"Read All about It": The Press and the Rise of National Consciousness in Early Twentieth-Century Dutch East Indies Society
Author(s): James M. Hagen
Source: Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Jul., 1997), pp. 107-126
Published by: The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3317671
Accessed: 29/09/2008 02:11

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ifer.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We work with the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to Anthropological Quarterly.
"READ ALL ABOUT IT": THE PRESS AND THE RISE OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY DUTCH EAST INDIES SOCIETY

JAMES M. HAGEN
University of Cincinnati

The essay examines the historical relationship between newspapers and national consciousness in colonial Indonesia. It begins with a critical evaluation of Benedict Anderson's thesis that the native intelligentsia of various colonized states imagined their own national communities as they began to consume newspapers printed in the vernacular of their respective states. In examining the general premise of Anderson's thesis, the study seeks both to specify the various ways that newspaper reading instilled a sense of community and the nature of the community it instilled. Translating a series of articles from early twentieth-century Malay language newspapers, it explores reader response by focusing on the strategies journalists employed to evoke them and so conceive their audience. [nationalism, community, newspapers, Indonesia, history]

In his landmark study *Imagined communities* (1991[1983]), Benedict Anderson points to the rise of the vernacular press as a catalyst that helped fuel the emergence of nationalist consciousness. Anderson's argument, presented in the context of a broader study of the origins and spread of nationalism, is that the advent of commercial printing provided the means, for the first time in history, through which readers could imagine a comradeship with a large number of fellow readers, most of whom they had never met nor would ever meet over the course of their lifetimes (1991[1983]: 33-46). The printing industry—by that he means primarily newspapers—created a medium for the sharing of experiences across a relatively distant territory. No matter that the experiences were vicarious and the sharing not exactly reciprocal, the news revealed the contours of a social world beyond the immediate experience of its readers, and reading the news made readers feel a part of that expanded social world. As people became aware of the events and comings and goings of people in the news, their stake grew in the community to which the stories referred. The historical force of nationalism, as Anderson shows, lies foremost with this sense of belonging it instills.

On close inspection Anderson poses a rather complex proposition. More than expanding and diversifying the base of reader experience, the consumption of print supposedly restructured that experience. First, Anderson proposes that reading changed perceptions of time. Specifically, he asserts that reading heightened awareness of the reality of co-occurrence within time and that awareness, in turn, made it possible to imagine an extended or non-local community—that is, a community moving together through time (1991[1983]: 22-33). Second, the language of print also shaped experience. The fact that many of the papers were printed in the vernacular instilled awareness of a broader, ethnically diverse community of speakers. In some places, the vernacular was the language of commerce, not the language of home—for example, much of Java—and in other places the situation was the reverse. But the vernacular was juxtaposed to languages of court or of high religion; it was, thus, or in time would become, the language of the nation (see also Steedly 1996: 460; Siegel 1997). In short, awareness of the sharing of experience and recognition of membership in a vastly expanded community created the foundation on which an explicitly nationalist discourse could take hold.

To support his proposition, Anderson summons an amazing array of historical evidence from nearly every continent, a feat all the more remarkable considering that the first edition of his book (1983) spanned just 150 pages. Among the colonized states examined, he cites evidence from Indonesian or Dutch East Indies history. In this discussion, although I focus narrowly on one facet of Anderson's study, specifically on the reading of Malay language newspapers at the beginning of the twentieth century, my objective is to assess critically a key assumption about the phenomenon in general: that the sense of community that laid the basis for nationalist discourse was forged and renewed in the regular, "ceremonial" act of reading the news (1991[1983]: 35, 44). Anderson cites Hegel as having suggested this idea, yet neither he, Takashi Shiraishi (1990)
nor Ahmat Adam—whose 1984 dissertation is a comprehensive account of the rise of the vernacular press in the Dutch East Indies between 1855 and 1913—specifies the various mechanisms by which reading the news may have instilled this burgeoning sense of national community. Although I will argue below that the consumption of print did facilitate the process by which persons began to conceive it (or rather various versions of the nation), the lack of specificity in Anderson’s analysis opens his overall argument to the criticism that he overstates the degree of change in consciousness, and the uniformity of it, attributed to the wide dissemination of the news. Simply, it is not enough to establish a causal connection by demonstrating the mere co-occurrence of the spread of print with the rise of nationalist sentiment among educated classes. What I hope to do here, based on analysis of a series of news articles, is to investigate how the imagined dialogue between consumers and producers would have begun to precipitate some of the changes Anderson attributes to it.²

Before that work can proceed, however, we need to consider several conceptual issues raised in critiques of Anderson’s study. The exercise forces us to reconsider both the phenomenon in general and the role the media played in particular. The first reassessment concerns Anderson’s concept of nationalism. Partha Chatterjee,³ one of the most thoughtful scholars on the subject, proposes that nationalism is less explicitly political than broadly cultural and he criticizes Anderson for drawing a distinction between what he calls the cultural roots of nationalism and nationalism proper.⁴ Instead, Chatterjee identifies various local sources of nationalist belief and inspiration and he chides Anderson for proposing that the nationalism that emerged in the colonized states around the beginning of the twentieth century is derivative of the various European and American nationalistic movements that had begun a century or more earlier.⁵ For Chatterjee, the driving force of historical nationalism in the colonized states is located in the myriad forms of resistance to European control, a resistance that is discernible only on the margins of dominant discourses.⁶ If nationalism, from this perspective, is a more nebulous concept—and it seems that calling it resistance comes no closer to a working definition—it also compels us to locate its sources in the various forms of its expression. Accordingly, there are multiple nationalist discourses, multiply authored, for any particular nation state, so the history of a dominant nationalist dis-

course is best seen in terms of the mediation of its different currents (Bhabha 1990: 292; also Siegel 1997: 17).

The second issue raised in critiques of Anderson’s study concerns the nature of community. The notion that nationalism is an indigenous product, as Chatterjee observes (1993), renders its locus precisely in the local imaginings of community facilitated by print capital that Anderson describes as its mere roots or preconditions. It is, in other words, the imagining of community that serves as the basis of the narrative of the nation and, thus, it is unnecessary to posit a separate precipitating factor—that is, the adoption of a model of political nationalism—to account for its rise.⁷ Anderson’s thesis of imported nationalism is necessary only if the community it gives rise to is narrowly conceived, as it is in the West, as fundamentally different from other forms (Chatterjee 1993: 230-234; Gupta 1995: 376). It is a necessity, however, that derives more from his assumptions about what constitutes community than from any inherent properties of nationalism per se.

To illustrate, Anderson suggests that community is instantiated by activities or practices. He cites the way people are sometimes moved in the presence of explicitly national monuments, and he describes the epiphanies of consciousness experienced by local officials as they undertake their bureaucratic pilgrimages from the province to the metropole and back again (1991[1983]: 9, 114-115; also Shiraishi 1990).⁸ The journeys describe conversions, realizations that others are traveling in the same space. What reading does, then, is facilitate the vicarious experience of such journeys on a massive scale, or this is the direction we might expect the argument to proceed. Before reaching this point, however, Anderson detours. Instead, he suggests that the experiences generated in reading are, in reality, effects of representations contained within the language of communication. Hence, the community he describes is, at base, a language community—an analytical construct of dubious relevance. The problem, as MichaelSilverstein (1998) points out, is that what a language represents and what it does in terms of shaping consciousness is not isomorphic. That is, the reality of community cannot be contained within, or deduced from, expressions that would delimit or define it (Chatterjee 1993: 223). First, the standardization of language, particularly the vernacular Malay language of the Dutch East Indies, was itself limited (Siegel 1997: 15-16); few speakers were native speakers so whatever influence this new language had on con-
sciousness at the beginning of the century was tempered by the use of the non-anonymous, localized languages of home. Secondly, signs, including ones mapping time and space—a crucial component in Anderson’s model—exercise their effects dialectically through their use (Silverstein 1998). Put simply, community refers to a process or a becoming rather than an outcome; or, for our purposes, a model that conceives it as process better illuminates people’s realization of it. The model I am proposing for understanding the emergence of national consciousness is predicated on dialogue—more imaginary than real—by which people begin to identify with certain others, and, to be consistent, “non-others” as I will discuss below. To be sure, there is something to Anderson’s observations; the vernacular does signify something larger than localized languages. Yet turning this observation on its head, it is the process of creating this community (rather than merely signifying it) that I wish to examine. Aspects of dispersed community are brought into sight (if not focus) by the sharing of ideas and experiences made possible through news writing and consumption. Whatever the tropes eventually employed in the press to represent this emergent national community—that is, to bring it into focus—the mobilization of members followed the various threads of dialogue that alternatively united people and divided them from one another. Community formation, thus, describes a contradictory process, a waxing and waning; it is not, as we might be led to believe, simply the precipitate of experience, real or imagined, nor an affect of ceremonial transcendence or Durkheimian “collective effervescence.”

Finally, the ties of imagined community, experienced vicariously through the medium of print, are also given verity in a series of exclusions (Chatterjee 1993: 138; Bhabha 1990). In other words, signs that register community inclusiveness and common identity also denote and, in some sense, depend on difference. Of course, differences are variably defined. Some are eclipsed by commonalities in other respects, or those differences simply may not be valorized; but although the specific differences that matter for articulating identity change, difference in general remains a defining feature of any collectivity. How are collective identities forged from difference? Recall Anderson’s description of nationalism as essentially “fraternal” and “horizontal” (1991[1983]: 7, 143-44). On the one hand, he acknowledges the gendered basis of (some) nationalist discourses, yet, on the other hand, he does not distinguish the non-valorization of vertical class relations in certain contexts and the (apparent) complete effacement of those divisions in dominant nationalist discourse. In other words, what is missing from his discussion is acknowledgment that banners proclaiming the brotherhood of all citizens do not negate the divisions between “brothers” as might be implied by the description of nationalist ties (that is, the discourse of nationalist ties) as horizontal. The divisions may be latent or emergent, they are certainly visible in other contexts; but focusing on the mediation—or, as the case may be, valorization—of difference in framing nationalist discourse draws attention to the architects of such discourse and to their strategic positions within a complex field of power relations. In sum, I offer these emendations to Anderson’s study, not to weaken the comparative framework he employs, but rather to strengthen it, I believe, by drawing attention to the processes by which reading the news and writing it made people cognizant of their relation to, and place in, the nation.

