparages is exactly the strength of the dogmatic mind. Faith solidifies illusion. The competition between the critical mind and the dogmatic mind is like a shooting championship of a certain kind:

1) the dogmatic's rifle shoots only to the front (like a normal rifle), but the critical's rifle shoots to the front and to itself. 2) the dogmatic faith solidifies the base on which it stands, the critical mind destabilizes its own base. I am afraid that the critical mind is doomed to fail if it doesn't change strategy. I hope I am wrong.

What about the competition between the puritan mind and the syncretic mind? The puritan has sharp arguments. Syncretism doesn't have argument. Studying cases of attacks on

minorities of local beliefs (assuming that local beliefs are an important locus of syncretism), one will realize how weak is their argumentation and articulation capacity. I opine that it is not because many of them come from a poor uneducated background (because some of them are university graduates), but because the very structure of syncretism lacks logic. It lacks logical consistency even on a superficial level. Rather, in its interiority, to reconcile differences and conflicts it resorts to *rasa*—namely feeling, sense, sensitivity, empathy, intuition. Now, we are coming back to *rasa*. What's wrong with *rasa*?

Rasa

What's wrong with *rasa*? The Javanese appreciate it highly, don't they? In Clifford Geertz's *The Religion of Java* or in Magnis Suseno's *The Javanese Ethic*, in the writings of Ki Hajar Dewantara or of the *dalangs* and local wise people, in various testimonies of traditional dancers, musicians, artists or artisans, we learn how *rasa* has played a vital role in shaping Javanese communities. Born into a Javanese family I've never been taught about *rasa* in an explicit and explanatory way, exactly because *rasa* is not about formulation. It's the sum of feeling, empathy, sensitivity, sense, intuition and the like, which are known through *laku* (practice, habit). It is really about relation.

Magnis Suseno, a German Catholic priest in Java, shared same experiences with me. To pacify a crying child, a mother told her kid, "dear, stop crying. Look, there is Father Priest" or "there is a guest" though probably the child cried because another kid had hurt it. She would say it in such a way that the child would learn to be bashful about how it had behaved. In a slightly heavier case, when I was very annoying, my mother would say to me, "look, your father is coming!", and I would learned to be afraid of my father. Other members of our extended family would tell me about ghosts. (I didn't get the ghost stories from my own parents.) "Beware. Don't do that. There is a ghost..." The priest, the guest, the father, the ghost were the others to which a child should learn to relate. Relation was more important than reason.

I suggest that knowledge has a feel. It is the interiority of knowledge. The interiority of knowledge is how we feel the knowledge. We have talked about the spirit of Indonesia from the exteriority, as the replication of codes. Now I want to talk about the feeling and the meaning, *rasa* and *makna*, as the interiority of the spirit. The technical question would be: how the replication of particular codes is felt or experienced.

Asuming that syncretism is an important pillar of the spirit of Indonesia (Pancasila and *bhineka tunggal ika*), I would say that *tenggang rasa* is the feeling in which this set of codes is experienced. *Tenggang rasa* is an expression for the feeling of empathy, tolerance and other feelings associated with them. Important to note: this feeling can only exist in an intersubject relation. It cannot exist when one takes the others as objects. Other important

expressions associated with *tenggang rasa* are “*tahu diri*” (to know oneself in relation with others), *tahu malu* (to feel shy if one doesn’t behave or one doesn’t know one’s position to other people).

The feeling (*rasa*) of something brings us to the second aspect of interiority: the meaning (*makna*) of something. The feeling of the spirit (or the set of codes) brings us to the meaning of it.

What is the meaning of syncretism? It is what syncretism holds valuable. It is intersubject or interexistence relation. It is coexistence among subjects. It is *tenggang rasa*. It is based on *rasa*. So, what’s the problem?

What’s the problem with *rasa*? The problem of *rasa* is that it doesn’t speak the language of reason. This is not just a romantic answer. The fact is, it shouldn’t be a problem until reason becomes the only language of knowledge. We know, since the beginning of The Age of Reason, slowly and surely reason has been marching its way to be the one and only language of knowledge.

The problem of syncretism is that it relies on *rasa*, and *rasa* doesn’t speak the language of reason. The problem of syncretism is that its mechanism of *rasa* leads it to containing too many internal inconsistencies and contradictions which it cannot defend against the judgement of reason. Now, what is the problem of reason?

