

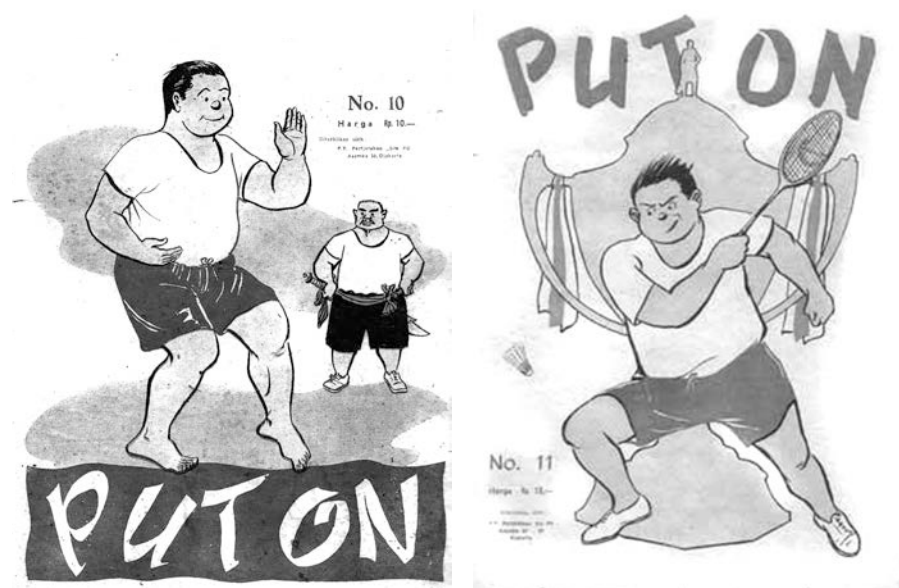
## Multiculturalism in Indonesian Comics

Iwan Gunawan

This essay is a brief report of my research on Indonesian comics. Some Indonesians called them CERGAM, a word that is derived from the first syllable of two words: *CER*ita (story) and *GAM*bar (picture). This term was very popular in the 1960s to 1970s, the times when Indonesian comics were flourishing. In this paper I will use the term CERGAM interchangeably with the term "Indonesian Comic". In my opinion, CERGAM are local comics that are both produced and published for the first time in Indonesia. I understand that there are grey areas of the definitions concerning the birth of the Indonesian Comics. We can say that the period of Indonesian Comic formally started from the Indonesian independence (August 17, 1945) or at the time when indigenous comics started to exist in the "Indonesia" region (about 1930s, in the Dutch colonial era). I choose the latter based on my intention to see a complete spectrum of comics in Indonesia. Indonesian comics have grown out of people from a diversity of discourses, cultures and places.

### Comic Strips

The Indonesian comics rooted in 1930s when several comic strips were produced and published in local magazines and newspapers. In 1930s Indonesia was still part of Dutch colonies, known as Netherland Indies or Dutch East Indies. At that time there were foreign comics that were already translated into Indonesian (Malay language). Many popular comics such as Flash Gordon, Tarzan, Rip Kirby, came in the form of strips published in Netherland Indies magazine such as *De Zweep*. There were also comic strips originally created and published for the first time in Dutch Indies. Many ethnic groups live in the Dutch East Indies such as Dutch and other European, Native Indonesians (with its diverse ethnic groups), Chinese, Arabian and others. Browsing magazines at that time, I found many comic strips that responded to the diversity of ethnicities in Dutch Indies. The genres were also varied, from romance, gag/humor, legend, to historical one. 'Put On', a gag series describing the daily life in Batavia, was originally published in *Sin-Po* (1931), a daily newspaper of Chinese community acting as publisher in the Dutch East Indies. Put On is a character created by Kho Wang Gie. Put On was pictured as a fat Chinese-Indonesian male character that lived with his mother in Batavia.



Picture 1. Covers of Put On, Keng PO 1950s

There were also westerners that worked for publishing companies in Dutch Indies. An American artist, Billy Cam, created comic strip 'CAMouFLAGES' for *D'Orient* magazine from 1935-1940.

'CAMouFLAGES' was about the life in Batavia during Dutch colonial era in Indonesia, from a westerner's point of view. This magazine was meant for the Dutch audience or Indonesians that can read Dutch language. Since the 1st of February 1939, *Ratoe Timoer* magazine started a comic strip that was based on local legend, titled *Mentjari Poetri Hidjae* by Nasrun A.S.