We can now turn to the question posed at the outset: How did media consumers and producers come to see themselves as participants in, and as members of, a national community? What is it in this experience that had this effect? In pursuing this question, I do not propose to undertake a comprehensive examination of the role of the media; the scope of investigation simply does not permit analysis of the relative weight of factors that gave rise to nationalism in the East Indies. Nor do I explicitly seek to trace a trajectory of the idea of Indonesia. The articles selected are largely apolitical and prosaic; for the most part, they are not the sort of stories that would galvanize an overtly political, in this case, anti-colonial awareness. This is not to suggest that such a study cannot be done effectively (see Gupta 1995) or that there was no such awareness; rather, my purpose here requires moving “Indonesia” to the background in order to focus more generally on the practices and strategies of writing and reading.

As suggested, if not produced or instantiated by the signs that would have stood for it, the imagination of the nation was nevertheless constrained by the mediums or channels through which it could be conceived. Under colonialism, these channels were limited. There were newspapers, but editors had to be careful to steer each edition clear of violations of the Dutch government’s strict press laws—press laws that had been amended in 1856 ostensibly to ensure
public order, but which had been widely used to suppress criticism of the state (Adam 1984: 38-39). In addition, education and literacy was still restricted; for this reason, any knowledge and stake native residents would have had in the well-being of others beyond their immediate vicinities was necessarily limited. At the beginning, then, nationalist sentiment was distinctly the province of elites, and the way the nation took shape in their imaginings reflected elite pretensions (compare Conner 1990). This does not mean that the general masses were excluded from the way the nation was (and would be) imagined. Rather, the inclusion of the masses was predicated upon elites finding a place for them (in relation to themselves) in the colonial hierarchy even though, at the same time, the places identified were being transformed.

From localized beginnings, awareness of community built outward steadily transforming “space” on the margins of consciousness into “place” that people could identify and recapitulate as part of their identity in other contexts (see Appadurai 1995). Newspapers helped to do this, I will argue, not only by representing the world as microcosm, but primarily by being part of it and coextensive with the macrocosm they represented (Silverstein 1998). Newspapers, in other words, extended, and not only expanded, the purview of their readers. There are two ways in which this is accomplished. In the first part of the essay I examine the way newspapers and journalists mapped the contours of time and space, bearing in mind that the use of such indexical markers does not define the boundaries of a national community nor foreclose the possibility of imagining it in different ways. In the second part I analyze the strategies journalists employed to conceive their audience; these strategies helped elicit awareness of a broader community without specifying it any distinct, uniform way. They did so, in certain cases, by emphasizing (or “playing up”) the evocativeness of reports. More commonly, reporters engaged readers by making their depictions of the world salient, that is, by habituating readers to identify persons (often caricatures) with particular situations they were typically used to represent. As part of this habituation, in the course of identifying persons, journalists attempted to articulate the attitudes and values of an intimate community of readers and journalists as part of, yet distinct from, and privileged over, broader East Indies society.

The Setting

Around the beginning of the twentieth century there was an urgency to the promotion of certain interpretations of social order. Specifically, local elites needed reassurance of their social position in shifting East Indies society in light of changes taking place. While I do not seek to specify causes, the most significant changes were linked to, and are reflected in, shifts in Dutch colonial policy and administration. First, around the turn of the century, a large contingent of European-born Dutch administrators and their wives arrived and took up duties in the East Indies effectively displacing Indonesian-born Dutch and Eurasians who had been, until that time, the privileged elites in the colonial hierarchy. In sending these new recruits, policy makers in Holland disrupted roughly two centuries of cultural accommodation between the native elite and those in charge of day to day colonial administration (Taylor 1983: 168). This change paralleled another one, around the same time, initiated by the immigration of large numbers of native Chinese who quickly came to challenge their *peranakan* (Indonesian-born Chinese or mixed Chinese-Indonesian) counterparts in business and politics.

The second change came about as a result of Dutch efforts to extend sovereignty over the entire archipelago, to consolidate the borders from without, and to quell pockets of resistance within, in places like Bali, North Sumatra, and South Sulawesi. In addition to the long-term consequences of this effort, with which the present government of Indonesia continues to grapple, at the time, too, territorial consolidation called popular attention—partly through the media—to the remarkable ethnic and linguistic diversity of the region united, however nominally, under the Dutch crown. Despite the influx of European-born administrators, this consolidation required a cadre of local elites to help administer (and languish) in the more remote outposts of the empire. These outposts, too, particularly in the east, served as places of exile for political prisoners.11

A third change in Dutch policy, initiated largely in response to criticism at home, was the implementation of the so-called Ethical Policy with its program of missionization and education. While missionization succeeded in acquiring Christian converts in many places and facilitated nationalist imaginings (Henley 1996: 54), it had an equally profound effect in terms of the resentment it inspired and the urgency it gave to efforts to revitalize the teaching of
Islam. The spread of education posed a similar contradiction; by increasing literacy rates, among other things, it raised expectations among the native elite and Eurasians for greater opportunities in colonial society. At the same time, however, the spread of education revealed to people the limits to those opportunities and the extent of the injustices committed in the name of colonialism. Reporting on these contradictions as well as contributing to them were hundreds of papers, over ninety of them printed in the vernacular in Java alone during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The Newspapers

For this exercise I focus attention on just two newspapers, both from central Java. One of these, Retnodhoemilah, was published twice weekly in both Malay and Javanese by H. Buning & Co., first in Solo, later in Yogyakarta. The newspaper was especially oriented for teachers (Adam 1984: 173); reflecting this fact, lead-off articles typically consisted of technical treatises on such disparate subjects as metallurgy, archeology, and philology. Retnodhoemilah was published from 1895 until 1909, for the last nine years under Javanese editors; the survey period covered July of 1908. The other newspaper, Taman Pewarta, was published in Solo also in Malay and Javanese; it circulated from 1902 until 1915. At the time of the survey period, January 1915, it was published three times weekly. Like Retnodhoemilah, most contributors were Javanese, however, the senior editor and the publisher were Chinese. Taman Pewarta claimed to be the unofficial mouthpiece of the Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, a peranakan-based Chinese Association (of old immigrants as opposed recent ones) promoting the welfare and protection of the Chinese community through education. Despite the differences in overt ethnic affiliation, however, I found considerable similarity between the two newspapers in terms of their content and format, at least in the Malay language versions surveyed. Contributing to this convergence was the fact that to survive in a competitive market, Taman Pewarta had to appeal to Javanese and Eurasian readers as well as to its Chinese constituency and the fact that both papers had to temper their political views in order to avoid the threat of press censorship.

We do not know how many people actually read the newspapers. Medan Priyayi, one of the most popular papers of the time, reportedly attained 2,000 subscribers at its height in 1911 (Adam 1984: 226); the number of subscribers for Retnodhoemilah and Taman Pewarta would likely have been no greater. Of course, subscription rates offer only one measure of dissemination since the news would have circulated in other ways, such as through families and domestic help, and as long as someone was able to read, it could be passed on orally to the illiterate—the mass of “unaddressed” recipients (Goffman 1981: 133). Also missing is a profile of subscribers; we do not have information on who received the newspapers on a regular basis except, in the case of Retnodhoemilah, from a record of delinquent subscribers whose names, home towns, and occupations appear at the top of the first column of the first page of each edition. The twenty or so readers listed are mostly priyayi (upper-class Javanese officials and literati) posted in various places throughout the archipelago. Their names had been printed to embarrass them into repaying their debts. With so much competition and so many subscriptions in arrears, newspapers faced a constant threat of insolvency (Adam 1984). In fact, Retnodhoemilah was so strapped financially in the year before its demise in 1909 that a notice was posted informing readers that they had to subscribe to it for a minimum of six months. Evidently, too, competition extended to contributors: editors needed journalists, and many papers, including both in this sample, offered readers free subscriptions if they contributed articles of their own. Without wishing to overstate the point or efface the complex social divisions taking shape (or being reconstituted) in the first decades of the century, this overlap between journalists and their audience makes it reasonable to propose that each of the newspapers was written by and for largely the same group of predominantly male Javanese, Chinese, and Eurasian elites.

I selected several articles for translation and analysis. Space limitations, of course, preclude the investigation of a more representative sample of the range of subject matter covered. A more daunting problem which can only be acknowledged here is that by selectively translating articles one cannot presume to convey what is entailed in the whole reading experience; for this reason I focus primarily on journalists’ reporting strategies. Yet if newspapers had the formative influence I suggest they did, then, the effects must lie precisely in this reading experience. How might they have been produced? A few points are obvious. Newspapers were seen in their entirety if not actually read from beginning to end, so, from the moment the reader picked one up, he or
she would have been bombarded with a plethora of messages hawking everything from religion and morality to hair tonic. The juxtaposing of stories, announcements, and advertisements would have led readers, as Anderson suggests, to construe connections between otherwise disparate reports; over time (that is, in separate editions) event sequences would be constructed (Anderson 1991[1983]: 33). In such a way, the unfamiliar would have become familiar; that is, the world would have become known as the connections between places could be recalled. Similarly, readers scanning a list of government decisions would eventually come to see their importance. Seeing the range of government responsibility, readers as well as writers would have been quick to identify “problems” as the result of official inattentiveness or even corruption (Gupta 1995: 388). The broader point to emphasize is that the news helped generate not so much an image of the nation as a way to conceive it by creating “events” (if not merely representing them) that tapped certain sympathies and fostered in some cases feelings of moral outrage (Appadurai 1995: 208).

At the same time, however, it has to be recognized that many of the events reported in the press would have had little intrinsic interest to, or effect on, readers since most would have taken place and involved persons far from their home towns and local neighborhoods. If there was an interest in this broader world which originated, in part, from the expansion of the scope of understanding locality and translocality, and from the moral relevance of events there, it also reflects, in a general sense, the significance of the medium of communication. That is, by becoming news—by being written about and printed—the events and the persons involved in them acquired a certain value. The significance of stories reflected public awareness of their wide circulation; thus, the very fact of circulation constituted an event. The newspapers valorized the persons and activities they reported on; the stories created a frame of reference that distinguished news (berita) from information conveyed through other media (for example, omong-omong or conversation, or rumor, desas-desus), even if the messages communicated were identical.

