Recollections from "Beautiful Indonesia" (Somewhere Beyond the Postmodern)

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In late August of 1971, just five years following the mass killings which accompanied General Soeharto's rise to power and which left one-half to one million Indonesians dead, Mrs. Soeharto made public a sudden inspiration she had received during a recent visit to Disneyland. "I was inspired to build a project of that sort in Indonesia, only *more* complete and *more* perfect, adapted to fit the situation and developments in Indonesia, both materially and spiritually."[1] And the name of this cultural dream project? "Beautiful Indonesia"-in-Miniature Park (Taman Mini "Indonesia Indah"), or simply Mini, as the park came to be called.

The park's centerpiece was to be an 8.4 hectare pond with little islands representing the archipelago. Mini would also include "ancient monuments," representative "religious buildings," a 1000-room hotel and shopping center (of "international standards"), recreation facilities, an artificial waterfall, a revolving theater, and an immense outdoor performance arena. Particular importance and one hectare of land each would be given to twenty-six display houses representing the "genuine customary architectural styles" of each of Indonesia's provinces. A central audience hall of Central Javanese aristocratic design would be used for large

1. *Pendjelasan Tentang Projek Miniatur Indonesia "Indonesia Indah"* (1971:3) (emphasis added). Mrs. Soeharto's account of how she was "inspired" (*diilhami*) with the "Beautiful Indonesia" concept appeals to a sense of divine inspiration and blessed mission.

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Figure 1. Fujicolor in "Beautiful Indonesia." The map reads: "'Beautiful Indonesia'-in-Miniature Park: National Culture Preserve."

"traditional" (*tradisional*) ceremonies. And all of this could be appreciated in its Mini completeness from an aerial cable car. Thus was born the "Beautiful Indonesia" project, a project immediately set apart, both "spiritually and materially," from other more down-to-earth Indonesian development efforts. The quotation marks surrounding "Beautiful Indonesia" created an "as if" sense of an idealized Indonesia, a perfectly cultural representation viewed, by the logic of miniaturization, as if from a distance.[2]

Yet such a view was not shared by all of those of the 1966 generation that had supported the removal of President Sukarno and establishment of Soeharto's New Order government. For on December 16, 1971, a delegation from the newly formed Economizing Movement (Gerakan Penghematan) entered a "Project Miniature Protest" to the National Planning Development Board.[3] The proposed ten and one-half billion rupiah project—twenty-five million U.S. dollars in 1971—was criticized as a grossly luxurious use of funds that could be better spent, it was argued, on either fifty-two small industries (employing one hundred workers each), or seven large university campuses, each the size of the prestigious Gajah Mada University. Mrs. Soeharto's response: "Whatever happens, I won't retreat an inch! This project must go through!"[4] Within days the anti-Mini movement spread to other cities; in Bandung it became the Sound Mind Movement (Gerakan Akal Sehat). On December 23, a large assembly calling itself the Savior of the People's Money Movement (Gerakan Penjelamat Uang Rakjat) marched directly on Mrs. Soeharto's Our Hope Foundation (headquarters for Mini planning) in downtown Jakarta where army rifles left four marchers seriously wounded.[5] Soon thereafter, President Soeharto himself brought a quick end to all Sound Minds and Saviors: "Quite frankly, I'll deal with them! No matter who they are! Anyone who refuses to understand this warning, frankly I'll deal with them!"[6]

Indeed. On April 20, 1975, headlines declared "Dream Becomes Reality" as the Soehartos dedicated the newly constructed "Beautiful Indonesia" on the southern outskirts of Jakarta.[7] Embodying the kind of international stature Mini was in-

2. Susan Stewart (1993:68) sees in the logic of miniaturization a form of longing productive of interiority and cultural order: "Thus the miniature world may always be seen as being overcoded as the cultural." Miniaturizations "all tend to present domesticated space as a model of order, proportion, and balance." This linking of miniaturization with culture and order has striking resonances with the New Order's Mini cultural theme park.

3. See *Sinar Harapan*, 16 December 1971.

4. As translated by Benedict Anderson, in Anderson (1973:65).

5. *Sinar Harapan*, 23 December 1971.

6. As translated by Anderson, in Anderson (1973:65).

7. "Impian Menjadi Kenyataan: Taman Miniatur Indonesia Indah." *Skets Masa* 3 (1975):4.

tended to produce, Imelda Marcos was conspicuously present for the opening ceremonies. "Dear God, our Lord, with the intention to build up our people's and nation's love for the Fatherland did we build this 'Beautiful Indonesia'-in-Miniature Park," prayed the Minister of Religious Affairs.[8] President Soeharto continued:

> Economic development alone is not enough. Life will not have a beautiful and deep meaning with material sufficiency only, however abundant that sufficiency might become. On the contrary, pursuit of material things only will make life cruel and painful. . . . One's life, therefore, will be calm and complete only when it is accompanied by spiritual welfare.
>
> The direction and guidance towards that spiritual welfare is, in fact, already in our possession; it lies in our beautiful and noble national cultural inheritance. . . .
>
> We need . . . to ask whether we really have done or contributed anything to help perfect and enhance this "Beautiful Indonesia"-in-Miniature Park: a Park that depicts Our People, a Park that makes us proud to be Indonesians, a Park that we will bequeath to future generations.[9]

It is perhaps significant that the first open protest to New Order rule should oppose the construction of a cultural dream park, for in the years to come a highly articulated rhetoric of culture would serve the Soeharto regime well, as constant appeals to "traditional values," "customary behavior," and similar expressions of social stability have greatly facilitated the maintenance of state security. The 1971 anti-Mini protests were concerned first and foremost, however, with money. Hence the special status of the notion "cultural inheritance" in President and Mrs. Soeharto's dedication addresses: something of purportedly tangible value—an inheritance, something "already in our *possession*"—and, at the same time, more ideally "spiritual" than that sought by Saviours of the People's Money. If left unprotected, such a treasure might eventually be destroyed, Mrs. Soeharto reckoned, by the lowly, purely material demands of a developing people. With the founding of "Beautiful Indonesia," Bapak (Father) and Ibu (Mother) Soeharto assumed the roles of model parents of an extended national family, privileged benefactors of an extensive inheritance. Displacing economic concerns with a patently "cultural" gift, this novel inheritance offered Indonesians a bequest they apparently could not afford to refuse. Built into the logic of such a bequest was

