Blood and Crown

by Dwi SETIAWAN

Yazman Yazid's *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*:
What a missing film adaptation can tell you

Abstract

This article investigates a forgotten, discredited, and missing film adaptation from a largely invisible country in adaptation studies: *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* (*Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng*, 1983), a commercially and critically unsuccessful film adaptation of a commercially and critically successful Indonesian novel, *The Dancer of Paruk Village* (*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, 1982). This article demonstrates how: 1) the disappearance of the film can bring to light the cultural constructs of Indonesian film adaptation; and 2) the surviving script, combined with other secondary resources, can reveal the politics of adaptation, society, and government at the time; and 3) examining a forgotten and missing film can further expose the mutual relations between post-colonial powers and empires.

Keywords

Indonesia, military, archive, depoliticisation, politicisation

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Introduction

The Dancer of Paruk Village was written by a renowned Indonesian novelist Ahmad Tohari during the Suharto/New Order/military era (1966-98) and was the first book of a trilogy under the same title. The trilogy tells the life of a *ronggeng* or a traditional erotic dancer from Paruk village named Srintil, who regularly performs in political rallies of the Indonesian Communist Party (henceforth the PKI) during the Sukarno/early Independence era. Following the killing of six army generals on 01 October 1965, the army under General Suharto accuses the PKI of being the mastermind of the movement, launches a counter-coup and a manhunt for the communists throughout the country, and eventually removes President Sukarno from power.[1] Srintil is implicated, captured, and imprisoned without trial. She survives the great ordeal but must continue her life with ex-communist status, which is the worst stigma one could have during the new military era.

The novelist had to face a long, ideological interrogation by the military, and the trilogy went through some censorship. This should not be surprising as the trilogy is the first to touch the subject of the PKI and the 1965 conflict. Ironically, it is its double status as the pioneer of 1965 stories and a victim of censorship that has put the trilogy on the national and, eventually, the international map. As an indicator of public interest, the censored version of the trilogy was reprinted more than four times. The first and second books were translated into Japanese, Dutch, and German. The uncensored version of the trilogy was eventually published in a single-volume novel in 2003, following the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 and has been reprinted nine times. In the same year, Rene T. A. Lysloff translated the unabridged novel into English for international readers under the title *The Dancer*. Academically, *The Dancer* has also attracted the interest of scholars both from Indonesia and abroad. The novel has been studied numerous times, in various forms, and with different approaches. Last but not least, it is practically the only Indonesian political novel to have been adapted twice and, more importantly, the two adaptations were produced, respectively, during the military and the post-military eras.

A year after the publication of the first book, Gramedia Film produced its cinematic adaptation under the title *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* (henceforth *Blood and Crown*). The directing was entrusted to a then unknown young director Yazman Yazid, who had directed only one film previously. There is no available data on the reception of *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* by its contemporary audience and actually the film is missing. There

have been virtually no popular or critical commentaries on this adaptation. The screening of the adaptation of the complete trilogy entitled *The Dancer* (*Sang Penari*, 2011) by a critically acclaimed director Ifa Isfansyah revived its name although from that moment the first adaptation has consistently received unfavourable and dismissive comparisons to the second. The novelist himself claims that he has never and will never watch *Blood and Crown* (Soebagyo 2011). Writing for *The Jakarta Post*, Ika Krismantari (2011) calls the first adaptation 'a cheap pseudo-porn flick' (par. 4). Another film critic Triwik Kurniasari (2011) states: 'the film maker moved too far and turned the film into X-rated material, while failing to capture the real message of the book' (par. 2). Some of these negative judgements, in part, might have been caused by the misled notion that, unlike the second adaptation, the first adaptation only narrates the early parts of the trilogy which focuses on the making of Srintil into an erotic dancer, and ignores the latter parts where she encounters the PKI. The fact is that the first book, on which the first adaptation is based, does not have anything on the banned political party, which only appears in the second book, *A Shooting Star at Dawn* (*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*, 1985), published two years after the release of the film.

It is clear that *Blood and Crown* has not been considered as a serious, political, or aesthetically successful film and, therefore, it has not been considered worth analysing. It is consistently dismissed as a film that only exploits sexuality and does not "faithfully" represent the content of the political novel. In this article, I argue that *Blood and Crown* is as serious and political as the novel and the second adaptation. The fact that the film is missing despite its relatively recent production makes it a very worthwhile case in terms of understanding Indonesian cinema in general and film adaptation in particular. By investigating the base and superstructure of Indonesian film archiving, this study attempts to identify the reasons the adaptation has been marginalised and forgotten, and why it is now missing, as well as to portray the current state of film adaptation and studies in the country. As far as the surviving screenplay is concerned, the missing film powerfully represents what Krishna Sen calls 'the politics of depoliticisation' as propagated and practised by the Indonesian military regime (1994: 6).

