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The Last Tiger in East Java: Symbolic Continuity in Ecological Change

Abstract

The present paper examines beliefs about tigers in East Java, Indonesia. There, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the tiger serves as a symbol, functioning especially as a complement to shamans and ancestral spirits. The tiger also acts as a symbol of nature, though not of uncontrolled nature — the animal guards the order of both the jungle and the village, and serves as an agent of the supernatural beings that own the forest. The Javan tiger's numbers have declined drastically in the face of ecological change, to the point where it is doubtful that any still remain. The tiger is very much alive as a symbol, however; this aspect of the creature has adapted to its new situation far better than the animal itself. At present the role of tiger-as-symbol has changed, so that now it guards not only nature but the Islamic faith as well.

With the disappearance of the actual tiger, the panther has come to take over many of the roles once held by the larger cat. This shift has been facilitated by the fact that both animals occupy the same linguistic category.

Key words : Java — ancestors — shaman — were-tigers — symbolism

THE Javan tiger (*Panthera tigris sondaicus*) is for all practical purposes extinct, the last one having been shot, it is said, by either President Suharto of Indonesia, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, or the late Shah of Iran. In East Java, however, this fact is not generally acknowledged, and many people remain convinced that, rare though it may be, the tiger still roams the forests.

The present paper examines beliefs about tigers among the Javanese, Osing, and Madurese peoples of East Java, detailing how the animal continues to function as a symbolic construct in the midst of the changing social and ecological reality that has brought about its biological demise. One central question raised here is what happens to a symbol when its antecedent object disappears; although, as I have discussed elsewhere, the significance of a symbol consists of the intersection of meanings read into it by its users, these meanings are usually interconnected with the symbolic object itself (see WESSING 1978b).

TIGERS AND PEOPLE IN NATURE

In the past the tiger was a rather common animal in Java (VAN BALEN 1914, 384–61). In 1822 the area between Panarukan and Banyuwangi in East Java abounded with them, making some areas unsafe for livestock (KERN 1941, 295; BAERVELDT 1950, 20). The ecological niches of tigers and humans overlapped considerably: both evolved on the forest edge, where they hunted essentially the same game, humans possibly scavenging on the tiger's leavings (SUNDQUIST 1983, 50; SAUER 1952, 23; LEWIN 1984).

The tiger's preference for hooved animals brought it into close contact with humans, since hooved creatures not only form part of the village livestock but are among the wildlife attracted to feed on the village fields (SEIDENSTICKER and SUYONO 1976, 66–67). Originally tigers protected the fields by preying on this wildlife, rarely molesting humans and their cattle (BAERVELDT 1950, 80; PERRY 1965, 170–71; SCHALLER 1973, 6).

Tigers, humans, gardens, wildlife, and livestock, then, constituted "an integral and fragile web . . . molded and bound by the nature of their resource base and the forces of their environment" (SEIDENSTICKER and SUYONO 1976, 60). Both tigers and humans adapted to an environment that included each other's presence, the tiger's adaptation being biologic while man's was symbolic and cultural.

The opening of the forests for plantations in the mid-nineteenth century resulted in the in-migration of thousands of laborers from Central Java and Madura. The ecological impact of this population shift was "of a greater magnitude than all the past influences of man on Java combined" (SEIDENSTICKER and SUYONO 1976, 73). Forest products and the local game were quickly exhausted (BRYANT 1973, 87; WHITMORE 1984, 266), and the use of guns allowed hunters to kill both the tiger and his prey more efficiently than ever before (compare RAMBO 1978, 213-14). As a result the number of tigers declined drastically. The dynamic balance described above came to an end, its place taken by a predatory relationship in which tigers, deprived of their prey, began to raid villages (BAERVELDT 1950, 82). With this shift the tiger's image changed to that of a ruthless killer and "rapacious tyrant," who devoured cattle and killed an average of 2,500 people a year (ROBINSON 1966; KERKHOVEN 1879, 503, 510; KARTOMI 1976, 12; MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 189).

In 1822 the government started employing tiger hunters (KERN 1941, 295). By the early 1940s, with only about two to three hundred Javan tigers left (PRIYO SM and TOTOK HARTOYO 1991, 3; PRIYO SOEMANDOYO 1988, 58), there was talk of creating nature reserves for them (BAERVELDT 1950, 35). SMIT, who was incarcerated near Sukamade during the early Japanese occupation, mentions seeing only one tiger during this time (1982, 129). After WWII the tiger's numbers declined even further. One informant, who used to catch a tiger a year in his steel trap, claimed to have caught his last one in 1962. As late as the end of the 1960s tigers could still be shot in the Banyuwangi Residency of East Java, but after that they rapidly disappeared. The Javan tiger now appears to be gone forever, though its extinction has been difficult to confirm owing to the animal's retiring nature.

Efforts to protect any specimens that might possibly remain in the Meru Betiri nature reserve have been hampered by an ever-growing human population and by competition for funds from important national development schemes (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 195; GREENBERG et al. 1991, 45). Complicating the situation is the fact that protecting the tiger involves preserving its entire habitat and ecosystem; this includes dealing with the often neglected human factor, making it a social as well

as an ecological problem (MCNEELEY and Wachtel 1988, 328).

Media reports have raised the general awareness of ecological problems, and popular playwrights such as RENDRA (1980) and IKRANAGARA (n.d.) have argued against overexploitation of Indonesia's natural resources (activities that have not, incidentally, always been kindly viewed by the government [compare FOLEY 1987]). Nevertheless, the tiger's plight remains poorly understood by the Indonesian public. City people, including those involved in conservation and the search for tigers in Meru Betiri, are sometimes surprised that the animal is not seen more often — people expect them to just jump out of the woods (ANONYMOUS 1991a; 1991b). The belief that tigers remain in the wild is common even among villagers (DINAH SUSI T. 1991, 15).

The confusion about the tiger's status is partially linguistic in origin. The two types of big cats on Java, the panther (*Panthera pardus*) and the tiger (*Panthera tigris*), are commonly referred to by the same Javanese word, *macan* (compare TIM PENYUSUN KAMUS 1990, 298–99). The spotted panther is called *macan tutul* and the black panther *macan kumbang*, while the tiger is known, among other things, as *macan loreng*. The name *macan loreng* also applies to one of the three folk categories into which the tiger is classified: *macan loreng* (the ordinary striped tiger), *macan sruni* (a tiger whose stripes are said to run mainly on its rump), and *macan gembong* (a grayish, lighter-colored animal) (HADI EKO Y.Y. 1991, 11). In the Indonesian language the tiger is known as *harimau*, and in East Java it is also called *singa* (lion), showing up as *simo* in place-names (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1992a, 26; KAYAM 1992, 33).

