



Mapping
South:
Journeys
in
South-South
Cultural
Relations

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A Glossary of Illegality

Nuraini Juliastuti

This glossary project was initially called “A Glossary of Piracy”. As the writing progressed, the project transformed into a documentation of gestures of illegality. The discussion of piracy needed to be extended beyond its narrow consideration as a violation of intellectual property rights perpetrated in so-called Third World and postcolonial cities. Illegality, illegal spaces and pirated products instead come to light in different ways in the discussion about cultural products and their accumulation and production. This can be explained through the application of different pirating techniques (such as copying, hijacking, and consuming pirated products) as both a series of techniques for conveying ideas or thoughts, and a series of tools for accessing knowledge. Pirated products have long been accepted as a kind of currency in accumulating and producing contemporary cultural goods. Piracy thus indicates a willingness to participate in lifestyles promoting global brands and fashions, and is often overlaid with class sentiment. In fact, contemporary cultural production often depends on a mixture of the legal production system and the illegal one, creating a situation of disorderliness within contemporary culture. Some parts of this mini glossary, however, seek to disentangle the intricate relation between access to knowledge and disorderly techniques, which are evoked by illegality. The word “knowledge” used here refers mainly to “cultural products”. Sometimes it refers to written and audio-visual materials. Sometimes it refers simply to relevant elements of cultural production. Particular spaces described here serve as a physical embodiment of ties that connect different forms of disorderliness. Imbued with an unorthodox character, my glossary needs to be illustrated with some concrete examples. Some parts of the glossary derive from my review of the works of Wok the Rock, a Yogyakarta-based visual artist and a prominent figure in the underground music scene in Indonesia. In reviewing his works, a dialogue about degrees of illegitimacy, elements of the infrastructure of piracy, technological piracy and the materiality of illegal products was conducted. His stories merged with mine in the writing process. However incomplete it may seem, my glossary has progressed to become a map of shared memories and opinions about illegality.

KW

After they begin circulating in a hybrid network of legal and illegal systems, some pirated goods decide their own fate. Pirated goods are often called fake goods. But instead of the singular meaning with which many people interpret the word “fake”, the landscape of pirated goods reveals a range of colloquial terms for different degrees of illegitimacy. Such terms include *KW1*, *KW2* and *KW3* in Indonesia. The word “KW” derives from the Bahasa Indonesia’s *kualitas*, which is often pronounced as *kwalitas* and which can be translated into English as quality. In Malaysia, goods are listed as A, AA and AAA. Both KW1

and AAA are rated as high quality goods, or very good fakes and high quality forgeries. In Taiwan, South Korea and China, they are grouped into A, AA, A, B and C. Goods rated A have superior qualities. They are considered replicas. In Indonesia, a replica is also called *KW Super*. Original goods are called *Ori*, short for *orisinal* or original. As practices of piracy develop, a list of the terms will grow longer. Categorisations of piracy may become eclectic, adopting various colloquial terms.

Such a system of categorisation and valuation is, first and foremost, based on gradations of a fake's quality and its closeness to the original. However, a categorisation that has been translated into another cultural context also translates the trajectory of goods at a particular historical juncture. It gives insights into the existing networks of piracy. The street still serves as the main stage of piracy. But the Internet has steadily grown into a prominent site of KW trading, and has become the means to engage in a conversation about piracy. Concentrated in particular streets, malls, campus areas and existing traditional markets, piracy brings significant changes to the urban landscape, transforming that landscape into a hybrid of official and non-official spaces.

Being an inhabitant of a place that is abundant in pirated goods, or illicit-but-licit things, does not necessarily mean one shares the same vocabulary of piracy with others. People are required to continuously update and improve their knowledge of the diversity associated with pirated goods. The success of online marketing has also prompted KW distributors to retail their items on the Internet. Technological development is now crucial to this emerging business system, infusing it with an urban focus. The development of personal website technology, which enables users to operate that business without having any particular technological skills, is also a factor boosting the popularity of online marketing. It promises interactive communication as the basis for its operating system. The seemingly minimal amount of effort to operate the business has made it a supposedly "suitable" side job for many people, especially women based at home who work on the business in their spare time. While underlining its informal and lucrative aspects, personalised technology has made some KW websites convey a sense of femininity.