Locating the missing film
The disappearance of *Blood and Crown*, I argue, involves the poor infrastructure of Indonesian film archiving, the persistent dichotomy of popular and non-popular forms of

art, and the unfortunate fate of a commercially unsuccessful popular film adapted from a commercially successful canonical novel. The topic of film archiving and restoration has largely been untouched by scholars of Indonesian film, including, but not limited to, Karl Heider (1991), Krishna Sen (1994), Kartika van Heeren (2012), Ben Murtagh (2013), and Ariel Heryanto (2014). If they are discussed at all, archiving and restoration are just mentioned as problems and have not yet been discussed as factors. It is my contention that both have played as significant a role as other film sectors not only in the disappearance of *Blood and Crown* but also in the impasse of Indonesian film adaptation and studies.

There are so far two notable institutions for archiving and restoring Indonesian films, namely Sinematek and Jakarta Prima Digital. Sinematek was established by Misbach Biran, a film researcher, and Asrul Sani, a film director, on 20 October 1975 (Krismantari 2012). Sinematek was the first film archive in Southeast Asia and the only one in the country until just recently. Afterwards, Jakarta governor Ali Sadikin provided regular funds from the city's budget and helped the archive to obtain a financial support from the Ministry of Information (Setiawati 2012). The archive was formally taken over by the Usmar Ismail Foundation, also headed by Biran, in 1995 (Setiawati 2012). Unfortunately, a 2001 regulation prohibited the government from allocating funds for non-profit organisations, leading the archive to becoming underfunded. Although the Indonesian government allocated Rp 10 billion (approximately GBP 500,000) to build a new building in 2008, Adi Pranajaya, the head of Sinematek, said 'it would be useless to have a new building without the proper management and a solution to the operational problems' (Lutfia 2008: par. 10).

As of 2012, Sinematek continued to struggle with financial problems; of the estimated Rp 320 million (GBP 16,000) needed to properly store the films in its care and repair damaged reels, it only received a budget of Rp 48 million (GBP 2400) (Goan 2012). Its seventeen staff were paid under Rp 1 million a month (around GBP 50). The operation at the archive slowed down to the point that the founder urged the government to take it over (Setiawati 2012: par. 29). Sinematek continues to focus on archiving rather than restoration because the latter needs more skilled staff and a lot of financing. Film restorations, such as of Usmar Ismail's *Lewat Jam Malam* (1954), were entirely funded and carried out by foreign institutions (Siregar 2012). The archive has also had the legendary director's 1956 film *Tiga Dara* restored in the Netherlands (Goan 2012).

There are now a few Indonesian private companies competing for film archiving and restoration, one of which is Jakarta Prima Digital (henceforth JPD). JPD was founded in 2012 but its owner has been in the film industry for more than thirty years (Harahap 2016a). As a business, it has a competitive edge over Sinematek Indonesia as well as their direct competitors. It began with seven people in the Fatmawati Area, Jakarta and moved to a six-story building in the Kebayoran Lama Area. As of 2016, it employed thirty skilled staff working in several departments such as Repair, Scan, Audio Repair, Preset-Plugins, Manual Repair, Subtitle, Quality Control, and Mastering. At the beginning, all of the machinery was purchased from a foreign vendor but this has now been combined with equipment made by JPD themselves. In total, there are around seven hundred films in JPD's archive, four hundred of which are fully owned by the company, while the rest are licensed from the producers (Harahap 2016b). As of March 2016, eighty films had been fully restored. JPD has just signed a contract with Flik TV, a channel under paid Indihome TV, to screen the restored films so that they can be enjoyed by the wider public (Harahap 2016c). This contract has naturally generated a large amount of revenue for JPD, which will enable them to find, archive, restore, and distribute more films.

JPD claims that it is now ready to compete with foreign companies in terms of speed and quality. The reason is, however, appalling as well as revealing. According to Edwin Theisalia, the Technical Manager, foreign companies are used to working with films with approximately twenty percent damage whereas most Indonesian films suffer from ninety percent damage (Harahap 2016c). To put this into perspective, *Catatan Si Boy* (1987) and *Saur Sepuh* (1988), the most popular films of the military era, are the most damaged collections that they have (Harahap 2016b). It might be surprising that relatively newer films also badly need restoration. *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), the undisputed symbol of the Indonesian film revival in the 2000s, has been undergoing restoration due to poor storage. If the more popular and newer titles suffer from negligence, *Blood and Crown* would have no better chance. This, I think, is one reason why film adaptations are rarely re-adapted in Indonesia. If filmmakers never watch or hear about a film adaptation, the possibility of a re-adaptation of that work is understandably very low. When a re-adaptation materialises, there are at times inexplicable discontinuities between that adaptation and the earlier version because the second adapter basically works from scratch. In turn, this does not help researchers and Indonesian adaptation studies.

