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JAVANESE FOLK HORROR IN CONTEMPORARY MASS CULTURE OF INDONESIA

The interaction of Internet-lore, literature and the 2022 box-office film “KKN in Dancer’s Village” is “a 3D narrative”, a modern version of the “oral-written-theatrical continuum” (according to the term offered by V.I. Braginsky). In 2019, an Indonesian Twitter user @SimpleMan posted about “real” events that are said to have happened in 2009 at a student field-practice in a remote village in East Java. The semi-anonymous compiler of Internet-lore also wrote a fiction book. After publication, the director Awi Suryadi made a folk horror film adaptation: its intrigue is tied to the beliefs and ritual practices of the villagers. A set of texts, the lore about the village of spirits appeal to fears of the Javanese mysticism kejawen, the incorporation of animistic beliefs into Islam, previously acceptable, but today interpreted as polytheism. The popularity of “KKN” reflects mass reactions to the loss of significance and meaning of animistic rituals, disappearance of the village dance institution, fear of the village life, denial of the “inconvenient past” as a consequence of Islamization combined with technical and economic progress. It demonizes the village and traditional rural practices such as making offerings to the spirits and ritual dancing, and marks the end of the Java-centric era and the building of the new pan-Indonesian identity.

Keywords: *Internet-lore, folk-horror, Indonesian horror, KKN di Desa Penari, Javanese culture*

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