Time, Space, and Notions of Progress

Anderson’s central argument, again, is that reading the news transformed readers’ perceptions of time or, more precisely, that it changed people’s percep-
tions of its passage (1991[1983]: 33). At the heart of it is the observation that most reports are dated, but that even when not, other temporal references, including the dates on the masthead and the days of the week newspapers are printed, serve to divide old events from new ones. The newspapers denote time largely as an orderly succession of days, weeks, months, and years; depicted as such, and seemingly removed from the rhythms of daily life and human agency, the world of time becomes, he says, paraphrasing Benjamin, “empty” and “homogenous” (p. 24).16 As readers become aware of its sweep, they transpose their own experiences onto it and begin to see events in their lives as unfolding and co-occurring along with those of the persons described in the articles. The co-occurrence of events beyond the confines of immediate experience, thus, leads readers to the realization of the commensurability of persons similarly bounded. For Anderson, this new awareness brought about a change in consciousness (1990: 253).

Aside from the problem that co-temporality is itself a representation rather than a reality (Silverstein 1998)—that it constitutes merely one mode of denoting time—Anderson’s observations have a certain resonance. In many places in the press time is denoted as movement and direction. Particularly in reports documenting changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, correspondents took the lead in fostering a perception that time was being propelled forward by dramatic improvements in communication and transportation between Europe and the East Indies, as well as within Java itself. These new technologies signified change and, reciprocally, change was signified by them, and because they were new, they indexed what had passed before. Seemingly, the spread of information about new innovations gave tangible measure and direction to the passage of time. Suddenly to keep abreast of change, for now it was possible to be left behind, writers reported on an array of new organizations or associations springing up in Java which embodied hopes of transforming, rationalizing, and improving social and spiritual life. The intent of these organizations was to replicate improvements in material life and to prepare the ground to acquire those material things for themselves that were manifestly available to others (for example, the Chinese and Europeans). For readers of the two newspapers, a series of notices such as the following that appeared in Retnohoemilah on July 11, 1908, lent a sense of real possibility to the prospects of social
improvement.

NEWS FROM BATAVIA. Perhaps at this very moment an association is being formed in Batavia named Mardi Oetomo.

The one who is responsible for establishing this association is R. Iskandar Tirokoesoemo, son of his excellency the Regent Karanganjar, and presently an assistant secretary to the vice regent in Welevreden.

The first objective of this association is to introduce priyayi to one another; the second is to educate so that members may learn for themselves the etiquette and good work that are the standards of the present era. The third objective is to assist members in times of difficulty and to help members who are searching for employment, etc.

At this time, there are over 50 members.

As of 6/27 1908, the association is not quite complete; it is not known how the goals of the association will be implemented and who will become its president, etc.

The meeting will take place on the morning of 6/28 1908 at 9 am at which time the members will meet in order to resolve these issues.17

The report above represents the activities surrounding the birth of the new organization in "real time"—"at this very moment," the correspondent says—that is, as he is writing the story and as the events are simultaneously unfolding. The writing and reporting are, thus, explicitly conjoined. Further, the discussion of the various details as last minute, leads both the journalist and his audience to anticipate a successful resolution; the change underway seems almost palpable.

In the same way that the newspapers influence readers' perceptions of time, the use of geographic indexes—where events occurred and where they are reported from—help shape perceptions of space, or enable readers to transform space into place. The preceding report, for instance, came from Batavia (now Jakarta), the commercial and political center of the Dutch East Indies. Knowing Batavia and its importance means that readers can situate themselves and their respective locales in relation to this center. More generally, news columns from across the globe, wire service reports (kabar kawat) from overseas, and news (berita) from villages refer readers to a conceptual map, though a map more virtual than real. As places on it are filled in, they are hierarchically ordered; Batavia assumes importance as a hub to outlying villages and principalities—people travel there, laws are set there, and its relationship to Holland is made apparent. Gradually, awareness increases of the connections between places and a system emerges revealing specific ties to centers and peripheries. This Copernican view of the world is instilled through regular reading, from the repetition of place names and from seeing a pattern of activities associated with them.

Through these contextual cues marking space and time, readers are led part of the way, as Anderson suggests, to experience membership in a translocal national community18—but, I emphasize, the process is incomplete. Anderson assumes that a sense of belonging is at the heart of community is created by awareness that others are simultaneously reading the same stories in the same language (Anderson 1991[1983]: 35). But something else is required; behind conceiving the possibility of a national community there is a desire to belong that writers themselves experienced and sought to instil. It is this desire that is manifest in the urgency behind the various campaigns to organize. On the one hand, the very anticipation of advancing socially provides a powerful incentive to belong. On the other hand, there is a fear that by not belonging to an organization readers and journalists will fall behind.

Throughout the early twentieth century local elites of various ethnic and religious affiliations organized themselves, and the newspapers contributed to this flurry of activity by reporting regularly on the establishment of new associations.19 Most, like Mardi Oetomo above and the more famous Boedi Oetomo, which was organized around the same time by East Indies medical students, were self-help organizations dedicated to improving the character of their members. This improvement would be both a sign of, and a means to, achieving progress (kemadjoean). But how it was to be accomplished remained vague. Consider a series of articles from Taman Pewarta, the first of which appeared on January 25, 1915.

PROOF OF PROGRESS. From Keboemen comes a report that within the last month in Keboemen District a women's organization was established by Boedi Oetomo members in Keboemen. The organization received the name "Wanita Oetomo." Its objective is to provide mutual support. But the most important goal is to collect and contribute information appropriate for women: information, for instance, concerning the care of children, managing households, etc.

All W.O. representatives are required to gather every fifteen days to meet at the W.O. organization hall.20

Again, in the absence of anything more specific, it is the activity of organizing, in and of itself, that represents a tangible measure of progress. The rush to convene meetings, elect officers, and set agendas—all written about and reported on in real time—creates the impression that various sectors of
society are advancing together. Further, as certain sectors organize, those groups not participating risk being left behind. Yet the organizing is more virtual than real; the sense of (vicarious) participation stems from the fact that it is the groups with which readers identify that are the relevant units. That is, specific groups advance by virtue of the fact that progress is charted against other groups, for example, native Javanese against the Chinese, the peranakan Chinese against rotok (or new Chinese immigrants), on the basis of their ability (merely) to organize. In reporting on the establishment of a new association the newspapers make that progress seem real. But what is actually being depicted? The organizing reported on is merely anticipated or hoped for rather than already realized. It is, furthermore, the existence of clusters of such reports, such as the one translated above, which contributes more to the sense of progress, and of who is progressing, than it is statements of the group’s goals. Note that the goals themselves are often defined in negative terms as in the previous report (and the following) on Wanita Oetomo. Given this association’s stated agenda, there appears to be little intent to bring about change focusing as it does solely on rationalizing women’s “traditional,” domestic practices. The objectives necessarily limit women’s space of activity and, thus, would seem to preclude, on the surface, the open-ended development of other, non-domestic goals. In other words, if domesticity is the proper focus, then, implementing recommendations within this context would limit further organizing outside it. This conservatism is echoed in a report printed in the January 27, 1915, edition of Taman Pewarta announcing, with considerable ambivalence, the success of a Chinese woman planning on continuing her studies in Holland and becoming a lawyer.

... Here is proof of the progress of Chinese women. How will progress of our native women proceed? Don’t rush, without a doubt the association of W.O. will also bear fruit which will exceed in deliciousness the progress mentioned above. We will give thanks when that time arrives: hopefully.

Despite the expression of hope at the end of the report, the journalist betrays his reservations about change by not calling for the emulation of the success that the Chinese woman attained, and by remaining silent on other specific objectives to which Wanita Oetomo should aspire. There is an assumption that a different version of progress is more appropriate for priyayi women, one different from priyayi men and from the one pursued by the Chinese woman. Moreover, the correspondent advises readers not to rush, a cautionary note that contrasts with the headlong pace at which other activities of the era are undertaken in the name of progress. He is no doubt aware that particular reports, like this one, can stir interest because of the very fact that they are represented and widely circulated. Prior to newspapers, such personal success would have had little chance of becoming widely disseminated public knowledge. Suddenly thrust into the spotlight the news provides, however, this Chinese woman becomes a public figure, a potential icon thus capable of articulating and embodying the aspirations of all those who might identify with her. Aware of this potential mass appeal, the correspondent raises the concern to his readers that while it may be fine for a Chinese woman to embody the aspirations of her people in such a way through Western-style education, among priyayi (elite Javanese) women, such success is morally suspect and inappropriate. Simply, it may raise the “wrong” expectations and undermine extant relations between men and women.

There is a broader issue in evidence here that concerns appearances. As I mentioned, Anderson implies that women’s organizations did not play an important role in the rise of nationalism (1991[1983]: 36); his views in this respect contrast with those of Chatterjee. In his review of nineteenth-century South Asian literature, Chatterjee argues that women did participate in emergence of nationalism, yet, he says, largely as “signs” in political discourse (1993: 68). He finds that the association of women with domesticity—regardless of where their activities actually take them—marks that sphere as a distinct enclave to be preserved and defended as a bastion against colonialism. Of course, as domesticity is preserved, he acknowledges, it is also revised. This new concern with maintaining orderliness and cleanliness within the household—the same goals to which Wanita Oetomo aspires—comprise part of a “disciplinary” agenda for instilling novel, largely middle-class virtues directed in the end toward preserving a sense of cultural superiority with respect to Europeans (p. 129). The perception or prevailing beliefs against which domesticity takes on value is that under colonialism, outside the family—the terrain occupied and represented by men—husbands, brothers, and sons have raced to accommodate (and subordinate) themselves to European ways.