The poor base structure of film archiving and restoration is one possible reason why *Blood and Crown* is missing. Nevertheless, as Marnie Hughes Warrington (2007) states: 'preservation is not determined solely by the longevity of media. More important, arguably, are human decisions' (191-2). The disappearance of the adaptation may owe to the superstructure of Indonesian film archiving, particularly the dominant perspectives on "popular" film (adaptation), the categories to which it is discursively grouped.[2]

Just as in the West, there have been continuing debates concerning popular and non-popular forms of art in Indonesia although it started relatively late in the 1980s. They began in Indonesian literary circles and later were continued by film communities.[3] Nevertheless, there are marked differences between the literary and film debates. First, the participants in the film debates were fewer and less diverse because the country was then lacking film scholars and critics.[4] Second, the film debates were less well-known because they rarely come outside of film circles. What came out in mass media were mostly film reviews. Literary debates, however, have been dominating the "cultural pages" in Indonesian newspapers and magazines since the pre-independence era. Third, at least judging from the available academic writings, prominent Indonesian film critics, particularly Misbach Biran, were quite hostile toward the growth of popular/commercial films.

The problem is that the film critic Misbach Biran is the same person who founded and led Sinematek for more than 25 years (1975-2001). This, I argue, has significantly influenced the Indonesian film archiving. Once a director, Misbach Biran quitted the profession in the 1970s and focused on archiving because he was disappointed with what he saw as the commercialisation of Indonesian cinema (Krismantari 2012). He further rejected films made by Chinese Indonesians in the colonial and early Independence eras as pioneering Indonesian films because he believed that they were only focused on making money (Biran 2009: 45). One can only imagine what kind of collections he and his staff preferred to search for and store in Sinematek. This might not be a major problem, if the institution had abundant resources because, in that situation, it could acquire both (what it deemed to be) popular and non-popular films. Yet, when resources were limited, as Sinematek was experiencing, it was compelled to prioritise and its priority evidently was what it considered non-popular films. Therefore, it restored *Lewat Jam Malam*, a film made for a festival by Usmar Ismail, the official father of Indonesian Cinema, rather than popular films from the same era.

The binary opposition of popular/non-popular forms of art appears to resonate in Indonesian film adaptation and studies. Hitherto, I have not found any Indonesian film adaptation that is considered to have surpassed the cultural status of its source text (mainly novels). When a non-popular novel is adapted into a non-popular film, it usually garners a critical reception but never to the point that the adaptation is considered better than the novel. Usually, this type of adaptation also does poorly in the box office, which can be seen, for instance, from the cases of *Atheis* (1974), *Max Havelaar* (1975), and *Sang Penari* (2011). When a popular novel is adapted into a popular film, it may or may not receive a critical reception but it will typically succeed in the market. This can be seen from *Pacar Ketinggalan Kereta* (1989), *Taksi* (1990), and *Laskar Pelangi* (2008) which won many awards as well as public attention. Due to their critical and/or commercial success, these adaptations can easily be found in Indonesian film centres and sellers.

In both cases above, adaptation is seen as a "tolerable" bastardisation and therefore does not create uproar. Controversies usually take place when a non-popular literary work is adapted or depoliticised, so to speak, into a popular film. This can be seen, for instance, from the case of *Roro Mendut* (1982), a film adaptation of Y. B. Mangunwijaya's novel with the same title. The novel is based on an old Javanese folk tale in which Roro Mendut and her lover Pronocitro commit suicide as their love is thwarted by Tumenggung Wiroguno, a Javanese lord who defeats the Pati region and takes away Roro Mendut as one of his war spoils. Mangunwijaya created a different ending in his novel in which the lovers die together on Wiroguno's dagger as a sign of optimism and resistance to power. The filmmakers preferred the folk tale ending, which created a hot debate with the novelist who saw it as a commercialisation.

Another example is *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* (2013), which created a controversy simply because of its poster. The Minang ethnic group accused the poster of "rape" against Hamka's novel because the character of Hayati is a strongly religious Minang girl and thus would never wear an open dress as on the poster. This kind of adaptation is normally not successful in the Indonesian Film Festival. Nevertheless, these "black sheep" of Indonesian film adaptations can easily be found and/or purchased due to their commercial success. *Blood and Crown*, another black sheep of Indonesian cinema, has attracted condemnation like *Roro Mendut* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck,* but it did not

succeed commercially like its counterparts. While a successful black sheep tends to be forgiven and celebrated, a failed black sheep is totally forgotten.

The fate of Indonesia adaptation studies is quite similar to that of film adaptations. The discipline is not well-known and far less established than literary studies, which has been around since the Dutch colonisers introduced education to indigenous people in the late nineteenth century. There is no research centre and/or resource centre focusing on this hybrid discipline, nor are there any journals, conferences, seminars, or other academic forums in Indonesia. Accordingly, it is still difficult to find this subject when one browses books, theses, and dissertations in Indonesian universities, including the top colleges in humanities. It is naturally far more challenging to find Indonesian adaptation studies in international publications. Out of the few available studies in Indonesian, most still deal with formal rather than sociological aspects of adaptation such as those by Umilia Rokhani (2008), Diki Mutaqin (2016), and Ayu Wardhani (2013). Last but most relevant, most of the studies still focus on critically acclaimed or commercially successful adaptations and none discuss a critical and commercial failure such as *Blood and Crown*, which I attempt to do in the following section.