Yes No Wave

Yes No Wave Music (<http://yesnowave.com/>) is a Yogyakarta-based net label run by Wok the Rock, Bagus Jalang and Adya Mahardhika. It is a long-term project that Wok has worked on for four years. It is a label and a mode of gift economy that has served as a method for local musicians to publish their works. It serves as an experiment in disseminating freely downloadable works to a wide audience in today's capitalist era. Since its inception, the label has released sixty-two albums. An observation of the albums indicates the operation of an alternative cultural network at the local level. It has earned a reputation as a project in which modes of cultural production that differ from the mainstream can be enforced.

Disorder

Pirating techniques can be seen as tools for obtaining knowledge. Piracy thus converges with attempts at tinkering with circumstances where access to knowledge is limited. Wok the Rock's disordered ways of accessing knowledge, as described below, is a case in point.

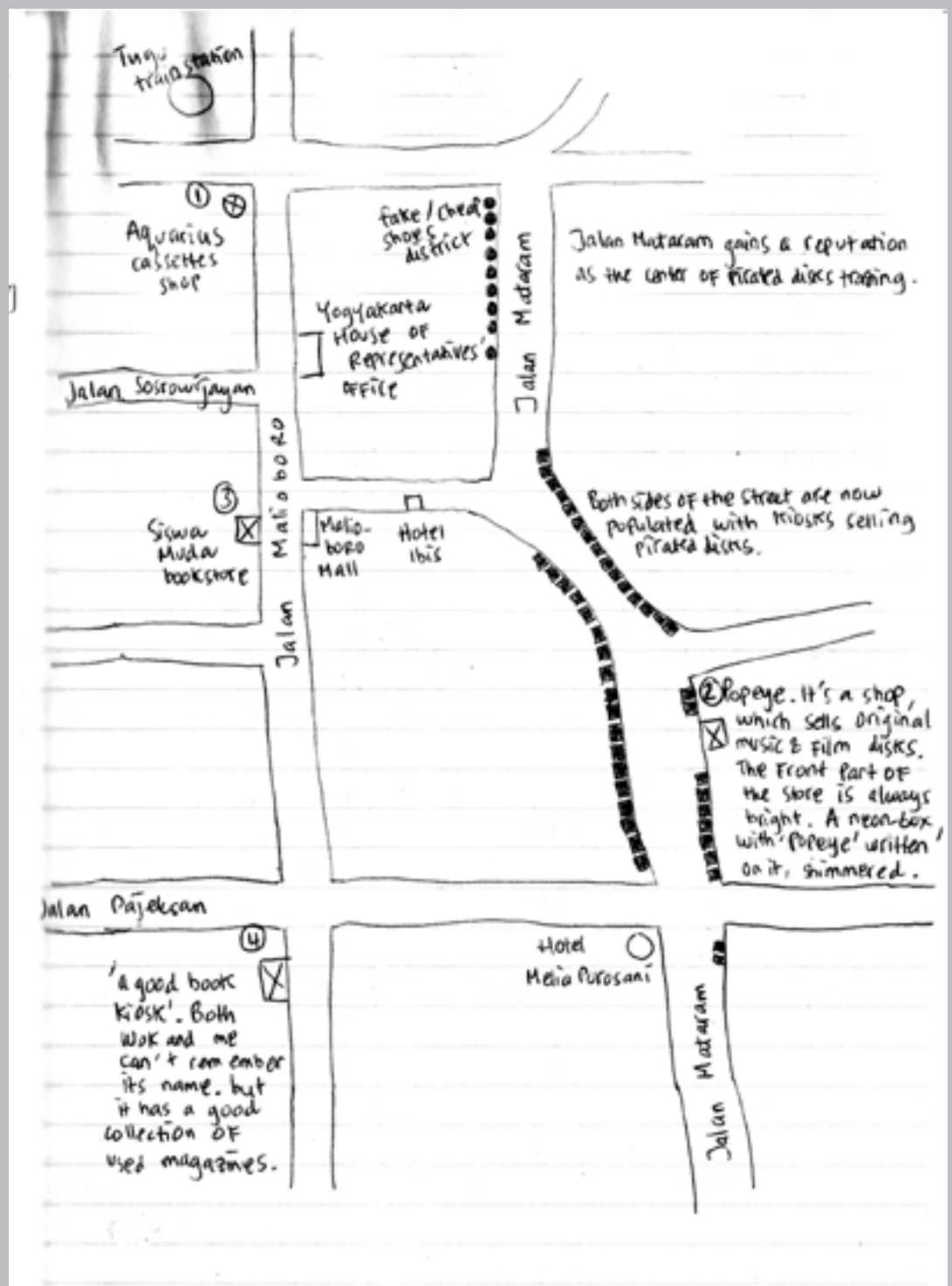
Wok moved to Yogyakarta to study advertising at the Faculty of Social and Political Science, Gadjah Mada University, in 1994. He dropped out within a year, and chose to continue his studies in the Department of Visual Communication and Design, Indonesian Institute of the Arts in 1995.