(Libidinal) Reason

Postmodern philosophy has exposed to the roots of the problem of reason. On this occasion I will focus only on the interiority of reason. I resort most of the time to my own contemplation. I have implied earlier that knowledge has a feel. We feel good when we think we know the truth. We don’t feel that good when we think we don’t know the truth. (If there has been any neurological explanation about it I would be very happy.) Logic has an impersonal and strict mechanism, but when it takes place in our brain, it will be bound to have interiority. It will have a sense. It will be experienced with a sensation.

The good sensation of “*reasonable*” truth links to the state of apprehension or control over something. We know, knowledge is power, knowledge is about control. This makes reason very different from *rasa*, of which good feeling links to intersubject relation. The second big difference between them is regarding their mechanism. The mechanism of *rasa* is a play of balance and harmony. The mechanism of reason is progress that aims at truth. When (it thinks) it reaches the truth it gives the brain an orgasm. It’s a pleasure seeking mechanism. Reason is then libidinal. (Rasa is like love, reason is like sex.)

Imagining the interiority (that is, how we feel the *reasonable* truth), unfortunately, the critical-scientific mind and the religious-dogmatic mind are not so much different. Both seek pleasure; the pleasure of truth. They may be different in how they formulate their truth. The critical mind may tend to be negative and deconstructive (it will likely say, there is no god and values are relative), the dogmatic tends to be positive and constructive (there is God and his words are fixed). Each side may accuse the other of reaching a pseudo truth. However, both are driven by the *reasonable* pleasure and orgasm. The problem of reason is, again, that it is libidinal.

Now, let us go back to the situation in Indonesia. Indonesia has the spirit of *bhinneka tunggal ika*, where harmony is maintained through a feeling of *tenggang rasa* (empathy, tolerance), and potential conflicts are reconciled through synchronization (for example, Pancasila) and syncretism (examples are abundant). The process has relied on *rasa*. The problem of *rasa* is that it is likely to contain internal contradictions and logical inconsistencies. It cannot defend its paradoxes against the judgment of reason.

On the other hand, especially since The Age of Reason, reason has nearly become the sole language for truth. Unfortunately, dogmatism is a legitimate part of this wave. The dogmatics' argument may be crude and primitive according to the critical-scientific mind, but they are no different in the interior sensation. They feel the pleasure and the orgasm of truth. Truth is tempting and desirable. Now, this is the danger: if the critical-scientific truth is too sophisticated and difficult, some people may resort to a quicky kind of truth of dogmatism. The problem we are having now, in Indonesia as well as in the world, is that the domination of this "libidinal reason" is even fostered by the mass media and digital information technology.

There should be more scientific research on the content and other aspects of digital information technology. As a journalist and a writer, I have been involved in the formation of public opinion since the Soeharto era. Without having to look too deep, the difference between the past time (military regime, censored conventional media) and today (democracy, nearly uncensored conventional as well as social media) is obvious. In the past, you had to have courage to speak up. Now, everybody wants to be heard. People had to think before speaking, now people speak first and think later. Moreover, through content's hits anybody can follow and exploit people's desires. Through likes and retweets truth becomes more pleasurable.

What I find alarming yet challenging is the very short format of text of the new media. You have to be understood in 140 characters in twitters. News gets shorter, even in print media, as if they are adjusting to a smartphone's monitor. People want to have the orgasm of truth as quickly as possible, even though it would be a fake orgasm. The visual, mixed media, and

very short form of text is a challenge for all of us who are concerned with public opinion, but it has proved to be benefitting to the dogmatics. Dogmas fit in less characters. Critical thinking needs more words to express. Contemplation needs a whole life. Dogmas are probably the best fit for the new media.

Unfortunately, when the sceptical minds give no hope, faith gives you passion. By looking at the interiority of reason, that is the libidinal reason, we can understand why some people can join ISIS.

Meanwhile, *rasa* has in the first place been having difficulty in defending its choice of syncretism against the judgment of logical consistency. One important pillar of the spirit of Indonesia is actually being shaken. *Bhineka tunggal ika* is facing a big challenge, probably bigger than what it had in the past. Will Indonesia lose its spirit of unity in diversity?

Critical Spiritualism[†]

Certainly I am a supporter of *bhineka tunggal ika*. I am patriotic on that. It's a faith I will defend, because the *makna* (meaning) of it is intersubject relation, and the *rasa* of it is *tenggang rasa* (empathy—not quite the same but very close to compassion). It is for me deeper than reason. The role of reason is to check whether the meaning is true.