Exploring the surviving script

The circumstances as described above often compel researchers to reconstruct missing films based on the available secondary resources. In *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*, for instance, Khrisna Sen (1994) reconstructs the missing works of Bachtiar Siagiaan, a left-wing film director during the Sukarno era, based on the surviving script, reviews and interviews, and the director's theoretical writings, as left-wing films were thoroughly wiped out by the military apparatus. One of the immediate problems with reconstructing *Blood and Crown* was, however, the scarcity of secondary sources. What I had in the beginning, despite my persistent search since 2014, was only a JPEG-formatted poster of the film given to me by a film enthusiast from Medan, Sumatera, and the passing remarks from the critics of the second film adaptation. With a pure stroke of luck, I managed to secure the screenplay of *Blood and Crown*, freshly microfiched by Library of Congress, in March 2016.

In this section, I will analyse the first adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel based on the surviving script and other relevant sources. In particular, I wish to show how the screenplay embodies 'the politics of depoliticisation' in Indonesian cinema which Sen

mentions but does not clearly define in her book. According to Jacques Ranciere (1992), 'depoliticisation is the oldest task in politics' and politics is basically a competition between two essential activities: depoliticising and repoliticising (19). Matthew Flinders and Matt Wood (2014), in 'Depoliticisation, governance and the state', define depoliticisation as 'attempts to stifle or diffuse conflict' and repoliticisation as 'the emergence and intensification of friend-enemy conflict' (139).[5] They operate in both obviously politically biased arenas (such as state, government, and parliament) and ostensibly politically neutral realms (such as culture, literature, and cinema).

There are three primary forms of depoliticisation and repoliticisation: governmental, societal, and discursive (Wood and Flinders 2014). Governmental depoliticisation generally refers to the transfer of governmental power from elected politicians to professionals, experts, or specialists. In the case of Indonesia, this is represented by the (forced) transfer of power from elected politicians to military professionals during the military era. Societal depoliticisation involves roles performed by the media (including film companies), corporations, and social organisations in demoting social issues to individual affairs, such as demoting poverty as problems of individual talent and perseverance rather than those of social injustice. Finally, when certain issues are thoroughly repressed and/or considered normal, natural, or permanent by means of language and discourse (including novels and films), this process is identified as discursive depoliticisation. This is, I argue, best represented, in different ways, by both the novel and the adaptation in the current study. Governmental, societal, and discursive politicisation are the opposites or counter-processes, so to speak, of those types of depoliticisation. Depoliticisation, politicisation, and their primary forms are highly interdependent and at times overlapping as the following analysis will show.

The screenplay consists of 121 scenes while, per its filmography, the film lasts for 96 minutes. The narrative of the first film can be divided into three stages, namely, 1) Srintil's and her boyfriend's childhoods, 2) their resistance towards the exploitation of the tradition, and 3) their liberation. There are three important subject matters in the screenplay, namely, religion/tradition, crime/juvenile delinquency, and social disparity/reform. These subjects traverse the three-stage script as well as embodying the depoliticisation and politicisation in the text and beyond.

The first stage: What seems missing immediately from the first stage of *Blood and Crown* is the personal background of Srintil and Rasus, her boyfriend. It is not revealed why Srintil is living only with her grandfather, Sakarya. As for Rasus, it is only mentioned that he comes from another area. Thus, the film suppresses what unites and at the same time disunites these two children. As told in the novel, Rasus' parents were killed by a poisonous coconut presscake, a poor man's food, unknowingly made and sold by Srintil's parents, who also ate it and died to prove their innocence. It is not immediately clear why this is missing in the film but this could be related to the infamous case of coconut presscake poisoning in Java throughout the 1970-1980s, in which hundreds of people were killed.[6] Although the poisoning in the story takes place in the pre-military setting, the military regime could have been concerned that this story would be associated with the more recent tragedy. This case embarrassed the military regime because it undermined its claim to have brought prosperity and equality to all people of Indonesia. The exclusion, or self-exclusion, of this background is perhaps the most traditional form of discursive depoliticisation because it relies on official state apparatus (in the case of official censorship) or fear (self-censorship).

In general, the script does not contain as much religious content as the novel but is less secular than the second film. The religion in question is a local belief called *Kejawen* or Kejawenism, which 'encompasses many non-Islamic elements, especially mysticism and respect for local spirits' (Cribb and Kahin 2005). In a nutshell, this film tells about how Kejawenism is exploited by some strong persona inside (Mr. Kartareja, the spiritual leader of the village) and outside (Sulam, a thug, and Dower, a juvenile delinquent) the community of belief for their personal benefit at the expense of the weak members of the community (Srintil, Sakarya, and Rasus). Although criticised by Rasus, no alternative discourse to that of Kejawenism is offered. There is neither a mention of Islam nor a subtle reference to it as there is in the novel. This is not surprising because at the time, Islam, even the novelist's moderate brand of it, was still considered the second biggest threat after Communism by the military regime. Kejawenism, on the other hand, was generally considered apolitical and harmless.