Imported magazines have always been rare things to him. Their distribution route never includes Madiun, his hometown, in East Java. For him, the main point of interest in these imported magazines lies in their graphic design. The development of an interest in the magazine's contents sometimes runs parallel to his interest in their design, though usually the latter takes precedence.

Almost all his favorite magazines are available online today. During his college years, however, they always reached his hands in secondhand forms: used copies of *Life*, *Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Asiaweek*, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*. He bought them at Shopping Center, situated in the Malioboro area.

Map of Wok's Sunday ritual itinerary 1. Visiting Malioboro was part of Wok's Sunday ritual at that time. It started with buying some cassettes in the shops Aquarius and Popeye, then browsing around Toko Buku Siswa Muda, a stationery store, which also sold the *International Herald Tribune*. Aquarius and Siswa Muda are located in Jalan Malioboro, the city's main street. Popeye is a shop that sells original music and film discs. It is located in Jalan Mataram. Jalan Mataram runs parallel to Jalan Malioboro. Jalan Mataram is now gaining a reputation as the centre of pirated disc trading. The front section of Popeye always looks bright, due to the neon-box, with the word "Popeye" written on it, that shimmers there. In front of Popeye, kiosks selling pirated disc kiosks form an orderly line. As with most of the main streets in the city, both sides of Jalan Malioboro and Jalan Mataram are populated with hotels, malls and the offices of state authorities. Standing in front of Siswa Muda is the building of the Yogyakarta House of Representatives. What is official and what is unofficial live harmoniously. What is original and what is fake live harmoniously, too.

Siswa Muda still exists at the same address. But I don't know whether they still sell the *International Herald Tribune*. Wok's Sunday ritual continued with visiting a street kiosk, which had a good collection of used magazines. It was located at the end of Jalan Pajeksan. Neither Wok nor I can really remember its name. The kiosk has now gone.



Multifunction kiosks. In Jalan Mataram, Yogyakarta, kiosks for pirated discs are often located adjacent to food stalls, groceries stores, shops selling shoes and clothes, optical shops and hotels. As shown in the picture above, a pirated disc kiosk and a food stall meet on a pavement. Multifunction kiosks can also be found: a food stall-cum-pirated disc kiosk, or a grocery store which doubles as both a pirated disc kiosk and a public phone service provider through the installment of phone booths inside the shop. Piracy has formed a new field of work and become part of the local everyday. One can perform hybrid activities while roaming the street: one can browse through the disc collections, buy a top-up voucher for a mobile phone, or order lunch at nearby food stalls. The discs on display look neat. They are grouped into categories: cartoon, horror, action, TV series, war, animation, classics, independent and European films, Asian films, Korean film series. There are no rules guiding these categorisations. Each kiosk owner builds his or her own system. (Photograph by the author, 2008).