There is much to recommend in Chatterjee’s analysis. But it is important to recognize, too, that the reality of organizing, and of reporting on and
reading about it, cannot be so unambiguously represented. The problem is that we cannot infer from the news how such organizing instilled awareness of a wider East Indies proto-nationalist consciousness among members of women's organizations or among readers of these reports. Awareness would have depended on their access to newspapers; it would have depended, too, on their ability to read, and on the existence of other formal and informal networks of communication that would have enabled them, as Siegel nicely puts it, to hear and be overheard (Siegel 1997: 6). In sum, we might not think of nationalism being advanced by Wanita Oetomo meetings focused on child care and household chores, or we might see such activities code and cover for political opposition, however, the key point is that just as discussions of such prosaic subjects may have served as idioms for more overt political expressions, those meetings may also have raised awareness in ways not limited to the association's explicit goals. The experience of the nation in nascent form, in short, is linked to the possibilities for imagining it.

Evocations, Representations, and the Construction of Identities

Obviously there was no Indonesian identity that came attached to the new use of the vernacular; users or speakers had to search out an identity or the terms upon which it might be negotiated (Siegel 1997). It was certainly not imposed on news readers by journalists; they neither occupied so privileged a position (or possessed enough authority) nor represented the world in so uniform and consistent a fashion. Instead, journalists enabled readers to conceive the possibility of a nation by orienting them to it, by extending their view as it were. They gave readers vantage points created in semiotic spaces carved out by the very routine of reading (Anderson 1991[1983]: 35). In this process cognition would proceed in phases. Instantaneous, emotional responses to specific representations would be transitory; they would give way to more enduring reflections on, and recognition of, the meaning, significance, and value of stories. Aware of these effects on their readers, correspondents employed a variety of strategies to engage and imagine them.

For the most part these strategies were transparent and not mutually exclusive. They may have been directed toward representing accurately some event and thereby fostering a corresponding mental image in the minds of readers. Or, and in combination, they may have aimed to channel readers' reactions in ways that reflected the journalists' normative expectations regarding what those reactions should be. They tried to evoke a sense of outrage or they represented stories poignantly in order to instill sympathy to tap some reservoir of sentiment. Toward this end, success would depend on the extent to which a writer could remind readers of the conditions of their own existence, most effectively, by giving them a window onto, hence, a way to experience, the personal, singular dimensions of some event or tragedy. As an example, consider the following that appeared in Retnothoemilah, July 11, 1908.

DEATH IN THE WELL. Recently, on June 18, 1908, a terrible fatal accident occurred when a child of about six died in a well. According to the report, people searched for the child from 3 in the afternoon to until 6 in the evening before the child was discovered already dead in the well. Perhaps that happened because the child was playing too close to it then fell. Poor Thing23

Here, the paucity of detail—no names are mentioned, the reader is told neither the class nor ethnicity of the victim, nor is the location of the incident revealed—highlights the apparent randomness of the accident, that it could have been anyone's child, niece, nephew, or neighbor who happened to have fallen into the well. Left to imagine the features of the missing context, readers impose their own; they might, then, see themselves in the position of that family whose child had just died, or they might be reminded of their own precarious hold on life. Moreover, they might feel, too, for a moment as though they know the family and that by sharing grief they are somehow joined.24 Yet the point remains, whatever immediate impact the story might have had, the poignancy of the reading experience, in contrast to lived experience, would be fleeting; the death would not be the reader's loss to suffer for long. After burning brightly for an instant, the memory of the event and of the emotion it evoked would likely fade into the pool of accumulated, vicarious experience to be forgotten or perhaps recalled in the future by some similar incident.

News reports fed on and fueled the desires of readers to witness and vicariously experience the dramas played out in them. In addition to using poignancy, some writers engaged their audience by piquing curiosity, for instance, by offering a view of the indiscretions of a neighbor, while still others appealed to, and satisfied nobler impulses to clean up corrupt local government, provided the appeals did
not violate press laws.\textsuperscript{25} And journalists sought to elicit responses, more overtly, by embellishing descriptions of events or by heightening the humoroussness and suspense of stories. When descriptions failed them—if only because they tried to convey something elusive about experience—some correspondents laced their reports with expletives: “attention!,” “wow!,” and “how about that!” As if to remind readers of their part in the dialogue, they addressed them directly: “listen readers,” “as you know…”—reaching out to them with the literary equivalent of nods and winks. In an important sense then the communication becomes the referent and the report itself the event.

On occasion journalists appear to withhold information; at other times they attempt to draw readers into their stories through sheer attention to the details surrounding events. For example, note the following report from the January 11, 1915, edition of \textit{Taman Pewarta} in a column “From the Correspondent (Surakarta Star):

\textbf{FRIGHTENING.} One morning, no more than a couple of days ago, as the writer was on his way someplace, he passed quickly by the front of the empty guard house, no. 11, in neighborhood of Mangkoejoedan, where he discnerned with his own two eyes a man inside who was sitting and staring as someone might who was brooding. Because he was only clothed in rags, the writer assumed that he must just be begging. In the middle of the day, however, the writer heard news that that person liked to buy rice and fried tofu without paying for it. In fact, after he ate, he began to act as if drunk, talking boisterously as if to show how fearless he was. You can be sure that after that the tofu seller would flee to avoid a flood of abusive language.

For nearly a whole day the mad man stayed in that guard house. And if asked by people “what’s your name???” “where’s your house???” he did not reply; he just remained quiet, acting crazy. Evidently this comedy became quite frightening for the village residents nearby. The village policeman urged someone to notify the subdistrict representative in Lawijan, but oh … the crazy man did not want to move from his place. In short, he was forced to…and brought in front of the subdistrict official. There he acknowledged that his name was Simin, that he came from Balong village in Ponorogo Regency, and that he had often been arrested because of his recidivism.

On the following day, he was summoned before the judge. The judge decided he had to be returned to his place of birth in handcuffs because he was clearly frightening.\textsuperscript{26} (ellipses in original)

Much of the initial discussion is intended to place the correspondent at the scene and so give readers an unmediated view of the situation as if they, too, “through the writer’s own two eyes,” might have seen Simin brooding in the guard station or gnashing his teeth at a tofu seller. Later in the story, though, the writer shifts perspective, reporting what he heard secondhand, sometimes saying so, at other times describing events in the third person. The events become encased, as it were, in the telling of the story (Siegel 1997: 73). This strategy of reporting on the reporting may be intended to confirm the verity of it. In addition, though, and what is more important, the description of place names, the guard station number, various persons, and favorite dishes all turn out to be extraneous in light of what transpires; they are included, I believe, less to convey the accuracy of the reporting than to extend the readers’ view, to make it easier to imagine having been present at the scene and to have experienced what the writer purports to have experienced.

There are, of course, limits to what can be translated from remote experience which, in turn, reflect a fundamental difference between bearing witness to (or talking to a witness) and the relatively passive act of reading. To illustrate, much of the news in early twentieth-century East Indies society consisted of events that in one way or another were out of the ordinary. The descriptions of them would have raised questions which could not easily be answered—questions posed from readers’ efforts to situate the unfamiliar into the range of more familiar experience. The questions may have been personal as in “How does the event affect me?” and they may have concerned frequency: that is, “How typical is that event in that place?” and “How many crazy people, like brooding Simin above, are out there?” Given this uncertainty, especially with respect to crime—the most common subject reported in both newspapers—readers and writers presumed the answers to those questions based on what they may have heard before. In other words, new reports on crime in Batavia would be situated into a series of existing ones that tended to reinforce the general impression of lawlessness there. The implication is that the view of the “distant” world being offered through the press would have lacked some of the perspective that readers would be accustomed to obtaining (or having access to) based on more direct or interactive experience. Furthermore, on the subject of crime specifically, in the absence of statistics—there were no such reports during the survey period (and if there were they may have only partially allayed fears)—and in the absence of anecdotal evidence of relative calm, which rarely passes for news, there may simply have been no curb on what readers were left to imagine. Correspondents, I observed, for
their part, seemed to play on this uncertainty or, less charitably, they exploited it or pandered to people’s fears and prejudices. At times, too, they appeared to be swept up in the visceral appeal of their own reporting. Thus, while no news of crime in Batavia would have facilitated the forgetting of previous reports, those silences by themselves would not have changed people’s perceptions. That is, there is no necessary correspondence between no news in the papers and order and quietude in the streets. Another incident, just waiting to happen, would have rekindled the same level of fear and have confirmed the same general impression.

There is another point that can be gleaned from stories on crime. While readers and writers may have had reason to be optimistic about the future, reflecting their ability to organize and advance (maju) socially, at the same time, evinced by the stories they read and witnessed, they would have to have been troubled, too, by perceptions of the broader community in social and moral disarray. In fact, the two images of groups coming together and society coming undone fed off one another. That is, increasing awareness of the world spread doubt and trepidation about it; and under this specter, it would have been necessary to bring some modicum of order to it.

Community took on multiple and contradictory forms. Just as reports on progress presupposed a population that would experience it, so, too, did stories on crime demand a cast of victims and perpetrators. As in some reports on progress, here, too, journalists identified individuals by names and titles. But, more pointedly than in those on the new associations, they did so by constructing types hewn from a broader inventory of possible oppositions: male and female, Chinese and pribumi (native), and peasants and elites. Specific individuals thus became characters and as characters (and caricatures) iconic of entire social categories played off against (implicit) others, including the community of readers and writers. The people they were became features of the scenes they represented; events became stories. As story tellers, reporters spoke directly to the audience, that is, they spoke to what people said about events rather than (merely) representing events themselves (Siegel 1997: 25-26). Indeed, engaging readers by telling stories appears to have been the only reason the following event from the January 15, 1915, edition of Taman Pewarta was reported. In it, a seemingly little incident is seized to inscribe certain social divisions by magnifying the seriousness of the threat to them.

CONFUSING REGULATIONS CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR A FOOL. According to Pri. Bode [another newspaper], there was a little ruckus at the S.S. Pegaden station. There, a native, who apparently rarely rode trains, bought a ticket to Cheribon on the slow one.

By accident, though, he did not board the slow train but instead boarded the fast one, and not long afterwards the fast train departed. He sat on the edge of a bench enjoying himself. Shortly, the conductor came by checking people’s tickets. The commoner, who did not understand, took out his green ticket and showed it to the conductor. The conductor immediately became very angry. In his anger he said something like the following:

“You fool!”

Yes my lord.

You monkey!

Yes my lord.

You must pay a fine of r0,75.