8. *Kenang-kenangan Peresmian Pembukaan Taman Mini "Indonesia Indah"* (1975:70).
9. *Ibid.*, 62–63, 65.

a transference of culture which erased the difference between past, present, and future, and thus flattened time—and with it, histories, including the extraordinary violence of the New Order's own origins as well as a history of social activism from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s—into a continuously presented present. For "Beautiful Indonesia" was founded upon, as we shall see, a peculiar sense of temporality.

Original Longings

The obsession with connecting the past and future in the form of a present finds prolific expression at Mini through numerous so-called monuments (*monumen*): miniature replicas of ancient monuments (*candhi*), memorial monuments (*tugu*), and commemorative inscriptions (*prasasti*). Discussing monumental styles in post-independence Indonesia, Benedict Anderson has noted that the realist figure of Jakarta's Liberation of West Irian Monument "symoblizes directly the liberation of the Irianese from Dutch colonial rule."[10] Although this Sukarno-era monument is modern in form, it points to the past and a specific *event* which recalls, in turn, a shared vision of the future, and works by a logic common to such monuments: "they face two ways in time. Normally they commemorate events or experiences in the past, but, at the same time, they are intended, in their all-weather durability, for future posterity."[11] In contrast to the Irian Monument, the Sukarno-era National Monument (Monas) looks somewhat traditional in style with its lingga-yoni form, but, as Anderson argues, does not actually recall an event and thus represents a very different sort of relation with the past. "The lingga-yoni in Medan Merdeka (Jakarta's Independence Square) means nothing in itself, but is rather a sign for 'continuity.'"[12]

The New Order monuments at Mini project something akin to this appeal to "continuity" and at the same time disclose an appeal all their own. For not only do Mini's monuments *not* face two ways in time, they appear to efface pasts and futures altogether. A Department of Culture and Education storybook account of a visit to Mini (designed for use in public schools as an introduction to Indonesian culture) provides a suggestive guide here.[13] The story's protagonist, a Central Javanese child named Mustafa, watches a television show with representative

10. Anderson (1973:63).
11. *Ibid.*, 61.
12. *Ibid.*, 63.
13. Siswoyo (1978).

singers and houses from Sumatra and wonders: "'When will I get to see those regional houses in their original [*asli*] settings?' . . . 'Go to Mini, whatever you desire will be fulfilled!' was the answer Mustafa received from the depths of his own heart."[14] Mustafa forms a student group, finds an adult leader, and within months is able to fulfill his desire: a trip to "Beautiful Indonesia." Upon arriving at Mini, the students sight the park's obeliskoid relative of Jakarta's famed National Monument:

> "Oh . . . . this monument's so tall! Is this the one called the National Monument [Monas]?" asked Dika.
>
> "No, ... this is the one called the Fire of Pancasila Monument [Tugu Api Pancasila]. It is 45 meters tall, 17 meters in circumference, and its base pillars are 8 meters long," said [the teacher] Abdulah.
>
> "Oooh, a sacred number for Indonesians! 17, 8, 45.
>
> "And the pictures on the base make the Pancasila Symbol [*Lambang*]!" shouted Dika.[15]

While Jakarta's National Monument stands as a sign for continuity, Mini's Fire of Pancasila Monument—built to resemble the National Monument and yet represent something else—stands as a redoubled representation: a sign of a sign for continuity. The measurements say "17-8-45" but this does not really designate a date, much less recall events associated with the canonized 17 August 1945, the moment when Indonesian independence was declared. Represented instead is a number, an ahistoricized point of reference. For little Dika learns to decipher the monument's form and shouts out *not* "Revolution!" but first, "Oooh, a sacred number," and ultimately, "*Symbol*!"

"Beautiful Indonesia"'s special ahistoricism and concomitant passion for form emerges, instructively, in another episode from Mustafa's fairy-tale visit. The scene is Mini's "Borobudur Monument": a two-by-two meter "Borobudur" under glass, resting dead center in a relatively modest open air pavilion surrounded, in turn, by eight life-size concrete Buddhas.

> "Only now am I able to clearly understand The Borobudur," said Lina, "because up until now I've just seen its photograph."
>
> "With a 'miniature' [*miniatur*] like this, we can see it in its entirety more clearly. If we went to The Borobudur, what would be visible

14. *Ibid.*, 11–12.
15. *Ibid.*, 27.

would certainly be larger, the reliefs clear. But as to which door we entered, sometimes we'd get confused" [instructs the teacher].[16]

Mini's "Borobudur" presumably would refer to some other place (Central Java's monumentally famous Borobudur near the town of Magelang) and another time (the ninth century, perhaps) and operate by a referential logic similar to that of the National Monument: a sign for continuity. But as the teacher carefully reveals, the Mini monument exceeds its potentially *confusing* Central Javanese counterpart by enabling us to see "Borobudur" in its entirety, its very completeness. The greatest of Central Javanese antiquities is thus converted to a sort of Maxi-Borobudur—a cumbersome version of "Borobudur"-ness. Appearing to reverse the distinctive relationship between replica and original, "Beautiful Indonesia" monuments stand, it would seem, as the displacement of the distinction itself. That is, origins are presented as recovered in a form so totally unconfusing, so endowed with an abstracted miniaturized clarity, that the distance between what represents and what is represented, in effect, collapses.

