Introduction | PEMUDA FEVER

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AN ACTIVIST'S DIARY

Today Jakarta is really terrifying following the "Trisakti Tragedy" that killed 6 university students and made them into Reformasi Heroes.[1] After-effects rippled, riots breaking out from crowds gone amok all over Jakarta. . . . I witnessed a tragedy, moving, saddening, [I was] understanding, angry, anxious, agitated, even afraid! From Sabang to Merauke, the archipelago grieves . . . Jakarta, 14 May 1998.

Jakarta is crippled. . . .

On the evening of the 15th at the Museum of Struggle '45 the Work Forum [Forum Kerja] held a press conference. Arby Sanit and some other intellectuals attended.[2] I was only there briefly, I didn't know what a Work Forum was. An Assembly of the People's Will has also been founded, and who knows what else with what name? Jakarta, 16 May 1998.

The political temperature is rising. . . . Jakarta, 19 May 1998.

Today launches a new history. At 9:05–9:06 AM this morning Soeharto resigned from his presidency . . . The Reform struggle will never end. The Reform struggle will always come and will always be. Today is a new history. And in the future we will still push back against all challenges. Jakarta, 21 May 1998.[3]

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In May 1998, the events and efforts that unseated the dictator Suharto escalated very quickly. Student-led mass demonstrations across the nation, months of economic instability since the Asian Economic Crisis had hit in 1997, elite desertion, public backlash against state killings of students, and the violence of the May Riots in Jakarta (May 13–14) shook the foundations of the once undefeated New Order military regime (1966–1998). The movement that toppled Suharto on May 21, 1998, was called "Reformasi" (Reformation). This book is concerned with the role and repercussions of the Indonesian student movement that claimed a special responsibility for Reformasi, becoming the de facto representative and mediator of Indonesia's transition to democracy.

Students were at the forefront of Reformasi. Those killed in violent protests became martyrs and Reform heroes (*pahlawan Reformasi*), and those who survived became pioneers (*pelopor*) of Indonesian democracy. Over the course of a decade, I met many youth who had participated in, witnessed, or were inspired by the student movement that took over the streets of Indonesia in 1998, launching the movement that heralded Indonesia's entry into the "third wave" of democracy. Some identified themselves as *mahasiswa*, university students, while others identified themselves as *pemuda*, youth. They were united under the term *aktivis* (activist), a term made popular by Reformasi.[4] Before 1998, activists forged underground networks within and without the country, communicating with sympathetic foreign groups, finding compatriots at other university campuses, securing patrons, and becoming advocates for politically sensitive environmental, peasant, labor, and indigenous rights movements that often met with state-sponsored violence. After 1998, activists became adept at being seen and heard, organizing media spectacles and large-scale demonstrations, and making use of the divergent careers of friends, former activists, and sympathizers who now populated civil society and media structures. Activists were democracy's subjects par excellence. I was fascinated by the cultural creativity and political machinations of the loud and often fragmented *pro-dem* (prodemocracy) groups who were marginal to power yet maintained a disproportionate visibility in national politics. My anthropological interest in street politics and student activism began in earnest in 2002, and in 2003–2005 I carried out an eighteen-month stretch of fieldwork in Jakarta and other major cities, walking and talking with former and present university students and activists. Much of this ethnography centers on the capital city of Jakarta, yet what I describe will resonate in some way or another with other university towns and cities drawn into the street politics and mass movements of Reform.

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Subsequent visits to the field each year allowed me to observe the long-term political involvement of Reformasi-era youth amid Indonesia's democratic growths and setbacks.

This book is about the lifeworld of the activist and the political implications of being young in Indonesia. It gestures toward youthful idealism at the same time that it describes the contradictions of "actually existing democracy" (Brenner and Theodore 2002). For sociological reasons of habitus, education, economy, and life-stage, youth have found a place in Indonesian politics and social movements. For historical and cultural reasons, youth pursue a populist claim on the nation, a claim that is strengthened by the "magic of the state"—the talismans, rituals, and elements of political efficacy that repeat and validate their claim (Taussig 1997). Unlike studies that have viewed democracy through the study of electoral politics, political institutions, mass organizations, and demonstrations in public space, thus overly emphasizing the demarcation between public and private, this book traces Indonesia's youthful culture of democracy through its concentrated, spatial, sensuous, ephemeral, and material forms. I present activism as lived experience to show how the intensity of political life bridges public and private domains, and individual and collective memories. The intertwining of history and memory plays a large part in fueling nationally inflected social movements in Indonesia. I name the invocation of youth spirit in the present age "pemuda fever" to describe how historical legacies infuse the present with urgency and legitimacy, naturalizing what often appear to be radical and disruptive thoughts and actions. However, activists are only one part of a broader set of political phenomena. Their creative and adaptive techniques of resistance world the world of the activist with lasting political outcomes, chief among which is the longevity of youth politics in Indonesia. In this book, I explore why and how social movements endure, how political identifications between individuals and the collective are achieved, and how contentious politics tap into rich veins of existing political tradition without veering into tradition for its own sake. As Asef Bayat argues in his study of youth "nonmovements" in the Middle East, revolutions are not planned; rather, they arise out of the alignment of youth resistance and already existing collective sentiment, often in urban centers (Bayat 2013a).

What produces and sustains youth activism? In what ways can our understanding of social movements be deepened by a turn to historical memory? Reformasi-style activism has been remarkably long lasting, despite the emergence of what Jessica Greenberg calls the "politics of disappointment" that often befall revolutionaries after the revolution is over (Greenberg 2014). I considered myself lucky that my research on the memories of 1998 took place

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in an unexpectedly lively time, among political actors who had not given up on Reformasi even after their main enemies, Suharto and the military, had formally retreated from politics. When I began my fieldwork, many activists were hopeful that the student movement, and by extension other politicized groups, would keep the tradition set by Reformasi politics alive, even in the transformed conditions of post-Reformasi Indonesia.

These activists' hopes had a strong foundation in everyday urban life. NGO and student-organized activities such as film screenings, discussions, and training sessions reminded students of their important historical and political role in Indonesian society. Off-campus and campus-based organizations at the local and national levels cemented the link between current students and their Reformasi-era seniors, as did campus commemorations and remembrance marches that recalled the student killings of 1998–1999. A feeling of closeness to the center arose from proximity to sympathetic politicians, intellectuals, and revered cultural figures in the capital city, such as former president Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid) and the literary icon Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who in their final years still attended civil society events and charmed the young crowd with their cynical wit and insider view of Indonesia's epochal changes. On the streets, demonstrations persisted, while the visual culture of student activism transformed revolution into a youthful style that could be worn and circulated with ease. These informal and institutionalized linkages between youth and politics point to the public forms that Indonesia's culture of democracy and civic participation take—a cross between "the politics of fun" (Bayat 2013b) and more recognizable acts of political presencing. Youth activism in Indonesia aligns with the observations other scholars have made about the naturalized aspects of youth participation in politics, as a feature of political modernity, as a sign of generalized discontent, and as political subjects hardwired for change and self-empowerment (Bayat 2013b; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Greenberg 2014). Seen in this light, Indonesian youth are "natural" activists, granted a historical right to nationalist politics and a globalized claim to the transcendental logics of contemporary social movements.

Indonesia's well-established culture of demonstration contrasts with other social movements where mass demonstrations have emerged as transitive, climactic, and difficult-to-sustain elements of radical politics, from the networked, embodied, and transnational nature of Occupy (see Appel 2014; Juris 2012) to the crushed dreams of Egypt's short-lived revolution during the Arab Spring. Closer to the mark, but in a far more corrosive context, are the tendentious mass politics that define Thailand's post-Thaksin "ungovernability"

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(Pavin 2014). Indonesian street politics in its post-Reform era serves as an important political institution that is accessible, thinkable, and imbued with populist immediacy. More worrisome are tendencies toward co-optation among former activists and the proliferation of undemocratic elements that mobilize mass demonstration tactics to assert their claim to public space.[5] The ongoing demonstrations during my own period of fieldwork in 2003–2005 had a distracting currency about them, for they spoke doublespeak about the place (and displacement) of activism in the present, in which Reformasi techniques adapted to a new and politically reactive context in fact worked to domesticate progressive activist politics. Under these compromised conditions, I had to find where activism was not only surviving but thriving. I followed activist praxis off the street, into places where subtle and profound changes were taking place, in youth domains where the memories and event-traces of 1998 had settled. These were not the institutions that we assume are fundamental to leftist and secular nationalist student movements, such as the school, the university, and the factory. Instead, my ethnography picks up from a point where the ideological transfer from ordinary youth to "activist youth" has already been made and secured, bypassing these foundational institutions. I bring to light those activist domains that enable social movements to linger, by reproducing student politics and imaginaries in everyday, exceptional, and seemingly apolitical ways, through their clothes, homes, and writings and even in the pleasure of friendship or the outbreak of violence. A recalibrated focus on the ordinary details of activist life shows most succinctly how resistance to the state endured and grew even in the worst of times. Most notably, in these lighter moments, activists would tell me stories, and in doing so, they *remembered*.

Memory is productive. It produces archives, spatial practices, bodies of writing, ways of talking and remembrance. These different sites and practices conjoin and overlap the past with the present, the eventful with the everyday. But Generation 98 did not indulge in unreliable nostalgic lament as a rule. Reformasi memories permeated everyday discourse as a readily available activist narrative of how much things had changed or stood still. They also served as important and authenticating eyewitness correctives to undemocratic attempts at repealing the changes wrought by the Reformasi movement. I became attuned to the presence of memory as an essential part of political discourse, and observed how memories tied to Reformasi, and an even longer-term collective memory about nationalist youth, marked a person's political location, legitimacy, and morality.

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The supplemental excess of memory in post-Reformasi activism enacts what Diana Taylor calls the interplay between the archive and the repertoire, between fixed objects and embodied memory (2003: 19–20). Ironically, Taylor's analytic reverses the strengths of ethnography into a weakness. What I was lacking was not what Taylor considers the neglected domain of repertoire, observed in "scenarios" (demo settings), oral histories, and bodily performances (the act of demonstrating itself), for these filled my fieldnotes, photographs, and videos, but in fact what I lacked was the depth of the archive proper. The ethnographic burden of evidence for a genealogical project on youthful resistance exceeded my fieldnotes and entered a new archival field. Long after fieldwork ended, I found myself in the archives of the International Institute for Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam, poring over the photocopies and original papers of prominent leftist activists who had resisted the New Order state. Writing projects and fellowships (2008–2014) afforded me the chance to visit libraries in the United States and Europe that had diligently acquired the archival matter of the student movement.[6] I matched these documents with my personal collections, which included diaries, T-shirts, drawings, text messages, newspaper clippings, books, magazines, and numerous other fragments that activists shared with me and that until now had lain dormant as field research souvenirs rather than becoming a "site of knowledge production and concept formation, a repository of and generator of social relationships" (Verdery 2014: 5).[7] My research into activist material culture and knowledge production places acts of everyday activism in a synechdochal light. Youth activism is a mode of citation and documentation that strengthens and shapes the role of collective memory in nationalism and political resistance.[8] The activist is a historical-political subject who *feels* historical.

This book introduces the activist subject through the material and ideational elements that characterized everyday activist life in Indonesia. To reflect this classificatory approach to the everyday, the chapters are simply named "Archive," "Street," "Style," "Violence," "Home," and "Democracy." Each chapter showcases unique political amalgamations of Reformasi's globalized moments and older traditions of morality, masculinity, and nationalism. Paper ephemera, the public and political spaces of the street, activists' dwellings, activist style and appearance, as well as practices of violence and democracy come alive as sites and fields distinguished by the regnant activism that affected New Order youth before and after Reformasi. Each domain can be separately read as a cultural artifact, but taken together they form what the novelist Orhan Pamuk has aptly named the dynamic and revisited story of youth—a living "Museum of Innocence" founded in nonstate, ordinary spaces

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that counters the authoritative and instrumental character of the New Order's mausoleum for pemuda history (Pamuk 2010). The book ends with a calculated guess at the student movement's pending historical outcome. The most recent presidential election took place in 2014 amid great tension between resurgent conservative forces and new progressives in Indonesia; not surprisingly, the activists of 1998 have found roles to play there. What would Walter Benjamin's angel of history (1968c: 257–258) say now if he were facing the debris of Reform, piled high to rot in some places while other pieces are lodged like shrapnel in the present time? Which of those prodemocracy activists became weapons for the future, and how many more walked away or sank under the weight of disappointment or remembrance?

GENEALOGIES OF YOUTH

In many ways, Indonesia is a young country, with more than a third of its population classified as youth.[9] In Indonesian, the word for "youth," *pemuda*, has a strong political meaning beyond simply referring to age groups, owing to its distinct nationalist heritage. Pemuda nationalism has served an essential nation-building function since the revolution. It constitutes a distinct series (Foucault 1972: 7) in a twofold way; its genealogical function operates as a lineage system that is the bedrock of an "imagined community" for youth, while its seriality (Anderson 1998b), its very openness to the demands of the political present, authorizes and gives meaning to a range of political enunciations by youth. The influence of each generation lingers long after its time has passed, each becoming the illustrious predecessors to the next generation of youth. The official story of pemuda nationalism begins with the colonial-era Budi Utomo, founded in 1908 and credited as the first indigenous mass organization, followed by the 1928 generation, who declared the nationalist charter of the Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge), crescendoing with the revolutionary youth of 1945, who fought for independence from Dutch colonialism, followed by the students of Generation 66, who allied with the military to overthrow Soekarno's Old Order, and finally, under the repressive management of Suharto's New Order, ends with the mass student protests of Generations 74 and 78.[10]

After 1978 there was a long break in pemuda nationalism's lineage, until it was revived again in 1998 with Reformasi. The pemuda generation of 1998 succeeded against the odds in deposing Suharto's thirty-two-year military dictatorship, given the measures the regime took to suppress its opponents and co-opt pemuda identity.[11] How should we interpret the long pause between the 1978 and 1998 generations? The time gap gives rise to at least two interpretations. First that the New Order state's measures to depoliticize students

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were wildly successful and that pemuda nationalism no longer provided an avenue for youth to participate in national politics in transformative ways—in which case the events of 1998 still need to be explained. Second, one could see the time gap as a period of *undocumented time*, with the events of the 1980s and 1990s still not widely known or integrated into pemuda history. If youth activism, and specifically student activism, continued during this neglected period, how should we understand such acts of resistance in a context of widespread repression? While the post-Reformasi era has brought new questions and doubts to bear upon the true extent of the New Order state's power and control,[12] there was no doubt that the militarized New Order state effectively controlled its population through systemic abuses of power, coercion, and consent.

How did the last generation of New Order youth gain the courage and the tools to rise up against the regime? Who were they before they became Generation 98? Activist youth were a mix of street, urban, rural, middle-class, cosmopolitan, provincial, and progressive men and women who were interpellated, obligated, inspired, and pushed by the demands of pemuda identity. The trajectory of the People's Democratic Party (PRD) activist Faisol Reza is a prime example of how a nationalist-leftist-populist orientation mingled with and eventually became the dominant framework for leftist activists raised in other intellectual and cultural formations. Reza attended an Islamic boarding school in Madura, where he was exposed to scholarly lectures by fellow *santri* (Islamic boarding school students) and developed a keen interest in theater. In high school, his growing "critical spirit" (*spirit kritis*) led him to stage a critical play about the school's administration, whereupon he was threatened with expulsion. When he arrived in Yogyakarta for university in 1992, he enrolled in two prominent institutions, one religious (IAIN Sunan Kaligaja—the State Islamic Institute at Sunan Kalijaga) and one secular (Gadjah Mada University), and became embroiled in city-wide student demonstrations. Reza cites two important books as his true inspiration to become a radical leftist activist, again one religious (Ahmad Wahib's *Revolutions in Islamic Thought*) and the other secular (Soe Hok Gie's *Diary of a Demonstrator*; see chapter 3 for a discussion of Gie).[13] If the middle-class and aspirational terms of university student life blurred the line between religious and secular divides, then pemuda nationalism, more broadly speaking, encompassed Muslim (majority) and non-Muslim (minority) interests, especially in providing a common advocative position toward the underclass *rakyat* (the People). My focus on leftist-secular-nationalist activism in this book acknowledges the popularity

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that these political configurations enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of Suharto's fall.[14] It was notable that several of my informants came from Islamic boarding schools and communities, or had grown up in observant Muslim or Christian families, but formed activist groups that were decidedly secular-nationalist and / or populist-leftist in thought and appearance. In part driven by the cosmopolitan environment of university campuses in large cities in Java, such secular-nationalist choices also revealed the New Order state's intrusion into religious domains. Prior to his public embrace of a more Muslim identity in the early nineties, which observers marked as a decided shift in New Order policy, Suharto had managed potential rivals from both traditional and modernist Islamic groups through a mix of suppression and accommodation. The secular emphasis of the New Order state disarmed the mobilizing capacity of religious groups critical of the regime in the years leading up to Reformasi. Similarly, the effacement of political Islam in the mainstream student movement reflects the minor role that Islamic organizations had on campus,[15] a picture that would change rapidly after 1998. With the identitarian and majoritarian path of religious solidarity closed off, the pro-rakyat and anti-authoritarian critiques of the development regime came from students and activists versed in the liberatory discourses of Marxist tradition. It bears reminding that the most politically risky aspect of the student movement remained the leftist tendencies of activists who knowingly took on "the pariah status of the left" (Aspinall 2005: 39), in contradistinction to a deeply anticommunist society where signs of "latent communism" were monitored, reviled, and punished by citizens themselves. Leftist and secular groups have received the most international media attention, state scrutiny, and scholarly interest, for they stood out so defiantly in the political landscape shaped by the gruesome history of the anticommunist pogroms of 1965–1966.[16] Max Lane, the translator of the banned novels of the imprisoned leftist writer Pramoedya, named the movement against Suharto a "movement without history," expressing the belief that Suharto had severed any ties that youth had to the nation's history of struggle (Lane 2008: 284). Pemuda nationalism was the remaining, albeit deeply compromised, history of struggle that functioned simultaneously as a New Order ideological state apparatus and a potential inspiration for youth.