The word *macan* is also applied to other felines. *Macan dahan* refers to the cat *Neofelis nebulosa*, while *macan reng-reng* (or *rem-rem*) denotes a type of tiger cat and *macan tapes* a striped wildcat. *Macan garambis* is the lion.

In common usage, then, there is no distinction between tigers and panthers: if one asks whether a certain cat was a panther (*macan*) or a tiger (*harimau*), one might be told that it was a *harimau tutul* (spotted tiger), i.e., a panther (compare KAYAM 1992, 3). Thus, though in the popular mind there are many tigers (*macan*) in East Java, newspaper reports of possible tiger sightings are very difficult to evaluate.

THE TIGER IN POPULAR BELIEF

Traditional beliefs about the tiger may be divided into two major categories: beliefs held mainly by the villagers, and beliefs relating to the Javanese courts. A third category, beliefs held by modern urbanites, is in a sense a combination of the two, with an admixture of European ideas;

this will be dealt with later.

In brief, villagers saw the tiger as an incarnation of the ancestral spirits who protect and monitor the behavior of those who live in the village, while the Javanese courts saw the tiger as the wild, uncontrolled aspect of the ruler, an aspect necessary for the defense of the realm but inimical to the civilized life of the court (WESSING 1992). These differing views paralleled the differences between the court and the village, or between the court and the forest (DOVE 1985, 12–14). Basically, though, the differences were mostly a matter of emphasis — beliefs about the tiger are fundamentally those of the village, and are rooted in the above-mentioned relationship between people, tigers, gardens, and wildlife (WESSING 1986, 2–9).

The Origin of the Tiger

In Southeast Asia it is often said that man and the tiger (along with the latter's putative forebear the cat) descend from a common ancestor (WESSING 1986, 10–12). The Naga of mainland Southeast Asia say that tiger, man, and spirit were brothers living together in a village together with their mother (HUTTON 1921, 529), an idea that also occurs in IKRANAGARA's play *The Great Anger of the Forest* (n.d.). A Javanese tale relates that long ago vegetarian tigers lived together with equally vegetarian people. Their diet consisted of *daun kentut* leaves (*Paederia foetida*), and ripe durian (*Durio zibethinus*). One day, when preparing the tigers' food, a person cut his finger, thereby adding a morsel of flesh to the tigers' lunch. The tigers liked the taste, and thus became wild animals (ANONYMOUS 1988, 47).

According to an informant on the north coast of East Java, tigers and crocodiles descended from the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law Syeh Sayyidina Ali, who symbolizes Islam's strength. It is from him that the tiger derives its power.¹

Thus the tiger is thought to be at least symbolically related to humans (WESSING 1986, 21–22; ANONYMOUS 1988, 47). As the above informant said, "The tiger has a human soul" (WESSING 1986; MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 133–34). This relationship is reflected in the words used for the tiger. In the forest, for example, where the word *macan* is avoided for fear that it will cause the tiger to appear, one of the terms applied to the animal is *nenek*, "grandparent" (from *nenek petua*, "apical ancestor"; compare NEILL 1973, 84).² Yet another name for the tiger is *kiai* or *kiai-ne*, a term often used for persons or things with magical or religious powers. This comes from the belief that tigers too possess such supernatural capabilities (SLAMET DJABARUDI 1990, 5); informants spoke of the

sakti (supernaturally empowered) *kiai gembong* who talked and walked on two legs.

The Forest and the Tiger

In Southeast Asia the forest is seen as a dangerous, mysterious place filled with supernatural forces, a place that should be avoided but that possesses rules similar, though not identical, to those of human society (BAERVELDT 1950, 80; SCHEFOLD 1989). The tiger is believed to have special powers relating to this forbidding place, where it is said to hold all in its control; one informant depicted the tiger as the steward of the forest, where it gains *kesaktian* (special powers) by fasting and meditating for forty-day periods in caves.³ One aspect of the tiger's *kesaktian* is the ability to disappear in the forest. In fact, it is believed that for a tiger it is taboo to be seen by a person;⁴ tigers that are observed are punished by having to fast for another forty days, possibly to regain their special powers.

CRAWFURD relates a Javanese tale in which "a tiger and a forest had united in close friendship, and they afforded each other mutual protection. When men wanted to take wood or leaves from the forest, they were dissuaded by their fear of the tiger, and when they would take the tiger he was concealed by the forest." Although the tale ends sadly in an ecological catastrophe that destroys both, it nevertheless illustrates the essential unity of the two (1820, vol. 2, 32–33).

With the increasing exploitation of the natural environment, the silent, forbidding (*angker*) woodlands near the villages have disappeared. People now conceive of "real forests," filled with tigers and *dhanyang* (guardian spirits),⁵ as existing some vague distance away (WESSING 1978a, 71). One of these is the Alas Purwo forest in Blambangan, regarded by many as a forbidding place whose *dhanyang* confuses people, preventing some who enter from returning home. The forest at Baluran is said to be guarded by a huge, wild-looking black figure that leaves tiger tracks. AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN writes of a shaman meditating in a cave in Central Java who was tested by the local *dhanyang* in the form of a tiger (1989, 13). There is also talk of tigers roaming the Baluran National Forest and Mt. Malang near Mt. Argopuro, though residents in the vicinity of Argopuro say that tigers live in the distance toward the east; locally only a few panthers are found.

To insure one's safety in the forest one should show proper respect for the tiger, asking its dispensation by saying, "*Embah* [a term of respect], please do not hurt me. I am Adam's descendant — please step aside and do not bother me." This is followed by a short prayer (*salawat*).

The reason for invoking Adam's name is the supposed common ancestry between tiger and man, the hope being that the tiger will not attack someone it realizes to be a descendant of the same progenitor. For similar reasons some people claim that it helps to take a cat along into the forest — the tiger, it is thought, is reluctant to attack those accompanying his putative kinsman (ANONYMOUS 1988, 47).

One elaboration of the idea that people and tigers have similar souls — or, as one informant put it, that all nature has essentially one soul — is the notion that people may somehow turn into tigers and vice versa. This notion finds expression in a cluster of beliefs concerning the relationship of tigers with *dhanyang* spirits, shamans, kings, and were-tigers.

Ancestors, Shamans, and Other Guardians

The *dhanyang*, as mentioned above, are spirits who guard or own the forest, and who also embody the fertility of a particular area. These tutelary spirits are often localized in large trees or stones,⁶ and frequently manifest themselves in the form of tigers. Every village, according to informants in Sumberwaru (Jember Regency) has a *dhanyang* that guards its welfare. The *dhanyang* tends to merge with the spirits of the village ancestors, especially the one who opened the area to human settlement (but compare TRIYOGA 1991, 55–56).⁷ The area controlled by a *dhanyang* is usually coextensive with the village established by the founding ancestor, although it may vary in extent from a single house site to an entire region depending upon the spirit's power.

