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Producing the local: Javanese performance on Indonesian television

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**Producing the local
Javanese performance on Indonesian television**

**Els Bogaerts
2017**

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Producing the local Javanese performance on Indonesian television

Proefschrift

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Aan mijn moeder en mijn vader
die me leerden lezen en leven

Untuk Bu Nur (Sri Djoharnurani)
peneliti sejati, sahabat sejati

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Credits

A huge detour – geographically, emotionally, intellectually and physically – brought me back to the subject with which I had obtained my first academic degree: performance on television. After my study of Germanic philology and Theatre Science at Antwerp University, I immersed myself completely in Javanese dance and music. This was the beginning of my fascination with Indonesian cultures, a fascination that continued unabated. Above all, my dance and music teachers and fellow students in Indonesia opened my eyes and heart to the local performing arts and to them I am very grateful.

One of the very first days I spent as a student at the Indonesian Institute for the Arts in Yogyakarta, I learned the meaning of the word *belum*. Not only is it the Indonesian equivalent of the English ‘not yet’. It contains a philosophical approach towards life, work and achievement. The correct answer to a question like ‘have you mastered this dance’ was not *tidak* (no), but *belum*. While *tidak* closes off all future developments, *belum* encompasses potential and possibility, progress and hope. The last few years this knowledge has kept me going on with my research and writing, despite the many breaks because of other projects, work and ‘life’. To all the people who continued to believe in the final result of this adventure, offering me support in various forms, I would like to express my sincere gratitude. It is not possible to thank them all personally. Nevertheless, I would like to mention a few persons specifically.

The ideas for my research took shape when I joined the Verbal Art in the Audiovisual Media of Indonesia (VA/AVMI) research programme at Leiden University between 1996 and 2001. The discussions with the VA/AVMI members who became dear colleagues and friends sharpened my mind.

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Eko Ompong Santosa transcribed the televised kethoprak Dewi Sawitri and copied Handung Kus Sudyarsana's script *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda*. Peter Keppy sent me references to kethoprak from the early twentieth century. Philip Yampolsky took the time to compile a list with suggestions for reading. I. W. Pantja Sunjata and Michael Asmara recorded and copied TV programmes.

Victoria Clara van Groenendael commented critically on the entire first version of the manuscript; Tineke Hellwig did so for part of the final version. With a perceptive eye Peter Wittoch commented on my approach of the key concept proximity. Tom van den Berge helped me to frame the introduction to my dissertation. Rosemary Robson edited the English, always positive about yet another final paragraph. I. Supriyanto suggested the English translation of several Javanese programme titles. All shortcomings of the dissertation, however, are mine.

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Note on spelling

Indonesian and Javanese words are spelled according to the Indonesian and Javanese official orthographic guidelines. They have no plural s; in this dissertation plurality will be clear from the context.

Proper names and toponyms are spelled according to the original form.

In Indonesian and Javanese sources, proper names tend to occur in different spellings: Handung Kus Sudyarsana is also spelled Handung Kusudyarsana or Handung Kus Sudyarsono. In such cases I opted for the most frequently occurring form.

Where Javanese script distinguishes between the sounds t/th, d/dh, final k/g and a/o, in contemporary spelling these differences are disregarded. Hence Den Baguse Ngarso instead of Den Baguse Ngarsa, and Gatutkaca instead of Gathutkaca. In quotations I keep to the original.

I opted for the use of kethoprak rather than ketoprak, the latter occurring in quotations and names of troupes and institutions.

Introduction

‘[...] no other social institution in Indonesia has arrested public attention on the scale or with the intensity of the electronic media, especially television. Nothing has attracted the number of hours of attention on a daily basis from around 100,000,000 Indonesians as television programs. This alone warrants special investigation. Without it, any understanding of contemporary Indonesia would be seriously flawed.’
(Ariel Heryanto 2008:5)

Empty streets when the show was on air, the talk of the town (and the village), 3.5 million postcards from audiences in Central and East Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Jauhari 1994:21-22), ... The response to broadcasts of serialized Javanese drama, *kethoprak sayembara*, in the 1980s and 1990s was overwhelming.

With the broadcast of the four episodes of the serial *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopuro* (Fog over Singgelopuro) in August 1993, the regional TVRI stations in Yogyakarta and Surabaya reached their zenith. All parties involved profited from the success. The serial boosted the image of the regional Javanese TVRI stations that used the buzz to boost their branding and to distinguish themselves from the upcoming private broadcasting industry. Local newspapers and enterprises that acted as sponsors shared in the financial profit. TVRI and the sponsoring partners deployed all sorts of alluring practices to make the audiences feel involved: they presented entertainment and suspense, co-operated with actors of famous and popular *kethoprak* troupes, they invited television viewers to participate and offered the chance to win a prize. Although the hyperbole ‘empty streets’ was often used to underline the popularity of a show,¹ whether true or not, it does tell us something about the kind of attention a show attracted.

In a nutshell, the case of the *kethoprak sayembara* serial touches upon the essence of local broadcasts in Indonesia in the final decades of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century and gives us a glimpse of how television is ‘both a witness to and an actor in economic structures, social change, political power and cultural meaning’ (Fickers and Johnson 2010:2). It gives us insight into how national, regional and commercial television, not to mention the government and private sectors, engaged with and reacted to each other. The broadcasts represented (aspects of) Javaneseness by using a vernacular, Javanese, and local settings, by building on a local performance genre, focusing on local history and topics, involving local artists and targeting local audiences. They were perceived to be firmly linked to a specific space and specific ethnic groups, and addressed feelings of belonging and proximity – a sense of nearness and closeness that manifests itself on the physical, cognitive and emotional level. While highlighting particular cultures, in this case

¹ As in the case of the Balinese *drama gong* when broadcast by TVRI Denpasar (Darma Putra 1998:30), the *wayang golek* of TVRI stasiun Bandung and the Depot Jamu Mat Kirun show at TVRI stasiun Surabaya (see *VISTA-TV* 1993 and 1994).

Javanese, at the same time they had Indonesia as a larger frame of reference. At the height of its success, the kethoprak sayembara serial was subtitled in Indonesian, and the producers suggested the idea of nationalizing the genre in nation-wide screenings. Nevertheless, on account of its strong local character, it did differ enormously from the Indonesian-spoken series that used to be produced in and broadcast from Jakarta. And, as the presence of the commercial stations grew stronger, in the eyes of media watcher, literary author and script writer Veven Wardhana, and many with him, these local programmes were perceived to be becoming an increasingly marginal phenomenon (Wardhana 2002:306; Rosidi 2004:10). Although a new media genre, conceived by and for television, kethoprak sayembara was nonetheless categorized as traditional – mainly because of its display of particular aspects of Javanese-ness. The case of kethoprak sayembara sheds light on the dual role of television in cultural processes, as an observer of and simultaneously contributor to culture.

The main objective of this dissertation is to explore how television represents Javanese-ness, as a factor designed to catch and keep the attention of its putative audiences. Its approach is both thematic and chronological. Three main themes structure the study: representing tradition, localizing persuasion and mediating the local. Since they each demand a proper methodological approach, the specific arguments and points I want to make will be introduced and discussed at the beginning of each of the three parts of this dissertation. Although presented separately, tradition, persuasion and the local are intricately linked to each other in televisual representations of Javanese-ness. In order to reveal ‘the specific, embedded, and diverse ways that people use media to make sense of their worlds and, most importantly, to construct new ones’ (Ginsburg 1994a:139-140), the analysis is based on a number of case studies, displaying Javanese performance by and on television.

Central to this research is the question of how people make use of national, regional, local, public and private television in Indonesia – each in their own way and with their own goals – to represent the local and, in particular, how they construct images of Javanese-ness through the production and dissemination of performance. Performance in Javanese has been used by the Indonesian television industry to achieve various purposes: to entertain and inform its audiences, to represent ‘the local’/‘the regional’, to preserve and nurture the ‘traditional’ and to contribute to the building of a ‘national culture’, for persuasive (commercial or propaganda) aims, as a counter-voice of diversification in the direction of global or ‘Jakartan’ influences, and to express multiculturalism. These issues have been put into the framework of discursive practices about local, national and global cultures in the electronic audiovisual media in Indonesia and of the meta-discourse about these topics within the disseminated genres themselves. The following principal questions have guided my research: How do people – whom I call agents – use and shape tradition, persuasion and the local in Javanese-language productions of performance and their dissemination? Who are these agents and what are their goals? How do the uses of tradition, persuasion and the local contribute to these productions and to the discursive practices concerning these productions?

My research focuses on the continuities and changes in the contents, form and status of Javanese performance because of and on television from the end of the nineteen eighties to

the first decade of the twenty-first century (1988-2008). As the dissertation covers two decades and is the result of a longitudinal study, it offers a historical perspective on the televising of Javanese performance in the dynamics of its context, and on the increasingly complex televisionscape in Indonesia. My linguistically based choice to study televised performance in Javanese provides insight into the particularities of such broadcasting and into how it differs considerably from Indonesian-language programmes. It also limits the scope of a person's viewpoint, in particular as Javanese-language programmes constitute only a small percentage of the entire gamut of broadcasting. The vast majority of the programmes are broadcast in Indonesian and are devised to attract more diversified audiences than just ethnic Javanese (of various social classes and culture backgrounds) and/or speakers (or hearers) of Javanese. Importantly, it does not include any religious programmes, even though these are prominently present in broadcasting in Indonesia, but did not usually use vernaculars like Javanese in the period researched. Another choice concerns the study of the agents in their capacity as contributors to the production of the local. This means that, as far as this relates to the audiences, I focus on the ways in which they are actively present and participate in television programmes, rather than using audience reception research in the traditional sense of the term as a starting point.

Offering a perspective on Indonesian television from an alternative point of view, namely: mediated Javanese performance, this dissertation is above all a plea for a more thorough study of the role of proximity in the production, dissemination and reception of local television programmes, hence the special attention devoted to the term in Chapter 1 and to the phenomenon of proximity in relation to television in Chapter 11. It is true that the Indonesian mediascape in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century developed in a world characterized by an increasing frequency and intensity of global communication with all the baggage this brings in its train. Nevertheless, it is proximity that reveals the processes taking place 'at the local sites of cultural production' (Winichakul 2003:6). Furthermore, it aims to make a contribution to the historiography of audiovisual electronic media in Indonesia. Finally, its intention is to take the edge off the following arguments and generalizations: that 'Java' is an overstudied 'area', that Javanese culture is hegemonic and homogeneous and that the national, New Order regime was all dominating and determining, leaving no room for local input or creativity.

1 Mediating performance

I use the term performance in its broad meaning. In this I follow Bauman's definition, in which 'performance usually suggests an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience' (Bauman 1992:41).² A performance is 'a deliberate effort to represent' (Peacock 1990:208). It is 'set apart, marked by various signals as distinct from ordinary routines of living' (ibid.), and has

² See Schechner on performance: 'Behavior heightened, [...], and publicly displayed' (Schechner 1995:1). See also Finnegan on forms of 'heightened verbal expression' (Finnegan 1992/1996:xiv).

to be recognized as such (Scannell 1995:13). Scannell's idea of 'communicative intentionality' (1995:14-15) approaches Bauman's definition of performance to some degree. He sees any radio and television programme as 'an organized event that exhibits a communicative intentionality in all its aspects (linguistic, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic)'. Nevertheless, they differ from other social occasions as they are institutional occasions, and are produced for absent listeners and viewers (Scannell 1995:15).

My focus on televised performance allows me to incorporate a wide variety of television genres in my corpus, including drama, talk shows and other entertainment, news bulletins, infotainment and commercials. These generic categories, referring to global television categories, are also used in Indonesian programming. However, as television genres 'are culturally specific and temporally limited' (Feuer 1992:139), in my study I pay attention to how these 'rhetorical and pragmatic constructions' (Feuer 1992:141) attain a specific meaning in the framework of televised Javanese performance – as illustrated by the above mentioned genre of kethoprak sayembara, an example of serialized drama. It was not their artistic qualities that determined my choice of certain television genres to be studied, but rather their performative character determined by their display of Javanese-ness in a dynamic interplay of 'verbal art' (Bauman, 1984; Finnegan 1992:10-11) with (other) aural and visual art. I prefer to call this performative art rather than just verbal art, as the latter term too much recalls pure verblativity although, according to Finnegan, most scholars use it in a wider meaning, referring to performance in its entirety (Finnegan 1992:10-11). Studying televised performance, we should not restrict its meaning to just 'a vernacular phenomenon' (Mitchell 1994:5), but also never lose sight of its visual and aural aspects.

Mediated performance is (at least) double representation. Mitchell points to the limitations of representation as a key word, but also acknowledges its advantages, as it is 'simultaneously linking the visual and verbal disciplines within the field of their differences' (Mitchell 1994:6). He proposes representation should be seen 'as a kind of activity, process, or set of relationships', and as 'the relay mechanism in exchanges of power, value, and publicity', that he characterizes as 'inherently unstable, reversible, and dialectical' (Mitchell 1994:420).

Mazzarella thinks it is important to understand what happens at 'the intersection of two or more systems of mediation' (Mazzarella 2004:353), in this case performance and television. The act of performing reveals meaning because of the people who make the representations. A focus on televised performance immediately and self-evidently calls attention to the agents involved in the mediation processes: actors, audiences, legislators, media practitioners, sponsors, media watchers, television institutions and so on – of whom we caught a glimpse in the kethoprak sayembara example at the beginning of this chapter. These agents will be accorded ample attention in the following chapters. The act of performing also enables these agents to acquire a deeper consciousness of their culture (Schechner and Apple 1990:1). Performance shares this reflexive character with media like television. As a reflexive and reifying technology, a medium 'makes society imaginable and intelligible to itself in the form of external representations' (Mazzarella 2004:346). And, just as is performance, a medium is a 'framework, both enabling and constraining, for a given set of social practices' (Mazzarella 2004:346). Considering mediation systems as practices enables us to see them as complex and

dynamic institutions, and to focus on their continuous changes and developments, and ‘conflicting tendencies’ (Sreberny 2000:116).

Another characteristic that performance shares with media like television is orality (Lindsay 2002; Jurriëns 2004:27-8). Since Indonesian audiences have a time-honoured experience of performance, television is well suited to these audiences because of the similarity between both mediation systems (see Coutas 2006:387). In an orally orientated society, these ‘habits of orality’ (Lindsay 2002:325) may partially explain the workings of proximity in Indonesian television. I shall return to orality as a common feature of performance and television in Chapter 11.

Televsual representation of ‘Javanese culture’ by means of performance, that is, narrative-based and image-centred presentation through the use of images, sound and text, produced for invisible (rather than Scannell’s absent) viewers, occurs in multiple contexts and on several levels.³ Representation invariably implies that certain important decisions have to be made about ‘what to include and what to exclude, what to “foreground” and what to “background”’ (Fairclough 1995a:4), and therefore is always only partial. As I show in this study, mediated performance is used for the representation of *budaya* (culture) as well as for other purposes. Since the ‘production and consumption of cultural representations affects the construction of identities – national, ethnic, religious, occupational, familial, sex and gender’ (Thompson 1997:1) – , the ways in which Javanese culture is represented in the Indonesian media can be influential in the construction of Javanese identities. In my analysis of media products, Fairclough’s questions about media output have been helpful. They concern the ways in which the world is represented, the identities that are created for those involved in the programme or story and the kinds of relationships that are set up between those involved (Fairclough 1995a:5).

The representations examined here occur within and are part of the Indonesian mediascape, a term coined by Arjun Appadurai (1996:33-37). A mediascape is a network of media technologies, productions and institutions, and an arena in which people meet and make representations (Arps et al. Forthcoming). The term accounts ‘for the different kinds of global cultural flows created by new media technologies and the images created with them in the late 20th century’ (Ginsburg 1994b:366). I use the term televisionscape to refer to institutions and broadcasting technologies that ‘produce and disseminate information’ and ‘the images of the world created by these media’ (Appadurai 1996:35).

2 Producing the local

In this dissertation I focus on how people – the agents mentioned above – represent the local and what mechanisms of representation are in operation. As the local has been a very prominent issue in Indonesian government policy, legislation and discourse regarding the electronic media, it forms the starting point of my research. The case of *kethoprak sayembara*

³ I use the terms ‘narrative-based’ and ‘image-centred’ as defined by Appadurai (1996:35).

with which I began this introduction exemplifies what Appadurai calls ‘the production of locality’. Appadurai defines locality ‘as a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts’. This phenomenological quality ‘expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility’ (Appadurai 1996:178). In my search for representations of the (Javanese) local, I follow Appadurai’s conception of locality as a complex phenomenological quality – although I prefer to use the term ‘the local’ rather than locality, acknowledging that both terms have their shortcomings, as both locality and the local also refer to physical space.

The author’s view on locality ‘as primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial’ (Appadurai 1996:178) should not be taken for granted, as conditions have changed since Appadurai developed his ideas on the basis of research conducted in the 1990s. We should question whether this view is still valid when studying the representation of the local by and on Indonesian television, in which space and scale do play an important role, if (only ‘if’) not actually, then certainly ideologically, emotionally and/or in discourse – as will become clear from my examples of the production of the local. Or, framed in another way, one can question, as has been suggested by Mazzarella: ‘[W]hat spatial or scalar level is denoted by this “local”?’ (Mazzarella 2004:352).

Whereas Appadurai approaches globalization and the production of locality from the point of view of nationalism and the nation-state (1996:188), in this study I prefer to focus on levels below the level of the nation-state. The last three decades, world-wide the regional and the local have become much more prominent politically, as Appadurai also acknowledges (1996:189). Globalization processes have instigated this revalorization of the local (Mazzarella 2004:352). A valuable concept in this respect is ethnolocality, that Boellstorff introduces to indicate the ‘spatial scale where “ethnicity” and “locality” presume each other to the extent that they are, in essence, a single concept’ (Boellstorff 2002:25). As such, ethnolocality mediates between ‘Indonesia’ and the ‘village’ (Boellstorff 2002:38 fn 9), and does not always correspond to one specific administrative area (Jones 2005:81). Ethnolocality enables us to detect and observe the local beyond the frames that have been determined by Indonesian politics and administration.

Recapitulating, the study of televised Javanese performance has enabled me to lay bare the functioning of representation (with all its implications), related to the production of the local and the construction of Javanese-ness.

3 Studying televisual representations of the local in Indonesia

Studies on televisual representations of the local in Indonesia are scarce. Although the number of these studies has increased during the last two decades, it is still an understudied field in cases which require an in-depth knowledge of local languages and cultures. Most research approaches media from a national or an international perspective, and focuses on political and economic aspects of the media, rather than on cultural phenomena. And, while in Indonesia

local television has recently received ample attention from Indonesian academics, unfortunately these studies often are not easily accessible.

Early publications on television in Indonesia focus on the active and prominent role of the medium in building the nation (Alfian and Chu 1981; Chu, Alfian and Schramm 1991). Kitley (2000) and Sen and Hill (2000) have paved the way for further research with their groundbreaking works. They cover Indonesian television from the launch of the national television station TVRI and its role as a national medium, to the founding of the first private television stations, each advocating a different approach. McDaniel offers a broader perspective in two in-depth studies of electronic media, the first discussing radio, television and video in the Malay world (McDaniel 1994), and the second politics, media and national development in Southeast Asia (McDaniel 2002). Both publications scrutinize Indonesian media in great detail.

Programming of local content that featured local cultures and vernaculars – local here referring to the sub-national – was very limited according to Sen and Hill. Their findings were based on the research they conducted in Yogyakarta in 1996: they list only three Javanese-language programmes on local TVRI featuring folk or traditional theatre, reduced to broadcasts of one hour or used to fill a night slot (Sen and Hill 2000:119-120). Kitley mentions a few programmes that represent particularistic cultural associations, on both TVRI and the private station Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI) (Kitley 2000:340). If we compare Sen and Hill's views to the findings of McDaniel, published only six years earlier, the differences are significant. McDaniel, who conducted his research in 1989 and 1990, was struck by 'the prominence of traditional performance arts' in Indonesian television programming. He mentions that

each night there is at least one show on regional cultural dance, song, or theater. Responsibility for these programs is rotated among the regional stations and the mobile production units. Regional stations often produce even more cultural programs for transmission in their own region. (McDaniel 1994:244)

McDaniel does not specify the languages used in these shows. However, as he uses the bimonthly broadcast of *wayang golek* (rod-puppetry) by TVRI Bandung as a case in point, that was most probably performed in Sundanese, we can assume that the traditional performing arts he mentions make use of local languages (McDaniel 1994:244-245).

The discrepancy between the observations of Sen and Hill (2000) and McDaniel (1994) raises several questions. One of the first questions that comes to mind when comparing their conclusions is why they differ so much from each other considering the limited time span between both studies. Had the introduction of private television by the end of the nineteen eighties influenced domestic programming, and in particular local content using vernaculars, so rapidly and significantly? Had television as a national medium perhaps pushed aside cultural expressions of minority groups, the largest of which is the Javanese, out of view? And, if Javanese performance on Indonesian television did actually have such a limited scope, why did the private station Indosiar make the effort to broadcast day-long *Srimulat* (Javanese-Indonesian comedy) programmes at the end of the fasting month? Or why did all Indonesian

electronic media broadcast a specific *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) show, performing the story *Rama Tambak* (in February 1998), during the economic and monetary crisis? Also, if a larger number of Javanese programmes had been broadcast, why were they (almost) invisible to researchers? Or is something else at work here? Did a different point of view or a specific focus colour the observations? Was, in the words of Annabelle Sreberny, ‘the “mood” of contemporary analysis’ (2000:114) decisive to the outcome of the studies, and is this discrepancy therefore a question of methodology and gaze?

Kitley (2000:340) and Sen and Hill (2000:123) did perceive changing attitudes towards local productions (local here meaning the sub-national, regional, local as determined by linguistic and cultural characteristics other than national Indonesian) and the potential of these programmes to win more audiences. However at this time this surfacing of ‘streams of heteroglossia’ (Keane 2003:505) was just the beginning of a trend that coincided with the implementation of the Regional Autonomy Law that at the time of their research was not yet realized.

More recently, several authors have studied specific cultural expressions on television that are tied to a locality, a specific group of people and/or a language on levels below that of the national. The studies by Jurriëns (2004) and Loven (2008) deserve a special mention. Both studies were conducted within the framework of the Verbal Art in the Audiovisual Media of Indonesia research programme at Leiden University between 1996 and 2001.

In *Cultural travel and migrancy*, Jurriëns took ‘unconventional roads’ (Jurriëns 2004:x). Situating the electronic media of West Java within the conceptual framework of travel and migrancy allowed him to discuss the interaction between the global and the local. In his analysis of the Sundanese television programme *Inohong di Bojongrangkong* (The leader of Bojongrangkong), the musical genre *pop Sunda* and the radio programme *Dongeng plesetan* (Tales of punning), he demonstrates how these programmes are not merely results of globalization processes, but also a critical comment on them (Jurriëns 2004:84). His study is embedded in an extensive introduction to Indonesian cultural policies and debates and to the West Javanese electronic media.

Loven studied the local television programme *Si Doel anak sekolahan* (‘Educated Doel’), ‘in an effort to disentangle the various understandings of “national television” in late New Order and post-Soeharto Indonesia’. Besides, she explored how the media in Indonesia ‘both shape and are shaped by discourse in society at large’ (Loven 2008:1). Loven offers a thorough insight into the context of the programme under scrutiny, and also provides us with a concise overview of previous studies on media and discourse in general, and media in Indonesia (Loven 2008:9-11).

In the meantime, several articles concerning local culture on Indonesian television have seen the light of day. Mrázek and Arps have studied Javanese television shows. Mrázek (1999 and 2000) focuses on the clown scenes to discuss innovation in televised *wayang kulit* in relation to the (then) present world – innovation that is itself the result of the interaction between *wayang* and television. Analysing the Surabayan *Pojok Kampung* (Neighbourhood Corner), a news programme in the local dialect, Arps shows that the language use in the

programme differs increasingly from New Order conventions, concluding (with Van Heeren) that the regionalization is ‘distinctly modern, is oriented to the here and now, it is exemplary for the future’ (Arps and Van Heeren 2006:315). Indigenous audience response to representations of Balinese culture on television have been paid attention in the research of Hughes-Freeland (1996), Darma Putra (1998) and Hobart (2001 and 2002). Hendrawan studied local television in post-Soeharto Indonesia from a global and national perspective, concluding that it is ‘a new actor in the socio-cultural transformation at the local level in Indonesia’ (2015:222).

Ariel Heryanto offers yet other perspectives on television in Indonesia. He discusses television from the point of view of popular culture and identity (2008, 2014). In a special edition of the *Asian Journal of Communication*, Hobart and Fox and their fellow authors examine the cultural practices that constitute Indonesian entertainment television, rather than approaching media from a political-economic or mass communications perspective (Hobart 2006a). Kitley (2004) and Coutas (2006/2008) have written comprehensive essays on the localization of foreign formats in Indonesia. In their 2011 edited volume, Sen and Hill again focus on the link between the media and politics, this time in twenty-first century Indonesia. They analyse media transformations in the post-Soeharto period and investigate how these changes are influencing the development of democracy in the country both positively or negatively. In his work (2002), Indonesian media practitioner and watcher Wardhana reflects on the Indonesian televisionscape in all its aspects from an insider perspective.⁴

My research has profited greatly from studies on local television and localizing processes in a non-Indonesian context – both Asian and other. I specifically want to mention the articles by Ping-Hung Chen on domestication strategies (2004) and Iwabuchi on cultural proximity (2001), both about Taiwan, and the 2010 *Media History* issue about perspectives on localizing the transnational in regional television in Europe (Johnson and Fickers). As television is a global medium, a comparative perspective on localizing strategies might generate new insights.

4 This dissertation

In my research into the ways in which television represents Javanese-ness, I found that an interdisciplinary approach and empirically based method were the most suitable to my materials and my aims. Taking the perspective of mediatized Javanese performance, I frame my analysis within performance and media studies, Indonesian studies and cultural anthropology. My sources and materials consist of television broadcasts, interviews, literature on Indonesian media, articles and essays published in Indonesian newspapers and magazines, letters from audiences, Indonesian legislative texts, scripts, programme descriptions and broadcast schedules, and television websites. I watched television broadcasts, witnessed the recording and production of several programmes in television studios and other spaces, and

⁴ On Wardhana’s work, see Jurriëns 2016.

obtained copies of TV recordings.⁵ I have interviewed performing artists and media practitioners, producers, people involved, or who have been involved, in the management of broadcasting institutions and *budayawan* (culture philosophers and thinkers) commenting on the media industry and media productions and broadcasts. In my analysis of broadcasts of televised performances, I pay detailed attention to language use and to public debate on representations of Javanese culture on television.

In the three parts of my dissertation, I focus consecutively on ideas of tradition, persuasion and the local in my discussion of ways of representing the local, that is Javanese culture, in performances on television. Each theme required a different approach. The first part is focused on the televising of one specific Javanese performance genre, *kethoprak*. In Part II the spotlight turns to the contributing agents and reveals the amalgam of messages, narratives and ideologies as these are integrated into the programme flow. Localizing strategies and the alliances in which local broadcasters engage are the theme of Part III. My rationale for choosing this threefold approach is my own curiosity to discover how research into television from specific angles would generate specific outcomes, that, when made into a compilation, would result in a mosaic. The form of a mosaic is better suited to grasp the character of television, as it will reveal the various facets of the Indonesian televisionscape, keeping the dynamics of the televisual processes.

Representing tradition

Since 1962 television broadcasting of local cultural expressions, including drama was placed in the hands of the national television station TVRI and – later also – its regional institutions. As an instrument of the Indonesian government, TVRI was the mouthpiece of New Order policy, voicing its striving for a national identity and unity. The station took the concept of ‘the local’ for granted and used it for ideological reasons, namely: for the grand narrative of building a national culture. Meanwhile, even as it was doing this, regular broadcasts of specific popular Javanese performance genres added to the branding of regional TVRI stations. They counterbalanced the discourse of loss – loss of local cultures and the Javanese vernacular – , prevalent at Javanese language congresses and among bureaucrats.

This study begins with an analysis of how the regional government station TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta represents ‘tradition’. This is put into the context of discussions about tradition and culture during the New Order period. I argue that the regional television station in Yogyakarta did more than merely implement government policies in its broadcasting. Benefiting from the contribution of producers who often were performing artists or *budayawan* themselves, and inspired by and building on local traditional performance, it developed its own performance styles and new television genres. Local audiences received the special attention of these producers whose goal was enhancing proximity. Tradition, in this period a frequently discussed concept, on television was interpreted in multiple ways and obtained a flexible character. Strikingly an open attitude towards innovation and the desire to

⁵ Audiovisual recordings of television programmes – some of which were recorded at the KITLV Jakarta (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde) for the purpose of the VA/AVMI research programme (Verbal Art in the Audiovisual Media of Indonesia); some obtained from various television producers in Indonesia; some recorded by friends and some by myself in the course of time.

keep pace with the developments in society became a means to preserve traditional performance genres.

Localizing persuasion

The end of the nineteen eighties marked a period of transition (McDaniel 1994:26) that began with significant economic growth and the first expansion in the Indonesian televisionscape. New technologies enabled the reception of foreign programmes via satellite dishes. As soon as the first private television stations were established, the national broadcasting services had to cede their monopolistic position in the broadcasting of local/regional performance genres. The five new competitors utilized local culture principally for commercial aims, addressing and shaping the needs of the rapidly expanding middle classes. Their competition gave TVRI a serious impetus to improve its productions and broadcasts. Within a decade the economic boom came to an end. The economic and monetary crisis (*krismon*) of 1997 and 1998 had a direct and profound impact on broadcasting and the private television industry suffered severe losses.

In this second part, I discuss how information, persuasion and propaganda were localized. I focus on the broadcasting of Javanese performance, in the first case for commercial aims, in the second case for informative purposes. Contrary to what might have been expected, the analysis of the agents involved in the mediation processes discloses how they balance in between different, often paradoxical ideologies.

Mediating the local

From 1998 onwards fundamental changes were altering the Indonesian televisionscape. They occurred as a result of far-reaching political changes after President Soeharto's resignation and the introduction of the Reformation era, and were reinforced by new legislation like the Regional Autonomy Law, that brought a renewed consciousness of local/regional identity, and the new Broadcasting Law. This led to the creation of an entirely new local broadcasting industry. Whereas the new broadcasting legislation, just as the preceding one, did not specify how the 'local' should be defined, it was the television industry itself that defined its meanings in the broadcasts. In public discourse in Indonesia, the concept of 'the local' was an important topic, but only a few specialists added any real depth to the discussions.

The third part of my study focuses on localizing practices and representations of Javanese cultures within the constraints of and the opportunities offered by these new local broadcasting industries. My first argument is that the concept of the local acquires meaning in the mediating practices of the local television stations. Secondly, local television stations, despite (or because of) their commercial interests, offer a much more diversified representation of Javaneness in the content of their programmes than used to be the case under the New Order regime.

In the final chapter, I reflect on the outcomes of this study, putting them in the perspective of some current developments.

The main key concepts of this dissertation, the local, proximity and tradition, will be presented in Chapter 1. Thereafter, I sketch the norms and standards that were set in debates that framed the discourse on Javanese language and culture in the period under scrutiny in this dissertation.

1 Key Concepts

Concepts are not just neutral entities, but are determined by the contexts in which they are applied. They are, as Hobsbawm remarked, ‘not part of free-floating philosophical discourse, but socially, historically and locally rooted, and must be explained in terms of these realities’ (Hobsbawm, 1992:9). This means they develop their proper sense in the language(s) in which they are used (Williams 1976:17). In the Indonesian context ‘the local’ has acquired multiple meanings. The same holds for the other concepts that will frame my analysis: proximity and tradition. This chapter addresses the theoretical frameworks of these concepts.

1 The local

Although television operates within a national framework (Curran and Park 2000:12;⁶ Mazzarella 2004:352), local, regional and global frameworks are also involved in the shaping of the Indonesian televisionscape. This is reflected in the Indonesian Broadcasting Law in which the local as a category of legislative practice is used as one of the markers to define and regulate broadcasting, taking its place alongside the national, regional and foreign. The first Indonesian Broadcasting Law (1997) regulated the area of reach (national, regional and local broadcasting), ownership (state versus private broadcasting companies), the proportion of domestic versus foreign content and production, language use (national, regional and foreign) and broadcasting networks (local, regional, national and international) (UUP 1997).⁷ In Chapter 9 in particular, I shall pay attention to the meanings of these separate categories as they have been applied in the consecutive Broadcasting Laws, particularly in Chapter 9, when I discuss the 2002 Broadcasting Law.

If the impact of these frameworks on media practices is to be properly understood, only situated analyses will suffice (Appadurai 1990:7; Ginsburg 1994b:366); after all, all of these frameworks ‘might constitute the loci of the “imagined communities” [...] of the future’, as Sreberny hypothesizes about the global media picture in the 1990s (Sreberny 2000:115). In their turn, these frameworks have also influenced and determined approaches within media studies.

Reversing the perspective

Representations of the local by and in electronic media have been studied from different points of view. Early media historiographies revealed how television functioned as an agent of nation-building and modernization (Fickers and Johnson 2010:1), a common practice all over the world. The perspective then shifted from the national to the global, focusing either on

⁶ Curran and Park’s *De-Westernizing media studies* is an interesting ‘reaction against the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory’ (2000:3) – although they omit Indonesia from their book.

⁷ UUP 1997 is the abbreviated form of *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 1997 Tentang Penyiaran* (www.bpkp.go.id/uu/filedownload/2/46/462.bpkp [Last accessed July 2017]).

the effects of cultural imperialism (Sreberny 2000:104; Cutas 2006:383) or of global cultural flows like ‘cultural borrowing, appropriation, hybridization and indigenization’ (Iwabuchi 2004:28).⁸ Deterritorialization (García Canclini 1995:129; Appadurai 1996), dislocation (Thompson 1995:203, 1996:103) and de-localization (Thompson 1996:99) are common themes on which media theories about the local were constructed. In order to do justice to the local media practices taking place all over Indonesia, I shall advocate a reversal of the perspective and examine mediation processes from local points of view.

The idea of reversing a perspective refreshes our view and reveals structures that were previously hidden underneath well-trodden paths. In his search for modern Indonesian literature, Derks, inspired by Soemargono (1979), pleads for a reversal of ‘the centralizing vision that has always been practised in Jakarta and beyond’ (2002:388). Only such a perspective will reveal the local and regional literary centres in Indonesia, that had otherwise been rendered invisible (Derks 2002:332). In their critical approach to globalization studies, Tsing (2000) and Mazzarella (2004) also propose a reversal. Both authors offer an overview of these studies and, while approving their outcome, they indicate blanks that can only be uncovered by reversing perspectives. Tsing argues that globalisms are ‘multiple, overlapping and sometimes contradictory’ (2000:342, 353). Furthermore, researchers who focus only on global flows ignore the ‘imagined stagnant locals’ in their approaches (Tsing 2000:346), referring to those people who have not travelled or migrated. Part of the audiences of local television stations in Indonesia can be defined as ‘imagined stagnant locals’. Mazzarella believes that ‘[t]here is no simple correlation between the spatiality of cultural production and the production of cultural space’. We need to study how media practices and the production of meaning relate to institutes, structures and flows (like media ownership patterns, structures of influence and the movement of capital) and to understand how these dynamics present a practical challenge to the lives and works of the people who feature in our analyses (Mazzarella 2004:351-352).

Anderson’s ideas about local communities also support our reversed perspective. The author, who is usually referred to in the context of the nation as an imagined community, states that

In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their false/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. Javanese villagers have always known that they are connected to people they have never seen, but these ties were once imagined particularistically – as indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship and clientship. Until quite recently, the Javanese language had no word meaning the abstraction “society”. (Anderson 2006:6)

Likewise, television audience communities are distinguished by the style in which they are imagined and addressed. For instance, broadcasting institutions project these imagined communities in their station identifiers.

⁸ On both approaches in media studies, see Ginsburg et al. 2002:14.

A versatile concept

Several scholars have pointed out the problematic character of the local as a concept. Dirlik argues that it is often uncertain what the local implies in contemporary discussions (Dirlik 1996:23, 42). In order to be able to work with the local as an analytical category, it is important never to forget its ambiguity. Besides being a category of analysis, the local is also a category of practice. Categories of practice are ‘categories of everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors, as distinguished from the experience-distant categories used by social analysts’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:4). I suggest that only meticulous empirical research into the use and representation of the local as a category of practice and analysis within the Indonesian televisionscape will offer an evidence-based insight into what the term encompasses and how it functions in the Indonesian context(s). By taking this path and not commencing with a constrained definition of the concept, the boundaries of the local will be kept open, an absolute requirement ‘if the local is to serve as a critical concept’ (Dirlik 1996:42).

Often, the local is analysed as one of the poles in an opposition, either juxtaposed with the national or the global. Sreberny, in her discussion on the “mood” of [then] contemporary analysis’, and the meanings of global, local and indigenous, signals ‘the slippery nature of the linguistic terms used in international communication analysis’. She claims that ‘the “local” is really the “national” while the truly local [...] is ignored’ (Sreberny 2000:104). I shall return to the notion of the local as the national later and investigate whether this claim is valid for Indonesia. Accurately Sreberny decides that ‘the real world reveals far greater complexity’ and cannot be grasped in bi-polar models (Sreberny 2000:114; Iwabuchi 2004:23). Mazzarella, Jurriëns and Coutas have a similar stance. Mazzarella thinks that the local and the global are ‘mutually constitutive imaginary moments in every attempt to make sense of the world’ (Mazzarella 2003:17). Jurriëns reflects on how the global and the local permeate each other (2004:7). In her analysis of *Indonesian Idol*, Coutas stresses the ‘need to resist the binary logic that seeks to comprehend cultural products via mutually exclusive terms’. She argues for the necessity to ‘recognize the emergence of a shared space’ (2006:389). Agreeing with the anaemic effects of binary categorization on the world’s complexity, I shall foreground the dynamics of the televisionscape in Indonesia from the perspective of the (subnational) local. Coutas’ approach towards *Indonesian Idols*, emphasizing the various dynamics taking place in the production and consumption of this programme, has been an inspiring example for me.

Lovell stresses the problematic character of the terms location, locality and the local. She introduces the notions of belonging and attachment in relation to particular territories and localities (Lovell 1998:4), and explores both the pragmatic and phenomenological connotations of belonging (Lovell 1998:1). I shall revisit her views on ‘belonging and locality as markers of identity’ (Lovell 1998:1) when I discuss the concept of proximity.

Local (lokal) or regional (daerah)?

Local relates to or is concerned with place or position in space (OED 2015) that is defined by geographical, administrative, technical, emotional and/or imagined and other attributes. Two terms are used to designate the subnational local: *lokal* and *daerah*.

The Indonesian and Javanese adjective *lokal* is a loanword from the Dutch ‘lokaal’ – itself a loan-word from Latin. The term *lokal* is frequently used in the compound *kearifan lokal*, local genius. This concept plays an important role in discourse about television and local content. Indonesians usually translate it into English as ‘local wisdom’.⁹ It encompasses culture, tangible and intangible heritage, tradition and the common knowledge of an ethnic group. I shall return to the use and interpretations of *kearifan lokal* in my discussion of mediations of the local in the final chapters of this dissertation. Local in this sense is usually linked to a specific geographic locality and to an imagined space.

The term *daerah* (region), a loan-word from the Arabic *dā’ira* (Jones 2007:53), is used to refer to political and administrative structures and geographical entities. However, at least as important in defining a region are the ‘cultural debates about the historical, traditional or linguistic specificities of a territory’ (Johnson and Fickers 2010:99). Whereas in the New Order period the government and the national media propagated the unity of the nation of Indonesia rather than its diversity, by the end of the 1990s the focus shifted to the region and to Indonesia’s diversity, leading to the implementation of the Regional Autonomy Laws in 1999 and 2004. Sentiments and issues that were on the agenda in this period can be compared to those that were raised during the 1950s (Sutherland et al. 2002:50). Nevertheless, we should be aware that it is more the changes rather than the continuities, that have produced the present (Frederick 1997:71).

In the 1950s, diversity stood out in sharp relief: the diverse ethnic groups, all with their proper regions, provided the perspective from which to consider the Indonesian nation. Hence the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, in Supomo’s translation ‘diverse but also one’. The unity and oneness of the nation would be guaranteed only by respecting these local differences (Supomo 1953:3).¹⁰ Following Asnan et al., the term ‘region’ in this period encompassed the following usages: in its broadest sense, region meant everything outside the capital. From an administrative point of view, regions were subdivisions of the state (either provinces, districts/*kabupaten* or the remnants of the self-governing areas under colonial rule). The region was also seen as ‘coterminous with communal identities, as far as these found some kind of geographical or spatial expression (like West Sumatra being the home of the Minangkabau, or Lombok that of the Sasak)’, comparable to the idea of *daerah*. Although the term region is nowadays usually used in the sense of a territorial unit of administration, as set out in the Autonomy Laws of 1999 and 2004, ‘it would be a loss if other meanings were excluded from analysis’ (Asnan et al. 2006:115-116). The issue of regional autonomy in the late 1990s and early 2000s reflects that,

⁹ On the issue of local agency and *phum panya*, a term comparable to *kearifan lokal*, used in Thailand since the late 1980s and roughly translated as native/local wisdom, Reynolds (1998:139-140) writes: ‘This idea of “native wisdom” is remarkably similar to the concept called “local genius”, so close that they appear to be translations of each other.’

¹⁰ ‘Ber-beda² tetapi, tetap satu djua’ (Supomo 1953:3). Supomo was the first Indonesian Minister of Justice.

People in Indonesia's provinces are reassessing their relations to the wider world: not only their immediate surroundings and the directives from Jakarta are changing, but also their ideas of belonging, their orientations and their range of action. (Sutherland et al. 2002:48)

The form and character of these reorientations affect the mediating of the local.

Indonesian discourse is not always explicit about what is meant exactly by the term *daerah* in respect of language use and culture, as it can be translated as either local or regional. As Jones observes publications about local culture projects all focus on particular regions, whereas 'the subject matter is generally much more localized cultural practices within the region' (Jones 2005:273). Boelstorff's term ethnolocality provides a way out of this confusion, as it distances itself from Indonesian political and administrative categories. Boelstorff argues that not the nation but the ethnolocalities might be 'the imagined communities *par excellence* under recent movements for "regional autonomy" in Indonesia' (Boellstorff 2002:26). I shall begin by introducing the local within the framework of the regional; the following section will feature the local as national.

The local as regional (daerah)

The example of TVRI Yogyakarta's kethoprak sayembara at the beginning of the Introduction reveals how ethnicity, language and locality in Indonesia are perceived to be 'essentially linked and largely congruent' (Arps in Spyer et al. 2002:182). Indeed, on the mental map of Indonesia that the New Order government propagated, each ethnic group and its vernacular was confined to a specific geographical area, called *daerah* in Indonesian. This mental map was among others reflected in cultural policy and legislation, including the Broadcasting Law.¹¹ It is actually a heritage of colonial times (Hitchcock and King 1997:11), when the government 'attempted a one-to-one mapping of people with some putatively common characteristics unto territory' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:24). The design of the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah park, inaugurated in 1975, was the ultimate symbolic realization of this perception.¹² The various Indonesian dance and cultural festivals I witnessed in the 1980s and 1990s were also shaped by the same vision, as they supported the 'assumed isomorphism of space, place, and culture' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:7-8). This means that the Javanese were imagined as living in the regions of Central and East Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Areas elsewhere densely populated by Javanese were kept out of this mental map, as were the mixed population groups in the so-called Javanese regions and the people inhabiting the border areas of these regions. Moreover, this vision ignores the pluriformal character of Javanese culture, as this mental map was based on the preconceived and essentialist notion that regional cultures are homogeneous. Regions, however, never coincide fully with the criteria that are used to demarcate them, like language, habitat and/or cultural habits (Bourdieu 1980:66).

The terms *bahasa daerah*, regional language, and *kebudayaan daerah*, regional culture, are based on the same idea. *Bahasa daerah* refers to the vernacular spoken by members of an

¹¹ On cultural politics in Indonesia, see Yampolsky 1995, Jurriëns 2004 and Jones 2013.

¹² On Taman Mini, see Pemberton 1994, Hooker et al. 1995, Acciaioli 1996, Hitchcock 1997, Boellstorff 2002, Jones 2005:279-280 and 2013.

ethnic group living in a specific region. The functions of Javanese as a regional language had been defined during the Javanese language seminar (Seminar Bahasa Jawa) held on 25-28 February 1975: a symbol of a region's pride and identity; a means of communication among the people of a region; a support to the national language; a medium of instruction at school; a means to develop and support regional culture (Subagyo 2009). These functions were recalled in 2009 during discussions about the potential implementation of regional regulations as an instrument to preserve and nurture the Javanese language.

The 1997 Broadcasting Law built on this idea and *de facto* promoted it. It did allow regional/local languages to be used as a medium of communication whenever this was needed to support certain programmes (UUP 1997 IV-33:2); nevertheless, the main language of broadcasting should be Indonesian (UUP 1997 IV-33:1). It also required broadcasters, when using regional languages, to translate these – as far as possible – into Indonesian, so as to make the programme intelligible to viewers in other regions.¹³

As I shall demonstrate, friction exists between this mental map propagating the congruence between region, ethnicity and language, the actual map of Indonesia and its inhabitants, and the essence of media. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the consequences this has on the Indonesian televisionscape: it has caused media legislation to lag behind the developments in the Indonesian televisionscape (but: in general legislation does often lag behind technological innovations and developments). It is not consonant with the main characteristics of media flows that are 'deterritorialised, often transnational or global' (Kitley 2002:208). In addition, it does not take into consideration that a large number of potential audiences of ethnic Javanese descent have (trans)migrated to non-Javanese areas, as in the case of the Javanese communities in Lampung, Sumatra, for example.