The Srintil of the film fulfils the archetype of 'damsel in distress' and, to some extent, goes further than that. To start with, she is too different from her surroundings just as a princess in the middle of a forest (Snow White) or in the kitchen (Cinderella). Srintil is supposed to be Javanese-looking or, for that matter, "rural-looking". Yet, the character is

played by a famous Indo-Eurasian actress of the 1980s: Enny Beatrice. Beatrice is only one of many Indo-Eurasian actresses who have become the standard of beauty and dominated Indonesian films and television shows. As Rosalind Hewett states in an interview:

> "They tend to be associated with stardom and success, and people in cross-cultural relationships like me tend to be told that our children are destined for television," [...].
>
> "Talent agents have even approached the parents of pre-primary school aged children in malls and on the streets in Indonesia, purely because of how they look."

(Cranston 2015: par. 15)

This Indo-Eurasian standard of beauty is not exclusive to females, but is also found in male casts. Rasus, the main male character in the film, is also played by an Indo-Eurasian actor: Ray Sahetapy.

Several critics have discussed the domination of Indo-Eurasian actors in relation to post-colonialism, such as Virginia Hooker (1993), Laurie Sears (1996), and Rosalind Hewett (2015). The casting reflects the ambivalent attitude of the Indonesian post-colonial subjects to the old and new western empires. On the one hand, the military government, followed by the public, regularly talked about the importance of the national identity as opposed to the 'evil and danger of westernisation'. On the other hand, they seemed to have no problem in receiving financial and military support from the western powers and adopting many western standards, including those of beauty. The fact that the government and society silently accepted rather than actively debated this ambivalence is in itself a symptom of depoliticisation.

The second stage: The turning point in the narrative is when Srintil is chosen by Kartareja as a new ronggeng and lured to give up her virginity in the bidding contest as part of her initiation (locally called *Buka Klambu*, literally "opening the curtain"). So innocent is she that Srintil is completely unaware of her distressful situation. It is Rasus, a male character, who makes her realise her situation as well as initiating and executing her liberation. Far more than the novel, the first adaptation fits what Felicia Hughes-Freeland (2008) calls the 'New Order's representational patterns of female experience' in that it pictures 'the female dancer as a victim who can only be saved by the agency of males' (145).

Furthermore, Srintil also fulfils a common representation of women in military-era cinema as identified by Sen (1994):

> Dozens of films in which female presence dominated the screen were drawn to my attention. My point, however, is not that women are absent, but indeed that they are emphatically presented to be seen, and so that the film is seen (sold). Some genres of Indonesian films are precisely about seeing the woman, but not about the woman seeing or speaking (134).

Although her presence, or to be precise her sensual body, dominates the screen, Srintil hardly speaks or acts throughout the film. In that manner, her potential as a rebel in the novel is completely repressed. This repression is categorically depoliticising as it reinforces rather than challenges the ruling discourse on good Indonesian women as being reproductive rather than productive, feminine rather than masculine, and silent rather than outspoken (131-156).

Filmmaker Gatot Prakosa suggests that this dominant discourse is a result of Western colonial influence because 'many traditional cultures of Indonesia accept a whole range of combinations of masculine and feminine characteristics' (cited in Sen 1994: 136). [7] What Prakosa criticises is the binary opposition that has characterised the western thought for ages, including the discourses of colonialism/orientalism, such as west versus east, western women versus eastern women, and outspoken versus silent. Ironically, post-colonial powers like the masculine military regime, and the filmmakers, made use of these colonial discourses rather than opposing them because, as their ex-colonisers had found earlier, these discourses were useful for subduing their subjects, particularly women. This is a case of what I call "double depoliticisation", whereby an issue was depoliticised by the empires and, later, the post-colonial powers for similar and/or complementary purposes.

The presented-to-be-seen mode is most obvious in films centred on prostitution, in which filmmakers could safely expose and sell female sexuality. The Board of Film Censorship was lenient towards this kind of film because the exposed women were prostitutes and thus an example of what Indonesian women must avoid. *Blood and Crown* could be considered one of those films, mainly due to the strong association between ronggeng and prostitution. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the screenplay does not significantly embellish the sexual content of the novel as the critics suggest about the film. Aside from Srintil's erotic dancing, sexual scenes only take place when Dower the juvenile

delinguent is about to rape Srintil, and when Sulam the thug is having sex with an unnamed married woman from Paruk. The former confirms Heider's (1991) general hypothesis of sexuality in Indonesian cinema, that is, it should be framed as "sadism [or] rape" (66). Yet, the latter specifically reinforces the novel's denigration of Paruk's free sexuality, as it portrays the open marriage practice in the community, which the novel condemns. This can be seen in Sulam's scene with a woman of Paruk:

> Sulam is opening his clothes while there is a kebaya of a woman on the floor. Sulam is smiling at the woman sitting on the bed. The woman is releasing her corset, her body is supple and her gesture is provocative:
>
> Sulam : Your husband is kind, letting her wife stay overnight here.
> But I don't know if his wife is as kind ...
> Paruk Woman : All women of Paruk only have one wish, how to satisfy herself and him who wants her.
>
> (Riyadi et al. 1982: 32, my trans.)