Such effects of Mini's continuous projection of recovered origins reemerge most conspicuously in the culture park's twenty-six life-size "customary houses" (*rumah adat*): exhibition pavilions representing each of Indonesia's twenty-six provinces (before the annexation of East Timor), pavilions that had been ceremoniously surrendered by the provincial governors to Mrs. Soeharto just before the dedication of Mini in 1975. At the dedication proper, twenty-six governors attended, each attired in the "customary regional costume" of his administrative territory regardless of his actual—most often *Javanese*—ethnic background.[17] Thus an East Javanese "New Guinean" governor with a fur crown and large ornamental nose bone, sat, exemplifying diversity, alongside his fellow regional representatives.[18] Just after the ceremony, the Indonesian magazine *Skets Masa* ran a cover story featuring the pavilions, at that time the park's main attraction. In the caption to a photo of the Central Java pavilion filled with visitors, we

16. *Ibid.*, 143–44.

17. For readers unfamiliar with Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, it should be noted that Javanese represent, by far, the country's largest ethnic group among many, each with its own language though all are bound together through the national language of Indonesian. From the early days of nationalism on, Javanese have dominated Indonesian politics. It might also be added that Javanese elite residing in Indonesia's capital city of Jakarta, on the western tip of Java, live socioeconomic light-years away from the object of their cultural longing, the heartland of Central Java.

18. The Javanese "New Guinean" with the ornamental nose bone was General Sutran, former Bupati of Trenggalek.

read: "'Javanese' [*'wong Jawa'*] are proud and stream into the Central Java pavilion."[19] We have no way of knowing, of course, if the people in the photo are from Central Java. But the caption reverses the relationship; whoever appears next to this pavilion *must* be Javanese. Indeed, they are "'wong Jawa'"—for this Indonesian language magazine uses the Javanese term—hence "Javanese": ambulatory emblems of ethnicity surrounded by the same quotation marks that enframe "Beautiful Indonesia."

In "Yogyakarta" (representing the palace-city province of the same name in south Central Java), the implications of displaced origins are brought home: "This is the Yogyakarta pavilion which represents the Yogyakarta Palace in a 'little' form [*bentuk 'kecil'*]. For those who are originally from the Yogyanese palace city, entering this 'Palace' creates the sensation of returning home."[20] The quotation marked "little" recalls, again, the Mini-Borobudur logic and suggests "Palace"-ness with little and big versions. Here, as it were, the real attraction is that the visitor experiences the sensation of returning home. While such a feeling might seem odd for most Javanese visiting this pavilion (visitors who could hardly call a palace home), upon entering the miniature "Palace," they enjoy the sensation of "home" that "Beautiful Indonesia" represents. For this is a sensation of "Palace"-ness unencumbered with confusing genealogy, a sensation continuously augmented, in fact, by appropriate refinements in protocol. By 1982, for example, taking photographs was strictly prohibited inside Mini's "Yogyakarta," which had come to be treated by Mini officials as "sacred" (*kramat*). Visitors touring Central Java's Palace of Yogyakarta, by contrast, could take snapshots with relative (un-"Palace"-like) impunity.

Presented as temporarily inhabitable customary spaces which might exceed the conditions of simulacra and originals, Mini's regional pavilions create the sensation of a virtual absence of distance between Palace and "Palace," between home and "home." On "Irian Jaya," representing Indonesian New Guinea, the nation's province furthest removed from Jakarta: "Roundtrip airfare from Irian Jaya costs 150,000 rupiah. If you travel by boat, only after one month will you arrive. Thus, to relieve your longing for your homeland, just go to Mini along with your brothers from this eastern province."[21] Longing for one's homeland is relieved as "home" itself is reconfigured in manageable terms, for such relief entails a partial forgetting of the locus of one's longing. To my initial astonishment,

19. "Impian Menjadi Kenyataan" (1975:6).
20. *Ibid.*, 7.
21. *Ibid.*, 8.

Central Javanese residing in Jakarta often advised me (from 1975 and "Beautiful Indonesia"'s opening well into the 1980s) to, as the phrase goes, "just go to Mini" if I sought an authentic (*asli*) experience of Javanese culture. "We go there regularly," one couple asserted with peculiar sincerity, "it's less of a hassle than going back to Central Java." Recalling what is absent in the form of origins recovered—"Central Java," "Yogyakarta," "Irian Jaya"—thus motivates, for some at least, repeated visits to "Beautiful Indonesia."

Ancestors of the Future

But there is a supplemental effect to this logic of relieved longing. For such recollections of origins disclose, in turn, the sense of a site elsewhere, a site possibly *not* visited by visiting Mini. This is particularly acute for "Beautiful Indonesia"'s dominant supporters, the primarily Central Javanese elite now living in Jakarta, and emerges unmistakably in the one unavoidable exception to Mini's miniaturized format: the central audience hall dubbed, in *Javanese* rather than Indonesian, the Grand Place-of-Importance Audience Hall (Pendopo Agung Sasono Utomo). The immense pavilion is an exaggeration of Central Javanese aristocratic house design. Its roof—the real focus of Javanese architectural attention—extends almost straight up rather than gently out, and gives the potentially intimidating impression of uncontrolled growth. "That Audience Hall at Mini is too tall for its own authority—grand, but not truly great [*ageng ning ora agung*]," a skeptical librarian from the Central Javanese city of Surakarta noted to me.