I don’t have any more money, nothing, not even a cent.

In that case you must be arrested.”

When that native heard those words, he must have become very afraid. He was then forced to go another car....

The train attendant sat with him and watched him so that he didn’t jump from the train. As it happened, as he [the native] was sitting with the train attendant, he asked him for advice on how he might keep from being thrown in jail (lit. “placed in the mouse hole”) as he still had to provide for his wife and children. The train attendant then told him. Just sell the things that you bought so that you can earn money for the fine of 3 talen.

Because of his ignorance, and because of the advice of the train attendant, he removed from his bag one tin of coffee that he bought originally for r0,60 which he then sold for r0,40 cents. The krapuk (crackers) he had originally purchased for r0,30 cents he sold for r0,20, and so on until he had paid the fine. Having done it, the commoner suffered a loss of not less than 50%. What a shame!

Observing what had happened, it is obvious that the confusion at Pegaden Baroe has not been settled. There are two trains that depart for Cheribon, one fast one and a slow one. The seller sells the tickets together. But that’s just the way it is for the ignorant, not being careful almost always leads to mistakes like the occurrence mentioned above. (ellipses in original)

The correspondent suggests that what has happened is not an isolated event; the confusion at the ticket office is an ongoing problem. Nor is the problem confined to a simple mistake for the difference in trains is more than simply a matter of price and speed. Si Bodo (the Fool) is not asked to make up the ticket price difference, instead he is forced to pay a penalty. No doubt the magnitude of the event reflects its setting: the locomotive is a microcosm of early twentieth-century East Indies society. It signifies progress and embodies the promise of the future. Furthermore, as in society at large, the train is divided, the fast one serves the upper class, the slow
one the lower class. Si Bodoh stands for a whole class of persons who, in their bumbling, make social boundaries real. While it is the division itself that is the cause of the disorder that made the news, the event is highlighted not to disabuse readers of the sensibility of maintaining such boundaries but the reverse (cf. Siegel 1997: 66). By bringing readers to the scene and identifying the relevant characters, the journalist reminds them of those boundaries and their permeability.

In addition to the use of elaborate description and reconstructed dialogue, journalists also sought to engage readers and establish their authority as purveyors of information, by referring to some underlying truths that the incidents described manifest. In this strategy, the intent behind the use of certain signs then is to register the intensities of meaning, or the senses of signs, as opposed to their conventional referents. Toward this end, writers use condensed signs that refer to, and conjure up deeper meanings and self-evident truths.30 For example, a confused passenger is called “the Fool,” a perpetrator of a crime is designated “the Criminal” (si Pendjahat), an unmarried woman who is the object of someone’s desire is called a “Butterfly of the Night” or prostitute. These descriptions still refer to appearances (Siegel 1997: 79), but the illusion created is that something essential about the person has been revealed, more so than through the disclosure of proper names for instance. Through this device whole categories of persons are identified. Penetrating the veneer of individuality, in turn, resolves certain ambiguities about motivation; and once motivation can be inferred, the whole chain of events depicted falls neatly into place. There is no need to consider mitigating circumstances. The generic categories that specific characters represent possess an enduring quality. Since they are not a product of circumstance, they are (or can be) consistent from one story to another; in other words, specific persons can become interchangeable characters that appeal to (as they shape) readers’ normative sensibilities. To the extent specific appeals resonate, the stories affirm a shared set of assumptions concerning who they, the readers and writers, are as a group by virtue of who they are not.

One of the most pervasive of these oppositions contrasts sophisticated priyai (the Javanese aristocratic class)—including readers who, as we are told, “know better”—and backward peasants. It is a contrast that contributes to what Shiraishi regards as one of the defining characteristics of early twentieth-century East Indies society: the juxtaposition of the traditional with the modern (1990: 31).31 To be sure, the juxtapositions reflect the reality of the unequal distribution of prestige, material resources, and educational opportunities, but the contrasts are employed performatively, too, to foster those same divisions. Occasionally, for instance, we read of a peasant or petty trader who stumbles across the divide and so presents a reporter with the opportunity to make the divide visible. More commonly, though, differences are drawn upon and reinforced in depictions of life in rural hamlets that are remote in distance and time. For instance, a report from the July 11, 1908, edition of Retnohadomilikah describes the panic inspired by a mysterious affliction known as pangoer (rasp) said to have been ravaging the central Javanese countryside. In it, the journalist rails against what he perceives to be the primary cause of the panic: entrenched traditional beliefs among the rural poor and the sham mystics and hacks who presume to be able to help them.

BLACKENING TEETH. We have yet to hear reports of children here whose teeth have been filed down by spirits. But news has emerged that the “tooth-filing” disease has already spread to Surakarta. There are also reports that blackening teeth is an antidote for the disease. That is the reason why the residents here darken the teeth of their children as a defense against the illness. According to their statements, small children are the most susceptible because they are visible to the spirits while their parents are not. Because of that, older people can do as they wish, blacken their teeth or not, it does not matter.

Ha! How is it that little children are more visible than older people whose bodies are bigger? It is fantasy, no?

Since the distant past, we Javanese have believed in superstitions or have allowed ourselves to be deceived by Javanese shamans or mystics; the shamans say all kinds of things.

... Because of this the native inhabitants here tell their children to darken their teeth so as not to be afflicted by that scraping devil under the orders of Nyai Roro Kidul [a powerful spirit goddess]. But school children here rarely darken their teeth; there are one or two but they were probably forced to do so by their relatives in the villages.

Fortunately, the school kids understand the situation.

With many apologies, A Traditional Javanese.32

With no obvious irony intended, the reporter announces his affinity with the peasantry—“bangsa kita orang Jawa” (we Javanese)—and he dons the pen name si Jawa Kolot (a Traditional Javanese). Yet, at different points in the story, he contrasts natives here with the natives elsewhere. Note that the first “here” (di sini) in the last full paragraph refers implicitly to a community defined by location; the second, describing school children, distinguishes
within the first a collectivity defined by education. The school children here know better, he says, than to dye their teeth. And if they do dye their teeth, it is only because their relatives in the villages, also “here,” force them. The two communities are defined differently, yet they are not entirely distinct. The correspondent situates himself and his readers as part of one and apart from the other.

Newspapers do not present an objective view of the world, a hypothetical picture of it from no place in particular. Instead, the journalists inhabit a place with a particular view that they share with their readers. This vantage point, in many cases, excludes the very subjects reported on: the uneducated underclass as opposed to the rational intelligentsia. Thus, for instance, the writer here is able to see the spread of the “rash” disease for what it is, mere rumor, whereas, he implies, for the peasants this is exclusively what they hear. Note, too, that there is never any suggestion that superstition can be eliminated through education—an emblem of privilege; rather, education becomes a way to resist irrationality’s intrusion. It follows, then, that since elites possess education, and a monopoly on rationality, they alone among the indigenous people have the requisite skills to lead—skills that would be particularly important once independence from the Dutch became a real possibility. It bears repeating, as it is reflected in this report and in others, that the sense of nationalism in the East Indies that began to take hold of public imagination in the first decades of the twentieth century did not reach its apogee in any sort of revolutionary movement. In fact, Indonesia’s leading nationalists at the time, members of the Serikat Islam, abandoned communism in 1919, partly under political duress, but partly, too, because of the limits of revolution’s appeal.33

There is a broader point, too, to be made. A sense of community, I suggest, is predicated partly on the identity one ascribes to it and derives from it. This identity is not at all unambiguous (Siegel 1997: 9). Yet however it comes to be defined, otherness is an integral aspect of collective identity formation (see Chatterjee 1993; Bhabha 1990). In the case of communities as disparate and heterogeneous as nations, the problem is that otherness or difference exists within as well as without. The challenge in constructing a sense of national community, thus, lies in overcoming these internal divisions in certain contexts without effacing them entirely. In studies of ethnicity, where such questions have long been of interest, notions of identity are conceived as nested, that is, oppositionally constructed depending on the relevant context (see Keyes 1976: 208; Geertz 1973: 261): the broader the context, the more encompassing the community. According to this view, identities are bundled without reciprocally determining one another—for instance, an ethnic identity is independent of a national identity (except where the former becomes an idiom for expressing the latter). Rita Kipp, more recently, offers a different perspective. She argues convincingly that in Indonesia presently the state encourages ethnic consciousness, and a certain amount of ethnic divisiveness, to defuse the historically more threatening specter of class mobilization (1993: 85-122). In other words, the state has a vested interest in generating what Erving Goffman calls a common subjective universe (1981:141), an agreed on set of terms, that in this case includes ethnicity and excludes class. If the state can claim some success today in using the press to further these aims—newspaper licenses are easily revoked if articles are deemed offensive or politically sensitive—it is because leaders are very aware (perhaps obsessively so) of the media’s impact on public opinion in a way that Dutch colonial authorities were not. Even so, the consensus-generating effect is limited; what the press can do is coordinate perspectives, to depict distance or proximity to the settings described, and populate those scenes with characters who are common to them.

To be precise, communities are not only rendered visible, they are also experienced to some extent in the way reporters orient readers to the scenes. In some cases, news stories foster empathy and a sense of identity, and they tap universal fears and longings by turning someone else’s tragedy or success into a common condition. In this way the world is made both familiar and, in some sense, familial. But there is a constant challenge: it is precisely because such stories are exceptional that they elicit the (sometimes) empathetic responses they do. Yet readers (and reporters) may be inoculated against such responses by repeated exposure. For instance, multiple reports of deaths in wells could easily become banal as could endless reports of the same poignant story. Alternatively, correspondents could fail to stir the emotions of readers if, as they often did, depict events as everyday occurrences or as typifying a place in some way. The exceptional (which may unite persons in a moment of empathy) gives way to the routine (in which people have returned to occupy specific places). In this routine maintaining reader interest, thus, requires affirmation, that is, setting
stories and casting characters in a meaningful context. Otherness, to return to the point raised above, describes a variable encoded in the description of settings and in the distance charted from where the reader stands.