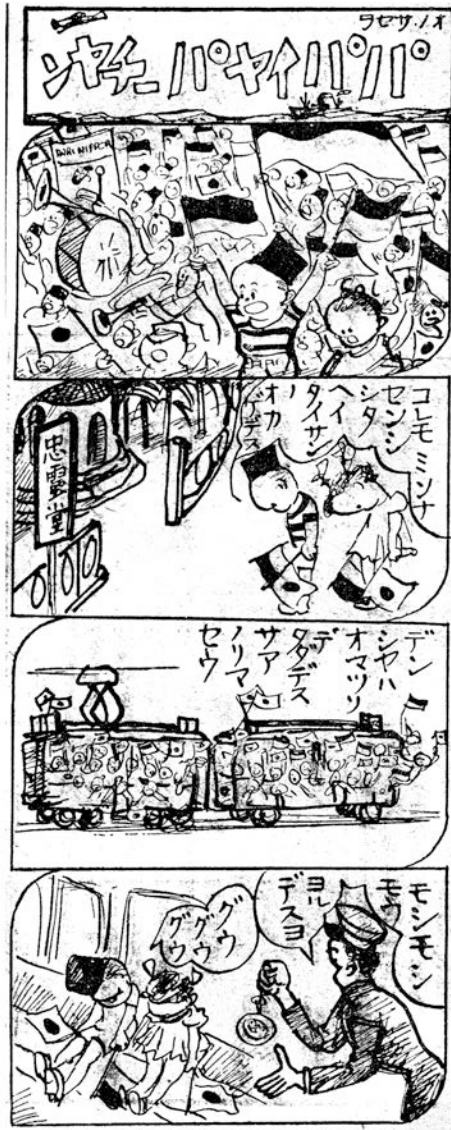


Picture 2. CAMouFLAGES by Billy Cam, D' Orient, Batavia: 1938



Picture 3. *Mentjari Poeteri Hidjaoe* by Nasroen AS, Radja Timoer, 1939

For three and a half year (1942-1945), Indonesia was ruled by Japan. Saseo Ono, a Japanese artist was sent to Java in order to promote the Japanese ideology among the Indonesian people. He did some paintings on Indonesia and also created comic strips *Papaya Pa'chan* (Pi'chan) in *Kana Djawa Sinbun*, 1944-1945. *Papaya Pa'chan* could be the first Manga (style) ever published in Java. *Papaya Pa'chan* (Pi'chan) was pictured as a smart, energetic, naughty and brave little girl. She always wears hair bow and short skirts. Her partner is a little boy with *pici* (Malay cap), striped t-shirt, and short pants. Both of them wear shoes.



Picture. 4 *Papaya P'a Chan* by Saseo Ono, Kana Djawa Shinbun, Jakarta: between 1944-1945

After the Indonesian independence, CERGAM was still published in magazine as comic strips. In *Star Weekly*, 1952 there was a traditional Chinese tale, Si Djin Koei (Xue Ren-gui) was created by Siauw Tik Kwie (Otto Swastika), a Chinese Indonesian illustrator, based on the story of Xue Ren-Gui. This comic strip then was published as book format. Some stories which are based on *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* and folk tales are also published in magazines. Sometimes CERGAM was also integrated with a short story. Many languages used at that times in Indonesia: Dutch, Indonesian, Chinese, Japanese, and many others ethnic languages. Magazines tried to grasp audiences with those many languages. Java and Sunda are two ethnics that have got magazines with their own languages, and also got CERGAM inside.

**TERTITA RINGKAS DALAM T.B. II.**  
Serombongan pasukan Astina dibawah pimpinan Durasono yang diperintahkan oleh Radja Astina guna mencari gadis untuk mempelai, telah memasuki hutan dimana Tjantrik Djonoloko dengan Pergiwo berada. Setelah mereka itu bertemu dengan kedua orang ini maka dimintanya oleh Durasono, Pergiwo pada Tjantrik. Tapi oleh Tjantrik diperbantunya, dan kemudian terjadi perkelahian yang menyebabkan tewasnya Tjantrik. Setelah mengetahui hal ini Pergiwo lari masuk hutan dan luput dari kedjaran pasukan dari Astina. Tapi malang bagi sang Puteri, karena sekuntia itu ia terperosok kedalam jurang yang dalam.

# Gatutkotjo & Pergiwo



Aku tiada tahan lagi hidup dirundung siksa .....!  
Aku tiada ingin lagi melihat sinarnya Batara Surja!  
O ..... Dewa ..... engkau yang menghidupkan aku ..... dan engkau pulalah yang berhak membunuh diriku!  
Gatutkotjo pilu mendengar rintih si Gadis, dan :  
„Ei ..... sigadis yang malang!  
Djangan engkau menangis ..... tenangkan dirimu, aku segera datang menolongmu!”  
Segera Gatutkotjo bersiap-siap untuk turun menolong

Pergiwo. Tapi tiba² ia merasa bagaikan disambar petir...  
..... ia jatuh terpelanting ..... matanya terasa pedas ..... pandangannya berkunang-kunang, sedang ia tidak dapat melihat siapa² yang berada didekatnya.  
Belum juga ia dapat bangun kembali, ditendanglah ia kuat² oleh sebuah telapak kaki mengenai punggungnya ..... hingga ia jatuh tertelungkup kedalam jurang dimana Pergiwo berada.

(Akan disambung).