What the librarian had in mind, as the exemplary model which Mini's Grand Audience Hall failed (in its very excess) to live up to, was Central Java's oldest surviving palace, the Palace of Surakarta (Kraton Surakarta), ruled right up to the present by a genealogically-entwined series of kings bearing no less a title than "Axis of the Cosmos" (Pakubuwana). Founded in 1745 through Dutch East India Company intervention, this palace bore the traces of a certain contradiction (to which we shall necessarily return) of origins. For it was *only* through Dutch intervention that the first of Surakarta's kings (Pakubuwana II) had been rescued from oblivion when his former palace, just ten kilometers down the road from Surakarta, was devastated by rebels. Although Javanese royal convention demanded that a deposed monarch retreat to ascetic hermitage in the geopolitical periphery of sacred mountains and empowered seashores, this king did just the opposite: in the guise of a customary royal progress which might exhibit a fluorishing kingdom, and with Dutch Company escort, he proceeded ceremoniously to found the Palace of Surakarta, "Finest in the World." From the late eighteenth

century on (and particularly from 1800 on, after the formal establishment of the Dutch East Indies colonial government), this palace grew to represent a world of "Javanese" difference in terms of customs, language, literature, and so on—all the essential lines of an identity that by the early twentieth century would be recognized, in retrospect, as a typically cultural identity. That is, in contradistinction to the increasingly undeniable and unnerving Dutch intrusion into Central Javanese affairs, the discursive figure of "Java" would gradually appear, in palace manuscripts and through court ceremony, to represent all that such a foreign presence could *not* be. In the process, the Palace of Surakarta would become an ideal site of origins, a siting of the past in the present, a privileged locus for much that might be recalled and recovered as, somehow, "authentically Javanese" (*asli Jawa*).[22]

It was precisely this siting (rather than the initial contradiction upon which it was founded, of course) that informed the librarian's reservations about the real authority or authenticity of Mini's Grand Audience Hall. For him, there could only be one such hall, one truly royal representation, and that was secluded well within the labyrinthine walls of the Palace of Surakarta proper. No doubt haunted by these sorts of reservation concerning the authority behind their newly projected culture kingdom, the Soehartos devoted special attention—regarding both construction and purpose—to their own Audience Hall. Thus the hall was designed, as Mrs. Soeharto put it, in a "Central Javanese architectural style . . . strong enough to last hundreds of years without losing its beauty or authenticity [*keaslian*]."[23] Although one might expect that over the years such a hall would *gain* an aura of authenticity, a sort of cultural patina, the First Lady assumed the opposite: a possible loss of authenticity over time. Within this framework,

22. An analysis of the emergence and elaboration of the figure of "Java" in Surakarta palace manuscripts from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, appears in Pemberton (1994) chapters one through three. For the purpose of the present essay, the key point here is that such a figure was produced, *in Javanese*, in contradistinction to the presence of Dutch colonial rule. What would become, from the early twentieth century on, a purely cultural subject of identity was not simply the consequence of essentially Orientalist logics imposed from without (and gradually imitated or incorporated by native Javanese), nor was it (or is it) simply evidence of an essential culture (precolonial or otherwise) asserting its presence from within. Instead, the figure of "Java" articulated a working through of the contradictions implicit in Surakarta's origins as it reproduced a world of difference ideally at odds with Dutch rule. Because this difference was founded upon the seminal contradiction of an *absented* realm, "Java" was destined to continuously recover an originary gap. The figure of "Java" thus remained as a trace of ambivalent origins: a product of colonial conditions determined to deny its own conditions of production. As such, this trace of the past would significantly haunt, as we shall see, the New Order present.

23. *Pendjelasan Tentang Projek Miniatur Indonesia* (1971:6).

authenticity does not accrue, but on the contrary must be built in as a unique quality which will survive through time, in spite of time, so long as the building stands. For the Audience Hall is founded upon a temporality in which change, any change at all, is detrimental. Here, time is not simply effaced (as is the case with Mini's monuments), but instead self-consciously opposed with a construction built to last hundreds of years: a construction always already "authentic."

Moving towards the Audience Hall one confronts the Indonesia Portal (Gapura Indonesia), an entrance normally kept locked, as the guidebook explains, yet opening for "grand rituals" (*upacara-upacara kebesaran*).[24] Such was the 1975 dedication of Mini, when guests paraded through the Indonesia Portal on their way to the Audience Hall and observed mass folk dances on the frontal plaza, the so-called Pancasila Royal Plaza or "Alun-alun Pancasila"—*pancasila* referring to the Republic of Indonesia's Five Principles, and *alun-alun* recalling royal plazas like the one which faces the Palace of Surakarta. Lest the resonances of royal aspirations be lost on those attending "Beautiful Indonesia"'s dedication, an offering was made on ritual behalf of the Audience Hall, with Imelda Marcos planting a banyan tree—*the* emblem for Javanese royalty as well as the logo for the New Order's dominant political organization, Golkar—in Mrs. Soeharto's orchid garden at Mini. For the dedication ceremony, the commemorative album recorded:

> Praise be to God Almighty, on Sunday, April 20, 1975, the performance of the Official Opening Ceremony of the "Beautiful Indonesia" Mini Park went well—safely, in good order, and in an atmosphere that was cheerful yet reverent and exalted. . . . With God Almighty's help and blessing, the weather on April 20 was fine.[25]

Not unlike the founding of the Palace of Surakarta two-hundred and thirty years earlier, when royal banyan trees (uprooted from the palace's previous location in an unprecedented fashion and carted off like grotesque potted plants en route to transplantation) were also ceremoniously planted and all was, as eighteenth-century Javanese texts proclaimed, suddenly "in good order," the founding of the Grand Place-of-Importance Audience Hall at Mini circumvented the implications of the past by reclaiming them in the form of built-in authenticity. While the procession of 1745 recalled the royal progress to perform as a sign of what the procession was not—the manifestation of a continuously flourishing kingdom—the

24. *Pendjelasan Tentang Projek Miniatur Indonesia* (1971:6).
25. *Kenang-kenangan Peresmian* (1975:20).

dedication of an oversized Audience Hall elaborated on that contradiction, with its reference to origins. For the hall lay at the heart of "Beautiful Indonesia"'s logic of authenticity and yet in its very "Palace"-ness, it recalled not only what the grand hall may be, but what it is not: a "Palace" elsewhere. With its novel durability of design and utility as a site for inhabiting "tradition," the Audience Hall would perhaps escape the quotation marks around "Beautiful Indonesia" by establishing itself as an original source, a cultural center of reference for future generations, the new locus of a cultural inheritance.