Consider the contrast between two articles that appeared in successive editions of Retnodhoemilah. In one, printed on July 18, 1908, the Kediri correspondent reported on an event he heard about from a "believable friend" ("dari teman sahaja jang dapat dipertajaa"). The article, entitled "Person Changes into a Dog" ("Orang Berganti Roepa Andjing"), tells the story of a woman who changes into a dog after refusing to extend a loan to a neighbor. As she returns home, suddenly in the shape of a dog, she is clubbed and mortally injured by her son who is unaware until it is too late of her real identity. Except for the initials of the village and the fact that one family is said to be wealthy, there are few distinguishing characteristics or signposts in this report to guide readers to the location of the event. Unlike the story "Death in the Well," translated above, there is no mention of when this story might have occurred, only cyclical time or times of the day are noted, an absence that would have been most unusual in other settings. The absences—including the fact that there is no rational explanation given for the events described, no "modern" institutions or authority structures—convey the image of community as timeless and generic.

In addition, despite the writer's request that readers accept the story's validity or not ("lain dari pada itoe salah atau benar maaflah toean toean pembatjaa"), it is clear he feels that they should not dismiss it. With this equivocal disclaimer, he concedes that the actions may not have taken place in the way described, but that accuracy at any rate is less important to convey than the underlying truth the story makes manifest. Indeed, the event becomes newsworthy precisely because of this message that exposes the wickedness of greed and the swift prospect of divine punishment. In contrast to the two previous stories, where the ignorance of bumpkins is the indelible mark of difference, the remoteness of this particular report does not reflect any similar sort of abjectivity. Difference, instead, is structured to make visible an ongoing social transformation. The story can be read, then, as transposing the spatially distant and timeless generic village to a temporally distant collective past. Without the abjectivity of characters—the bumbling fools—portrayed in other reports, the story of the person/dog transformation evinces a once-shared place and time. On the one hand, a certain image of the past is invented to satisfy the yearning for a tradition and perhaps to keep the tradition alive in light of the dramatic changes depicted here and elsewhere; on the other hand, that past (or its invention) gives measure to the extent of change or possible change. If there is any sense of nostalgia for village life to be gleaned from the way the journalist reports the story (and the fact that he reports on it at all), it feeds on the uncertainty journalists and their audience confront as they reflect on what must have seemed to them like an arbitrary and morally ambiguous present.

In contrast to the extraordinary events reported from the villages, the following article from Retnodhoemilah, July 15, 1908, describes what is supposedly a typical scene in Batavia.

**Butterflies of the Night [Prostitutes].** There are so many night butterflies in Batavia. Every evening after 8 PM, they flutter here and there non-stop; they all ride in carriages looking for food. It is not just one ethnic group that does it; there are prostitutes who come from Bogor, Krawang, Soenda, China, Japan and Holland.

When they cannot find sustenance, they suffer numerous losses: a) they must pay for the carriage that they ride, b) tiredness, c) hunger and d) they do not make any money. But if they happen to find sustenance, indeed they may profit handsomely: a) they find pleasure, b) earn money and c) do not have to pay the carriage driver.

In front of a large house, when it is open, there are people milling about. Some are there pawing things; some are there retrieving things out of hock; there are also some who do not try to retrieve their goods or pawn things but who steal. As it turned out recently there was a person who wanted to retrieve out of hock some of the goods he owned, but it did not happen because the f80 he had placed in the pocket of his pants disappeared. It had to have been stolen by some crocodile.

The writer describes a nightly occurrence (tiap tiap malam ... teroes)—an occurrence, too, which probably lies outside the range of the ordinary experience of most Retnodhoemilah readers. Again, if it were not out of the ordinary the report might not constitute news. The newsworthiness of the story, however, stems from more than its mere exoticism, it arises from the apparent ordinariness of what would be highly unusual elsewhere and at other times. The article, moreover, describes the setting as the story itself within which people engage in their various pursuits; the actors, then, form part of the setting. The scene is repeated every night, and the reporter notes that it takes place in the same place in front of a large house. The focus, though, is not on the actors' movement through space; it is on the seem-
ingly random movement of people within it. The movement gives the setting its dynamism, and the randomness of it confers a certain dangerousness to the place. There is, for instance, no way to distinguish the thief from customer; anything might happen, and that would be expected. And there is little possibility that perpetrators of crimes will be caught.

Note, too, that the primary activity, prostitution, rather than being used overtly, as it often is elsewhere, to label persons, is analyzed and made understandable here in terms of its motives of profit and pleasure. The list of nationalities and ethnicities conflates the different scales of the identities of the persons who engage in it. Moreover, because women of all kinds participate, it equalizes them. The impression being fostered is that the profession cannot mark and stigmatize just a certain population, the indigent people of the East Indies, the boemipoetra, for instance. If the practice is depicted as rational, however, it is not morally uncomplicated. There may be no threat of supernatural sanction, unlike the story of the woman changing into a dog, but the correspondent's explanation robs prostitutes of all moral sensibilities by overlooking, in effect, the circumstances that led them to it. Poverty, for instance, is never mentioned; prostitution is a career choice that represents a logical consequence of instinctual, amoral propensities.

Articles about village and urban life orient readers differently to the places described. Not only are the places themselves different, generating different versions of locality, the continuum of time and space is interrupted and disconnected. To some degree, the differences—one taking place in a nameless village, the other occurring here and now in a specific place—may be reconciled in readers' minds as denoting scenes from a journey through time. Although readers would not likely see their own neighborhoods mirroring the scene from the Batavia red light district, the recurrence of it means that the activities described are simultaneous with the ongoing activities in the surroundings of their own lives. The village in the previous story, in contrast, connotes a timelessness transposed to the distant past. It is a metaphor for the past, for the close-knit personal relationships, unyielding moral laws, the immanence of God, and the fact that unlike the city, immorality is swiftly and decisively punished. It is, furthermore, a self-contained and self-referencing world, part of the story rather than the "real" context. And, as a story it may have given expression to some of the anxieties of readers and journalists confronting a socially diverse, rapidly changing, and indifferent world of the present. In reporting on the life in the East Indies, I suggest that the newspapers helped make real the "void" Homi Bhabha describes as being "left in the uprooting of communities and kin" (1990: 291). At the same time, too, here and there, particular stories offer hope of recovery, perhaps by effecting a partial return to the past and to the virtues that shaped that world (Hoskins 1993: 366), or by illuminating efforts to organize and so reconstitute community modeled on new associations.

Conclusion

Anderson proposes that the imagination of a national community was facilitated in large part by the print media's ability to communicate a range of familiar and exotic experiences under colonialism in what was for many readers a new language, the vernacular. The vernacular was crucial in this development, for it signified new times and opened new vistas for discovering the world encumbered, at least in the Dutch East Indies, by the identities and expectations affecting communication in more localized languages (Siegel 1997: 13-37). The use of generic languages created certain possibilities for conceiving community; specifically, it did so, in Anderson's account, by transforming perceptions of time—a transformation that made it possible to envision an otherwise anonymous community moving through it. Newspapers played a prominent role in shaping temporal perceptions insofar as they punctuated and recounted a succession of days, weeks, and years. Combined with an abundance of reports on technological advances and on the birth of new associations, the effect of reading was to extend time, as never before, into an indefinite, homogenous future. In similar fashion, readers became aware of places and of the traffic of people, goods, and ideas between them. As reports from around the world increased, nationalist consciousness spread (p. 6). Incidentally, it was the growth in global coverage, particularly after World War I that marked the most important difference between the contents of Taman Pewarta in 1915 and of Retnodhoemilah in 1908.

But what is cause and what is effect? The model Anderson proposes is incomplete, a fact which leads to a fundamental distortion in his account of the processes that would explain the rise of nationalist consciousness. The first problem centers on the thesis of "imported" nationalism, discussed earlier, that is invoked in order to transform generic
The final point is, we cannot analyze the newspapers’ denotations of time and specific articles as if they were mirrors and expect to see a reflection of the attitudes and perceptions of the readers. Rather, a methodologically sounder approach I have tried to apply here, is to analyze the way journalists sought to orient readers to the scenes described—scenes made distant or proximate depending on the use of temporal and spatial cues and peopled by specific categories of persons, based on gender, class, and ethnicity. The deployment of particular categories of persons, in turn, registered collectively their places or stations in life. Characters such as bumbling villagers, lascivious women, rapacious thugs, and corrupt officials helped depict an objective reality. With no apparent contradiction to the mission of representing reality, however, the descriptions were framed primarily with the intent to guide readers through the stories, to enable them to envision and experience the scenes within a broader moral scheme that was clearly more overt in some reports than in others. This work made it possible for reporters and readers, then, to begin to imagine a national community by permitting them an opportunity to recognize possibilities for their own place and stake in it.

NOTES

Acknowledgments A number of people have helped me to see this monograph to completion. In particular, I wish to thank Nancy Florida for encouraging me to pursue this project in this first place and for helping me with some difficult translations from the Malay language texts. Thanks, also, to Susan Go for bringing the newspapers to my attention and for making them available. The manuscript here bears little resemblance to earlier drafts. To the extent it has been improved is testament to the perceptive advice of a number of readers, including Jennifer Sternhagen, Rita Kipp, Ken George, Ben Anderson, Dave Edwards, Phyllis Pease Chock, and an anonymous reviewer from Anthropological Quarterly. The inconsistencies and ambiguities that remain are entirely my own. Michael Silverstein kindly provided a copy of his important forthcoming essay examining the epistemological foundations of Anderson’s influential study.

1 A recent book by James Siegel (1997) at times brilliantly reveals how readers might have begun to envision the nation in anticipation of independence from the Dutch. Although he mostly focuses on literature, he also includes newspapers and even film. Some differences between his approach and mine will be elaborated below, though in general he follows Anderson’s model fairly closely.

2 I hope to address Partha Chatterjee’s criticism that Anderson understates the creative, dialogic process involved in conceiving the nation (1986: 19-22).

3 Although Chatterjee does not specifically address the role the media played in the spread of the public discourse of nationalism, he does shift the general terms of the debate concerning its nature and origins and for that reason his study is worth considering (1986, 1993; see also Bhabha 1990; Gupta 1995). On the subject of the press Chatterjee is equivocal about its role, or perhaps he feels it is too obvious to mention. Although he acknowledges the media’s impact on language (1993: 52), he describes its influence on “aesthetic norms and tastes” as “homogenizing” (p. 236). While this second observation is intriguing, he does not elaborate; in some ways then it remains more speculative than Anderson’s proposal that Chatterjee seems to dismiss, namely that reading the news created an awareness of community.