Picture 5. CERGAM integrated in series of short stories, *Gatutkotjo & Pergiwo*, by B. Djie III, *Terang Bulan*, Djakarta: 1954

## CERGAM in book format

After comic strips series ended, they were then collected into books. Because of its nature, the book format comes in horizontal perspective. “Komik MEDAN” which was so popular in 1960s is a term for comics or CERGAM that was created and published in Medan, the capital city of North Sumatra region. CERGAM was published as strips in daily newspaper, and then compiled into books. The themes of *Komik Medan* usually were taken from tales, legend or folk tale of Sumatra. Sometimes the stories were developed using historical background. Taguan Hardjo, one of the Indonesian comic maestros, was amongst this group. Taguan created various genres of CERGAM such as drama, detectives, adventure, humor, and folk tale. The angles of his artworks were similar to a movement of a movie camera. Taguan Hardjo was known not only for his delicate craftsmanship in his work but also for the stories he wrote; in terms of quality his works were no less than a literature. In 1962 he named his comics as “*nopel bergambar*” or in English: “novel with pictures”. Other important artists from Medan are Zam Nuldyn, Bahzar and si Gayo.



Picture 6. Ratu Karimata by Zam Nuldyn, Medan: 1960s



Picture 7. Djaka Lasak by Zam Nuldyn, Medan: 1960s

In addition to the comic strips compilation, there were also comics that were published as a comic magazine, such as *Aneka Komik* by Melodie, a publisher in Bandung. It contains short CERGAM, some articles, advertisements, and 2 to 4 pages of comic strips. Inspired by Superman, Captain Marvel (Shazam) and Wonder Woman, Melodie in its early years (1954) had published a number of superhero characters like Sri Asih, Kapten Kilat, Putri Bintang, Garuda Putih in *Aneka Komik*. Also in *Aneka Komik*, along with superhero characters, appeared "jungle adventure" characters like Nina and



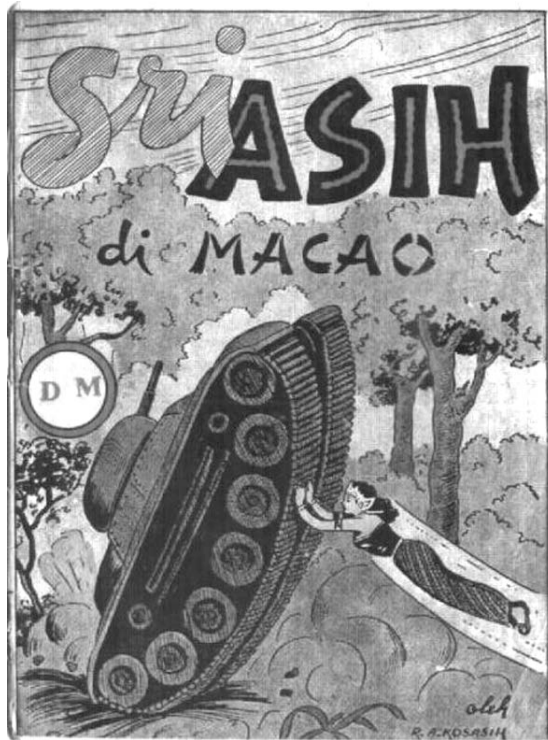
Djakawana. They were the Indonesian answers to Tarzan. This comic magazine was a way to get initial responses from the audience on the comic and its characters. Based on this magazine, *Melodie* started to publish CERGAM in an independent comic book format using the characters names.



Picture 8. *Tjempaka* by RA Kosasih, *Melodie*, 1950s

### Genres of American Style

As mentioned earlier, American comic characters have been big influence to the creation of CERGAM. Some said that Put On was the Indonesian version of *Bringing up Father*; comic strips featured Jiggs, an Irishman immigrant in America. The worldwide spread of "Tarzan" literature - man (and -woman) that was raised in jungle – had created so many variants in many other countries, including in Indonesia. In the 1960s to 1970s those "Tarzanesque" characters grew in numbers. Some of them were Zanga, Mala, Tjempaka, and one of the characters that is still in the memory of many CERGAM lovers until now is *Wiro si anak rimba*, by *Kwik Ing Hoo* (Wiro the Jungle boy). There were also many "Space adventure" CERGAM, as a response to Buck Roger and Flash Gordon. Not only the characters, Melodie publishing also adopted the way the early American comics had been published. First the comics were published as a comic magazine such as Action Comic or Detective comics, then the characters got its own titles (Superman and Batman). The first Indonesian Superhero might be Kapten Kilat, created by John Lo in 1954. Also from John Lo came Putri Bintang and Garuda Putih. A heroine character Sri Asih, created by RA Kosasih, was the most popular character at that time. Detective and romance CERGAM in magazines also remind us of the pulp fiction in American pop culture. From Medan we have superheroes such as Indra, and Kapten Amad. Those genres and styles might be superficially associated with American cultures. Along with Rock and Roll music in Indonesia, comics brought up negative reaction especially from political parties and government that were close to the Eastern Block at that time. Those genres still continued to exist in the period of 1970s and 1980s.