In June of 1971 when proposals for Mini were first being drawn up, the Soehartos were, in fact, already busy planning their own extensive mausoleum complex in Central Java: the Mt. Awakening complex, Giri Bangun, from *bangun*, a word that immediately calls to mind the New Order's central ideology of *pembangunan* or "development." Situated atop a mountain adjacent to a mountain holding the mausoleumed remains of Central Javanese royalty, Mt. Awakening was provided glistening marble columns, lavishly carved woodwork, gilded pillars, and other signs of respect that substantially outshone those of its neighbor. For according to the plans, the tombs on Mt. Awakening would, someday, hold the sanctified remains of President and Mrs. Soeharto: future-anterior royal ancestors of New Order "Java." By the time of Mini's dedication on April 20, 1975 (with the founding of the Grand Audience Hall as a point of cultural origins and Mt. Awakening looming ahead as a point of predestined return, thus fulfilling the well-known Javanese mystical formulation *sangkan paran*, "origin and destination"), the Soehartos would appear to have already arrived. And yet, despite the fact that the weather on April 20 was fine, as Mini's commemorative album recalled, the founders of "Beautiful Indonesia"'s Audience Hall would be haunted precisely by their own originality.

Preparing for the Past

From 1968 on, New Order officials had sought, without success, to convert the Palace of Surakarta into a designated "national monument." (At several points, the Soeharto inner circle apparently even offered to buy sections of the palace outright.) In spite of (and in part because of) increasing attention from Jakarta throughout the 1970s and '80s, this palace, however, did not really open up to the cultural visions of the New Order elite. Unlike its rival colonial-era palace sixty-six kilometers down the road in Yogyakarta, the Palace of Surakarta remained relatively inaccessible and did not transform itself into a refurbished "palace," a "living museum." Instead, it maintained its legendary position as a

fortress of the hidden, a bastion believed to contain behind its walls a cultural wealth of all that is authentically Javanese, a fortress whose physical condition was rapidly deteriorating to the dismay of its would-be patrons in Jakarta. Repeated attempts at renovation were either rejected by palace officials or simply derailed through royal recalcitrance. This peculiar resistance on the part of the palace unnerved those Jakartans who wished to recover the origins of Java, and thus attracted them all the more to Surakarta's decaying fortress and its hidden potential.

Motivated by the very elusiveness of Surakarta's Java and the correlative sense that something must be missing in "Beautiful Indonesia," that the dream kingdom was still somehow incomplete, the Soehartos' Our Hope Foundation went on to construct what most modern kingdoms, at one point or another, produce: a museum. In April of 1980, exactly one five-year plan after the formal opening of "Beautiful Indonesia," Mini's "Indonesia Museum" was dedicated. This sizeable addition to the culture park included one large building—the museum proper—surrounded by a moat with bridge, various outer pavilions, ornamental turrets, and formal gardens. According to the architect, the Indonesia Museum's design was "based on traditional Balinese architecture."[26] Perhaps the New Order architect encountered the same problems as the Dutch creator of the "Nederlandsche Paviljoen" (Netherlands Exhibition Hall) in the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition in Paris, for Mini's museum bears an astonishing resemblance to that late colonial structure. The 1931 Dutch architect, W. J. G. Zweedijk, had hoped to produce "a copy of the Borobudur temple" but abandoned this plan due to its "impracticality," choosing, instead, "Balinese turrets" and "a temple gate from South Bali" as dominant motifs.[27] Or perhaps, in light of Bali's international fame—Java, after all, is best known as coffee—Our Hope Foundation felt compelled to give Bali more prominence than its Javanese sponsors desired. In either case, half a century after the construction of the Nederlandsche Paviljoen, the same motifs and design would reappear in Mini's newest addition, reflecting a coincidental vision of two cultural-political empires. With the Javanese Audience Hall providing a natural center and cynosure, the Balinese-styled Indonesia Museum represented an auxiliary emblem of cultural inheritance.

The museum's interior program, however, returns us to Java. Borrowing its title from the Indonesian national motto "Unity in Diversity," the first floor presents a large painting entitled "The Indonesian Image" which depicts a map dotted with dwarfish couples in customary costumes, standing in front of tiny customary

26. *Museum Indonesia* (1980:28–29). The architect was Ida Bagus Tugur of Udayana University.
27. Zeijlstra (1931:33).

houses set within a tropical richness of flora and fauna. The guidebook explains: "the country in all its natural and cultural wealth."[28] Filled mostly with display cases (housing puppets, masks, "custom" costumed mannequins, and an entire Javanese gamelan orchestra), The Unity in Diversity display's dominating central exhibit highlights a wedding ceremony—an enormous affair with participants and guests—behind glass: the "Diorama of a Traditional Wedding Ceremony for Central Javanese Aristocrats." The placard in front of the display notes that this is a scene from a Surakarta wedding. The guidebook adds: "To demonstrate the spirit of Unity in Diversity, the wedding ceremony is attended by guests wearing traditional costumes from almost all areas of Indonesia."[29] Represented in this form, the spirit of unity produces novel results. Attending Surakarta's aristocratic wedding are, for example, a woman in a grass skirt and several men with aboriginal feather-headdresses. It is precisely in light of these unintentionally comic images of diversity, however, that Mrs. Soeharto's idea of cultural unity is constituted. For attired in velvet, jewels, and fine batik, the plushly dressed Central Javanese mannequin bridal couple look relatively grand as they hold ceremonial court, blankly reflecting the First Lady's own ruling Javanese vision.

