

**Consuming the Global and the Modern :
An Industrial Worker Experiencing McDonald and KFC**

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The formation of identity amongst the industrial workers in Tangerang is inseparable from their efforts to be modern subjects, represented by their aspiration for progress. A manufacturing worker introduced in this paper demonstrated his personal expression of what it means to be modern beings, to be differentiated from the 'un-modern' rural existence, and to be regarded as in conformity with modernity. These are achieved by undertaking austerity measures in his urban existence while at the same time attempting to take pleasure from a global culture, namely fast-food restaurants, which is uncommon to many urban residents from lower economic and social stratum. These are examples of what Joel Kahn defines as 'modernism', 'a special way of interrogating modernity' (2001:17). As modernism develops in accord with the specificity of places or sites, there may be different forms of modernism (Kahn 2001b:657,659) and we find one particular expression among the young migrant industrial workers in Tangerang.

Downtown Tangerang in Cimone reveals a different side of an industrial town marginalised by the presence of slum-like neighborhoods that provide migrant workers places to reside or simply to escape from the regime of manufacturing production. Its landscape is predominantly marked by a semi-modern shopping mall and two or three other smaller comparatively refined shopping outlets. Though for lower middle-class market, their reality, apparently being a simulated space for their modern and cosmopolitan originals in Jakarta's CBDs, contradict the notion of deprived industrial working class which makes up a third of the town's population.

As I was walking along the aisle of the mall, I was stopped at the front of a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant. It was the scene inside the outlet that clearly deterred me from going on with my window-shopping escapade that afternoon. Behind

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the glass window I saw Iwan, an informant during my fieldwork between 2000 and 2001, along with three adults and one youngster are dining in, consuming the restaurant's regular menu. From a distance while trying to hide my presence I saw their cheerful faces followed by relaxed conversation and frequent laughter. Later, I knew it was a family reunion. A moment before Iwan, who had been a manufacturing worker at a major tire factory in town for nearly two years, picked up his visiting relatives from Madiun, a district town in eastern Java at the bus terminal located across the street from the mall. The relatives were apparently his parents, an uncle, and his ten years-old younger brother. Knowing that they had just spent nearly ten hours on the economy-class bus, Iwan offered them to take a respite at that comfortable and clean chain restaurant, conferring them an early impression of an urban experience.

For Iwan himself, nonetheless, that occasion in the restaurant was remarkably special, at least to me, as he seemed to have a different look from his everyday appearance at a workers' neighborhood in one of Tangerang's industrial subdistrict. It was the first time during my seven months undertaking fieldwork in Gambir neighborhood I noticed Iwan was wearing a collared shirt, trousers, and leather synthetic shoes outside the factory setting, which required him to put on a complete work uniform, consisting of blue collared shirt as well as dark blue trousers, and sneakers. Whereas, worn-out t-shirt, blue jeans, and sandals were usually his order of the day at the neighborhood as well as under other casual environments.

The fact that Iwan sat and had lunch at the fast-food restaurant would not be so unusual, had he been known to me, and even his colleagues, as having a consumerist lifestyle in his everyday life. Iwan had a very simple livelihood in his urban existence



instead. This can be seen from the plain condition of the lodging, a 3x4m room in a lodging compound with approximately 70 rooms shared by over 175 worker tenants, he and another fellow, who was also an urban migrant workers from the same village of Iwan's, rented for nearly Rp60,000 per month. Judging from the absence of bed, mattress or furniture, even a simple one, let alone today-must-have electrical appliances, created an impression of the room being inhabited. Some signs of life could only probably be noticed from the presence of a small shabby plastic wardrobe, two plastic mats, apparently functioned to sleep on, and a radio tape recorder of an outdated model, possibly from the early-1980s.

This plainness was further reflected in his expenditure. Apart from not being too interested in pursuing pleasure in acquiring luxuries, Iwan also did not seem to concern in seeking comfort with his everyday existence. In the neighborhood, for instance, he went to the same food stall everyday and bought almost the same menu, consisting of rice, vegetable, fried soybean curd (*tahu*) or fermented soybean cake (*tempe*), a combination of diet which was relatively cheaper than the one with meat, fish, or chicken. Despite the facts that he was not a vegetarian and his hard 8-hour-long factory work on the shopfloor, often with overtime, actually required sufficient intake of nutritious food, often he was quite pleased by a diet of only rice and vegetable. These measures applied also to other basic needs, such as clothes and accommodation. A few time I observed he came empty-handed from shopping while his fellows who went along with him showed off to the crowd at the lodging outfits recently bought from a downtown mall or a nearby low-budget market. Two-three weeks before I completed my fieldwork, moreover, Iwan



moved out from the compound following a slight rise in lodging's rental price, notwithstanding the rest of tenants seemed unaffected by the increase and decided to stay.