Picture 9. Sri Asih di Macao, super-heroine by RA Kosasih, Bandung: Melodie 1950s



Picture 10. Basuki by BS Nursana, Bandung: MAR Comic, 1954

### **Wayang Cergam**

"Wayang" for the Indonesian people is a puppet shadow theater. Some puppets are made from leather; this kind of puppet make use of shadow effect in order to tell stories. There are also puppets that are made of wood and this kind of puppet is known by the name of *wayang golek* which belongs to the Sundanese, the population of the West Java region. Sometimes the puppet itself is referred to as *wayang*. The stories they perform are mostly taken from the episodes of Ramayana and



Mahabharata epics. This 'Wayang' puppet-show then adopted into many forms of performing arts. Wayang Cergam was developed in the 1950s as comic strips and also later was published in book format. The characters of CERGAM was based on the puppet Wayang and the traditional Wayang Wong (a kind of Javanese opera, with dance and theater which is also based on Ramayana and Mahabharata epic). One title adapted the pre-Hinduism mythology, "Wayang Purwa" by S. Ardisoma. Wayang Purwa is a story of the origin of Javanese Gods. R.A. Kosasih is the pioneer of the Indonesian Comics; he had done a lot of Wayang CERGAM and had been great influence for many other artists. His first Wayang CERGAM was Burisrawa Merindukan Bulan in 1952. His Wayang CERGAM titles like Ramayana and Mahabharata, a long epic, are still being reprinted until today. Besides Wayang, he also created many CERGAM in various genres: Superhero (Sri Asih), Jungle Adventure (Cempaka), Silat (Kujang Emas, Kala Denda etc.), Romance, CERGAM for children, Folk tale and legend, humor, propaganda, and many others.



Picture 11. Mahabharata, epic by RA Kosasih, Bandung: Melodie, 1950s

### Folk tale and legend Cergam

Along with "Wayang", this genre was a good response to the strong opinion that considered comics have brought negative influence to children. Comics were regarded as western propaganda and made children losing interest in reading textbooks. There were big issues concerning the moral aspects and the education of Indonesian tradition. Indonesia has had so many folk tales. The various ethnic groups in Indonesia have its own tales and legends. The comic artists adopted the folk tales and legends into comics. Since the comic strips era, this genre has already been existed. The themes of *Komik Medan* were mainly folktales from the Northern Sumatra and West Sumatra region. The comic industries in Bandung also produced many comics with legend and folktales from West Java. There were also several publishers in East and Central Java that produced legend and folk tales CERGAM books, along with the "Wayang". In 1970s, folk tale and legends CERGAM were very frequently produced. One of the publishers in Bandung, Maranatha, created a comic series entitled "HC Andersen". At first this label showed that the stories published was really HC Andersen's, but from time to time, the local folk tale and legends also made under this line of publishing. This "HC Andersen" label ensured the parents that the comics they bought for their children were good and had educational aspects.



S I: Peperda Djabar (sementara) No 075 ttg 29 Oktober 1960

Picture 12. *Hikajat Dewi Kembang Melati* by Abdul Salam, Bandung: 1960

### **Silat Cergam**

*Manga* and *Manhua* is popular with its samurai and kungfu. Indonesia's CERGAM might have been influenced by *manhua* or *manga*, or maybe not. Silat (Pencak Silat) is the traditional martial arts of Indonesia. Some CERGAM that came from Medan pictured the arts of Pencak Silat and also had become the main plot. In Bandung and Jakarta, Silat CERGAM had also developed to become one significant genre. Silat from Medan was rooted in folk tale, not an adaptation of samurai manga. The year 1967 was the booming year of silat genre in CERGAM. The booming was affected by the coming out of "*Si Buta dari Gua Hantu*" (The Blind Swordsman from the Cave of Ghost), a character created by Ganes Th, an Indonesian widely known for his great comics. At that time this character and the plot became a model for other silat CERGAM. He wasn't the pioneer in this genre, but Ganes with *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu* had created a huge wave on Silat CERGAM. There are many characters and stories that were "inspired" by *Si Buta*. Suddenly a pendekar (martial artist) was supposed to be handicapped (blind, lame, lopped off, or dumb), having an animal for a company, and most of them have a long hair. Some even move further to copy the style of the costume (snake skin costume). Another character that was influential was *Si Djampang*, character that was created prior to a novel authored by Zaidin Wahab. In CERGAM, the character of *Djampang* was more realistic in approach than *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu*; it was based on a traditional Betawi (an ethnic group living in Jakarta area) setting. Ganes, a Chinese-Indonesian grew up in an environment with landlords and *Jawaras*

(martial artists) pictured lively a multicultural life in Batavia. The silat cergam continued to develop until 1980s.