4 The difference in emphasis may lie between the idea and possibility of the nation, on the one hand, and the urgency and motive force behind the aspiration on the other. While the idea of the nation is a necessary condition for nationalism, it is by itself insufficient as an explanation for it.

5 The notion that some standard forms of nationalism could be grafted onto very diverse local conditions leads Chatterjee to protest: “If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain ‘modular’ forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they [colonial subjects] have left to imagine?” With some whimsy perhaps, he suggests that with Anderson’s thesis “even our imaginations must remain forever colonized” (1993: 5). If not completely clear, Chatterjee’s point nevertheless is well-taken.

6 It should be noted that reading nationalism as resistance poses its own familiar analytical conundrums, for instance, how is resistance determined? Is it hidden in other practices? Conversely, are the overt expressions of resistance, as is heard in some post-colonial societies, so transparent? Taken too far, conceptualizing nationalism as primarily resistance leaves no room...
for ambivalence on the part of some local elites toward a system that at once empowered them as it constrained them.

In the revised edition of *Imagined communities* Anderson concedes that he was short-sighted when he proposed that nationalisms in the colonized states were modeled on European nationalisms (1991: 163).

I do not wish to suggest that this view of community is necessarily wrong, it simply suffers from some of the constraints of the model that informs it. The model is based on the ideas of Victor Turner (1969), who distinguishes social structure from what he calls anti-structure or "communitas." The model, though, perpetuates the dichotomy between the individual and the collectivity (and between community and society) while obscuring, for instance, intersubjective or relational conceptions of self.

Siegel states this somewhat differently. He proposes that because Malay, the lingua franca, belongs to no one, its use confers an anonymity. The paradox is that while the language is anonymous, it allows users to overbear and be overheard, though not in any definitive form (1997: 13-37).

Durkheim himself seems less Durkheimian than is sometimes implied. The collective does not erase the individual, rather the collective arises from the association of individuals.

If one can say that, to a certain extent, collective representations are exterior to individual minds, it means that they do not derive from them as such but from the association of minds, which is a very different thing. No doubt in the making of the whole each contributes his part, but private sentiments do not become social except by combination under the action of the sui generis forces developed in association (1953: 25-26).

The verb formed from the noun *pulau* (island)—*memulaukan*—means to exile. While I do not know the origin of this term, I have heard the verb phrase *memulauburukan* used in reference to the internment of political prisoners on the island of Buru after the coup in 1965 that led to the deaths of several hundred thousand suspected communists. I raise this point to illustrate one way in which "place" may be instilled in popular consciousness without people necessarily being aware of its location on a map.

Microfilms of the newspapers were created as part of the Southeast Asia Microform Project (SEAM) and are available through the Center for Research Libraries (Chicago). The choice of these two particular papers was largely a matter of convenience; copies were in relatively good condition. Since the focus of this essay is on the way people read articles and not on the papers themselves, a larger, more representative sample of stories would be both unnecessary and would quickly run up against space limitations.

As anyone familiar with remote hamlets in the outer islands of Indonesian today is aware, newspapers—some salvaged from wrapping material—are often hung on the walls of houses for decoration, perhaps for privacy (to cover cracks in walls), and referred to as a source of information. Newspapers compete for space with religious and political icons and, at least in wealthier homes, posters of pop idols. It is likely the case that discarded newspapers early this century were similarly recycled by the lower classes. On a related note, the fact that H. Maier found a literacy rate of only 6.44% among the indigenous population as late as 1930, as Siegel observes (1997: 8), risks significantly underestimating the rate at which news from the papers actually spread.

There was, in other words, an absence of obvious ethnic markers in many of the reports, though certainly not all. Such missing markers might be implied—a shop owner in Semarang is probably Chinese, a farmer, Javanese—however, the view of the world offered was not tailored self consciously to fit a specific ethnic group. In these two papers an "all the news that is fit to print" attitude prevailed, within obvious political bounds (see also Siegel 1997: 17).

As a result, I made a decision to exclude whole categories of information: overseas wire service reports, lists of official transfer, of promotion, and of the retirement of colonial administrators, commercial reports, scientific and historical essays, and notices of violations of press regulations. I also omitted advertisements. The excluded material constitutes a sizable mass of print and many of those items may have been for subscribers the principal attraction. Yet, again, my interest lies less with what drew readers to the papers in the first place than with ascertaining the way reading collectively affected readers and constituted, in the way reading was routinized, a community of news consumers.

Obviously, there are other modes of conceiving time; no one model precludes the existence and periodic relevance of others (for example, Hoskins 1993: 78). The change Anderson purports thus is perhaps not new as one increasingly invoked to represent time.

"ROEPA ROEPA CHABAR DARI BATAWAI. Baroe sekarang ini bangki di Betawi ada perkoempoelan (vereen- inging), itoe kalau dadi, [ ] itoe jang di namai "Mardi Oetojo".

Jang mendirikan ja itoe R. Iskandar Tiroksoeomo, poerta nda padoeka Regent Karanganjar, sekarang mendjadi djoeroe toels pathi di Welevedren. —

Adapoent maksoed perkoempoelan itoe jang pertama soepaja prijai sihane kena satoe pada jang lain kadoea kali akan mendidik akal saepaja lid lid mendidak sihane adan saro kadosoe dan bekoemoeo jekkalu ada lid jang iedhendang mengetahoei. Dan lain lainnya. —

Ini ja banjanka lid soehad ada 50 orang lebih.

Ini waktu tt. 27/6 ’08 itoe perkoempoelan beloem berdiri sempoerna, dadi beloem kehaoe bagaimana maksoedhja jang terang dalanjaan, dan siapa presidentenja d.l.l.

Hari Akat djam 9 pagi pagi tt. 28/6 ’08 lidlid jang soehad ada di koempoelen perloe bernoemoefakatan.”

Articles are composed of codes as well as messages, to borrow a distinction from Roman Jakobson (Waugh 1976). The codes include references to time, to the names of places, and to categories of persons, notably to the class, gender and ethnic affiliation of persons. The codes enable readers to situate themselves in relation to the stories; they guide the audience like signposts through them. Even when codes are underspecified or implicit in context, as in reports on remote rural hamlets, readers impose their own indices; they infer from experience and habit the necessary parameters of time, person, and place. In short, whether stated or not, codes provide a context, and the context enables readers to envision scenes as described.

Some of the organizations were Islamic and reformist in nature. The largest one by far, though, the Sarekat Islam, was founded in 1912 in an effort to foster economic cooperation among natives (largely to resist Chinese business domination), but quickly grew into a popular political movement that attracted as many as 2 million members prior to collapsing in 1919.

"BOEKTI KEMADJOEAN. Dari Kebemoen ada diwartakan bahwa baroe sementara boelan ini di mana dalam afdeeling Kebemoen telah didirikan satoe perkoempoelan boeat
orang orang perampoean oleh lid lid B.O. di Keboemen. Adapen perkoempoelannan mana soedah di bri nama ia ioeelah 'Wanito Oetomo.' Sedang maksoerdja kejoela soepaja dapat ideep roekoen sateo anataria lain. Tapi jang terpinenting ielah menjari tambahjua pengetaoan jang pantas diketaoei oleh orang orang perampoean sepertihal: Hal mempria ana, mengatoor roemah tangga, d.d.l.

Adapen semeea lid dari W.O. di waxadjabikan tiap tiap limabias hari sekali ia misti datang boeat berhimpoon di dalam roemah perkoempoelannan W.O. ioe."

21"... Nah sekarang telah terboekti tentang kemadjoearnaa perampoean bangsa T.H. Bagaimanakah akan kemadjoean kita perampoean B.p.? Jang djangga terboeer, tak oeroen nanti di vereening W.O. tetoealh akan terdapat djoea boeahnja, ada melebihi lezat dari pada kemadjoean tersebut di atas. O ja sjoeoeelra kapan begioe: moedah-moedahan!"

22Peirce's model of signification is the most schematic and developed (1966: 381-393). But Durkheim, too, offers similar insight into the relationship between signification and community.

Representations from the moment that they come into being affect ... the mind itself. That is to say, they affect the present and past representations which constitute the mind, if it is admitted that past representations do persist with us. The picture which I see at a given moment reacts upon my manner of seeing, my aspirations and desires.... If I see the picture again it will act in the same way on these same elements, which persist unchanged except for the modifications which time has perhaps brought about. It will excite them as it did on the first occasion, and through them this stimulus will be communicated to the previous representations with which, from now onwards, they are related and which is thus revived (1953: 17).

23"MATTI DI SOEMEOER. Pada hari 18/6 08 jang baroe laloe adalah soeota kemajian jang ngeri, jaiote anak kejil kira-kira oeoem 6 taien telah mati di dalam soemoer, chabarnya anak ioe dijari dari poekeol 3 siang kira-kira poekeol 6 soret kepadapan anak ioe soedah mati didalam telaga, boele djadi anak ioe bermain-main didekaet soemoer lantass ajato. Kasian!"

24The poignancy of this singular incident contrasts with other fairly common reports of cholera fatalities in Java early this century. In those reports poignancy is sacrificed to convey the frequency of death rather than the nature of the suffering.

25Again, the press regulation was instituted in 1856 to limit criticism of the government. The key provisions of the law are contained in Articles 17 and 18 that state that each report sent for publication has to bear the signature of its author and that the publisher will be held fully responsible for the contents (see Adam 1984: 38-39). To avoid breaking the law, correspondents sometimes employ a strategy of indirect reporting, that is, citing or paraphrasing sections of articles published in other papers. One story on local corruption is pieced together from reports that appear in no less than three different papers; the Taman Pemarta story I saw was the fourth. This example points to some of the obstacles journalists faced in making the colonial state visible and accountable for the events that occur under its watch (cf. Gupta 1995: 392).