Pemuda history provided the iconography and typology that informed the perception and appearance of contemporary youth's resistance against authority. There was never a need to question the nationalized identity of students or the nationalist intentions of activist youth, for such terrain was largely prede-

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termined. There were distinct and recognizable ways that pemuda mobilized at times of political crisis or need. When new pemuda generations appeared, they were not dismissed as fake or inauthentic. Rather, they were continuing a thought rooted in the cultural assemblage of Indonesia's political modernity—an origin point that James Siegel has identified as the linguistic and domesticating forces by which national recognition was achieved (1997). In an argument that is important for chapter 3 of this book, Siegel describes how appearance and the idioms of nationalism became passwords that allowed Indonesians to switch identities and gain their rightful role as revolutionaries. "By the time of the revolution, one could be recognized as a nationalist. There were not only forms of dress and language and ideas to mark one, there were also inventions of nationalist leaders who verified one's national credentials" (10). The revolutionary pemuda of 1945 were especially good at ferreting out true and false nationalists, appropriating the language of appearance for themselves (Frederick 1997). Siegel's insight into how revolution sets new codes and authenticating gestures into motion unlocks the radical image transformation enacted by the largely middle-class university students and youth who shouted "Total Reform!" (Reformasi Total!) alongside the rakyat on the streets in 1998.

To go even further, we will need to explore how the highly reductive New Order vision of the sacrificial and nation-building role of youth, institutionalized and performed in various social domains, became a conduit for political action. Pemuda identity had its own memory capacity, its "archivable content" and its "relationship to the future" that could not be completely domesticated (Derrida 1998: 17). It was not mere historical repetition that tied youth to the last wave of mass politics, but the archivization of pemuda identity into a stable entity in Indonesian nationalism that became a supplementary source of activist power, specifically an activist power of representation: the power to mediate access to and from the rakyat. The simplicity of pemuda history's banal nationalism, its iterable and knowable qualities, created an unexpectedly fertile and stable foundation for dissident thought and a sense of alternative history to the New Order's official-speak and the gross social realities of the time. As early as the 1980s, student activists aimed their call to action at other students by declaring pemuda idealism and spirit (*idealisme dan semangat*) to be under threat by the New Order's hedonistic and selfish values; invoking a collective heritage, youth politics conveyed the need for a self-protective stance and an act of repair to sacred institutions (see chapter 1).[17] Finally, it was the familiar rendering of pemuda identity that gave such longevity and credence to the Indonesian student movement of 1998.

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PEMUDA FEVER CLAIMS GENERATION 98

Indonesians know pemuda history backward and forward, and they know it primarily as a chain of nationalist, masculine, urban youth who banded together because of their indomitable youth spirit (*semangat pemuda*). *Semangat* denotes far more radical potential and willpower than the sanitized fervor of "teen spirit." As scholars of Indonesian politics have noted, pemuda generations are defined by their enthusiasm for their cause rather than the limits of their ages; hence the terrors carried out by the revolutionary pemuda of 1945 were legendary (Frederick 1989). During the New Order period (1966–1998), the well-known history of Indonesian nationalism was inscribed annually in ritualized displays of somber commemoration on days like Youth Pledge Day, October 28. Pemuda appeared in monuments, museum exhibits, and historical dioramas as exemplary youth, even though very few gained individual recognition the way older and highly ranked "national heroes" (*pahlawan bangsa*) did. Instead, their generational names served as their main calling card. Each of these named generations (1908, 1928, 1945, 1966) represented a specific and unique generational contribution to the evolution of pemuda nationalism, such that repeating the sequence only strengthened their associative frame and presumed to tax the present generation of youth with a question: What will be *your* lasting contribution to the nation?

After the fall of Suharto, a generational identity was conferred upon Generation 98, the Reformasi generation, which in turn codified personal and individual memories into a collective asset open to use and misuse. It was thus that Generation 98 understood their place in the world, as an extension of this nationalist history, as mandate, calling, and destiny (*takdir*). The romanticism of Generation 98 was thickly felt and described by the young Indonesians I encountered. Their descriptions layered national history onto their own biographies, laminating them into something thicker than the words "politics" or "resistance" convey. There were people who were moved to tears as they relived the magnitude of this feeling in the retelling of their Reformasi stories to me (see chapter 2). This feeling of a historically charged present was the kernel of what I call "pemuda fever," a contagious feeling of political belonging and identification that everybody in post-Suharto Indonesia recognized and that select youth experienced. Here I draw primarily on the work of Jacques Derrida in *Archive Fever* (1998) to theorize how the drive to document, consign, and assemble signs of pemuda nationalism became a fever, "a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return

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to the origin" (91). In gathering together these signs of nationalist origin from within and without pemuda genealogy, activists call attention to the fact that "there is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside" (11). In other words, these signs, repertoires, and actions are exterior signs that become "the institution, in sum, of a *prosthesis of the inside*" (19). Pemuda fever becomes, in the hands of activists, a meaningful, emotive, and highly productive genre of nationalism that dynamically and practically reflects an interior state.

Yet the word "fever" can also seem problematic, associated in commonplace use with the abnormal, the irrational, the loss of self. When we are fevered, what the French call *en mal de* (in sickness from), we burn, we are in the consuming grip of something (Derrida 1998: 91). More the analytical problem that in talking about fever, Derrida claims, we repeat it, we intensify the object of analysis, we "raise the stakes" (91). Derrida's warning that analysis can become an act of reification and intensification gives me pause to reflect upon "pemuda fever" as a convenient label for youth politics. It is not the intention of this book to demystify or reduce activists' intentions to a single motif, nor is it my intention to appear an unwitting theorist of naturalizing youthful passions. We already know that pemuda identity was open to manipulation and that nationalism provides community in times of deep distress and change. Having proposed pemuda fever as an element of the student movement's mobilizing strengths, I must heed its cautionary tale, or else the study of radical youth politics risks becoming analytically *en mal de*, foiled by its own romanticism.