Silat cergam was created by many popular artists such as RA Kosasih, Oerip S., Hans Jaladara, Teguh Santosa, Jan Mintaraga, Djair, Mansur Daman, Henky etc.

In their hands, Silat Cergam became very diverse. Djair, for instance, created a unique series of Djaka Sembung, also a martial artist from Cirebon, West Java in 1890s-setting. Djaka Sembung blended the stories based on martial art action, struggle against Dutch imperialism, and Islam beliefs. Si Buta dari Gua Hantu, Mandala, and Djaka Sembung was already adapted into movies in the 1970s and 1980s.



Picture 13. Above is poster of the 1970s-version movie of Si Buta dari Gua Hantu. Below is the character of Si Buta dari Gua Hantu with its creator Ganes TH.



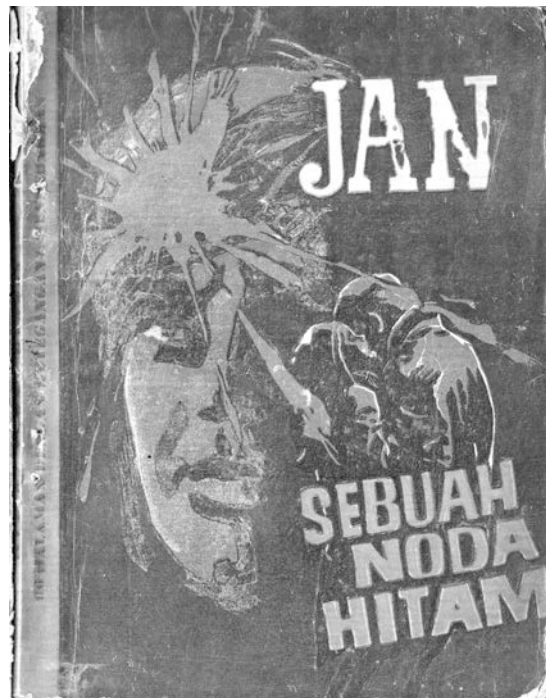
Picture 14. Three of the characters created in the 1960s that inspired by si Buta dari Gua Hantu in its design.

### Romance Cergam

Romance was a favorite theme since 1950's. This genre already appeared in comic strips in 1954. In 1960s this genre along with Silat continued to grow. Many artists explored romance cergam. Djair, Jan Mintaraga, Zaldy, SIM, Ganes TH, and even RA Kosasih also created Romance CERGAM. This genre pictured a kind of life style that identically represents the western – clothes, mini-skirts, hair do, man and woman relationship, etc. This genre became the main focus of the allegation that CERGAM was part of the western capitalism ideology. In 1965, not only Romance CERGAM, all comics are accused of causing the young generation losing their interest in reading textbooks and so it has spread ignorance among the people. Some romance comics even explored stories that were too close to pornography. This worsened the harm it has created. CERGAM was then subjected to burning by the government. The accusation of CERGAM and ban of the government continued until 1967. Many publishers and artists lost their jobs. In 1967 Ganes TH, Jan Mintaraga and several CERGAM artists asked the Police to be the registrar of their artworks and give the police the rights to censor when needed. Police gave the CERGAM stamps as a sign that the CERGAM was already given the permission to be published. In that way, CERGAM was able to be published freely with register stamp from the Police. CERGAM started to flourish again afterward.



Picture 15. Stamp of Registration from the Police, in every CERGAM in 1960s to 1970s.



Picture 16. Romance CERGAM, by Jan Mintaraga, the most influential comic artist in Romance genre, 1960s

#### Detective CERGAM

Besides Romance and Silat, there were Detective CERGAM and other kind of "modern" adventures. It was not as many as *Silat* or *Romance* but it is worth noting that this genre existed especially in the 1960s. The coming of the James Bond-kind of-movies to Indonesian theaters must be one of the reasons that this genre came into being in CERGAM.



Picture 15. Operasi OSS 117 by U. Sjahbudin, Cover by Ganes TH. Djakarta: 1960s

## Amusing CERGAM

Amusing or humorous-themed CERGAM might be the oldest genre in Indonesian comic history. The earliest gag cartoons in comic strips, Put On, were created by Kho Wang Gie in the 1930s. There were also many simple one-strip gag cartoons in many magazines. Diverse social lives and cultures were pictured in this genre. Many artists from various social backgrounds created Amusing CERGAM, referring to their own social attachments. Another popular strip was Klombrot, a cartoon in *Panjebar Semangat*, a Javanese language magazine in the 1950's. Klombrot was the creation of Indri Sudono, a very talented artist from Semarang, Central Java. He also took the Punakawan, four funny characters that were traditionally pictured in wayang universe and put in into modern-day social life context. The Punakawans comprised Petruk, Gareng, Semar and Bagong. They were the Royal servants of the Protagonist. It was said that they were the symbol of the power of the commoners. Those characters were genuinely local, so they were not in the Indian version of Ramayana or Mahabharata. These Punakawan in modern days continued to be pictured as series by many artists until now, such as Tatang S, a very productive artist. This kind of CERGAM often called the "Petruk-Gareng".