Symbolic Consumption in Workers' Urban Neighborhood

Such austerity does not appear to have resulted from the condition of payment received by Iwan. Most young workers in the area experience different existence despite their presence in Tangerang as well as their engagement in factory work had been less than two years in average. A tenant at Iwan's next door, a 20-years old girl who worked at a garment industry producing sport apparels of variety of global brands afforded to have a queen-size spring bed as well a 14-inches color television set. A workmate of Iwan from the same division and duty managed to pay for an 18-inches color television set, CD/VCD player, two loudspeakers, and a mountain bike respectively during four consecutive months. This comparatively high consumption, however, does not necessarily indicate absolute affluence experienced by contemporary workers compared to their predecessors in the early-1990s (e.g. Hadiz 1997, Kammen 1997, Wolf 1992). The increasing possession of such cultural symbols of modernity and progress might reflect the final stages in a Rostowian unilinear course of economic development with some keywords, such as industrialisation, high consumption, and leisure time (Rostow 1982). However, a full realisation of modernity as indicated in the take-off phase, or even in the stage of high mass consumption, might not be a true reflection of the everyday reality on the ground. It is ironic that this pattern of consumption of material goods and the embrace of such lifestyles are adopted by the very same migrant workers who remained living in an area where, for example, access to clean water is almost a daily



struggle and where a typical slum-like *kampung*, with almost no rubbish collection, is their everyday experience. The devastating effect of flooding during monsoons offers no peace of mind to the residents in the area. Moreover, in terms of economic activities, the industrial workers still have to work long hours for approximately Rp 16,000 (\$3) a day, and more hours of overtime for more payment. The notion of less work for more leisure time, a stage in the Rostow's characterisation of a high mass consumption society, is certainly not the order of the day in Tangerang. Such paradoxes, nonetheless, reveals a declining tendency in remitting workers' urban income to the family in rural areas replaced by consumption for their own purposes, producing meanings of the practice in response to their own actuality in the city.

Elsewhere (2004) I have maintained consumerism and, borrowing Thorsten Veblen (1970), 'conspicuous consumption' amongst factory workers with rural background in urban Tangerang being affected by their efforts to produce a new meaning to and realigning of their pre-existing perceived 'modernity' with the actuality of the industrial town. Their childhood encounters in the countryside with a variety of cultural flows, making modernisation and global discourse familiar in rural society, have created a phantasmagoric image of modernity which they seek to embrace through migration to the city. The move to an urban centre for rural youth is not merely about migration *per se*, that is, it is not just about colonising urban space in order to claim their economic rights. Urban migration is seen by rural youth as a practice by which they achieve modern emancipation, moving from a rural existence that does not seem to represent qualities promised by that the (urban-centred) modernisation. '[S]pace', as Foucault said, 'is fundamental in any exercise of power' (1991:252). Speaking about architecture, Foucault



argues that the manner in which a city or a space is organised (e.g. how the society should be; how to avoid epidemics and revolts) signifies ‘the techniques of government’ or ‘a program of government rationality’ to reinforce its power, by ‘assur[ing] the tranquillity of a city’ (ibid.:239-42). This means that, despite the bodily presence of the subjects, until a set of rules is put in place, a space remains a no man’s land without any enforced power. Such an analogy is probably useful in looking at the connection between urban space and modernity. Urban migration does not necessarily mean an imposition of control by the migrants over an urban space, especially when it is only linked with economic pursuits, in which their subjectivity is, in fact, subordinated under a production regime. The embrace of modern and urban practices engender possibilities, in which a set of rules, ‘a program of workers’ rationality’, to adapt Foucault, is imposed to reinforce their subjectification, to confer their own power. Thus, the conquest of urban space is carried out through the production of their own meaning of their existence in the city.

Nonetheless, the structurally-designated status in the urban sphere, with which a slum-like neighborhood and marginalised urban space are their actual reality, makes their modern self fragile. The purchase and possession of luxuries, therefore, not only represents a means of confronting the stigma placed upon the factory workers. Consumption of commodities is an endeavor to bring workers back to the track of ascertaining modern identity. In addition, consumerism as a contestation of meaning to the formation of identity reveals how power is generated and exercised at the micro level. The possession of luxuries produces a medium for the workers through which a sense of power and control—to experience freedom in consumption, to find their leisure heaven, to boost their role in familial relations— is imagined to be embodied in their own



subjectivity, in the sphere impervious to the interplay of power relations at corporate and state level. It compensates the structural subjugation in which workers are treated as mere objects, rather than subjects, in production relations. Practice of consumption amongst the Tangerang factory workers substantiates Foucault's (1979) stance about power never being 'on one side' (p.60) and, thus, inherent to every individual body. It becomes a field in which the subaltern produces their own 'power' by contesting the 'official' (media) definition of being factory workers: the feeble subjects. Consumerism, in this light, is not an 'appropriation' of power from authority, but resembles a process Foucault described as 'subjectification' (cited in Rabinow 1991:11), which in this context is to (re)gain power to control the private domain of the worker subjects. It is an act of reiterating the selfhood of subject under urban modern circumstance. Similarly, it becomes an expression of resistance against the alienating consequence of industrialisation and modernisation that tends to marginalise subaltern subjects such as industrial labourers.

Realising Modernity : A Schema for Future

How do we, then, read Iwan's discriminatory asceticism in his urban existence, while his colleagues seemed to be consciously and overtly 'consistent' in their preference for urban lifestyle by appropriating material culture associated with modernity and progress? Does he, in fact, have a sort of conception of modernity comparable to the one espoused by others in the neighborhood? How does he himself read his presence in the restaurant?

Later that day I could see his reluctance in responding my curiosities when he knew I saw him that afternoon. However, he eventually smiled whilst repeatedly reminded me to keep the encounter earlier that day secret from the rest of the compound's residents.



His response is certainly atypical from Solvay Gerke's (2000) point of view. In his account on 'symbolic consumption' in Indonesia, Gerke maintains that consumption behavior is essential to domestic lower middle class in order provide them 'touch' for their current status recently acquired through education and respectable occupation (p.146). However, their limited affordability to access commodities perceived to be belonging to the *real* middle class has disallowed them from conspicuous consumption. This makes every appropriation of modern and middle-class-associated commodities has to confer displaying effect in order to exhibit their alignment to a particular bourgeoisie lifestyle. The trend which Gerke identifies as 'lifestyling' (p.147) can be best seen in his illustration:

'...[O]ne could readily see young people and families spending hours sitting in strategic places, where they could be seen by all and sundry, at McDonald's or Pizza Hut drinking Coke or milk-shakes with a burger. They would take the empty hamburger bags with them, as they left the fast-food restaurant, so that everybody in the street could see where they had lunch or dinner.' (p.146-7)

While 'demonstrative consumption' (p.147) was undoubtedly lacking in my situation with Iwan, lifestyling as consumption stemmed from insecure economic basis, in contrast, could not be ruled out. Despite a significant rise of wage level enjoyed by workers in Tangerang in the early-21st century compared to the early-1990s, dropping in KFC or McDonald restaurants or going to electronic shops, even for cheaper China-made products, did not necessarily reveal their constant affordability of consumption, let alone their economic well-being. The fact remained that one had to juggle monthly income earned from factory job to eventually purchase luxuries or treat others at the restaurant, often at the expenses of better basic necessities. Other simply had to make saving for



months to satisfy obsession in conforming to a particular imagined lifestyle or existence beyond his or her subsistence, making consumption of this sort symbolic.

For Iwan, even so, there is more than just about sacrificing one to the other. Saving for remittance in order to support the economy of his parents in the countryside, as he said, was not the reason for his asceticism in the city. Being employed in urban industrial factory and earning his own income for his own purpose had been a long-standing aspiration since his schooldays. 'I work for my self,' he claimed. This statement was not unique in its own, judging from conspicuous consumption amongst migrant industrial workers I described earlier. Though seemed to share his colleagues' ideas about consumption being means of imagining modern subjectivity embodying power and control, Iwan views that urban environment is not an utmost condition required in modernity. For him, city remained a mere 'rice field' in which a rural entity like him could stretch out opportunities in seeking respectable employment with decent remuneration. The failure of rural economy in providing adequate job opportunities for the youngsters was one reason for his conception of city being an expanded economic field. On one hand, such claim was probably less accurate provided the sustainability of rural economy following the 1997 financial crisis, during which urban formal sectors were severely hit. Urban sectors, particularly the manufacturing ones, on the other hand, had been a dream that came true to the younger generation from the countryside experiencing improved education with urban-centred discourse as well as greater exposure to realities beyond rural boundaries. These are conditions which Kenneth Young (1994) terms 'the urbanization of the rural', which engenders (urban) modernity as the 'dominant narrative' to most rural children.



As part of rural younger generation, Iwan is inevitably susceptible to the narrative. However, as he stated, the appropriation of modernity through symbolic consumption to fulfill the urban existence of the rural youth-turned urban workers, hoping to embody them with modern and urban identity, is a bogus aspiration. This is particularly true to him as the vulnerability of urban economy in offering persistent employment makes it unworkable for people like him to ensure their continued presence in the city. He then illustrated the impact of the 1997 financial crisis through which Tangerang was virtually deserted by its migrant workers population. Though he represented a newer generation of urban workers in Tangerang, arriving only two-three years after the crisis when industrial economy in the area was likely to regain reasonably its dominance, Iwan remained firm in his belief that city was not his imagined existence of modernity. He, moreover, asserted that urban modernity as perceived by most of his colleagues in the area was incompatible with marginal conditions experienced by workers in Tangerang. 'It looks odd that we manage to buy refrigerator and TV set amidst our lives in this poor *kampung* where flood can come anytime and electricity supply is frequently cut off,' he stated. To make such incompatibility more complex, he points out that imagining social advancement and cultural progress through 'superfluous' (*nggak perlu*) consumerism is spurious for those who remained at the factories' lower hierarchy, performing hard and physically-demanding labor.

Therefore, to him, working in the factory is merely transitional toward a better existence. Such view is in fact not uncommon to the population he represented. Though factory work provides the migrants with the sense of 'uplifting' from their rural (agricultural) existence, it does not mean that they embody a feeling of attachment to the



job (Warouw 2004). Options for occupations beyond the factory work that migrant workers believe they have, as a result of improved school education, contribute to their perception of factory work as being transitional, at least in their imaginings. This view often explains workers' acceptance of the harsh industrial experience and their low attachment/loyalty to the company/employer, leading to a disinclination to fight for improvement of conditions in the occupation.² In relation to migrants' aspirations of cultural progress, this construction of urban possibilities are, therefore, not merely about economic opportunity. It is equally about possible future existence in which they can bring their pursuit for modernity to fruition.

While urban setting remains central to such expected future opportunities, Iwan, nevertheless, perceives city in itself is also a transitional reality, which accordingly produces rural existence for his ideal life trajectory. This might remind the circulatory movement amongst migrants from the countryside in a poor community of Jakarta during 1970s and 1980s as seen by Lea Jellinek (1991). '[L]eaving their wives and children to tend crops and look after their home in the countryside' (ibid.:33), they saw the city as merely a place for temporary work. Accordingly, their temporary existence in the city was affected by their economic link with the countryside in the form of the remittance of urban income as well as the need to visit families. Villagers came to the metropolitan centre in order to 'toil' urban economic fields for 'harvest' with which migrants bring back to their village. Thus, countryside remained their ultimate home. However, for Iwan, the connection between urban with rural area was not highlighted by his familial

² This contradicts Hadiz' (1994) finding about the Indonesian working-class action in 1990s. He argues that the workers' greater reliance on urban existence, but, at the same time, their limited social mobility enabled them to 'have a more permanent stake in struggles to improve their work and living conditions in the factories and cities' (p.69).



responsibilities, let alone was seen exclusively as a circulatory passage between rural home and village-based rice field carried out in a frequent basis. Though often made short annual return to village during Idul Fitri season, he never remitted bulk of his urban income to rural family and came back to the city empty-handed. He understood his urban adventure was a one-time journey, after which he would eventually withdraw to the countryside for good.

By the time I spoke with him, he had not decided for how long he would be residing and working in the city. 'I want to obtain cash [from my current job] to the utmost of my condition before I'll retreat to my home village someday,' he explained. He continued, 'I'd like to use the money to start a life of my own.' It is under this rural setting that Iwan wished to represent modern identity into actuality. Having his own house, separate from his parents', was his future desire in which he would relieve his urban asceticism by acquiring any symbols of modernity he might pay for. This liberation from asceticism in countryside is enabled, he believed, by the relative absence of deprived conditions he experienced during in the city, both at urban dwelling and the factory. He added that there would be no underprivileged status as it was regularly discovered on manufacturing shopfloor. Having come from admittedly a rural low-income family employed in agricultural sector, he emphasised, as I noticed, his longing for improving his rural-based social status. He was quite convinced that his would-be long-accumulated urban income would enable him to invest in a small trading business (*warung*) that allowed him to sustain his future rural existence.



Realising Modernity : An Agenda for Present

So, how do we explain Iwan's disengagement from his urban austerity by taking pleasure in the fast-food restaurant?

Though not a frequent customer, he visited fast food restaurants once a month, normally following monthly payday. KFC was not the only choice for Iwan as McDonald outlet, located in another shopping mall, was also of his preference. Despite specialities offered by these restaurants, Iwan, however, did not seem to distinguish between the two as he always order rice and fried chicken menu when dropping in at one of the outlets. 'It is the only menu that goes well with my tongue,' he said when asked why he did not prefer, say, a combination of french fries and fried chicken, or, even, beef burger. He wittily called french fries and beef burger as '*panganan wong londo*' (a food for white people), spoken in a thick eastern Javanese accent. As we normally used bahasa Indonesia in our conversation, I could sense that he was making an emphasis in expressing 'a food for white people' by turning it into eastern Javanese dialect. He probably would like to reveal his unwavering local identity, both as an Indonesian or a Javanese, when dined in at restaurants of which he was quite aware of their American origin.

Dropping in at these restaurants was not merely about dining in or possibly maintaining his local taste in relation to other menus unfamiliar to him. He did not deny that being in those places exposed him to a global culture previously he had only seen on TV or heard from other people's accounts. The first time he stepped his feet on McDonald outlet, his first fast-food restaurant experience, he was so nervous as he was strange to the manner applied in such places. It started from clean and bright



environment, queuing lines to order meals, illustrated menu list on the wall, food tray, wash basin in dining area, to an almost spotless restroom. He was further confused by the fact that he himself had to take litter on his table before he left restaurant. However, after several visits he appeared to get accustomed to this fast-food manner, unusual to patrons of food stalls in his urban neighbourhood or village. In fact, he increasingly became more confident in his conformity to those rules. 'I know what to do now [when at the restaurant] and I'm no longer confused [with the manner], from which, I think, people would think I'm a regular patron,' he explained. With big laughter he added, 'I'm no longer interested in looking intently the layout and decoration of the place as if those were new to me.'

In this regard, fast-food restaurants can sometimes be considered as an organisation of capitalist industries addressed by Harry Braverman (1974) to which production mechanism is internalised through habituation the self. The significance of habituation is not merely related to the technological transformation, but equally to the conditioning of workers to become an extension of machinery. The same applied to the manners established in fast-food restaurants with their attempt to minimize inefficiency when there is no rules employed by which chaos and confusion may delay the whole profit-taking process. Such places offer their patron disciplines that meticulously define every single movement of individuals in order to bring maximum utility in achieving the objective of capitalist production. The introduction of fast-food restaurants rules, ranging from queuing for service instead of shop attendance approaching customer, client taking his/or own meals to the table, or self-cleaning up, has placed patrons as an extension of fast-food restaurant production, rather than a separate entity from the production itself.



This sort of regime production has been an authority that creates individuals as the object of power, as Foucault maintains when discussing penitentiary institutions, as 'docile bodies' whose initiative has been subtracted and replaced by 'new forms of knowledge' (1991:155). Therefore, this incorporation is also the way rural individual like Iwan is introduced to the 'new mechanisms of power' (ibid.) which regulate his mind and body to conform with the corporate project of commodity production.

To Iwan, his conformity with the restaurants' rules demonstrates his ability to assume 'new forms of knowledge' which he acknowledges as modern identity. The attributes and disciplines ascribed to his favorite places for eating give him a sense of uplifting, distancing him from his pre-modern existence in the countryside or even the chaotic environment of urban neighborhood. It is in this light that his eloquence with this set of disciplines is valued as a celebrated representation of imagined modernity. His adherence to modern tradition along with its knowledge represents the haunting imagination of modernity which he considers to be the inherent quality of the fast-food restaurants. In addition, as Iwan saw that modernity can not contain contradiction in itself, he, therefore, considered the restaurants as the only sites he was presumably disconnected from his urban reality in *kampung* or factory. He enjoyed being alone sitting at the fast-food restaurants as no one would know his experience of industrial pressure and his lower status in a tire-producing manufacturing industry as well as of deprived condition of urban neighborhood. He was sure believed that anonymity in such restaurants' atmosphere as well as his engagement in this practice of eating and behaving would ensure his full modern identity. This is also an aspiration, as mentioned earlier, which he believed he could acquire also in the countryside where 'nobody', at least until I



caught him, would realize that he was once part of marginalised urban community and was employed as *cuma buruh pabrik* (a mere factory worker).

Conclusion

Today, the popular acceptance of dominant social values, one of which is consumption, has enabled the penetration of commodity capitalism to rural towns as well as to the marginal urban industrial-residential neighborhoods. Consumption has allowed workers not only to be engaged in the discourse of cosmopolitan culture, but equally gives them a chance to be the consumers of globally-produced commodities from which modern culture take its representation. In the theory of 'mass culture', Theodor Adorno (1991) sees that consumption is no more than 'an appendage of the machinery'(p.99), an extension of the production sequence. He argues that the culture industry subjugates consumers to market exploitation and the art of advertisement, inundating individuals' consciousness with cultural commodities stripped of their use value. The acceptance of consumption by the masses might indicate what Antonio Gramsci (1971) terms 'hegemony', in which the ruling class' domination of society is carried out not through coercive forces, but 'intellectual and moral leadership' (p.57-8), penetrating the subjects' 'private initiatives and activities' (p.258). John Fiske (1989:2) points out that commodities, such as televisions, records, and clothes, make up the 'resources' for those who hold the economic and ideological authority to maintain the contemporary order and to exert moral values to be embraced by the masses. There is no doubt that the migrant workers' idea of modernity to which they subscribe is inseparable from the state's dominant ideology of development (*pembangunan*) promoting progress and advancement



to its populace. The incorporation of urban lifestyle into the idea of modernity suggests the efficacy of the state's ideological apparatus (e.g. media and school) to promote the modern conditions experienced by the urban middle class as the icon of *pembangunan*.

Nevertheless, the engagement of workers in the practice of consumption does not only imply the passive subjugation of the subaltern to the dominant values and profit-oriented motives of the capitalists. Consumption can be also an arena in which the subaltern produces their own discourse different from the hegemonising 'intellectual and moral leadership' of the bourgeoisie and the state about modernization and urban lifestyle. For rural youth-turned urban migrants, the consumption of consumer goods, on the one hand, increases their leverages in order to demonstrate a degree of independence from parents regarding their pursuit of modern identity. It shows that their urban existence is not solely filled by their struggle for subsistence. On the other hand, as factory workers, amidst their urban hardship and experiences on the shopfloor, symbolic consumption reveals a degree of 'affluence' which is in contradiction with the society's perception of workers' subjection and destitution. Thus, it becomes an expression of resistance against the alienating consequence of industrialisation and modernisation that tends to marginalise subaltern subjects such as industrial labourers.

For Iwan, experiencing fast-food restaurants is a way of negotiating the actual realization of his conception of modernity, delayed by space and time. For a people like him, having to take adventurous journey to an industrial city and experiencing urban destitution, modernity can only be maintained in a condition of anonymity. It is more like a 'presentation of self in everyday life' in Erving Goffman's (1990) sense, in which a full appropriation of modern, and global culture form the 'frontstage' of Iwan. Others are



denied facts that there is a dark side of his life, a 'backstage', which he considered to be inconsistent to modern conditions. This explains his preference of countryside, his village of origin, as an ultimate site in fulfilling modern pursuit. However, this does not mean that urban spaces are impossible for his desire for cultural advancement and modern pleasure. Fast-food restaurants with American license, common today even in urban enclaves for lower middle class, with their eye-catching attributes from outside, their increasingly familiar interior designs and their 'rules of engagement', can similarly provide the condition of anonymity where one can experience a total disengagement from her or his everyday reality of social and economic deprivation. They can offer the less-privileged urban residents not only a global experience of dining, but also a cultural sanctuary from structurally-defined urban hardship and an imagined existence of, as well as association to modern community (Anderson 1983).

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