In general, the discursive representation of sexuality in the script is depoliticising because it merely supports rather than challenges the dominant discourse of sexuality in the novel and the military era. Furthermore, as the critics suggest about the film, it helps divert attention from the more political content of the book.

Nevertheless, judging by the low intensity of the sexual representations in the script, it is likely that the real diversion came from outside the scriptwriting division. The screenplay was jointly written by three screenwriters: Rachmat Ryadi, Satmowi Atmowiloto, and Eddy Suhendro. All of them were then young writers and *Blood and Crown* was either their first or second screenplay. The novelist said in a seminar in 2016 that he was quite satisfied with the script and knew the writers personally. Yet, he lamented that, in the film making, the director was the decision maker, thus implicitly accusing Yazman Yazid in regard to the sexualisation of the first adaptation. It is quite easy to agree with Tohari's accusation because Yazid is known to have directed many Indonesian sex comedies, which regularly exploit the female body. Nevertheless, if one looks at his filmography closely, he made those films long after the production of *Blood and Crown*, which was only his second film. In fact, his first film was an award-winning sex-less drama on child psychology.[8]

The director of cinematography, however, was a much more experienced figure in the film industry and a veteran of sex comedies. Before *Blood and Crown*, Anthony Depary had shot eight films, most of which were sex comedy flicks such as *Inem Pelayan Sexy 2*, *Karminem*, and *Jalal Kawin Lagi* (1977). Similarly, Bambang Trilaksono was a seasoned artistic director with sixteen films under his belt by 1983. His *Kutukan Nyai Roro Kidul* (1979) was one of the most sexual films of that era. Before *Blood and Crown*, he was involved in the production of a sex comedy entitled *Hidung Belang Kena Batunya* (1982). Josephus Adisubrata, a journalist turned film producer, might have played a key role in the sexualisation of the film. Before 1983, he produced one to two films a year and all of them consistently won national awards, which in Indonesia would not normally be given to sexual films. In 1983, however, he suddenly released four films with the same genre of prostitution, namely, *Blood and Crown*, *Kadarwati*, *Johanna*, and *Yang*. Moreover, he employed the same screenwriters for all four films. This production increase, genre selection, and labour efficiency indicate a strong commercialisation push by the producer and his production company, Gramedia Film.

Due to the absence of the Communists, the other antagonists become marked in the adaptation. Sulam represents the thugs, known locally as *preman*, who live off small-time crime like extortion. As portrayed in the documentary *The Act of Killing* (2015), the military used the thugs from the beginning of its reign, initially to kill the Communists and later to hit anyone critical of the establishment. The end goal was to make the terror appear as a horizontal (people vs people) rather than a vertical (people vs government) conflict. Nevertheless, the relations grew weary at the beginning of the 1980s because the thugs grew out control, 'taking crime into a new, organized, and supra-local realm' (Barker 1998: 11). The military regime began to politicise the thugs, originally a social problem, as a threat to the national security. In particular, this governmental politicisation of the thugs provided a pretext to a campaign of mysterious killings, which began exactly the year of the film's screening. Paramilitary forces hunted down and murdered recidivists and others considered by the state apparatus to be habitual criminals.

It should be noted that the scriptwriters felt it necessary to mention that Dawuan Market, Sulam's domain of power, is far from the city and control of the police. Military-era films were not allowed to undermine the authority and capability of law enforcement. To

show that blatant extortion took place while law enforcement officers were around would surely have betrayed this guideline. This can be seen from the following dialogue:

Vegetables Seller	: Doing business here is difficult ...
Chillies Seller	: But where else can we go?
Vegetables Seller	: Why is there no market other than this Dawuan Market?
Chillies Seller	: How about moving to the city? It's secure, the police are there.
Vegetables Seller	: You're crazy! It takes two-days-and-two-nights walking to reach the city. My vegetables will be rotten by the time I sell them.

(Riyadi et al. 1982: 32, my trans.)

In the novel and the second film, Dawuan is a city. Not only does it have the police but it also has a military headquarters, which not every city in Indonesia has. This village-isation of Dawuan reflects a particular attitude toward the city and village during the military era, which will be made clearer by the ending of the film.

Meanwhile, Dower represents one of the illegitimate children of the regime. The regime's materialistic developmentalism, combined with a lack of political channels, brought into being rebellious yet apolitical juveniles.[9] In terms of perceived threats, rebellious teenagers were nothing compared to the Communists and thugs. The regime concurrently politicised and depoliticised the issue of juvenile delinquency. In their comments in mass media, government officers regularly politicised it as a product of westernisation. At the same time, juvenile delinquency as a side effect of the regime's capitalism and political repression was thoroughly supressed. Instead, government apparatus demoted the issue as a social or individual crisis and preached the importance of religion and family in facing this problem.[10] This is governmental and societal depoliticisation, at once, because the supposedly governmental responsibility is being transferred to social and individual hands.

The characterisation of the hero of the film is typical and unique at the same time. On the one hand, just like typical social reformers of rural communities in the military-era film, Rasus is an outsider. He is not a native son of the village. Therefore, he is criticising the sexual practice in the village from the very beginning, without having to experience an 'enlightenment' from the city as the same character in the novel and the second adaptation:

Darsun	: You will never understand, Rasus, because you are not the offspring of people from this area. Every offspring of Kyai Secamanggala understands, including myself.
	All people of Paruk respect a ronggeng, moreover his spirit wants her ...
Rasus	: But Kyai is long dead. He won't be able to do anything again.
Darsun	: He is dead, but his spirit still exists. His spirit still protects this village. All his offspring believe in this, Rasus. He was the patriarch of Paruk village. He will always be here to protect his offspring.
Rasus	: I don't believe it.

<div align="right">(Riyadi et al. 1982: 20, my trans.)</div>

In many ways, *Blood and Crown*, particularly through the actions of Rasus, falls outside of the category of political drama and falls into a local action genre called *silat*.[11] Normally, in silat films, a distressed main character will be saved by a hermit and coached physically, mentally, and spiritually before he comes back for revenge. But this does not happen with Rasus in the film. He is already "made" and preparing his revenge in the jungle all on his own. His exploits in the jungle might easily remind the spectators of the adventure of John Rambo in *Rambo: First Blood* (1982), which gained immense popularity in Indonesia and happened to be released one year before *Blood and Crown*. *Rambo* itself is a depoliticising film not only in that it portrays the Vietnam War as a theatre of American individual heroism instead of an international political conflict with ugly manoeuvres, but also because it represses the deep division and profound crisis within the American population.

Juxtaposing Vietnam War films and their Second World War predecessors, Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud (1990) find that many Vietnam War films repress internal conflicts in soldier communities. While internal conflicts within a group of American soldiers under combat conditions were a constant element of Second World War films, these differences were employed to 'make the point that only by working together could Americans hope to defeat their common enemies' (5). In Vietnam films like *Platoon* (1986)

and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), working together is not presented as a realistic model. Internal divisions among American fighting men now cause violence and death, and this implies the lack of purpose about the war and the depth of social disintegration. Fighting alone, as Rambo does, becomes a viable option to obscure those challenges. In a similar fashion, Rasus has to fight Sulam and his gang alone although he clearly has followers in Paruk, particularly the youngsters. The New Order government would not allow cinematic representations of group conflicts because these might have suggested a social disorder rather than a mere crime.

Dittmar and Michaud (1990) further identify certain types of films that appeared in the post-Second World War era but are curiously absent from the post-Vietnam War period, including the "command level" or the "big picture" films. Those films were meant to help audiences understand and accept the sacrifices of American soldiers within the larger context of overcoming the global, ideological and territorial ambition of the Axis powers. Yet, precisely because this model would inevitably reveal America's own global ambition during the Vietnam War, the big picture remains off-screen. Many Vietnam War films, including *Rambo*, 'place themselves squarely at ground level, focusing on the situation of men in combat' (1990: 6). Comparably, most Indonesian silat films like *Blood and Crown* focused on fighting scenes to avoid the bigger questions such as the government's developmentalism, which created the materialistic Kartarejas, the thugs, and the delinguents.

Another American crisis being repressed by Vietnam films like *Rambo* is, as John Hellmann (1991) and Frank Sweeney (1999) identify, the crisis of identity. American society was seen to become over-dependent on technology and saw it as both a guardian and saviour of American values. However, the Vietnam War showed that technology, especially the American extensive firepower, was, in the words of Rambo himself, 'the god that failed' and an instrument of bureaucracy that betrayed American soldiers. To deal with the painful loss of the war and, no less importantly, their identity, Rambo rekindles a more primordial American identity: the frontier heroes. Much of his lack of weaponry and survivalism underlines the film's re-appropriation of this myth. *Blood and Crown* and other 1980s silat films were facing a similar crisis. The society understood that the government's developmentalism had created excesses and, to deal with them, they revived the dying myth of *pendekar* or traditional fighters.

When all of these Hollywood depoliticising discourses were appropriated into an already depoliticised local film, what occurred was another instance of double depoliticisation. It is noteworthy that the screenwriters suppressed the relation between this main character and the military although in the first book of the trilogy Rasus had already worked as an office boy in the military headquarters. Establishing this relation in the film would have potentially created a set of unnecessary challenges for the filmmakers. One of them is that it would compel the filmmaker to include the military on-screen, not to mention the challenge of portraying Rasus as good enough but not as good as the military. In any case, for filmmakers at the time, it was always wise to avoid any representation of the military unless the military-controlled State Film Corporation made the film itself.

The third stage: The most striking difference between the novel and the first film seems to rely on the final stage. In the script, the damsel in distress is successfully kidnapped and saved by the prince charming in the night of Buka Klambu so that she is free from the culturally sanctioned rape. Such a happy ending is not only given to please the audience but was also officially required by the censors (Sen 1994: 70-1). The regime took a sad ending as a political challenge because, as in the case of the poisonous coconut presscakes, it undermined the happy life that the regime claimed it had created in the country. In addition, Srintil does not give her virginity to Rasus as she does in the novel and the second film. While filmmakers might still have filmed a rape under the pretext of educating people on what they must avoid, consensual sex, especially without negative consequences, was strongly discouraged on screen (Heider 1991: 66).