Founding ancestors are thought to have had extraordinary capabilities, and, though dead, to retain something of those powers. Among these powers is the capacity to deal with tigers, believed to be incarnations of the natural forces of the locality. The ancestor of the Singa patrilineage in Lumajang, for example, is said to have transformed a tiger into a person in order to help him clear the forest (this tiger-person later married, and his descendants are were-tigers). In East Java and Madura it is believed that the soul of an ancestor who has mastered the magical arts may incarnate as a perhaps quite dangerous tiger unless his *ilmu* (spiritual power or knowledge) is transmitted to his descendants at the time of death (WESSING 1986, 49, 106–107); this notion has a firm foundation in the Islamic belief that people's deeds live on and may take physical form (SMITH 1979, 34, 36, 49, 60). It is said of Singa's male descendants that they became tigers at death unless their fingers were cut off — this no longer happens, a female descendant informed me, since the male line has died out.

The *dhanyang*-spirit of the founding ancestor, guarding the village in his tiger-form, may give aid to those who request it. Thus the *dhanyang* of Sumberwaru is said to accompany home those detained in the evening at the home of the village head, a descendant of the village founder (compare AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1992a, 87; 1992c; 1992d, 23). Tigers also guard the founding ancestor's grave. Such is the legend concerning the tomb of Embah Surgi, who came from Yogya (Mataram) and opened the area around Puger — this grave once had so much power, it is said, that birds flying over it would fall from the sky and passing thieves would stumble. The guardian tiger disappeared some years ago.

Founding ancestors are often religious leaders as well, since the person who pioneered a certain area is quite often the same person who introduced Islam there. Thus it is perhaps natural that tigers — or, more properly, *macan* in general — are often associated with the spirits and deeds of religious figures. There is, for example, a spotted panther said to protect the late *kiai* As'ad's *pesantren* (Islamic school) at Asem Bagus; when the founder of the school, *kiai* Samsul Arifin, cleared the forest in 1900 there were many *macan* in the area, but since these wanted an Islamic school to be built they willingly moved, one staying to guard the place. A tiger said to watch over Tanjung Keraksaan, an Islamic boarding school near Probolinggo, is identified in local legend as the incarnation of the *ilmu* of the school's founder (this particular tiger, unlike the *ilmu* incarnations mentioned above, is benign in nature since it is a manifestation of the founder's holy powers). Tigers may also guard the graves of religious leaders (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1992e, 27); one example is the *pasarean* (shrine) of Syeh Maulana Isak, whose spiritual essence is said to live on today (compare EKA NURCAHYO 1992).

Some claim that the supernatural tigers guarding Islamic schools may be created by a *kiai*, who does so using a *doa isim* (an incantation employing the name of God) found in the Qur'an book of Samsul Muarif (SS, EIR and SJS 1992, 39). The *kiai* must fast a certain number of days and follow other rules before pronouncing the formula. Strictly speaking the tigers so created are not supernatural animals but manifestations of the guardian angels associated with the Qur'an and the Ḥadīth (the traditions of the prophet).⁸

Many of these beliefs come together in stories centering on a white tiger named Kopok, who watches over the area of Mt. Gunung Agung (or Gunung Ringgit) near Situbondo.⁹ Some say that this tiger is associated with Kanjeng Raden Candrakusumah, whose grave he guards on Gunung Agung; the Kanjeng's descendants need not fear tigers, it is claimed, because Kopok chases them all off. Others explain that Kopok

protects the grave of Syeh Abdurrachman Rama Agung, who pioneered the area.¹⁰ Kopok is the Syeh's gift; because of him, thieves are afraid to operate in the area. Every year during the month of Ruwah offerings are made to the guardian tiger;¹¹ meat may not be included, however, since this would make the tiger wild.

The name Kopok, or Kopek, is linked to other tigers as well, such as one near Puger associated with Mt. Gunung Ringgit or Mt. Gunung Kapur (said to once have been a boat filled with coins). It is claimed that the mountain is guarded by a large snake and three tigers, of which Kopek, a white or gray animal, is the familiar of Embah Jirin, one of the area's pantheon of guardian spirits. AMARI (1990, 30) writes of a certain Sultan Agung of Mataram (r. 1614–46), who had a snake (*naga*) familiar named Kyai Kasur and two tiger familiars, Kyai and Nyai Kopek. These he rode when going to investigate the Muslim saint Ki Ageng Gribig, from whose body a mysterious glow was said to emanate. He then gave his familiars to the saint. Others say that the Situbondo Kopok was an actual white tiger, a familiar of the local female shaman Embah Yo. The tiger died of old age around the mid-1970s and may have been slightly deaf (*kopok*: Mad., hard of hearing; Jav., a runny ear); he would cross roads in front of cars, paying them no heed.

As Kopok's relation with Embah Yo shows, it is not solely with the spirits of ancestors or religious leaders that tigers are associated — they may also be linked with living shamans. There is a connection, of course, between shamans and the spirit world; indeed, it is a common belief in Southeast Asia that the prosperity of society depends on shamans who can contact the *dhanyang* and the souls of the dead. Shamans, in addition, are said to be in spiritual harmony with or have power over forests.¹²

Throughout East Java shamanistic powers are believed to descend either from parent to child or from grandparent to grandchild (WESSING 1986, 59–60, 83). A person with tiger-*ilmu* is said to have a menacing face, although his nature may be gentle. One shaman told me that it is unnecessary to change into a tiger physically — the *ilmu* is sufficient to make one's enemies perceive one as a tiger (although other people reported that this particular shaman could suddenly appear near one in the forest, an acknowledged tigrine quality).

The shaman is often helped by a tiger familiar (*macan gadungan*),¹³ the physical manifestation of the shaman's *ilmu* and often the incarnation of the shaman's spirit or of the magic of his ancestors (WESSING 1986, 63–74). According to most informants the role of familiar can only be filled by a striped tiger (*macan loreng*), although now — perhaps because of the scarcity of tigers — it is occasionally taken by a panther. Some say

that such tigers can walk on two legs. People often speak of shamans sending their tiger familiars on errands or using them to ride on (FURY AFRIANTO 1990, 39); the above-mentioned Embah Yo, among others, was said to travel in this way.