In centuries past, when *rasa* still reigned, people in Nusantara didn't have to account to reason for the syncretic steps they took. Nowadays, as reason is taking over the world, reconciliation of differences cannot rely on *rasa* alone. It has to undergo a test of reason. Unfortunately, syncretism may not pass the exam. Therefore, we, the proponents of *bhineka tunggal ika*, cannot depend on syncretism alone. We have to develop another pillar to support *bhineka tunggal ika* that will survive the judgment of reason. Here I suggest critical spiritualism.

A twitter explanation of it would be: "Critical spiritualism is an openness to the spiritual without betraying critical thinking." "A critical thinking that is not closed to the possibilities outside its limit." "A critical thinking that is aware of its problem." "A situation in which spirituality and critical thinking engage in a good dialog."

The dialog between Habermas and Cardinal Ratzinger is an effort of this kind in the secular Europe. Not necessarily that Habermas is critical and Ratzinger is spiritual; both have both qualities. In Indonesia, where most of the people are embracing religion, the major dialog

[†] I used the term "critical spiritualism" for the first time in my novel *Bilangan Fu (The Number Fu)*. While exploring the idea beyond the novel I thought that "critical spiritualiy" would probably better to convey the meaning. However, I decided to use the initial name.

may need a different form. A symbolic Javanese style Koran recital in the palace a few months ago has managed to reintroduce to the wider audience the notion of Islam Nusantara, in which inculturation and intellectual exercise walk hand in hand.

The proponents of *bhineka tunggal ika*, or of humanity in general, need to convince the world that a good dialog between critical thinking and spirituality is possible. It will cross cut the dialog between secularism and religion, and will help the world fight not only terrorism but any form of dogmatic violence.

For certainly humanity is not just a set of codes as any other set of codes that will survive or not survive in this world based on its fitness to self-replicate. Certainly humanism is different in its content (its value and feeling) from theocracy or secularism. Theocracy, dogmatism, as well as secularism seek truth; humanity or humanism seek compassion. Those who accused humanism of being an invention of Western civilization may look to the experience of Indonesia. Through the language of *rasa*, the Nusantara's people have articulated *bhineka tunggal ika* and various other expressions in languages of the archipelago. Humanity is an articulation in the language of reason, and it is historically western, yes. However, if we look to the language of *rasa*, we will find a huge treasury of expressions in the same spirit in various cultures. The total sum of those vocabularies, of reason and of *rasa*, will make us understand that there is indeed a true spirit. A true spirit of being a subject who lives among subjects; of being an existence that exists among existences. We can regain our faith in a true spirit.

The Phantom

Once upon a time in a faraway land not only there was one little girl but there were millions of children who lived with ghost stories. Ghost stories made them thrilled and made them scared, made them happy and made them sad. Ghost stories make us feel what is not real; but what is real?

Strangely, the ghost is the common enemy of two mortal enemies, the religious-dogmatic and the secular-critical mind. In fact it is not that strange, as the ghost appears in the language of *rasa*, while both eternal foes speak the language of reason.

Now, listen to an echoing sound of a slitdrum in the middle of the night. It may come from a peddler selling *satay*, or *mi goreng*, or *mi godok*, or *mi toktok*, or meatballs... and you may come accross the Flat Face Phantom. I like him because he is one of a very few urban ghosts, and he appeared for the first time during the era of the military regime. Believe me, he will convey the moral of his own story only if you dare to listen to him as he stirs the soup with strange things bubbling inside his pot. He could be stirring his own eyes, mouth, nose, and

heart... (The beauty of the ghost is that it speaks to you in metaphors but you don't want to take it as metaphors.)

He said to me: you may be living in a house confiscated by a certain regime from a minority or a political outcast who himself had taken the house over from fleeing colonial giants who had previously occupied the land of the small brown people who probably had been envying each other and so on; you may be living in a house called Indonesia, or a house called Earth, but our past is never clean and pure. So, (now this is the moral of the story):

...if your libidinal reason renders you lustful for truth, and your sensation-seeking keeps your *rasa* in the superficiality of experience, you'll become self-righteous and self-complacent. You close any chance of dialogue, either with your enemy or between the inner capacities of your own self—between critical reason and spirituality. Then, you will start dropping your eyes, ears, mouth and heart, and end up with an empty flat face. Numb. Ignorant. The phantom of civilization.

Indonesians still love ghost stories. Probably it is just another manifestation of our spirituality, or another way to introduce spirituality to our children. A kind of kindergarten spirituality, that is not meant to be trapping you. Let's cherish it. The challenge of the world today is that it is too much dominated by libidinal reason. We need *rasa* to balance it. We need a dialog between the best of reason and the best of *rasa*, between critical mind and spirituality; a dialog that will lead us to the union of truth and compassion.