The very seriousness of this vision would be made public just three years after the erection of the Indonesia Museum when, on May 8, 1983, three thousand dignitaries and members of Indonesia's elite (including the vice president, members of the cabinet, top-ranking military officials, members of Javanese royal families, and foreign diplomats) assembled in "Beautiful Indonesia." Inside Mini's Audience Hall, the guests sat for three hours as they observed an "authentic Javanese wedding ceremony" of unprecedented grandeur: the wedding of President and Mrs.Soehartos' daughter, Siti Hediati, to Major Prabowo Subianto, a professional army man with an unusually fast-rising career.[30] In a near-perfect conflation of two realms of authority—contemporary politics and "traditional" customs: given the privileged status of such affairs among Javanese royalty in

28. *Museum Indonesia* (1980:47). There is absolutely no evidence that Mini's museum actually borrowed ideas from the Nederlandsche Paviljoen, yet an almost identical glass painting of the Indies appeared in the 1931 exhibition.

29. *Ibid.*, 9.

30. The groom was reported by *Tapol* as "the army's fastest rising star" ("Junta . . . and Dynasty?" *Tapol* 59 [1983]:9). At the time of the wedding, Prabowo was a deputy commander of the 81st detachment of Kopassandha, the elite paratroop corps, and was rumored to have killed Nicolau Lobato, Fretilin's commander. (This rumor turned out to be false.) Son of the prominent Indonesian economist, Dr. Soemitro Djojohadikusumo, Prabowo is said to have been introduced to the Soeharto daughter by Colonel (now General) Wismoyo Arismundar, Commander of Kopassandha and second husband of Mrs. Soeharto's younger sister.

high colonial times, what scene could possibly be more authentic for effecting this sort of conflation?—the Mini wedding appeared to reconfirm the expressly "cultural" nature of the Soehartos' rule, as nearly the entire apparatus of state officialdom was brought into the service of "Javanese custom." A sample excerpt from the Indonesian daily *Kompas* thus reads as follows:

> Vice President Umar Wirahadikusumah (attending the wedding with his wife) and Commander of the Armed Forces General M. Jusuf acted as official witnesses for this. Meanwhile, President Soeharto accompanied by Inspector-General of Development Sudjono Humardani and [Inspector-General of Social Affairs] Ibnu Hartomo, were ceremonial representatives. The Islamic official performing the marriage was the head of the regional office of the Department of Religious Affairs, K. H. Moch. Nasir.
>
> . . . Prof. Dr. Soemitro Djojohadikusumo [father of the groom] was attired in a matching "truntum" batik traditional black coat, and Surakartan headdress.[31]

Mini had been conceived by the Soehartos as evidence of an enormous cultural inheritance; Siti's wedding would bring the full import of such an inheritance home. It was as if the mannequins of the Indonesia Museum's royal wedding diorama had come to life and were represented, for a moment, by the Soeharto entourage before the Soehartos themselves assumed, as they would one day, their legendary position on Mt. Awakening as rulers who had once reigned in a glorious Javanese past. In the meantime the dioramic bridal couple stood poised, not unlike the costumed figures and shadow puppets in the museum's other first-floor glass cases, anticipating future recallings, a future past already present.

But there is still more to the Indonesia Museum. While the first floor trains the visitor's eye to focus on Indonesia's "diversity" (*keaneka ragaman*), the second floor, Man and Environment, is explicitly educational: a domestic miscellany of household objects, dioramas of everyday customs and rites, a mounted deerhead ("Donated by Mrs. Soeharto"), dozens of miniature models of customary houses, barns, and modes of transportation. The third and crowning floor, Arts and Crafts, houses the museum's requisite treasures: batik, ceramics and carvings, silver ornaments, semiprecious stones and jewelry, Indonesian currency, a twenty-five foot copper Tree of Life ("full of symbolism," the guidebook reminds us), an

31. *Kompas*, 9 May 1983.

ornate bowl filled with marble eggs, and a large marble book encrusted with glass flowers, donated, again, by the First Lady.[32] As Sukamdani Gitosardjono (Deputy Manager of the "Beautiful Indonesia" Project and Mrs. Soeharto's brother-in-law) has pointed out, "throughout the park, the First Lady's hand may be recognized."[33]

Like its European predecessors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (including Jakarta's own Central Museum established by the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences), Mini's museum is dedicated to training the eye (Ground Floor), educating the mind (Second Floor), and storing the cultural valuables (Top Floor). *Unlike* its predecessors, however, this museum holds almost nothing old; there are no antiques here. Indeed, save some outdated Indonesian currency, the deerhead, and a few other items, everything else in this museum is (or was, in 1980) spanking new. When asked whether the Indonesia Museum is really a museum since its collection consists of new objects, Mrs. Soeharto offered this response: "We may call it a museum now because someday everything in it will be antique [or 'old'; the Javanese is *kuno*]."[34] What the First Lady seems to have had in mind is not a future time when the collection shows age—when, say, mannequins deteriorate and begin to lose fingers, or the copper Tree of Life corrodes—but just the opposite: an already arrived future of continued changelessness when the collection can be called "antique" simply on the assumption that it will exist, like the Grand Audience Hall, hundreds of years later. The real appeal of marble eggs and books lies, after all, in their promise of showing no signs of change: cultural treasures forever new *and* antique. Reiterating the future anterior sense of authenticity by which the Audience Hall is secured and the Soeharto royal tombs are luxuriously prepared, "Beautiful Indonesia"'s 1980 addition thus may be called a "museum"—in light of the novelty of its antiquities—now.[35]

32. The marble book reads "With Flowers We Express Love, With Flowers We Develop" (*Dengan Bunga Kita Nyatakan Kasih Sayang, Bersama Bunga Kita Membangun*), a two-lined bit of poetry. The first line is European derived—the gift of "love"—while the second, unrelated line borrows the New Order's development slogan "With 'X' [Birth Control, for example] We Develop" and possibly refers to Mrs. Soeharto's thriving orchid industry. An unintended reading of *bunga* (flower) is "financial interest."

33. "Taman Mini: Reflections of Indonesian Life and Thought" (1982:14).

34. This was reported to me by a senior official at the Indonesia Museum. The unfortunate official had worked happily for years at Jakarta's Central Museum, but because of his talents as a polyglot "suddenly was transferred to Mini" where he remained on call as a guide for foreign visitors.