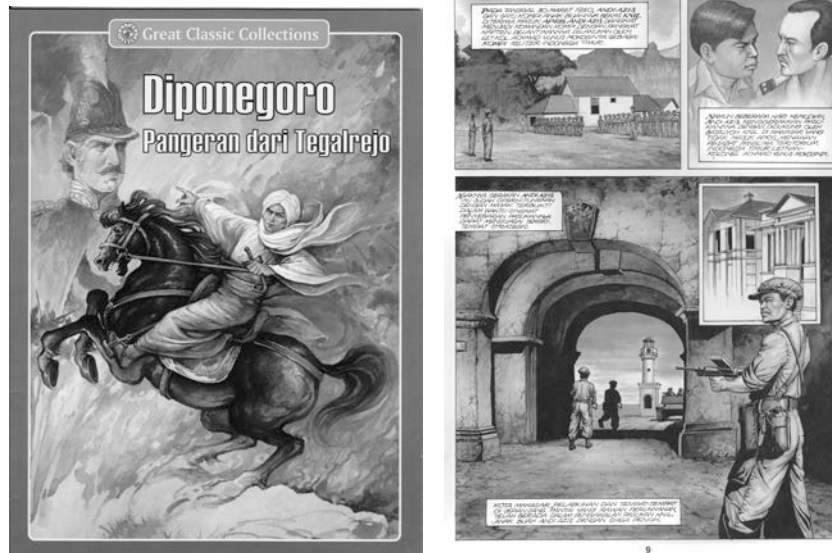
Picture 16. Three of "Petruk-Gareng" CERGAM

## War and national heroes and political Cergam

Many CERGAM have made use of war stories, stories of the national heroes or interesting themes taken from the Indonesian revolution. Sometimes these kinds of comics were created in line with the



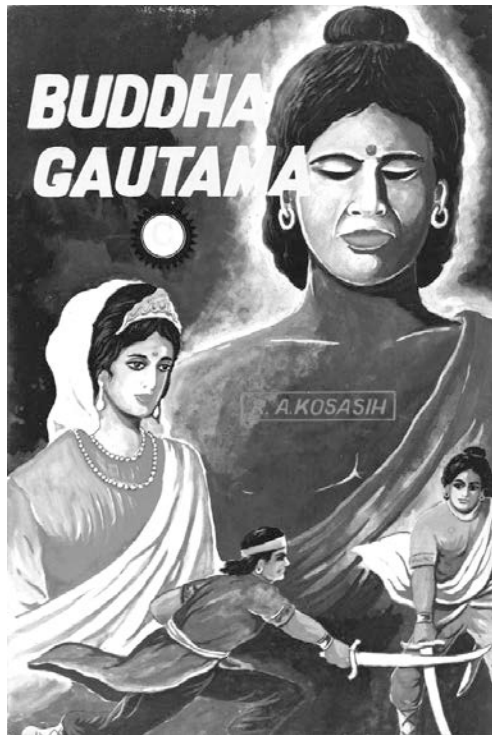
education program. The publishers would ask the artists to do series of comic biographies of Indonesian national heroes like Diponegoro, Imam Bonjol, Tjut Meutia, etc. Delsy Syamsumar, one of the great Indonesian illustrators, had produced a series of Indonesian national heroes in beautiful water-color drawings. In 1980s there were even commissioned comics from the government about the wars where the late Indonesian President Suharto was part of it. In 1990s, there were comics on national and political figures like Megawati, Abdurrahman Wahid etc. When the general election process became more democratic, and many political parties came into being, comics have also documented the phenomena.



Picture 17. Left: *Life of Diponegoro*, an Indonesian hero, published by Pustaka Lebah, a publishing company that applies the approach of the comic industry producing comics and picture books for children, 2000s. Right: A historical account created by Wild NS and Hasmi, 1980s.

### CERGAM of religious teachings

Various religions in Indonesia: Islam, Christian/Catholics, Hindu, Buddha, produced CERGAM that are part of the spreading of their own respective teachings. Islam and Christian CERGAM still existed even in the period when CERGAM was not popular anymore. Hinduism-based Wayang CERGAM is still the most surviving genre up until today. CERGAM about prophet Mohammed and all the Islamic figures and events are still being produced until now.



Picture 18. Left: *Buddha Gautama* by RA Kosasih, Maranatha, 1970s. Right: *Story of Prophet Daud (David)*, by Oerip S. 1970s

#### 1960s-1970s: Booming of CERGAM

The period of 1960s to 1970s were the good years of CERGAM. Many titles with various genres were published. Many artists come and go. They lived a proper life only by doing CERGAM. For instance, from just one title, an artist could earn money enough to buy a Vespa motorcycle. They say, at that time they could buy a house only by doing CERGAM. CERGAM's popularity had inspired the film industry so much that they ended up making a movie version of the CERGAM with the characters such as *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu*, *Jaka Sembung*, *Panji Tengkorak*, *Mandala*, and *Gundala*. There is also Teguh Santosa who made a different kind of theme. His beautifully crafted artworks combined actions and adventures with a little touch of history in the background.



Picture 19. Two of the popular artists from the 1970s.

Left: Gundala by Hasmi from 1970s. Right: Elmaut di Mala Dewa by Teguh Santosa from the 1960s

### 1980s: Declining of CERGAM

This was the era of the translated comics. Many translations of foreign comics industry were available; the American and European comics flourished. Television slowly became the main entertainment media in Indonesian household. New video cassette movies rental shops have taken over the customers of CERGAM rental shops, as CERGAM rental shops were transformed into Video cassette movies rental shops. Advertising industries absorbed the CERGAM artists as visualizer, illustrator, or storyboard artists. There was no significant innovation on comics at this time. The collaboration between publisher and artists was not like in the 1950s – 1970s that used to be so harmonious. Bestselling CERGAM of the 1960s-1970s was reprinted in poor quality. Some new CERGAM still survived such as Silat CERGAM (Henky and co), superhero CERGAM (Nusantara), Wayang CERGAM and Folk-tale / legend CERGAM (Maranatha publisher). Popularity of Conan the barbarian also brought up the “barbarian” genre in CERGAM but failed to be popular. Conan and other similar genre were also translated and published. Artists still created short CERGAM in magazines such as *HAI* and *Ananda*, and comic strips in newspaper. Arswendo Atmowiloto, editor of *HAI* magazine, has successfully thrown the “local comics” issues into people’s discourse.



Picture 20. *IGOR*, a character created by HAR that was inspired by Conan the Barbarian. Cover created by Jan MIntaraga, 1980s.

### 1990s: CERGAM communities struggled

CERGAM continued to disappear from the people’s collective memories. The history of CERGAM seemed to stop in this era. Many old publisher of CERGAM stopped their productions. Most children born in 1980s have known comics only as *manga* since translated version of *manga* started to dominate the comic market in Indonesia. Some of these children became very attached to Manga cultures and turned into a Manga artist, making CERGAM in manga styles. This era was the era of diverse comic communities: ones may favor the superheroes from US, the European comics or the *mangas*. Some communities have this idealism to create a style of their own, not oriented to the mainstream styles. Campuses created many discourses on Indonesian comics: seminars and

exhibitions in University of Indonesia, Bandung Institute of Technology, Jakarta Institute of the Arts etc. There were studios that tried to give birth to “new” Indonesian comics mostly were in Bandung, Yogyakarta and Jakarta. In 1995, Toni Masdiono with some other artists created Avatar. QN Studio created superhero Caroq. Other studios: DS (Dwianto Setyawan), Balon, Karpas Biru etc. also established and created some CERGAM. Yogyakarta comic communities have also developed, mostly taken the discourse of comic as the expression of art. In 1996, Masyarakat Komik Indonesia (Indonesian Comic Community) was established. In 1997 the government created an annual event “Pekan Komik dan Animasi Nasional” (National Comic and Animation week) and comic competition. In 1998 Toni Masdiono published “14 Jurus membuat Komik” (Creating Comic in 14 Steps) that has inspired a lot of young artists to do comic. “14 Jurus” had been reprinted for the tenth times now. Many young artists admitted that it was the book that inspired them. Indies Comic – Xerox printed, self-published in small numbers - flourished at this time.



Picture 21. *14 Jurus membuat Komik* by Toni Masdiono, Dwitama Media Asri, 1998

#### 2000s: CERGAM publishing



Picture 21. Activity of the CERGAM communities. Reintroducing the Masters of the past to younger generations. PENGKI Indonesian Comic Exhibition: 2002 and 2004.

Gramedia group, the biggest publisher in Indonesia, and also the biggest Manga publisher in Indonesia, tried to publish local titles and created lines of local comic production, such as *Dua Warna* by young artist Afi Zachkyelle. Even though that the art works was very good, but the sale was not quite good. In the year 2002, PENGKI (*Pengumpul Komik Indonesia*, or in English Indonesian Comic

Collectors) was established by a number of lecturers at Institut Kesenian Jakarta 'the Jakarta Institute of the Arts'. In the same year PENGKI created events that were intended to relate the historical continuity of CERGAM to young people and new comic artists. The events exhibited selected comics of the 1950s to 1970s, and also brought comic maestros like Taguan Hardjo and RA Kosasih back to people's attention. The event was once again organized in 2004 and it put forward another group of comic artists such as Hasmi, Djair, and Man to be exposed. Those events gathered people with interest in CERGAM together and triggered four comic collectors to create a website: [www.komikindonesia.com](http://www.komikindonesia.com). One of the founders of [www.komikindonesia.com](http://www.komikindonesia.com) ended up into contact with Bumi Langit, the corporate that owns the publishing rights for Gundala character. This had brought about several projects to bring Gundala back to the people's mind with new reprint of Gundala comic series, and now we are still waiting for Gundala movie this year.