YOUTHFUL INTERVENTIONS IN NATIONAL TIME-SPACE

The words of D. Rudi Haryanto, an artist, aspiring filmmaker, and activist from Semarang who had moved to Jakarta in the midnineties give a strong taste of how pemuda fever formed the narrative backbone of youth politics. The handwritten journal and letters that he shared with me begin in 1997, a momentous year marked by the regional financial meltdown caused by the Asian Economic Crisis. The monetary crisis, dubbed *krismon* in Indonesia, and its ensuing total crisis (*krisis total*, or *kristal*) galvanized civil society groups, including students, into action. In 1997, Rudi was just nineteen years old, not yet a mahasiswa (university student), when he became involved in Jakarta's student movement politics. Rudi found it difficult to attain placement in a university because of his disciplinary record. He had been forced out of high school in Yogyakarta with an early diploma over a political act of resistance.

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He later achieved his dream of becoming a student when he enrolled in the Jakarta Institute for the Arts, a bohemian arts enclave that was conveniently located in close proximity to other Reformasi campuses, such as the University of Indonesia-Salemba, Bung Karno University, Pancasila University, the Institute for Administration Indonesia, and various teaching and secretarial colleges. In Jakarta, he followed the footsteps of his older brother and other senior activists he admired by becoming active in an organization, Interaction Forum '66, founded by "Older Brothers of the 66 Generation" (Abang-Abang Angkatan 66), even though he joked that they were "disillusioned" (*sakit hati*) with the New Order regime. As committee secretary, he attended meetings and political events regularly. Each night, after a daily routine of film shoots, portfolio building, job seeking, political seminars and meetings, even a romance that suffered from his dedication to politics, he recorded and reflected on the changing tenor of Indonesian life. On the commemorative occasion of October 28, 1997, he wrote in the unmistakable tones of pemuda fever:

> Today is Youth Pledge Day. Exactly 69 years ago Indonesian youth in groups of Jong Java, Jong Celebes, Jong Sumatra, Pemuda Betawi, pledged themselves to One Archipelago, Nation, and Language. Indonesia!!! The Youth Pledge of 28 October 1928 (before that Boedi Oetomo 1908) was the culmination of the role of youth in the independence struggle. *I imagine how boisterous the movement's atmosphere was during that time. How spirited the youth of Indonesia were at that time.* Once I saw documentary photographs in the Museum of the Youth Pledge. I saw the Spirit that lit up like sunlight the faces of the Indonesian youth activists of the time, faces pure and simply dressed. *1928 was the standard for Indonesian Nationalism. What about the youth of today?* The times have changed. . . . After 1966 in the thick of New Order conditions under Soeharto's power, Indonesian youth lost their essential character . . . today youth hang out in malls, skip school, get high on ecstasy, tout, fight, play arcade games, display themselves in malls, gossip at MacDonalds, meanwhile more than 300 of their brothers and sisters in Irian Jaya (Papua) die of hunger!!! Maybe the youth have forgotten that today is Youth Pledge Day. But there is still another event, still a small segment of youth who care about the fate of the nation and who commemorate the Youth Pledge, who reflect on current conditions and what is happening to the country that is being dragged far away from the values of the Youth Pledge. At the Proclamation Monument this afternoon some comrades were arrested while carrying out their remembrance of the Youth Pledge in an action [aksi]. Of course the arrests were

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> expected but actually they are always puzzling and demand the question: Why does it occur? Such a question will only bring smiles and be answered with excuses, and will never be answered in the Soeharto era. *Indonesian Youth are very happy today!!! What you did, hail to you Youth of 1928, is recorded in Indonesia's history. The spirit of patriotism, nationalism, freedom and unity, intelligence, courage, have become a valuable legacy for us the youth generation who live in a time decades after you incised history with the 1928 Youth Pledge. Freedom!!!* (Emphasis added.)

I present Rudi's journal entry from Youth Pledge Day in its entirety to show how a self-referential pemuda history had become a means for critically minded New Order youth to express a political difference between themselves and mainstream youth. Pemuda fever moves Rudi's historical perspective forward and backward in a prophetic and nostalgic manner. It is consistent with what Agamben calls the defining quality of the contemporary actor, his sense that things are wrong in *his* time, betraying a "relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism" (2009: 41). Triggered by the memory of black-and-white photographs of Generation 1928 at the Youth Pledge museum, Rudi's imagination made their vivid scenes of nationalism unfold before his eyes. Disgusted by the westernized, capitalist, and frivolous pastimes that preoccupied contemporary urban youth, Rudi's thoughts immediately returned to the "spirited" and vibrant 1928 generation, whose purity shone in their faces (see fig. 1). Youth today, Rudi laments, are more apt to behave as *remaja* (teenagers) or ABG (the common abbreviation for spoilt and barely grown children known as *anak baru gede*) under the "New Order conditions" that had so corrupted the essence of youth that they are unable to muster a sense of solidarity toward their starving and marginalized "siblings." Yet, even while he disparages present-day youth, he brings to our attention the avant-garde actions of *other* youth, the activist minority who still care about and act on the values inculcated by Generation 1928. Those other youth with whom he identifies will not be recognized by the Suharto era. Their contributions can only be read in the light of history. And so, after recounting the arrests of his comrades on Youth Pledge Day in 1997, he addresses Generation 1928 directly. Thanks to *you*, he says to them, pemuda are happy, for Generation 1928 left the youth of today a lasting reserve of spirit (semangat) to draw on. "Merdeka!!!" (Freedom!!!), the final word in this entry, belongs more properly to the 1945 Generation, who fought for independence from the Dutch, but it is a fitting ending. Merdeka is coming. Many of Rudi's subsequent journal entries end in the same way, linking the feeling of Reformasi to

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the revolution's battle cry. Pemuda history's legacy is twofold—the nationalist values that belong especially to youth, and the fact of the radical break itself, since contemporary youth activism was only possible after Generation 1928 made what Rudi calls an *incision* (*torehan*, an Indonesian word that describes a surgical cut or an engraving in a hard surface) into history. The terrifying word "incision" describes the originating cut that created a new and permanent orifice in the body politic. More precisely, the incision made an opening no one thought to close.