35. This newness is striking if one visits old local museums like the Radyapustaka in Surakarta, a colonial-era hangover which has yet to be successfully integrated into the national museum system. From the Department of Education and Culture's point of view, the Radyapustaka's enormous mechani-

Meanwhile, of course, the Palace of Surakarta remained as a remnant reminder of all that the Soehartos' dream kingdom might not be, museum or no museum: the trace of an absence, a sign that something might still be missing, an indication of yet-unrealized constructions of desire. Occasionally, this absence was particularly tangible. At the 1983 Mini wedding, the Soehartos had provided several first-row "VIP-VIP" chairs for Javanese royalty, yet one of these chairs—that prepared for the chief enigmatic trace of Central Java's long genealogy of kings—remained conspicuously unfilled. Surakarta's incumbent Axis of the Cosmos (Pakubuwana XII) apparently was unwilling to acknowledge a transfer of cultural power to the authorities behind "Beautiful Indonesia." One and one-half years following the Mini wedding, the threat of such an absence reasserted itself, however, more forcibly than ever before. For on the night of January 31, 1985, all the core buildings of the Palace of Surakarta burned to the ground. The very nightmare of historic ephemerality, of the termination of "tradition" against which Mini was so studiously constructed, had apparently, in Surakarta, been realized.

While official government reports cited an electrical short-circuit as the cause of the fire, members of the royal family and many older Surakartans thought otherwise: "It was already predetermined," noted one palace-affiliated mystic.[36] Long before the fire, prophecies had, in fact, already revealed that this Javanese palace would not survive two hundred and fifty years. 1985 marked two hundred and forty Western years of its existence, or two hundred and forty-seven Javanese years, depending upon one's calendrical preference. "You can believe in this or not, but *these* are the realities," observed the king himself amidst the charred ruins of his palace.[37] Indeed, from the early twentieth century on, palace prophecies had foreseen the end of the kingdom of "Java" represented by the Palace of Surakarta, that virtual "Java" continuously reconstituted in light of the increasingly invasive presence of Dutch colonial rule. When Surakarta's long-reigning tenth Axis of the Cosmos (Pakubuwana X, r. 1893-1939) died, most ominously, on the magically charged Javanese New Year's Day of 1939, just before the total collapse of the colonial empire, Surakartans knew that the prophecies had been realized. Even the palace's largest, notoriously potent gong, Sir Surak—*surak*, "the noise of

cal antique clocks (*jam antik*), Victorian calliope-like "Gamelan-Machine," or "Gift from Napoleon" vase (with what appear to be the dried remnants of the original flower arrangement), contain a headache of cultural connections to a colonial past.

36. Mloyomiluhur, in the Indonesian daily *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 4 February 1985.

37. *Suara Merdeka*, 4 February 1985 (emphasis added).

spectators cheering"—ceased to sound and would maintain an eerie silence ever after. The contradiction of the palace's own creation, of a model "Java" always positioned ideally just beyond colonial administrative reach, had retraced its origins back to a prophetic conclusion. And the 1939 coronation of the deceased king's predecessor was in fact eclipsed and subsumed under the more generalized rubric of a novel bicentennial of the kingdom—even though it had not dawned on this palace, in the mid-nineteenth century, to hold a centennial—which commemorated *realm*, rather than ruler. What was thought to remain, in effect, was the palatial shell of a kingdom, inhabited by prophetically misfortuned descendants. Thus when the 1985 fire devoured even this, the full force of prophecy simply reiterated its logic of predetermination. Only this time *nothing* would remain save, perhaps, memories of what should have now disappeared.

Enter President Soeharto with a four-billion-rupiah "Committee for the Reconstruction of the Surakarta Palace," a decree —"Traditional rituals *must* be continued!"—and this thought: "Reconstructing the Palace of Surakarta which burned to the ground recently is not intended as a return to feudalism [*feodalisme*] or to a feudal government in Indonesia, but rather to preserve the center for developing national culture, *particularly Javanese culture*."[38] In response to overly inquisitive news headlines—"The Palace of Surakarta has been destroyed by fire. Heaven forbid! What sort of sign is this?"[39]—General Benny Murdani, the terrorizing kingpin of the Soeharto regime's intelligence apparatus, immediately moved to put an end to all prophetic theorizing: "Reporters will *not* reach their own conclusions. The cause of the fire was an electrical short-circuit."[40] And state architects, in turn, assured the public that the reconstructed palace would appear, upon completion, absolutely authentic (*asli*):

> The forms of the buildings will not be changed, but made just like the previous ones. Only the internal construction will be changed, exchanged with steel and concrete. The old main pillars of teak wood will be exchanged with concrete ones whose exterior will be panelled with wood. . . . According to the Minister of Public Works, concrete and steel constructions are stronger than those of wood, and what is important is that they are able to resist raging fires. . . . "Basically, we

38. *Suara Merdeka*, 6 February 1985 (emphasis added).
39. *Minggu Pagi*, 3 February 1985.
40. *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 4 February 1985 (emphasis added).

will make every possible effort to *restore the asli form with modern technology*," he noted.[41]

Thus in 1987, a newly recuperated Palace of Surakarta was dedicated, a palace, as newspapers put it, of "even greater elegance and greater authority."[42]

But comments from those closest to the old palace were not as optimistic. The customary reply from longterm palace servants faced with this construction of "even greater elegance" was, in its very understatement, implicitly devastating: "Quite handsome, but . . ."[43] Within the space of this ellipsis remained a difference that reiterated, through absence, the difference across which the authenticity of "Java" is instituted. Just as 1939 marked the prophetic passing of Surakarta's king and thereby affirmed the sense that there had existed, at one time, a true Axis of the Cosmos (while at the same time a bicentennial had extended the realm of "Java" beyond palace walls through its novel celebration of origins), the 1985 passing of the palace into ominous flames reaffirmed the sense that there had indeed existed a true palace, an authentic space now placed in the *past*. It was precisely this conclusion that would be avoided with the returning of the palace to its authentic form if "tradition" were to reassert itself. The ellipsis disclosing difference would itself be erased. By this I do not mean to say that there somehow had existed a prior realm of pure difference in which authenticity was then, or even now in retrospect, immediately self-evident. Indeed, the ideal figure of "Java" emerged and had flourished under conditions, primarily colonial, that appeared to demand the displacement of difference: from the displaced kingdom of 1745 ritually circumvented (with the help of the Dutch East Indies Company) in the form of a "royal progress," retraced back to the 1939 bicentennial displacement of the vacated throne, and back even further, perhaps, to the 1980s displacement of the palace itself.