Map of Wok's Sunday ritual itinerary 2. The ritual ended with Wok roaming over Shopping Center. Shopping Center is located behind Fort Vredenburg, a fortress built by the Dutch during the colonial era. Standing in front of the fort is Gedung Agung, one of the presidential palaces. Standing next to Shopping Center is the Yogyakarta Art Council building. Hamengkubuwono X, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, is watching the hustle and bustle of Jalan Malioboro-Jalan Mataram-Jalan Senopati triangle from his palace not so far away.

In the 1990s, Shopping Center was just like any other traditional market. Local traditional markets are usually designed as mazes. Shopping Center was a maze of small semi-permanent kiosks. Within the market, there were two theatres: Senopati and Jogja. Senopati mainly screened Indonesian movies, whereas Jogja screened a mixture of Indonesian and foreign movies. Both Indonesian movies and movie theatres themselves were in decline at that time. In the discussions about film in the mass media, the slogan "in hopes of the resurrection of the national film" became a frequent echo. What most often screened at both these theatres were second-rate Hollywood movies and local porn.

Shopping Center was relocated to its new location in 2005. The city government built a science museum – with playgrounds for children – in its former location. They call it Taman Pintar, or the Smart Park. Shopping Center now occupies a four-storey shopping block. Passages in the block that once looked dim are now brighter and wider. It is still a maze, but it is always full of visitors nonetheless.

Kiosks are categorised according to the reading materials they sell: local textbooks, new and used magazines, antiquarian books and so on. Situated between these kiosks are food and beverage stalls. To avoid getting lost in the maze of kiosks, one should know how they are arranged.

Clippings are one of the popular reading goods. They are important resources for students' research works. The shopkeepers sit in front of their kiosks with high piles of used newspapers. They cut various articles and arrange them according to different subject categories: media bans, illegal logging, human rights, riots and student fights. Each kiosk builds its own system of categorisation. Students come to the kiosks and give a brief description of the topics for their papers. The shopkeepers then recommend a set of clippings related to the topic.

On the bookshelves alongside the photocopied English textbooks, one can find papers and undergraduate theses written by students from various universities in Yogyakarta. The names of the students as well as the university logos are written on the texts' covers. The texts thus arrive in the market after passing through the academic regulations and walls of the education institutions, which have turned out to be very porous indeed.

Just as the notion that knowledge is a prerequisite for modernity has been accepted as part and parcel of local history, so techniques for accessing knowledge have undergone their own particular process of

development. That is, each means of accessing knowledge articulates its own trajectory and develops in its own specific way. The perception of how to access knowledge has also changed from time to time. Each technique follows its own preferred path, with the possibility of intersecting with other, different paths.

Clandestine ways of obtaining books (the books banned during the New Order era, for example) have given knowledge-seeking techniques a sense of subverting authority. In fact, banned books often have their own distribution routes. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's (PAT's) books are a case in point. One of the methods I used to get PAT's books was by ordering them from "the special middleman", people who are related (whether formally or informally) to the books' publisher in Jakarta. We met at a particular time and place. I paid the book price directly to the middleman. This was how I got one of PAT's novels, *Arus Balik*. The book came to me in a package wrapped in used newspaper.