A final type of spirit-tiger is that which reincarnates from the soul of a person who has died of unnatural causes, or of a person being punished for some transgression (A. SAEROZI 1981, 81). In May 1991 there was a commotion in the Bondowoso Regency when reports circulated that a recently deceased woman — who was thought to have become rich on “sinful money” (*uang haram*) — had risen from her grave with the face of a tigress. She was eating chickens, it was said, and making a nuisance of herself around the neighborhood. Tigers of this type are generally seen as benign, however, and are often said to help their descendants; this woman may have become a tiger in expiation for the sins she had committed (compare MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 136). According to informants, such transformations occur forty days after death: between the first and seventh days the soul becomes a ghost, after which it turns into a tiger (though, if the person was evil, it may also become a pig or wild dog). In Situbondo such tigers are called forth by burning incense, making an offering, then throwing a pebble (the pebble is said to turn into the tigrine incarnation of the person’s soul). Shaman familiars, similarly, may be conjured up by simply burning incense. Either being may serve as a guardian.

Such incarnations are known as *macan onjangan* (tigers who can be called) and are only visible to those who have evil intentions or have transgressed the village rules of conduct. Throughout East Java people claim to use both tiger familiars and ancestral tigers in order to protect their houses and crops.¹⁴ Thieves who defy these guardians find themselves in all-night fights, and can only leave with the householder’s permission.

This introduces another important role of the supernatural tigers, particularly those associated with ancestors and shamans: that of guardians of the moral order. This role derives from the fact that both ancestors and shamans are themselves responsible for the moral welfare of the community (compounded by the fact that the two figures are often the same — as an informant in West Java pointed out to me, most people in these small communities are related and thus share a common shaman ancestor not too many generations back). The ancestral spirit-tiger is eminently suitable as a guardian of virtue, since it is the ancestors who laid down the *adat*, a set of near-sacred principles that regulates the conduct of the village. Among the tigers said to watch over the moral

well-being of the village (especially the purity of its women) are Kopok in Pacaron and Kasur in Wonorejo (Baluran). They know who is guilty and will not look at ordinary people; a favorite prey is illegitimate children, who can be seen by tigers through a special lens (KARTOMI 1976, 13).

Behavior in the forest is regulated as well, the tiger being the guardian of the forest and the manifestation of the forest's owners, the *dhanyang*. Several informants mentioned how a tiger picked a "naughty woman" out of the middle of a group of men with whom she was spending the night in the jungle. One is not supposed to show pride in the forest, eat directly from a pan, or wash one's dishes at a water source — one is expected, in other words, to be polite, considerate about sharing food and clean water, and orderly in one's behavior.

Tigers are also deeply angered by direct injuries. They are said to search for mates that have been captured (ANONYMOUS 1991a), and to otherwise defend themselves as a community. A story is told of four men who were in the Blambangan forest when a tiger cub appeared at their campsite. Three of the men caught the cub and ate it despite the protests of the fourth, who remonstrated that "he owns the forest." That night two dozen tigers appeared and killed the three men. The fourth man, when showing the remains to the authorities, said that he had been guarded by a pair of tigers who had licked him.

The tiger's powers serve not only for purposes of protection, however. As an informant from Gunung Agung explained, the tiger's human soul gives it curative powers as well. These powers can be evoked by calling the tiger in Sayyidina Ali's name, although to do so one must have *ilmu* acquired through fasting and meditation. The literature contains many references to medicinal uses of the tiger involving either its image or parts of its body (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1990, 21; MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 219; WESSING 1986). Tiger teeth are said to possess a power that can protect one from *ilmu sihir* (black magic, a constant worry in East Java), and the whiskers to comprise a potent poison; the latter, when carried, are supposed to make one appear ferocious and not to be trifled with.

Another part of the tiger's body, little reported in the literature but known throughout East Java, is the tiger's star-shaped *sengkel* bone, which only the striped tiger is said to have. This rare bone, containing the tiger's strength, is allegedly located in the animal's left shoulder and disappears within an hour of its death. The bone is used as an amulet that is supposed to make the owner very strong, invincible in fights, and able to lift great weights with ease. It also lends a person authority (*kewibawaan*).¹⁵

Finally, the tiger's very essence is felt to have power. In a poorly interpreted episode described by JUNGHUHN (1975, 119–20), a group of villagers literally tear the body of a dead tiger apart and bathe themselves and their weapons in the tiger's blood (which they may even drink).¹⁶ Similar things happened after the *rampok macans* (WESSING 1992), the ceremonial tiger killings described by RUZIUS (1905), who claimed that the mutilation of the tiger's body and the taking of amulets from it were evidence of the degree to which people feared this animal (compare NIEUWENHUIS 1984). One may also see it, however, as an imbuing of oneself and one's weapons with the essence of the tiger's power. Like bullets that have tasted tiger's blood (VAN OSSENBRUGGEN 1916, 240), such weapons or amulets are thought to have very special qualities.

Royalty

The tiger, as king of the jungle, is closely associated with the royalty, although in East Java kings are not reported to have become tigers after death, as was the case with the last King Prabu Siliwangi of West Java (r. ?–1579) (WESSING 1993). In contrast with the abundant data concerning village beliefs on tigers, however, specific information on the link between tigers and the royalty is quite scarce. Below I present a few of the legends I have found.

Kings rule over relatively large areas, and thus their associated *dhanyang* are relatively powerful too. Panembahan Senopati (r. 1575–1601) and his descendants, the rulers of Mataram, are said to have such a spirit counterpart in the person of Nyai Roro Kidul, the Queen of the Southern Ocean. Legend claims that Senopati married this spirit, who guarded the welfare of his realm and will continue to do so as long as each of Senopati's successors marries her in turn. It is said that Nyai Roro Kidul may appear in the form of a white tiger or send a striped tiger to do her bidding (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1991b, 29; SEMAR SUWITO 1992, 42).

Another legend concerns King Tawang Alun of Macan Putih (circa 17th c.), who, after meditating in the forest, heard a voice directing him to go southeast. Doing so, he met a white tiger whom the voice instructed him to mount and ride to the location of his new capital (SRI ADI OETOMO n.d., 39–41). The voice (which may be seen as that of a nature spirit, the tiger, an ancestor, or all three) called him “grandchild,” indicating a relation of kinship between them. A present-day descendant of Tawang Alun, a respected gentleman living in Rogojampi, told me that Tawang Alun's descendants are still guarded by this tiger spirit, which is the embodiment of the shamanistic powers of his line. The spirit follows them on their travels and can be called upon in need. If challenged on the

street, their voices sound like tigers' growls. The white tiger also is said to appear at certain places sacred to the dynasty.

FURY AFRIANTO (1989, 15) writes that the Candi Lor shrine of the ancient East Javanese Sanjaya dynasty is guarded by a *dhanyang* who incarnates as a white tiger. Similarly, in Puger on the south coast a white tiger appears at the grave of the hero (or prince) Sutaji, while in Nganjuk several white tigers guard the grave of the princess Dewi Ragil Kuning of Kediri (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1991a).