And yet, the New Order's 1987 recovery of the palace from ashes—thereby circumventing the difference between what is "authentic" and what is not; between the old palace and the new—constituted a somewhat different, though undoubtedly related, means of cultural retrieval. For while the palace retraced its origins back to their prophetic conclusion in the all-consuming light of the fire, the Reconstruction Committee, led by President Soeharto, arrived at its own conclusion: "Traditional rituals must be continued!" That is, while palace prophecy

41. *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 9 February 1985 (emphasis added).
42. *Suara Merdeka*, November 1987.
43. I am grateful to Nancy Florida for calling this provocative comment to my attention.

announced, effectively, "This will all end!" New order "tradition" insisted on just the opposite: "This can't end; it must go on!" The restored palace was designed to exhibit a wholly continuous authenticity which would survive, like Mini's Audience Hall itself, endlessly. Thus for all the similarities between the displacement of difference upon which the palace was founded and the effacement of historical difference built into "Beautiful Indonesia"'s future anterior mode of cultural reproduction, there might remain this dissimilarity: palace prophecy is perfectly capable of recognizing that one's days may be numbered, of foreseeing an end; New Order "tradition," by definition, is not.

Now this apparent difference between prophetic foresight and, as it were, future anterior foresight of course calls to mind the possibility of a shift to what Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson, and others have recognized as a postmodern condition which (through sustained depthlessness, unparodic pastiche, deferred signification, and so on) effects an effacement of history, a time always already present.[44] Many of "Beautiful Indonesia"'s attractions—a novel museum housing new antiquities, the "Javanese" wedding attended by aboriginal guests, "Borobudur"-ness suspended in virtual reality—suggest just such a shift. Indeed, the site of Mrs. Soeharto's original inspiration leading to the founding of Mini, Disneyland—"I was inspired to build a project of that sort in Indonesia, only more complete and more perfect"—stands, in many respects, as an unintended hallmark of the postmodern condition. But "Beautiful Indonesia," despite its requisite quotation marks, is not simply a Southeast Asian citation of, for example, Tokyo Disneyland. For what the Soehartos long to recover is a space of cultural reproduction, "particularly Javanese," *already* well practiced in reproducing itself in the idealized form of "Java." That is, the longing for the "more complete" itself recalls a specific logic of reproduction—the recalling of origins through the Javanese "authentic," *asli*—inherently foreign to other, possibly postmodern, theme parks: the reproduction of "Java" under colonial conditions. If contemporary international travellers visiting Mini discern certain postmodern effects in its Disney-like attractions, they may do so because the object of their gaze has already been prefigured, in part, from *within* the postcolonial space of cultural reproduction that the figure of "Java" would foreshadow, and not wholly transposed from without. In short, although the conditions of advanced capitalism

44. On the "future anterior" mode, see Lyotard (1984). Fredric Jameson has lingered on the possibilities of pastiche and the temporalities of retro in Jameson (1984). A more recent essay by Jameson pushes the centrality of temporality even further in what he calls "an ultimate historicist breakdown" (1989:525). For a critique of postmodernity in Japan, see Ivy (1989).

that facilitate the dissemination of Disney inspirations like those realized in Mini no doubt accelerate postmodern effects, these effects, in places like New Order Indonesia, necessarily lean upon a trace of the modern colonial past. It is precisely the history of that past—the very coloniality of "Java"—which Mini would circumvent through its obsessive recovery of "tradition."

Thus while "Beautiful Indonesia" emerged in the wake of the 1965–66 killings as a vision of secured cultural inheritance which might displace the violence of the New Order's own origins, it did so en route to reiterating a more long-term displacement of origins: that upon which the dominant object of its cultural desire—the Surakartan figure of "Java"—was, under colonial conditions, founded. Given such conditions, this figure of desire from the outset was, as we have seen, fundamentally split. For while "Java" flourished in colonial Surakarta (through literary and ritual reproduction) as a sign of all that Dutch rule might *not* represent, it was increasingly capable of foreseeing (through prophecy) its own end. It is just this sort of terminal conclusion, of course, that Mini, and, by extension, the Soeharto regime itself, must continuously deny through repetitive citation, temporal displacement, and so on. To the extent that one might read into Mini's surplus of citation evidence of a patently postmodern condition—a novel global stylistics of pastiche, perhaps—such a reading necessarily ushers in its own form of denial, not just of the particular conditions surrounding "Beautiful Indonesia"'s conception, but of the highly modern colonial legacy of "Javanese" citations which foreshadowed New Order cultural longings. And with this denial what is *overlooked* is the terminal force of the ellipsis I noted a moment ago: the trace of a difference which proclaims, in effect, that the end has already come.

Although the persistent denial of such a conclusion will no doubt motivate further expansions of "Beautiful Indonesia" (in its broadest discursive sense), still, one wonders about the particular status of Mini in the near future as the Soeharto regime faces it final years. Protests of the sort that opposed Mini's construction in 1971 appear, at the moment, unthinkable. Yet might not the park itself one day stand as an unintended monument to an era strangely devoted to "tradition," to a bygone time founded upon a peculiar sense of temporality? Or as an unintended museum to the New Order past which might be called a museum because everything in it would be, indeed, old? Then, perhaps, Indonesians might visit such a museum and note, not uncritically, "Quite handsome, but . . ."

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