Why is it important to isolate the drive to history in pemuda fever? And how might a focus on student movement practices of everyday life offer an antidote to pemuda fever's excesses? This book argues that both are necessary diagnostic tools to make visible the myriad practical, cultural, and affective ties that kept activists in the movement. As we have seen in the writing of D. Rudi Haryanto, historical linkages between one generation of pemuda and another are productive linkages that form part of a larger genealogical turn or, following Maurice Blanchot, an etymological seduction that translates everything in its wake into its own self-fulfilling terms:

> The other danger of etymology is not simply its implicit relation to an origin, and the marvelously improbable resources that it seductively uncovers. Rather, the danger is that etymology imposes, without being able to justify or even to explain it, a certain conception of history. This conception is far from clear: the necessity of some provenance, of successive continuity, the logic of homogeneity, the revelation of sheer chance as destiny and of words as the sacred depository of all lost or latent meanings whose recovery is thenceforth the task of him who writes in view of a last word or final rebuttal (fulfillment, realization). (Blanchot 1995: 97)

Pemuda history provides a structure of feeling and an abstract, idealized goal to which today's tasks are assigned. However, it masks how youth democratized Indonesian political culture by the very youthful and global interests and popular instincts that activists brought to their political work and behavior. Training sessions and demo planning meetings were opportunities to network, play, and potentially strike up friendships. Even small organizations maintained a busy schedule traveling to meetings in and out of town, going from *kost* (rented rooms in boardinghouses) to *kantor* (office), or from hotel ballrooms to NGO offices. With the mass demonstration under their belt, activists became confident experts at managing scale, "blowing up" an issue, or directing its information flow in media campaigns and press conferences. More important, an ethnographic study of the student movement's microp-

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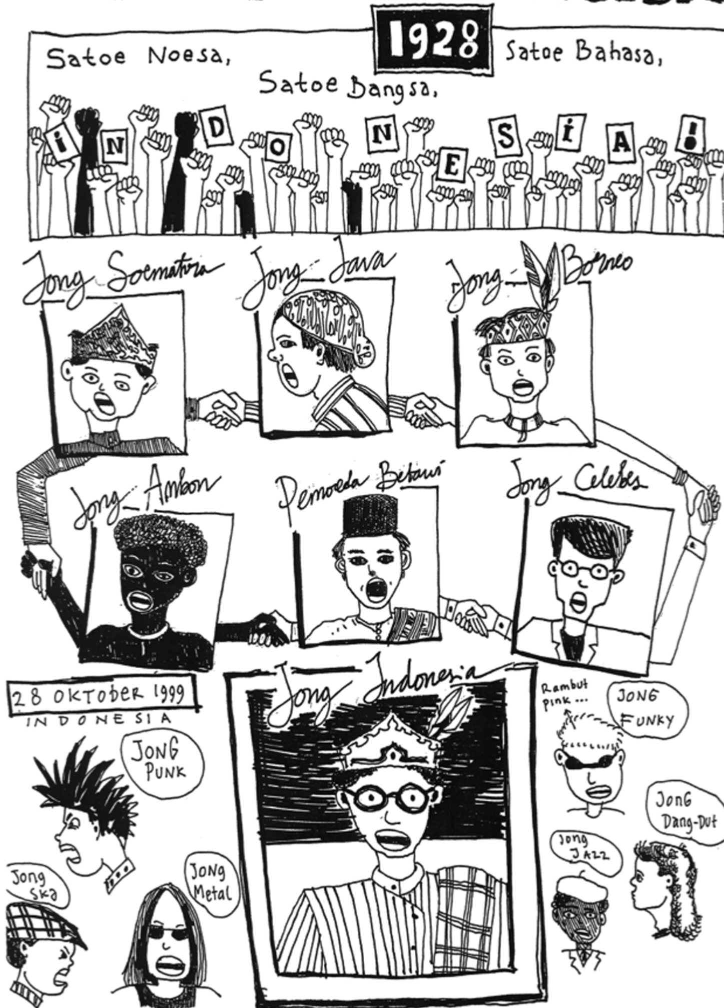

FIGURE I.1 “Soempah Pemuda” (Youth Pledge), drawing by D. Rudi Haryanto on the occasion of Youth Pledge Day, October 28, 1999. Top half: the ethnic youth leagues that first declared the Youth Pledge in 1928 hand in hand, appearing as equal partners. Below: the scattered New Order social types whose taste-based identities convey the fragmented, globalized, and exclusive qualities of contemporary youth. Reprinted with the permission of the artist.

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olitics and everyday spaces is necessary because the literature on the actual personalities and practices of activism remains so sparse. While media coverage about Indonesia's economic and political crises were prevalent domestically and internationally in 1998–1999, and even though books, memoirs, and human rights reports poured out of Indonesia in subsequent years, scholars have tended to research and write around the student-shaped presence of Reformasi. Scholars have reproduced the dominant narrative of Reformasi as a given set of events that occurred in the center and heavily involved students but have not explored the post-Reform connection between student activists to larger national issues of decentralization, political and legal reforms, the rise of civil society, the role of the elites and the military, and so on. In the most uncritical and crude discourses about Reformasi, many of which continue to circulate to sharpen the distinction between elites and the People, the rakyat is no different from the floating masses of the Suharto era and the activist a misguided example of middle-class privilege. Mass mobilizations and mass politics, while being the purview of student activist efforts in the late 1990s through 2005, remained analytically estranged from a serious discussion of the middle-class politics and personality of studenthood and activism, except when middleclassness was diagnosed in cursory and disparaging terms by observers proclaiming the end of the movement (Heryanto, cited in Tauffiqurrahman 2010). Thus, a glaring absence remains in our understanding of the institutions and structures of cultural politics that drove the changes of the Reform era and what survived and followed the wake of student activism as public culture. It is the same student activist–shaped hole, blown up.

