

APPENDIX: SYNOPSES OF THE PLAYS

Plays by Kala Dewata

Name of Play: Atap Genting Atap Rumbia (Tiled Roof Thatched Roof)

Synopsis: The play depicts the goings-on in two households – one in the city and the other in the village. The plot centres on the wish of a young lady from a well-to-do family in the city to marry a man who lives in the village with his poor family and the objections she faces from her mother. However, she receives support and help from her elderly maid and her husband and this leads to a misunderstanding on the part of the man's family. It also focuses on the man's resolve to marry his chosen bride despite his family's initial objection. The play culminates in a confrontation between the urban and rural families where both parties reach a mutual agreement concerning the proposed marriage.

Name of Play: Di Balik Tabir Harapan (Behind the Veil of Hope)

Synopsis: This play deals with a father's misguided hope for his children. The father forces his son to pursue a course of study which the son has no interest in but which the father believes will lead to a bright future. He also encourages his daughter to socialize freely with sons of prominent members of society in the hope that she will find a husband. His high hopes for his children belie his own desire to maintain and enhance his own social standing (which he associates with material wealth and title) even after retiring from his post as a top government official. This desire becomes clear when he dismisses the offer to return to his village and lead the people since he feels this is beneath him. He also attempts to improve on his financial standing by investing in a venture that unfortunately, failed to generate any money and caused him to lose his life savings. Worse still, the father's plans for his children take its toll on them and they retaliate by leaving him.

Name of Play: **Dua Tiga Kucing Berlari (Two Three The Cat Runs)**

Synopsis: Inter-racial relationship is the central theme of this play. This theme is explored by contrasting the way two generations, i.e. the parents and their children, who are Malays, deal with living in the same community with the Chinese. Essentially, the older generation from both races harbour suspicion of each other and thus, do not mix while the younger generation of Malays and Chinese are good friends with one another. A conflict arises when the parents of a Malay girl disapprove of her close relationship with a Chinese boy. Their forbidden love leads to a silent war between the girl and her father. As for the boy, his parents' ultimatum that he marries the girl of their choice in order to save the family business or be disowned by the family forces him to leave home and join the army. He returns later to his love but she, knowing the fate that will befall him if they continue with the relationship, breaks up with him without as much as an explanation. Heartbroken, he returns to the army and later met his death while on a mission.

Plays by Usman Awang

Name of Play: **Tamu Di Bukit Kenny (Guests at Kenny Hill)**

Synopsis: The play revolves around a high-ranking government officer and a few guests that include villagers, a businessman, and relatives who come to the house to ask for help. It also portrays the officer's wife's disapproval of his desire to help anyone and everyone who seeks his help. The play also depicts his children's behaviour which is influenced by the West.

Name of Play: **Malam Kemerdekaan (Night of Independence)**

Synopsis: This play takes place on the eve of a country's (Malaysia) independence from British rule. It tells the story of a mother who pines for the return of her son who left for battle and from whom she has not received news for a long time. The mother is cared for by a young lady who has lost her own mother, and two of her son's closest friends. The son returns unexpectedly on the eve of independence much to everyone's delight. He, then, has to deal

with the changes that have taken place during and because of his absence, i.e. his mother's poor health, the marriage between his love and his best friend, and a debt of gratitude he owes to the young lady who has been like a daughter to his mother.

Name of Play: **Menjelang Takbir (As Call of Worship Approaches)**

Synopsis: A wife's discontentment with her husband is the theme of this play. Her feelings of discontent are a result of her mother's constant jibes about how her daughter's poor husband is unable to provide her with material possessions and about how different her daughter's life would be if she had married the man her mother chose for her. Furthermore, her sister has the material wealth that she does not. Her husband is saddened by this change in his wife because money has never been an issue in their marriage before. In the end, after a brief separation, the wife realizes her mistake and returns to him.

Name of Play: **Serunai Malam (Night Flute)**

Synopsis: This is a story about a couple who disagrees over plans for their future. The young man is determined to return to his village and contribute to the rural community by teaching in the school there. The young lady, on the other hand, wants him to accept a job offer from her father that will require him to remain in town. Initially, both are adamant about achieving their own dreams and wishes but finally, the lady agrees to follow the man's wishes.

Name of Play: **Bulan Tetap Bersinar (The Moon Still Shines)**

Synopsis: This play centres on a beautiful young lady and the constant demands she faces from her male employer. These demands test her love for the man in her life (who is also her colleague). This is because the employer threatens to fire him if she does not agree to a date with him. The young lady finally relents when told this but during the date she was drugged and raped by her boss. Fortunately, her man recognizes her sacrifice and stands by her.

Name of Play: **Dari Bintang Ke Bintang (From Star to Star)**

Synopsis: The protagonist in this play is a young lady who is being pursued by one man but is in love with another. In the end, she marries the man who loves her when the one she loves did not profess his love for her (due to a deep sense of inadequacy on his part).

Name of Play: **Gendang Kosong (Empty Drum)**

Synopsis: The central character in this play is a wealthy lady who speaks on wifely duties, on the role a mother must play in the home in order to check the moral decay of the younger generation, and also on helping the less fortunate and respecting one's elders at community functions. Yet, she fails to be the wife who looks after her husband and passes the responsibility to her maid instead. Furthermore, she allows her daughter to mix freely with the opposite sex. Her hypocritical-self is finally revealed by a journalist

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