In contrast to these close links between tigers and the crown are the annual *rampok macans* (ceremonial tiger killings) that used to take place in the courts of Central and East Java until the beginning of the twentieth century. In these ceremonies, which I have elsewhere interpreted as a ceremonial cleansing of the realm (WESSING 1992), the tiger personifies the disturbances that inevitably arise and upset the cosmic alignment of the realm. By killing the tiger — here seen also as the wild aspect of the ruler's nature — these disturbances are cast out and social order restored. The ambiguity of the tiger's position, representing both an aspect of the ruler's essential nature and the chaos that threatens the realm, reflects the ambiguity of the relation between the ruler and his village subjects (DOVE 1985).

The opposition between the court and the powers of the forest can also be seen in the story behind the *reog* performances of Ponorogo, which commemorate the defeat of the *singabarong* in the Roban Forest. The story goes that the *patih* (chief minister) of Bandarangin had to arrange a marriage between his king and the princess of Kediri (HARTONO 1980, 44–45), to do which he was required to capture 150 tigers in the Roban Forest. This he did, including among them spirit-tigers and were-tigers. After delivering these to the palace at Bandarangin he and the king headed for Kediri to fetch the princess, accompanied by their entourage and an army. The *singabarong*, the protective tiger-spirit of the forest, was understandably upset at the abduction of 150 of his charges. Accompanied by many fierce tigers, he attacked the courtly procession. A battle royal ensued, the *singabarong* shifting his shape between that of a man and a tiger. In the end the *singabarong* and his troops were defeated and the king went on to marry his princess. The *singabarong* was not killed, however, but remained to serve the king, symbolizing the ruler's wild aspect as discussed above.

Were-Tigers

Another tigrine being that looms large in the East Javanese tradition is the were-tiger. Were-tigers are people said to physically transform them-

selves into tigers through the use of magic. This magic is quite different from the power by which a shaman incarnates a spirit-tiger — the results may look similar, and in popular lore were-tigers and shaman-tigers are often confused, but the social contexts of the two are entirely different. The tigers described thus far, the incarnations of ancestral souls and shamanic power, are honored guardians regarded by the people with fear and reverence; the transformations are beneficial, and take place in an approved and regulated context. Were-tigers, on the other hand, use their magic outside of this approved context and are generally regarded as antisocial individuals who are dangerous to the community. In strongly Islamic East Java both shamanism and magic tend to be regarded as evil; the confusion between benign spirit-tigers and magic were-tigers is, perhaps, the result of this.¹⁷

The idea of shape-shifting is a common one in Southeast Asia, as it is throughout the world (WESSING 1986; MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 138). Books and films about were-tigers are very popular, and when something unusual occurs involving a *macan* there is almost invariably speculation about were-tigers. Some years ago, for instance, a black panther got into the Situbondo Regency offices at night. Talk of were-tigers was rampant, as it was thought that only a spirit-tiger could have entered the locked building. The beast was shot, and the regent had it stuffed and displayed in order, he said, to quell such talk.

I have on several occasions tried to follow up on reports of were-tigers, but, as MCNEELEY and WACHTEL comment, looking for one of these beings is “like trying to find the end of the rainbow — it’s always just over the next hill” (1988, 141). Many appointments to watch were-tiger transformations came to nought, but I was nevertheless assured that were-tigers are all around, in Lumajang, Puger, Jember, Banyuwangi, and Situbondo. The reluctance to show too concrete a knowledge about were-tiger magic may be due in part to the negative image associated with its adepts. To be known as a magician is to run the risk of getting killed (ANONYMOUS 1992a; 1992b; 1992c).¹⁸

Were-tigers, it is said, may be recognized by the lack of a philtrum, the groove in the upper lip. They are also believed to be “backwards” in many respects: their heels are reversed, and in the process of transformation the person’s head becomes the tiger’s tail. People say that practitioners of were-tiger magic seldom eat and never become rich, but because of their *ilmu* they live for more than one hundred years.

The actual shift to tiger form is accomplished by burning incense and making an offering of *kembang gaddhing* (*cempaka mera*; PENNINGA and HENDRIKS 1913, 131),¹⁹ followed by the recitation of a magic for-

mula. The man then throws off his clothes and becomes a tiger. The throwing off of the clothes, which contain the essence of the practitioner and symbolize his civilized nature, is reminiscent of the above-mentioned throwing of a pebble, the essence of the earth (MUS 1975, 7–19).

Another method is for a man, his wife, and sometimes a shaman to go into a room with a lighted oil lamp. The man or the shaman then performs magic, and the man becomes a were-tiger. His body remains in the room, shrouded in a white sheet, while his spirit wanders about in tigrine form. The flame of the oil lamp must be closely watched, since if it wavers as if blown by the wind it indicates that the were-tiger is in trouble. Extinguishing the lamp causes the tiger to disappear and returns its spirit to the body. If this is not done the man could die. Should a were-tiger die and its bones be found, it can be brought back to life by the shaman; if no bones can be found, it is gone for good.

Returning to human form often depends on the help of someone who knows the counter-magic. If that person should die or be unable to apply the counter-magic the were-tiger is stuck. This appears to have happened in the Jember Regency during the 1970s to an old man named Grida who was reportedly able to change into a tiger. One day he remained in tiger form and stayed that way until he disappeared in the 1980s (compare WESSING 1986, 77).

Just as real tigers are said to have communities with dwellings, a social organization, and a leader who makes rules and dispenses justice (WESSING 1986, 94–100), were-tigers are rumored to inhabit settlements of their own. There are persistent whispers that a certain village on Madura is a were-tiger community, though no one will state its precise location. Its inhabitants are said to jump about and use magic to effect the change. Local people guard the bodies of their deceased for three days, as the were-tigers are said to eat corpses.

It is said that people with a natural ability to change into tigers inhabited the East Javanese villages of Prata and Lodoyo (or Gadungan; compare *macan gadungan*) near Blitar. The ability was heritable, but the people have now died out. Some say that nowadays people are just not strong enough to acquire the necessary *ilmu*, though if the ability was natural this does not make sense. All were-tigers in East Java are said to descend from these villagers (WESSING 1986, 100–103). Such “were-tigers,” however, should probably be regarded as shaman- or spirit-tigers instead — the shape-shifters of Lodoyo, being natural, were different from the reputed were-tiger villagers of Madura.²⁰

The Madurese villagers are indeed the inverse of the inhabitants of Lodoyo, representing a reversal of the natural order in which humans

become beasts (this reversal is also reflected in the above-mentioned "backward" physical features of the were-tigers). Were-tigers are socially dead, as symbolized by the shroud in the magic ceremony and the reported eating of corpses. In this unregulated reversal lies the main difference between were-tigers and protective tigers, whether shaman, ancestral, or *dhanyang*: as mentioned above, the latter are socially sanctioned and spiritually controlled, while were-tigers operate for their own selfish purposes outside of society's ken.