THE FIELD: WHAT I DID WHEN I WAS THERE

What is the field of study? Where is the field? I have already described the archive as constituting a new and generative field of ethnographic inquiry that chapter 1 takes up to illuminate the affinities between New Order–style activism and post-Reformasi political pursuits. Now I turn to another site of cultural production, the city and its streets, to convey the temporal-spatial rhythms of activism. It is a truism that urban ethnographies differ from traditional ethnographies due to their multisited, socially complex, heterogeneous, and discontinuous spaces of research (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The communities found in the city are "global villages" made up of chains of uninhibited connections, while the field is more and more a constructed unity of the places and times the anthropologist chanced upon. Research challenges and dynamics in post–New Order Indonesia resonate with such descriptions of conceptual multiplicity, yet post-Reformasi Indonesia also provided me

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with what Indonesians call *benang merah*, a red and binding narrative thread. The thread that held my field site together was the continuing significance and memorialization of the Reformasi era, providing the narrative anchor and tonal break of "before" and "after" Suharto, before and after the student movement. Reformasi still comprised the underlying logic of comparison, commemoration, and aspiration for its direct participants and witnesses, even its indirect legatees. For instance, demonstrations in the present time instigated comparisons to past demonstrations, which in turn invited political memories, and it was not long before activists turned their talk to the Reformasi narratives of the end of the New Order in order to anchor present-day politics in the recent past. The activism of Generation 98 bore a tenuous relation to current debates about the future of national identity and Indonesian politics; it resembled a sticky residue, adhering to life after Reformasi yet subject to a new matrix of discipline, interests, and calculation.

My field site oscillated between the vast city of Jakarta and the more modest and ephemeral site of the demonstration. "Field" is translated as *lapangan* in Indonesian, the same word that is used for the demonstration site, the *lapangan demo*. A lapangan is a foursquare field of open space. Synonymously and metaphorically, Indonesian activists link the demo field to the more ambitious "field of struggle," *medan perjuangan*, indicating a projection of their political space and struggle onto the universally recognized franchises of freedom and sovereignty. Such scalar leaps between the local and the global, the everyday and the eventful, motivate a great deal of post-Reformasi political discourse. I had a hunch that "the true force of this history, or better, the sense of a certain age," was in "'a color, a tone of voice, a tactile choice of word, a simple vibration'" leaving the ineluctable trace of the "'unstable, incomplete, unsettled, irreducible to the word'" (Mrázek 2010: xiii).

I followed activists through the city and out of its bounds, paying attention to the sensory and practical realms that constituted the everyday life of politics but could not be reduced to a normative sense of the everyday. My movement through the city gave me a map of how political spaces and organizations formed constellations of memory and political practice. I rushed to attend events and lingered into the night, experiencing the micro and macro character of the field as demo site and city of struggle. I came to know the city differently too, on foot, and through public transportation, looking for markers that activists (many of whom could not drive or did not have cars) would name, and discovering green spaces and pleasant, hidden corners that were as close to public space as one could get in Jakarta. The learning curve of anthropological fieldwork involved learning mobility and communication: how

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to receive and respond to text messages in abbreviated Indonesian;[18] how to negotiate transport; how to arrive safely; how to be sent off by friends, and in what order; how to walk in the demo and on the streets; how to disembark a moving bus without falling flat on my face (as happened once); how to not laugh wildly every time the *bajaj* (auto-rickshaw) rattled me through to my bones; how to join up with the demo after speeding through the streets on a motorcycle taxi; how to spend hours as the lone young woman among young men. Fieldwork was, as anthropologist Saya Shiraishi describes it, an extended social ritual of *antar-jemput* (drop-off and pickup) (1997: 30). These sensory experiences of conducting research give a sense of how Jakarta's urban spaces were redeployed and occupied transiently by the city's youth.

How I came to this project is another story. My personal biography and interests put me near and distant from the political selves and lives of my informants. I am not Indonesian by birth or citizenship, but Jakarta was a place I was deeply familiar with growing up. In the 1980s I lived with my nuclear and extended family in an ethnically and religiously mixed neighborhood of tiny, one-story houses in North Jakarta. At the time the neighborhood and my family were fairly modest in income and appearance. Later, in the speculative boom years of the 1990s, we moved to an enormous planned city in North Jakarta—a suburb of large, two-story houses built on former naval landholdings and reclaimed paddy fields that accommodated international schools and cuisines, mansions and malls. I left for the United States in the summer of 1997, assured of an uneventful and privileged college life in New York. A few months later Indonesia's financial world collapsed, and not long afterward its political world overturned. My family fled the very real possibility of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia following the May Riots in 1998. I had missed all the signs of these cataclysms. And so I came to learn Indonesian later in life at Cornell University during my graduate training through the Department of Anthropology and the famed Southeast Asia Program, referred to reverentially by visiting scholars as "the mecca of Southeast Asian Studies." My struggle with my American-sounding accent, my limited but correct and therefore inappropriate lexicon, my general inexperience with politics, all stood to brand me as foreign in class, race, and appearance. It was a long time before I could respond in a sensible way to the quick wit and rich political vocabulary of activist speech, with its serious bravado and its punny Jakarta slang. As Yuliana, a human rights activist I came to rely on, said, "You were quiet for the first six months! I thought there was something wrong with you." I "passed" as an upper-middle-class follower of the movement when I did not speak, and so I faithfully wore the activist uniform of faded jeans and a slogan T-shirt to all