The politicised Sulam and his gank are all killed by Rasus. Just like the regime's massacre of criminals, Rasus' extra-judicial killings are without any consequences. The role played by this coercive depoliticisation is 'to shore up a particular political regime or a particular mode of production' (Barker 2009: 8). As with the fear of the anti-communist retribution, the fear of the anti-preman campaign had the effect of weakening opposition while strengthening the military and the ruling party. Less directly, the depoliticisation had the effect of promoting the integration of the Indonesian economy into the global economy. After all, foreign investments require order and efficiency, which the thugs seemed to threaten mainly through extortion. Elements of the Indonesian oligarchy and the military benefitted greatly from foreign investments in resource extraction, telecommunications, and industry.

The end of the delinquent Dower is very different from that of Sulam and his men. In *deus ex machina* fashion, his father, the head of another village, finds out his intention and arrives at a critical moment when his son is about to rape Srintil. Almost at the end of the film, Kartareja is struck by lightning, which is portrayed as a punishment from the spirit of the founder of the village. There are several significances behind this ending. First of all, this reinforces the (re-) location of religion to the supernatural realm, which is an act of discursive depoliticisation. Second, Kartareja is portrayed as the betrayer of Kejawenism and, by contrast, Srintil and Rasus, the defenders of the religion. The former is wrong because he is politically savvy whereas the latter are right because they are politically innocent. Unlike Kartareja, all of the representatives of the depoliticised Kejawenism survive, including his own wife.

In the end, just as in many films in the military era, *Blood and Crown* champions the city over the village. The hero might not come from the city, as in Indonesian films on social reforms at the time, but he is bringing the damsel in distress to the city. By this point in the story, their enemies in the village have been completely defeated or even killed, so there is no reason to run away to the city. Not only does it reflect the common attitude of military-era films, but it also represents the regime's discourse on city versus village. As described by Graeme Hugo *et al* in *The Demographic Dimension in Indonesian Development* (1988), the regime's developmentalism created many new cities and greatly expanded old ones. Cities were the symbol of its success and pride and at the same time the source of its anxiety and embarrassment. Internally, the regime had to deal with social problems typical of growing urban societies such as crime, social gaps, and slum areas. Externally, it also had to deal with increasing economic, political, and cultural gaps between cities and villages. To close the gaps, however, villages were modelled on cities, not the other way around.

Intan Paramadhita (2011) observes that idealistic filmmakers in the military era often portrayed the city as "a site of social/economic disjuncture and moral contradiction produced by Suharto's developmentalist paradigm" (500). At times, the filmmakers used retuning to, and even telling life in, the countryside as a subtle criticism towards the regime's developmentalism. By contrast, the State Film Corporation and commercial producers took the city as "a visual marker of national progress and modernity" (501). Going to/after the city thus signalled an agreement or at least a non-hostile attitude toward the government. This kind of depiction was also often used in films to deal with traditional

cultures which were deemed irrelevant and obstructive toward the progress of the era (Sen 1994: 121). The latter attitude is well represented in *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, which was intended by its filmmakers and dismissed by its critiques as a popular/commercial film. This representation is also closely related to the notion of discursive depoliticisation because it discursively suppresses the ugly faces of the military's cities.

Conclusion

In this article, I have identified the reasons *Blood and Crown* has been marginalised and forgotten, and why it is now missing, as well as reconstructed the missing film based on the surviving script. The disappearance of the film adaptation is due to the poor infrastructure of Indonesian film archiving, the dichotomy of popular and non-popular film adaptations, and the neglect of critically and commercially unsuccessful film adaptations. The surviving screenplay offers many cases of depoliticisation i.e. 'attempts to stifle or diffuse conflict' (Flinders and Wood 2014: 139). The depoliticisations in the text embody the depoliticisation of critical issues in the public and government arenas such as political religion, rebellious women, supra-local crime, and social discontent. Last but not least, the script also presents several instances of double depoliticisation, particularly through its appropriations of American *Rambo*, whereby an issue is depoliticised by the empires and post-colonial powers for similar and/or complementary purposes.

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Notes

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[1] For a historical background of the conflict between the army, PKI, and Sukarno, see Roosa (2006)

[2] What I mean by popular here refers to "its accessibility and immediate appeal to a large number of people" (Heryanto 2014: 15)

[3] See, for instance, Heryanto (1985)

[4] A modern film school was only established in 1976 (Paramadhita 2011: 501).

[5] The approach has been used elsewhere by Setiawan (2016) to analyse a post-military Indonesian adaptation

[6] See Shurtleff and Aoyagi (2011)

[7] See also Murtagh 2013: 6-7

[8] For the most complete database of Indonesian cinema, see http://filmindonesia.or.id/

[9] Juvenile delinquency was one of the favourite themes of Indonesian films in the military era, including film adaptations (Heider 1991: 43).

[10] See Thong (2011: 135-7)

[11] In general, silat is 'used for the Indonesian versions of the general East Asian martial arts' (Heider 1991: 39).

Blood and Crown

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