26"BIKIN SELEMPANG. Beloem selang berberapa hari lamanya, watkote pagi penoeelis hendak berpangkang, melintas di moeka gordoe kosong No. 11, di kamp. Mangkojoedan, dapa tooe dengan kadoea mata sendiri di dalam gordoe itu adalah saorang lagi laki doedoek meroenong, saolah oleh orang yang mengandong kasekalantn hari. Oleh sebab ia orang hanja berpakaiin serba kojak kojak, dus penoeelis ada doequan, betapa

ioe orang minta mina sahada. Pada waktu tengah hari, penoeelis mendengar chabar poela, ka'lau orang tadi soeka beli nasi dan tahoe goren, akan tetapi tidak membajari. Malahan iatkala habis makan, orang ioe telah djadi main maoboek, boeka moeloet lebih doeoe, saakan akan menuondoekkan gagah ber- anina. Soedah barang tentoe, si pendjoeal tahoe lantass indar dari sioe selaleo melepasakan perkataan jang amat kotor.

Hampir sehari soeentoek, si tabiat gila ioe tinggal di dalam gordoe. Dan kalau ditanja oleh orang lain, siapa nama?? di mana Roemahnya?? ioe orang tidak soeka menjohoe; kejoela tinggal diam, dengan bertinkah boeais. Roepa roepeanja ini komodi mendjadiakkan sangat selempangnya pendoedoek kameong jang berdekaekan. Maka sigerahal oeh politie kameoong, orang man dijadah menghadap toen onder distrik di Lawian, maar, och .... ia belief soeka bergerak dari tempatnya. Pendekjaan: dengan paksa ia laloe di ... sampai di moeka toen onder distrik. Di sioeolah ia mengakoe bernama Simim, asal dari desa Balong, regenschaap Ponorogo, dan memang soedah kerapakali ia dapat hoekoean dari sebab djahajtna.

Pada kaesokkan harinja, ia lantass dijoeento di moeka ha-kim Rol, maka ia poetoessanjaa, ioe orang dikoeomboalan ka tanah toepmah daarahnja, dengan disertai satoe pasang gelang beji, karena ia terang bikin selempang." (ellipses in original)

27The dialogue between journalists and their readers does not end with the final sentence of an article, nor when the paper is closed, put away or discarded. A "state of talk" does not depend on talk occurring at any given moment (Goffman 1981: 130).

28"ATOERAN KOERANG BERE BIKIN SOESAH BAGI SI BODOH. Meneerroet Pri. Bode ampeenoja chabar, maka ia bi-lang bahwa di Halle S.S. Pegaden baroe jang ada sedikit rame, di sioe adalah seorong bangsa B.p. jang kira kira djajaran man menak trein, ia soedah beli satoe kaartiis boeelmieenj lang hendak peri tog Cehibon.

Akan tetapi oleh sebab dari nacip kajielakaan ioe orang maka iapan tidak masoek ke dalam hoomelriein, tapi ia laloe masoek ke dalam selnretrein dan tida lama lagi ioe selnretrein laloe berangkant. Setoedojcja ia beroedoekja dioedoejong bangkoe do the soeda selang lama datanglah saorang condeetje boeat melihat masing masing kaartiis. Si Kromo jang tiada mengerti lantass ambil ia poenja kaartiis idjo jang laloe di kasih toendjoe pada toen condeetje, soedah barong jang misti sekoeteka ioe condeetje soedah djadi marah kras. Kemerahan mana condeetje ioe telah menggoenakan perkataan sebagai berikoteo:

Kowe orang bodoh!
Saja kangdjeng.
Kowe monjat!
Saja kangdjeng.
Kowe misti bajaan oeoang denda f0,75.
Saja tiada beroejang lagi sepeser poen djoea kangdjeng.
Dan kowe misti dihekoem!
Hata ketika ioe orang B.p. mendengar perkataan ioe, soedah misti mendjadiak kan ketoetjoean sahingga iapeen kepaka masoek ke dalam kamam noo....

Serta satelalh ioe trein bediendenja soedah doedoek, mendjaga djangan sampe orang ioe bisa belonjat dari dalam trein. Adapen selama orang ioe doedoek dengan trein bediende maka iia laloe mina nacehat, bagimana soepaaja ia tida sampe dimasoeken di dalam obang tikoes alias roemah boei, sebab misti merawati anak dan bininja.

Maka oleh ioe trein bediende poin laloe berkuta. Djoeal sahadae barang apa jang kamoe baowa, soepaaja mendapatan oeo-ang denda 3 talen ioe.

Oeleh sebab dari bodohnja, maka lantaraj nacehat dari se-
orang trein bediene, ia poen laoe keloeaerkh dari boenkeesan satoe blik koffie jang saljaa beli 0,60 cent dan lantas didjoeal dengan harga 0,40 cent. Kroepeok azalnja ia beli 0,30 cent didjoealnja dengan harga 0,20 cent, d.l.l. sebagiaenja, jang sampe ia dapat membajar dedenja itu. Mendiadi si Kromo itoee telah dapat karoeqian tida koerang dari 50 procent. Ah kesian!

Mennik itoe, njata sekali bhawa di Pagedan Baroe memang beloem diatoer sampe beres. Sebab di sitoe adalah doea boeakh trein jang sama senda hekoerangoe ke Cheribon belaka, tapi jang satoe snelrein dan jang lain boemelrein, poen pendedjoalnja kaartjis dibikin sama-sama. Begiotoeal oentoek orang bodoh dan koerang hati hati nistjaalhaken bikin keliooe sebagai telah kedjadian terseboet di atas tadi.” (ellipses in original)

37I should note that Indonesia’s greatest writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, opens his historical novel Jejak Langkah (1985) set at the beginning of the twentieth century, with a description of the hero’s train trip to Batavia and to the beginning of a new life. Significantly, there is no one to meet him and no one to look after him.

38The distinction here corresponds to the one drawn by Frege (1966), between the sense of a sign and its referent. Though both may evoked for any one sign, one or the other may not be obvious. As part of a strategy journalists may make an obscure reference in order to convey a particular sense that (in theory) the reader understands.

39The Indonesian term modern is a Dutch loan word, as is tradisi. Janet Hoskins suggests that adat, usually translated as custom, is a term that encompasses the slightly broader notion of “a past which is continuous with the present” (1993: 367a.1). In this light the concept of tradition may be both continuous or discontinuous. This uncertainty, I believe, contributes to the interest in stories of magical villages.

31MEMHITAM GIGI. Beloem kengenderan chabarnja disini anak dipanggoerin oleh seten, akan tetapi disini telah petjok chabah jang penjaki pangoer soedah mendjangan di Soerakarta; maka ada chabah djoega menghitam gigi itoeah jang mendjadi penolak sipenjaki jang terseboet; sebab itoe maka pendoedoe disini telah menjoeroeq anekja, soepaja menghitam gigi, akan penolak penjaki itoe; pada katjana: anak-anak ketjil itoeah jang terweetama, sebab anak-anak ketjil itoeah kelihatan oleh seten otoe, dan orang toea tiada tampak, sebab demikian orang toea itoe sesoekanja, menghitam gigijna baik, dan tiada, ja ta’djadi apa.

Ha! ha! bagaimana anak jang ketjil lebih tampak dari pada orang toea jang telah besar toebhoea? boeeken adaebabah ini?

Dari zaman poerakala sehingga kini, bangsa kita orang Djawa, masih djoega melakoekan [ ] ataupun gampang sekali dibodoegoe oleh doekoen doekoen Djawa, dikatakan begini dan begiowe.

... Maka sebab chabah jang demikian, pendoedoe boemi poetera disini menjoeroeq anekja menghitam gigi agar djangan dipangoer oleh seten soeroekan K.Nj.R. Kideoe, Akan tetapi anak-anak sekolah disini, djeronj seksa jang menghitam gijina; ada djoega satoe doea, berangalhi terpaksa oleh sanak saudarana di kampoen kampoen. Sjoekoerlah, anak-anak sekolah ada mengarti adanja.

Dipenjoeran jak ma’aflah, si Djawa Kolot’

32To the extent independence did harbor some threat of social revolution, it was resisted, as in the Moluccas, by local elites who went so far as to found their own separatist movement largely out of fear that in the new Indonesian state they would lose their privileged status (Chauvel 1990). In Banten, West Java, the involvement of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in the popular revolt of 1926 was primarily based on its anticolonial appeal and its call for action; there is little evidence to suggest that class conflict played a significant motivating force (Williams 1982: 62).

Chatterjee (1993) makes the point that aspects of tradition are marked off and preserved as a way to resist change imposed elsewhere: changes, that is, that result from the need to adapt to the exigencies of colonial rule and to the demands of capital. The invention of tradition thus poses as a form of resistance. Yet the efficaciousness of a tradition depends on its accessibility and its continuity with the present (see Hoskins 1993: 366). Presumably, reports of villages in the newspapers serve to keep the traditions represented there alive.

33KOEPOE KOEPOE MALAM. Boeken boeken banjaknya koepoe koepoe malam di Betawi. Tiap tiap habis djam 8 malam teroees terbang kesana kemari tiada berhentijna dan tiada hasijnja sama...naak sado adan menjahari makan. Tiada melainkan sebangan sadja, ada koepoe koepoe jang asal datang dari [ ] Bogor, Krawang, Soenda, Tjina, Djepang dan Belanda.

Djika dia tiada dapat makanan, ada banjak roegi a) moestui membayar sado kei dia naij [ ] b) leelah, c) lapar dan d) tiada dapat doeiwit; tapi kalau kebetoelkan dapat makanan memang oenootg besar: a) dapat njaman, b) dapat oewan dan c) tiada membayar toekang sado.

Di moeka roemah gade, djika telah di boeka, adalah beber-apa orang berkereoe [ ]. Ada jang akan menggeakedown, ada jang akan neboes dan ada djoeoe jang tiada akan neboes dan menggeakedown tetapi akan menjoeeri. Sepero baroe baroe ini adalah saorang hendak neboes dia poenja barang, tetapi tiada djadi sebadi dia poenja wangs f80. — jang dia tareok di sak badjoenja soedah hilang, mesti di ijoei oleh salah soeatoe boeaja, P.H.”

REFERENCES CITED

Newspapers

Taman Pevarta. 1915 (January 11-27). Solo: s.n.


THE PRESS AND NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS
ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUARTERLY