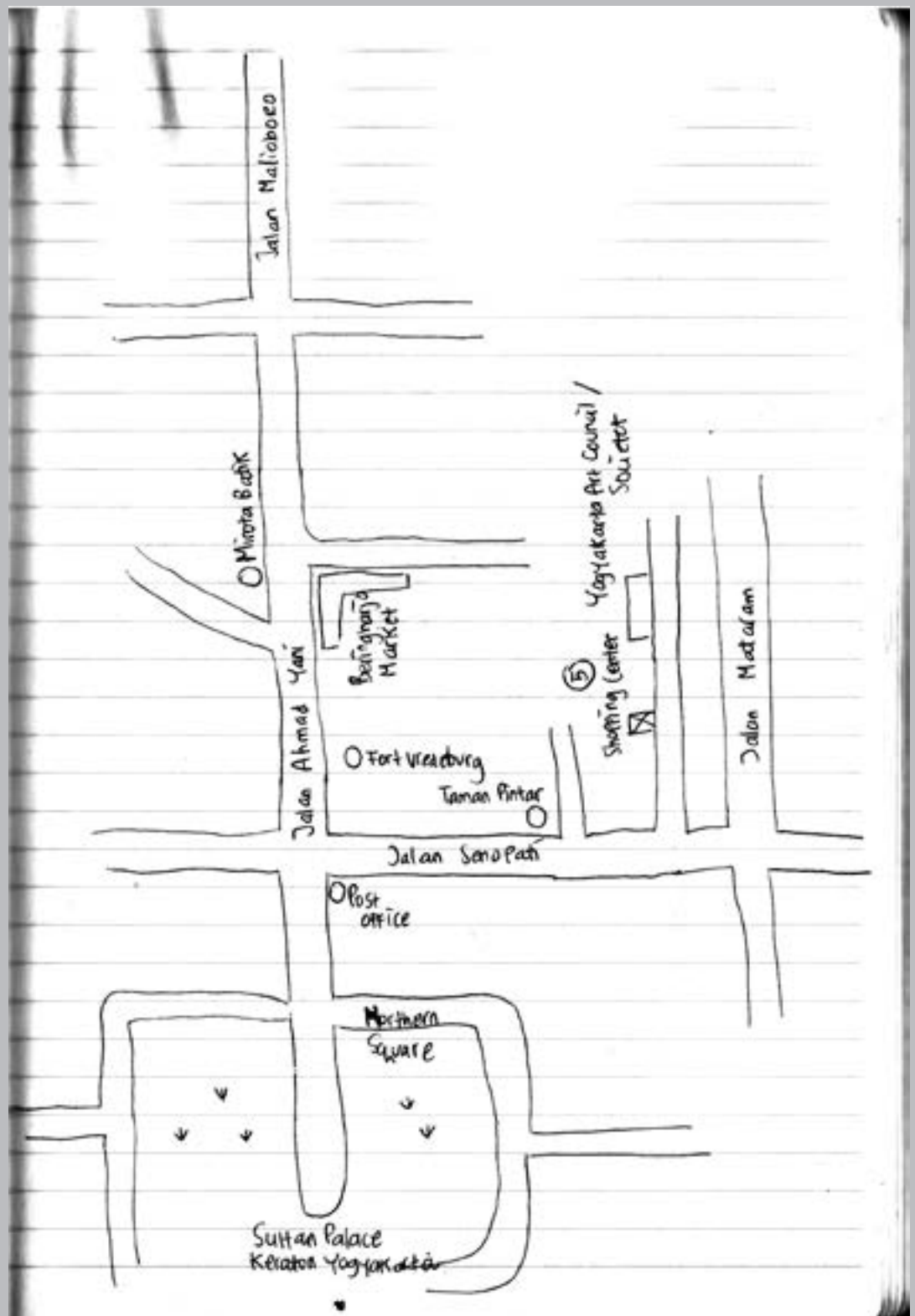
Piracy has led to an unceasing desire for knowledge that exists in various forms: students busy photocopying foreign textbooks; the bustling pirated disc vendors (who manage to transform themselves into new sources of knowledge); the flourishing local publishers busy translating foreign textbooks (surely without securing copyright permission for the text publication) and publishing the works of local writers.

Shopping Center has now become an essential space in the life of students from Yogyakarta, as well as students from other cities who frequent it. Its narrative is of knowledge-seeking shaped and informed by photocopying, collecting secondhand reading goods, and buying theses or papers. All have crossed the porous border from university to marketplace, changing into illicit things.

Wok's dependency on secondhand reading materials indicates how access to knowledge can be limited. One can come to depend on certain cultural products provided by piracy, and that dependency is most evident when non-official spaces fail to provide what one wants or needs. The consumption of pirated goods thus hovers between an act of emergency and an act of survival, without which basic necessities cannot be fulfilled. And because they provide necessities, such acts tend to repeat themselves, making their state of emergency permanent. Every time Wok goes to Shopping Center, he only hopes that all the secondhand magazines are in good condition.

Tinkering practices

In the 1990s, one of the most common ways to acquire the music of some groups, especially if it was difficult to get through official distribution channels, was to make a duplicate of the original discs. After successfully getting the original discs, the next step was to buy blank cassettes. According to Wok, Panarec and Sunny were more popular than BASF and TDK, because they were slightly cheaper. A Sunny blank cassette sold for around 1700Rupiah at that time, whereas a BASF sold for more than 2000Rupiah. Wok told me that he usually bought ten Sunny cassettes, so that he could copy more



records. Then he brought them to the house of one of his friends, and organised the duplication process. Usually some tinkering was needed before the duplication process, including, Wok said, storing the used cassettes in the fridge. This was believed to bring the used cassettes back to their mint condition.

Map of shops selling secondhand cassettes. As the number of records that Wok wanted to copy increased, he realised he needed more blank cassettes. Since he had a limited budget for fulfilling his desire for music, he started to use secondhand cassettes. He bought them at shops located between Fort Vredenburg and Beringharjo market. A secondhand cassette sold for around 200Rupiah.

A copy of one of the Toy Dolls' album. Wok copied the album with a Sunny blank cassette. (Photograph by Wok the Rock, 2005).

A copy of one of the Ramones' albums. Wok copied the album with a used cassette. (Photograph by Wok the Rock, 2005).

Map of disorderly ways of seeking and producing cultural products. By trying to illustrate the disordered ways of local knowledge-seeking, we can create an inventory of the many different techniques available for accessing cultural materials, spaces and agents. Moreover, we can see how practising these different techniques has helped develop new spaces for, and techniques of, piracy and creative knowledge access. For example, pirated discs are "knowledge carriers" which local people depend on for their knowledge of current world cinemas. Movies and videos screened at local alternative cultural spaces are sometimes also dependent on pirated discs, while some people explore world cinemas from home based on pirated discs loaned from local video rental services. In some cases, these services become renowned for their good selection of movies and actually transform into local home cinemas (such as Movie Box Jogja in Yogyakarta). In other cases, the employment of a series of illegal and legal techniques produces amateur cultural products (poor quality discs and video transfers, etc.). Ultimately, the range of actors involved in seeking and producing knowledge is wide, with a variety of techniques employed to make the process as elastic as possible.

Burn

The burning of piles of allegedly illegal products is still regarded by the state as its preferred technique for eradicating and deterring piracy. It is designed as a public event. Journalists from the national mass media are invited to cover the event. Prominent figures in local art and cultural scenes, and sometimes famous spiritual and religious leaders, are also invited to attend. Large tin containers and heavy equipment are commonly used during the burnings. Direktorat Jenderal Hak Kekayaan Intelektual, the Indonesian Intellectual Authority, and Kepolisian Republik Indonesia, the Indonesian National Police, are the state bodies in charge of piracy eradication. Covering their faces with cloth masks and holding long sticks with which to ignite the blazes, the appointed state officers of pour gasoline onto the piles of illegal goods, ready for burning. As with other kinds of ceremonies, invited guests – as well as a wide audience – watch the fire dutifully.

The materials categorised as illegal are extremely varied, including pirated discs, counterfeit money and pirated mobile phones. Some of the public burnings include machines used to duplicate discs and money, while others include porn films, alcoholic drinks, heroin, marijuana and, sometimes, secondhand garments. These materials are often considered and categorised as "dirty". The techniques of burning and crushing illegal goods indicate the need to keep the local environment clean, and for putting things in order. But in each case, the public destruction of these goods stretches the meaning of "dirty" further than usual, so as to include any matter that stems from disorderliness.



Techniques

- storing/archiving
- collecting
- copying
- tinkering/cannibalistic acts
- pirating/hijacking
- recycling
- translating
- downloading/unloading
- treasure hunting
- networking
- digging/mining

Spaces

- secondhand shops
- antiquarian shops
- official distribution channels
- alternative book shops

Actors/agents

- junk men
- alternative book publishers
- independent - unauthorized translators
- photocopy shops
- the Internet
- cheap printers
- secondhand/antiquarian books/cd owners

Aesthetics of the reading materials

- used
- copied
- scrap/chunks/disperate
- e-book