The man-tiger and spirit-tiger communities remind one of KRUIJT's descriptions of villages inhabited by the souls of suicides, those who have suffered sudden death, and the victims of certain illnesses (1916, 245). This idea is grounded in the Islamic belief that the souls of those who died in similar ways are grouped together, awaiting judgment day (SMITH 1979, 42). It is only a short step from that notion to the concept of communities of souls with similar affinities, such as were-tiger spirits.

In these East Javanese beliefs about tigers, then, the tiger is a materialization of the powers of the forest and the earth. It has an ambiguous relationship with humans, living near the village and protecting the fields yet sometimes devouring livestock. This ambiguity is echoed in its dual role as guardian of morality and the *adat* and the personification of the darker, antisocial aspects of man. In the former role the tiger is respected, while in the latter it is stigmatized.

The Tiger as Symbol in the City

In the cities today the tiger has a high profile. Stories featuring the big cat regularly appear in the news, and advertisements favor it as a symbol of speed and strength. Tiger emblems and amulets are seen on vehicles and above the doors of shops. Many city folk are concerned about whether the tiger still exists in Java; two-thirds of the letters to the newspaper *Surabaya Post* reprinted in PRIYO SM (1991) expressed the belief that it does. In the mid-1980s a prize of US\$500 was offered for a substantiated recent photograph of a Javan tiger; several expeditions were mounted, but none succeeded in seeing a tiger.

As mentioned earlier, the reputation as a vicious killer that the tiger acquired in the wake of the opening of the forests seems to have been largely due to ecological pressures. The butchery of livestock reported by KERKHOVEN (1879, 503) took place in a densely populated district where the forest was almost completely cleared, while a man-eating tiger reported by ROBINSON operated in sugarcane fields with high human population densities and dispersed prey (1966). Tigers, furthermore, appear to be feared out of proportion to the number of people they actually kill.

More lives are taken by elephants every year, and there were nearly as many murders as killings by tigers in Riau, Sumatra during 1979 (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 190). Yet neither elephants nor the people of Riau are known as vicious killers; in fact, elephants are regarded as the most likable of Southeast Asian animals (SAVAGE 1984, 196).

The reason for the inordinate fear of tigers is the tiger's new position as a symbolic other vis-à-vis human society. Where once it was a stern protector and ally, in the new situation it has been redefined as a force antithetical to ordered civilized life: a wild, chaotic counterpart to man that dwells in the forest (compare SCHEFOLD 1989). In many cases this forest is actually a jungle of the imagination (SAVAGE 1984, 50, 54, 272). European hunters in particular contributed to the tiger's bad reputation, writing of spotted robbers and infamous man-eaters whose death was sometimes rewarded with a prize (PRIYO SOEMANDOYO 1988, 58). Yet man-eaters are rare when the tiger is left undisturbed — the animal's bad reputation is largely undeserved (CORBETT 1978; SCHALLER 1967, 277).

The postcolonial era has also seen a social differentiation between the Western-educated elite in the urban areas and the estate workers and farmers who inhabit the villages and lack access to Western education (KAYAM 1992). There are corresponding differences in the belief systems of these two groups. Whereas most modern urban Southeast Asians would claim that "people are people and animals are animals," rural dwellers tend not to draw such sharp distinctions, maintaining that humans and animals have similar souls (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 133–34). We must keep in mind, however, that the expression of such views, especially today, is influenced by the context of the interaction and the audience addressed.

In 1990 sixty students at the Universitas Jember were given a classroom assignment to write a short essay on the topic "Tiger" (*harimau*).²¹ These essays were then analyzed for the concepts expressed in them. Words like "conservation" (*pelestarian*), "rare" (*langku*), and "extinct" (*punah*) were used regularly, although it was not always clear whether the authors really understood their meaning: 51.7% mentioned that the tiger was rare, but only 13.33% mentioned extinction. While 38.3% of the Javanese respondents indicated that the tiger was to be feared, only 21.3% mentioned specific dangers such as attacks or man-eating (4.26%).

This survey also yielded a few responses relating to the mystical aspect of the tiger. Although most village beliefs about tigers are present in the students' responses (see table 1), the percentages are rather small, a reflection, perhaps, of the perceived inappropriateness of this knowl-

TABLE 1: Student Responses to "Tiger"

<i>Factors*</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>		<i>Javanese</i>	
	60	%	47	%
Wild animal	39	64.99	32	68.09
King of the jungle	35	58.33	29	61.70
Rare animal	31	51.67	24	51.06
Maleness, power, egoism	20	33.33	13	27.70
Forest	19	31.70	17	36.17
Feared by man	19	31.70	18	38.30
Zoo, circus, television	19	31.70	15	31.91
Protection	18	29.99	15	31.91
Carnivore	17	28.33	12	25.53
Decline due to hunting	15	24.99	11	23.40
Nature reserves	10	16.66	8	17.02
Extinct or nearly so	8	13.33	8	17.02
Habitat destroyed	8	13.33	8	17.02
Hunted for profit	8	13.33	6	12.77
Prey has disappeared	3	5.00	3	6.38
Attacks villagers	2	3.33	1	2.13
Man-eater	2	3.33	2	4.26
Ecosystem	2	3.33	2	4.26
Man is part of ecosystem	1	1.66	1	2.13
Were-tiger	4	6.67	1	2.13
Earth and forest spirits	4	6.67	3	6.38
Cats are tiger's ancestor	4	6.67	4	8.51
Sacred, supernatural	3	5.00	—	—
Moral guardian	2	3.33	1	2.13
Taboos	2	3.33	1	2.13
Body parts as amulet, etc.	1	1.67	1	2.13
Person fated to be eaten	1	1.67	1	2.13
Tiger magicians	1	1.67	1	2.13

* Other things mentioned were authoritarian, individualism, and bravery.

edge to the context of the interaction.²²

The beliefs and the values associated with the beliefs are changing in both the cities and the villages. Forbidding (*angker*) forests and sacred (*kramat*) places have retreated in the face of change, and tigers like Kopok and Kasur, who used to guard sacred places, have disappeared with the building of houses, the increase in population, and the coming of electric lights.²³ This, indeed, is the same fate that befell most of the supernatural entities that inhabited East Java (A. SAEROZI 1981, 49; FATHONI 1989, 28). A man in Puger indicated the offshore island of Nusabarongan as the place "where the spirits are now. It became too *ramai* (lively, noisy) around the villages."²⁴

And thus the knowledge of these things slowly fades. Shamans age, and young people go to school, become urbanized, and claim to have forgotten the old lore, pursuing jobs and modernity instead (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 193). Publicly they scorn the old beliefs and claim to put their faith in God and/or science, yet privately they often admit to knowing and having seen these things for themselves.