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the meetings, seminars, and demos I attended. The ruse worked unpredictably. More than once, television news crews that were on the lookout for interviews with demonstrators in the field approached me, much to my alarm. My solidly upper middle-class background, in the populist context of the street-side movement, reared its head often. I must restate the stereotype here that "Chinese" are all seen as rich and their wealth is thought to result from exploiting indigenous Indonesians. My relationships with some informants became challenging when they assumed that I had access to financial resources and political connections by virtue of being from Amrik (America) and being ethnic Chinese.[19] In the student activist world of frequenting roadside vendors and walking in the heat, these were all things people who looked like me, *bersih putih* (clean and white [and rich]) did not do. This was a classed and gendered response to my presence, as few women activists ever questioned my choices to follow their lead. It was men who circulated derisive and cautionary stories about girlfriends who were so *borjuis* (bourgeois) they could not eat roadside food or stow away on the train. But these are surface stories about the anthropological encounter and difference that fell away the more time I spent in the company of Indonesian activists. In their present struggles against the neoliberal policies of an oligarchic state, leftist and progressive activists have to keep up with a fast-paced, mediatized state politics that exacts more national level organizing and internal solidarity on their part than ever. In 2016, the threats to democracy from well-organized oligarchic elements in the state and from less organized conservative forces in Indonesia augur yet another crisis in the making. The political map has changed since Reformasi. No matter. Generation 98 is equipped for it.

THE CHAPTERS IN SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provides a first look through previously unseen archival material to establish a paper trail for the student movement's "missing years" (1980s–1990s), locating material evidence of fragmented but vibrant student activism amid the inertia of the New Order's depoliticized campuses. The underground resistance movement depended on what I call the *techne* of paper to generate reams of counter-regime propaganda, internal communications, and legal documents in response to state charges of subversion. I unveil the epistemic tensions that animate the hopeful and moral gestures of student activism captured and circulated in paper form a full decade before Suharto fell from power. I theorize the relation between archives, documentation, and historicity to draw attention to the contradictory attributes of marginal student

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archives—from their fetish quality as invaluable souvenirs of the democracy movement to their tendency to reproduce, disappear, and reappear in new and unregulated contexts far from their point of origin.

Chapter 2 describes how student activists came to be at home on the street, asserting their transformational claim to the city through spectacular displays of political participation. The student-led mass demonstrations that overthrew Suharto in 1998 were emblematic of the intense spatial politics that formed the backbone of popular democracy in post-Suharto Indonesia. The street was a zone of strategic experimentation, student expertise, and efficacious nationalism that brought together middle-class university activists with rural and urban poor in an unevenly sutured political body, the rakyat (People). Throughout the chapter, I showcase the work of disappeared activist poet Wiji Thukul, whose poems about the dispossessed rakyat in the city operate as spoken anthems of resistance at demonstrations, reminding activists of the interplay between the spatial embeddedness of social injustice and the immanent revolution found in everyday urban life.

Chapter 3 argues that political movements are profoundly aesthetic frameworks that introduce new ways of looking, seeing, and being—turning style into the conduit and currency for political identity. I examine the singular importance of style to student movement politics as the terrain through which youth identities and affiliations were secured, and by which forbidden leftist references entered the mainstream. Student activist visual culture invested the activist body with a signature pemuda style that was iconic, historical-nationalist, and global in its orientation, and it did so through widely available objects of public culture such as film, photography, and clothing. I demonstrate how the production and consumption of political fashions in the activist movement became a popular access point to experiencing and desiring political youth identity. I conclude with a study of Reform's cinephilic infatuation with the 1960s activist Soe Hok Gie as an example of how pemuda style's saturated images of youth merged the political goals of the present with the pure nationalist intentions of the past.

Can heroes be moral *and* violent? Chapter 4 examines the ways that enduring perceptions of students as socially privileged and moral subjects have muted public and scholarly debates on student violence. I analyze activist narratives of state violence, trauma, and counterviolence over ten years of Reform politics to trace the intimacy of violence in activist narratives and political trajectories. As student movements evolved toward greater militancy and spectacular violence after the fall of Suharto, violent methods and experi-

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ences entered their agenda with increased frequency. I offer up controversial activist memories of retaliation against suspected state agents and symbols of the state as evidence of defensive and provocative student practices that have sparked state interventions. By asserting student experiences of state violence and counterviolence as linked discourses, I explicitly counter the silence obscuring student violence by drawing attention to the connections and tensions between civil society's framing of collective solidarity and the state's call for discipline and order.

Can revolutionaries ever settle down? Chapter 5 leads us "home" through the rarely seen domestic arrangements that provided spaces of rest, return, and belonging for student activists. It unlocks the spatial poetics and territorial logics of the *basekemp* (organizational headquarters), *posko* (command posts), and kost (rented rooms) as activist structures that housed extensive experimentation against New Order ideologies of family, home, and authority. I analyze how these shared spaces of work and play provided youth with the freedom to interact, mobilize, and socialize outside gendered social norms and hierarchies. However, the egalitarian dream of youthful community was also vulnerable to the movement's practical and logistical challenges. This chapter undoes the distinction between public and private spaces to show the reach of activism's territorializing potential—a project that makes political life as fully present in the makeshift homes of activists as in the demonstrations on the streets.

Chapter 6 shows Generation 98 in the grip of election fever during the 2004 elections, as activists sought to renew their representation of the People on the streets and from within the system. However, New Order rituals of "democracy festivals" (*pesta demokrasi*) and the monied politics of military and elite domination destabilized Generation 98's progressive vision of civic and public life. I argue that the transition to institutionalized democracy, the codification of Reformasi narratives, and the temporal distance from 1998 made activist futures more insecure than ever. By focusing on discourses of corruption, individuation, and social difference that emerged during the elections, I convey pemuda identity's uneven integration into post-Suharto Indonesia.

The book ends on a grace note of hope. At present, Indonesians are placing their hopes in Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, who won a very tight race in the July 2014 presidential elections. Generation 98 volunteered eagerly for his campaign against the former general Prabowo Subianto, a powerful elite figure thought to have been responsible for the kidnapping and disappearance of activists but never convicted. As one activist from Generation 98

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described him, Jokowi is a previously unthinkable and entirely new breed of politician in post-Suharto Indonesia—one without tradition, ties, or capital, without *ormas* (mass organizations), religious networks, international affiliations or degrees, even without activism! The comment places activism as yet another Indonesian institution that Jokowi has surpassed, signaling the welcome end to Generation 98's long era of struggle in the pemuda spotlight.

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