Picture 22. Samples of artworks. On the left is the original and on the right are the artworks that were recreated by younger artists. Above: Gundala by Hasmi (1968) and by Toni Masdiono (2007). Below Gundala vs. Godam, also by Hasmi from the 1970s, and the artwork recreated by Admira Wijaya in 2010.

The communities that gather around the sites initiated the production of the old comics reprinting, or sponsored senior CERGAM masters such as Mansur Daman (Man) to continue making CERGAM of Mandala, or Gerdi WK to continue doing the comic character Gina. Other communities were also growing. They stepped into major publisher. On the other side, there were activities from communities that created comics and that encouraged people to create comics. To name one of the communities which is determined to develop comics is Akademi Samali, a comic community that bases their activities on education, discourse creation, and production. Akademi Samali founded by Hikmat Darmawan, Beng Rahadian and Zarky. Akademi Samali has given birth to several young comic artists and at present they have successfully collaborated with a publisher to systematically produce numbers of CERGAM that are well accepted in the market. Some studios like Seveanartland and Windrider produce CERGAM in Manga styles. An artist by the name of Is Yuniarto from the Windrider recreated the Wayang CERGAM Mahabharata in Manga style.



Picture 23. Left: *Garudayana* by Is Yuniarto. Right: *Baratayudha* by Caravan Studio. Both CERGAM recreating an epic story Mahabharata in 2000s.

Caravan Studio (Chris Lie and Afif Numbo) also recreated Baratayudha (Mahabharata epic) with a different approach in style: little bits of Manga, Manhwa and Disney style mixed into one. Jagoan Comics and Metha Studio, created lines of production in a DC/Marvel like superheroes universe. Started in the 2000s until today, many of Indonesian artists began to do commissioned works from US or Europe. Goji, Admira Wijaya, Sunny Gho, Garrie Gastonny, Ardian Syaf, Chris Lie, Sami Basri, Apriyadi Kus-Biantoro, Toni Masdiono, Mansur Daman and Iwan Nasif have all created great comics artworks for America, Europe, and Singapore. They got into the entertainment and comic industries by way of doing illustrations and comic artworks. Actually, the fact that Indonesian artists are doing commissioned works for the foreign industries were not the first time. In the 1980s this kind of work has already been done when Teguh Santosa became inker for *Conan the barbarian* and several titles for American comics.

Now, Indonesian comics started to rise again. Indonesian comics could compete with Manga in terms of popularity and in production as well. In the 2000s there is also a new trend of popularity in genre amusing comics like *Benny and Mice* and *101 comic series*.





Picture 24. Successful humorous CERGAM in 2000s: Benny Mice series, Jakarta: KPG (left) and 101 series, Jakarta: Cendana Art Media.



Picture 24. *Curhat Tita, Back in Bandung*: 2000s. Tita Larasati called her comics Graphic Diary.

Those comics showed that the Indonesian people are so hilarious. *Kambing Jantan* from Raditya Dika, *Anak Kos Dodol*, by Dewi Rieka and K.Jati, were also such a comical and popular works. Comics done by Tita Larasati and Sheila Rooswita indicate that it is possible to use comic as a personal diary or at least as media to tell their life story. Comic like *Hidup itu Indah* (Life is Beautiful) by Aji Prasetyo shows that a multicultural approach can be used in looking into the Indonesian social life. Comic strips still have their own unique place on the media. Characters like Doyok from the late Keliek Siswoyo, Panji Koming from Dwi Koendoro, Mat jagung by Diyan Bijac and Radhar Panca Dahana, Lotip by Beng Rahadian, have already planted deep in people's mind, through their significant and continuous presence in comic strips.





Picture 26. Four of CERGAM Magazines published from time to time. *Aneka Komik* in 1950s, *ERES* in 1970s, *Sequen* in 2000s, and *Splash* in 2000s.

### On line comics

Since 2000s there are many Indonesian artists that posted their artworks in webs, blogs or Facebook. Using media technology is a new kind of approach that gives people the liberty to publish their comics. Now, there are also Indonesian webs that specialize in publishing comics by individual artists such as [www.ngomik.com](http://www.ngomik.com) and [www.makko.co](http://www.makko.co).

### Conclusion

CERGAM was born out of diverse people of Indonesia, diverse ethnic groups, religions, and social class. The approach, objectives and discourse in producing CERGAM also vary. Those facts and the long history of CERGAM, the media technology and globalization have affected the forms of today's CERGAM or Indonesian comic. I believe that there won't be a rigid form and single approach in Indonesian comics. The forms and styles of CERGAM are still in the process and will not stop to develop, because the Indonesian people themselves still have such strong belief in their diversity.

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