CONCLUSION

"Myth," O'FLAHERTY writes, "may be, among other things, the incarnation of a metaphor" (1988, 7). The tiger that inhabits the beliefs detailed in this paper is indeed just that: a metaphor for human society. The experience of myth, O'FLAHERTY continues, is a function of the meaning the individual brings to it (1988, 16); in this it is like our experience of symbols, which is a function not so much of their innate meaning (if any) as of our interpretation of them (WESSING 1978b).

In this paper I have described how the tiger declined as a result of a new vision of nature and man's place in it, in which the tiger was often seen as an alien being, an obstacle to human domination of the environment, an evil "other" to be exterminated. The depiction of the forest and the tiger as an "other" was not entirely a Western innovation, however. The Javanese nobility had long characterized the forest as alien to the concept of the ordered state (DOVE 1985) and thereby justified its destruction (BECKER 1979, 219). Yet the rulers were symbolically related to the tiger and the forest, finding in them the wilder qualities necessary to properly defend the realm (WESSING 1992; O'FLAHERTY 1988, 82–88).

Among the far more numerous villagers, the tiger and the forest were sources of power, and were even protectors and guardians in the face of ecological disturbances. Since it was primarily the *spirit* of the tiger and the forest that they were concerned with, it has been relatively easy to disjoin the real tiger from his symbolic counterpart. Like the

disappearing forest, the vanishing tiger is said to have gone from here but to be alive and well, over there, somewhere (WESSING 1994).

The tiger's symbolic function continues, therefore, in spite of its ever-diminishing numbers, since it is the tiger-as-symbol that embodies a people's perception of itself and its environment. The tiger represents the power of nature and, in its ambiguity, the conflicting aspects of man (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 197; WESSING 1986, 111-16; compare O'FLAHERTY 1988, 81). As the tiger itself has disappeared these symbolic functions have been transferred to the panther, a shift facilitated by the lack of distinction between the two in common usage. The fact that cats in general are felt to be somewhat magical facilitated the process.

A second factor that aided the survival of the tiger-as-symbol is the fact that it has in some cases been absorbed into the Islamic belief system (one of the important counterforces to the traditional Javanese belief system). This was made possible by replacing the lion with the tiger as the symbol of Syeh Sayyidina Ali, the prophet's son-in-law. In this way the tiger, the guardian of the *adat*, became the defender of a faith that has slowly been becoming an *adat* as well.

The developments that caused the tiger's demise have also brought changes to the villages. Ideas about man's place in nature have slowly altered, and with them the worldview and the *adat* of the villages have changed as well. "Myth," O'FLAHERTY (1988, 35) observes, "is not so much a true story as a story on which truth is based, a story which people may infuse with their truth." The search for the tiger in Meru Betiri may reflect a search for the antecedent object that gave reality to this powerful symbol in Javanese culture. Just as the tiger functions as a metaphor for society, the difficult search may serve as a metaphor for the stresses caused by the social changes that threaten the traditional Javanese truths infusing the symbolic tiger. When these truths change, the myths and symbols they infuse lose their currency. Just as the tiger's presence is diagnostic of the fitness of the environment (PANWAR 1982, 332), the belief in tiger symbols is a measure of the survival of this traditional worldview. When it dies the tiger dies too, because the tiger's defense of the *adat* is part of the *adat*, as is the tiger itself.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the "K. I. T. L. V. Sixth International Workshop on Indonesian Studies, Madurese Culture and Society: Continuity and Change," Leiden, 7-11 October 1991. I would like to thank Mr. A. Latief Wiyata, Mr. Bambang Samsu, Mr. Budiono, Mr. Dominikus Rato, Mr. Edy Sriono, Mrs. Herowati Poesoko, Mr. Kusnadi, Mr. Made Suryantara, Mr. Mahfudz Sidiq, Mr. Markus Apriono, Mr. Maulana

Sk., Mr. Misrawi, and Mr. Sutjitro for their help in gathering some of the data for this paper; Dr. Huub de Jonge and Ms. Jet Bakels for their comments on a previous version; and finally the late Mr. Frits Turpijn for some great tiger tales from the Krikilan area.

1. Islamic sensibilities do not allow the telling of this story here. A very similar tale is current among the Gayo of North Sumatra:

Cats and tigers originally came from human sperm. It happened at a time when a couple was newly wed. They were in a little hut in the middle of their rice field. No one was around and it was very quiet and the bride and groom were copulating. Just when the groom was about to climax, there was a noise. She whispered, "Someone is coming." He was startled and afraid, and did not finish copulating. But he ejaculated anyway. Some semen fell to the floor and turned into a cat. Some shot out the door and fell to earth. That became the tiger. They then went into the kitchen, but the tiger, being outside, could not. So he went to the forest. (WESSING 1986, 11)

In the East Javanese version, some of the sperm falls into the river and becomes a crocodile and the rest falls to the ground and becomes a tiger. The crocodile and tiger originally represented the water and land manifestations of Siva (SKEAT 1972, 91), and this association was probably transferred to the important Islamic figure. In a personal communication Dr. Martin van Bruinessen noted that in Middle Eastern tradition Sayyidina Ali (Our Lord Ali) is associated with the lion (Ar. *asad*). In Indonesia the lion is transposed into the tiger, as may be seen in the flag and coat of arms of Cirebon. The prophet Muhammad is reputed to have been fond of cats, making it taboo to bother them. In Banyuwangi the people of Bugis claim to be descended from crocodiles, and say that crocodiles appear when called "because they are our ancestors." Calico cats (*belang telon*) are said to have magical and curative powers, and hurting them is believed to bring rheumatism.

2. The link between tigers and ancestors is also reflected in the belief that a tiger appearing in one's dream indicates that an ancestral spirit will bring good luck (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1991c).

3. Fasting and meditating for forty-day periods, sometimes in caves or forests, is a common concept in this area. The purpose is to acquire *sakti*, "life force" or "power" (ANDERSON 1972, 10-13)

4. Tigers are said to be visible, however, to those who have transgressed the moral code and to those who are fated to be eaten by a tiger. People born on the same *weton* (a particular combination of the seven- and five-day weeks used in Java) as a certain tiger may be destined to be devoured by the animal (HADI EKO Y.Y. 1991, 11).

5. For a detailed discussion of these spirits see MUS (1975, 7-19) and VAN OSSENBRUGGEN (1905).

6. One example is a stone called Watu Blorok near the village of Mojokerto. The *dhanyang* in this stone, which appears as a tiger named Mbah Blorok, punishes those who offend it by such acts as urinating on it. The stone has markings, said by some to be symbols from the pre-Islamic kingdom of Majapahit and by others to be scratches left by a tiger (AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN 1992b, 49).

7. In Blitar this spirit is called *dhanyang leluhur*, "ancestral *dhanyang*" (compare HEFNER 1985, 58-59).

8. There are those who question whether this constitutes a proper use of religious texts, calling such practices *syirik* (idolatry). Others, however, feel that since the focus remains on God it is an exaggeration to call it idolatry (ISWARDANI Jk., Wm, and NUNIK 1992).

9. PIGEAUD (1982, 495) glosses *Ringgit* with *wayang* (puppet show). AYIEK SYARIFUDDIN (1992d, 9), however, translates it as *angker* (forbidding).

10. The possessions of this great spiritual leader, which are believed to share in his power, are bathed every two years. It is said that the water will cure any illness (compare

EKA NURCAHYO 1992).

11. In Sumberwaru the guardian tiger is feasted during the ceremony of *bersih desa* (village purification), usually held during the month of Suro, the first month of the Javanese lunar calendar. After *magrib* (evening prayer) on the day of the ceremony the village head and an Islamic elder burn incense beneath the *dhanyang's* decorated shrine, which is filled with food and flower offerings; this has to be done carefully in order to avoid offending the tiger. People claim to see the tiger heading for the shrine on this day, after which he disappears. The appearance of the guardian tiger of a village near Jombang, a white animal named Kiai Tumenggung Kopek, is said to be a portent of disaster; he is feasted following sightings to avoid trouble.

12. Umar KAYAM's novel, for example, mentions a shaman called Kiai Jogosimo ("Guardian of Tigers" or "Guarded by Tigers") who interacts with the trees of the forest (1992, 2-3).

13. *Gadung*: to cheat; mock, unreal (PIGEAUD 1982, 114). *Macan gadung*: disguised or mock tiger (BEZEMER 1921, 609-10).

14. Such protection may be gained by planting a *raja* (mystical design or formula) in the yard. An informant told of a guest who dreamt he was being examined by a tiger while sleeping in the informant's house. The man explained that his father-in-law, who comes from Banyuwangi (an area famed for its magicians), had buried some magic rust near the house, which guarded the family and materialized as a tiger in the guest's dream.

15. In a related story, a man is said to have seen a *gembong* tiger hit a wild ox (*banteng*; *Bos sondaicus*) with a piece of wood. The *banteng* fell and the tiger, having hidden the piece of wood, carried the animal off. The man then recovered the wood and took it home. There he hit a heavy object with it, which he was then able to lift with ease.

16. It is believed that consuming a token amount of the blood of a person one has killed will strengthen one's heart (FAISAL BARAAS 1983, 75) and prevent the victim's soul from haunting its killer. An Osing man, thinking he had killed someone with a knife, immediately licked the blood from his knife. According to informants, the same thing was done in East Java in 1965-66 with the blood of executed communists. One killer even returned to the scene of his crime because he had forgotten to do this (DIAH PURNOMOWATI and SLAMET SUBAGYO 1990).

17. The tendency to equate magic with shamanism has led to apparent misunderstandings on the part of some people about the nature of were-tigers. For example, an informant told me that in the Banyuwangi Regency collectors of forest products desire the ability to turn themselves into tigers — that is, to become were-tigers — in order to keep themselves safe from tigers. They believe that tigers will then help them bring their products in and will guard their homes and property. This differs from the usual belief, which, as we have seen, regards the beneficial aspects of the tiger as under the control of a shaman and not related to shape-shifting by ordinary persons.

18. The murders of the reputed sorcerers, which are said to be fairly frequent, may function as a social control in the community, casting the magicians as convenient "others" on whom unacceptable desires may be projected (MCNEELEY and WACHTEL 1988, 142).

19. The *cempaka* flower (*Michelia champak*), one of the flowers used in offerings, is connected with ancestral spirits through the *campaka kemoja* (*Plumiara acuminata*), a recent substitute for the *nagasari* (*Mesuaferia ferrea* [Dr. Mien A. Rifai, personal communication]), the *kemoja* tree that is often planted near graves (TIM PENYUSUN KAMUS 1990, 160, 387, 415).

20. Lodoyo is also mentioned in the literature as the location of a sacred gong. When this gong was bathed on the first day of the month Suro, were-tigers (spirit-tigers?) were always around. Informants in Blitar call this gong Kiai Pradah (compare the tiger village Prata) and say that it can transform into a tiger. The water in which the gong is bathed is said to bring good luck (SUG 1992, 9).

21. The students were asked to identify themselves according to ethnic origin. With a

few minor exceptions this sample broke down as follows: 47 Javanese, 4 Madurese, and 9 other.

22. It is possible that such views were seen as inappropriate to the academic context, and that the students wished to avoid appearing "backward." I noted a similar phenomenon in Aceh in 1980–82: upwardly mobile academics claimed to have no knowledge of village customs, even though they maintained close family connections there. At a talk I gave at a university in East Java dealing with tiger beliefs, some members of the audience emphatically denied that these beliefs existed, could exist, or were relevant. In private, however, other members of the audience said that these beliefs were known and believed by many who outwardly denied them; the context of the university, with its symbols of learning, modernity, and the Western audience, made this knowledge inappropriate. At another university in East Java people privately talk about seeking assistance from shamans in order to gain status or advantage, while publicly denying that these things happen. See M^CN^EE^EL^EY and WACHTEL for a similar observation (1988, 141).

23. Dr. H. Page Stephens of Cleveland, Ohio, wrote in a letter that "ghosts in an Eastern European village all disappeared after they put in lights and a highway. The explanation the people gave was that the ghosts were run over by the cars."

24. The notion of *ramai* encompasses noise, people, and civilization, and is something people try to achieve. The forest, on the other hand, with its magic and spirits, is *sepih* (quiet, lacking in *ramai*). The village is *ramai* and inimical to the tiger. One theory about the *angker* quality of *sepih* places is put forward by Romo Lukman, a leader in the Catholic Church on Java. *Angker*, he said, is caused by differing intensities of the local magnetic field. Damp or wet and dark places, especially near large trees or springs, have a stronger magnetic field than do dry, bright places. To lessen the *angker* quality of a place you have to reduce the intensity of the magnetic field (SS, EIR and SJS 1992, 42). This would presumably be done by making it light and dry.

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