The local as national

What is categorized as local in domestic programming is often actually national. Sen and Hill argue that this means that the so-called local programming 'is in the national language [...] and its content is designed to be acceptable to all its culturally varied audiences' (Sen and Hill 2000:123). Such programmes might carry a local touch or nuance (*bernuansa* Betawi, Jawa, Minang), for example, in the setting, in specific cultural expressions and localized speech – Indonesian pronounced with a local accent or interspersed with a local dialect.

In the 1990s, the growing presence of foreign programmes in Indonesia spurred the owners of television stations on to increase local – in the sense of domestic – productions and to upgrade their quality. As the five new private Indonesian stations offered more choice than before (when only the national station TVRI had been broadcasting in Indonesia), the hope was that the audiences would shift their allegiance from foreign to domestic stations (Sunny et al. 1993).

In discourse about television programming, *lokal* meant 'not foreign', and was interpreted either as domestic/national or as local/regional. Therefore Indonesian films and soap series (*sinetron*), programmes of domestic production houses and local cultural productions bearing

¹³ Penjelasan Atas Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 29 Tahun 1997 Tentang Penyiaran, Pasal 33 Ayat (2) (www.bpkp.go.id/uu/filedownload/2/46/462.bpkp [Last accessed July 2017]).

specific ethnic identity markers were all subsumed under the term of local programming. Examples range from the Betawi serial *Si Doel Anak Sekolah* (Educated Doel) at RCTI,¹⁴ and the East Javanese comedy *Depot Jamu Mat Kirun* (Mat Kirun's Traditional Medicine Depot) by TVRI Surabaya (Mas 1993), to Indonesian-spoken legendary soaps (*sinetron legenda*) like *Saur Sepuh* and *Mahabharata* and Indonesian *sinetron* that all reached tremendous heights of popularity in this period. Regularly published surveys conducted by SRI (Survey Research Indonesia) in the five main Indonesian cities in 1993 and 1994 show that audience interest in domestic programming had increased significantly.¹⁵

It seems that, all over the world 'the domestic, in the sense of "near to home, local, parochial"' (Sen and Hill 2000:124) remains an attribute that is inherent in the medium television. Sen and Hill refer to research on Australian national television by scholars who concluded that 'Television is still a gloriously hybrid medium, with a plethora of programming of an inescapably and essentially local, untranslatable nature' (Sen and Hill 2000:123).

Hence reversing the perspective and focusing on televisual (re)presentations of the (sub-national) local implies that we realize the purport of the local under scrutiny and its relation to the contexts in which it functions all the time. Therefore, in seeking to uncover how television represents Javanese-ness, we need to be continuously aware of the frameworks in which the local is presented, from 'the most local of local detail' to 'the most global of global structure' (Geertz 1983:69), and from the 'most spatially specific' to 'the most spatially diffuse' (Cooper 2003:36), as it were. To avoid confusion, when applying the term 'the local' in this dissertation, I add the adjectives national, sub-national, regional or sub-regional to specify what place or position in space is intended in the context of my analysis or discussion.

2 Proximity

Media apply a variety of strategies in their attempts to appeal to larger audiences; as Chen (2004:173) mentions, these include cultural differentiation (Lee and Wang 1995), cultural proximity (Rogers and Antola 1985; Straubhaar 1991; Iwabuchi 2001), localization (Weber 2003), indigenization (Chan and Ma 1996) and domestication.¹⁶ In my work I shall focus in detail on localizing practices and strategies.

Several media scholars have suggested that, when a choice is available, domestic productions are more appealing to audiences than imported programmes (Coutas 2006:375; Sreberny 2000:104). Straubhaar, who conducted research in Latin American countries, argues that this preference is related to social class (Straubhaar 1991:51). The preference for local over foreign programmes also seems to play a role in Indonesia, as has been suggested by

¹⁴ Rano Karno 1993; *Penghargaan VISTA-TV* 1994; CP 1994; *Persaingan program* 1994.

¹⁵ *Lokal masih* 1993; *Warna lokal* 1993; *Lokal makin* 1993.

¹⁶ Gurevitch 1996; Silcock 1994; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996; see also Chen 2004:173.

culture and media specialists, journalists and media researchers,¹⁷ and the same is true of other Southeast Asian countries (McDaniel 2002:81,150,191-192; Chen 2004). Ishadi S.K., in 1993 head of the Department of the Indonesian Information Research and Development Centre, acknowledged that foreign programmes were more entertaining, informative and topical than Indonesian productions. All the while, as TVRI had then been thirty years in existence, one entire generation had been habituated to watching Indonesian programmes. Ishadi assumed that the preference for local over import programmes could be associated with certain criteria and standards, especially language use, culture, current affairs and familiarity with broadcast issues. His consequent conclusion was that local productions needed to be encouraged and that their quality had to be enhanced (Tedjomurti and Pahlevi 1993). Umar Kayam, a creative author and script writer, actor, sociologist, columnist, government official who was involved in media and culture in various capacities, took the opposite point of view asserting that foreign broadcasts were not attractive as their appeal was hindered by the barrier of foreign language and culture. He doubted whether audiences really understood imported shows, even when members of the audience had mastered the English language. This was the reason owners of satellite discs also preferred to watch domestic broadcasts rather than foreign ones, he said (*Prof.Dr. Umar Kayam* 1993). Journalists used the surveys of SRI to argue that the audiences preferred local programmes (Tedjomurti 1993).

Although researchers and media practitioners did assume this generalization was tenable, it does require some critical notes. It ignores the success in Indonesia of imported Indian, Japanese, Hong Kong Chinese, Brazilian, Korean and other non-domestic productions other than those originating from the US. Banerjee's research that concentrated on the Malaysian and Singaporean contexts shows similar findings of 'an increasing importation of programmes and content from the region' (Banerjee 2002:530). Although he acknowledges the central role of social class, Straubhaar does not ignore other factors, including age, gender and specific interests, that might condition an active audience who is 'tending to prefer and select local or national cultural content that is more proximate and relevant to them' (Straubhaar 1991:43). Sreberny explains that when viewers have the choice between domestic and foreign programmes, audience behaviour can be influenced by 'a mix of demographic variables such as gender, education, urban dwelling, linguistic background, coupled with different patterns of work, leisure and actual programming schedules'. She concludes that 'much work remains to be done regarding audience preference structures' (Sreberny 2000:104).

McDaniel found that locally produced programmes were more popular than imported programmes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, on the grounds that their cultural references were perceived to be familiar, not foreign (McDaniel 2002:150, 192). As a case in point, he uses the Indonesian *sinetron*, a genre that 'is fundamentally different from soap operas elsewhere', he argues (McDaniel 2002:192). From the point of view of content, language seems to be an important determining factor in selecting television programmes, alongside local settings and familiar themes (McDaniel 2002:192, 150).

¹⁷ These media researchers include Sen and Hill (2000:124-125); McDaniel (2002); Kitley (2004:153); Loven (2008:2)

All these assumptions run counter to the fact that Japanese drama series are popular in Taiwan (Iwabuchi 2001), Indian films in Nigeria (Larkin 1997) and the Danish series *Borgen* in most countries of the world (Sjouwerman 2015). While these media productions do represent Japanese, Indian Hindu and Danish cultures and use vernaculars, they are attractive to viewers from other cultural backgrounds because of the ideas they present. The Indian Hindu films provide an alternative modernity to Muslim Hausa viewers, one that differs from the modernity offered by the secular West (Larkin 1997:434). Likewise, Japanese dramas were culturally resonant with the experience of some Taiwanese viewers of modernity in the 1990s, whereas earlier the Taiwanese ‘have tended to face the west to interpret their position and understand the distance from modernity’ (Iwabuchi 2001:73). Cogently both Larkin and Iwabuchi mention the existence of a perceived proximity between the culture presented in the media production and the culture of the target audiences (Larkin 1997:411; Iwabuchi 2001:67). The attraction of *Borgen* (the series began in 2010) lies in the portrayal of a smoothly functioning Scandinavian democracy and equal rights for women and men, and of politicians as ‘real’, hard-working people. The viewers have little difficulty in identifying with the protagonists and with the female lead as a role model.

I have not come across any convincing arguments that would be decisive in determining whether or not Javanese audiences do show a preference for local productions rather than national or global. In fact these studies on the workings of cross-cultural proximity actually provide counter evidence. In the following I shall foreground the strategies used by the television industry to approach local audiences by its shaping of familiarity in its productions. My survey clearly revealed that the concept of proximity does play an influential role in the mediation process.

Rootedness and common ground

Reflecting on two television programmes, *Mbangun Desa* (Developing the Village) and *Inohong di Bojongsrangkong* (The leader of Bojongsrangkong), Indonesian media critic Veven Sp Wardhana (2002:303-306) observes the following: compared to most other broadcasts of Indonesian television stations, these programmes are unique, not solely because they use regional languages or Indonesian mixed with regional dialects. They are also unique in their setting of the location, the social typology, the characterization of the dramatis personae and so on.¹⁸ Wardhana points out that it is striking that both programmes, broadcast by regional TVRI stations, are irrefutably characteristic, whereas most series and soaps broadcast by commercial television seem much of a muchness, and devoid of special features. Quite clearly these soaps have been inspired by foreign productions like Latin American telenovelas or Indian movies. Although Wardhana’s conclusions are generalizing and also contradict McDaniel’s findings on preference as mentioned above, importantly he addresses the function of proximity.

¹⁸ ‘Dibandingkan dengan umumnya tayangan sejumlah televisi di Indonesia, dua mata tayangan ini memang terasa mempunyai kekhasan; dan kekhasan itu bukan semata karena memakai bahasa daerah atau bahasa Indonesia dengan dialek daerah, melainkan karena setting lokasi, tipologi sosial, karakterisasi masing-masing sosoknya, juga yang lain-lainnya memang terasa jelas’ (2002:305).

Mbangun Desa and *Inohong di Bojongrangkong* are literally connected to the notion of homeland; they are strongly linked to their area of origin. The homeland (*bumi*) in the case of *Mbangun Desa* means Java, or more specifically Yogyakarta, while the homeland of *Bojongrangkong* is the region of West Java called Sunda.¹⁹ Although the broadcasts display an ‘earsplitting’ (regional/subregional) local cultural nuance, they are very much felt to be Indonesian as well.

Wardhana speaks not only as a media watcher, but also as a concerned member of the television audiences and as an Indonesian from a specific ethnic background. In his observations, the local has become both a category of practice and a category of analysis, and refers to those characteristics that connect people who share ‘a powerfully imagined and strongly felt commonality’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:20). In this specific piece, Wardhana regularly uses the word *terasa* (feel, experience, to be felt): at the particular moment at which he was confronted with fragments of both series while attending a media conference abroad, he was overcome by emotional feelings of longing for a specific location and its typical features, a location the author actually belonged to, one with which he was familiar.

Wardhana’s observations unequivocally reveal how televised performance can address feelings of rootedness and belonging, and how these feelings are related to (part of) his self-understanding – a term used by Brubaker and Cooper (2000:17-19) instead of the reifying ‘identity’. They also show how locality can become multivocal, as to Wardhana the programmes feel like both local and Indonesian, and rootedness ‘and belonging itself can be viewed as a multifaceted, multilayered process which mobilizes loyalty to different communities simultaneously’ (Lovell 1998:5). It is in this context of belonging and locality as part of one’s self-identifying (Lovell 188:1) that the concept of proximity enters the picture.

Proximity is an essential characteristic of the medium television. To understand how proximity works requires the notions of common ground and co-presence. Scannell introduces ‘common ground’ to explain how meaning comes into being while people watch and listen to a broadcast. Common ground supposes ‘a shared competence’ between programme makers and audiences. Scannell calls it a precondition of any kind of social interaction and one that also applies to mediation processes. It includes ‘a common cultural-linguistic competence, shared knowledges and understandings’ (Scannell 1995:13). Hobart indicates mutual knowledge as a necessary condition of viewing. Both theatre actors and audiences bring these pre-understandings to television. Hobart stresses the need to apply indigenous criteria of analysis to these pre-understandings as they differ from European criteria, and refers to Alton Becker’s argument that in their theatre Javanese use epistemologies that are distinct from ‘the unitary epistemology assumed in Western analyses of theatre’ (Hobart 2006:408).

Television suggests physical proximity ‘by simulating co-presence with its listeners and viewers’. Co-presence attempts to bridge the gap between the location of broadcasting and the location of reception (Scannell 1991:2) as both locations have their proper context. Scannell distinguishes between the event-in-situ and the event-as-broadcast. It is the task of

¹⁹ ‘Jika “bumi” Den Baguse Ngarso adalah Jawa, terutama Yogya, “bumi” Bojongrangkong adalah kawasan Jawa Barat: Sunda’ (2002:304).

broadcasting ‘to re-present the event in such a way as to proximate its eventfulness’ for those not present (Scannell 1996:79-80). Scannell’s concept of co-presence corresponds to Williams’ ‘mobile privatisation’ (1975:26) and Thompson’s ‘despatialized simultaneity’ (1995:32).

In another sense television also brings audiences close to what is to be seen on the screen. Bernard Sharratt introduces the concepts of intimacy and knowledge when he describes the experience of watching television in a domestic setting. Intimacy and knowledge occur on several levels, from the use of close-ups and the sense of acquaintance with newsreaders and soap characters, to the conversations about and derived from television that take place in the family circle and elsewhere (Sharratt 1980:283-284). The term most often used in Indonesian media discourse to indicate this intimacy is *akrab*. As my examples will show, *akrab*-ness is at play in the familiarity of audiences with media talk (Hutchby 2006, referring to Scannell 1988 and 1989) – and not just talk, but also images and sound – , as well as with form and content (Sedyawati 1991:500-501; Lindsay 2002:326-327).²⁰ The staging of the heroic lives and deeds of famous Javanese sultans and the screening of these life-stories by local television, for instance, floats on by such familiarity that is alike a familiarity with ‘tradition’ in several respects.

Summing up, proximity implies the suggestion of a physical closeness (a basic feature of the medium television), of shared competences, knowledges and understandings (brought about produced by the presence of common ground), and of intimacy and familiarity (because of the context of media reception and content and form of media products).

3 Tradition

Tradition was a recurring topic of concern in the discourse of New Order authorities, artists, media practitioners and academics, and consequently has become a theme that cannot be ignored by researchers focusing on Javanese performing arts.²¹ The preservation and development of traditional art forms featured high on the government agenda, as were efforts to ward off those influences that might lead to what was seen as a deterioration in or the extinction of these art forms. In selecting what genres should belong to tradition and how they should look and sound, policy makers assumed a normative stance.

These discussions had a colonial origin, as does the Indonesian term *tradisi*. Both ‘assumptions about tradition and the traditional arts that surface in contemporary Indonesian debate’ (Lindsay 1985:4) and ‘the notion of preserving, or saving the traditional arts [which] meant protecting their traditionality, their non-Western distinctiveness’ (Lindsay 1985:35) are legacies of opinions that were current among the Dutch and Indonesian intellectuals of the late colonial era (Lindsay 1985:4). Opinions about arts and tradition persisted and shaped discussions about the building of a national identity after Indonesian independence in 1945

²⁰ On cultural proximity, see Iwabuchi (2001), on historical proximity Mitchell (1994), as examples of familiarity with media content.

²¹ Humardani 1972, Sedyawati 1981, Lindsay 1985, Hatley 1985 and 2005, Pemberton 1994, Sears 1996, Yampolsky 2001, Hellman 2003, Murgiyanto 2004, Hatley 2005a and b, and Antlöv and Hellman 2005.

(Bogaerts 2012). They took on fresh life in the New Order period – in particular after the end of the 1970s – and still circulate in public discourse up to the present.

When they were performing and mediating art genres categorized as traditional or building on tradition artists and media practitioners tackled the concept in a practical way, but took a more theoretical approach when discussing tradition. The upshot was that contradictory views could be expressed by one and the same person. S.D. Humardani was an influential and pioneering performing artist and head of the Surakarta Music Academy (Akademi Seni Karawitan, ASKI) between 1975 and 1983. He considered all art was contemporary, as long as the performers were dynamic and creative. Therefore he would not consent to the use of the term ‘traditional art’ (*Sisa-sisa Gendon* 1983). Nevertheless, he explored the purport of traditional artistic genres extensively as they came into being and developed historically, continuously evolving and changing in the hands of outstanding creative traditional artists (*empu*) (Humardani 1972:7). In point of fact, Humardani personally represented the ideological conflict that existed between two alternatives: making the traditional arts traditional or keeping them contemporary (Lindsay 1985:78). Another example of such contradictory views is the way in which kethoprak artists embrace tradition. Even as they constantly innovate the genre so as to remain alluring to the audiences, they do not lose their concern about how traditional Javanese theatre should be developed without forsaking its traditional features and about what is the best way to preserve it. Electronic audiovisual media play an important role in the shaping and framing of ‘tradition’, as I demonstrate in this dissertation.

Tradition as a category of analysis

Before exploring tradition as a category of practice in my analyses of representations of tradition on and by the Yogyakarta TVRI station (in Part I), the use of tradition as a medium to convey and disseminate information and propaganda (in Part II) and the role of tradition in the new local broadcasting industry (in Part III), it is essential to reflect on the various uses and comprehensions of the concept as a category of analysis. Rather than viewing them as binary opposites, in the way social scientists and anthropologists have frequently done, I regard the nature of tradition and modernity to be mutually inclusive. I think that such an opposition offers a false *modus operandi*, as it overly simplifies the complexity of cultural processes and reduces them to two extremes.

Various scholars have stressed the need to differentiate between tradition in the historical sense, tradition as an ideology and tradition as a construct. As illustrated by Finnegan (1992:6), the concept is used to refer to

‘culture’ as a whole; any established way of doing things whether or not of any antiquity; the process of handing down practices, ideas or values; the products so handed down, sometimes with the connotation of being ‘old’ or having arisen in some ‘natural’ and non-polemical way. It has other overtones too. Something called a ‘tradition’ is often taken to somehow belong to the whole of the ‘community’ rather than to specific individuals or interest groups; to be unwritten; to be valuable or (less often) out-dated; or to mark out a group’s identity.

The concept of tradition encompasses multiple phenomena and is not fixed. Its variegated character has an impact on discussions about the production and mediation of Javanese performance genres and therefore must be analysed in more depth. I use the work of Williams and Thompson as a point of departure for my theoretical framework. Williams notes that tradition ‘survives in English as a description of a general process of handing down’. In this sense of tradition, seen by Williams as an active process, ‘it only takes two generations to make anything traditional’. But he adds that ‘the word moves again and again towards *age-old* and towards ceremony, duty and respect’ (Williams 1976:269). In the 2010 revised edition of his work an extra paragraph, added to the keyword, focuses on yet another perception of ‘tradition’ that occurs in particular ‘within forms of “*modernization* theory”’. There, it says, the terms ‘tradition and especially traditional are often used dismissively, whereas traditionalism seems to be becoming specialized to a description of habits or beliefs inconvenient to virtually any innovation’ (Williams 2010:319-320).

Thompson has analysed various aspects of the concept tradition and their function. In order to understand the changing character of tradition, a *traditum*, ‘anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past’, Thompson distinguishes between the hermeneutic, the normative, the legitimation and the identity aspects of the concept. These four aspects often overlap or merge together (Thompson 1995:184-187, 1996:91-94). The hermeneutic aspect offers a framework for interpreting and understanding the world. It views tradition as ‘a set of background assumptions that are taken for granted by individuals in the conduct of their daily lives, and transmitted by them from one generation to the next’ (Thompson 1996: 91). If perceived as ‘sets of assumptions, forms of belief and patterns of action handed down from the past’, traditions ‘can serve as a normative guide for actions and beliefs in the present’. Thompson calls some of these practices routinized, and others traditionally grounded (Thompson 1996:92). When the exercise of power and authority are supported by traditional grounds, tradition is used in claims to legitimacy (Thompson 1996:92). This happened in the New Order period when Indonesian cultural policy focused on ‘[t]he significance of “cultural tradition” (read *Javanese* tradition)’ (Hatley 2005a:69) and the president and bureaucrats appropriated symbols of traditional culture ‘to support their authoritarian practices’ (Hatley 2005a:69-70) and for other purposes. Bonneff calls this process ‘retraditionalisation’ (Bonneff 1997:30). Finally, tradition can play a role in individual and collective identity formation. In this case, ‘traditions provide some of the symbolic materials for formation of identity – shaped by values, beliefs, forms of behaviour, transmitted from the past’ (Thompson 1996:93). Therefore, the questioning of the position of the traditional Javanese arts affects Indonesian and Javanese perceptions of national and Javanese identity (Lindsay 1985:32).

Thompson’s emphasis on tradition as an active process corresponds with the ideas of a number of Javanese theatre specialists and practitioners. His categorization will be helpful in bringing together the very disparate ideas and complicated discussions on the topic. Significantly, he acknowledges the importance of the study of tradition to the understanding of ethnic identity (Thompson 1996:93) – important for the mapping of Javanese-ness in this book.

Thompson's approach is particularly valuable to my research because he takes his exploration of tradition a step farther, as he relates its development to the presence of media. He postulates that 'if we pay close attention to the transformative impact of the media, we can gain a rather different view of the changing character of tradition and its role in social life' (Thompson 1995:179). Since symbols of tradition have been increasingly exchanged by means of media rather than through face-to-face interaction, tradition has been partially de-ritualized, de-personalized and de-localized, he says (Thompson 1996:94-99). Thompson (1996:99) argues that

The uprooting or "de-localization" of tradition had far-reaching consequences [...]. It enabled traditions to be detached from particular locales and freed from the constraints imposed by oral transmission in circumstances of face-to-face interaction. The reach of transmission – both in space and time – was no longer restricted by the conditions of localized transmission. [...] Traditions were de-localized but they were not deterritorialized: they were refashioned in ways that enabled them to be re-embedded in a multiplicity of locales and re-connected to territorial units that exceed the limits of face-to-face interaction.

In this study I shall return to Thompson's ideas on the relationship between media and the evolving character of tradition. Nevertheless, because of the changes in the Indonesian televisionscape over the years, Thompson's views will need some critical reflection.

Thompson's analysis of views on the decline of the role of tradition in modern societies (Thompson 1995:183) fits the discourse of loss, in which the loss of tradition in the face of modernization, globalization, Indonesianization and/or the influence of electronic media, is one of the frequently occurring themes in discussions of televised Javanese performance, as will be demonstrated below. If, however, the role of tradition in social life is perceived to have been declining because of the development of modern societies, it would be 'difficult to understand why certain traditions and traditional belief systems continue to have a significant presence in the late twentieth century' (Thompson 1995:183). A second problem Thompson signals is that the general thesis of decline pays little or no attention to the role of the media (Thompson 1995:183-184). He himself wants to prove 'that tradition has not been destroyed by the media but rather transformed or "dislodged" by them' (Thompson 1995:181).

Tradition and New Order discourse

Although it has been intensively debated and much studied, tradition remains a complicated matter. Early contributions to the discussions about traditional Javanese performing arts in New Order Indonesia include those of Edi Sedyawati, Humardani and Sal Murgiyanto. On account of their prominent functions in the Indonesian government and academic institutes, the views of these performing artists and academics have been influential in the evolution of government policy and academic work in Indonesia and consequently they have determined the course of certain developments in traditional performing arts practices. As they have been studied extensively elsewhere (Lindsay 1985; Hatley 1995, 2005a, b), I shall just briefly refer to Sedyawati and Humardani in order to show how personal and diverse attitudes towards tradition and traditional arts can be.

Sedyawati (1981:119-120) distinguishes two meanings of traditional art. Firstly, it can be interpreted as art that is performed to continue a tradition, in the sense of a custom. In this

case, the tradition is the most important, and the artistic expression is reduced to the status of the supporting medium. When we consider traditional art as an art form that should be cultivated in order to preserve a tradition (*seni yang dibina demi kelestarian tradisi*), obviously its main purpose is to create and support a feeling of collectivity among the members of a specific society. This view of tradition corresponds to Thompson's hermeneutic and identity aspects. Art can also be an instrument to strengthen tradition. Hence the idea of art serving tradition (*seni untuk tradisi*). In its second meaning, the concept of traditional art refers to various art forms that contain and perpetuate tradition in the sense of norms and constraints that have become fixed. This perception of tradition is analogous to Thompson's normative aspect. Here it is the art itself that has become the centre, the most important. Hence the idea of art that 'owns' tradition (*seni yang memiliki tradisi*) and has its proper interests, and its main purpose is to arouse an aesthetic feeling. When focusing on traditional theatre, Sedyawati (1981:39-40) claims that this theatre lives in two worlds: the specific regional culture in which it originated and which has a number of characteristics that have developed in compliance with traditional constraints (*keajegan tradisi*); but also to the world of a wider audience for whom traditional theatre had been reformed and whose members do not adhere to the original traditional ideals. This so called shift in ownership can be discerned in the case of kethoprak, as I shall show in Chapter 4. As definitions of traditional theatre are rare and often vague, Sedyawati's conclusion about the purport of *teater tradisi* is valuable for my analysis of kethoprak and tradition. In her view, traditional theatre is linked to tradition (*terkait pada tradisi*) or contains tradition (*mempunyai tradition*). The plot, the development of the story, the dialogues and the staging have a specific form, and the acts of the play as well as the representation of space, time and situation adhere to specific conventions (Sedyawati 1981:40-42).

Humardani's views, explained very briefly above, are more contradictory. Most important to him was the balance between form and contents of a performance and the respect for an artist's creativity (Rustopo 1991:18-19).

In a nutshell, the concepts of tradition, proximity and the local are intricately linked to each other. They are crucial to the framing of the ideologies of the television industry in Indonesia, in identifying practices (in the branding of stations or programme categorizations), in the production processes of local television stations when they target local audiences and in ideas about the effects of the audiovisual media on local performing arts genres. They will recur in my analysis and form the essential threads running through the three parts of my dissertation.

2 Norms and standards: Debating local language

It is naive to think that the teaching of regional languages at school, the spelling of road signs in regional scripts and the regular staging of regional performing arts genres using regional vernaculars will prevent these vernaculars from shifting.
(Asim Gunarwan, *Kompas* 24 July 2002)²²

Studying the televising of Javanese-ness, views on and attitudes towards language use – one of the constitutive aspects of Javanese-ness – require special attention. These views and attitudes are part of the ‘common cultural-linguistic competence, shared knowledges and understandings’ (Scannell 1995:13) that conflate to form a shared competence among the people involved in the mediation process. The existence of this shared competence is a prerequisite for common ground, a notion that I introduced in the previous chapter, making mediation meaningful.

Visions on language and culture that were prevalent in official government discourse and the perceptions of practitioners of and participants in Javanese culture will feature prominently in this chapter. The relationship between regional and national languages, literatures and cultures had been part of heated debates in the 1930s. In 1945 they had become one of the main concerns of the committee convened to draw up the Indonesian Constitution (Yampolsky 1995:700-701). After initially having given priority to the building of a national culture and the use of Indonesian as a national language (in the framework of the building of the nation-state and the stimulating of economic development), since 1973 the government displayed a systematic concern for regional cultures (Yampolsky 1995:707). It facilitated platforms in the form of projects and congresses that focused on ‘regional’ – in this case Javanese – culture and language and on policy regarding these topics.

I shall begin my argumentation with a discussion of the Javanese Language Congresses. As an extension of national government policy, these congresses offer an interesting insight into the ways Javanese officials handle the split between two loyalties: that of being Indonesian and that of being Javanese, and into the different language and culture ideologies in contemporary Indonesia. Language and culture preservation is one of the dominant themes of these congresses. In the section about the centres in the region, I shall give brief introductions to groups and organizations that, through discussions, poetry readings and performances, and the publication of research results and/or of journals and magazines have joined the discourse on the use, study and development of Javanese. The bulk of this chapter will explore the main issues presented by these institutions, organizations and groups and raised at the congresses.

²² ‘Jangan sampai ada pandangan bahwa dengan mengajarkan suatu bahasa daerah di sekolah, dengan menggunakan aksara daerah untuk penamaan jalan-jalan, dan dengan terus dipentaskannya acara-acara kesenian daerah yang menggunakan bahasa daerah, maka bahasa daerah akan tidak mengalami pergeseran. Ini adalah pandangan naif,’ kata Asim Gunarwan.

My point is that there are parallel epistemologies about Javaneseness that are determined by mindsets concerning the presence, use, role and function of the Javanese vernacular in contemporary Javanese society. Prominent are two views that have persisted for a long time in ideologies and practices, and that have both been given a platform in the media. The one view centres on the discourse of loss, viewing the Javanese language as part of a tradition that has to be preserved, if not by natural means, then by recourse to government policy. It promotes the use of the standard Javanese, the dialects of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. The tackling of what is perceived to be the nub of the problem, the loss of Javanese as a regional language and the countering of the diminution by means of a government regulation can be seen as an extension of New Order policy. Within the paradigm of the discourse of loss, the Javanese language is thought to belong to a refined and elevated (*adiluhung*) cultural heritage, characterizing Javaneseness. What is perceived as the deterioration of Javanese is more than just the loss of the language, it is also a loss of competence, namely: the ability to use the various speech levels properly, a skill invariably accompanied by being adept in the corresponding etiquette and customs. Adherents of this mindset prefer the use of the correct speech styles, in particular the polite *basa*, and advocate a homogeneous, conservative and static view on language use. Their starting-point is the perception, prevalent in the New Order period, that ethnicity and language are confined to a specific geographical area, the region, and that the use of regional languages in a global era needs to be regulated by local governments.

The counter-view consists of those voices who do not agree with this preservation rhetoric. In their work and performances and at cultural festivals, literary authors writing in Javanese and local performing artists both highlight the active use and abundant presence of Javanese in multiple styles and forms. In their opinion, the Javanese language is a means by which to express emotions and should be used for all kinds of creative purposes. It considers Javanese a language of modernity and pays due attention to its linguistic and cultural diversity, and dismisses the idea that it is just a cultural heritage in need of preservation. The vernacular is seen as part of living and thriving cultures, (re)presenting Javaneseness. It enables the speakers, writers and performing artists to use all kinds of dialects and sociolects, not just the (dialect that had become the) standard language, as its point of departure is the idea of diversification. It gives free rein to all speech styles, from the very formal and polite to far more colloquial and familiar forms. It is based on a contemporary view of language use and the potentials of a language in motion. The parallel existence of these two mindsets about the presence, use, role and function of Javanese, although not entirely comparable, may remind us of the approach to classical and colloquial Arabic in Egypt, for which Armbrust (1996:37-62) coined the term ‘split vernacular’.

A look at the fora and the centres in the region that had Javanese language, literature and culture on their agenda in the period 1988-2008 exposes the purport of these opposing stances. In their discussions of norms and standards, these fora and centres framed the role and position of the Javanese language, literature and culture, and set the tone for a long period that has extended up to the moment of writing. Discourse on Javanese performance in the electronic media is related to and/or has inevitably been influenced by these views and

discussions. On the other hand, and this is my second point, the electronic media have contributed to changing perceptions of the use of local languages. As I shall tackle this point throughout my dissertation, two examples should suffice here. The Indosiar broadcasts of Javanese dramatic genres since 1995 have lent a new impetus to the discussions and put them in a new perspective (see Chapters 6 and 7). The second example concerns the bill introducing Regional Autonomy in 1999. Its purpose was to decentralize the government and this had a large impact on representations of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of Indonesia. The resulting choices of the local media concerning audiences address changed visions on language use in media productions.

1 Javanese Language Congresses: ‘Using correct Javanese’

The first congress

A major forum in discussions of language use and language policy have been the Javanese language congresses.²³ Since 1991, every five years a *Kongres Bahasa Jawa* has been organized alternately in the provinces of Central and East Java, and in Yogyakarta, the capital of the Special Region of Yogyakarta.²⁴

When viewed from a wider perspective within the national Indonesian context the Javanese congresses are not unique. They are comparable to congresses on Sundanese or Balinese language and culture, for example. They showcase the efforts made by officials and cultural practitioners representing specific ethnic groups in Indonesia to support, control and protect their vernaculars and cultures on the one hand, and the efforts of the national government to formalize and bureaucratize the development and preservation of these languages and cultures on the other. Even in a larger historical context, the Javanese language congresses are not unique; language and culture congresses are a legacy of colonial times. The Javanese language congress in 1991, presented as the first one of its kind, established a link with its predecessors, the innumerable congresses, seminars and conferences on matters Javanese, in an overview in the congress proceedings (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4-7; Darusuprpto 1993:48-9, 50-2, 61). The list differentiates between activities that have taken place before and since Independence and begins with the Congress for Javanese Culture Development (Congres voor Javaansche Cultuurontwikkeling), held in the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta from 5 to 7 July 1918, and the First Congress of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology (Eerste Congres voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde), that was organized to coincide with the foundation of the Java Institute in Surakarta, from 24 to 26 December 1919. The study of Javanese, Balinese and Madurese languages and cultures was the main focus of this scholarly institute. The last

²³ Both Bonneff (1997) and I have based our findings on the congress proceedings, the congress papers and our personal observations during the congress(es). I have also used congress reviews and newspaper articles. Although we had different aims and have foregrounded different topics (while pointing to the same issues), our writings on these congresses do show an overlap.

²⁴ In Semarang on 15-20 July 1991 and 10-14 September 2006; in Batu, a resort in the vicinity of Malang on 22-26 October 1996, and Surabaya on 27-30 November 2011; in Yogyakarta on 15-20 July 2001 and 8-12 November 2016.

congress of the Java Institute took place in 1930; the publishing of its journal, *Djâwâ*, continued until 1941. In June 1943 Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX took the initiative of convening a 'congress or conference' (*kongres atau musyawarah*) on the Javanese language and script in Yogyakarta (Suwarno 1991). Ten years later, in November 1953, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Teaching and Culture resumed the meetings when it organized the Javanese Language Conference (*Pasarasehan Bahasa Djawa*) in Yogyakarta. In the 1980s, the government established several research projects as instruments by which to study Javanese culture and language as part of the national culture and to contribute to its development (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4). Therefore, the 1991 congress held in Semarang was actually not the first such gathering, but rather, following Fishman's conclusion on the phenomenon of the 'First Congress', 'the foremost or the most important among the first' (Fishman 1993:333). The fact that 'even the reference to *language* does not seem to be entirely unambiguous' (Fishman 1993:333) is also true of the Javanese Language Congresses, whose focus is not confined to language but encompass Javanese literature and culture as well. The congress itself was even called a cultural event, that also paid attention to cultural knowledge, cultural behaviour and artefacts (Panitia Kongres Bahasa Jawa III 2001:7). Finally, a first Javanese Culture Congress (*Kongres Kebudayaan Jawa*) was convened in Surakarta in November 2014 ((fri-43) 2014).

Building the nation, fostering regional languages and cultures

The 1991 congress was a state-instigated and state-dominated initiative. It was the first to be organized collectively by the governments of Central and East Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta on such a large scale with subsidies from the central national government. Its concept, organization, format and even topics were inspired by and grafted onto New Order 'congressing' in general and more specifically on the many Indonesian language congresses. Large numbers of state representatives attended the opening and closing ceremonies. The papers were replete with New Order rhetoric and offered guidance for and developing perspectives on (*pembinaan dan pengembangan*) the topics discussed. Several speakers voiced great confidence in the ability of the government to protect and 'save' the Javanese language, literature and culture from deterioration and/or extinction.

Although it was presented as a congress from a national point of view, it was also unquestionably a display of a particular kind of Javaneseness. Several of the opening speeches at the 1991 congress made explicit reference to the 1945 Constitution, stating that Indonesian is the national language and that regional languages that have been carefully preserved by the community will be respected and protected by the national government.²⁵ Pertinently, the 1988 Principal Outlines for State Policy (Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN) were used as another legitimizing source for the congress, mentioning that regional languages have to be preserved in order to offer a voice to the people's culture, aimed at supporting cultural diversity as a source of the creativity and strength of the Indonesian people (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). Although the GBHN does tend to allocate the Indonesian people an active role in

²⁵ UUD 1945 Bab XV pasal 36; UUD 1945 penjelasan pada Bab XV pasal 36.

the development of national culture and states that they should be able to enjoy its results, it also cautions against narrow feudal and regional attitudes and against negative influences from abroad (Santoso 1993:174; GBHN 1988 in Aziz 1994:244).²⁶ Despite the fact care was taken at all times to emphasize the national context of the event, the symbols used during the opening and closing ceremonies were utterly and completely Javanese and contained references to rituals, objects and performances that are perceived to belong to Javanese tradition, including a Javanese *surya sengkala*, a chronogram indicating the year 1991 in the congress logo, the cutting of a *tumpeng*, a ritual rice cone, by the governor of Central Java and performances of classical dances by the four centres of 'high' Javanese culture, the courts of Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Mangkunegara and Pakualam. On the last day of the congress two trees were planted: a white banyan tree (*beringin putih*) and a fragrant champaka tree, a *kanthil*. The entire congress was framed like a shadow puppet theatre, beginning with the lighting of the *blencong*, a Javanese oil lamp, representing the hope that Javanese language and literature would become a torch to illuminate the world (KBJ I Buku I:19), ending with the snuffing of the *blencong* and the planting of a tree-like property, the *tancep kayon*, symbolizing the official end of the event.

The purpose behind the organizing of the congress was threefold: the perceived decline in Javanese language and culture; the contribution of Javanese to Indonesian, the national language, as one among the many regional languages; and the growing attention Javanese had been receiving in academic centres abroad (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). The aim of the congress was 'to monitor the Javanese language and literature and their research in order to design policies and operational formats aimed at preserving and developing them within the national context'. It was hoped that the congress would create a model that would serve to guide and develop Javanese language and literature both at school and in society in the framework of building and developing a national culture (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4).

Government officials, teachers of Javanese language, literature and culture, poets and literary authors and academics attended the congresses. The 2006 congress organization categorized the participants into practitioners, theoreticians, policy makers, conservators, publishers and representatives of research, education and teaching institutions, including those involved in language guidance, preservation and dissemination, and the royal courts. Radio and television broadcasters were placed in the category of publishers, alongside those in charge of print media.²⁷ Quite a number of non-Javanese and non-Indonesian academics participated, lending the congresses an international aura, besides emphasizing the presence of and the attention paid to Javanese elsewhere in the world. In 2001, the Surinamese minister of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Paul Salam Somohardjo, whose ancestors are said to have originated from Magelang and Solo ((San/Rsv)-z 2001), attended the congress. He wanted to preserve the customs, etiquette and culture of the Javanese in Suriname ((San/Rsv)-z 2001),²⁸

²⁶ Ketetapan MPR RI No. II/MPR/1988.

²⁷ <http://www.jawatengah.go.id/konjawa/pemakalah.htm> [Last accessed 21 July 2008].

²⁸ Suprihipun bangsa Jawa ing Suriname menika boten ical adate, tatacarane, langkung-langkung kabudayanipun.

with the help of the Indonesian Javanese, especially Sri Sultan HB X, Governor of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, and teachers and practitioners of Javanese language and culture, he said (*Suriname butuh* 2001). The other reason he was visiting Java was more explicitly political: representing the political party Partai Percaya Luhur, Somohardjo said he had returned to his roots (*bangsul ing oyode*) ((San/Rsv)-z 2001).

Counter voices

Prestigious though these congresses were, copiously covered in local and national media, they also received their fair share of criticism and generated counter initiatives. Although many Javanese literary authors attended the first congress, in later years those who did not feel represented by or that they had been given a fair hearing at the Kongres Bahasa Jawa (KBJ) gathered at counter congresses, convened separately from the KBJ. A few days before the third KBJ in 2001, for example, authors spontaneously organized a Javanese Writers Congress (*Kongres Sastrawan Jawa* (KSJ)) in Taman Budaya Surakarta sponsored by the Studio for Javanese Literature, the Sanggar Sastra Jawa Yogyakarta (*Merasa tidak dilibatkan* 2001). This congress was not meant to be competition for the KBJ and should be seen as a forum in which literary authors could discuss the destiny of Javanese literature (*Merasa tidak dilibatkan* 2001). The participants disagreed with the overall setup of the official Javanese Language Congress in which, they said, almost no attention was paid to literary authors and their works, modern Javanese literature in particular. Most of the KBJ papers focused on language, although in point of fact the literary authors were the people who actually preserved Javanese literature, the organizers claimed (*Kurang perhatian* 2001).

Counter voices were aired in other fora too, especially in the print media. In his very critical article in the Yogyakarta newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana launched a fierce discussion that questioned the relevance of regional cultures to the development of the Indonesian people in the modern world. He said all the energy poured into nostalgia was futile (Alisjahbana 1991). In his criticism, Alisjahbana was actually remaining faithful to the convictions he had expressed during the Culture Polemic (Polemik Kebudayaan) of the 1930s. Alisjahbana was then one of the 'nationalist-minded artists and intellectuals [who] had engaged in a vigorous series of cultural polemics on the nature and direction of a national culture in and around the pages of the journal *Pujangga Baru*' (Foulcher 1986:13).²⁹

The fact that the language of communication was Indonesian, the national language, and only a few papers had been written and presented in Javanese (some of them by non-Javanese participants), was a cause for comment from the very first congress. Therefore, at the opening ceremony of the second congress, all speakers were requested to deliver their speeches in 'standard Javanese in the Central Javanese style'; English translations would be available for foreign participants (*Kongres Bahasa Jawa II* 1996). Nevertheless, during the 2006 congress only six of the more than fifty papers were presented in Javanese, the majority were still in Indonesian, a foreign language not mastered by the participants from Suriname (Herdjoko

²⁹ On Polemik Kebudayaan, see also Achdiat Mihardja 1986, Holt 1967, Teeuw 1979:35-38, and Jurriëns (2004:39-42).

2006b). Of the government officials only Mardiyanto, governor of Central Java, presented his paper in Javanese.³⁰ Why did the Sultan of Yogyakarta of all people read his speech in Indonesian, journalist Herdjoko wondered, especially since – because of his function as a monarch – he is seen as the fount of Javanese culture and language (Herdjoko 2006b). Pertinently, why was the journal launched during the congress written in Indonesian (Herdjoko 2006a and b)? In his article entitled ‘Loved abroad, discarded at home’ (Herdjoko 2006b), the journalist juxtaposes this attitude to the enthusiasm exhibited by delegates from East Kalimantan and Suriname when they talked about their Javanese radio and television broadcasts for the local Javanese population groups.

The conclusions, decisions and resolutions of the congresses raised numerous questions, especially since their implementation remained invisible to the eyes of many. In what he himself calls a cynical comment, Javanese lecturer Sucipto Hadi Purnomo has seen each congress generating its successor, but without any results having been achieved (Purnomo 2006). The fact that none of the resolutions had had a follow-up as no task force, Badan Pekerja Kongres, was ever actually established to realize the recommendations and resolutions, was deemed a lost opportunity, all the more so when the high cost of the congresses was taken into account (Permana 2006; Herdjoko 2006a and b).³¹ In 2001 this situation was characterized as *jarkoni* (*Isa ngujari ning ora isa nglakoni*), having good intentions, without implementing them (*Di balik Kongres* 2001). It is a reflection of the paralyzing effect of government policy on practices affecting the use of local languages. The actual speakers of the language expected the government, not they themselves, to solve the problems.

2 The ‘centres’ in the region

Diverse groups and organizations, called *badan*, *balai*, *sanggar* or *yayasan* (committees, institutes, studios or foundations) have indubitably been active in the writing, performance, studying and promoting of Javanese language, literature and culture. They have held conferences, seminars, poetry readings, theatre performances and rituals, and published literature and articles about Javanese literature and culture (TIM MS 1997). Such literary magazines as *Djaka Lodhang*, *Mekar Sari*, *Panjebar Semangat* and *Jaya Baya* have played an important role in the publishing and dissemination of Javanese literature that would otherwise have only been available in live or mediated oral presentations, and in articles about Javanese culture.³²

Besides the official academic branches, the national government established several organizations whose purpose was to study and develop Javanese culture. The Javanese Language Institutes (Balai Bahasa Jawa) in Semarang, Surabaya and Yogyakarta, founded as

³⁰ Entitled ‘Basa Jawi prelu nut ing jaman kalakone’ (Javanese language should keep pace with the developments of the epoch).

³¹ Achiar Permana (2006) mentions a budget of ‘Rp 4,25 miliar’.

³² On Javanese-language magazines and literature in this magazines, see Ras 1979; Quinn 1992; Bonneff 1997:46-47.

sub-branches of the Centre for Language Cultivation and Development (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa),³³ implemented and oversaw the carrying out of the policies and tasks that had been developed on the national level (Quinn 2012:68, 79). In a similar vein, the Taman Budaya (Cultural Centres) repeated the national government discourse on the development of local cultures for the benefit of the national culture. Among the activities they organized, Jones (2013:212) lists seminars (to discuss problems and disseminate information about the arts) and workshops (to give guidance and technical instructions about art works and techniques).

Another example of a government-instigated initiative is the so called Proyek Javanologi, the Javanology Project. In June 1982, the Project for the Research and Development of Javanese Culture (Proyek Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kebudayaan Jawa), later called the Project for the Research and Teaching of the Javanese Branch of Indonesian Culture (Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara bagian Jawa (Javanologi), was established in Yogyakarta under the auspices of the Department of Education and Culture (KBJ I Buku I:6). The aims of the Yogyakarta Proyek Javanologi were idealistic, high flown and weighty: the creation of a dynamic cultural life that would underpin both the regional and the national culture. The principal goal was to strengthen the identity of the nation, boost national self-esteem and pride while heightening mutual understanding between the Indonesian people; its ultimate goal being to foster the unity of the nation (Karkono 1992-1993:293). A detailed description of the tasks reveals the ways thought necessary to achieve these goals and create the circumstances ideal for a developing nation: researching, making inventories, protecting, guiding, continuing, digging, developing, storing, preserving, creating and so on (Karkono 1992-1993:294-5). The series of active verbs is an indication of the dynamic view of the work to be done.³⁴ A similar rhetoric was used during the Javanese Language Congresses and it recurred in metadiscussions in the print media and on radio and television.

The project was meant to be a five-year pilot and, should success ensue, the formula would be applied to the study of other regional cultures in the country. However, because the Javanology Project rapidly led to assumptions that it was favouring the ethnic Javanese and this might lead to inter-ethnic tensions in Indonesia, after less than two years the ministry under a new (Javanese) minister had already hastened to take steps to set up an umbrella organization with centres focusing on various other ethnic cultures like Baliology and Sundanology, and on the cultures of the Minangkabau, Melayu, Batak and South Sulawesi. In a reaction to this decision, the next year a newly established foundation, the Yayasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Kebudayaan Panunggalan, consisting of the Javanology Project's former head and some of his staff who had left the government project formed an independent centre, the Javanology Institute (Lembaga Javanologi) in Yogyakarta (Quinn 1992:280-281). They claimed that this bid for independence was essential if it were to operate in a dynamic way, beyond the reach of the tentacles of bureaucracy. The Lembaga Javanologi studied Javanese culture, not for its own sake, but, again, to amplify the growth and the development of the

³³ Hereafter Language Centre (Pusat Bahasa, as it usually is referred to in Indonesia).

³⁴ Meneliti, menginventarisasi, memelihara, membina, meneruskan, menggali, mengembangkan, menyimpan, memantapkan, menciptakan [...].

national culture (Karkono 1992-1993:297). Nothing new under the sun in fact, but at least the ways the goals were to be achieved and the topics to be studied had assumed a far more concrete shape (Karkono 1992-1993:298-300). The activities were carried out by the Institute itself and in co-operation with other groups and institutions, including the Yogyakarta branch of the Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional (the Research Centres for the Study of History and Traditional Values),³⁵ that fell under the Education and Culture Department. An example of one of its activities was the *ruwatan* (cleansing) ceremony featuring a special wayang kulit performance of the Murwakala story on 6 July 2003 ((SIG) 2003). In a reaction to the changing circumstances and the decline in cultural expressions, in July 1991 the Yayasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Kebudayaan Panunggalan broadened its scope by establishing the Institute for the Preservation of Culture (Lembaga Pelestarian Budaya).

In any discussion of Javanese cultural centres, the role of the Central Javanese courts should not be overlooked; for ideological reasons, their prestige in Javanese cultural matters remained high. As cultural institutions, they represented tradition (Bonneff 1997:35). Importantly, a number of cultural festivals drew attention to Javanese culture, especially to the performing arts and literature. Among these was the Yogyakarta Art Festival (the Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta (FKY)). The FKY organized performances and published several edited anthologies of Javanese short stories and poetry. Very popular in the nineteen-nineties and important to the dissemination of and discussion on expressions of Javanese culture were the broadcasts by local RRI and private radio stations (Mardianto and Darmanto 2001), the national TVRI station and the regional TVRI stations broadcasting from Yogyakarta and Surabaya. This dynamic cultural scene represents the second epistemology to do with Javanese culture that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter.

3 Issues

The topics that recurred are part of a more general discourse in Javanese society at large as well as among members of literary and cultural institutions, and they also appear in print and audiovisual media. Most of them are not new; they stem from earlier periods in history, some of them going back to the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. They all touch upon language, literature and culture maintenance, preservation, development or loss.

During the closing ceremony of the first Javanese Language Congress, the governor of Central Java, Ismail, stated that the congress had been held at exactly the right time. Ten years earlier, the Indonesian people had still been preoccupied with national aims and actively involved in strengthening the unity and union of the nation. However, had the congress been organized ten years later, the governor feared 'we would have lost our precious fortune, Javanese language and literature, while our generation has already forgotten about its proper

³⁵ On this institute, see Jones (2013: 242 ff.). In September 2006 its name was changed into Balai Pelestarian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Yogyakarta. Recent information on the organization, now called Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Yogyakarta, can be found at <http://www.bpnb-jogja.info/main/> [Last accessed 27 October 2016].

culture because of the influences of globalization and modernization' (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:100). Ismail's speech touches upon several important issues that were thoroughly discussed at this and the following congresses: the negotiation between national and regional cultures, the fear of the fragmentation of the nation's unity and separatism of the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, the (negative) influences of globalization and modernization, the possible loss of Javanese language and culture, and the need to preserve them as national asset and as belonging to the 'high points of regional cultures' (*puncak-puncak kebudayaan daerah*) (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:100), thereby ensuring that future generations would not reproach the present generation accusing them of neglecting its duty.

Between two loyalties: national and regional

The discussions at the conferences clearly show the continuous juggling between the strengthening of the national culture and language on the one and the preserving of the Javanese ethnic culture and corresponding vernacular on the other hand. Finding an equilibrium between the two seems to have been experienced as a difficult dilemma, especially as the Orde Baru national government had been doing its utmost to see that the nation-building proceeded as quickly and as trouble-free as possible. Complicating the picture, it seems there was a dichotomy in Javanese society itself between two extremes. At one pole were those who thought that Javanese should continue to play a significant role as symbol of regional pride and identity, as the language of intra-ethnic communication and the tool to develop and support regional culture (Soewandi 1993:21) and consequently championed the need to preserve it; at the other end of the scale were those who wanted to follow the trend and go with the contemporary globalizing flow and accept all the consequences this entailed.

In their papers, quite a few participants referred to the Clauses 32 and 36 of the 1945 Constitution. These articles deal with the use of Indonesian as the national language as propagated by the Indonesian government, the position of regional languages versus the national language, the role of regional cultures in the framework of the national culture and the active involvement of the state in respecting and protecting those regional languages that were properly nurtured by the people inhabiting the regions in which these languages were spoken. Quoting and repeating these articles as a formula, almost reciting them as a mantra, seemed to legitimize the attention they devoted to Javanese language and culture and their research into it, but simultaneously they appeared to ward off all possible imputations of a tendency towards Javanization, ethnic chauvinism, regionalism (*jawanisasi, sukuisme, daerahisme*) or even separatism; the last eventuality to be avoided at all costs. During the fourth congress this very sensitive issue was paid special attention as it was linked to regional autonomy and the need to strengthen the unity of this multi-ethnic society (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), a requirement that would mean discarding narrow ethnicism and regionalism (*kesukuan dan kedaerahan yang sempit*) (Pendahuluan 2006). Although thereby avoiding any ideas that might have lead to a potential threat to the national unity, the importance of the Javanese language and culture in the building of the national culture was addressed in many papers. One example that is regularly quoted is the Javanese contribution to Indonesian vocabulary.

The discourse of loss – ‘Javanese on the threshold of extinction’,³⁶

One of the topics that has received its fair share of attention is the decline (*kemerosotan dan kemunduran*) of the Javanese language and culture. This discourse of loss even emerged as one of the *raisons d’être* of the 1991 conference and was explicitly stated in the congress aims (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). ‘Decline’ is interpreted in several ways: mistakes in the use of *basa*; loss of the knowledge of *basa*, the very symbol of the refined (*adiluhung*) character of Javanese; a poor command of the language etiquette (*tata krama* and *unggah-ungguh*); the influence of Indonesian and the pressure to Indonesianize (Sudaryanto 1993:8); the mixing of Javanese and Indonesian, and even of English (code-switching, interference). Expressions used to describe the situation assumed a dramatic undertone: Javanese is in ruins (see Quinn 1992:264, 267), the Javanese have lost their Javanese identity and the Javanese are no longer Javanese (KBJ I Buku V:58) are just a few examples.³⁷ In newspapers and journals, authors often offer a dichotomic view on this topic: one of the counterviews to ‘Javanese is in ruins’ is the observation that Javanese language and culture have been evolving and that this process does not necessarily mean decline, deterioration or loss.

Various reasons were given for the decline: the concentration of the Jakarta-based Language Centre (*Pusat Bahasa*) on the Indonesian language, the lack of or the poor teaching of Javanese since Javanese has been given the status of a foreign language, and the focus in the programmes of the Indonesian government’s Five-Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun, Repelita*) on economic development (Sudaryanto 1993:5-7). The lack of interest shown by young ethnic Javanese is a recurring theme that is exacerbated by the tendency to abandon the use of Javanese not only in discursive practices with fellow youngsters, but also in family circles. Other causes put forward are urbanization and the rustic or conservative (*ndesa* or *kolot*) image with which Javanese is saddled; the influences of foreign cultures that are imported by the television industry and the (negative) impact of the mass media on the popularity of traditional regional performing arts. The perceptions that learning regional languages has no added value and that Javanese is not a democratic language are mentioned as other reasons (Pradipta 1993:209-16). Referring to the poor command of the Javanese language etiquette, Errington (1998:279) remarks that

Much attention at the conference was given to the complex system of Javanese verbal etiquette, the correct forms of which (several paper givers argued) are disappearing from use by younger speakers. Largely ignored by such arguments is the fact that control of these most refined forms of usage has never extended widely beyond traditional elite circles.

The concern about language corruption and decline has been a persistent theme since the colonial period. Sudaryanto (1992a) says that already by the beginning of the twentieth century speakers of Javanese were not able to use the speech levels properly. Uhlenbeck (1964:69-70) points out that in the course of the twentieth century

³⁶ Bahasa Jawa di ambang kepunahan (ICH/Teguh et al. 2006).

³⁷ Basa Jawi sampun risak; wong Jawa ilang Jawane; wong Jawa wis ora Jawa.

the phenomenon of the special vocabularies became a hotly debated issue. Many Dutch-educated Javanese intellectuals had lost the ability to use the subtle distinctions of their mother-tongue with any sort of confidence. Moreover the important social changes in Java sometimes made it an extremely difficult matter to define the social position of one's speech-partner in relation to one's own, while this is an absolute prerequisite for the correct choice of lexical items, forms of address etc.

The adiluhung concept

The discourse on language deterioration and loss and the need for language protection is inextricably related to the *adiluhung* concept and the idea that Javanese language and literature are part of a cultural heritage that should be nurtured for future generations. The reasoning behind this idea is the frame of reference that is used to evaluate the quality of contemporary Javanese language and literature, namely: the Javanese used by nineteenth-century court poets and in the elite circles of the Javanese courts and aristocracy. Often mentioned is the Surakartan *zaman keemasan*, the golden age of Javanese literature, represented by the masters of the literary art,³⁸ the *pujangga* Yasadipura and Ranggawarsita, and by Mangkunagara IV (Tjokrowinoto, 1996:9), 'the' norm referred to when discussing the application of 'good Javanese', elegant literature and a correct Javanese attitude.

Why does this nineteenth-century *adiluhung* literature remain such a strong frame of reference, even at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century? One indication is given by Koentjaraningrat who claims that 'whenever a culture or sub-culture in a particular class of the society concerned has an established ancient tradition and therefore a vested interest in protecting the great tradition, it will show greater resistance towards change than cultures or sub-cultures with few such traditions' (Koentjaraningrat 1989:462). The primacy of the written Javanese of the nineteenth-century that had become the norm has influenced the perception of the language as used in later periods. The ideal language employed in textual traditions from the past came to be perceived as the real language – a phenomenon not restricted to Javanese. Van der Horst's analysis of the emergence of standard languages in Europe shows how also there written, idealized forms of the languages were used as the main criterium (Van der Horst 2008:175).

Errington (1998:278-9) reintroduces the topic into the discourse about the relationship between national and regional, when he states that

Suharto's fond hope and the institutional logic of the conference presuppose, rather, that Javanese stands in need not of development like Indonesian but rehabilitation and preservation as an exemplary ethnic tradition. This appropriative focus on traditionally prestigious, ostensibly moribund forms of 'high' Javanese is part of the ongoing construction by the New Order of a newly invented Javanese tradition – well described by Florida (1987) as a lofty, monolithic, ineffable 'noble sublime' (*adiluhung*) – of which the state is itself custodian.

In her analysis of the *adiluhung* concept, that Florida translates as 'the beautiful sublime' (1987:2 and 1995:32), the author brings in the role of literature. She argues

³⁸ Robson and Wibisono 2002:602.

[i]n late twentieth-century Indonesia, ‘Traditional Javanese Literature’ is popularly understood as a particular genre of beautiful writing, a genre of elite (royal) writing characterized by difficult or esoteric texts of great refinement and philosophical depth: that is, *Literature* with a capital L. (Florida 1995:22)

She calls this a ‘generic misunderstanding’. The author traces the origins of the *adiluhung* literary canon back to ‘nineteenth century Dutch colonial philology’ (Florida 1995:22-3) and describes how historical events led to an ‘ideological construct’ of traditional Javanese culture (Florida 1995:24). She links the ‘cult of the *adiluhung*’ (Florida 1995:32) that began at the beginning of the twentieth century and ‘was repeated and intensified’ in the New Order ‘*adiluhung* rhetoric’ to ‘the late colonial voice’ (Florida 1995:33). Also Arps points out the influence of Dutch scholars on the standardization of literary norms in his analysis of Jacob Kats’s ‘attempt to synthesize Javanese practice and European ideas’ when codifying Javanese poetics (Arps 2000:115). Furthermore, two other factors were as important to what Arps calls the ‘regulation of beauty’, namely: ‘the reorientation [by Javanese nationalists] towards the literary heritage, and the campaign to change literary ideas and ideals’ (Arps 2000:115), both because of historical circumstances. Therefore neither Florida nor Arps attributes the canonization of Javanese literature to Dutch efforts alone, but each acknowledges the active role of the Javanese, identified either as ‘conservative *priyayi*’ (Florida 1995:32) or as Javanese nationalists, for whom ‘[h]istorical awareness included awareness of the literary canon’ (Arps 2000:120).

The *adiluhung* ideology had (and still has) a direct influence on actual language use. Anxious about making mistakes (*wedi kleru*), a number of participants at the fifth Javanese Language Congress chose to present their papers in Indonesian. Therefore I do not agree with Heryanto’s claim that, ‘Now failure in performing the proper *bahasa* as an indication of not yet being an ideal Javanese, or Malay, hardly hold its validity. Every Javanese and Malay is now taught to view and define her/his identities and others’ within the modern Western frame of view: all are indiscriminately and universally “human beings” (1995:33). It is not a matter of adopting either a Javanese or modern/Western inclination, but it is both, in conjunction with the Indonesian frame. In the requirements it sets for pupils to master the Javanese speech style system, formal education sets the bar too high and curbs the enthusiasm of pupils and young interlocutors to speak the language (Prasetyo 2011). Another frequent implication of the *wedi kleru* attitude is that Javanese often acknowledge that they do not speak Javanese, meaning they have not mastered the *adiluhung* etiquette (but nevertheless all the while communicate in the *ngoko* speech style, and in Javanese dialects and/or sociolects). The use of Indonesian rather than Javanese by guests in Javanese talk shows is one glaring outcome of this *wedi kleru* stance.

The term *adiluhung* was also applied to the categorization of artistic performance genres. Whereas in the 1980s it was still confined to traditional Javanese court arts (Lindsay 1985:44), by the 1990s commercial performance genres like kethoprak were also defined as *adiluhung*, thereby classicizing this genre (see Chapter 4). The link is probably preservation discourse: the perception that art forms that need be preserved belong in the *adiluhung* category.

To conclude, in one way the *adiluhung* ideology can be perceived to be disconnected from both the reality of daily life in contemporary Indonesia and from cultural practices in which a livelier and continuously developing Javanese is used, especially in oral types of communication. Nevertheless, the practice of reciting literature belonging to the *adiluhung* canon and the correct use of the language etiquette still does continue in certain circles.

Modernization and democratization

In spite of its many adherents, during the Javanese Language Congresses the *adiluhung* ideology met resistance. Counter voices to the purist aspects of the ideology consider *adiluhung* Javanese to be feudal in character and no longer applicable in contemporary communication. They promote the modernization and democratization of the language as an adaptation to changing circumstances.

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century several movements, like the Samin and the Djawa Dipa Movements, the latter with the support of Sarekat Islam, the Islamic Union and the newspaper *Oetoesan Hindia* (Soewandi 1993:25; Anderson 1990:214-218), were already trying to simplify Javanese. During the Japanese occupation Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX proposed that only one level of Javanese, *bahasa Bagongan*, a Javanese court dialect, be used so as to jettison perceived feudal aspects and facilitate the mastery of Javanese. In the 1950s pleas to simplify the language system were again heard, as no Javanese was able to implement the complex language etiquette system with the requisite adroitness, as said in a poem published in *Medan Bahasa* (1952:7), quoted by Soenardji (1993:58-59). The author of the poem suggests that Javanese be reduced to two speech styles: *ngoko*, the speech style used to think and to reflect, and *basa*. After the Second World War, the use of *ngoko* in magazines and newspapers increased (Soewandi 1993:22). The preference for *ngoko* over *basa* in literature and story-telling mirrored a democratic, practical and social society, and this choice has therefore become increasingly popular (Hutomo 1993:321). The urge to modernize Javanese is an important issue, since the Orde Baru government had tried to relegate regional cultures ‘to the domain of “tradition” and thus disposed of its political meanings’ (Asnan et al. 2006:155).

The problem is that not many authors define what they mean by ‘modern Javanese’. According to Soeprapto, it is the language developed in contemporary Javanese language press, the Javanese that is used in the electronic media, by educated urban and rural speakers, and that ‘though showing shortcomings, [...] can be called modern Javanese’ (Soeprapto 1993:594).

*Language preservation: Cultivating, developing and preserving*³⁹

One of the consequences of the *adiluhung* ideology is that Javanese language and culture – perceived as a cultural heritage – should be nurtured, developed and preserved. The proponents of this view, who include high-ranking bureaucrats, however often do not go into the practicalities of why, what and how. This attitude is reflected in the papers presented at

³⁹ Pembinaan, pengembangan dan pelestarian.

consecutive KBJ. Generally speaking, congress participants point to formal education and government institutions as environments that should concentrate on the topic. Only a few participants have offered specific solutions to tackling the cultivation, development and preservation of Javanese language and culture. One of them is Budya Pradipta. As a check on where and how Javanese is still taken care of properly by the people – referring to the often quoted clarification of Clause 36 of the 1945 Constitution – , Pradipta gives an impressive overview of the circles in which Javanese language and culture are still alive (Pradipta 1993:220-25). He lists traditional performance genres (both live and broadcast on the radio), the print press, traditional ceremonies and the reading of Javanese books on private radio stations. He mentions occasions and social events, locations and centres in which people communicate in Javanese.

The policies governing the use of good and correct Indonesian, as advocated by the Language Centre (*Pusat Bahasa*) (Heryanto 1995:38) were adopted and applied to Javanese: good and correct Javanese was ‘Javanese which was free from writing and speaking errors’.⁴⁰ Hence, the tasks of the centre were reflected in the KBJ papers. The need for the development and cultivation of Javanese implied that this had to be done in a controlled way by specific institutions and people (governmental bureaucrats and/or academic linguists) and with specific aims, rather than letting speakers go their own way in a natural process. However, the official fostering of Javanese as a regional language was important only insofar as this exercise would assist in developing and enriching Indonesian vocabulary and the riches of national culture as part of the identity of the nation (GBHN 1993 in Aziz 1994:125).⁴¹

The term preserving, *melestarikan*, already fashionable in the 1980s (Heryanto 1995:45), promoted the idea of making the nation’s culture *lestari*, everlasting. The discourse on the need for the preservation of culture as heritage continued in the 1990s. The private TV station Indosiar used it in the slogan ‘fostering the culture of the nation’ (*melestarikan budaya bangsa*) (see Chapter 7). This urgency to preserve language and culture is related to the discourse of loss.

While the younger generations were severely castigated for their so called negligence towards things Javanese, Soeprapto stressed the need to involve young people in the cultivation and development of Javanese for the following reasons: 75 percent of the authors of Javanese literature were younger than forty years old, young people were already involved in the matter through Javanese programmes broadcast by RRI and private radio stations, and their attitude towards Javanese at the time was very positive (Soeprapto 1993:597).

During the congresses, Javanese performing arts were paid ample attention, both in paper presentations and in actual performances. It is striking, however, that little attention was paid to Javanese language, literature and culture in the electronic mass media, and to the 1997

⁴⁰ ‘Basa Jawi ingkang leres punika basa Jawi ingkang mboten lepat ing panyerat lan pangucapipun’, a quote of Mbah Guno (KRT Soesanto Guno Prawiro, famous Yogyakarta comedian) in an interview with *Bernas* (17 July 2001).

⁴¹ Pembinaan bahasa daerah perlu terus dilanjutkan dalam rangka mengembangkan serta memperkaya perbendaharaan bahasa Indonesia dan khazanah kebudayaan nasional sebagai salah satu unsur jati diri dan kepribadian bangsa. Perlu ditingkatkan penelitian, pengkajian dan pengembangan bahasa dan sastra daerah serta penyebarannya melalui berbagai media (Ketetapan MPR RI No. II/MPR/1993).

Broadcasting Act that regulated language use in these media. When the mass media were discussed, they were often interpreted as print media only – journals, magazines and newspapers – making use of written language, whereas in the 1990s Javanese actually occurred much more frequently in orally oriented media like radio and television, cassettes and CDs. Nevertheless, at every congress a few papers at least were dedicated to electronic media, the majority focusing on radio, only some on television. With a few exceptions, most papers were in line with New Order policies and rhetoric and focused on the role mass media could play in fostering and preserving the Javanese language, culture and media literature; in developing the language and culture; and in disseminating traditional genres as an alternative way to achieve the same aims.

If the tasks of development and preservation of the language were to be pursued, a standard (*baku*) form of the language was felt to be necessary.

*Standards or standardizing? 'Between registering, standardizing and fossilizing'*⁴²

At the second Javanese Language Congress when the participants were asked to deliver their presentations in Javanese, the request was specified: the speakers were asked to make use of standard Javanese in the style of Central Java. This type of Javanese had been the standard for a long time. In the mid-nineteenth century Dutch linguists began codifying the language (Bonneff 1997:52). In 1893 the colonial government had decided that the Javanese to be taught at school should be the dialect of Surakarta, 'being considered by the Javanese themselves as the language in its purest and richest form' (Uhlenbeck 1964:65).

One of the main aims of the first Javanese Language Congress was the publication of a Standard Javanese Grammar (*Tata bahasa baku bahasa Jawa* (TBBBBJ)) and an Indonesian-Javanese Dictionary (*Kamus Indonesia-Jawa*); both were launched at the congress. The projects had been supported by local government institutions: they were realized with sponsorship from the Central Javanese Regional Development Planning Board (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah, BAPPEDA). The head of the Balai Penelitian Bahasa (Centre for Language Research) in Yogyakarta, Sudaryanto, also editor-in-chief of both projects, was responsible for the research and the compilation of the two volumes.

In a paper presented during the second Javanese Language Congress, Sudaryanto analyses the meaning of the term standard (*baku*) to legitimize the urgency for compiling a prescriptive grammar of Javanese. It was introduced by the Jakartan Language Centre (Pusat Bahasa) from the time of its establishment in 1975 and was perpetuated thereafter in the term *bahasa baku* (standard language) (Sudaryanto 1996:1). The term is closely connected to the ideas of *baik* (good) and *benar* (correct), qualifying the Indonesian one was supposed to speak. If the term *baku* is to be understood as in *bahasa baku*, standard language, then any grammar of the standard language (*tata bahasa baku*) must approach a purely prescriptive grammar. It should be the product of objective and thorough research into a certain type of language that could be designated prestigious (Sudaryanto 1996:6). Precisely because of the prestigious character of

⁴² 'Antara membukukan dengan membakukan dan membekukan' (Sudaryanto 1992a:1).

the language, this kind of grammar should become a manual, just as in the case of prescriptive grammars in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, he argues.⁴³

Whereas Sudaryanto used colonial publications to defend his approach and give his project added prestige, taking the opposite tack Governor Ismail referred to the past to decolonize Javanese studies. In his word of welcome to the grammar book, he puts it in the perspective of the interest of the Dutch in Javanese. Javanese as a language with high linguistic and philosophical values (Sudaryanto et al. 1992a:xi) has been appreciated not only by Indonesians but also by the Dutch, writes Ismail. Their deep knowledge of the Javanese language and literature, and therefore also of the culture, enabled them to keep a firm grip on Java and on Indonesia as a whole – a topic that was also touched upon in several congress papers. Therefore Ismail welcomed the publication of the TBBBJ as a entirely Javanese project.

Several papers, either directly or indirectly, question the idea of the use of the standard language as ‘the’ norm and the view on Javanese as a homogeneous vernacular. Suripan Sadi Hutomo, for instance, discusses the use of Javanese dialects. At the time and in particular in the context of the Javanese Language Congresses, his views were revolutionary. Therefore I shall highlight his paper. At the time of writing, Hutomo’s ideas about the use of Javanese dialects were becoming more generally accepted and applied. He tackles the teaching of Javanese at school in which pupils were taught that good Javanese was the language used in the area of Solo (Surakarta) and Yogyakarta. This meant that the dialects of Solo and Yogyakarta have been defined as or are considered to be standard dialects (*dialek baku*). The upshot of this view, a colonial heritage, resulted in the understanding that all literature, either written or told in other dialects, was considered to be of a lesser quality (*tidak bermutu*) or not refined (*kasar*). This evaluation, that he qualifies as very severe (*kejam*) and biased (*berat sebelah*), meant that people had lost sight of the fact that in the coastal areas Javanese literature also developed, in the form of (handwritten) manuscripts and in the oral traditions of local performance genres, usually written down by folk literati (*pujangga rakyat*) from an Islamic background.

Hutomo emphasizes that both language and dialect are tools of communication, and claims that the criteria ‘refined’ and ‘not refined’ do not stem from language itself but are extra-linguistic. Only the number of speakers would make any difference between the two. To correct preconceptions about the absence of non-standard dialects in modern Javanese literature, he gives several examples from 1935 onwards (Hutomo 1993:324-5). He calls the literature written in Javanese dialects, if it is perceived from the point of view of the development of Javanese aesthetics, an experiment. Such an experiment does not differ sharply between written and oral literature. Not least because of the increasing mobility of the people and the expanding reach of mass media, communication has intensified. In the wake of these developments, standard Javanese and dialects have been mixed with each other, depending on the social and geographical setting of the story (Hutomo 1993:326).

Suripan Sadi Hutomo was a pioneer in advocating the use of Javanese dialects rather than keeping to an idealized standard language. In the twenty-first century, views on regional

⁴³ On such grammars, see Uhlenbeck 1964.

languages in certain circles have shifted, with an ever-growing support for the use of dialects and sociolects. Unquestionably local television has played a role in this democratization of the language. In the 1990s, this adjustment in the standards was not yet apparent. Arswendo Atmowiloto and Suparto Brata's effort to publish the magazine *Praba*, in which 'modern Javanese truly suitable to modern society'⁴⁴ would be used failed (Soeprapto 1993:591-592).

Conclusions

The cultivation, development and preservation of language and culture featured prominently on the New Order agenda and, as concepts, they were typical for Orde Baru rhetoric. New Order policy can be characterized as prescriptive and top-down, relying on the active involvement of national and local governments, and a uniformity of purpose in the tackling of problems. The following chapters will testify to the fact that the development and preservation discourse recur in discussions about televised Javanese performance.

The development of the Javanese language has received ample attention, both positive and negative, often evoking emotions and lacking a solid basis in research and/or evidence, when it focuses on a fixed image of the language rather than on the actual language use. The frame of reference applied was the Javanese used in a specific kind of literature in the past. What Florida has called 'a peculiar kind of absence' (Florida 1995:22), implying that nowadays the *adiluhung* Javanese literature is almost unread, precisely by its 'absence' it has won itself a strong presence in discussions and emotions. Pertinently, in its relationship to the discourse of loss, this *adiluhung* discourse has also been continued in discussions about Javanese performance on television. The comments on the loss of mastering the speech levels correctly not only affect language. They go much further, as they imply that one is no longer thoroughly conversant with the attitude concomitant with the correct use of the language etiquette, the philosophy, literature and so on; in fact, that one is no longer Javanese. This stance has been vehemently countered by Javanese arts practitioners during the Javanese Language Congresses. Locally famous artists like the *campursari* musicians and singers Manthous and Anik Sunyahni ('happy to be born as a singer since it allows me to preserve Javanese language and culture') ((cr10/lis) 2001),⁴⁵ and wayang kulit puppeteer Ki Enthus Susmono claimed they were agents who were actually fostering Javanese language and culture in an active, creative and artistic way. They pointed out the overall presence of Javanese in the performing arts at that time. Apparently, art offered natural routes by which to escape government and academic paternalism.

Although the criticism of the poor condition of the Javanese language and its decline was not new, the growing competition between Javanese and Indonesian since independence had added a new dimension to the discussions. The discourse of loss is closely interwoven with a vision of language and culture that is static and an idealization of a past language and culture stratum. Nostalgia 'for the glorious past within an orientalistically inspired frame of

⁴⁴ Bentuk bahasa Jawa modern yang pas betul dengan masyarakat Jawa modern.

⁴⁵ I personally witnessed the interviews with these artists at the 2001 Congress.

reference' (Arps 2000:124) has been a determining factor here. The idea of the *adiluhung* has expanded, and is now applied to artistic expressions other than court performances.

An often heard criticism, uttered during the Kongres Bahasa Jawa is that nothing has been done to ward off the decline, not even as a follow-up to the congress resolutions. Positive views, on the contrary, favour the inevitable development of the language and culture. Also the lively scene animated by the individuals, groups and institutes involved in the study, writing and performance of Javanese language, literature and cultural expressions in the 1990s, offers positive proof of the dynamics at work and the self-developing and preserving mechanisms. As the examples have demonstrated, parallel mindsets about Javanese as a language of communication and art exist, depending on whether one represents a speaker of Javanese as a colloquial in everyday communication, an artist using Javanese in artistic expressions on stage and in the media, or a bureaucrat having to cope with language legislation, education and preservation, an advocate of the use of 'pure' and 'elevated' language and etiquette, or a speaker favouring adaptation to altering circumstances. It is by no means an exception that these paradoxical views are advocated by one and the same person, depending on the function and ideology this person represents and the multiple loyalties he or she might hold, juggling between the 'national' and the 'regional', or between advocating the preservation of a 'perfect' Javanese of past times (hence seeing the 1990s developments of the language as a decline and/or loss) and simultaneously speaking a modern and democratized variant of Javanese in daily life (thereby advocating the natural process of language dynamics).

Looking ahead to the last chapter of this dissertation, interesting shifts have taken place since the 1990s and the early 2000s. The attitude towards language in Indonesia has changed. Whereas Indonesian had been foregrounded since independence, the openness towards the multiethnic and multilingual character of the country in the twenty-first century has led to a new interest in regional languages and cultures. The other shift is related to language and ideology: from foregrounding written Javanese and high and refined language use, etiquette and polite speech style and a focus on (and striving for) an ideal derived from the past, attention has shifted to spoken Javanese and familiar speech styles, representing modernity and contemporaneity, and oral expressions rather than written. The use of Javanese in performance (live and mediatized) has also been paid more attention. This change in emphasis has led to a different view of artisticity, that is slowly but surely dislodging the *wedi kleru* (scared to make mistakes) attitude.

Part I

Representing tradition

Introduction

From its earliest beginnings, Indonesian television has broadcast traditional Javanese performances. The dramatic genres were adapted to and appropriated by the television industry, as well as inspired the medium to create new genres, all of which had an impact on live performances.

In a bilingual (Indonesian-English) publication of Indonesia's national TVRI station, published on the occasion of TVRI's twenty-third anniversary in 1985, the role of the station in relation to traditional cultures was clarified as follows:

Indonesia's art and music arose of its diverse age-old cultures and customs; its music, drama and dances mirror the essence of each area and reflect themselves in the State Motto: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* – Unity in Diversity. The country believes that the traditional cultures must be preserved so that the innate dignity of each area is not lost amid the technological and materialistic advancements of modern society.

Television plays an active role in support of this aim. In addition to the daily presentations of both popular and traditional music, TVRI schedules regular programmes contributed by the regional production centres as well as the Jakarta station.

These include: *Konsert Remaja* (Youth Concert), which features choral singing by students of songs typifying the Pancasila State philosophy; *Cakrawala Budaya Nusantara* (The Cultural Horizon of Indonesia), a weekly presentation of traditional Indonesian theatre, such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre), *sandiwara* (drama) and other cultural forms; and *Panorama Indonesia*, where once every nine weeks each station contributes a programme that reflects the culture of its area. (*Televisi Republik Indonesia* 1985:69).

TVRI's vision represents various points that prevailed in culture policies in the New Order period: the relationship between national and regional arts and cultures, the need to preserve the regional cultures that were perceived to be traditional and the discourse of loss in the face of modern developments. TVRI contributed to these goals in the programming of art and culture, including drama and music. It featured regional artistic genres and cultures, and emphasized their contributory function to Indonesian culture.

This part of my research focuses on representations of tradition by regional television during the last decade of the New Order period. The establishment of the first private television station, RCTI, in November 1988, marks the beginning of this decade; the stepping down of President Soeharto ten years later, in 1998, the formal demise of the New Order regime, the end. I zoom in on how the regional TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta represented tradition and how this was related to discourse about tradition and culture during the New Order period.⁴⁶ My point is that TVRI Yogyakarta, a regional government station, both adhered to conservative New Order views about the role of traditional performance and adopted an innovative stance. It profited from the expertise and enthusiasm of local producers, cultural practitioners and specialists who were inspired by or built on local traditional performance to create new performance styles and new television genres. Although their innovations were not always warmly received, exactly because of this open attitude towards tradition and their ways of

⁴⁶ TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta: further referred to as TVRI Yogyakarta.

adapting performance genres categorized as traditional to the needs of contemporary contexts, they succeeded in preserving these genres.

In Chapter 3, I pay special attention to TVRI Yogyakarta, the first regional television station in Indonesia. In particular, I concentrate on representations of Javanese culture as an example of so-called regional culture (*budaya daerah*) in the 1990s. As this regional station was designated the artistic and cultural barometer of the region at its foundation, insight into its programming should reveal whether this was still the case in the 1990s and how it managed to achieve this goal. Among the local programmes, the genre kethoprak was one of the favourites. In Chapter 4, this Javanese performance genre that is often categorized as traditional drama will be in focus. Beginning with the history of kethoprak, I present discussions about the assumed traditional character of this dramatic genre. To compete with the private stations, the regional TVRI stations also created new programmes; their serialized kethoprak broadcasts, the kethoprak sayembara, became a craze. In Chapter 5, I analyse two examples of mediatised kethoprak, the first a televised kethoprak performance, the second the phenomenon of kethoprak sayembara.

A mouse-deer among elephants

As soon as the broadcasts of private television stations RCTI and SCTV could be received without a decoder, a troubled future loomed on the horizon for the national television station and the regional TVRIs. Facing various problems but realizing its potentials, on the occasion of its 34th anniversary in 1996, in order to measure TVRI's strengths and weaknesses TVRI Yogyakarta organized a seminar on identity building and culture with the Research and Development Unit of the Department of Information.⁴⁷ Opening the seminar, Sultan Hamengku Buwono X of Yogyakarta characterized the station as a mouse-deer surrounded by elephants (*pelanduk di antara gajah-gajah*) ((sam) 1996a; *Posisi TVRI* 1996). The elephants, the recently born private television stations, had immediately expanded to an enormous size, as they enjoyed the backing of gigantic capital (*modal raksasa*) (*Posisi TVRI* 1996). Mouse-deer TVRI had a limited budget and did not derive an income from advertisements. Seminar participants – national and local television and culture specialists and practitioners – therefore advised the station to become more market-oriented and adopt an entrepreneurial attitude (*Harus ditumbuhkan* 1996).

Although TVRI had lost its privileged position as sole Indonesian broadcaster, it retained its function as voice of the government. Among its strengths were the station's wide reach and the compulsory relay of its news bulletins and several other programmes to all Indonesian television stations. Not to be outdone, private stations had already begun creating alternative news formats, that were attracting more viewers than the TVRI news programmes. TVRI had also lost its monopoly on the broadcasting of regional art genres. In Chapter 6, I show how in the first half of the 1990s private television stations gave ample room to Javanese and other

⁴⁷ The seminar 'Building the identity of art and culture by means of the medium television' (Membangun citra seni dan budaya melalui media televisi) was convened in the Hotel Santika, Yogyakarta, on 21-22 August 1996. The Research and Development Unit of the Department of Information: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Penerangan, Departemen Penerangan (Deppen).

ethnic cultures and to programmes, in particular drama series, that in one way or another were linked to what was perceived to be part of Javanese tradition. The problem was that Javanese performance genres that were categorized as traditional, like wayang kulit, wayang golek, kethoprak, ludruk and Srimulat, once the mainstay programmes of the regional TVRI stations in Yogyakarta and Surabaya, had also become part of the programming of Jakarta-based private television stations, mainly with commercial aims in view. The 1996 television seminar participants therefore recommended TVRI Yogyakarta explore new broadcasting formats and new ways to engage with its audiences, identifying the suburban middle classes and their cultural preferences as the principal target ((R-12)-i 1996; (sam) 1996b). Going a step farther, the station should explore the artistic and cultural potential of the locales whose population it was targeting and take more advantage of the expertise of the numerous regional intellectuals, culture specialists and artists (Kastari et al. 1996).

TVRI stations in Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Semarang and Jakarta continued programming local productions with a strong Javanese flavour that belonged to the sphere of tradition. But how did TVRI, and in particular TVRI Yogyakarta, represent local arts and cultures, as recommended in the 1996 seminar? How did it address local cultural specifics to engage with its audiences by creating feelings of belonging and intimacy, *akrab*-ness?

Context

The best way to understand TVRI's position in the 1990s is to give a brief sketch of the context in which it had to function at that time. By the end of the 1980s, the Indonesian televisionscape had changed drastically. The appearance on the scene of the first private television stations broke the monopoly of the national TVRI. For the first time since it had come into existence, TVRI had to contend with the presence of other television stations and to compete with them, especially after the government had allowed the private stations RCTI (Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia, established in 1988) and SCTV (Surya Citra Televisi, established in 1989), that commenced by broadcasting locally, to begin broadcasting nationwide in August 1993. TPI (Cipta Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia, launched in 1990) had already been broadcasting nationally, making use of the technical facilities of TVRI. The fourth private station, ANTeVe (Cakrawala Andalas Televisi), began broadcasting nationally immediately after its launch, also in 1993, while a fifth station, Indosiar, was poised to commence broadcasting. The television industry was said to be booming. Adding to the range of choice, an open sky policy allowed a few foreign broadcasters to be received in Indonesia as well.

Newspaper articles gave a wide coverage to the effects of the deregulation of the Indonesian televisionscape: the more open market competition between the stations would mean that the quality of the programmes, including those of TVRI, would improve. Breaking up the government monopoly would make the world of broadcasting pluralistic (see Part III). Furthermore, the private television stations would serve as a barrier to foreign broadcasts; the target of the sixth Repelita development programme was that, by the end of the five-year period (1994-1999), 80 percent of the material broadcast would be produced locally, meaning

in Indonesia.⁴⁸ Local productions were important as they would reflect the nation's identity (*merupakan gambaran jati diri bangsa*), said Alex Leo Zulkarnaen, then Director-General of Radio, Television and Film (Fathonie 1995:22-23). Acknowledging the positive effects of this expanding television industry, Indonesians were aware that a broadcasting law needed to be implemented soon to regulate matters like media ownership, the relationship between TVRI and the private television industries, and the tasks and responsibilities of each type of broadcaster (*Deregulasi TVRI* 1993; *Salam Vista TV* 1993).

TVRI positioned itself as the antithesis of the private television stations: it dedicated itself to the state ideology (until it became a public broadcaster following the 2002 Broadcasting Law) and the preservation of national and local cultures, attempting to achieve this twofold goal without officially taking part in the competitive, profit-oriented culture industry. Unofficially, it had devised its own ways to bypass the ban on advertising on TVRI that had been implemented in 1981. Nevertheless, while continuously having to cope with budgetary limitations, in its efforts to be creative it paid ample attention to the 'local' (both the national local and the local on sub-national levels) and its local audiences. Its efforts in this direction emanated a sense of idealism. An investigation of the television magazine *VISTA-TV* in 1995, however, counters the assumption that it was TVRI that broadcast the largest numbers of local productions. In February 1995, TPI had the highest percentage of local programmes – local in the sense of domestic. Another outcome of the survey was that the cost of local productions was nine times higher than the cost of purchasing foreign productions. Hence *VISTA-TV*'s conclusion that foreign productions were subsidizing local productions (Fathoni 1995:22-23).

In the years 1997-1998, the rapid expansion of the Indonesian television industry came to a halt, in the wake of a monetary and economic crisis that had an impact on the media, including the television industries. During this crisis, both TVRI and the private television stations experienced considerable difficulties in keeping their enterprises up and running, as their debts increased exponentially ((zal) 1998; (cp) 1998). It took the television industry a few years to recover from the crisis. Then, once again, the televisionscape underwent substantial changes – when the new Broadcasting Law saw the light of day and the first local television station was established. I shall tackle these later developments in detail in Chapters 9 and 10, but include the first year of the period of transition, 1999, in my analysis in Part I.

⁴⁸ Repelita: Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun: Indonesian government's five-year development plans.

3 TVRI Yogyakarta: barometer of regional arts and culture

Soon after it was set up, TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, founded to produce and broadcast programmes for local audiences in the vicinity of Yogyakarta (and later also in Central Java), became a regional broadcaster officially controlled by the national TVRI station in Jakarta. Although this meant that its programming was thereafter centrally determined by TVRI Jakarta and later, from the late 1990s, regulated by the first Indonesian Broadcasting Law, the close linkage it had built up with the region provided opportunities to represent local culture in a creative way. Keeping in mind the dual role of television as ‘both a witness to and an actor in’ cultural, social, political and economic processes, in this chapter I examine how the station realized its aims in the context in which it functioned. Originally assigned the function of the barometer for its surroundings – I clarify this in detail below – the station had been accustomed to presenting and representing the arts and culture of the region in which it was active as a broadcaster. But did it still have this function in the period under scrutiny? How did it present Javanese arts and culture, and in particular Javanese performance, and how much space were these allocated in the broadcasting? What function did ‘tradition’ play within this context?

To uncover how the station interpreted the scope of arts and culture, a look at its programming will clarify the categorization principles applied by TVRI. Programme planning and categorization can contain meaningful information about the background and aims of televisual representation of culture. Insight into the classification system used can explain how, why and to what purposes certain categories have been handled. As are genres, programme categories are not just neutral classifiers, but ideological constructs that provide the audiences with a kind of pre-reading. Therefore, not only characteristics pertaining to a certain programme make up a category, but also a mental image encompassing a system of expectations, orientations and rules that moves between the producers, the broadcasts and the audiences, and offers a context for interpretation (Feuer 1992:144).

Focusing on the arts and culture programming at the end of the 1990s and more specifically on Javanese-language programmes, I argue that this station developed a strong branding and catered for its audiences by imbuing its programming with features of proximity in a number of ways. A detailed analysis of the programming also reveals that in the 1990s TVRI Yogyakarta screened many more Javanese-language programmes than only ‘the hour of *kethoprak* (folk theatre) every Tuesday evening and an hour of *wayang* (traditional theatre) every other Thursday’ (Sen and Hill 2000:120). While it unquestionably did support the national government’s educational and development aims and assisted in the building of a national identity and culture, this regional television station in Yogyakarta was more than just a mere extension of the national TVRI station. TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta contributed to the Indonesian televisionscape of the New Order period by representing the local in a way that enhanced a feeling of intimacy, *akrab*-ness, luring local audiences to watch its productions.

1 The first regional station: voicing the national, representing the local

The first regional station, TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, was established on 17 August 1965 on the local initiative of the Directorate of Radio, three years after the launch of the national TVRI station in Jakarta. Initially it produced its own programmes, supplemented with programmes provided by TVRI Jakarta (Kitley 2000:38). The aim was to develop ‘a culturally diverse range of programmes responsive to local audiences’ (Kitley 2003:98). On account of the political turmoil – the attempted coup of October 1965 and its devastating aftermath – the regional station’s policy, production and broadcasting became strictly bound to those of the national TVRI station. As Kitley states, ‘Since then, TVRI Yogyakarta has operated as a centre-out, national broadcaster dominated by decisions and programming supplied by the national station in Jakarta’ (Kitley 2003:98). Kitley’s statement is correct, but needs to be nuanced. As I shall demonstrate in this and the following two chapters, a reversal of the perspective I advocated in Chapter 1 disclosed TVRI Yogyakarta’s local capacities and strengths. Within the constraints imposed by national television, in the production of the local TVRI Yogyakarta did succeed in creating opportunities to represent Javaneness. Moreover, productions of TVRI Jakarta, produced in the framework of the integrated production system, like legends, regional pop music, comedy and children’s stories, also provided space for representations of regional cultures (Direktorat Televisi 1998b).

As a mass medium owned by the government, TVRI was supposed to voice the national government’s ideology and propagate its missions (Wahyudi 1994:280; Yampolsky 1995:717). Its motto and tune ‘TVRI forging national unity and union’ (*TVRI menjalin persatuan dan kesatuan*),⁴⁹ reflected its orientation towards the nation as a whole rather than to the various regions of Indonesia, and referred to the unifying aspirations of the Indonesian government rather than to the multi-ethnicity of Indonesian society. One of TVRI’s policy guidelines was to disseminate and thereby preserve and protect the national culture, ‘meaning to stimulate the development of various aspects of Indonesian culture’ (Alfian and Chu, 1981:31). The Constitution decreed that national culture should be dynamic, adapting itself continuously to concomitant developments in Indonesian society. It should be based on the apices of regional cultures, as these were the ancient and original proofs of ‘high culture’ (see Yampolsky 1995). It was also expected that TVRI should support and promote the various developmental activities in progress throughout the Archipelago, and pursue its educational task that included encouraging public appreciation of cultural shows and other entertainment programmes (Alfian and Chu 1981:31). The promotion of the appreciation of traditional art and culture were an integral part of the government plans to nurture the national pride (Guidelines for State Policy/Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara 1999-2004, IV-F2f). The regional art programmes were said to reflect the specific character of the Indonesian culture(s) and were therefore presented as being ‘not less interesting than programmes originating from countries that had already developed’ (Direktorat Televisi 1972:89). Thus, programmes

⁴⁹ English translation: Jennifer Lindsay.

featuring culture occupied a large percentage of the daily broadcasts. Often these programmes were designed to ensure the propagation of the government's mission. *Lenong Info* and *Ria Jenaka* are examples of these programmes in the period 1998-1999. *Lenong Info* was a sitcom in the form of a *lenong* performance, a Jakartan dramatic genre categorized as traditional, disseminating actual government information and boosting the government mission; *Ria Jenaka* (Cheerful [and] Funny) presented the government mission through the vehicle of various kinds of traditional cultures (Direktorat Televisi 1998a).⁵⁰

Saraswati Sunindyo remarked that the structure of TVRI resembled 'the structure of the Indonesian government, with the central studio in Jakarta and branches in other big cities on Java and throughout the islands' (Sunindyo 1993:141-142). Indeed, the New Order provided the ideological framework for the production of mediated culture fitting the political regime.⁵¹ Nevertheless, although Jakarta was perceived as the centre of power, money and knowledge, and 'regional productions suffer[ed] from the stigma of being "local"' (Sunindyo 1993:141-142), Sunindyo mentions that regional TVRI stations did prove their proper quality. As an example, she refers to two high standard productions of the TVRI station in Yogyakarta, firstly the plays, 'such as those by Gandrik (a people's theatre group in Yogya which includes elements of social critique in its productions', and secondly 'its *kethoprak* films which are based on *babad* (local historical legends and stories)' (Sunindyo 1993:141-142). As this chapter will elucidate, local TVRI stations did have their say and input in (part of) the centralized programming.

The creativity of this regional TVRI broadcaster can be traced back to the basic principles that were formulated at its founding. In the early days of TVRI Yogyakarta, it was decided that the Yogyakarta television station had not only been commissioned to preserve Javanese culture in an increasingly multicultural environment, but that it should also become a barometer of the arts and culture of the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java (Soenarto 2008:77).⁵² Functioning as a sensor of the surrounding atmosphere, in this case its cultural environment, in its programming TVRI Yogyakarta was expected to represent the arts and culture of Yogyakarta and Central Java and to reflect on the condition of and changes in local cultural life. Its broadcasting strategy was based on this barometer function. It consisted of digging into the cultural activities of the inhabitants of the region and returning these to the audiences (Soenarto 2008:76-77). While television observed the tenets of local culture and contributed to it, the people involved in the cultural processes became the focal point. With this barometer simile in mind, the founders of TVRI Yogyakarta introduced spatial (geographical) and cultural nearness, proximity.

⁵⁰ English translation of *Ria Jenaka*: Kitley (2000:376).

⁵¹ Sreberny (2000:104-105), focusing on the media in Iran, states that national culture 'may produce mediated culture within a narrowly defined ideological framework that fits the politics of the regime of the day.'

⁵² 'barometer seni budaya DIY dan Jawa Tengah' (Soenarto 2008:77). RM Soenarto succeeded Ir Dewabrata Kobarsih as head of TVRI Yogyakarta from 1969, according to his memoir. Anang Wiharyanto, TVRI Yogyakarta's Public Relations officer, stated that Soenarto was head between 1971 and 1975 (<https://anangwiharyanto.wordpress.com/profil/> [Last accessed July 2017]).

In the attempt to become a barometer of the (Javanese) regional artistic and cultural life, local artists, including Bagong Kussudiardja and Bei Tjokrowasito, and culture specialists and academics, including Umar Kayam and Bakdi Soemanto (Soenarto 2008:76), were invited to contribute to the presentation and representation of Javanese culture on television. In the programming, theatre, literature, traditional drama, wayang and kethoprak – all with a Javanese scent – , and the visual arts were allotted plenty of attention.⁵³ Broadcasters from the local radio station Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Yogyakarta, like Habib Bari, Soewanto Suwandi, Hardoyono and Soetadi joined TVRI Yogyakarta. Soenarto describes how in an initial effort to underline the station's local, Javanese identity, the opening tune of TVRI Jakarta was arranged for a gamelan instrumentation (2008:75-82).

Since then, local contributors have continued to play an important and influential role at the station. To the present day, some of TVRI's producers have participated in local cultural life as local artists (dancers, musicians, theatre actors) and/or have been closely involved in local networks of cultural practitioners (*budayawan*) and artists. This engagement is reflected in the choice of topics and genres, ways of representation, but also in how the potential target audiences are imagined. Their artistic aspirations have proven to be a counterweight to the government propaganda and the control of the national TVRI. The fairly independent character of the Special Region of Yogyakarta in its relationship to the national centre could also have contributed to this. The locality itself – or actually its image that was constructed in the course of time – contributed significantly to the branding of the station.

Branding: embracing the region

The image of the television station in Yogyakarta was indeed closely linked to the image of the national TVRI station. Above all, however, the station did (and still does) associate itself with the Special Region of Yogyakarta, whose most representative aspects were adopted in the station's identifiers. With these identifiers the station made (and makes) itself known to its audiences by means of an audiovisual compilation of these aspects, and they have been a strong means to enhance a nearness to the television viewers, a form of proximity. They include the view of the city as a cultural centre, in which both the palace (*kraton*) and the palace culture are prominently present alongside traditional and contemporary artists; a region of great historical importance, the scene of a decisive phase in the struggle for independence that led to its designation as a special region (*Daerah Istimewa*), and a location in which, many centuries earlier, the glorious court of Mataram had been established; an excellent centre of education and an attractive location for domestic and international tourism (Intani 1997:9). The goal of the station was to reflect these characteristics – in particular those of the city as centre of education and culture, but also the heritage of the region as a celebration of the past (Lowenthal 1998:x) – in its programmes. These should literally exude a similar breath (*senapas*) (Cahyono 1994a:55), an almost physical sense of the intimate connection between the television programmes and the surrounding region comparable to Wardhana's

⁵³ 'Media yang menyiarkan acara yang berbau Jawa'; personal communication Habib Bari, Yogyakarta, 14 August 2001.

experience when watching regional TVRI programmes abroad, as described in the Introduction to this dissertation. Pertinently, the rich cultural potential of the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java provided ample resources from which to produce interesting programmes (Cahyono 1994a:55). Kethoprak is one of the dramatic genres that fits this image of the city and the aims of the regional TVRI station. The genre is also an exemplification of the close connection between TVRI Yogyakarta's identity and 'tradition'. In short, TVRI Yogyakarta has constantly striven to represent Yogyakarta as a city of culture (*kota budaya*) and a centre of history and intellectualism. Consequently (local) Javanese culture has been assigned a major role in the station's programming.⁵⁴ This ideal is still carried forward in the station's present-day branding that I shall analyse when I focus on twenty-first century localizing strategies in Chapter 10, and in the Epilogue to the final chapter.

2 Programming arts and culture

The following brief sketch of TVRI Yogyakarta's programming gives an idea of how the station manoeuvred between its dual mission to voice the national and represent the local. Its purpose is to give a sense of the climate in which this was done. After TVRI Yogyakarta was made dependent on the national TVRI station, its programming was tailored to meet the stipulations set out for regional television stations in Indonesia: to relay broadcasts of the national TVRI station and to broadcast regionally produced programmes (including news, information, culture and children's programmes) for the consumption of the inhabitants of a specific region. Regions were determined by the geographical situation and the capacity of the radio frequencies available for TV broadcasts, and in this period sometimes covered several provinces (Direktorat Televisi 1972:67). The studio in Yogyakarta contributed to visualizing the development of the region, and to neutralizing (*me-neutralisir*) the broadcasts from the capital Jakarta – consisting of a considerable number of programmes from the West – so that the people living far from the city would not forget about their own culture (Direktorat Televisi 1972:230).⁵⁵ Potential cultural influences from abroad were considered a serious threat to the Indonesian identity, a concern that had already been voiced before the launch of the first Palapa satellite in 1976. At the end of the 1980s it led to the licensing of five private television stations, whose purpose was to hold a 'Westoxification' (Sen and Hill 2000:108) of Indonesian culture at bay. A comparable discourse was again brought up as an argument to establish local private television stations after the Soeharto period. In that instance, it focused on the dominance of 'Jakarta' and the failure to take the diversity of Indonesian cultures into account, rather than on foreign dominance (see Chapter 9).

Broadcasts by TVRI Yogyakarta that became popular among audiences in this early stage (1965-1972) included local performance genres like kethoprak and *wayang orang* (danced

⁵⁴ Personal communication Habib Bari, Yogyakarta, 14 August 2001.

⁵⁵ 'memberikan visualisasi realisasi perkembangan daerah, dan menjadikan pula wadah me-neutralisir siaran-siaran dari kota metropolit Jakarta, sehingga rakyat yang jauh dari kota yang kini sudah dapat melihat siaran2 televisi, tidak ter-robek2 hatinya lantaran terlalu banyak suguhan kebudayaan yang datang dari Barat, sehingga melupakan kebudayaan sendiri' (Direktorat Televisi 1972:230).

wayang drama), a children's serial performed by puppets, progress reports about the development of the region, the 'rural broadcasting' programme *Mbangun Desa* and programmes featuring regional cultures (Direktorat Televisi 1972:230). Before the establishment of private television and the use of satellite discs, the popularity of certain shows was easy to assess. If a programme failed to satisfy, the audiences had no other alternative than to turn the TV off. This meant that, at that time, TVRI audiences were 'captive audiences' – Lindsay uses the term for those audiences who are invited to watch a performance they have not selected themselves, and for television audiences watching TVRI broadcasts before the founding of private television (Lindsay 1995:665; Hutchby 2006:13). As Darma Putra illustrates, regional TVRI broadcasts had a strong resonance and impact. Every time the Balinese *drama gong* was broadcast by TVRI Denpasar, the streets in towns and villages were reported to be empty, as everybody was glued to their television set enjoying the programme. This was especially the case when a well-known group performed high quality drama. TVRI Yogyakarta's broadcasts of kethoprak elicited the same effect (Darma Putra 1998:30).

Ten years later, TVRI's programming policy, as described in the bilingual publication about the national television station from 1985, contained the following guidelines for the art and culture programmes: they were to guide and improve the quality of existing artistic expressions (either traditional or contemporary) and to expand the viewers' knowledge of the arts and culture of various places, regions and periods. Cultural values that would raise public appreciation of the arts and culture should be emphasized. The presentation of a cultural programme at a specific time and place should conform to public interest in such a time and place. Furthermore, cultural performances that were academic or experimental in nature should be accompanied by sufficient information and retain a connection to the culture of the people so as to make them acceptable and comprehensible (*Televisi Republik Indonesia* 1985:64-65). Consequently, television was urged to approximate its audiences by using several methods. Again strongly emphasizing the educational function of television, the guidelines point out the necessity of a relationship between the programme contents, the cultural environment in which it was broadcast and the television viewers. They stressed the active role television had to play in keeping the traditional cultures alive.

On the basis of his research in 1989-1990, McDaniel found that traditional performance arts were prominent in Indonesian television programming. He signals that the televised wayang golek performances were adapted to the needs of the medium. To fit TV schedules, the presentations were shortened from their usual seven- to nine-hour length. Sub-plots and side actions were stripped away to keep the main action going, reducing the performance to about two hours (McDaniel 1994:244-245).

The first private television stations had just been founded when McDaniel was doing his research. Therefore, TVRI had not yet fully entered the competition with the new broadcasters. What, if anything, had changed about a decade later, when the five private broadcasters were in full swing? When the economic crisis struck the television industry at the end of the 1990s, Soeharto resigned ushering in the Era of Reform. Although New Order

ideology was still very influential, in 1998 some artistic freedom was already making itself felt. This trend continued in the following years. TVRI Yogyakarta's programming in 1999 and 2000, when it was on its way to becoming a public broadcaster, already displayed several novelties compared to the programming in the previous years. The programme categories had also been partially redefined and reorganized (Wahyudi 1998:39). Did TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta still function as the barometer of the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java – although it no longer used the 'barometer' simile? And if so, how did it sensor and represent the locale?

3 Classifying programmes in an integrated schedule (1997-1999)

Until the end of 1998, the TVRI programming was strictly controlled and centrally regulated. The television directorate in Jakarta determined the programme categories for all TVRI stations throughout the country. All the information necessary for the central and the regional TVRI stations – from the programme criteria, the format and target audiences to the programming schedule – was set out in a book published annually containing the integrated schedule programming (Direktorat Televisi 1998a).

TVRI based its production on an integrated production system, the *sistem produksi terpadu* (Wahyudi 1994:2), consisting of a co-operation between the central station and the regional stations, of which the results were broadcast nationally. The integrated schedule programming had been introduced to strengthen the unity of the nation and direct the minds of the Indonesian people towards one path, aiding and abetting the national project (Wahyudi 1994:6). Since the 1970s this system had been implemented as a standardized programme format for all TVRI stations (McDaniel 1994:242).⁵⁶ As McDaniel states,

It allows regional stations to satisfy local preferences, yet gives central authorities control of the general shape of broadcasts. The uniform pattern permits stations to leave and rejoin the national network as required, though certain offerings, such as the national news, must be broadcast live by all. (ibid.)

The joint programmes were categorized as information (including news) and sports, education, entertainment (including culture, music, drama and film) and fillers, containing public service advertisements, information on development programmes and trailers.⁵⁷ In April 1988 the integrated schedule system was extended by adding extra evening programmes, like broadcasts of traditional or contemporary TV drama and series, films and live broadcasts of interesting international sport events (Wahyudi 1994:131). The Yogyakarta TVRI station played a significant role in the co-production of these programmes and added its own flavour to the programmes' contents, especially those to do with entertainment. The relay

⁵⁶ Wahyudi (1994:125) mentions 1983 as the year in which the Integrated Schedule Programming (Pola Acara Terpadu) between the central TVRI station and the regional TVRI stations began. It was introduced to avoid the overlapping of the programmes broadcast by the national TVRI station (TVRI Pusat) and the regional stations (TVRI Daerah).

⁵⁷ Berita penerangan, Olahraga (31.44%), Pendidikan (12.10%), Hiburan (Budaya, musik, drama dan film) (49.57%), and Acara penunjang (6.89%) (Wahyudi 1994:8).

of these co-productions was compulsory for all TVRI stations until 1998/1999 when regional stations were given the opportunity to increase the broadcasting of their own local productions (*Direktorat Televisi* 1998a: Introduction).

Between 1997 and 1999, TVRI Yogyakarta's productions originated from two departments: the News and Information Department (*Pemberitaan*) and the Broadcasting Department (*Penyiaran*). The programmes of the News and Information Department of TVRI Yogyakarta were subdivided into three categories: news, features and reports.⁵⁸ The Broadcasting Department was responsible for the categories culture, drama, music, and education and religion. These categories did not deviate much from the central TVRI's first programme categorization of 1963, although 'the proportions ha[d] altered over time' (Kitley 2000:39). Absent was the category of advertisements, as the broadcasting of commercials had been banned since 1981 (Kitley 2000:42, 63-72; Sen and Hill 2000:114-115). This ban had led to a new programming schedule as extra time slots for which new programmes were proposed had become available (Arswendo Atmowiloto 1986:57). President Soeharto was convinced that the available time slots would best be used for activities and programmes that would lubricate the development of the nation (Atmowiloto 1986:16). From April 1997 onwards, programmes of the Yogyakarta regional television station with a culture and entertainment component filled 35 percent of its daily broadcasts, compared to 30 percent for news and information, 30 percent for educational programmes and 5 percent for special programmes like fillers and trailers (Intani 2000:5).

In the meantime, after many years in the making a programme classification for all broadcasters had finally been regulated by law (see Kitley 2000, and Sen and Hill 2000). The 1997 Indonesian Broadcasting Law required broadcasting institutions (both radio and television) to classify their programmes on the basis of the contents and relationship to target audiences. The programming had to be adapted to the age categories of the viewers and the time of broadcasting. When it put this classification in place, the government claimed it was protecting audiences from negative influences and simplifying their choice for a specific programme. When allocating time slots, the broadcast institutions had to bear in mind the Indonesian time-zones and especially the times required to fulfill religious duties. They should also take into account that unexpected nation-wide broadcasts from Jakarta might intervene in the regional stations' programming. The legislation governing programme planning closely resembled the requirements of the integrated schedule system. Programme planning was compulsory to ensure that the actual broadcasting, that was the result of a co-operation between the central and regional TVRI stations, kept in balance and ran smoothly. Programming should cover a period of at least six months to one year. Programmes of a current nature could be adjusted on the spot according to the needs. The programmes should be grouped into categories whose aims had to be straightforward, heeding the general habits of society, and the needs and wishes of the target groups. Besides programmes featuring

⁵⁸ The same held for TVRI Semarang and Surabaya; personal communication Kristiadi, TVRI Yogyakarta, August 2001.

education and culture, commercials, and those focusing on religion, the categories should encompass news broadcasts, information, sports and entertainment.⁵⁹

In October 1998 it was announced that the integrated schedule format was to be abolished. As the relay of TVRI broadcasts from and co-productions with Jakarta would no longer be mandatory, regional TVRI stations would be free to fill their broadcasts consonant with their own potential and possibilities (pry/ant 1998). Now on a loose rein, the broadcasting of local productions increased significantly.

From 1 April 1999 onwards, TVRI Yogya altered its categorization. The logic behind this new categorization tallied more closely with globally used categories than previous programme plannings had been. The categories had been adapted to relatively new television genres like talk shows, quizzes, features and documentaries – this is where the global comes in –, but also to a new grouping of the already existing genres. Therefore the category drama had been redefined and now contained all the dramatic genres with the exception of wayang, dance drama (*sendratari*) and opera that were categorized as performance (*pergelaran*), as was orchestral music (*orkestra*). Even the rural development programme *Mbangun Desa*, originally produced by the news and information department, would be taken under the wing of the drama department. The so-called cultural programmes (*acara budaya*) were placed in the category ‘features, documentary and instructional’ (*features, dokumenter, instruksional*).⁶⁰

4 Javanese-language programmes

Broadcasts emphasizing regional languages, ethnicity and religion were an essential part of domestic producers’ strategies to attract viewers (Kitley 2000:340). In the case of the programmes discussed in this section, the ‘audience appeal derives from the representation of particularistic cultural associations’ (Kitley 2000:340). Programmes featuring shadow puppet theatre, diverse Javanese talk shows, kethoprak and *Mbangun Desa* pre-eminently represented Javanese culture from Yogyakarta. In its culturally oriented programmes, TVRI Yogyakarta pushed the boat out even more to win its audiences’ sympathy. On several occasions the station received awards for these programmes in local and national television competitions. Nevertheless, the audiences watched them critically and commented on their shortcomings – mainly attributable to the restricted amount of production time available and the limited budget (Bakdi Soemanto 1997:325).

The annually compiled programme criteria of TVRI Yogyakarta offer an overview of the television programmes per category.⁶¹ They prescribe the characteristics for each programme, including the duration, the programme criteria, the form of presentation, the target audience, the broadcasting frequency and time slot, and the language use. On the basis of this

⁵⁹ UUP 1997, Pasal 46 Ayat 2, Penjelasan.

⁶⁰ Rencana programming TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta per 1 April 1999, tahun anggaran 1999/2000’, TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, Seksi Siaran.

⁶¹ Kriteria mata acara program TVRI stasiun Yogyakarta.

programme criteria compilation, I want to discuss how TVRI Yogyakarta represented the local in the programme categories featuring arts and culture, drama and music. My examples feature Javanese-language programmes. Just as the station embraced the locale of Yogyakarta in its branding, so it also did in its programming. Focusing on and inspired by traditional local performance genres, it reflected the culture of the region in which it was broadcasting and contributed to it.

Programmes featuring arts and culture

Some of the programmes in this category presented the arts and culture by means of a diegetic explanation, meaning the arts and culture were discussed, not shown. They consisted of a presentation in a talk-show format or humorous discussions, featured prominent Indonesians or offered perspectives on the development of Indonesian arts and culture. In other cases a mimetic approach prevailed, presenting Javanese performing arts genres or focusing on local artists. All the programmes targeted a general audience and pursued informative, educational and entertaining aims. The language of presentation was either Javanese or Indonesian. This choice was principally driven by the prescription in broadcasting legislation that decreed that Indonesian would be the mandatory language in electronic mass media. The use of local languages was allowed as a medium of communication if and when it was needed to support certain programmes – this had no further explication. Legislation required that, whenever possible, the local language should be translated into Indonesian, thereby enabling speakers of other local languages to understand the programme's contents.⁶²

Among the newly created Javanese-language programmes was *Pringgitan*, first broadcast on 24 July 1999. TVRI Yogyakarta conceived the talk show *Pringgitan* on the eve of its thirty-fifth anniversary. The title of the programme offers the framework to interpret its contents and style. It refers to the *pringgitan*, the space in a traditional Javanese aristocrat's house between the *pendhapa*, an open square pavilion with a roof supported by pillars, and the inner part of the house, the *dalem*, the place in which wayang kulit (*ringgit*) performances and ceremonies used to be held. The setting of the programme was therefore imbued with a 'classical', kraton-like look. It consisted of carved walls and decorations, bronze vases, a low table set with delicate china. In this setting, the presenter, called the master-of-ceremonies (*pranata cara* or MC, as at contemporary 'traditional Javanese' wedding ceremonies) and specialists, who were treated as guests, were seated. The themes were presented as a dialogue between the *pranata cara* and his guests. This interactive format allowed audiences to phone-in directly to ask a question or give some comment. The *pranata cara* answered the questions immediately and involved the guests in the discussion. *Pringgitan* was broadcast live once a month and lasted for half an hour.

In every episode, Javanese cultural values, in particular ways to preserve them and modernize them, were discussed in Javanese, in the polite speech style *basa*. The first broadcast, for example, focused on problems to do with the art of kethoprak. The famous

⁶² UUP 1997 Pasal 33 (1) & (2) (Muljono 1998:22) and Penjelasan Pasal 33 Ayat (2) (Muljono 1998:77). Later on these rules were adapted. See for example Loven, 1999.

Yogyakarta kethoprak actors Bondan Nusantara, Marsidah and Ki Sugati were invited as informants/specialists/guests. All the programme's elements were Javanese and were said to belong to the traditional Javanese idiom (*idiom tradisi Jawa*): the setting, the properties, the costumes of those who were visually present, the language of communication spoken by the host, the guests and the people phoning in, and the accompanying music. By producing and broadcasting this programme the aim of TVRI Yogyakarta was to create what was thought to be a typically Javanese cultural milieu (*lingkungan pergaulan*), considered to be in imminent danger of eroding rapidly away; to offer a programme that was tailored to the taste of the audiences who faithfully paid their television licence fee; and to contribute to the currency of Javanese culture, a buffer to prevent traditional values from being left behind by the increasingly fast rate of developments (*TVRI Yogya siapkan* 1999). It was hoped that the actualized Javanese culture would breathe inspiration into the national culture.⁶³

Of the TVRI Yogyakarta's productions featuring Javanese culture in the 1990s, the talk show *Obrolan Angkring* (Chatting at the Foodstall) captured ample attention of urban and rural audiences. Broadcast regularly from 1 April 1997 onwards, it depicted a more present-day Java than in *Pringgitan*. A setting and context – that in the eyes of younger Javanese referred to a traditional lifestyle – were used as background to discuss actual themes like the influence of globalization, drug abuse or the trend of dyeing one's hair purple to flaunt modernity. In the midst of the economic crisis,⁶⁴ for instance, four consecutive special broadcasts of *Obrolan Angkring*, bestowed ample attention on the impact of the crisis and the factors put forward as the causes of this crisis, collusion, corruption and nepotism ((can) 1998; (R-5) 1998).

In the show the *angkringan* – a long carrying shoulder pole with containers of food, drinks and utensils on either end (Robson and Wibisono 2002:45), used by peddlers – was given the form (and connotative meaning) of a foodstall, at which the characters gathered and held their discussions (*obrolan*). This reconstructed location represented yet another aspect of local culture: for the inhabitants of Yogyakarta and visitors of the city, the foodstalls are part and parcel of the city's image. They stand for typical Javanese food, enjoying a pleasant evening with friends chatting and eating, having a good discussion while imbibing tea or a hot ginger drink. Not only was the setting recognizable to the audiences, the permanent group of (very popular) *Obrolan Angkring* actors who depicted stereotypical characters usually performed in the presence of well-known Yogyakarta stars, *bintang tamu*. The series' playwright/scriptwriter and director, Kristiadi, attributed *Obrolan Angkring*'s success to the fact that the programme offered easy identification with the main characters who were said to represent citizens of Yogyakarta (Bosnak 2006:102). The participation of famous local artists made the show even more attractive, in particular for the public who attended the recordings at the TVRI studio. Once in a while, the programme was presented and recorded in iconic spaces,

⁶³ Personal communication RM Kristiadi.

⁶⁴ See: 'HUT televisi di masa krisis' and 'TVRI di persimpangan jalan'.

like the Yogyakarta palace; with Javanese dancer and comedian Didik Nini Thowok acting as guest star, the public flocked the palace to witness the show ((cr11) 2001c).⁶⁵

The traditional setting was used as a context in which contemporary social and other problems could be raised and discussed by the owners of the foodstall, the local visitors and the guest stars. Pros and cons were weighed up; controversial opinions were aired. Humour was the device that alleviated the gravity of the problems. The use of deliberate overacting, word play and puns, and humorous body language, all highly reminiscent of the humour used in traditional Javanese theatre, succeeded in making this programme attractive to young people. In contrast to most other Javanese-language programmes in which the standard vernacular prevailed, in *Obrolan Angkring* a mixture of Javanese, slang and Indonesian, called hybrid Javanese (*bahasa Jawa Hibrida*), was used in the discussions. Colourful and lively, sometimes vulgar or coarse as it was, it was close to the day-to-day contemporary Javanese (Sucahyo 2001b). The references to local persons, situations and themes also preserved the link between the programme and the locale. Combined with the language use, they proved that the broadcaster was still continuing its barometer function.

To put these Javanese-language programmes in perspective, I would like to mention two examples of programmes featuring local culture, presented in Indonesian. The first one is *Kedai Djogdja* (The Djogdja Stall), a production of TVRI Yogyakarta, broadcast from July 1997. This time, the setting of a foodstall was used to represent the Yogyakarta dance world – ‘modern, contemporary, classic, traditional’ – and issues concerning dance ((R-5) 1997). It was designed to function as a bridging medium between dancers, choreographers and society, and to increase the people’s appreciation of new choreographies. The dances were presented in a village atmosphere, and discussed in the setting of a foodstall (*kedai*) ((R-5)a 1997; (aa) 1997; (cc) 1997). From December 1997, the series was presented by soap star Ratu Tria (Inayati H. 1997; (R-5)b 1997).

The second example is the programme *Hiburan Tari* (Dance Entertainment), featuring all kinds of dance genres and styles from different Indonesian regions. Presenting this programme, the television station in Yogyakarta kept to its mission of disseminating the nation’s culture, in co-operation with the national television station. It presented art that was ‘neat and orderly, disciplined, inoffensive, attractive or impressive to look at, pleasant to listen to’ (Yampolsky 1995:712). The programme criteria required that the dances could be either traditional, classical or modern, or consist of new creations. Such qualifications were taken for granted and no further clarification was given. The programme, recorded in a studio and presented in Indonesian, offered a prettified version of dances and music from all over Indonesia, but concentrating on Central and East Java, and Bali. Prettified means that the tempi were speeded up and the length been cut to tailor it to the television time slots. Beautiful, neat choreographies were adapted to the position of the cameras, new costumes and make-up were used and the camera work emphasized the beauty and elegance of the young performers in close-ups. The aesthetics of the medium seemed to have taken over the aesthetics of the performance.

⁶⁵ I personally witnessed the recording of this episode on 5 August 2001.

Drama

The category of drama encompassed wayang, kethoprak, soap series (sinetron) and a children's programme (*Bingkisan untuk Anak*, A gift for the Littlies) in which different performing arts and music, both traditional and contemporary, and traditional children's games were presented 'to preserve and develop these art forms and to equip the children to appreciate them', concurring with New Order ideology and discourse (*Kriteria mata acara* 1997/1998). The language of communication in the soaps and the children's programme was Indonesian.

The two programmes in this category that used Javanese as the language of communication were *Kethoprak* and *Wayang*, the latter a general category referring to all kinds of wayang shows. Again, the purpose of these broadcasts was educational – to raise the appreciation of the audiences as well as to preserve, revive and/or develop the genres called traditional – and entertaining. The drama was required to be of good quality and to provide the interested audiences with 'sound entertainment' (*Kriteria mata acara* 1997/1998).

The following description of *Kethoprak* gives an idea of the detailed requirements as formulated in TVRI Yogyakarta's programme criteria booklet.

Duration: 53'

Programme criteria: presents folk stories, myths, epics, legends, history, and made-up stories based on existing stories (*carangan*), using gamelan or other traditional instruments as accompaniment. Aims: to raise the audiences' appreciation and to preserve qualitatively good kethoprak, as well as to provide the interested audiences with sound entertainment.

Form of presentation: performance in the studio and in other places; traditional drama

Target audience: general

Frequency: four to five times a month (from the first until the fifth Tuesday)

Time slot: 19.32-20.30 [1998]

Language: Javanese

TVRI Yogyakarta differentiated between two types of audiences: urban and rural. While a talk show like *Obrolan Angkring* was a favourite among urban audiences, the kethoprak serials were extremely popular in rural areas (Intani 1997:10). They were utterly connected both to the locale and its inhabitants and to TVRI Yogyakarta, and they represented Javanese tradition. *Kethoprak*, classified under the category drama and called the station's 'primadona', contributed significantly to the image of the station. By the end of the 1970s, the televised genre had become popular for several reasons. Earlier, it had already been mediated by radio and cassette. The familiarity of the Javanese audiences with the stories and the use of the Javanese language were instrumental in its success (Monel 1993:15-17). Whereas *Obrolan Angkring* offered an image of present-day Java, in mediatized *kethoprak* the Javanese world imaged is an interpretation of the past according to the constraints of kethoprak and television – although ample reference is made to the present. In the next two chapters, I shall focus on TVRI Yogyakarta's kethoprak productions.

With its live broadcasts of night-long shadow puppet theatre performed once a month at the Sasana Hinggil Dwi Abad building in the Yogyakarta court compound, TVRI Yogyakarta was engaging in the continuation of a local tradition. The wayang kulit performances, enabled

by a co-operation between RRI and the Yogya-based newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, had been broadcast live by the local radio station RRI Nusantara II since 11 January 1958. They continued to be broadcast – almost non-stop – every second Saturday of the month, from 21.00 to 04.30 hrs. Later both TVRI Yogyakarta (from July 1977) and the local branch of the puppeteer organization Ganasidi (Lembaga Seni Pedalangan Propinsi DIY, the Institute for the Art of Puppetry) (in 1991) joined forces with the radio station and the daily in the organizing and broadcasting of this monthly event. Antonius Darmanto (a radio practitioner and researcher of the radio broadcasting of Javanese literature) states that the goal of the organizers was to bring sound and cheap entertainment to the people (*hiburan yang sehat dan murah*). Darmanto's remark about sound entertainment is a reference to one of the tasks electronic mass media in Indonesia were required to fulfill as their role was defined in the 1997 Broadcasting Law. As a mass communication system, broadcasting was expected to become an effective tool in the struggle of the people to build the nation, to forge national unity and union, to sharpen the people's minds, to develop and preserve the nation's culture, a means to inform, enlighten and educate the people, to provide sound entertainment, to offer public opinion a channel and to encourage the participation of the people in the development of the country.⁶⁶ They had chosen the Sasana Hinggil Dwi Abad building to enliven this southern court square in the evenings and to offer a location in which both elite (in the palace!) and the common people (the palace building is for everybody!) would feel welcome (Darmanto 1998). When the complete Baratayuda series was performed during the first year of its existence, the hall was always crammed with people ((Moel) 1998).

The performances and the broadcasts were seen to have contributed to the preservation and development of the art of conventional shadow puppetry in Indonesia – meaning no contemporary experimental creations would be allowed – , and to Javanese culture in general. For several reasons, they can be called unique. The conservative management pattern guaranteed a continuation of the performances for more than fifty years. Darmanto says that this is unique in the history of Javanese traditional art performances. Furthermore, the organizing committee, the Panitia Pergelaran Wayang Kulit (PPWK), is the only organization ever to have succeeded in having the complete series of the rarely staged Baratayuda epic performed. Thirdly, the event set the trend for radio broadcasts of wayang kulit performances. After the broadcasts of the local radio station RRI Yogyakarta had proved a success, RRI Surakarta and Semarang also began broadcasting wayang kulit performances. Lastly, the routine performances were decisive in the careers of the puppeteers. Although the fee they received was not particularly generous, puppeteers were eager to have an opportunity to perform at the hall, as it was the best possible chance to become famous to a wider audience after a successful show – or to disappear (Darmanto 1998). The co-operation with TVRI Yogyakarta came to an end in 2011 when the station had to reorganize itself. In 2012 TVRI again was invited to act as a sponsor by the organization of the monthly performances ((Ewp)-c 2012).

The other broadcasts of wayang kulit and other types of wayang by TVRI Yogyakarta (*Pergelaran Wayang*) followed the innovations and developments in the world of wayang and

⁶⁶ Penjelasan Atas UUP1997, Umum 1.

took part in the innovating and developing of the genres themselves, a manoeuvre essential to capturing the attention of the audiences. In 1997, the programme co-ordinator made several suggestions for the improvement of the programming of the following year. He asked for an extension of the time slot for shadow puppet broadcasts from one to two hours, and proposed to add a serialized wayang orang with a quiz (*wayang orang sayembara*) to the programming. His suggestion was inspired by the success of serialized kethoprak.

Music

Among the programmes featuring music, only *Langen Gita* focused explicitly on a Javanese cultural expression using the Javanese vernacular. *Langen Gita* presented Javanese texts, sung to the accompaniment of traditional or modern instruments, both pentatonic and diatonic, in a relaxed atmosphere in a typical Javanese performance setting, reflecting the ambiance encapsulated in the name. Other local, mostly hybrid musical genres and styles featured in the Indonesian-spoken programmes *Jendela Musik* (A window on music) and *Irama Keroncong* (The rhythm of keroncong). In *Jendela Musik*, *kasidah* (Islamic poetic songs in Indonesian)⁶⁷ and *campursari* were the genres most frequently heard. Campursari was born as a result of global musical encounters. The vocalists who sing Javanese lyrics are often accompanied by a mixed instrumentation – a synthesizer and drum set with traditional gamelan instruments (Perlman 1999:8) – , or just a keyboard. Originally a combination of keroncong and gamelan, the genre developed under influence of *dangdut*, pop music and other musical genres. *Irama Keroncong* presented music performed by the Radio Orchestra of Yogyakarta (Orkes Radio Yogyakarta, ORY).

Special programming

Important occasions, like the celebration of Indonesian Independence, the anniversary of TVRI, the fasting month and the end of the fasting month, or the National Day of the Press (Hari Pers Nasional), provide the television industry with opportunities to take a break from routine programming and compile a special broadcasting schedule. Alongside the celebration, the occasion is used by the television industry to strengthen its profile and to re-engage with its audiences by creating special broadcasts.

TVRI Yogyakarta's identity was most clearly expressed in the programming of its anniversary celebrations. In August 1998, for instance, it organized several competitions, and the station's most popular programmes were broadcast in co-operation with TVRI Semarang (Suwanto 1998:13). Until 24 August, 'entertainment with a traditional or local nuance', like *Mbangun Desa*, *Kethoprak*, *Wayang Kulit* and *Obrolan Angkring* were broadcast. They were followed by broadcasts of 'non-traditional entertainment', like soaps, a student debate programme and various music programmes (Intani 1998:15). As reported in the many interviews with the head of TVRI published in the local newspapers, the television station used the occasion to advertise its enthusiasm for innovation, the beginning of a new broadcasting year and the presentation of the new programming to the public. Winning back

⁶⁷ On Kasidah, see Arps 1996.

the hearts of the audiences who had left TVRI, opting for private Indonesian or foreign broadcasters, was one of the station's principal aims. TVRI Yogyakarta received positive responses from audience members, who sent letters to the programme producers and to local newspapers. In these letters, fans explained how they had watched the serials with the whole family, and how the programmes had made them forget about the economic crisis. Some of them complained that TVRI's programming left something to be desired as its broadcasting schedule tended to be changed unexpectedly. Consequently they often missed their favourite broadcasts. The serials broadcast in the framework of the celebrations made a positive addition to TVRI's image, they wrote. Many of the letter-writers asked the station to keep their favourite programmes scheduled and broadcast them more regularly (at least once a week), and above all to announcing their time slots clearly.

Conclusions

As the examples presented in this chapter show, TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta gradually developed an original programming, focusing on cultural expressions from the locale in which it was broadcasting. During a significant part of its existence it was controlled by the national TVRI station and functioned as a mouthpiece of the national government. However, it took pride in catering to local audiences, at its launch stating that it aimed to be the barometer of regional arts and culture. It later continued this role but cast aside the barometer simile. In the course of time, in response to new impulses, in particular the competition with the private television stations, and later its loosening tie with TVRI Stasiun Jakarta, it significantly increased the number of these local productions. Although it initially broadcast televisual adaptations of live performances, it developed its own television formats, based on and inspired by traditional shows.

The programmes discussed above feature various communities and represent various aspects of their cultures. The most striking aspect is that the most popular programmes in which Javanese culture played a prominent role were dramatic genres. These are better suited to the medium of television than other genres, moreover television itself has a dramatizing character. Besides, live Javanese drama had always been popular. Contrary to the programmes featuring prettified dance and music, these dramatic genres were not 'congruent' with the 'aesthetic and logic' of the government (Yampolsky, 1995:718). Because of the use of different styles of the Javanese language, humour and parody, the neatness and the refinement in some programmes make way for emotions and a little disorder. In a nutshell, the category of drama very aptly suited the 'system of expectations, orientations and rules that moves between the producers, the broadcasts and the audiences' (Feuer 1992:144).

The overall focus on the traditional and its rural connotations was also tailored to these expectations, orientations and rules; contemporary urban culture was not shown with the exception of some music programmes, and even what was called creation (*kreasi*) or *modern* was still often connected to tradition. As such the programmes provided the audiences with symbols that enabled them to identify with the programme content. The region represented

was very local: it was Yogyakarta, and often it was the village. Javanese should be read as 'Yogyakarta', meaning that the geographical, the ethnic and the ideological connotations of 'Java' and 'Javanese' were interpreted in a narrow sense. Of course, the limited reach of the station and its target groups played a role in this. TVRI Yogyakarta's identity was closely linked to its environment. It dexterously used this context in its image-building and branding, in its programming, and to foster a feeling of *akrab*-ness between the programmes and the audiences. Besides, most of the staff producing the programmes discussed above were native of Yogyakarta. Hence, 'the relationship between spatial and virtual neighborhoods' (Appadurai 1998:189) was fairly tight.

The national was present in TVRI's missions and messages, and in the fact that the local television station was owned by the central government. It was also present when the broadcast of locally produced programmes had to be postponed to some unknown date, because of the mandatory relay of programmes produced by the central TVRI station in Jakarta. Nevertheless, the national was also counteracted: because of the use of Javanese as the language of communication, the national language hegemony and legislation governing language use in the Indonesian media were contested. None of the Javanese spoken programmes offered translations or was provided with Indonesian subtitles.

Although advertising on TVRI was not (yet again) officially allowed by the government, it sidestepped the prohibition determined to play an active part in the culture industry and to struggle for its slice of the cake. With its week-long broadcasting of specific programmes like *Obrolan Angkring* and *Kethoprak* once a year, TVRI was adept at using culture to disseminate the more or less hidden advertisements of the sponsors.

In the programme descriptions, culture is defined as 'expressions of culture' in the form of traditional performance and art genres. Consequently, it was represented as a vehicle to inform and entertain its audiences and to stimulate their interest and appreciation, in a manner consonant with the national government's aims and mission. Certain aspects of Javanese culture were used as a framework within which to convey government messages (for instance, in *kethoprak* and *wayang kulit*) or to discuss contemporary problems (*Obrolan Angkring*). For its audiences recognition, proximity and *akrab*-ness played an important role. But overall, *Kethoprak* and *Wayang*, *Pringgitan* and *Obrolan Angkring*, each in their own way, were representations of (Yogyakarta) Javanese-ness, and from this perspective culture encompasses more than performing arts. It seems that TVRI Yogya's popularity in the past can be partly attributed to this adherence to Javanese culture, and to its development of a proper repertoire.

4 Traditional Javanese performance? Kethoprak at TVRI Yogyakarta

Television features three kinds of kethoprak performances: kethoprak for television, kethoprak on television and television kethoprak. (Bondan Nusantara 1990:41,55, 1991d:42).⁶⁸

Reflecting on the rapidly increasing impact of foreign cultural influences on traditional arts in Indonesia, the famous Javanese puppeteer Ki Manteb Soedharsono said he was convinced that traditional arts were being forced to enter into a close engagement with these extraneous influences. He acknowledged that this view was not new. From time immemorial, said Ki Manteb, Indonesians had been accustomed to associate (*bergaul*) with cultures from abroad. As an example, he referred to the indisputable presence of influences from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam (Abbas dan Subro 1995:155).⁶⁹

Kethoprak is an example of a Javanese dramatic genre that time and again, ever since its coming into being more than a century ago, has been absorbing and integrating influences from its surroundings. Essentially a Javanese affair, it developed from a modern urban commercial performance genre into one that has been attributed the designation ‘traditional’. TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta has played an influential role in the broadcasting of this local genre. After sketching the beginnings of the genre, in this chapter I shall concentrate on televised kethoprak. Bondan Nusantara’s three categories of televised kethoprak will serve as a starting point: kethoprak for television, kethoprak on television and television kethoprak. In Chapter 5, two examples will be paid special attention: kethoprak on television (*Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda*) – based on an analysis of the 1993 TVRI Yogyakarta broadcast; and television kethoprak (*Kethoprak Sayembara*) – based on an analysis of local newspaper articles.

Kethoprak’s connection to Javanese tradition has been an inexhaustable topic of discussion among practitioners, researchers and government institutions. In order to grasp the most important points in these discussions, I focus on the notions of kethoprak and tradition held by two prominent kethoprak actors, script-writers and directors, Handung Kus Sudyarsana and Bondan Nusantara.

The discussions about kethoprak and tradition reveal that defining tradition as it pertains to kethoprak is a complicated matter. In the section on the effects of television on kethoprak as a so-called traditional art form, I shall reflect on the discourse about these effects on ways to preserve the genre, the loss of tradition and the erosion of its *adiluhung* features. Tradition in this sense is bound up with ideology and a more theoretical approach to kethoprak. Any

⁶⁸ ‘Wonten tigang jenis Kethoprak ingkang dipun-tayangaken televisi. Injih menika Kethoprak kangge Televisi, Kethoprak ing Televisi saha Kethoprak Televisi [...]’ (Bondan Nusantara 1990:43, 54-56; 1991d:42).

⁶⁹ ‘Akulturasi budaya di negeri Nusantara semakin seru. Arus budaya modern datang dengan derasnya membanjiri kebun seni tradisi. Arus deras budaya manca itu membuat seni tradisi mau tak mau harus bergaul akrab. Namun hal ini bukan sesuatu yang baru. Sejak dulu nenek moyang telah terbiasa bergaul dengan budaya-budaya dari luar. Misalnya pengaruh Hindu, Budha, Islam dan lain-lain. Ki Manteb memandang sudah wajar pengaruh-pengaruh itu datang’ (Abbas dan Subro 1995:155).

development and innovation should accordingly remain within the constraints of the genre, whatever these may be. Kethoprak practitioners (when creating, performing, and/or broadcasting the genre) treat tradition as an active process. They accept development and innovation as necessities and part and parcel of the creative character of the genre. But, since kethoprak practitioners are both artists and observers-cum-critics, they adhere to both a normative and a pragmatic stance towards the genre, depending on the context.

1 *Kethoprak*, ‘essentially a Javanese affair’

Kethoprak is a Javanese dramatic performance genre that came into being in the late nineteenth century as a result of and/or a reaction towards the processes of modernization in Indonesia (Vaničková 1965:402-403; Budi Susanto 2000:31). The precise origin of the genre, the connection between kethoprak as folk art and as urban popular drama, and the history of its development have been the topic of extensive discussions and have produced a diversity of ideas about its periodization.⁷⁰ Wijaya and Sutjipto (1977:11) mention the year 1887 as the beginning of *kethoprak lesung*, kethoprak accompanied by singing and percussion using a wooden rice pounder, and divide the history of kethoprak into three periods. As it is not based on clear concepts and characteristics, this division raises a number questions (Wahyana Giri MC 1992). In the 1920s, when the genre developed under the influence of the Malay-spoken *stambul* theatre (Cohen 2006:3, 371-372) and European theatre and film, it enjoyed huge popularity, as the following two examples show. An article in *Warna-Warta* of 19 May 1927 signals the mushrooming of kethoprak troupes in the area of Wates, close to Yogyakarta.⁷¹ Another article in the same newspaper, entitled ‘Kethoprak causing victims’ (*Lantaran ketoprak* 1927), reports on the large audiences in Tempel (Yogyakarta) flocking to watch rehearsals of the local kethoprak troupe.⁷² The victims (*korban*) in the title refer to members of the audience who climbed a lime tree in such large numbers it seemed as if the tree was bearing human fruit, until suddenly one of the branches broke and the people tumbled down.

In its new shape, since the 1920s kethoprak has embodied threefold features: from the wayang tradition, the folk tradition and the modern theatre (Vaničková 1965:414). Most of these features have persisted up to the present. It is performed on a stage by actors and is accompanied by a gamelan orchestra and male and female singers. Traditionally beating on a *keprak* or *kenthongan*, small wooden slit drums (Kunst 173: 192-193), was used to mark either the beginning or the end of the scenes, to stress an action or strong emotion and to

⁷⁰ On the history of kethoprak, see also Kunst 1973:287-288; Vaničková 1965 and 1967; Kus Sudyarsana 1984/1985:60-64 and 1989:15-22; Hatley 2008; Cohen 2016.

⁷¹ ‘Katoprak satoe komedie jang boeat orang di Vorstenlanden soedah tidah asing lagi. Begitoe djoega ini waktoe di Wates moentjoelnja ketoprak ada seperti toemboehnja djamoer di waktoe oedjan’ (*Oedjan ketoprak* 1927). I would like to thank Peter Keppy for sharing this information (and the following references to *Sin Po* and *Warna-Warta*) with me.

⁷² ‘Itoe ketoprak kaloe waktoe gladi (training) banjak orang jang dateng menonton, tapi tida seperti pada hari Minggoe jang laloe loear biasa banjknja orang jang menonton, sahingga tempat itoe mendjadi penoeh orang banjak, saking banjknja penonton laloe pada liat naek di atas poehoen djeroek. Itoe poehoen djeroek sakoetika keliatan berboeah manoesia, tida disangka sangka mendadak itoe tjabang poehoen laloe pada patah dan menimpah orang jang dibawahnja itoe poehoen.’

accompany particular dance movements. It also sent the *gamelan* players a signal to commence or stop playing or switch to another melody or rhythm. It was the cue for the actors to enter and leave the stage. Present-day performances tend to omit the use of the *keprak*. The themes can be drawn from Javanese legends and history, or from Javanese interpretations of non-Javanese stories. The dialogues are spoken in contemporary Javanese, and are couched in a typical vocabulary and prosody; the singing is also in Javanese.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, one of its most notable features, no doubt affected by the dynamics introduced by the many and varied troupes in Southeast Asia, was a mutual dissemination of ideas and influences between urban popular theatre forms. Consequently kethoprak shares common characteristics with other forms of urban popular drama in Southeast Asia, that were ‘entertainment-oriented and highly commercial’ (Tan Sooi Beng 1997:18). Among these theatrical genres are the Malayan *bangsawan*, the *zarzuela* of the Philippines, the *likay* of Thailand, the *lakon bassac* of Cambodia, the *cai luong* of Vietnam, the *komedi stambul* of the Netherlands East Indies, the *ludruk* of East Java, the *sandiwara* or *tonil* of West Java (Tan Sooi Beng 1997:18) and the Balinese drama gong.

However, although kethoprak was indubitably influenced by different cultures (and can be considered a hybrid form) and has inevitably incorporated elements of these other theatrical genres, its essential character is still perceived to be Javanese. Vaničková calls kethoprak ‘essentially a Javanese affair’. The author, who conducted her research on kethoprak in 1961-62, stated that, ‘[i]t has its roots in the Javanese milieu and is performed in Javanese, by Javanese, for Javanese’ (Vaničková 1965:398). Geographically, it is one part of the cultural heritage of Central Java, whereas ludruk, another Javanese theatrical genre, is of East Javanese origin and is prominent in Surabaya and Sidoarjo (Vaničková 1965:418-419). More specifically, Yogyakarta has become ‘the’ centre of kethoprak. To such an extent that, as Hatley states, since the early twentieth century this popular theatre form has become explicitly identified with the city (Hatley 2004:66), and kethoprak activities in the area of Yogyakarta have influenced the standards and stylistic models of the genre in other areas (Hatley 1985:7). In 1957, the first national kethoprak festival and congress were held in Yogyakarta (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:339-340). Despite the presence of famous touring kethoprak troupes from East Java (Siswo Budoyo and Wahyu Budoyo) and Surakarta (Kethoprak Cokrojo), the image of kethoprak is that of a quintessential part of the cultural landscape of Yogyakarta.

Although essentially perceived as Javanese, kethoprak has a long history of political involvement in a national context. In particular, it has been used to advocate revolutionary and nationalist ideas.⁷³ Over time, in different settings, various agents prompted by various interests pushed it either to politicize or depoliticize. During the colonial period, it was used as a medium to stir the national consciousness of the people in the struggle for an independent Indonesia (Vaničková 1967:131; Kus Sudyarsana, 1984/1985:59).⁷⁴ The colonial government frequently banned such performances. In February 1929, for instance, the police in Batavia

⁷³ See Brandon (1974), Vaničková (1965 and 1967) and Aiko Kurasawa (1987).

⁷⁴ Jan Mrázek paraphrased parts of Vaničková’s 1967 text in English.

intervened as the pregnant female protagonist in the play *Bermana-Bermani* represented the Indonesian people, the mango fruit for which she longed independence, and the sultan from whose garden the mango had to be fetched, the government.⁷⁵ In the independence period, kethoprak actors in specific troupes used their performances as a vehicle for political satire. In this environment of change, the old repertoire was adapted to the purposes of nationalist propaganda and the ongoing saga of political struggle (Vaničková 1965:414). Pertinently, for ideological purposes at the end of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s organizations like the communist-oriented Lekra (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, the Institute of the People's Culture) and the All-Indonesian Kethoprak Organization (Badan Kontak Organisasi Kethoprak Seluruh Indonesia, Bakoksi) were seriously interested in kethoprak as a means to propagate their ideology (Vaničková 1965; Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:342-344).⁷⁶ Brandon calls Bakoksi the 'largest politically oriented theatre grouping in Indonesia' (1974:215). The nationalist Lembaga Kethoprak Nasional (the Institute under the PNI-affiliated Lembaga Kebudayaan Nasional, LKN, the Institute for National Culture) offered a counterweight to Bakoksi (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:30).

During the Japanese occupation, kethoprak artists were involved in the dissemination of Japanese propaganda; Kurosawa gives two names (Kurosawa 1987:64).⁷⁷ Radio entertainment, deployed for propaganda objectives, 'was confined to music and traditional performing arts', while programmes like radio drama, storytelling and variety shows were rare (Kurosawa 1987:88).⁷⁸ Later, the New Order government never hesitated to disseminate information and propaganda by means of kethoprak and other traditional performing arts genres. Actually this compulsory depoliticization meant a (new) politicization by the New Order regime, because kethoprak was depoliticized in the sense that no open criticism of the government was tolerated, a process already begun in 1965. Despite the censorship, kethoprak practitioners became adroit at insinuating critical comments.⁷⁹

Although in its form, contents, language use, repertoire and performance structure it 'remained entirely Javanese' (Vaničková 1965:440) and preserved artistic features of the Javanese performance tradition, recalling its political involvement (in the 1920-1930s and again in the 1950s-1960s) Vaničková concluded that kethoprak was transformed into a qualitatively different type of art and transcended the local. She argues that, as it had freed itself from the wayang tradition and in view of the political satire of the clowns, it had

⁷⁵ 'Kethoprak Dilarang. Katanja sebab mengandoeng politiek ... Seperti ternjata dari pembrian tahoenja Thalia Bioscope di Mangga Besar moelai semalem di itoe gedong tontongan aken dipertoendjoeken permaenan Katoprak. Tapi waktoe itoe pertoeendjoekan maoe dimaenkan mendadak politie soeda larang sebab anggep lelakon jang diambil, jalah Bermana-Bermani ada mengandoeng politiek: jaitoe katanja itoe poetri dalem itoe lelakon jang boenting dioempamakan bangsa Indonesia, sedeng boeah yang di-idamin ianja ada kamerdikahan....dan itoe boeah mangga jang di-idamin moesti diambil dari kebonnja satoe soeltan, jang dioempamakan ada pamerintah. Begitoelah itoe permaenan Katoprak djadi tida dipertoendjoeken dan Thalia Bioscope tidak banjak sedikit dapet karoegian' (*Sin Po* 8 February 1929 L.2 P.3). Another example is given in *De Indische Courant* of 26 April 1927 (see 'Binnenland. Djocja: Een verbod').

⁷⁶ In *Lekra tak membakar buku*, Rhoma Dwi Aria Yuliantri and Muhidin M. Dahlan show how Lekra appropriated the dramatic genre for ideological purposes, as reported in *Harian Rakjat* (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:339-353).

⁷⁷ Bandem and Murgiyanto mention two lakons: *Amat Heiho* and *Pendaratan di Maguwo* (1996:145).

⁷⁸ On traditional arts under the Japanese occupation see also Cohen 2016:187-193.

⁷⁹ Hatley has written extensively on social references in kethoprak performances in the New Order period.

assumed a national, pan-Indonesian character, especially after the Second World War (Vaničková 1965:440-441, 1967:169-191, 214-217). Certainly, during the late New Order period when the genre was disseminated nation-wide by Indosiar and efforts were made to cultivate its popularity among non-Javanese audiences, it was still categorized by the public as Javanese, not a pan-Indonesian, entertainment.

2 Mediating kethoprak: radio and cassettes

The use of electronic mass media as a vehicle for the dissemination of local cultural expressions began in the 1930s, when gramophone recordings and live performances of local music were broadcast by the newly established radio stations. Listeners were spell-bound by the new technology of radio: the ‘transmission of real performance in real time’ was a fascinating novelty and it offered a sense of immediacy of communication between physically disconnected performers and listeners; a band reinforced by the familiarity of the content of the radio broadcasts – ‘music of the listener’s own locality’ (Lindsay 1997:108-109).

In 1935, the Mataramsche Vereeniging Voor Radio Omroep (MAVRO) Yogyakarta broadcast a kethoprak performance by the troupe Krido Rahardjo (Wijaya and F.A. Sutjipto 1977:44). Afterwards performances by this troupe became part of the standard MAVRO radio broadcasts during what remained of the colonial period (Mardianto and Darmanto 2001:96-97).

Acting for radio required adaptations that would aid the listeners’ visualization of the performance: all the attention was concentrated on the evocative strength of the voice, the music and sound effects (Widayat 1997:44-46). Consequently Mardianto and Darmanto (2001:118) have called radio kethoprak a separate genre. In tune with the aural character of radio, Krido Rahardjo –called Ketoprak Mataram RRI Yogyakarta after Independence – , began to use written dialogues. A real novelty was the exclusive use of the voice as a means to convey dramatic expression, as the actors were invisible to the listeners. The length of the dialogues was extended concomitantly and the use of and playing with language were raised to new heights. The accompanying music was complemented by sound effects. Also, some of the principles of western dramaturgy were introduced to reinforce the basis of kethoprak. The performances worked towards a climax and the contents of the dialogues were attuned to the theme of the lakon. Another innovation was the presentation of foreign stories – *Hamlet* was adapted to a Javanese lakon, for instance (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:36).⁸⁰

The weekly kethoprak broadcasts by the local radio station RRI Nusantara II Yogyakarta (founded in 1945) were transmitted live, following in the footsteps of the MAVRO broadcasts (until 1942) and the local *Jawa Hôôsô Kanrikyoku* (Java Broadcasting Superintendent Bureau) radio services during the Japanese occupation. These RRI performances took place in the studio and were tailored to fit the constraints imposed by the medium of radio. Therefore live broadcasts required the utmost concentration and creativity of the director, the actors and

⁸⁰ On the history of Ketoprak Mataram RRI, see Sudaryono 1997.

musicians. One of these constraints they faced was on-the-spot adaptations. If, for instance, the 22.00 news bulletin ran over time, the time slot available for the play had to be reduced. To finish the whole story in time and not disturb the climax, impromptu condensations of dialogues were resorted to (Mardianto and Darmanto 2001:96-136).

At the time of writing, the Yogyakarta RRI still presents live broadcasts of monthly performances for a public in the RRI studio.

From the 1970s, popular music and local dramatic genres, including kethoprak, were recorded on cassettes, to be sold either as a commercial product or to be broadcast on radio. The cassette industry tended to be more selective than radio as it presented only the top range of performers (Sutton 1985:26), whose prestige and power flourished in the wake of the popularity engendered by these recordings (Sutton 1985:40). This dissemination of local performing arts genres on cassettes, Sutton argues, had an important consequence: it facilitated imitation. Sutton also underlines its potential to standardize and homogenize (Sutton 1985:25), but concludes it nevertheless did not expunge diversity (Sutton 1985:26). Cassette recordings of local performing arts genres whetted the public's expectations of live performances (Arps 1985:49) and honed the reception of the listeners (Suryadi 2014:185).

The introduction of cassette tapes encouraged the broadcasting of kethoprak by private radio stations. Even in places without electricity, battery-operated tape recorders and radios enabled people to listen to cassettes and broadcasts of traditional performing arts. Although some kethoprak troupes hailed the advent of the cassette industry, others feared it, because one of its side-effects was a decline in live performances. The validity of this point can be disputed on the grounds that the tapes were popular precisely because they contained recordings of well-known troupes; consequently their audiences were even more keen to attend a live performance of this troupe. Therefore, Wijaya and Sutjipto conclude that modern technology was unquestionably a useful tool in boosting the art of kethoprak (Wijaya and F.A. Sutjipto 1977:44-45).

3 Mediating kethoprak: television

Not long after the launch of the national TVRI in Jakarta in August 1962, traditional performing arts were already featuring as an important item in its programming. One of the main goals set by *Televisi Republik Indonesia* was to disseminate and preserve national culture. Therefore, the programmes of both the Jakarta-based national and the regional government-owned television stations featured quite a high percentage of cultural programmes in their daily broadcasts. Although the reasons regional performing arts programmes were allotted a significant position in the broadcasting schedules of both the national (TVRI Jakarta) and the regional government television stations might have been several, the fact that broadcasts of Javanese drama were assigned a fair amount of scheduling

time by the regional television stations TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta⁸¹ and TVRI Stasiun Surabaya⁸² certainly played an important part in promoting these genres. Later, private television stations broadcast kethoprak for commercial reasons. As I shall show in Chapter 5, from 1995 Indosiar tried to win the hearts of the Javanese, the largest potential consumer market, with broadcasts of traditional Javanese theatre genres including kethoprak. Since 2002, local Javanese private broadcasters have certainly focused on local genres like wayang kulit and kethoprak (see Chapter 8; Bogaerts 2017a).

Broadcasts of kethoprak on television once again confronted its performers with new challenges. Bondan Nusantara has noted that the first kethoprak programme was broadcast in 1965.⁸³ At the time, in the period following 1965-1966, only a few troupes could be televised: Kethoprak Budi Rahayu, Dahono Mataram, Sapta Mandala, Eko Budoyo, Among Mitra and PS Bayu (Bondan Nusantara 1990:43). Although Bondan Nusantara does not explain his remark, it is reasonable to assume that, in the light of the contemporary upheavals in the political situation, many kethoprak actors had either been killed or imprisoned in the resultant turmoil or, at the very least, had been banned from performing.

In the early 1970s when kethoprak began to be broadcast weekly on television, it was – although warmly received by rural audiences – not regarded as ‘genuine’ kethoprak, but as an interesting novelty (Hatley 2004:67). As Hatley describes, it was not the filmic medium but

ketoprak on stage, playing out stories of Javanese history and legend through improvised dialogue and familiar characterisations and scenes, which kampung people referred to as “our own art form”, through which they claimed to learn their own history and cultural traditions. (Hatley 2004:67)

Despite such unpromising beginnings, slowly but surely the attitude of the audiences changed. Just as in the past radio technology had created a sense of immediacy between performer and listener (Lindsay 1997:108-109), TVRI Yogyakarta, as fitted its barometer function, achieved the same with its broadcasts of performance genres originating in the audiences’ own locale.

In the period under scrutiny in this research, 1988-2008, the majority of the troupes invited to appear on TVRI Yogyakarta’s screen originated from Yogyakarta villages, the city of Yogyakarta and Yogyakarta academic institutions; they were supplemented by some troupes from Central and East Java. Several sub-genres or styles developed on and by television can be distinguished: when performed by students of the Gadjah Mada University or the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (Institut Seni Indonesia, ISI), artistic and aesthetic aspects prevailed. Usually the setting was simple but subtly grand, and the whole atmosphere was ‘classical’, kraton-like, and the dialogues sustained the images. When performed by village kethoprak groups, the furnished studio settings and the abundant use of the stage props created a ‘realistic’ effect. When recorded outdoors, these performances achieved an even more ‘realistic’ effect: instead of miming horse-riding against a backdrop depicting a forest, actors representing characters from a far distant Javanese past, historical or imagined, rode real horses in a real forest.

⁸¹ TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta was established on 17 August 1965.

⁸² TVRI Stasiun Surabaya was established on 3 March 1978.

⁸³ If he is not mistaken, he adds.

In 1977, during a seminar on kethoprak in Yogyakarta organized by the Department of Education and Culture, when a young actor was requested to specify the point of climax in the play *Arya Penangsang Gugur*, the following happened:

The actor looked puzzled and embarrassed and finally replied that it depended on how many nights were to be taken to present the story! To him the lakon represented not a fixed dramatic whole with a key point of climax but a more fluid entity, shaped by the contingencies of the performance. If necessary it could be divided into several sections, performed on separate nights, each section ending sufficiently climactically to draw viewers back for the next night's performance. (Hatley 1985: 112)

As Hatley goes on to demonstrate, several other factors can play a part in shaping the progression of a live show: for instance, the late arrival of certain performers or the over-extension of particular scenes and routines. Actually, although this anecdote refers to a live/non-televised performance, it does betray the characteristics of a televised kethoprak performance, in which exactly the opposite is happening.

Whereas in nascent years of TVRI's history, it adapted traditional performing arts genres so that these could be broadcast on television,⁸⁴ when these genres became a regular feature in the television programming, they were formatted so that they would meet the constraints of the medium. This meant that 'the relationship of the theatrical event to the televisual one' (Auslander 1996:200) changed – the live versions 'had been constructed to be seen *as television* – they were pre-adapted [...] to the demands of their new medium' (Auslander 1996:200). An example of how a live performance was shaped to the demands of the medium television was the three-night kethoprak performance by the troupe PS Bayu, in early September 2000. It had been designed to be recorded by the Yogyakarta TVRI and broadcast in a serial consisting of twelve episodes. The preparations included the strengthening of the troupe by the addition of some mainstay actors, the tightening-up of the timing, the acting model of each scene and the improvisation, traditionally the basis for kethoprak acting ((R-4) 2000).

Cogently Bondan Nusantara distinguishes three kinds of kethoprak performances broadcast on television. As examples of the first kind, kethoprak for television, Bondan Nusantara gives the kethoprak fragments broadcast in the framework of regional news programmes or in programmes focusing on Javanese culture. Kethoprak on television, his second category, consists of broadcasts of kethoprak performances that would have taken place irrespective of television. These broadcasts can be live or else consist of pre-recorded, edited kethoprak performances in the studio. This kind of kethoprak still faithfully observes the constraints of a stage performance, ranging from the creation of the story and the structuring in scenes and sub-scenes to the plot, the costumes and the make-up of the actors (Bondan Nusantara 1990:54). The production process of kethoprak on television is not too complicated. Using a

⁸⁴ See Soenarto (2008:1-9), then programme director at TVRI Stasiun Jakarta, on his adaptation for television of the traditional dance fragment *Gatutkaca Gandrung* by Rusman, famous performer of wayang orang at the Sri Wedari theatre in Solo, and Rusman's wife Darsi. The broadcast was at the special request of President Soekarno to the director of TVRI.

synopsis of the story, the group rehearses two to three times, after which the performance is recorded. Both TVRI Yogyakarta and Surabaya produce such broadcasts.

When the Yogyakarta TVRI station created kethoprak sayembara, serialized kethoprak that included a contest for prizes, Bondan Nusantara postulates this marked the birth of the third category, television kethoprak: created especially for the television medium and existing only on television. In 1988, TVRI Yogyakarta broadcast the first kethoprak serial, *Prahara* (Storm), based on a script by the novelist Singgih Hadi Mintardja and performed by the troupe Sapta Mandala Kodam IV Diponegoro directed by Bagong Kussudiardja.⁸⁵ Despite the fact that various artists did regard this broadcast as the initiation of kethoprak *televisi*, others were adamant that the serial *Prahara* was no longer worthy of the name kethoprak, arguing that it failed to replicate the traditional constraints of the genre (*sawetawis pakulinan* (tradisi) *Kethoprak*) (Bondan Nusantara 1990:44). In his justification of the new dramatic and filmic approaches adopted in television kethoprak, Bondan Nusantara points out the close relationships between the medium film and television, and between drama, film and *sinema elektronik* (*sinetron* or soap) – after all film and television are both part of modern culture (Nusantara 1990:44).

In fact most kethoprak productions broadcast by Yogyakarta TVRI in the 1990s did go beyond just televisualizations of live performances. Recorded either in a studio setting or outdoors, these productions deviated from the traditional live performances on a stage using backdrops, in the presence of an audience and improvising lengthy dialogues. TVRI kethoprak was a genre conceived for the medium television: because of the directness of the images, long-drawn-out dialogues were made superfluous; improvisation was restricted because of the restraints imposed by scenarios and scripts whose content was dictated by time limits and censorship; the scenes were condensed and reduced to the essentials; the acting, the costumes and the make-up were influenced by modern drama and tailored to the circumstances and television techniques available in that studio. Any direct audience response was eliminated since people were not usually present during studio recordings.⁸⁵ In short, the performance had been adapted to the constraints of the medium and the aesthetics had been adapted to those dictated by television.

4 Kethoprak: traditional drama?

As demonstrated by kethoprak performers and researchers, the genre has swayed to the incessant process of innovation and adaptation to the dynamics of the society to which it belongs and in which it is performed. They all stress the dynamic character of *kethoprak* and its open attitude towards a changing context. In making their claims, they might have had in mind *wayang kulit* and *wayang wong*, that are cast in a more conservative image – although these genres have also been accommodating contemporary influences, explicit in Ki Manteb

⁸⁵ Personal communication Habib Bari, Yogyakarta, 14 August 2001. Darma Putra (1998) mentions similar characteristics of televised Balinese drama gong.

Soedharsono's comment at the beginning of this chapter.⁸⁶ This confirms Vaníčková's conclusion that kethoprak is 'an excellent example of the interweaving of Javanese stage traditions with new art trends' (Vaníčková 1965: 399). Umar Kayam argues that this tendency towards engaging in a dialogue rather than approaching it as a confrontation with foreign elements is typical of traditional art in Southeast Asia. As he has shown, traditional art will embrace foreign elements and integrate them as it has always been receptive of the streams of cultural influences that have marked the history of Southeast Asia (Kayam 1981:63-65). Although kethoprak has a complex hybrid character and is in a continuous state of flux in its efforts to adapt itself, so far it is still invariably associated with 'tradition'.

Since its coming into being, kethoprak seems to have displayed an accommodating attitude to external artistic concepts and modern technology (Widayat 1997:41-51). Sources from the nineteen twenties, when kethoprak was a familiar, fast-growing and attractive form of entertainment, reveal that this combining of elements borrowed from several artistic spheres was a distinguishing feature from a very early stage.⁸⁷ Rather than making a choice, people tend to retain aspects of tradition and incorporate them into their contemporary lives (or vice-versa). In the words of Thompson

For many people, the option of maintaining traditional ways or adopting modern life-styles does not present itself as an 'either/or' choice. On the contrary, they are able to organize their day-to-day lives in such a way as to integrate elements of tradition with new styles of living. Tradition is not necessarily abandoned in the quest for 'bread and enlightenment' but is, on the contrary, reshaped, transformed and perhaps even strengthened through the encounter – partly through the media – with other ways of life. (Thompson 1996:95)

The same principle holds for a performance genre like kethoprak. In the process of their exposure to developments in society, some of these were creatively integrated into kethoprak, but others were discarded. They moulded kethoprak into a dynamic dramatic genre that has been able to survive for more than a century. Bondan Nusantara argues that the changes it underwent armed the dramatic genre with the powerful weapon of invulnerability (*senjata ampuh*) with which it could resist the challenges of the era (Bondan Nusantara 1997:53). Similarly, Thompson (1996:106) sees the 'process of intermingling' as

a source of enormous cultural creativity and dynamism. In the sphere of literature or popular music, of art or cinema, the weaving together of themes drawn from different traditions – this continuous hybridization of culture – is the basis of some of the most original and exciting work. It creates a cultural restlessness which is constantly shifting directions, assuming new forms and departing from established conventions in unexpected ways. And it attests to the fact that, in a world increasingly traversed by cultural migrations and communication flows, traditions are less sheltered than ever before from the potentially invigorating consequences of encounters with the other.

As kethoprak developed, views on and perceptions of the genre changed. Festivals and congresses played an influential role in defining the genre and its role in society. They were

⁸⁶ See also Kitsie Emerson's *Transforming wayang for contemporary audiences* (2016).

⁸⁷ To give one example: 'The gamelan orchestra consisted of the flute, drums and a wooden rice pounder. We cannot understand why, when a Buddhist story was performed, they sang Malay keroncong and other new songs.' (Gamelan jang digenaken adalah soeling, gendang dan lesoeng. Kita tiada abis pikir, kenapa kaloe itoe lelakon jang diambil ada dari Boedha, di sitoe ada djoega lagoe krontjong Melajang dan laen laen lagoe baroe) (*Wajang orang 'Ketoprak'* 1926).

organized to exchange ideas and discuss what could be done to improve the quality of the genre (from artistic and organizational perspectives) and how to mould it to the needs and aims of the parties involved. Kethoprak was defined from the point of view of these needs.

The first two kethoprak festivals and congresses emphasized the fluid and dynamic character of the genre and its modern identity, untrammelled by traditions. Only later, in the New Order period, was kethoprak defined as a traditional performance genre that required protection and should be preserved. The first Kethoprak Festival and Congress, held in Yogyakarta on 5-7 July 1957, gathered professional and non-professional kethoprak troupes and organizations (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:339). In his opening speech, Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX declared that the world of art could not be seen disconnected from the context of modern influences. In the Indonesia of that time kethoprak artists were eager to develop the genre in response to the requirements of 'our modern era' (*era yang maju*) (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:339).⁸⁸ The second Kethoprak Festival and Congress was held in 1964 in the Gedung Kesenian Sriwedari in Solo. In a written speech, read during the congress by his representative, Minister of Education and Culture Prijono stated that kethoprak was a very popular and highly flexible expression of folk culture (*populer dan luwes*), unencumbered by the restrictions of the old traditions as was the case with wayang kulit and wayang orang. Kethoprak's repertoire and technique were much freer than those of the wayang and this quality made it much easier to use kethoprak for educational and moral purposes, and as a revolutionary tool. Minister Prijono emphasized the importance of presenting 'our modern moral, the moral of Indonesian socialism' in the kethoprak stories (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:345).⁸⁹ He proposed the genre be performed in regional languages other than Javanese or even in Indonesian. An important topic raised at the second congress was the need to innovate kethoprak for the benefit of the revolution and the people. The proposed innovation focused on the content of kethoprak, without rejecting the primary characteristics of the genre.

The necessity to pay due attention to the development of the genre and strive for the improvement in its quality continued to be important topics raised again in later periods. In 1974 and 1976 the Yogyakarta branch of the Department of Education and Culture organized two seminars (*lokakarya*) on kethoprak.⁹⁰ The results of both seminars were published in 1977 by Wijaya and Sutjipto, who presented a written history of the development of kethoprak, replete with ample information on existing kethoprak troupes and their contributions to the dissemination of persuasive government messages and to innovations, and presenting a recapitulation of the points made in the papers presented at the two seminars. The publication was accompanied by an audiovisual documentary. It became an influential study, and many of its findings recur in later views on kethoprak. The purpose of the work was to

⁸⁸ 'ingin ikut maju sesuai dengan tuntutan zaman kita jang maju. Seperti segi2 kebudajaan lain, alam kesenianpun tidak lepas dari pengaruh2 modern. Begitupula kesenian ketoprak tidak mau ketinggalan' (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:339, quoting *Harian Rakjat* 6 April 1957).

⁸⁹ 'Ketoprak [...] adalah kesenian Rakjat jang sangat populer dan luwes, karena tidak terikat atau terkekang oleh tradisi2 lama sebagai misalnja wayang kulit dan wayang orang jang lebih terikat pada tradisi2 tertentu. Lain halnja dengan ketoprak, baik dalam repertoirnja maupun tehniknja djauh lebih bebas dari wayang. Karena itu ketoprak dapat digunakan sebaik2nja dan djauh lebih mudah untuk mendjadi alat pendidikan dan moral, alat revolusi pada umumnja.'; 'moral modern kita, moral sosialisme Indonesia'.

⁹⁰ 5-7 February 1974 and 29 April-1 May 1976 (Wijaya dan Sutjipto 1977:45).

introduce kethoprak, ‘a Central Javanese folk theatre genre that still is enjoyed by the people’ (Wijaya and Sutjipto 1977:7). The book hopes to offer those readers who were already acquainted with kethoprak material to encourage them to contribute ideas about how the genre might be developed and how its quality could be improved (Wijaya and Sutjipto 1977:7). Another result of the seminars was a performance of the lakon *Pangeran Harya Timur*, a performance with which the team involved wanted to demonstrate the characteristics (*ancer-ancer*) of a kethoprak show (Wijaya and Sutjipto 1977:58). The idea of upgrading and improving local performing arts genres was definitely a concern of Orde Baru government institutions. Sedyawati commented on this, urging the readers of her articles to question whether Indonesian traditional art indeed needed be developed (Sedyawati 1981:48, 51).

In 1997, in the framework of the ninth Yogyakarta Art Festival (Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta IX), a new volume on kethoprak, edited by Lephén Purwaraharja and Bondan Nusantara, saw the light of day. Focusing on the genre in the New Order period, it tackled various discussions like the exposure of kethoprak to the electronic mass media, newly created kethoprak styles and the New Order development discourse (*pembangunan*) in the performances.

How was it possible to combine this drive for innovation and development with the perception of kethoprak as a traditional performance genre? While a definition of ‘traditional’ is rarely given, a comparison of the views of several authors on the factors determining the context of ‘traditional’ reveals their fairly overlapping conclusions. Wijaya and Sutjipto question whether kethoprak should still be considered a folk performance, in the sense that it only attracts the attention of the *rakyat kecil*, people of the lower social classes. They refer to artists like Bagong Kussudiardja and Handung Kus Sudyarsana of the kethoprak troupe Sapta Mandala, who claimed that the word ‘rakyat’ should be interpreted in a broader sense, namely: people from all layers and classes in society. Wijaya and Sutjipto consider the consequences of this view on the way kethoprak should be presented: artistically it should be mature, it should retain traditional characteristics and it should be adapted to the conditions and situation at the time of performance. ‘Traditional characteristics’ encompass ‘several aspects of the lives of Javanese people, such as language, philosophy, status levels, and so on’ (Wijaya and Sutjipto 1977:43).

Kethoprak practitioners

The principal contributor to the creative development of kethoprak with an eye on tradition has been Handung Kus Sudyarsana, journalist with the local Yogyakarta newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* and a famous and influential kethoprak innovator, actor and playwright.⁹¹ Whereas Vaničková concludes that kethoprak was transformed into modern Javanese theatre, Handung Kus Sudyarsana classifies it as traditional drama because he believes that the traditional elements in kethoprak still prevail over the modern ones (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:25). The two views, Vaničková’s and Kus Sudyarsana’s, are an apt reflection of the

⁹¹ On Handung Kus Sudyarsana, see also *Marisi semangat* 1991; *Handung Kus* 1991; Sastrosuwarno 1991.

changing perception of the genre in the course of time. In the process of building the new nation after Independence, the search for the modern and the corresponding discourse of modernity prevailed in (part of) the Old Order period. Kethoprak, perceived as a modern genre, therefore suited Soekarno's ideas on nationalism and was used as a tool to propagate revolution and progress. Conversely, Soeharto thought national culture should be built on tradition and the rich heritage of the past. As kethoprak was then perceived to be a traditional genre, and later even incorporated in the *adiluhung* discourse, it was used as a medium to disseminate New Order rhetoric.

Kus Sudyarsana sees tradition as stipulations that have become common practice (*ketentuan-ketentuan yang sudah menjadi kebiasaan*) (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:25). Kethoprak is a traditional folk drama, he says, thereby distinguishing it from modern drama and traditional classical theatre. He argues that its traditional character predominates in the performances, in particular in the elements that belong to Javanese tradition: the structure of the lakon/story, the dialogues, the acting, the positioning of the actors in the performance space (blocking), costumes, make-up, the properties used, as well as the music played on traditional instruments (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:25). The dialogues, the acting and blocking, and the accompanying melodies still adhere firmly to the principle of improvisation, he writes. On the other hand, he emphasizes that, since the very beginnings of kethoprak, efforts have constantly been made to breathe new life into the dramatic genre in order to adapt it to the alterations in society and the requirements of the era in which it is performed. His study contains many examples of innovative changes and developments. From 1927 onwards, for instance, the kethoprak repertoire was enlarged with stories originating from Turkey, India, the Middle East, Cambodia, China and Europe, together with stories from Indonesian regions other than Java, like Sumatra, Kalimantan and Bali (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:18). Ever increasingly, stories were being based on fiction, featuring plots borrowed from novels, films or scripts (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:18, 20). Musical influences also introduced changes. In 1928, the group Bekso Langen Wanodyo, the first female kethoprak group, was not accompanied by the *lesung* or a gamelan orchestra during its performances, but by an *orkes*, consisting of western instruments (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:28). When kethoprak was performed on a conventional stage instead of in a traditional space, dance movements, with the exception of those of the clowns, were sometimes even dispensed with. The costumes were made fit the atmosphere of the lakon, dependent on the representations of specific historical periods, social contexts (court or village scenes), geographical locales (Yogyakarta Javanese, East Javanese, Middle Eastern) and so on (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:21).

Bondan Nusantara, another prominent kethoprak practitioner and script-writer and director of a large number of television productions, thinks that conventional kethoprak (*ketoprak konvensional*) – he does not use the term traditional here – is characterized by the absence of a full script or scenario; the dramaturgy of the lakon refers to the wayang kulit purwa, the shadow puppet theatre; it has improvised dialogues, intuitive acting and use of the space, realistic costumes and make-up; it is performed to the musical accompaniment of a gamelan orchestra playing in the pelog and slendro tonal systems (and therefore is also called *kethoprak gamelan*), traditional vocalizing (*tembang*) and wooden slit drums (*keprak*); the

duration of a performance is between five and six hours and it has a curved development of the plot (Bondan Nusantara 1997:56). The author distinguishes conventional kethoprak from newly created kethoprak (*kethoprak garapan*) that displays the following features: it uses a script (full play); the dramaturgy follows western conventions; the acting and the use of space follow specific patterns; costumes and make-up are realistic and/or symbolic; backdrops marking the setting (as used in conventional kethoprak) are dispensed with; the musical accompaniment is free, meaning both diatonic and pentatonic orchestra/instruments can be used either separately or in combination, keprak and tembang can be employed but are sometimes omitted; the whole performance lasts for a maximum of two-and-a-half-hours; electronic equipment is used for amplification and there is a lighting design (Bondan Nusantara 1997:55). He states that the different kethoprak styles, whether conventional or newly created, have their own fans (Bondan Nusantara 1997:57). The former is popular in rural areas and among aficionados of local Javanese culture. The latter finds a large market in urban environments and among younger audiences. As an example of the latter, Bondan Nusantara mentions *kethoprak plesetan*, of which I shall give a brief description below.

Two aspects that are often mentioned as characteristics of traditional kethoprak are language use and improvisation. Language use might indeed be an important factor in determining whether a regional performing arts genre is defined as traditional or not. As Darma Putra has shown, the character of the Balinese drama gong, that was initially performed in Indonesian, ‘gradually changed from a modern into a traditional theatre genre’ after it had become ‘a fully Balinese language theatre style’ (Darma Putra 2008:107). However, the case of language use in kethoprak differs from drama gong: even when Indonesian is spoken, kethoprak is still categorized as traditional theatre; therefore language is not the only determinant. Some authors distinguish kethoprak from other forms of drama, like Javanese-language drama (*sandiwara Jawa/drama berbahasa Jawa*), modern theatre in Javanese (like Teater Gapit’s performances) and drama in Indonesian, on the basis of the language use in the various forms. Wahyana Giri MC (1992) postulates that the dialogues in kethoprak are specific; they contain expressions that are characteristic of the dialect used at the court and are replete with sentimental clichés.⁹²

Kus Sudyarsana (1990) presents an exposé on the use of Javanese in his article about the utilization of language etiquette (*unggah-ungguh*) in kethoprak. He explains which language levels and styles should be used according to the status and position of the character in the play, and according to the descent (*awu*) of the personages. To make his point, he gives examples of correct and incorrect language use among characters. Among these examples is the proclamation of Prince Mangkubumi’s installation on the throne as the first Sultan of Yogyakarta in the lakon *Pangeran Mangkubumi*, that was performed by Kethoprak Mataram Saptamandala Kodam IV Diponegoro (Kus Sudyarsana 1990:32). The proclamation formed the highly appreciated final scene of this story and Kus Sudyarsana’s text has been an often used source of inspiration for later interpretations of the lakon.

⁹² ‘awujud tetembungan (dialek) khas kraton kang klise sentimentil’.

Alongside language use, improvisation is often mentioned as one of the main characteristics of 'traditional' drama. Actors provided with a minimum of information about the story and the characterization of the roles before the performance will have ample room for improvisation (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:22). As Vaničková (1965:431) observed

the *kethoprak* is centered on the acting of the cast. The *kethoprak* actor is at the same time playwright, shapes the play directly on the stage, in contact with the audience. This type of acting demands exceptional powers of improvisation.

and

[Improvisation] is an art with a long-established tradition on Java, and not only on the stage, but also in dance and musical performances, where especially the *gamelan* provides music improvised on a very wide variety of basic motifs. Such improvisation requires not only routine and sensitive reactions, but above all creative fantasy and invention. Of assistance to actors and producer, both in the staging and in the acting, is contact with the audiences, its perceptiveness and receptiveness and its familiarity with the story. (Vaničková 1965:431)

From the 1970s, Handung Kus Sudyarsana was personally actively involved in the world of kethoprak, and in the mediating of the genre on the radio and television. In collaboration with his elder brother Bagong Kussudiardja, he established the group Sapta Mandala Kodam VII Diponegoro (later Kodam IV) in 1971. One of the aims of the group was to renew kethoprak, and not only on the artistic level; both the artists and the organization had to be innovative. The structure of the lakon was changed; earlier it had always begun with an audience scene, the *babak jejeran*, and ended with the *tancep kayon*; after the innovations had been introduced, it commenced with a scene at a foodstall or in a forest, *adegan warung* or *hutan*; in scenes that formed an anticlimax, the tempo was speeded up so as not to hamper the climax. This means that the traditional structure of the kethoprak lakon was abandoned, although sometimes, on certain occasions, it was still used. The conventional characterization of the personages underwent a change. The dialogues were moulded to fit the lakon, both in form and in contents. A condensed dialogue system (*dialog padat*) was used. On the level of the acting and the blocking, shortcomings in the traditional movements were improved; gestures and movements were enriched, and other forms of movement were developed. Costumes were newly designed, but were still Javanese in style, and in appearance and use close to traditional garments (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:38). Without deviating from the theatrical principles the make-up was made more realistic. The kethoprak musical pieces were no longer used to support the action and atmosphere in each scene, but just as a musical accompaniment, and hence were assigned a different function (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:22). In the stage design (*panggung*), naturalism prevailed over artistic principles. Professionalism became important and the way kethoprak was organized was reformed.

The writing down of the lakon as full-length plays, a break with tradition, was not an improvement from the perspective of creativity, claims Kus Sudyarsana, as it decreased the spontaneity of the performances. It also became more difficult for kethoprak actors, especially the younger ones and those who had appeared on television, to perform without adhering strictly to the written script (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:39). This intense clinging to written texts

and scripts was opposed to the (idealized?) image of traditional art which was connoted to spontaneity.⁹³

Barbara Hatley acknowledges the important influence of these innovations on kethoprak as a genre and calls it the Sapta Mandala factor. Through the annual kethoprak competitions in Yogyakarta and, above all, via television broadcasts ‘the Sapta Mandala model of innovative *ketoprak*, script-based and strongly influenced by Western drama and film’, using the Indonesian language rather than Javanese when performing on national television, ‘spread widely and became entrenched as a new standard for other *ketoprak* groups’ (Hatley 2004:75-76). To clarify this change in more detail, it is necessary to take a closer look at another type of kethoprak that developed in the 1990s, *kethoprak plesedan*.

Kethoprak plesedan

From the end of 1991 kethoprak plesedan became very popular, among younger spectators in particular. Rooted in existing artistic traditions, it developed from comic kethoprak, as Didik Nini Thowok (1997:149), one of the contributors to this development, demonstrates when he describes its history. The *plesedan* (punning) is all-encompassing and that was novel, according to Hatley. Not just the language use itself but all the aspects of the performance could be subverted and overturned: the characterization, plot, standard interactions and scenes. Stage conventions were opened up: innovative dance choreography was used in the depiction of battle scenes, keyboard was combined with gamelan for the musical accompaniment (Hatley 2004:77-81).⁹⁴

In his contribution to the edited volume on kethoprak during the New Order, Kristanto explains why kethoprak plesedan, as performed by the group Sapta Mandala, can still be called traditional. That a play is traditional is determined by a host of factors like the background of the actors, the choice of the stories to be performed, the linear presentation of the story, the open attitude of the actors towards improvisation on all levels, the absence of a strict and complete script including the full dialogues in the consecutive acts and the adroitness of the actors in handling and reacting to unforeseen situations (Kristanto 1997:132-133). The key to the meaning of ‘tradition’ in traditional art is the training in *rasa* he writes, quoting Bondan Nusantara. The term *rasa* encompasses feeling, sense, intuition and inner meaning. But he immediately admits that this is also one aim of avant-garde art, in Indonesia and elsewhere, a concession that undermines his reasoning.

Kristanto argues that the borders between the traditional and the modern have become blurred within the genre. But kethoprak actors and directors also carry this blur within themselves: although they are strongly rooted in tradition and in the past had often enjoyed little schooling, they had the ability to free themselves from the traditional ways of thinking and traditional theatrical forms. Hence, their performance in kethoprak can compete with the performance of actors in modern plays, like Teater Gandrik in Yogyakarta or Teater Koma in Jakarta. Their jokes are intellectual and have a bearing on contemporary political and social

⁹³ On spontaneity and tradition, see for instance Bagong Kussudiardjo in *KR* 21 August 1993:4; Kasim Achmad 2006:4-5; Noor W.A. as quoted in Hatley 2008:137.

⁹⁴ For more information on kethoprak humor and kethoprak plesedan and their legacies, see Hatley 2004:77-85.

issues, thus differing from traditional kethoprak groups, according to Kristanto, who forgets that in the past contemporaneous political and social issues also lay at the heart of kethoprak performances. Other features that have changed are the form of the organisation and the discipline of the actors in rehearsing and performing. When preparing a performance, the main lines of the story, the order of the acts, the patterns of movement and the choice of the cast are fixed and rehearsed. Just as in modern theatre, he says (Kristanto 1997:133-135). In its turn, traditional theatre has frequently been used as a source of inspiration for actors and theatre groups working in a non-traditional way.

Conclusions

Kethoprak is still ‘essentially a Javanese affair’, even though in some cases it is (partly) spoken in Indonesian, and retains its traditional connotation, even if it displays an innovative format or style. Kethoprak broadcasts feature troupes from Yogyakarta, Central and East Java who use various Javanese dialects and ideolects in their performances. However, the genre is rooted in local society to such an extent that it is perceived to be very local, namely: belonging to Yogyakarta. Therefore it is very well suited to the vision, mission and aims of TVRI Yogyakarta and has contributed to what the station in its early stage called the barometer function.

Several views on tradition in relation to kethoprak have been described in this chapter. New Order culture policy and discourse made tradition into a construct. As I have shown, the image of kethoprak changed, from a modern genre, as explicitly stated during the first and second kethoprak festival and congress, to a traditional genre in the New Order period. Tan Sooi Beng claims that, since the 1970s, for *bangsawan*, a theatrical genre that resembles kethoprak, the Malaysian government has created a traditional past (Tan Sooi Beng 1997:vii-viii). Wijaya and Sutjipto’s *The coming into being and development of kethoprak: Folk theatre of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta*, the outcome of two seminars published under the auspices of the Indonesian Directorate General of Culture in 1977, might have performed a similar function.⁹⁵ Therefore, it supported and promoted the preservation discourse. As the aim of the New Order government was to get a grip on and keep control of the regional performing arts in Indonesia, the fixing of kethoprak by the imposition of specific constraints would have been helpful.

Kethoprak practitioners Handung Kus Sudyarsana and Bondan Nusantara both perceive tradition as a process, a movement in time that is consonant with its context, carrying within it the potential to be ‘reshaped, transformed and perhaps even strengthened through the encounter’ (Thompson 1996:95). Their stance concurs with the tradition of kethoprak itself. As the history of kethoprak demonstrates, it has always been in flux. This dynamic character is inherent in the genre – which has not always been acknowledged in criticism about kethoprak. Mass media – gramophone, film, radio, cassette tapes, television – , each with its

⁹⁵ *Kelahiran dan perkembangan kethoprak: Teater rakyat Jawa Tengah dan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta.*

own technology and constraints and hence specific character, have significantly contributed to the incessant reshaping and transforming of kethoprak, and to the increasing popularity of and expanding access to the genre. Kethoprak's accommodating stance towards the media has made it trendy, enabling it to survive for more than a century. The reverse of the mediatization of kethoprak is that it has enabled the government to disseminate information and persuasive messages on a large scale and in a rapid tempo.

Nonetheless, the dynamic quality of kethoprak did not lend itself to being fixed into a tight-fitting corset, the aim of the policy makers, not even after it had evolved into a traditional genre to be preserved, and not even when it was ascribed an *adiluhung* quality on the perceived grounds that that traditional arts were there to be used for the purpose of building an Indonesian culture, tradition here being part of an ideology. Apparently, New Order discourse on the deterioration and loss of a genre like kethoprak had become deeply rooted and was still abroad at the time of writing. Fortunately, kethoprak artists who have appreciated kethoprak's potential to adopt new developments and adapt to new contexts, have succeeded in innovating the genre in their co-operation with regional TVRI stations, as I demonstrate in the following chapter.

5 Kethoprak on television and television kethoprak: two case studies

Taking into account all the changes, what has made the genre remain ‘kethoprak’? In particular, what was the reason televised kethoprak and television kethoprak kept the connotation ‘traditional’? How does the genre function within the discourse on tradition? How should kethoprak be categorized, as it has differentiated itself into various subgenres and styles over the course of time; some of these approximate more traditional forms of this Javanese theatre genre; others tend to resemble soap series or modern Javanese drama? To answer these questions, I focus on the constraints that determine whether or not a production belongs to the sphere of tradition/convention, as this was delineated by Handung Kus Sudyarsana and Bondan Nusantara.

Presenting two case studies, I explore two of Bondan Nusantara’s categories: kethoprak on television, with the televised play *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda*, and television kethoprak, with the genre *kethoprak sayembara*. On the basis of this exploration, I proceed to some major effects of televising on kethoprak. The two case studies illustrate my point that innovation of so-called traditional performance genres has resulted in their preservation. They also illustrate that TVRI Yogyakarta and the genre kethoprak and its practitioners have been inextricably linked to each other. TVRI has contributed to the presentation, development and preservation of the genre and offered kethoprak practitioners ample opportunities to perform on television; kethoprak has contributed significantly to TVRI Yogyakarta’s branding. The case of kethoprak is an outstanding example of how TVRI Yogyakarta has utilized proximity in the production of the local.

1 Kethoprak on television: The Installation of Prince Mangkubumi⁹⁶

In 1993 TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta produced a *kethoprak* version of the story of the accession to the throne of Prince Mangkubumi as the first sultan of Yogyakarta. It broadcast *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* (The Installation of Prince Mangkubumi) in two episodes, on 20 September and 11 October.

That same year, the story of Prince Mangkubumi’s elevation was also staged in Yogyakarta on several occasions. In January 1993, the group Sapta Mandala performed the play in the audience hall of the sultan’s palace (Pagelaran) to commemorate the founding of the Mataram court by Prince Mangkubumi, later Sultan Hamengku Buwana I.⁹⁷ R.B. Soedarsono (1993) has claimed this was the first occasion on which the reigning sultan of Yogyakarta had assented to the representation of Javanese court history in *kethoprak*, ‘a theatre form of the common people’ (Hatley 2008a:169), within the palace walls. Built by the first monarch, for two-and-a-half centuries this palace had been a political centre. However, in

⁹⁶ Part of this chapter was published in *Wacana* in a more elaborate version, presenting an analysis of the storytelling and narrative techniques in this programme and of the intermedial character of the *lakon* (Bogaerts 2016).

⁹⁷ The performance took place on 16 and 17 January 1993.

the 1990s in its role as a centre of traditional Javanese culture, the staging of dance and theatre other than court genres was unusual. The 1993 kethoprak performance was presumably an allusion to the reigning sultan of Yogyakarta, Sultan Hamengku Buwana X, as it depicted Mangkubumi as a wise leader who enjoyed a close relationship with his people (Hatley 2008:169).

In September 1993, members of the Gadjah Mada University Art Unit (Sekber Unit Kesenian UGM Yogyakarta) performed the *lakon* in the Balairung building of the university, to celebrate the foundation day of the university (Utami 1993:11). It was a televisual adaptation of this version of the performance that TVRI Yogyakarta recorded and broadcast in September and October that same year.⁹⁸ The purpose of the recording and broadcast was to offer the general public (*masyarakat umum*) the opportunity also to enjoy the Balairung performance that had been staged for an invited audience.⁹⁹

Bondan Nusantara directed the three versions of the play, all based on adaptations of a script written by Handung Kus Sudyarsana. I have not been able to trace either Handung Kus Sudyarsana's original script or the copy used for the 1993 television performance. Recently I did come across a photocopy of a script by Handung Kus Sudyarsana in a reworked version (*dipun rakit malih*) by Bondan Nusantara.¹⁰⁰ The copy is undated but it seems highly likely it was used for the January 1993 performance in the Yogyakarta *kraton* – it contains references to the sultan's palace as a performance location. The division into scenes, the dialogues and the stage directions very closely resemble those of the 1993 TVRI version.

Most of the actors and musicians involved in the performance were members of the Gadjah Mada University Art Unit, not professional kethoprak actors. Nevertheless they were well trained, some having studied dance or acting elsewhere. Wicaksono Haryo Putro, who took the role of Prince Mangkubumi, won praise for his performance. An acknowledged court dancer, and considered to be a serious actor, he was thought 'weighty' enough to play the role of Yogyakarta's first sultan.¹⁰¹ He was said to have exuded the aura of a traditional Javanese ruler, embodying the requisite and becoming behaviour and body language.

The students were honouring an old tradition as their forerunners had a hand in the development of kethoprak. For instance, in 1963, the amateur troupe Among Mitra, consisting of young people including students, gave an innovative performance of the story *Nagasasra Sabuk Inten*, written by S.H. Mintarja (Wijaya dan Sutjipto 1997:42). At the second Kethoprak Festival and Congress in 1964, the Gadjah Mada University student kethoprak troupe took second prize in the kethoprak competition with their performance of the story *Geger Gunung Sewu* (Yuliantri dan Dahlan 2008:347-348).

The central theme of all these *Pangeran Mangkubumi* stories is the enthronement of Prince Mangkubumi. The main events leading to this climax are the following: Chief Councillor

⁹⁸ Hatley (2008: 168-169) suggests that the three performances of the *lakon* were all staged by *Sapta Mandala* actors, but according to the data I obtained, this was not the case.

⁹⁹ Personal communication Bondan Nusantara, Yogyakarta, 2 July 2012.

¹⁰⁰ This copy is kept in the library of the Studio Teater PPPG Kesenian (PPPPTK Seni dan Budaya) in Yogyakarta. I am very grateful to Eko Ompong Santosa who sent me a digital copy of the text.

¹⁰¹ In 1993 he danced the role of Yogyakarta's ninth sultan in Kristiadi's dance drama *Sang Prawara*.

Pringgalaya, who sides with the Dutch, persuades Susuhunan Paku Buwana II to sign an agreement with the latter. Upon hearing news of this capitulation, Paku Buwana's younger half-brother, Prince Mangkubumi, decides to take up arms against the Dutch, but he refuses to rebel against the king, his liege lord. Mangkubumi and his soldiers attack the Dutch headquarters (*loji*). When news of this assault reaches his ears, the monarch collapses. Prince Mangkubumi is installed on the throne as the first ruler of Yogyakarta, Sultan Hamengku Buwana I. Although this theme runs through all the versions of the story, each individual performance offers a different approach and divergent presentation of the story (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).



5.1 Prince Mangkubumi



5.2 Sultan Hamengku Buwana I on the throne

The lakon of the 1993 television version, a reworked version of Kus Sudyarsana's script, presumably drawing upon a Javanese court chronicle (like the *Babad Giyanti* or *Serat Babad Mangkubumi*) and oral literature, is unquestionably based on historical fact. Several rebellions raised against the vacillating Javanese ruler, quarrels with the Chinese, problems arising from land and Dutch interventions in internal politics eventually led to the division of the Central Javanese kingdom into the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta in 1755. Pangeran Arya Mangkubumi, the half-brother of Susuhunan Paku Buwana II of Surakarta, was acclaimed the first sultan of Yogyakarta. Lauded for the resistance he had offered his half-brother and the Dutch and his emergence as victor in the resultant struggle, he is depicted as a hero and the founding father of Yogyakarta.¹⁰²

The theme belongs to a series of very popular motifs, namely: the struggle of members of the aristocracy in collaboration with the people to achieve both independence from the Dutch and the inception of a righteous rule by the Javanese monarch. Brandon has remarked that this theme – 'depicting the evils of the enemy and the virtues of the local hero' – is not confined to Javanese kethoprak, but is a constant in other dramatic genres in what he calls the popular

¹⁰² Ricklefs gives a detailed account of the Dutch intervention in Javanese affairs between 1726 and 1754 in his chapter on the rebellion and the division of the kingdom (Ricklefs 1974:37-66).

tradition, both in other Indonesian and other Southeast Asian cultures. Brandon emphasizes the plays ‘appeal to nationalistic sentiments’ (Brandon 1967:103).

This lakon belongs to the so called *kejawen* stories, that kethoprak participants say constitutes the core repertoire of the genre (Hatley 1985:54). Hatley points out their ‘inherent Javanese-ness’ as they are ‘rooted in Javanese history, attired according to traditional, ongoing Javanese dress convention’ (Hatley 1985:54). The lakon is well known and loved as the story is inherently linked to the history of the city and its court. The show is a representation of both the historical event and the foundation myth of Yogyakarta. Representations like these in televised performance play an important role in the branding of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. They legitimize the power of the rulers of Mataram/Yogyakarta and strengthen the identity of the city and its inhabitants. The audiences know the stories and that is part of the fun. As I have shown elsewhere, the performance history of a *kethoprak* story influences the perception of the audiences (Bogaerts 2016). As local nationalism in Yogyakarta is strong and its native inhabitants consider Sultan Mangkubumi a local hero, the *lakon* has always been popular and attracted large audiences from all strata of Yogyakarta society. It has been performed by various groups at various times for various occasions and audiences, in villages, in a *kraton* environment by professional actors and elsewhere; it is still one of the most popular *kethoprak* plays. Therefore, the TVRI Yogyakarta programme *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* is an outstanding example of the production of the local on multiple levels – the local in the sense of ‘a phenomenological property of social life’ and its inseparable link to ‘the actual settings in and through which social life is reproduced’ (Appadurai 1996:182) (see the Introduction).

Televising Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda

Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda was broadcast in two 55-minute episodes, the time slot available in the television schedule. Each episode consisted of a series of scenes (*babak*), defined by the locale in which the action took place, the characters present and the mood/atmosphere (*swasana*) of the scene.¹⁰³

In most traditional *kethoprak* performances, each scene is given form in a specific setting. Painted backdrops and stage props are used to represent the locale in which the action is taking place. In the broadcast of *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda*, this was not the case. The setting was a plain stage, with several platforms, one of them consisting of a series of tiered daises in the stage centre back, all black. The central platform had a cube on top, a curved back ‘wall’ and was topped by a royal umbrella. The *mise en scène* was very simple and abstract. The lighting was simple: a red glow behind the central platform; the stage plainly lit with white light. With the exception of the most important elements, like the royal umbrella, two lances and a magic whip, no properties were used. Other conventions belonging to traditional *kethoprak*, like the use of a *keprak* or *kenthongan*, were omitted, and the use of singing (*tembang*) instead of a dialogue to convey a message was restricted to the introduction to the story, when the credits were shown on the screen. Such simple and abstract staging

¹⁰³ For an elaborate description of the scenes, see Bogaerts (2016:484-486).

exemplifies one of the typical *kethoprak* styles of TVRI Yogyakarta. No audience was present in the studio during the recording of the play but the musicians took over part of the audiences' role in reacting to certain events on the stage.

The programme combined characteristics of a television production and a staged performance, as Bondan Nusantara himself remarked.¹⁰⁴ The story developed through a series of six scenes and began, following traditional *kethoprak* constraints, with an audience scene in the palace of Susuhunan Paku Buwana II of Surakarta. The greetings and courteous exchanges between the ruler and those in attendance were very brief; the reporting on the prosperity and tranquility of the kingdom, signifying the righteous rule of the king, was skipped. Contrary to tradition, Chief Councillor Pringgalaya addressed the Susuhunan – usually the ruler opens the dialogue –, reporting that everybody was present at the palace audience.¹⁰⁵ Almost from the beginning a problem (later it becomes clear that this is the main problem and the audiences watching the show know this, of course) was introduced: Prince Mangkubumi had failed to come to pay his respects to the ruler, and therefore the gathering will be extraordinary.

The broadcast was the result of an edited studio recording, using three cameras, one of the microphones hanging visibly above the stage. The cameras not only determined the points of view and scope (full view, close-up and everything in between), angle (left, centre, right) and movement (panning, etcetera). The camera-work and the editing enhanced the storytelling – for instance with a close-up shot at the beginning of the programme showing the royal umbrella that was closed, indicating the waning power of the ruler of Surakarta, and of an opening royal umbrella at the moment when Prince Mangkubumi was installed on the throne at the end of the second episode, a sign that the equilibrium had been restored. Camera focus also indicated space, working in conjunction with other parameters like the presence of specific characters and references in the dialogues. Lively switches between camera standpoints and certain editing accentuated the dynamics of the fight scenes, while the music supported the atmosphere. The opening audience scene, on stage a long scene with few dynamics and ample dialogue, was injected with tempo by edited camera shots, varying between points of view, scope and angle.¹⁰⁶ Flash-backs were embedded in the main storyline by means of fading in and out; the first episode ended with a cliffhanger.

Although these televisual aspects, the camera-work and gaze, the sound amplification and the editing added extra information to the *kethoprak* performance and functioned as the narrator, the broadcast gave the impression that it was closer to the world of theatre rather than that of television. Whereas televisual techniques were used for the flashbacks, other 'problems' were solved in a theatrical way. When the Susuhunan, Pringgalaya and Governor-General Van Imhoff (representing the Dutch) were watching what was happening outside the

¹⁰⁴ Personal communication Bondan Nusantara, Yogyakarta, 2 July 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Ngestokaken dhawuh timbalan dalem, para pengeran, pengeran putra, sentana, bupati, nayaka tuwin wadu wandawaning praja nuwun inggih sampun ngabyantara wonten ngarsa dalem.

¹⁰⁶ Kristiadi (2010:2) points out the dynamic character of the medium television versus the static character of specific *kethoprak* scenes on stage.

palace and the perspective changed to the soldiers fighting, this switch of perspective was solved as follows: the three protagonists watching the fighting (Figure 5.3) turned their back to the cameras/audience, but remained visible (Figure 5.4), while the actors representing the fighting soldiers appeared in the front part of the stage (Figure 5.5). When the focus of the story changed again to the Susuhunan and his escort, they turned their faces and bodies back to the camera/audiences. This type of approach is much closer to earlier kethoprak forms that used to be performed in villages and in *pendhapa*, than to the commercial kethoprak performances on a proscenium using backdrops and/or furniture or the style(s) performed and recorded in fully furnished studios.

If we examine the characteristics of the programme closely, we may conclude that the mediated kethoprak performance was traditional according to Sedyawati's criteria. The plot, the development of the story, the dialogues and the staging had a specific form, and the acts of the play as well as the representation of space, time and situation adhered to specific conventions (Sedyawati 1981:40-42, 48). Or, following Kus Sudyarsana's more theoretical view, the traditional elements prevailed. As a traditional form of drama, it focused on local Javanese theatrical conventions and aesthetics. Importantly, the use of the Javanese language, speech styles, etiquette and prosody, the focus of the story on court life and its protocol, the accompaniment of a gamelan orchestra featured prominently. The lakon also had a traditional origin. The respect for the history of the Yogyakarta court – whether accurate or not –, the high esteem for the sultan and the close relationship between Prince Mangkubumi and the villagers were paid a great deal of attention and augmented the overall traditional appearance.

However, the fully scripted play did not allow room for any improvisation, one of the main features of traditional kethoprak. Therefore, when the televisual adaptations are taken into consideration, the conclusion has to be different and the show has to be designated *kethoprak garapan*, following Bondan Nusantara's criteria (1997:55). One of the characteristics of kethoprak is its reflection on the circumstances, society and context in which it takes place. This allows contemporary issues to be embedded in the stories of past histories and legends. In the case of Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda, among the contemporary references raised were gender issues (women join the struggle against the Dutch and support Prince Mangkubumi) (Figure 5.6). The allusion to the ruler of Yogyakarta at the time of broadcasting is another example of a context-bound and contemporary reference. Nevertheless, in spite of all the changes, developments and adaptations, this mediatized kethoprak can still be called traditional. Possibly on account of its aesthetics imbued with a classical touch, evoking a palace atmosphere, but certainly also because the main characteristics of kethoprak had been maintained (Kristiadi 2001).



5.3 The Suhunan, Pringgalaya and Governor-General Van Imhoff watching what is happening outside the palace



5.4 Turning their back to the cameras/the audience



5.5 The actors representing the fighting soldiers appear in the front part of the stage



5.6 Women joining the struggle against the Dutch

2 Television kethoprak: *Kethoprak sayembara*

In August 1993 the *kethoprak sayembara* serial *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopuro* (Fog over Singgelopuro) was broadcast by producer TVRI Surabaya, in co-operation with TVRI Yogyakarta. In an article in the TVRI journal *Lensa* on the phenomenon, Tri Jauhari explains the overwhelming response to this serial: approximately 3.5 million postcards from audiences in Central and East Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta had been received by both broadcasters by the end of the last episode.¹⁰⁷ Other responses that reflected the popularity of the serial included the letters to the editors (*surat pembaca*) sent to *Jawa Pos* and *Memorandum*, the East Javanese print media that supported the serial, and the discussions of fans in buses, markets, the small shelters of nightwatchmen (*gardu ronda*) and at local community meetings during the period in which it was broadcast. Minutes before the expiration of the quiz's deadline, the guards of the television station in Yogyakarta were reported to have closed the gates when crowds of *kethoprak sayembara* aficionados tried to hand in their postcard at the last minute, hoping to win one of the prizes: a fan, a radio, a television set, a motorbike or a car. The author of the article links the success of the serial to the involvement of the audiences who during each episode were invited to take part in the quiz. This participation fanned their appreciation of the programme. Secondly, because the programme was broadcast in four episodes the eagerness of its admirers was stretched out over a longer period. Thirdly, the attention of the audiences was caught not just by the (familiar) narration about a kingdom in the past and the conflicts between the protagonists, they were also drawn in by aspects of mystery and suspense inserted to add flavour to the story. Fourthly, the role of the cinematic format cannot be overlooked. The *kethoprak sayembara* was presented as a teleplay – some people called it a soap serial (*sinetron*) –, shot outdoors to make it look more 'realistic' and more dynamic than a performance on stage. Every episode ended with a cliffhanger, whetting the audiences' appetite to watch the next episode. Last but not least, the prizes were tantalizing (Tri Jauhari 1994:21-22). In short, the combination of entertainment presenting both new and familiar elements, audience participation, ever-growing huge PR campaigns and the possibility of winning a prize all contributed to the success of *kethoprak sayembara*.

TVRI Yogyakarta's *kethoprak sayembara* was a new television genre. Several types of serialized *kethoprak* had already been shown before the creation of the *kethoprak sayembara*. Live *kethoprak* had been performed in a serialized form, when a story was spread over several nights, depending on the circumstances and the performance context. Cassette and radio *kethoprak* likewise used to be serialized. Therefore, a serialized presentation on television was well suited to the genre. An additional boost was that at the time serialized comics relating Javanese *babad*-based history (Figure 5.7), Hasmi's local comic on superhero Gundala and Asmaraman S. Kho Ping Hoo's silat stories were very popular, and these, together with S.H.

¹⁰⁷ According to Wicaksono et al. (2002), 800,000 postcards were received by TVRI, but the authors do not specify which TVRI station(s).

Mintardja's serialized historical novels, must have inspired the television producers when they created kethoprak sayembara. The success of battle dramas like *Saur Sepuh* (The Reply of the Elders) (see Chapter 6) on the radio and in movies sequels and television series) must have been influential as well.



5.7 Serialized comic *Arya Penangsang*

Williams defines televisual serialized drama as 'a dramatised action divided into pieces'. The serial on television has its precedents in the cinema and on radio and, in an earlier period, in serialized fiction (Williams 1990:60). Williams distinguishes serials, 'in which a connected dramatic presentation is offered in several linked episodes' from series, 'in which each play is normally self-contained but in which certain regular characters occur' (Williams 1990:80). Kethoprak sayembara belongs to the first type, the serial. Heidt argues that the serialization of television programmes might be seen as 'the main structural characteristic of the television medium' (Heidt 1987:184). Building up a reliable regular audience for their channel or station, television broadcasters needed to give their programmes continuity. In the case of commercial channels, the guarantee of reliable audiences would be interesting to advertisers. When he refers to the effects of 'habitualization through long-time exposure' on the viewers of the series, Heidt has long-running series with at least five episodes in mind (Heidt 1987:184-185). Kethoprak sayembara serials did not usually run as long. The majority consisted of four to six episodes. It was more the regularity in their broadcasting that effected the 'habitualization through long-time exposure'.

The regional TVRI stations in Yogyakarta and Surabaya characterized the kethoprak sayembara serials as traditional shows (*tontonan tradisional; paket tradisional*). This identifying of the television genre with the concept tradition attracted ample attention in public debate. The role of television in kethoprak was a particularly hot topic of discussion.

The debates ranged from the positive impact of television on local artists to the idea that televising kethoprak would lead to the extinction of traditional performance. In the section on the effects of television on kethoprak, I shall present some of these debates.

My historical overview in the next section shows how, as a creation of TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, kethoprak sayembara developed into a tried and tested format, both artistically and entrepreneurially. It was innovative and attracted large audiences. But when the formula had been repeated time and again it was drained of the allure needed to compete with the programmes of private broadcasters.

Serializing kethoprak: history

TVRI Yogyakarta had launched the new serialized programme in an effort to re-awaken the people's waning attention for broadcasts of traditional Javanese theatre performances in an era when competing television industries had entered the market. The serialized kethoprak performances, created especially for television, were invested with several strategies to ensure that audiences did not grow bored. The addition of the quiz format – hence the name kethoprak sayembara, *sayembara* meaning prize contest – ensured that audiences were directly involved in the programme. The possibility of winning a prize was part of the allure, probably the most important feature, as was often mentioned in local newspapers and magazines (NAR 1991). These *kuis berhadiah*, prize-winning quizzes, gave the television station the opportunity to take a new tack towards customer relations and to by-pass the ban on broadcasting commercials (from 1981 to 1989). The sponsors who provided the station with the prizes saw their business opportunities and sales figures grow.

TVRI Yogyakarta was simultaneously finding ways to make its broadcasts of traditional drama alluring to ensure there was a steady stream of attention from the public and to preserve the genre. TVRI Denpasar, for instance, had the same idea with its broadcasts of the Balinese drama gong, that was also sponsored indirectly by means of the quiz connected to the broadcasts (Darma Putra 1998:34, 38).

After the first broadcast of kethoprak sayembara by TVRI Yogyakarta in the 1970s – presenting the lakon (story) *Kidung Perenging Dieng* (Ballad of the Slopes of Dieng) that was directed by Handung Kus Sudyarsana – for almost two decades the new genre disappeared from the screen. At the end of the year 1988 when the station broadcast *Prahara*, the audience response was positive. Not least because of the involvement of well-known kethoprak practitioners, local artists and aficionados like Handung Kus Sudyarsana, Singgih Hadi Mintardja, Bakdi Soemanto, Bondan Nusantara and Setiadji, because of the outdoor recordings (instead of the former usual studio recordings), and the attention it was paid in the newspapers that supported it (Monel 1993:16).

In the following years kethoprak sayembara's popularity increased significantly. Therefore, in 1992, TVRI Yogyakarta launched a co-operation with TVRI Surabaya. *Siung Macan Kumbang* (The Fangs of the Panther), the first result of this co-operation, broadcast simultaneously by the two stations (Monel 1993:15), was a big success – two million postcards were received and the sponsoring newspapers, *Jawa Pos*, *Suara Merdeka* and

Kedaulatan Rakyat also benefited from the attention the programme attracted.¹⁰⁸ An article in the magazine *Tempo* remarked that this was not just an ordinary show. The authors of the article drew attention to the special format of the kethoprak serial, its commercial aspects and those whom it benefited. The format of the programme was based on the concept of a soap series (*sinema elektronik* or *sinetron*). In several ways the kethoprak performance had been modernized. In their discussion of this modernization, the authors borrowed a concept from the wayang kulit, the *pakem*. This term, used for handbooks containing synopses of wayang stories, also refers to the guidelines setting out how the stories should be performed. In this case, the *pakem* of kethoprak had been abandoned and the story was inspired by *silat* films (not by legends or the history of Javanese kingdoms, as was usually the case). The music illustrating the performance was modern. The dialogues had been actualized by inserting everyday language (*bahasa Jawa sehari-hari*). This new production introduced by TVRI Yogyakarta reflects the way the station kept its role as the barometer of the arts and culture of its surroundings while following the changes in society.

There was yet even more on offer. From the broadcast of the first episode in October, millions of people in Yogyakarta and Central and East Java racked their brains about who might have stolen the amulet (*jimat*) Siung Macan Kombang. They sent their answer to the puzzle to the Yogyakarta television station on a postcard with a coupon (*kupon*), published in the newspaper *Jawa Pos*. *Jawa Pos*' circulation increased from 260,000 to 360,000 copies, wrote Chudori et al. in *Tempo*. It shared part of its profit with both television stations; Rp. 20 million went to TVRI Stasiun Surabaya, Rp. 15 million to the TVRI station in Yogyakarta. *Tempo* mentioned that *Jawa Pos* had been spending Rp. 150,000 million on the production costs of the serial (Chudori et al. 1992). Last but not least, the chance of winning one of the prizes – a television set, a bicycle (*sepeda* Federal), a refrigerator or a motorbike (*motor bebek*) – tantalized the audiences (Chudori et al. 1992). As *Tempo* mentioned, the success of the programme not only proved that the production of television serials had developed, but also that television had found new ways to earn an income other than by broadcasting commercials.¹⁰⁹

In August 1993 it was TVRI Surabaya's turn to produce a kethoprak sayembara serial. *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopuro* was the result of a co-operation with the newspaper *Jawa Pos* and the famous kethoprak troupe Siswo Budoyo from Tulungagung. It was to be broadcast by TVRI Surabaya and relayed simultaneously by TVRI Yogyakarta ((wa) 1993a). One new feature was the Indonesian subtitling of the dialogues, making the local production accessible to non-Javanese audiences. It was hailed as a first step on the road to 'nationalize' (*menasionalkan*) kethoprak sayembara. The subtitling had been inserted after a request made during a preview of the series, that TVRI Surabaya had organized in search of input and criticism from artists and prominent figures in the local community (*Ketoprak AAS diusulkan* 1993). The lecturer of the Airlangga University who had suggested adding Indonesian subtitles to the spoken Javanese - referred to as *bahasa Jawa Kromo Inggil* in the newspaper

¹⁰⁸ Other newspapers that had been or became involved as a sponsor were *Bernas*, *Monitor* and *Dharma Nyata*. Chudori et al. mentioned the same number of postcards.

¹⁰⁹ See also Sunardian Wirodono (1993) on the mutual profit of the kethoprak sayembara serials.

article – , argued that not all members of the audience in Surabaya were ethnic Javanese. In presenting this argument he was presupposing that only ethnic Javanese would have mastered the language and only residents of Surabaya would watch the serial, both assumptions being incorrect. The internal TVRI buletin *Lensa* claimed that kethoprak sayembara series like *Siung Macan Kombang* and *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopuro* could now easily compete with nationally produced and broadcast TVRI programmes inspired by well-known traditional local stories.¹¹⁰ When national film stars began to appear in kethoprak sayembara, the genre was said to be even more ready to ‘go national’. TVRI Yogyakarta hoped to be able to convey the contents and the message to Indonesians of all ethnic backgrounds, thereby stimulating the interest of younger generations in ‘traditional’ art. After all, the results of a small-scale survey conducted in Surabaya by Paramanidya, an institution specialized in social research, in August 1993 had shown that audiences who had previously not enjoyed watching kethoprak, had begun to appreciate this form of traditional theatre after having watched the kethoprak sayembara serials, not least because they could participate in the quiz (Tri Jauhari 1994:22).¹¹¹ Tri Jauhari’s own survey of 1988, before kethoprak sayembara was screened after a long absence, had shown that the interest in kethoprak among students at the Gadjah Mada University had been very low.

The producers of TVRI Yogyakarta assumed that the national broadcasting of kethoprak sayembara might provide a stimulus for other local traditional products to make their debut on the small screen. This tied in with one of TVRI’s aims, namely: to preserve the culture of the nation. The print press also had an interest, as sponsoring kethoprak sayembara spelled an increase in editions and in profit. The Surabaya-based *Jawa Pos*, for instance, had been able to extend its influence to Central Java, thereby bringing the inhabitants of the three Javanese provinces (East and Central Java and DIY) within its reach. Moreover, there was the possibility that kethoprak sayembara could Indonesianize (*mengindonesia*). In that case, however, it was questionable if *Jawa Pos* would continue to sponsor it, or whether other print media would take over the role (Tri Jauhari 1994:21-22).

A final kethoprak sayembara programme was broadcast in 1997.¹¹² About 4,000,000 postcards were received, and TVRI had to engage freelance personnel to sort them out. The raffle was broadcast live from the TVRI studio in Yogyakarta. The first prize was a house, provided by the Foundation of the Minister of Information Harmoko. The coupons were published in *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, *Bernas*, *Suara Merdeka* and other newspapers. This time, the broadcasting of the programme was not restricted just to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Semarang and Surabaya, but also – and this is extraordinary because of the different vernaculars spoken in the regions – in Bali and Bandung.

The years 1997 to 2001 were blighted by a vacuum caused by a lack of finances. TVRI Yogyakarta was no longer able to produce and broadcast kethoprak sayembara

¹¹⁰ Such as *Kabayan* and *Malin Kundang*.

¹¹¹ The results of this survey had been published in Nugroho (1993a).

¹¹² Personal communication Heruwati (TVRI producer), Yogyakarta, 6 August 2001.

programmes.¹¹³ Since 2001, several efforts have been undertaken to revitalize the genre. These efforts have been part of a strategy to strengthen the existence of kethoprak and to foster and preserve traditional art genres ((M-5) 2016), as a heritage of the refined culture of the ancestors and original (authentic) Yogyakarta culture.¹¹⁴ In September 2001, TVRI Yogyakarta launched a new formula in co-operation with the daily *Bernas*. It bore the brand name *Kethoprak Berhadiah (TVRI Yogya tayangkan 2001)*. Although similar in format to kethoprak sayembara, the new title emphasized the prize (*hadiah*) winning character rather than the *sayembara*, the contest, thereby making it less weighty, said the producer of the serial.¹¹⁵ After 2002, new kethoprak serials have seen the light of day, but no longer on such a regular basis as in the past.

Whereas in the past coupons or postcards were used as medium to respond to the daily/weekly and the final quizzes, TVRI in co-operation with a local telecommunications operator made it simple for the public to react easily by means of the short message service (SMS), a more contemporary medium. Only messages sent by this operator would reach TVRI.¹¹⁶ Regularly broadcast advertisement spots and road shows were set up to inform and lure potential viewers. The idea was that the people in Yogyakarta would once again embrace this dramatic genre that was said to have rooted in all layers of local society. However, the poor results of a remix of an existing serial in 2011, playing nostalgia as an asset, generated fewer than 10,000 sms's and did not come anywhere near the overwhelming response of the public to the kethoprak sayembara quizzes in the 1990s.¹¹⁷ They showed that the format has lost its attraction to the viewers. Possibly it was no longer perceived as innovative. Neither the advertisements nor the road shows were able to create a similar kind of proximity between the audiences and the serials as had been the case in the past. It also shows nostalgia of itself did not work. Finally, it proved that more was needed to compete with other television stations and that the heyday of kethoprak sayembara, topic of the next section, had waned.

'A puzzling detective story':¹¹⁸ Promoting kethoprak sayembara

Seduced by the success of such TVRI Yogyakarta productions as *Ampak-Ampak Kaligawe* and *Siung Macan Kombang*, in 1993 TVRI Surabaya took its turn to produce a kethoprak sayembara serial. Ki Siswondo Hs, the well-known head of the famous kethoprak troupe Siswo Budoyo from Tulungagung, wrote the script and Siswo Budoyo actors performed the play. Guest actors were singer Ria Enes, famous for her radio show with the puppet Suzan, playing the role of Wulandari, and Untung Muljono, son of famous kethoprak performers,

¹¹³ Personal communication Heruwati, Yogyakarta, 6 August 2001.

¹¹⁴ 'warisan budaya adiluhung leluhur'; 'budaya asli Jogjakarta' <http://anangwiharyanto.wordpress.com/> [Last accessed 15 October 2010].

¹¹⁵ Personal communication Heruwati, Yogyakarta, 6 August 2001.

¹¹⁶ BUMN, PT Telkom Flexi RO Yogyakarta.

¹¹⁷ The broadcast of the sixth episode of the serial *Maejan Nagih Janji*, a 'remix' of the serial *Sawijining Dina Ing Sasi Rejeb*, generated a response of 9,396 sms's (competing for the Honda Revo motorbike and other prizes). Approximately 7,500 reponses were received for the main quiz (competing for the main prize, a Honda Supra X 125 motorbike) (<https://anangwiharyanto.wordpress.com/2011/01/15/undian-kethoprak-sayembara-berakhir/> (15 January 2011) [Last accessed August 2017].

¹¹⁸ 'Cerita detektif yang memusingkan' ((wa) 1993b).

artist and scholar, in the role of Tumenggung Sasadara. The four episodes of the serial were broadcast simultaneously on Monday evenings by TVRI Stasiun Surabaya and TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta.¹¹⁹

TVRI Surabaya deployed several strategies to make the serial attractive. Its largest asset was its co-operation with the East Javanese kethoprak troupe Siswo Budoyo. The troupe was well-known and popular and identified with East Java. These factors enabled TVRI Surabaya to create an atmosphere of *akrab*-ness in the serial. Secondly, its co-operation with several local newspapers allowed for huge PR campaigns, supported by advertisements, previews and comments in these newspapers and on radio and television. Part of the PR campaign was a teleconference: during each broadcast, a presenter from TVRI Yogyakarta and one from TVRI Surabaya bid against each other to guess the number of incoming postcards (Monel 1993:15-17). Thirdly, as with the previous kethoprak serials, the sponsoring enterprises generated income for the TV station, thereby subsidizing part of the serial's production. Finally, the station co-operated with local officials and politicians.

The fictive story, based on the history of the Javanese kingdom Majapahit, was promoted as a puzzling detective story (*cerita detektif yang memusingkan*) ((wa) 1993b). This detective character was foregrounded in the PR campaigns that announced and accompanied the broadcasts. The entire serial evolved around the question 'Who is the brains behind the murder on King Kartiko Aji?'

The *Jawa Pos* displayed hundreds of banners (*spanduk*) and billboards (*baliho*) in the streets of Surabaya. Both the *Jawa Pos* and *Memorandum* advertised the serial by placing large pictures, mentioning the prizes per participant category and the dates of the broadcasts. Participants were differentiated according to the type of link they had to the *Jawa Pos*: Category A for those with a subscription; Category B for those buying single copies. They could make use of the coupon that was published in a few editions of the *Jawa Pos*; Category C was specially for readers of *Memorandum* that also carried a coupon. Plenty of prizes were made available for each category. This differentiation led to protests: in their letters to the editor *Jawa Pos* readers who could not afford a subscription expressed their disappointment, as they felt they too had helped *Jawa Pos* to flourish by buying copies in shops (*toko eceran*) or on the corner of the street. The editors of the daily thanked all the letter-writers for their comments. They claimed this topic was connected to 'the problem of the preservation of traditional arts to which we all contribute'. Category A was meant to spoil (*memanjakan*) the subscribers and provide them with an extra service by means of this entertainment programme, broadcast by the TVRI stations in Surabaya and Yogyakarta. The *Jawa Pos* used the serial as a tool to communicate between the newspaper and the subscribers. The Marketing Director of the *Jawa Pos* added that for all three categories large prizes had been reserved ((Ita) 1993c).

While the television stations broadcast fragments of episodes as teasers for the audiences, daily features in the local newspapers stirred the fever. Focusing on *Jawa Pos*, I shall give a sense of how the excitement was built up. Two types of articles were published: those

¹¹⁹ On 26 July, 2, 9 and 23 August 1993.

containing synopses of the serial, heightening the suspense by dropping hints; and essays, based on research, offering analyses of what was happening in the serial. Among the persuasive techniques used in the former were repetitions (of the story contents, suspects, the puzzle) to build up the tension, unflagging references to the advantages of participating in the quiz, and the unravelling of the plot as if through the eyes of the viewers. The latter provided credible sources (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999:291; Pratkanis and Aronson 2001:51) to persuade the viewers, in the form of (results of) audience research presented in tables and interviews with experts who were involved in the production (the producer, Ki Siswondo and several actors).

The *Jawa Pos* newspaper articles of the first type provided readers with all kinds of information about the form and contents of the serial: the synopsis of the entire story and the synopsis of each episode was presented in more detail before it was broadcast; suggestions about who might be the guilty party behind the murder on the king. Six characters were mentioned as possible suspects and their putative guilt was backed up by insinuations about their ambitions and pointing out their conspicuously suspicious behaviour, the intrigues at the court and the problems arising from the succession to the throne ((ita) 1993b). The articles read like introductions to detective stories and they built up the tension, initially in the lead-up to the first broadcast, thereafter binding the public to the newspaper and the broadcasts by making insinuations about the potential murderer and the brains behind the murder (example: the murder weapon, a keris, is owned by the king's younger brother), by referring to the prizes to be won, totalling an amount of 60 million Rupiah, by repeating that the final opportunity to win a prize was fast approaching and that the only way to be sure of finding out was to watch all four episodes, thereby heightening the suspense (Figure 5.8). The journalists kept on repeating their persuasive message that sounded: from tonight onwards, those who want to win a prize could prepare themselves to discover the brains behind the murder of Prabu Kartiko Aji. Want to join the quiz? Please fill in the coupon – guiding the readers through the steps to be taken ((ita) 1993d).

Terungkap, Otak Pembunuhan



Surabaya, JP.-

Nanti malam penggemar ketoprak *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopuro* (AAS) dapat menyaksikan tayangan akhir. Sekaligus akan mengetahui jawaban siapa otak pembunuh Prabu Kartika Adji. Lima tokoh kuat yang putut dicurigai telah dimunculkan. Simak saja permainan watak Ratu Ampean. Selain ambisius, juga punya perangai ketus ditunjang dengan kedudukannya sebagai garwo ampai. Berturut-turut Patih Tamengyudo yang tiba-tiba masuk perut pembunuh sang raja. Juga ada Nyi Tumenggung Sosodoro, Bekel Badahu, dan Pangeran Lintang Premono.

Selain itu, tokoh yang tidak memiliki kans tetapi bisa saja sebagai otak pembunuh karena maksud-maksud tersembunyi.

Seperti Sosodoro. Meski demikian, mungkin saja ramalan ini meleset karena segala rahasia masih ada dalam penggambaran Siswondo selaku penulis ceritanya.

Memasuki episode IV ini, ternyata ayahanda Wulandari, yakni Sosodoro, sang penggak hukum kerajaan, dikeroyok massa. Tidak ingin orang tuanya celaka, Wulandari (Ria Enes) lantas membantu. Tentu saja dengan topeng dan busana samaran.

Seperti episode ke-2 diceritakan bahwa Wulandari adalah seorang pendekar. Bahkan, dialah yang berhasil meloloskan P. Tarang-gono dari sekapan begal utusan seseorang tokoh kerajaan. Tentu saja dia menggunakan ilmu *kadiklayan* yang dimilikinya dari seorang guru pertapa. Hanya saja, pagi ini *Jawa Pos* tidak menurunkan jawaban siapa otak pembunuhan tersebut. Dengan pertimbangan, jika diturunkan pemirsa TVRI tidak *surprise* lagi.

Sementara itu, jawaban sayembara terkumpul 3,5 juta kupon dan kuitansi yang terkumpul dari Jateng, DIY, dan Jawa Timur. Malam ini setelah tayangan ketoprak ini, akan diundi siapa pemenang sayembara AAS, baik dari paket C maupun paket A.

Siapakah peraih hadiah mobil sebagai hadiah utamanya? Ikuti saja penayangannya di layar gelas TVRI Stasiun Surabaya dan Stasiun Yogyakarta. Borngkali saja Andalah juaranya. (ita)

5.8 Brains behind the murder disclosed
(*Jawa Pos* 23 August 1993)

The participation of the troupe *Siswo Budoyo* was vaunted in the PR: a well-known group of reliable and experienced kethoprak actors, who were used to performing in the traditional manner, as an itinerant troupe on a temporary stage in a bamboo construction (*tobong*). They had the reputation for attracting large audiences. The fact that the leader of the troupe had written the script and played the role of the king who was murdered in the first episode was paid all due attention. The articles highlighted that the recording and editing of the first three episodes had already been completed, but that the recording of the last episode would have to wait until early August, in order to keep the answer to the puzzle undisclosed. Some of the viewers had been looking for leaks, it said, chasing *Jawa Pos* staff, calling or visiting Ki Siswondo, some of them even willing to bribe him in search of the answer to the puzzle ((wa) 1993a). The 'syuting' location of the last episode was kept secret, to prevent crowds from flocking there in their search for the answer (*Siswo Budoyo kehilangan* 1993; (ws) 1993b). Pride was certainly taken in the wide scope of the serial, as it would be broadcast in East and Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta ((wa) 1993b).

The essays by Priyono Adi Nugroho, published in the *Jawa Pos*, offer another example of the role of the print media in promoting the serial and heightening the suspense (Nugroho 1993a, b, c). Besides their commercial goals, they also offered a reflection on the position of the

traditional arts in contemporary Indonesia, on the need for preservation and on language use. The serial and the quiz were presented within the framework of a research project, offering academic support by means of three tables (Table 1). The research on the perception of the audiences of the AAS serial was conducted by the Centre for Socio-Economic and Mass Communication Research (Pusat Studi Sosial Ekonomi dan Komunikasi Massa, Pussekomm) Paramawidya Surabaya after the broadcast of the second episode. The centre carried out its survey in East Java (in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Gresik and Mojokerto), by means of a questionnaire (*angket*). However, as only 200 people from various backgrounds and professions bothered to fill in the questionnaire, the academic scope of the facts could be called into question.

Nama Otak Pembunuh	Frekuensi
1. Ratu Ampean	102 (51 %)
2. Nyi Sosodoro	29 (14,5 %)
3. Patih Tamengyudo	20 (10 %)
4. P. Sindu Pawoko	14 (7 %)
5. Tumenggung Sosodoro	11 (5,5 %)
6. P. Lintang Premono	9 (4,5 %)
7. P. Tranggono	7 (3,5 %)
8. R. Setyoko	3 (1,5 %)
9. Nyi Lintang Premono	2 (1 %)
10. Nyi Ratu Kartiko Aji	1 (0,5 %)
11. Tidak menebak	2 (1 %)
Jumlah	200 (100 %)

Table 1. Third table, published in *Jawa Pos* (19 August 1993:8). It presents the names of the suspected brains behind the murder of the king and the number of votes they received from the audiences who responded to the questionnaire.

The second part of the essay focused on the contribution of kethoprak sayembara broadcasts to burgeoning interest in and love of traditional art forms, discussing the development of the genre and how audiences could be motivated to preserve it by the lure of prizes.¹²⁰ One conclusion is that, in its efforts to preserve traditional art, it competed with modern entertainment. Whereas the latter was supported by a strong financial backing, contemporary technology and good management, the traditional genres were sadly deficient in these. Audiences commented on several aspects of the programme and made suggestions for improvements. The majority thought that language use and the dialogues should be improved (49% very necessary; 35% necessary). The dilemma was: if refined and correct Javanese (*bahasa yang halus dan benar*) were used, audiences might not understand the message. However, if the Javanese is mixed with foreign terms (*istilah-istilah 'asing'*), although communication would improve, these might damage or destroy the language.

¹²⁰ 'memajukan kesenian tradisional' and 'memberikan rangsangan dan motivasi untuk melestarikan seni kethoprak' (Nugroho 1993b).

Just before the broadcast of the final episode, Wahas Shofyan, *Jawa Pos* journalist in Kediri, covered the experiences of several experts who were directly involved in the production of the serial in two articles. Offering a ‘backstage’ view, he focused on the professional approach of Ki Siswondo and the responsibilities he had shouldered during the production process, on the differences between playing in a film and acting on stage and on the valuable experience of the actors to be used to raising the quality of the troupe when they performed live. The extra value for the troupe was the *sayembara* character of the serial that had generated plenty of attention, ranging from those who only wanted to know the right answer to the puzzle, to the fans of traditional art forms who concentrated on the content. Among the topics debated were how to prepare the regeneration of the troupe and how to preserve the traditional art of kethoprak. This included kethoprak actors performing as film artists (Shofyan 1993 a, b).

‘Infatuated with traditional shows’:¹²¹ *Kethoprak sayembara presented as traditional culture*

The *Jawa Pos* addressed its readers as aficionados of traditional shows. What does ‘traditional’ mean in this context? Firstly, it refers to the involvement of the kethoprak troupe Siswo Budoyo, that was dubbed a traditional performing arts troupe (*grup seni tradisional*). This 60 million Rupiah production would mean the troupe would enjoy many advantages. An article in the *Jawa Pos* goes into the history of the troupe, established in 1958 – using the idea of tradition as heritage – and mentions an award the troupe received in recognition of its efforts to preserve and develop traditional arts ((ws) 1993a). Referring to the educative function of traditional art, Siswondo is quoted: the troupe goes beyond simply putting on a show (*tontonan*), it cultivates an aspiration (*tuntutan*) through an art form that is permeated with elevated values. As kethoprak was then still very popular in Tulungagung, with 75 percent of the 1,000 theatre seats sold every night, the head of the troupe Ki Siswondo was given the accolade maestro of traditional art (*tokoh seni tradisional*) ((wa) 1993c). The appearance of Siswo Budoyo in the television serial was framed as a special present for the thirty-fifth anniversary of the troupe. However, here again the meaning of traditional was not consistent. Siswo Budoyo had made its name for its innovations in the genre, despite the fact it used to perform kethoprak in the traditional way, an itinerant troupe that used a backdrop and theatrical make-up and costumes. Nevertheless, it had introduced innovations in the mise-en-scène, stage and lighting technique and the use of properties. Its costumes, still traditional in design, were made of more glamorous materials and were highlighted by splendid accessories. Western percussion had been added to the accompanying gamelan slendro and pelog (Kus Sudyarsana 1989:36).

Both TVRI Surabaya and the city of Tulungagung acquiesced in the traditional image of the troupe. The official account from the side of TVRI Surabaya in its vindication of the producing and broadcasting of serialized kethoprak ran as follows: by increasing the number of broadcasts of traditional programmes (*paket tradisional*), the station hoped to be able to break through the allure of programmes with a foreign content, watched by urban audiences.

¹²¹ ‘pemirsa yang gandrung dengan tontonan tradisional’ ((ita) 1993d).

Among the traditional performances mentioned were ludruk, a theatre genre said to be part of the station's identity, kethoprak and dhagelan (humorous skits) featuring famous comedians and local Srimulat artists (*TVRI utamakan* 1993). As Siswo Budoyo was based in Tulungagung and would bring profit to the city, the local regent (*bupati*) consented to allow the television crew to make recordings in his official residence, the 'grand and authentic' *pendhapa* Kongas Arum Kusumaning Banga ((ws) 1993a). The regent called Siswo Budoyo a consistent reservoir for the lovers and developers of traditional art, as well as an enormous asset to the city, a centre of industry, food and culture ((ws) 1993a).

Finally, the need to preserve traditional art genres and to retain their traditional character was expressed on several occasions, during which the public was invited to participate actively. Hence the preview of the serial, called a traditional soap ((ita) 1993a), and the suggestion that subtitles be added, as I discussed above. Ki Siswondo personally asked the audiences to voice constructive criticism about the shortcomings of the serial, 'for the purpose of retaining our traditional culture' ((wa) 1993a).

Nevertheless, the traditional stamp of Siswa Budoyo on this kethoprak serial also fuelled criticism. The stage format was said to be too prominent, tending to swamp the televisual character, in particular when it was compared to the kethoprak sayembara productions of TVRI Yogyakarta. Sunardian Wirodono (1993) states the latter had distinctly shown the dynamic development of the genre as it had actually succeeded in transforming it into a television genre in all its aspects.

3 Televising kethoprak: effects

The production and broadcasting of kethoprak programmes on television inevitably had impact on the genre itself and on its reception. Counted among these effects are an easier access to drama and a changing experience in watching kethoprak, the coming into being of new kethoprak styles and other ways of representing Javanese-ness. Lastly, the impact of television on kethoprak can be assessed as negative (the discourse of loss) or positive, or both.

In a study of kethoprak, wayang wong and ludruk from the perspective of change, Umar Kayam and his fellow researchers Ahmad Adaby Darban, Ryadi Gunawan and Faruk (in both the research report and its reworked publication)¹²² underline developments in technological communication, in particular radio, television and film, and the changes in the social and the value systems in society as the main causes of alterations in the traditional performing arts genres (Umar Kayam et al. 2000:341, 380ff). Among the effects they list the increasing access to drama. In the early 1970s, kethoprak by amateur and professional troupes was broadcast weekly by TVRI Yogyakarta, whereas radio stations were broadcasting the dramatic genre on an almost daily basis (Hatley 1985:11). This media exposure led to a

¹²² The reworked version reflects a notable change in Indonesian society. What immediately strikes the eye is the introduction that in the reworked version no longer begins with 'national development' (*pembangunan nasional*). It stresses the diversity of traditional Javanese art (*seni tradisional Jawa*) and the diverse disciplines to which traditional art belongs: fine arts, dance, literature, and theatre (*seni rupa, seni tari, seni sastra, dan seni teater*) (Kayam et al. 2000:339). The second paragraph is identical to the one in the first version.

greater accessibility to various kinds of drama. Williams has drawn attention to this evolution. His contention is that television in most parts of the world changed the scale and intensity of dramatic performance drastically, causing ‘a majority of any population [to have] regular and constant access to drama, and us[ing] this access’ (Williams 1990:59). In the wake of their increasing reach, the media not only made drama ‘an intrinsic part of everyday life’ (Williams 1990:59), kethoprak was now brought within the purview of people in social classes beyond that of the *wong cilik*, farmers and labourers, in whose circles kethoprak is said to have originated. This assertion has been confirmed by the study of Umar Kayam and his fellow researchers, who conclude that the electronic mass media have made traditional performing arts more accessible to people in different social layers (Kayam et al. 2000).¹²³ Sedyawati (1981:39) calls this a shift in ownership. Hatley has also pointed out the effect of the television broadcasts on the broadening of kethoprak audiences because, once broadcast, the genre received ‘increased attention from and contact with people of some education and status’ (Hatley 1985:13). In Chapter 7, I shall demonstrate how the private television station Indosiar made clever use of the increased accessibility to televised kethoprak in its marketing strategies.

While televised kethoprak potentially reached a much wider and more varied audience, it was facing an uphill battle in its competition with alternative spectacles. Most of these broadcasts, often of foreign origin and significantly different to traditional performance broadcasts, swayed the audiences’ preference for certain programmes and whetted their taste, that, Umar Kayam claims, tended to diverge (Kayam et al. 2000:383). Competition among TVRI stations and later between TVRI and private television stations increasingly forced the public to make a deliberate choice in their most favourite programmes. In 1981, for instance, TVRI Yogyakarta’s kethoprak broadcasts after the world news (*Dunia Dalam Berita*) on Tuesday nights coincided with the US series *The Bionic Woman*, that was broadcast by TVRI Jakarta and relayed by TVRI Surabaya. As the residents of Yogyakarta were able to receive the transmissions of both stations, they faced a dilemma. *Tempo* signalled that younger audiences and audience groups from the middle and higher social classes ‘of course’ preferred *The Bionic Woman* (*Kini TVRI rajin* 1981).

The potentially wide access to televised kethoprak also had another effect. Those involved in the production and broadcasting processes grew more aware of the contents and form of presentation, and this awakening led to new kethoprak styles. Since the early 1980s, when kethoprak was still recorded in the studio, TVRI had tried to turn it into an interesting spectacle. As soon as technology allowed, recordings were made outdoors. The staging was adapted to facilitate the camerawork and produce an aesthetically attractive visual result for the television screen (Kristiadi 2010). The Javanese used in mediatized kethoprak was cleansed of its coarse humour, vulgar expressions and open criticism of the government. Pragmatically, the production of kethoprak became more efficient, easier and cheaper (Kayam et al. 2000:380-390).

Television changed the experience of watching kethoprak: it brought the spectacle into the people’s homes, enabling them to watch the programme in the comfort of their own homes,

¹²³ See also Wijaya and Sutjipto (1977:43).

ensconced in a safe, relaxed atmosphere, without any hassles or too much bother (Bondan Nusantara 1990:42).¹²⁴ The regular broadcasting of the genre increased the habituation of the viewers. Since the end of the 1970s, kethoprak broadcasts of TVRI Yogyakarta had built up a large following. This was due to the fact that the genre kethoprak itself was popular among the people, the stories were familiar, and because of the use of the Javanese vernacular. To its aficionados, kethoprak had therefore become a form of entertainment for which they had acquired a taste (*numani*) and to which they had grown attached (Monel 1993:16). The close interaction between performers and audiences, one of the main characteristics of live performances, also changed. As audience participation altered – direct interaction between the televised actors and the audiences at home was no longer possible – TVRI explored possibilities to engage its audiences in different ways and to enhance feelings of *akrab*-ness. It invited the public to attend performances in its studios, spiced up kethoprak broadcasts with competitions (in the case of kethoprak sayembara) or organized performances, to be broadcast either live or pre-recorded, to celebrate special occasions. In the case of studio recordings with no audience present, musicians accompanying the performance took over the role of the audiences, reacting to the jokes during the comic scenes, for example. This happened in the *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* broadcast that has been analysed above.

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the dissemination of traditional performance genres by means of electronic mass media, like cassettes, radio and television facilitated imitation (Sutton 1985). Certain kethoprak styles and performers achieved main-stream status and set the tone. Because of their prominence they were imitated by the others. The trends, set on television, were followed in non-mediated kethoprak performances. This pattern was most clearly visible and audible in the comic sketches, whose successful puns and jokes were imitated endlessly. This effect on the genre has led to the dichotomic perception among kethoprak actors, playwrights and directors that, while television has in some cases certainly strengthened the creativity of kethoprak performers, it has also had the power to transform it into a unilinear source of information (Bondan Nusantara 1990:42).

Another effect the medium television has had on kethoprak is that it now conveys a representation of the Javanese world that is perceived to be increasingly realistic (Hersri Setiawan 1998). The presence of television has made this realistic approach of kethoprak possible. When performed by village kethoprak troupes, the furnished studio settings and the abundant use of the stage props made the *mise-en-scène* function as simulacra (Baudrillard 1994), as in the classical battle dramas that I shall introduce in Chapter 6. When recorded outdoors and filmed in a natural setting, an even more realistic effect was obtained. Actors actually mounted a horse instead of mimicking horse-riding. Rather than use simple stage props or a backdrop to represent a typical Javanese aristocratic setting, recordings were made in historical buildings, like the *pendhapa* Kongas Arum Kusumaning Bangsa in the serialized

¹²⁴ ‘langkung gampil saha langkung sekeca anggenipun sami mriksani Kethoprak’.

For an account of watching kethoprak on television in a village with only one television set, see Hermawan Widodo, ‘Ketoprak sayembara “Mayat Hidup Lahir Dalam Kubur”.’ *Blogspot Pataba* <http://patabamembangun.blogspot.nl/2012/05/ketoprak-sayembara-mayat-hidup-lahir.html> [Accessed 2 September 2014]

kethoprak *Ampak-Ampak Singgelopura*. The costume design was more firmly based on historical reality (Kayam et al. 2000:x), although historical accuracy still did not seem to matter much. This realistic tendency has aroused the expectations of the viewers, who are quite prepared to comment either positively or negatively on the representation of the period depicted in the story. While traditional kethoprak performed on stage challenged the imagination of the audiences in their experience of the dramatic developments, this was less the case in the kethoprak sayembara productions, because of the more realistic representation that was said to be more aggressive and easier to swallow (Fadjri and Bujono 1992).

The discussions about this increasing filmic realism in televised kethoprak failed to take into account the abstract character of the setting in one of the main TVRI Yogyakarta kethoprak styles, in which artistic and aesthetic aspects prevailed. The broadcast of *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* exemplifies this. While the mise-en-scène in the style as presented in *The Installation of Prince Mangkubumi* was minimalized and the use of properties reduced to only the most essential ones, mirroring the situation in live pre-independent kethoprak performances in rural areas, the mise-en-scène in kethoprak sayembara was extended, enlarged, made more exuberant and to appear realistic.¹²⁵ But actually, in the latter case, this had led to a blurring of the fictive and the real space. In spite of the fact the representations of an interior in the setting were substituted by a 'real' interior, the performance space remained fictive; the audiences, however, perceived it as real.

Discourse on the effects of the televising of kethoprak focuses profusely either on the usefulness of modern technology in advancing the art of kethoprak (Wijaya and Sutjipto 1977:44-45) or, jumping to the other extreme, on the loss of the traditional identity of the genre because of television. Although the televising of kethoprak at first was seen as hampering the development of the genre, later the influence of television was perceived as positive. Purwadmadi Admadipura has claimed that TVRI Yogyakarta not only contributed to the development and the growth of the genre through its routine (weekly) broadcasts of kethoprak. More importantly, it succeeded in stimulating the world of traditional art, enabling it to respond to the challenges of the changing times (Purwadmadi Admadipura 1997:68) and also to the revitalization of local artists (Hartanto 1997:120-121).¹²⁶ In the eyes of Ki Sugati, actor and leader of the kethoprak troupe PS Bayu, television has functioned as a support for traditional performing arts like kethoprak ((Jay/R-4) 2000). Pertinently, television has played an important role in making the genre more popular and giving it a wider reach, as radio had done before it. It boosted the status of certain kethoprak actors and troupes and made them famous, besides being a stimulus to strengthen their creativity (Bondan Nusantara 1990:39-69).

TVRI's sense of responsibility towards the choice of cultural expressions that were recorded and broadcast increased, as the survival of particular genres and artists was said to have become increasingly dependent on their frequent appearance on television and therefore

¹²⁵ On live kethoprak performances in rural areas before Indonesian independence, see Hersri Setiawan's account 'Wayang dan ketoprak: Jagad gedhe vs jagad cilik' (1998).

¹²⁶ 'Kehadiran TV, sebenarnya dapat membangkitkan seniman lokal' (Hartanto 1997).

on more frequent exposure to (larger) audiences than would have been the case in live performances. In 1990, when about 500 troupes were active in Yogyakarta and Central Java, many of whom wanted to perform for television, TVRI Yogyakarta organized selections. These troupes had not only been set up by artists, but also by government and private institutions, and inhabitants of urban and rural areas (Bondan Nusantara 1990:44).

On the other hand, others see television as one of the main causes of the deterioration, even the outright loss of traditional performance genres. In an interview with the newspaper *Republika*, Ki Siswondo HS, Siswo Budoyo's leader, expressed his concern, and in doing so contradicted Ki Sugati's view: since the beginning of the 1990s traditional art genres in Indonesia had begun to teeter on the brink of extinction. Their circumstances often forced small troupes to throw in the sponge (*gulung tikar*). The principal cause of the decline was television, he stated. He was convinced it offered a varied range of entertainment that often ran counter to local cultural values and ethics, and, above all, was easily accessible. The decline was visible not only in urban but also in rural areas, and it would eventually lead to the extinction of traditional art forms. He acknowledged this development was an inescapable outcome of modernization. Nevertheless, he himself, with the help of his kethoprak troupe, tried to keep going, although they had to adapt their performances to the tastes of their audiences who preferred humour rather than an edifying story that inculcated courtesy and etiquette. His conclusion: television destroys traditional shows (Sunarwoto and Fathoni 1996).¹²⁷ Only three years earlier he had been 'the' guest star in the most successful kethoprak sayembara serial on the regional Javanese television stations.

All the while, other factors, agencies and mechanisms that influenced the condition of kethoprak were constantly raised in the discussions: these included factors like urbanization, globalization, a 'modern Indonesia' that is not interested in traditional 'rural' 'old-fashioned' art forms, and a lack of interest of the artists themselves (*Banyak seni tradisional* 1993).

This discourse of loss is closely related to the preservation discourse and to the averred traditional character of kethoprak. The meaning of loss ranges from a betrayal of the traditional features when developing kethoprak (*mengkhianati ciri tradhisional*) (Wahyana Giri MC 1992) to the need to preserve the genre and its values (*Kesenian ketoprak Mataram* 2008) as well as to document it and make recordings before it becomes extinct (Fajrih and Bujono 1992). In the course of time kethoprak was attributed the quality *adiluhung*, refined, a term that in the 1980s was still confined to traditional Javanese court arts and unthought of for commercial urban performance genres like kethoprak. The atmosphere had changed, the most likely link being that artistic genres belonging to traditional spheres, either originally or because of New Order ideas and policies, needed to be preserved because of this quality, lest they be lost. Consequently, even kethoprak sayembara was qualified as invested with 'high values'. Some audiences took the view that in this new television genre kethoprak might lose its identity (*kelangan jatidhiri*), as a journalist wrote in the Javanese magazine *Mekar Sari* (NAR 1991). They wondered whether it was still kethoprak, or whether it should be called film, drama or a show? The author of the piece acknowledged that traditional art was subject to change and that it did not just hold firm to high values. He agreed that the genre needed to

¹²⁷ 'Televisi matikan tontonan tradisional'.

be developed and adapted to new epochs, however without compromising the *adiluhung* values of the art. In its new form, he wrote, kethoprak had become a modern performance genre for modern audiences, not just for the traditional public. Therefore, if it were to retain the fervour of fans of traditional theatre, kethoprak has to continuously re-invent itself.

Conclusions

TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta took pride in its broadcasts of what it categorized as traditional culture, including kethoprak. The station screened these cultural expressions in order to inform and entertain its audiences and to raise their interest and appreciation, according to the national government's aims and mission, and used them as a vehicle to easily convey government messages.

Preservation was one of TVRI's aims. But, while McDaniel concludes that 'radio and television's contributions to preservation of regional traditional performance arts are questionable' (McDaniel 1994:301), the kethoprak broadcasts by TVRI Yogyakarta prove there was another important motive: awareness of and enthusiasm for local culture. After all, TVRI Yogyakarta had been designed to function as the barometer of this local culture. From its early beginnings, the station had programmed kethoprak and shaped it to the constraints of the medium. The various styles of kethoprak contributed to TVRI's identity, while the television station contributed to the development of the genre as well as designed a new television kethoprak format genre, the kethoprak sayembara, that only exists because of and on television. Because of these innovations, kethoprak continued to exist. Tradition was preserved, albeit in novel forms. Recognition by the audiences was important. But but overall, kethoprak programmes were representations of (Yogyakarta) Javanese-ness.

The ways in which the station produced the local made the programmes appealing to its audiences – at a time when television stations and programme supply were still limited. In the case of the kethoprak broadcasts of TVRI Yogyakarta, the representation of culture has remained local. The productions were made in co-operation with local groups, the themes referred to local history and heroes of the past, local myths and traditional stories, and were tailored to local audiences. The general perception was that the language spoken was Yogyakartaan Javanese, although actually TVRI Yogyakarta also broadcast kethoprak of Central and East Javanese origin. When co-operating with TVRI Surabaya and the East Javanese troupe Siswo Budoyo, for instance, the standard Javanese was permeated with East Javanese. Therefore, kethoprak, TVRI Yogyakarta's primadona, was linked to a local geographical (Yogyakarta) and local ethnic (Yogyakarta Javanese) environment, at least ideologically, as the programmes were also to be seen in Central and East Java and, in a certain period, even co-produced with the East Javanese TVRI Surabaya.

Comparing a broadcast like *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* with kethoprak sayembara as a phenomenon reveals the following. In the first case the theatrical atmosphere of a staged performance combined with televisual techniques brought this televisual interpretation closer to earlier performance formats of kethoprak. It is reminiscent of Hatley's account of the

audience's attitude towards early kethoprak broadcasts, that the latter did not perceive as real kethoprak. The theatrical approach in *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* could therefore have contributed to enhanced feelings of *akrab*-ness to the viewers. The choice of the lakon, a well-known and beloved story, and its relation to the locale of broadcasting, Yogyakarta, heightened the working of proximity. Kethoprak sayembara was a different matter. The filmic format and the realistic settings engendered another kind of proximity. But here, too, the stories, the involvement of popular performers and the use of the Javanese vernacular contributed to the proximity.

In his article on script-writing and directing, Soemardjono (1984/1985:3) points out the various attitudes to the character of kethoprak: some call it a traditional art form (*kesenian tradisional*); others call it folk art (*kesenian rakyat*) while, when facing the challenges posed by modern media like radio and television, it is required to synchronize with the expressive features, language and constraints of these media.¹²⁸ In the discussions that take an ideological perspective on tradition, kethoprak is viewed as a precious inheritance from the past that should be preserved. This stance is often normative in character and ties in with the discourse of loss. Kethoprak practitioners, when at work, view kethoprak as part of a tradition that is constantly in a state of flux as it adapts to and appropriates developments from its surroundings. This demonstrates how variegated and complicated discussions on the traditional character of kethoprak are and exposes the presence of a split between pragmatic and ideological approaches to the genre.

¹²⁸ 'mau tidak mau ketoprak harus melaraskan dengan bahasa radio dan televisi'

Part II

Localizing persuasion

Introduction

The end of the 1980s saw significant economic growth and the first expansion of the Indonesian television landscape. Both government television and the new private broadcasters turned to Javanese performance for informative, persuasive and propaganda ends. TVRI continued its rural broadcastings, disseminating government messages in support of development goals, to inform and educate local villagers. TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta's *Mbangun Desa* (Developing the Village) provides a case study in Chapter 8. Private broadcasting institutions with purely commercial objectives also focused on 'Java', first by producing programmes with a tinge of Javanese-ness, and later by broadcasting specific regional performing arts. The case of the then newly established Indosiar described in Chapters 6 and 7 shows the efforts made by this station to seduce both the advertisers and the audiences, not to mention the Indonesian government, by facilitating the presence of multiple discourses in these programmes.

Three premises, all deduced from the character of the medium television, form the starting point for my exploration of localized persuasion. Firstly, contrary to what might have been expected, both case studies balance in between various, often apparently paradoxical narratives and ideologies. The most prominent feature in the Indosiar broadcasts of Javanese performances were the messages from the commercial world. Indosiar's self-(re)presentation and its New Order-based discourse about the need to preserve the nation's tradition were interspersed with these commercial messages. In *Mbangun Desa*, from the perspective of the sponsors and the producers, the most important component was the development discourse. However, the series gained fame and popularity because of its comic and entertaining narrative that grew steadily more prominent in the course of time. Also in this, discourse on traditional culture was part of the show.

As White argues, 'television is the locus of intersection and coexistence of varying narratives, genres, appeals, and modes of address' (White 1992:191). To unravel these apparent paradoxes, I analyse localized persuasion with respect to this 'variety of issues, voices, positions, and messages' as '[n]one of these on its own accounts for the ideology of the medium' (White 1992:190). White's idea of the multiple messages approaches what Becker refers to as epistemologies. In his analysis of wayang kulit Becker discerns the various conceptual worlds that 'coexist in a single wayang' (Becker 1995:40). Each epistemology exists in a different concept of time, and each epistemology retains its distinctiveness, even in language (Becker 1995:40). To reveal how Indosiar's Javanese performance programmes and TVRI Yogyakarta's *Mbangun Desa* simultaneously managed to accommodate a variety of patrons and ideologies by presenting multiple narratives, voices and messages, I shall analyse the agents involved in the mediation processes and examine the programme flow.

Secondly, Javanese performance was part of the medium's strategy to persuade Javanese people in front of a television set 'to play the role of viewer' (Allen 1992:119). Television's key predicament is its quest for audiences who must constantly 'be seduced, attracted, lured'

(Ang 1991:18). Only if an audience has been recruited can more persuasion be successful. Furthermore, the traditional aura Javanese performance in the 1990s had contributed to the persuasive techniques of the medium. As Kemper demonstrates, when used in advertisements, tradition serves ‘to catch the eye, not to represent a known way of life’ (Kemper 2001:137); this is equally true of the programme in its entirety, that is after all commercial television’s main instrument in its search for audiences (Ang 1991:27). A similar conclusion can be reached about government television when it resorted to traditional Javanese performance genres for non-commercial informative and ideological persuasive purposes. Thus, traditional culture was used to frame and address audiences as citizens who must be reformed, educated, informed and entertained – as public (Ang 1991:29) – , and as potential consumers of TV programmes and the products advertised on these programmes – as a market (Ang 1991:28).

My third premise concerns the fact that not only TVRI but also the private television industry in Indonesia sustained the New Order government ideology. This conforms to the character of television that ‘works to sustain the dominant social-cultural ideology’ (White 1992:190). My findings in Chapters 6 and 7 support Kitley’s conclusion that in the 1990s the commercial television industry in Indonesia was largely controlled by the state, making it ‘a compliant adjunct to the political and cultural objectives of the government’ (1994:12).

Performance and persuasion

Information, persuasion and propaganda are all forms of communicative practices. Jowett and O’Donnell define persuasion as ‘a communicative process to influence others’ (1999:27). They view the persuasion process as interactive, resulting in ‘the fulfillment of a personal or societal need or desire’. This fulfillment regards both the persuader and the persuadee, ‘if the persuadee accepts the persuasive purpose’ (Jowett & O’Donnell 1999:27-28). Propaganda shares techniques with information and persuasion, but goes a step further (Jowett & O’Donnell 1999:26). It deliberately and systematically attempts ‘to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist’ (Jowett and O’Donnell 1999:6). Popular performance genres, both live and mediated, have proved to be an excellent propaganda channel (*Folk media* 1982), taking their place alongside photography, music and film. These performance genres facilitate the creation of a favourable climate in which to present information, persuasion and propaganda, a process that Pratkanis and Aronson (2001:51) call pre-persuasion. Pre-persuasion is the first of four stratagems of influence they list in their study. The second one is the source credibility, required if the persuader is to appear authoritative or trustworthy. Source credibility as a special technique to maximize effect is also mentioned by Jowett and O’Donnell (1999:291). The goal of the message, the third stratagem, is to control the attention and thoughts of the audiences. As fourth stratagem, Pratkanis and Aronson mention the arousal of emotions. Jowett and O’Donnell (1999:295) explain, for instance, how by means of specific language use and lyrics, melody and sound, music can arouse emotions and hence is employed as an effective persuasive medium.

Javanese performance has been used in Indonesia to disseminate government information, persuasion and propaganda under various circumstances and in different periods, by various parties concerned and by means of various media. The instances of persuasion discussed in this second part have had a host of predecessors. To put them in a historical perspective, and to trace changes and/or continuities in the persuasive techniques applied, here are some examples.

In the colonial period, kethoprak mobilized support for nationalism; as I have shown in Chapter 4, although the Dutch banned these performances, they themselves employed Javanese drama to propagate their messages. Interesting examples of Dutch colonial propaganda are the films *Tanah Sabrang*, *Land aan de overkant* (The Land Overseas) from 1939, and *Mas Soemo Bojong* (Soemo's Evacuation) from 31 December 1941.¹²⁹ *Tanah Sabrang*, a film by Mannus Franken, commissioned by the Centrale Commissie voor Emigratie en Kolonisatie van Inheemsens (Central Committee for the Emigration and Colonization of Indigenous People) (Mannus Franken 1979:44), urged poor farmers in densely populated Java to transmigrate to Sumatra. *Tanah Sabrang* is constructed around two types of wayang, the wayang kulit and the wayang wong, and employs the Javanese clowns as messengers and persuaders, relying on their prominent position in the traditional wayang plays – and source credibility – , and on their humorous presence. These clowns address the people, inform them and accompany them to their new homeland, just as they accompanied the wayang heroes (Franken 1988:28).¹³⁰ *Mas Soemo Bojong*, a production of Java Industrial Film (Batavia), based on a script by Andjar Asmara, was commissioned by the Netherlands Indies Regeerings Publiciteits Dienst (R.P.D., the Government Information Service).¹³¹ The film provided local people with information about evacuation strategies in the event of a Japanese invasion. It begins with a discussion at a *warung*, a foodstall, after rumours had been spread about the possible arrival of the Japanese within days. The village head gathers the people and reassures them that the government has prepared for their evacuation. A simulation of the evacuation is shown, voiced-over in Javanese.

Although they apply different approaches to information, persuasion and propaganda, the two films share many similarities. Both of high artistic quality, they frame the themes within a Javanese cultural setting, use Javanese as the language of communication and feature Javanese culture. In both films the village head (*lurah*), representing local authority and enhancing the credibility of the source, plays an influential role, 'guiding' the people to make the 'right' decisions and reassuring them of the support of the (colonial) government (Figures II.1 and II.2). Both films consciously apply the idea of cultural proximity to attract the attention of their audiences, and to enable an easy identification with content and form of the mediated drama and especially with the people who receive the information in the film, creating resonance (Jowett and O'Donnell 1999:290-291), thereby making them susceptible

¹²⁹ The Indonesian Film Center gives 1942 as the year of production (<http://www.indonesianfilmcenter.com/pages/archive/watch.arcv.php?v=5217>) [Last accessed 7 February 2017].

¹³⁰ See also Arps 1988; Grasveld 1988.

¹³¹ <http://in.beeldengeluid.nl/kanaal/2532-de-kolonie-nederlands-indi/2541-mas-soemo-bojong> [Last accessed 7 February 2017]. Kurosawa (1987:105) mentions the title of the film, without any further data, in her list 'Films made in Java'.

to the message. Comparable persuasive techniques were applied by Indosiar and in *Mbangun Desa* in the 1990s.



II.1 Village head in *Tanah Sabrang*



II.2 Village head in *Mas Soemo Bojong*

Several new types of wayang were developed with persuasive aims in mind during the Japanese occupation (Brandon 1967:285; Kurosawa 1987:83-84), the Revolution years and early independence (Brandon 1967:286-294). In the 1960s, the LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of the People's Culture) propagated its ideology by means of traditional drama (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:337-384), using the satirical humour of ludruk to win the hearts of the people (Yuliantri and Dahlan 2008:373-379) (see Chapter 4).

Under the New Order, various parties including the Indonesian government and the military as well as commercial and other sponsors made extensive use of live performances and mediated shows on cassette tapes, radio and television to disseminate their messages. The Department of Information (Departemen Penerangan, Deppen) investigated the potential of local performance genres. In special programmes but also on a regular basis, it trained and instructed the messengers (Surjodiningrat 1982; *Pesan-pesan* 1995): the performers of wayang kulit (Yampolsky 1995:711; Clara van Groenendael 1985) and wayang golek, kethoprak (Wijaya and F.A. Sutjipto 1977:45; Hatley 1985:202), horse dance (*jaran kepang*) (Clara van Groenendael 2008) and other art forms belonging to the traditional sphere, like ludruk, Srimulat and dhagelan. The more relaxed comic scenes proved to be the best suited to this purpose, with servants or nursemaids (*emban*) voicing the messages. Special compositions (*gendhing*), like the Family Planning song (*Gendhing Keluarga Berencana*) and the song propagating reforestation (*Gendhing Penghijauan*), or messages inserted in the lyrics (*tembang*) or the vocal interjections (*senggakan*) championing family planning or mutual co-operation (Gotong Royong) became well-known.

The building of the nation and the development of the country (*pembangunan*) were the main themes of government campaigns. Development information was tailored to the goals of the Five-Year Development Plans (Repelita), as designed by the New Order government (Soemardjan and Breazeale 1993; Yampolsky 1995; Hellman 2003). Alongside India and Malaysia, Indonesia was seen as 'a front-runner in instrumentalizing her rich potential of folk

culture for government sponsored messages' (Oepen 1988:59); television was the central agent for the promotion of this 'paradigm of development' in these countries (Nain 2000:146).

One of the largest persuasive media spectacles ever in the country was the Indonesia-wide broadcast of *Genta Indonesia* on the evening of 16 February 1998, at the height of the monetary and economic crisis. The result of a co-operation between all official Indonesian mass media institutions, the show was one continuous request for contributions (in the form of US currency or gold) to support the Indonesian Foreign Currency Reserves, couched in the form of an emotional appeal to the feelings of unity of the people and the nation. In an array of media genres, artists and officials voiced the persuasive slogans and messages. Srimulat celebrities were given a prominent role in propagating love for the rupiah, the Indonesian currency (Bogaerts in Arps et al. *Being with media* Forthcoming).

Looking ahead to the following chapters and with this concise historical flash-back in mind, we are justified in calling the informative and persuasive techniques used by and in Javanese media a tradition. Just as in the past, the embedding of informative and persuasive messages in a Javanese cultural setting, the use of Javanese as the language of communication and the featuring of Javanese cultural expressions continued to be approved practices and therefore they were implemented by TVRI Yogyakarta and Indosiar as the analyses in Part II will demonstrate.

Messages from commercial sponsors, in particular producers of traditional herbal medicine and the clove cigarette industry (for example, Gudang Garam), had already appeared on live shows and in radio broadcasts of traditional performance genres. Consequently, the commercialization of these genres on television was not a new phenomenon but their scale did increase dramatically. In the following chapter, I shall elaborate on the localizing of persuasion as it was communicated by private television stations targeting Javanese audiences.

6 A potential gold-mine? Commercializing Javanese performance

Not only during the ‘spice mania’ did people cast their eye on Java. At present, as the world enters the global information era through transnational television, the attacks of the television conglomerates in Java are once more impossible to evade. With a population of 103,592,109 in 1995, an economic growth of 7.4 percent in 1996 and the strong growth of a middle class, Java has become an interesting gold-mine to be fought over by many parties. (Wijaya 1997:115)¹³²

Films, series and shows produced abroad and adaptations of foreign productions were part of the trend in Indonesia’s private television programming that resulted in ‘the emergence of an all-imported culture’ (Asmarani 1998:11). These programmes were imbued with an aura of modernity and were more attractive, especially to the younger generation, than the regular TVRI programmes, in particular its traditional art and culture programmes that many of the audiences considered to be old fashioned. Moreover, from the perspective of production, they were cheaper than locally produced programmes.

At the time – in the early 1990s – only government television stations were active in programming to do with the regional arts. In his article ‘Forces for change in the regional performing arts of Indonesia’, Yampolsky (1995:716-717) explains that

While in theory the independent stations could develop their own programmes on regional matters, including the arts, in fact they do not do so, preferring to broadcast material from abroad. So the only stations active in programming concerned with the regional arts are the government stations, and their needs are those of the government: professionalized, morally acceptable, propaganda-friendly performances, with or without ritual origins but in either case functionally secular.

In a footnote the author mentions that the ‘educational’ channel TPI had begun broadcasting programmes on regional culture, but he did not expect this channel to approach regional performing arts any differently than the government did (Yampolsky 1995:716). When he published his article, Yampolsky could not foresee that soon ‘Java’ was to be re-discovered as a potential gold-mine (Wijaya 1997:115) and that Indosiar, that would go on air in January 1995, would set the trend and take the lead. In what has usually been called the global information era (*era informasi global*), Java had become an important locale, both for its cultural resources that provided television stations with interesting programme material, and for ‘the Javanese’, the demographically largest minority group in Indonesia and the largest identifiable target group for marketing purposes. In particular, the rapidly developing middle classes whose purchasing power was growing in step with the strengthening economy (a growth of 7.4 percent in the year 1996) were an ideal market for advertisers (Wijaya 1997:115; Mahfuf 1997; Frith 1996:266). The continuously expanding area coverage by

¹³² Tak hanya ketika ‘demam’ rempah-rempah saja Jawa dilirik. Kini saat dunia memasuki era informasi global lewat TV transnasional, lagi-lagi ‘serbuan’ para konglomerat media TV ke Jawa tak terelak. Dengan jumlah penduduknya 103.592.109 jiwa di tahun 1995, pertumbuhan ekonomi 7,4 di tahun 1996 serta berkembangnya kelas menengah yang tajam, Jawa adalah ‘ladang emas’ yang sangat menggiurkan untuk direbut banyak pihak.

television was densest in Java. Thus, winning the hearts of the more than eighty million potential Javanese viewers became a priority.¹³³

In order to compete with global television on the one hand and regional TVRI stations on the other, in the first half of the 1990s the private television industry increased local programming – ‘local’ in the sense of both domestic/national and regional (Tedjomurti 1993). It also revitalized programmes with ethnic references (*bernuansa etnik*), and increased the broadcasting of traditional performing arts to excessive amounts (*dengan porsi 'gila-gilaan'*) (Wijaya 1997:115). Traditional Javanese performance genres like wayang kulit, wayang golek, kethoprak and dhagelan, formerly broadcast only by TVRI, now became part of the programming of Jakarta-based private television stations; traditional Javanese culture was expected to generate income.

In this chapter, I elucidate how Indosiar, founded as the fifth private broadcaster in Indonesia, constructed a branding and re-discovered Java. The station’s search for a specific identity and some initial reactions towards its policies offer valuable background information. It gives insight into media ownership and business and other networks and highlights Indosiar’s corporate stance and concomitant ‘issues, voices, positions and messages’ (White 1992:191), and forms the basis for my analysis in the next chapter.

I focus on the issues, voices, positions and messages that Indosiar disseminated in its Javanese programming in the second half of the 1990s. The various messages intersected with each other, because the programmes were part of a planned *flow*, ‘perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as technology and as a cultural form’ (Williams 1974:86). In a planned flow,

[...] the true series is not the published sequence of programme items but this sequence transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence, so that these sequences together compose the real flow, the real ‘broadcasting’. (Williams 1974:90-91)

Therefore, programming on a more general level needs to be looked at, since the medium’s ‘highly fragmented and heterogeneous’ character was present ‘[w]ithin individual programs, between programs and commercials, and across a variety of programs’ (White 1992:190-191). In the following sections, I unravel this planned flow to uncover the ‘varying narratives, genres, appeals, and modes of address’ (White 1992:191) that constitute the broadcasts. Mazzarella’s view of the global and the local as ‘mutually constitutive imaginary moments’ (Mazzarella 2003:17) might offer a solution to how to approach these seemingly paradoxical narratives of Indosiar. This approach stresses the dynamics television had to cope with and its ‘ability to move fluently between’ (Mazzarella 2003:18) the constituent forces that shaped its broadcasts.

Indosiar’s arrival in the arena of the private television industry in Indonesia and its reception will be paid ample attention. I commence by reflecting on a trend in the early 1990s to revitalize programmes with ethnic references. It shows how the private television industry

¹³³ According to Wijaya (1997:115), in 1995 Java had 103,592,109 inhabitants.

for persuasive (meaning: commercial) aims chose to broadcast these local media products in its battle to compete with foreign broadcasters.

1 A tinge of Javanese versus spoken Javanese¹³⁴ – Authenticity in plywood and rubber

In the early 1990s, private television stations had begun broadcasting programmes with – what they called – an ethnic touch (*bernuansa etnik*): *Mahkota Mayangkara* (broadcast by TPI in 52 episodes) was followed consecutively by *Mahkota Majapahit* (RCTI) and *Kaca Benggala* (again TPI). The soap serials, categorized as classical battle dramas (*drama laga klasik*) that represented local – in particular Javanese and Sundanese – fictionalized history while focusing on past kingdoms, were followed by another serial, *Singgasana Brama Kumbara* (ANTeve). This was an adaptation of the radio drama (*sandiwara radio*) *Saur Sepuh* by Niki Kosasih that had been turned into film in the late 1980s. Both radio and TV versions were considered to be very successful. The TV serial, broadcast in prime time, obtained a high rating in the competition with two Indian productions, the Mahabharata and Ramayana (HS 1995a).

The production house PT Menaragading Citraperkasa produced *Mahkota Mayangkara* for local and foreign markets. Although an expensive production because of the number of actors and technical staff involved, the specially constructed sets and the long production time, the serial was a financial success. This resulted in the simultaneous production of the three new serials mentioned above, that were bought by three private TV stations: ANTEVE bought seventy-eight episodes of *Singgasana Brama Kumbara* for Rp. 50 million per episode and began airing them on 3 January 1995; twenty-six episodes of *Mahkota Majapahit* (Figure 6.1) were purchased for the same prize and broadcast by RCTI; TPI disseminated a hundred episodes of *Kaca Benggala* (HS 1995b).

The characterization of these programmes as having an ethnic tinge reveals the growing distance between the Indonesian observers and their cultural heritage, that was no longer perceived as ‘their own culture’. It also reveals the impact of global perceptions of indigenous performance, whether it be drama, music or classical battle serials on television: localized genres performed in vernaculars were perceived to belong to the ‘etnik’ category, whereas once they had been categorized as traditional. This approach betrays an auto-orientalist gaze.¹³⁵

Drawing on theatrical, filmic, radio and televisual genres, *drama laga* carry characteristics of these genres. They undeniably have the universal features of modern (melo)drama, soap operas and Indonesian *sinetron*: the development of the plot is driven by crises and dramatic dialogues, camera work and sound, and the court intrigues, love scenes and battles arouse

¹³⁴ ‘*Bernuansa Jawa*’ (Hartanto 1997) versus *berbahasa Jawa*.

¹³⁵ Inspired by Mazzarella’s idea concerning auto-orientalist advertising (2003:138-141).

strong emotions and suspense. The fight scenes are heavily inspired by Chinese kungfu films and Indonesian silat (the art of self-defence). The dynamic rhythm is the result of a quick succession of short sequences and a compactly edited mixture of shots. Of the local features, the influence of kethoprak is particularly traceable: the stories refer to ancient kingdoms and local legends, set in an idyllic past, and often do indeed stem from oral traditions. Scenes that are obligatory in all kethoprak performances (court audiences, battles, clown interludes and love scenes) (Hatley 1985:87) are set in suitable locations (the palace, the *pendhapa*, the forest, the hermitage, the village, etcetera); the characters are stereotypical; the design of the costumes has a traditional kethoprak look, but the materials and colours are modern. Nevertheless, the serials do not obey to the constraints of traditional kethoprak, but just seem to have been loosely inspired by the genre. Most importantly, the language of communication is Indonesian, not Javanese – a trend that was continued in the Indonesianization of *kethoprak humor* (kethoprak turned into comedy).



6.1 Mahkota Majapahit

In the representation of history in, for instance, *Kaca Bengala*, the producers said they were striving for realism and authenticity. They claimed they had consulted library collections in Solo and Demak in an attempt to recreate the original costumes and settings, although they admitted that more research and consultation with historians would have been a good idea, if they were to have come closer to the original. But this would have been too time consuming and very expensive. To disguise this weakness, they said they only used the idea of ‘history’ as the background to the story. This idea was given shape by means of the setting, consisting of kraton buildings constructed of plywood and rubber (*kayu lapis dan karet*), situated in a green, rural environment, in the nature reserve Pangandaran, that the actors-cum-soldiers traversed on their horses. The camera work had to do the rest: full shots to show the rustic

atmosphere were interspersed with medium shots and close-ups to heighten the dramatic atmosphere (HS 1995c). These discussions on authenticity and realism do not touch upon the ability to fly of the fighting heroes, nor do they mention their other supernatural powers. Also the music, newly composed for the serials and usually performed on electronic instruments (the sound of a *suling*, a bamboo flute, played on a keyboard, for instance), was not authentic in the sense the producers used the concept.

Just as an ‘authentic’ setting was alluded to by a construction of plywood and rubber, Javanese culture was alluded to by the Javanese accent used by some characters and the use of Javanese expressions that were not subtitled or paraphrased in Indonesian, the insertion of a short sequence of *tembang macapat* (vocalizing traditional Javanese poetry) or a feast with dancing-women (*tayuban*) accompanied by an accoustic gamelan, a letter written in Javanese script on a kind of Javanese paper, whose text was read aloud in Indonesian (!), batik wrap-around skirts and *iket kepala* (headcloths), a host of properties used in daily life, like an earthenware water carafe (*kendhi*) and buildings made of woven bamboo (*gedheg*). These are but a few examples of how the simulacra were constructed. The mechanism at work here is comparable to what happens in regional pop music: it refers only to elements of regional music, or, as Yampolsky states:

The crucial fact about all of the features of regional music incorporated into Pop Daerah is that they function not as elements of the regional music but as tokens of it, or allusions to it. They do not actually bring regional music into the Pop idiom, they bring the notion of it. (Yampolsky 1989:15)

As these serials were produced for as wide an audience as possible, and even for foreign markets, the decision that Javanese culture would only be alluded to was probably deliberate, so as not to deter non-Javanese audiences. Had the local flavour (*warna lokal*) been too strong, this could have had a negative influence on the reception of these serials.¹³⁶

The *sinetron laga* and their popular predecessors in the form of *sandiwara radio* have settled in the collective memory of their audiences. Not only the stories, and the voices and the appearance of the protagonists are vividly recollected, but also the advertisements that were part of the broadcasting flow. Procold, a product of Kalbe Farma, and *Saur Sepuh* in both its radio, film and television versions are forever united in a nostalgic image (and sound) – the title *Saur Sepuh* or the name of the main actress immediately bring the jingle of the Procold advertisement to mind – , as were many other products of the mostly pharmaceutical companies who sponsored the shows (Figure 6.2).¹³⁷

¹³⁶ The Surabayan Javanese accent of the presenters of *Krucil*, Arswendo Atmowiloto’s children’s programme, for instance, was too strong to be well received by non-Surabayan audiences. The presenters therefore either had either to be trained not to use it or would be replaced by others (Arswendo Atmowiloto 1995).

¹³⁷ <http://lapanpuluhan.blogspot.nl/2006/02/sandiwara-radio-dari-kuping-turun-ke.html> [Last accessed December 2015]; HS 1993:10-11.



6.2 Drama Laga *Saur Sepuh* & Sponsor Procold

These examples are evidence that the broadcasters of the drama laga had reached their goals; they had succeeded in developing reliable audiences, preparing them for further persuasion, among other means by the use of commercials (see Chapter 7). Since the serials had been broadcast on a regular basis and had successors, viewers underwent a long-time exposure and became familiar with content and form. Proximity was not just at play in this sense, it was also present on the cultural level. Just as *kethoprak sayembara*, the television genre of the *drama laga* relied heavily on the tradition of serializing (Javanese) drama in other media like print literature, radio and audio cassettes, and film – as, for instance, in the filmic version of *Saur Sepuh* and its four sequels. Suited to both the medium television and local Indonesian narrative practices, a closeness could be engendered with the audiences. The television industry had also reached another goal: it had discovered new ways to wheedle funding from the private sponsors, ones that did not involve the broadcasting of advertisements in commercial slots (Chudori et al. 1992).

The success of these serials that carried a touch of Javanese-ness – *bernuansa Jawa* – in their story, setting (an imagined Java somewhere in an imagined past), costumes and properties (influenced by the Indian Mahabharata and Ramayana television serials and ‘antique’ motifs), with dialogues spoken in Indonesian, probably paved the way for Indosiar to tap the local market. Success meant being scheduled at prime time, having high ratings and, as a result, generating a high income from advertisements. Hence success seen from a persuasive and entrepreneurial perspective.

However, rather than conquering the Javanese market just with programmes with an ethnic touch, Indosiar chose to broadcast local performing arts in which vernaculars were spoken, in particular Javanese and Sundanese. The overwhelmingly positive reception of TVRI

Yogyakarta's kethoprak sayembara serials in the early 1990s must have been an important argument in Indosiar's choice.

Before demonstrating what Indosiar's re-discovered Java looked like, I shall introduce this television station as a newcomer in the private television sector.

2 Indosiar Visual Mandiri: A new competitor in the market

On 11 January 1995 Indosiar Visual Mandiri was officially launched. The station was part of the Indonesia-based company PT Indovisual Citra Persada, owned by the Salim Group, with headquarters in Jakarta.

Television was just one of the activities of the Salim Group.¹³⁸ The Group, founded by Liem Sioe Liong (or Soedono Salim, his Indonesian name), an Indonesian entrepreneur of Chinese descent, consisted of private and public companies involved in a range of industries from banking, insurance, food, cement, automotive, chemicals, media to textiles, both in Indonesia and elsewhere. In the period prior to the economic and monetary crisis in 1997-1998, it was the largest conglomerate in Indonesia (Dieleman 2007:63-64). Its position gave the Group 'considerable economic power, including the power to influence domestic institutions such as the legislature's implementation of laws' (Dieleman 2007:128).

Liem Sioe Liong and the Salim Group had close personal and business relations with President Soeharto, to the mutual benefit of both. However, these close ties to Soeharto caused the group to find itself in heavy weather when the president resigned during the economic crisis. Anthony Salim succeeded his father Liem Sioe Long to solve the severe economic (bankruptcy of many of its companies) and political problems the conglomerate was facing. Indosiar was one of the Salim Group companies that was taken over by the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA) (Dieleman 2007:Chapter 4). After the crisis, Salim re-purchased the television station (Dieleman 2007:109). Indosiar's mother company adjusted its strategies, both in the domestic market and abroad. It slimmed down and focused on a limited number of sectors (food, telecom, media and property) (Dieleman 2007:113). In 2011, Indosiar became part of a new network, that resulted from a merger with SCTV, another private television station in Indonesia. It would become Indonesia's second largest broadcasting group (*The Jakarta Globe* 5 April 2011; Lim 2012:3-4).¹³⁹

Although presented as a national broadcaster, from its inception Indosiar has been part of a transnational network (*Multichannel News International*). After all, the Salim group was an international conglomerate, and so were the media networks with which Indosiar was

¹³⁸ For an analysis of the Indonesian Salim Group, see Dieleman 2007.

¹³⁹ The merger was part of a barter between the conglomerates of the Salim and the Sariaatmadja families, strengthening Salim's power in plantations and Sariaatmadja's power in broadcasting (Iswara and Rosalina 2011). Because of Indosiar's enormous losses in 2005 and 2006, and the threat of a possible violation of the Broadcasting Law (that prohibited monopolies) and looming problems with broadcasting frequencies, the merger between the two TV stations had been controversial and, hence, postponed. With the deal finally done, it would become Indonesia's second largest broadcasting group (*The Jakarta Globe*, 5 April 2011; Lim 2012:3-4).

intertwined in one way or another. In its initial phase, it worked hand in glove with TVB Hongkong whose staff took care of the management of Indosiar.

Indosiar's first broadcasts were transmitted by eight transmission stations, covering cities in Java (Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta and Surabaya), Bali (Denpasar), Sulawesi (Unjungpandang) and Sumatra (Medan). The number of transmission stations was soon expanding rapidly, and in 1997 Indosiar covered the whole of Java, one of the principal goals of the station (*Indosiar menambah* 1997), and Bali, as well as parts of other islands in Indonesia.

Indosiar's take-off was launched by a large PR offensive, in which it introduced itself as the station with most modern technology, specialized in local sinetron and committed to offering its audiences new alternatives.¹⁴⁰ This approach was the constant theme of its publicity rhetoric.¹⁴¹ By this means, Indosiar created the image of a glamorous, energetic, metropolitan TV station, attractive to young and old, having a professional crew, the newest technical equipment and with high-quality artists and programmes.

A wide reach, a strong corporate identity and specified programming offered obvious advantages in the struggle for the public's loyalty and the ratings. Nevertheless, Indosiar's identity was not created overnight and this delay was a problem for advertisers, who needed a clear demarcation of market segments to promote their products (Tedjomurti 1995b). This called for 'niching': the station had to specialize in audience segments, in programming and in networking, and simultaneously develop a strong relationship with its audiences (Tedjomurti 1995a). With the slogan *Indosiar memang untuk Anda* – Indosiar is indeed for You – Indosiar explicitly focused on including its audiences by means of its broadcasts, its off-air and social welfare activities (showcasing Indosiar's corporate social responsibility and building on its identity), and its website disclosing the numbers of visitors (*Anda pengunjung yang ke-*). The 'You' for whom Indosiar was producing and broadcasting programmes, was a general audience from all social layers of society and of all ages. In Chapter 8, the station's audiences are analysed in more detail.

*'Private television: do not prioritize business'*¹⁴²

Factors like new television technologies (Kitley 2000:215-249) and rapid economic growth spurred on the privatization of electronic media. All over Southeast Asia state monopoly was giving way to private media monopolies. McDaniel (2002:36) uses the term 'take over', but Kitley (2000:249) observes that in Indonesia 'TVRI ha[d] not let go its monopoly' yet. The new media developments brought forth news programmes diverging in both contents and form from the government news broadcasts, and in a significant increase in the amount of foreign content and number of advertisements (Mc Daniel 2002:36ff.). Between 1990 and

¹⁴⁰ *Advertorial* 1995; Website Indosiar 1997; (ely) 1995a.

¹⁴¹ Some examples: 'offering the audiences the best (*Kompas* 10 January 1995); 'presenting first-class, high quality entertainment' (*Republika* 11 January 1995); 'spoiling the eyes and ears of the audiences' (*Suara Pembaruan* 11 January 1995).

¹⁴² Harmoko: 'TV swasta jangan memomorsatukan kepentingan bisnis' ((xta) 1995).

1995, overall spending on advertising in Indonesia had increased sixfold (McDaniel 2002:82).¹⁴³ Indosiar's establishment in 1995 intensified the competition for advertising revenues among private television stations, that McDaniel claims was one of the consequences of the globalization of television advertising as a by-product of satellite television.

This development should be put in a historical perspective. As I have mentioned earlier, since 1981 TVRI had no longer been allowed to broadcast commercials, a ban 'that eventually contributed to the birth of the system of commercial television' (Loven 2008:236). Since this ban, advertisers had had to rely on print, radio, cinema and billboard advertising (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:25), with a preference for print advertising (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:27). In 1989, when the ban on advertising for private television had been rescinded and the first licence for a private television station had been granted, advertising expenditure on television rose quickly. By 1995, the competition for advertising among the five private stations had led to 'an all out war', in the words of *Media Scene* (1995-1996:22). As television advertising expenditures increased from 38 percent in 1992 to 50.2 percent in 1996 (*Media Scene* 1995-1996:58-61), advertising expenditures in the other media decreased (*Media Scene* 1995-1996).¹⁴⁴ In the period 1996-1997, the television share of the total adspend was still increasing, but the growth rate had 'substantially slowed down compared to previous years' (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:9), presaging the economic crisis at the end of the decade. The Indonesian government faced the conundrum that although a target audience of over 5 million people was available to the television advertisers (Sreberny 2000:110), the high cost of advertising revenues ruled out competition between all but five television stations ((xta) 1995). Therefore, as the fifth station at the time Indosiar was the last in the series of private television stations in Indonesia officially licensed to broadcast.

Ratings

In the mid-1990s, when television was considered to be the most important medium to reach consumers in Indonesia (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:27; Ishadi SK 1997:18), 'ratings' had become the buzz word. In its magazine *Media Scene*, the Indonesian Association of Advertising Agencies (Persatuan Perusahaan Periklanan Indonesia, PPI) regularly published ratings of product categories, television advertising expenditures by brand and Indonesian programmes.¹⁴⁵ The amount of attention paid to ratings and to the competition for audiences underscored '[t]he importance of commercial sponsorship and the relation of viewership to station and network revenue' (White 1992:171). The discourse on ratings, media penetration, advertising expenditures and the much-discussed balance between imported programmes and

¹⁴³ McDaniel's data (from about 500 million Rupiah to more than three trillion Rupiah) need to be checked.

¹⁴⁴ Figures are based on Gross Rate Card Cost and are extracted from monitored exposures (*Media Scene*).

¹⁴⁵ For the period 1995-1996, product categories with the highest advertising expenditures on television include beverages, shampoos and hair treatments, foods, toiletries, pharmaceuticals (analgesics) and sweets. These were followed by cigarettes, cosmetics and media, pharmaceuticals (other than analgesics), vehicles and spare parts, and bank and insurance (*Media Scene* 1995-1996:58). The products were marketed either in commercials or in 'infomercials', thirty-minute programmes promoting the direct marketing of products and sponsored by the various marketers (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:163).

local productions laid bare a number of issues affecting Indonesian television in this period. These were not Indonesia-bound but ran parallel to developments elsewhere in the world. The focus on advertising expenditures had made entertainment into a commodity, resulting in an obsession with audience research, sales figures and sales charts, and viewing patterns and reactions (Frith 2000:203, 211). The ratings data were controlled by AC Nielsen who ran the surveys (Barkin 2004:73). The higher the programme ratings, the more income the advertisements would generate, and the idea was that this would be equally true of programmes featuring tradition. The best example was given by RCTI that made history with *Si Doel Anak Sekolah*, a local serial featuring (an interpretation of) Betawi tradition, that obtained the highest rating ever in 1995-1996 (*Media Scene* 1995-1996:151; Loven 2008).

The overall attention of the private broadcasters to ratings and advertising revenues was a target for plenty of criticism, levelled by the government, journalists and media watchers, and not least Indosiar's competitors. At Indosiar's launch, H. Harmoko, Indonesian Minister of Information (1983-1997), expressed his concerns about the station's ideology by addressing the Indonesian private television industry in general terms. His statement reveals the continuing efforts of the Indonesian government to deploy media for the development of the country and hence he urged private media to co-operate with TVRI. Nain (2000:146), who studied the media in Malaysia, calls this strategy by which the state tries to keep control of the media 'in the "national interest", while at the same time seemingly complying with the needs of a "free" market', regulated deregulation.¹⁴⁶

Instead of highlighting commercial interests, Harmoko said the stations should prioritize the people and the country. He therefore expressed the hope that Indosiar's idealism would contribute to the development of broadcasting in Indonesia, as well as to national resilience (*ketahanan nasional*) and the intellectual development of the Indonesian people (*mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa*). Another concern was the increasing influx of foreign programmes using satellite dishes that should be anticipated.¹⁴⁷ After all, Indosiar should not lose sight of the fact it had been granted a broadcasting licence to provide the Indonesian public with information that supported TVRI. Vigilance should be shown to ward off the negative influences from foreign cultural infiltration by both foreign TV stations and non-Indonesian programming broadcast by private Indonesian mass media, said Harmoko. Harmoko also reminded the private stations to contribute 12 percent of their advertising revenues to TVRI. This third concern voiced by the minister referred to the slack attitude of the private television industry towards its obligation to allocate part of its advertising income to TVRI.

Journalists and media watchers also pointed the finger at Indosiar's (too) commercial attitude. Linked to this issue, print-press journalists in particular stressed the necessity of educating a public who has learned how to 'read' and interpret television contents and hence has acquired 'media literacy' (*Agar kepribadian* 1995; *Budaya audio-visual* 1995). Other issues that rubbed the Indonesian public up the wrong way were the strong 'Chinese' image

¹⁴⁶ Compare to Kitley's 'incomplete deregulation' (2000:235).

¹⁴⁷ (xta) 1995; *Menpen Harmoko* 1995, *Indosiar asked* 1995.

of Indosiar, hence its nickname ‘Indosiar Visual Mandarin’ punning on its name Indosiar Visual Mandiri, and its monopolistic attitude (Wardhana 1997:46-49, 63-66). Indosiar’s competitors in the television industry expressed similar concerns. They made comments on the channel’s strong financial backing from the Salim conglomerate that would allow it to dominate the market; on the Chinese ethnicity of its owner, a member of a politically-sensitive minority, and its catering to that community; and on his political connections in Indonesia leading to exemptions from imported programme limits (Thomas 2005:141).

These discussions demonstrate the importance of relating the formation of a station’s branding and ideologies to media ownership, networks and contextual circumstances. Programming, that will be discussed next, was another factor that determined a station’s identity. Recapitulating, a section of Indosiar’s co-existing and contradicting narratives, voices and ideologies (White 1992:190) was formed by its position as a new competitor in the Indonesian private television industry, owned by a Chinese entrepreneur with strong ties to the Soeharto family. The circumstances in which Indosiar was founded – in Indonesia and in a global context – favoured commercial broadcasting. They enabled Indosiar to present itself first and foremost as a profit-oriented broadcaster and to be identified as such.

Looking for a niche

Not yet knowing its audiences and mastering ways to persuade them, the station initially followed the mainstream of Indonesian private television programming. Only after it had obtained insight into public demand would it gradually develop its own distinctive style, said director Angky Handoko (*Private TV Indosiar* 1995). In the competition with other private Indonesian television stations to sell commercial slots, Indosiar initially focused on the broadcasting of programmes in those areas in which ratings research/sampling by the Survey Research Indonesia (SRI) were carried out, the cities of Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Semarang and Medan.¹⁴⁸ Jakarta however received the main focus as it constituted the largest market, according to Indosiar Visual Mandiri director Angky Handoko ((ely) 1995a). At first, the station tended to broadcast box office films, series, sitcoms, documentaries and sports programmes, all produced in the United States (*Private TV Indosiar* 1995), besides productions of Japanese and Hong Kong origin and relays of TVRI news programmes. The broadcasting of local *sinetron* was another strategy to attract the audiences’ attention. Therefore Indosiar transformed itself into a ‘soap factory’ (*pabrik sinetron*), profiting from the strong position of locally produced soap series and the high ratings they received ((ely) 1995b).

Only when it began its regular broadcasts of locally produced programmes in regional Indonesian languages did Indosiar begin to distinguish itself from the other private television stations. While the dramatic genres augmented Indosiar’s branding, Indosiar adapted the genres to the medium and its aesthetics and, with the help of an amalgam of agents who contributed to and hence helped shape the programmes, imbued them with the Indosiar stamp. Although broadcast nation-wide, these programmes with a traditional character were devised

¹⁴⁸ On ratings and Indonesian *sinetron*, see Habsari 2008.

to capture audiences from specific ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and to woo them with alluring advertisements.

Presenting the traditional shows as an effort to preserve the nation's culture(s) under the slogan 'melestarikan budaya bangsa', Indosiar engaged in New Order discourse and culture policy. In the televised drama, local (including Javanese) and national cultures were reflected upon. This narrative led to a paradoxical image of the station that contrasted sharply with the station's commercial attitude but did suit its mission: to provide services in the field of media communication, in the form of information, education, entertainment and advertising, and to participate in the intellectual development of the nation. To achieve the latter aim, the broadcaster also disseminated government propaganda. At the same time, the focus on the preservation of the culture of the nation covered up the station's commercial run on the Javanese market. Another effect of Indosiar's involvement in traditional performance genres was that in its self-representing practices the station became part of the show, adding an extra layer to the multiple narratives.

With the programming of regional performing arts seven months after its launch, Indosiar introduced a striking change in its persuasive strategies. This leap into a niche affected Indosiar's identity and branding. It allowed the station to approach aficionados of 'traditional' performance genres in local languages, a large potential market, more directly. By broadcasting these genres, Indosiar aimed at pre-persuading its audiences. Once persuaded to play the role of viewer and hooked by the show, they were open to further persuasion. Framing the first broadcasts as a special package was alluring to the audiences, making them feel special too.

3 Re-discovering 'Java'

Indosiar began the broadcasting of regional performing arts using Javanese and other vernaculars on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Indonesian Independence on 17 August 1995. As did all private television stations in Indonesia in the competition for viewers (Wardhana 1997:193-196), Indosiar seized upon a special event as an opportunity to sharpen its profile and promote its special broadcasts. This change in its programming enabled the station to address ethnically oriented markets in the most densely populated areas (Java and Bali) more directly. Framing the programming within the *Pekan Kesenian Tradisional* (PKT), the Week of Traditional Art, from 12 to 20 August Indosiar broadcast the shows to the areas within its reach. In these broadcasts, the station did more than just try to differentiate itself from its domestic competitors. The trend of providing (sub-national) regional ethnic programming should be seen in a wider context, in which domestic commercial television entered into competition with global broadcasters.¹⁴⁹ Hence, this was not restricted to Indonesia. Thomas argues that, in order to be alluring to audiences and to attract advertisers, domestic commercial broadcasters 'had to thoroughly localise or at least culturally

¹⁴⁹ Thomas (2005:212) calls this 'subregional ethnic programming'.

contextualise their programming somewhat' (Thomas 2005:212). Indosiar did so by focusing on local content of a specific kind.

Prominent puppeteers (*dhalang*) and well-known regional art troupes were invited to perform in this special series of shows. The puppeteers were Asep Sunandar, a wayang golek puppeteer from Bandung, Ki Anom Suroto and Ki Timbul Hadiprayitno, both shadow puppeteers from Central Java, representing the styles of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, and a Balinese colleague of theirs.¹⁵⁰ The regional art troupes consisted of Ketoprak Siswo Budoyo from Tulungagung in East Java, Topeng Betawi Setia Warga, led by H. Bokir, Ludruk Surabaya from the radio station RRI Gresik and Wayang Orang Sriwedari from Solo in Central Java, that performed the lakon *Hanoman Obong*, part of the Ramayana. Indosiar's choice of these particular genres and artists actually set a trend for its future programming.

The station wrapped its commercial aims strategically in discourse about proximity and the local. Indosiar's PR staff claimed that its screenings in PKT showed Indosiar's concern about the potential of culture (EH 1995). The shows were performed on stage in their respective regions. Indosiar recorded and edited them before broadcasting them. The reasons behind this approach, Indosiar's PR staff explained, were to make the local artistic nuances and cultural roots tangible, certainly a more difficult objective to achieve if performed in a studio context (EH 1995:59). *VISTA-TV* interpreted the change in Indosiar's programming as a device to demonstrate its nationalistic affiliation (*nasionalisme dan kebangsaan*) by means of the people's artistic expressions (*kesenian rakyat*) (MH/WP/et al. 1995:41).

The broadcasts, particularly the shadow puppet theatre performances, were said to have attracted large audiences, although they partly (on 10-17 August) coincided with TVRI's Wayang Week (*Pekan Wayang*), programmed for the same occasion.¹⁵¹ Indosiar's Press and Communication Relations officer, Gufroni Sakaril, stated that, in answer to audience responses, Indosiar increased the production and dissemination of traditional performance programmes.¹⁵² The regular broadcasting of traditional performance had a positive impact on Indosiar's branding that had initially been vague; the station was criticized for its commercial attitude, its close association with Hong Kong TV and its programming of mainly foreign blockbusters. Gradually, however, in public discourse 'Indosiar' became virtually synonymous with the broadcasts of local ethnically oriented content. During the long hours I spent in traffic jams during my visits to Jakarta in 1997 and 1998, Javanese and Sundanese taxi-drivers often talked excitedly about their preference for Indosiar, just because of these broadcasts.

Local content, modern entertainment

From September 1995, in the framework of the culture preservation discourse Indosiar broadcast programmes in Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese and Batak vernaculars on a regular

¹⁵⁰ I have not found any detailed information about the Balinese puppeteer.

¹⁵¹ Veven Sp Wardhana (1995) pointed out the phenomenon of special days and special broadcasts that are all broadcast simultaneously, so nobody can watch all of them.

¹⁵² Personal communication Gufroni Sakaril, Jakarta, 22 December 1997.

basis. I shall return to Indosiar's use of this preservation discourse in Chapter 7. Among the Javanese theatrical genres were wayang kulit, wayang orang, kethoprak, dhagelan and ludruk, all broadcast without subtitles or dubbing. Although it has a Javanese background and is oriented towards Javanese viewers, Srimulat is a case apart. Indonesian spoken, with Javanese in the comic dialogues, it was categorized as sitcom rather than traditional art. Night-long wayang kulit performances were aired on Saturday nights, from 23.30 to 04.30 hrs. From October the same year, Indosiar extended its programming of traditional theatre with broadcasts of Sundanese wayang golek, and shorter time slots on other days were filled with broadcasts of other Javanese performance genres.¹⁵³

At the beginning, Indosiar tried to find qualitatively good performances of traditional dramatic genres, meaning: popular entertainment. Once the broadcasts were in great demand, the troupes themselves contacted the TV station. Every month Indosiar received about ten letters of request to perform at Indosiar, of which the station approved four to five.¹⁵⁴

In December 1997, the executive producer of Indosiar's production department Non Drama (!), Panca Cahya Utama, invited me to attend the recording of a wayang kulit performance. It would be a *wayang kulit ngepop*, a shadow puppet show with mass-market appeal, he said. Heru Soesanto, the mayor (*walikota*) of Malang, performed the lakon *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati*, supported by guest stars. The show was organized to celebrate the fifty-first anniversary of the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan (BPK)). The performance and the recording took place on 18 December 1997 in the auditorium of the Audit Board (in the BPK building) in Jakarta. During the live show the editing was done in the Indosiar van on the same premises. The production was broadcast on 7 March 1998.

In an interview after the show, puppeteer Heru Soesanto told me that he had chosen to perform a *wayang campursari* – a then recent phenomenon in the development of wayang kulit – to make shadow puppet theatre attractive to younger audiences. Campursari stands for the hybrid character of the show, mixing wayang kulit with other genres and styles. The walikota had often been involved in the popularization of regional art forms (*kesenian daerah*), as he had been a dhalang since 1980. His performances with the famous professional dhalang Ki Anom Soeroto and Ki Manteb Soedharsono must have been a source of inspiration to him.

The campursari character of this particular show was created by the mingling of traditional shadow puppeteering of the dhalang manipulating leather puppets and speaking through them as he told the story, with other performance genres that conveyed other frames of reference by dancers, singers, musicians other than gamelan players and comedians. Hence, the wayang story was enriched by the comic presence of the popular comedians (*pelawak*) Timbul and Rabies who filled the clown scene (*gara-gara*) with their humorous skits. Traditionally this was done by the clown puppets. Dangdut and keroncong-like songs were played by a campursari orchestra consisting of some gamelan instruments, keyboards, drums, a kendhang and a guitar, led by the famous Manthous and his group, Maju Lancar, from Gunungkidul,

¹⁵³ Such as ludruk, *lawak* (comedy) and kethoprak.

¹⁵⁴ Personal communication Panca CU, Jakarta, 17, 18, 23 December 1997.

and the female vocalists (*pesindhen*) – among whom was USA-born ‘Ning Elizabeth Sekar Arum from Malang’, as she was announced by the dhalang – who each sang a song in turn. Four beautiful female dancers from Malang wearing glamorous costumes with traditional features performed the Gambyong dance. A fight scene between the protagonists Arjuna, Cakil and a giant was taken over from the puppets by (human) dancers. The dhalang’s performance embellished by all these interventions by guest stars was intended to be spectacular and give the show more verve. The staging was thought to be innovative, but nevertheless had already set a new standard for shadow puppet performances because of its abundant imitation of television puppeteers.¹⁵⁵

The broadcast of Wahyu Kuncoro Jati was typical of the Javanese genres that Indosiar broadcast: Panca CU claimed it was a ‘traditional’ performance transformed into ‘modern’ entertainment, with a contemporary and innovative character. Its purpose was to attract large numbers of audiences for business purposes and it was free of any ideological mission.¹⁵⁶ That was the task of TVRI – a remark by which Panca CU distanced himself (and Indosiar) from TVRI and its conservative image. However, a close reading of the contributions by the multiple agents that shaped the broadcast and constructed its polysemic character, as I shall do in the next chapter, reveals that the Indosiar programmes did contain other ideological missions.

Linguistically based markets

By broadcasting these productions, Indosiar had shown a preference for local content categorized as traditional rather than programmes with an ethnic tinge, the latter the preference of the other private TV broadcasters. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 4, a genre like kethoprak, not to mention dhagelan and ludruk, that were originally identified as modern urban genres, had gradually been incorporated into the traditional canon, hence their being advertised as traditional art genres. The use of local languages was one of the parameters that determined whether a genre was considered traditional or not. Indosiar used the potential of ‘linguistically based markets’ (Sreberny 2000:116) for the production and dissemination of these media products. Sreberny says that the emergence of these markets – her examples feature Spanish, Chinese and Arabic but are equally applicable to Javanese – supports ‘tendencies towards cultural, linguistic and religious particularity’ (Sreberny 2000:116).

From the perspective of broadcasting legislation, Indosiar’s broadcasting in vernaculars was conspicuous. Because of the changes in the Indonesian television landscape, the government had imposed several restrictions on all private television broadcasting and these would be sanctioned in the 1997 Broadcasting Law, the first bill to include television. When Indosiar was launched, several drafts of the law had already been in circulation (actually since the 1970s); in the early 1990s it was revised (Kitley 2000:225-226; Peranginangin 1997:20-21). Language use was one of the topics with which the law was concerned. The media legislation (and its drafts) required all television programmes, including advertisements, to be broadcast

¹⁵⁵ For a detailed analysis of such ‘mixed’ wayang performances, see Mrázek 1999, 2000 and 2005.

¹⁵⁶ Personal communication Panca CU, Jakarta, 18 December 1997.

in Indonesian. Regional languages should only be maintained if suitable to the programme. Were regional languages to be used, these had to be made accessible to non-native speakers (referred to as inhabitants of other regions) by translating them into Indonesian as far as this was possible. Foreign productions should be dubbed into or subtitled in Indonesian.¹⁵⁷

When regional traditional genres were broadcast, use of the (sub-national) vernacular was taken for granted and beyond discussion. However, Indosiar did not provide the spoken word with Indonesian subtitles to make it accessible to non-Javanese viewers. Possibly it imagined that audiences for the Javanese performance genres would be restricted to ethnic Javanese, although it did broadcast these genres Indonesia-wide, making them accessible (but not necessarily meaningful) to people from other ethnic groups living in a different cultural environment and speaking different languages. This presumed oversight reveals how problematic it was for Indosiar to identify its audiences. Moreover, as the largest identifiable target audience ‘the’ Javanese were not a homogeneous group. Consequently, not all of the then more than 80 million native speakers of Javanese felt ‘their culture’ was represented in these programmes. The ratings were the last factor that hampered the construction of a clear target audience, as they were based on research in the largest Indonesian cities only.

From a commercial point of view, the dissemination of Javanese theatrical genres seemed to be a lucrative business. To gain access to the Javanese gold-mine, private TV stations had to compete with both global and local television, and therefore engaged in the innovation of what were called ethnic broadcasts of performance genres that belonged to the cultural riches of specific ethnic groups (*‘pembaharuan’ tayangan etnis Jawa*) (Wijaya 1997:114-115). Indosiar had been the first station to do this. The station’s choice for linguistically and therefore ethnically based markets stemmed from the idea that Indonesian culture should be based on the apices of regional cultures, as these had been determined by constitutional law. This was no outgrowth of an auto-orientalist gaze as the classical battle serials displaying an ethnic nuance had been. As I have explained before, the government’s plans to stimulate the building of a national culture included the promotion of traditional art and culture. This had been solidly embedded in the policy lines of TVRI, before it was joined by Indosiar. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether Indosiar’s stance was really a response to Indonesian Minister of Information Harmoko’s call to the private media to co-operate with TVRI, as it had been made with business in mind.

With this choice Indosiar set a trend. As a result, other television stations entered the competition and began broadcasting traditional performance genres, while at the other hand some new genres developed in the media. In March 1996, for instance, TPI began broadcasting wayang golek twice a month. TPI stated that this was neither a new initiative nor an imitation (*ngekor*) of Indosiar. Paying attention to traditional art forms had always been an essential part of TPI’s policy, it claimed; in the past it had scheduled *Dolanan* (traditional games), *Dhagelan Mataram* (humorous skits in the Mataram style) and *Wayang Kulit* ((SJ) 1996).

¹⁵⁷ UUP 32/2002, Pasal 38 (1-2), and Pasal 39 (1, 2 and 3); PP 50/2005, Pasal 16 (1-6).

The interest in traditional performance did not last, however, as demonstrated by the unconvincing ratings. After the monetary crisis of 1997-1998, the broadcasting of these genres decreased; finally they were suspended entirely. What was successful and remained popular was comedy: Kethoprak humor and Srimulat, and all the variations on both forms. In November 1998, RCTI began broadcasting Kethoprak humor,¹⁵⁸ followed by Indosiar and SCTV that broadcast their own variants of comic kethoprak and ludruk (Bosnak 2006:80). TVRI Jakarta, also eager to claim its share, scheduled *Wayang orang humor (Vista-TV)*. These programmes did very well in the ratings and offered an ideal context for advertisements. Although often Indonesianized and modernized to a certain extent, these genres were still considered to belong to the sphere of local (Javanese) tradition.

*'Indosiar is Javanizing'*¹⁵⁹

While private TV stations were building relay stations all over Indonesia, the Javanese scent was said to dominate in their programming. As the previous sections have revealed, this Javanese inclination was based principally on economic arguments. As more than half of the country's population was of Javanese descent and Java was the most densely populated island, the television industry used the number of Javanese inhabitants to legitimize its orientation: Javanese performances would attract advertisers (Hartanto 1997:120).

Two main points of criticism dominated the discussions. Looming large was the fact that the orientation of the private TV stations towards the ethnic Javanese seriously limited the number of programmes featuring other ethnic cultures. Critics blamed the 1997 Broadcasting Law for having required the Indonesian television industry to support the building of a national culture without mentioning the need to maintain a multi-ethnic character (Hartanto 1997:121). The only Indosiar programme that actually approached the idea of multi-ethnicity was *Tembang Persada* (Patriotic Songs), featuring familiar songs from various Indonesian ethnic groups, linked to their areas of origin: Java, Batak (*Horas*), Sunda (*Kawih Pasundan*), Padang, Ambon and so on. The second criticism was levelled at Indosiar in particular, alleging that the station had been Javanizing (*men-Jawa*) (*Membangkitkan gairah* 1996; Hartanto 1997:120-121).

Discussions in the media focused on both phenomena. Critical articles published in newspapers and magazines carried titles like: 'Petruk's success story at Indosiar' (*Kisah sukses* 1995) – referring to Indosiar's successful wayang broadcasts in which Petruk is one of the clowns; 'Because of its potential, Java is given priority' (Mahfuf 1997); 'Courting Java with tradition' (Wijaya 1997). Journalists wondered why what were called multi-ethnic programmes focused mainly on Java. After all, Indosiar had relay stations all over the country. Could the strategy to disseminate Javanese materials be legitimized because of the number of native speakers of Javanese who were potential TV audiences (Hartanto 1997:120-121)? In other words: Were the private TV stations simply propelled into making this choice by commercial motives (since they were selling large time slots to advertisers)? Another frequently asked question was whether the slogan preserving the culture(s) of the nation

¹⁵⁸ Personal communication Timbul Suhardi, Jakarta 19 June 2001.

¹⁵⁹ 'Indosiar men-Jawa' (Hartanto 1997).

(*melestarikan budaya bangsa*) could be interpreted as taking responsibility only for the culture of the majority (Mahfuf 1997:116-117)?

When Indosiar was said to Javanize (*men-Jawa*) – ‘Jawa’ here meaning Central Java – , this did not have a positive connotation. The discussion that followed seemed to be a continuation of the discourse about the dominance of Javanese culture in the national culture that had already been a thorn in the side for a long time. It seems that Indosiar especially was thought to have become too Javanese; the presence of Javanese culture was perceived to be too strong, even though the number of programmes featuring Javanese performing arts was actually very small in comparison to the overall programming; moreover they filled night time slots. Reactions like these were based on preconceived ideas. The same is probably true of connoting the process of *men-Jawa* solely to Central Java as many groups and actors from East Java had also been regularly invited to perform for Indosiar. Lastly, the number of advertisements explicitly featuring Javanese culture was fairly limited, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 7.

A wider scope

On the occasion of its third anniversary in 1998, Indosiar widened its scope with the programme *Semarak 3 tahun Indosiar* (Adding lustre to the three years of Indosiar). This might have been a reaction to the criticism of the absence of multi-culturalism in its programming. *Semarak 3 tahun Indosiar* was broadcast live from the Indosiar studios between 19.30 and 22.00 hrs. About 1,200 artists from all over Indonesia, like those of Toraja, Bali, Betawi and Irian Jaya, contributed to the programme that was to reflect the pluriformity of Indonesian cultures (*keragaman budaya nusantara*) and make it alluring to a wider audience (*seluruh masyarakat luas*). Director Handoko hoped the programme would comfort the residents of Jakarta, both the Betawi, the original inhabitants, and the immigrants, and assuage their homesickness. Different genres and styles appeared on the screen. Among the Javanese artists involved were dancer Didik Nini Thowok and comedian Timbul ((Cdr) 1998:10). Indosiar used the programme to proclaim itself a nation builder and a broadcaster who fostered local cultures, the nostalgic symbols of the people’s home regions.

Indosiar also joined the discussion on a recurrent theme about traditional culture in contemporary Indonesia by screening two films: N. Riantiarno’s *Cemeng 2005* (The last primadonna) and Garin Nugroho’s *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* (And the moon dances).¹⁶⁰ *Cemeng 2005* symbolized the uncertain future of traditional performing arts in contemporary Indonesia. It featured itinerant theatre troupes, *sandiwara jalanan*, from Cirebon on the verge of extinction. *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang*, a film about dance against a Javanese background, represented the confrontation between tradition and contemporary dance. The films represent two directions in the discourse on tradition and new developments: *Cemeng 2005* stands for the discourse of loss; *Bulan tertusuk Ilalang* for the confrontation between the two worlds. As both films had been sold to advertisers as part of Indosiar’s anniversary package (*paket Ulang Tahun*), they served the station’s commercial aims and fitted its preservation discourse. They

¹⁶⁰ Broadcast on 18 January and on 25 January 1998, both at 19.30 hrs.

were also possible precursors to Indosiar's broadcasting policy after the economic crisis, when it slowly but surely stepped away from its ideology of propagating the preservation of cultures of the nation.

Conclusions

When it was established in 1995, in many senses Indosiar found fertile soil. The Indonesian government had put an end to its monopoly on broadcasting (at least officially); it had launched the project of deregulating the Indonesian broadcasting industry and displayed an open attitude towards commercial initiatives – provided that they supported TVRI. The economy was growing rapidly. Four private stations, Indosiar's predecessors, had paved the way for the last station in this period. In short, all the circumstances were propitious for the setting-up of the new private television station.

In the course of its first year of existence, the station constructed a branding that sustained multiple ideologies, hence my idea of apparently paradoxical narratives (to which I shall return in the next chapter). My analysis in this and the next chapter of the agents and the personal and institutional relations that contributed to these ideologies lays bare Indosiar's media practices. Highly commercially orientated, supporting New Order government discourse and engaging in Javanese (and other ethnic groups') performance genres, the station catered simultaneously to the local on both the national and the regional levels, and to governmental and private spheres. The station's ownership and business networks also contributed to the global aspects of the broadcasting.

Opting for broadcasts of linguistically and ethnically based programmes that were categorized as traditional, Indosiar set a trend in the world of private television in Indonesia. With its Indonesia-wide broadcasts of these traditional performance genres, Indosiar bridged physical distances (from the location of the performance, to the TV studios, to the audiences all over Indonesia; from the regional to the national level; from the villages or small towns to the metropole) and temporal ones (from the past in the wayang and kethoprak stories to the contemporary setting of the Jakarta-based TV station). To some extent, Thompson's view of tradition is applicable here: the traditional performance genres were de-regionalized/de-localized, but simultaneously 'continuously re-embedded in new contexts and re-moored to new kinds of territorial unit' (Thompson 1996:94).

With its programming policy, Indosiar took an easy path in several ways. By choosing the most obvious genres from the traditional canon, leaving genres less well-known in Jakarta aside, reducing 'traditional Javanese culture' to just a few icons of regional traditional performance, Indosiar's programming of traditional drama can be called conservative. Its choices were based neither on actual investigation into the culture nor on market research, but on assumptions about what might be alluring to its target audiences, assuming that most ethnic Javanese were wayang and kethoprak aficionados. Indosiar constructed a narrow image of its Javanese viewers and of Javanese-ness.

By preferring 'main stream' performances by popular troupes, the station avoided the risk of failing. The majority of these performances were deliberately designed to be popular (*ngepop*) and often consisted of a mixture of performance genres and (sometimes) media. Their image was intended to be 'contemporary'. This was grist to the mill of the discourse of loss proponents who advocated 'authentic' styles. The material was easily available, and easy to record, edit and disseminate without too many costs. Lastly, Indosiar's interpretation of 'local content' was restricted to Java (meaning performances in Javanese, Sundanese and Cirebonese), Bali, and Sumatra (the Batak songs in the programme *Horas*). This narrow-minded vision of the meaning of the local was actually very 'Orde Baru' and continued the New Order approach to the building of a national culture on the basis of the apices of regional cultures (usually meaning a restricted number of local regional cultures, ignoring most of the other ethnic cultures of Indonesia).

7 Indosiar is indeed for You: Narratives, messages and ideologies

Indonesian advertising is fascinating—it inadvertently reveals much about Indonesian cultural desires, in contrast to other Indonesian media that were heavily censored during Soeharto's regime. (Reynolds 1999:87)

Once attracted by a specific traditional performance programme presented by Indosiar, its audiences were available for further persuasion couched in various other narratives, messages and ideologies, including those of a commercial nature, culture preservation and other New Order narratives and the 'Indosiar' discourse.

To lay bare the complex interweaving of these multiple narratives, messages and ideologies that together shaped the Javanese programmes, I have based my analysis on a few examples. Leaning heavily on Indosiar's broadcasts of the kethoprak show *Dewi Sawitri*, the wayang kulit programme *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati* and *Tembang Laras*, a comic performance by Dhagelan Mayang Sari, I discuss the multiple persuasive discourses in Indosiar's broadcasts of traditional Javanese performing arts. The advertising of local products, Indosiar's rhetoric advocating the preservation of regional artistic genres as national cultural heritage and the commercialization of Javanese performances are all points to be examined. In the last section of this chapter, I shall explore the 'You' (*Anda*) Indosiar was targeting. The main points of attention will be the programme flow and the agents and their discourse.

The context offered by a broadcast schedule irrevocably has an effect on a programme. Williams' concept of *flow* that I introduced in the previous chapter is useful in this respect. Williams looks at examples of flow in television in three different orders of detail: The flow within a particular day's programming (long-range analysis of sequence and flow); the flow of the actual succession of items within and between the published sequence of units (medium-range analysis of flow and 'sequence'); and finally the really detailed flow within this general movement, meaning the actual succession of words and images (close-range analysis of flow) (Williams 1990:96). I return to this concept of flow in my analysis of the television programmes.

To give some idea of how the multiple narratives and discourses shaped the play, I begin by returning to the wayang kulit broadcast I introduced in the previous chapter: *Wayhu Kuncoro Jati*.

1 Shaping the broadcast: An example – Wahyu Kuncoro Jati

In Chapter 6 I sketched the performance context of the shadow puppet show *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati* and described the campursari style that formed the basic framework of the show and the programme flow, and suited Indosiar's preference for popular entertainment. A closer look at the contributions of the multiple agents that shaped the broadcast and constructed its

polysemic character shows that Panca CU's presentation of Indosiar's broadcast of a wayang kulit show as a traditional performance transformed into modern entertainment without any other ideological mission had been too simple. These agents were: the performers, the sponsor of the performance, the local government of Malang represented by its mayor (Pak Haji Soesanto), who acted as the puppeteer of the show (Ki Soesanto), the audiences attending the performance and watching the television broadcast, the national government (supplying its ideology, policies, legislation, propaganda), advertisers and others economically interested and Indosiar (as a technology, as a media institute with an ideology, owners and networks, and as a commercial Indonesian broadcaster). These agents voiced their issues and messages that made up the programme flow as a rich composition of epistemologies. Operating in a complex field of forces, by means of the broadcast Indosiar was promoting the businesses of the station and its owner, and seducing both advertisers and audiences, not to mention the Indonesian government. Before analysing the main messages separately, I show how these had been woven in the programme as 'coexisting and contradicting ideologies' (White 1992:190) and added additional layers of meaning to the play on several levels.

What was on display was a performance of a Javanese wayang story by a puppeteer playing wayang kulit, with the co-operation with various guest stars from other artistic disciplines. The embedding of other genres made the shadow puppet theatre into a hybrid performance. The puppeteer, puppets, musicians, singers, dancers and comedians – on the level of performance – breathed life into the characters – on the level of the story. Regularly, they also stepped out of the play by referring to their activities beyond the performance and revealing their preoccupations in the jokes they made. The puppeteer talked about his function as mayor of the city of Malang and about his joint recording with Manthous of songs of the national Golkar party that had been distributed all over Indonesia, and engaged in a dialogue with a female singer about her three children. This switching of roles also took place on the level of the story. Petruk, one of the clowns, functioned as the alter ego of the puppeteer, when he introduced himself as Petruk from Malang in East Java, when he addressed the audiences and told them he was very honoured to meet them at the BPK building in Jakarta, and when he invited the performers to introduce themselves to the public. This was most apparent in his dirty jokes with the female vocalists, loaded with sexual innuendos. Petruk was also the character who brought Indosiar into the performance when he urged the pesindhen not to take too long to introduce themselves because the performance had to fit Indosiar's schedule and when he announced that Indosiar was going to broadcast the show all over Indonesia, as he had been told. In the discussion between the mayor-puppeteer-Petruk and a female singer who was a member of the Organization of the Wives of Civil Servants in Malang (Dharma Wanita Kodya Malang), Petruk admitted knowing her husband well. When he referred to Indosiar's crew who were smiling (*Iki tukang tivi nganti mesem, lho Ibu*) because the mayor was acting as the puppeteer in the role of Petruk who was flirting with the pesindhen (*dolanan karo sindhen*), the three roles of the main performer of the show and the several levels of the broadcast were turned topsy-turvy.

The sponsor of the performance, the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (the Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan, BPK), enabled the show and provided the occasion, location and the public for the performance and the TV recording. Several times the puppeteer referred to the reason for the event, the fifty-first anniversary of the Audit Board (*dina iki mengeti Hari Jadi BPK sing kaping 51*), on which he and his troupe wanted to call down blessings (*ngaturake dirgahayu*). The fact that the live performance had taken place more than a fortnight earlier and was broadcast long after the actual anniversary on 1 January, seemed to matter little.



7.1 Audiences enjoying the comic skits



7.2 VIPs sitting in the first rows in the BPK Hall

Ki Soesanto welcomed the public in the BPK Hall (mentioning the names of the VIPs present), songs were sung (for the anniversary and the setting-up of BPK), and the Audit Board featured in the jokes. During a dialogue between Limbuk and Cangik about *pembangunan*, ‘the’ New Order term for the development of the country, the puppeteer listed the development tasks undertaken by the BPK, on both the physical level and on the level of human resources.



7.3 The puppeteer, Limbuk and Cangik



7.4 Karen Elisabeth from Chicago alias Sekar Arum from Malang

The audiences in the BPK auditorium entered the broadcast in several ways: shots show the VIPs sitting in the first rows in the BPK Hall; other shots focused on the women, *ibu-ibu*, partly formally dressed in the ‘traditional’ ‘national dress’ *kain-kebaya* (Figures 7.1 and 7.2). Audience participation and interaction with the performers was made both visible and audible: the spectators were shown applauding, talking to each other and laughing in response

to the performance. Their reactions to the comic skits were audible when the camera focused on the comedians. Finally, there was the public at home watching the broadcast, interpreting the performance and the multiple narratives.

Typical New Order Government rhetoric occurs in the dialogues about family planning (with the singer who was mother of three children), the development of the country or *pembangunan*, already mentioned, the preservation of the culture of the nation, a reference to the national Golkar party and so on. When the propaganda on *pembangunan* drew to a close, the puppeteer entered into a dialogue with the pesindhen Karen Elisabeth from Chicago alias Sekar Arum from Malang, first in English, then in Javanese, to the surprise of the laughing audience – shown in several shots quietly alternated with shots of the dhalang and the singer – particularly when the singer began speaking Javanese with a Malang accent (*niku wah*). The spectators were clearly impressed with her versatility in the Javanese language (and dialects) and humour, wordplays and puns. They were shown clapping their hands, talking to each other while nodding approvingly. Beginning the dialogue in a typically Javanese, but also typically wayang kulit-like way, by asking the name of a person/character, their place of origin and other whens and hows, in his encounter with the pesindhen the dhalang gradually highlighted the actual topic of discourse: the preservation of traditional cultures, a most favourite topic of discussion in the New Order period.¹⁶¹ National strength was within reach by fostering the cultures of the nation. A country needed an identity to shape unity and union (*mujudake persatuan dan kesatuan*), and this should be more than just a slogan. Furthermore, traditional culture was not inferior to art from abroad. The defence of Indonesian cultures against negative foreign influences, and the urge to preserve traditional cultures, as a representation of Indonesian nationalist ideology had by then become the ideological priority of Indosiar as it proliferated itself to the audiences – hence the long sequence in the programme devoted to these themes.

Issues discussed during the show had to do with Javanese culture (for instance, in the remark about the Indonesianizing of wayang, to make the genre known to non-Javanese-speaking people) and contemporary political issues (in references to the possible resignation of the Indonesian president, when Hanuman suggests the time has come for him to resign as he is sixty-five years old, President Soeharto's age at the time of the performance).¹⁶² References to other extra-performative circumstances included the dhalang's reference to the beginning of the fasting month that coincided with BPK's anniversary on 1 January 1998, wishing the Muslim public success in observing the fast. Petruk greeted the audiences with the Arabic Assalamu alaikum [...] wa barokatuh). Moreover, there were plenty of references to the economic crisis (*krismon*, referred to as *jaman moneter*, the monetary era).

The commercial sponsors of the programme advertised their products in four slots: the analgesic Mixagrip, a product of Dankos, and Susu Indomilk, a product of the Salim Group; the logos of the companies were shown on the screen, without sound. Indosiar presented its

¹⁶¹ See Clara van Groenendael 1985 on the use of foreigners studying traditional performing arts to stress the need to preserve one's own culture.

¹⁶² 'Yuswaku wis swidak lima [sic] tahun. Aku kok ki lagi wae lengser keprabon, ta, ngger.'

forthcoming programmes, from soap series, *Srimulat* and *Dangdut Ria*, to Walt Disney movies, Indian films and films with Asian stars, and World Boxing Matches in the many trailers. The entire show was framed within a text, in Indonesian, that appeared on screen at the beginning of the programme, explaining the meaning of *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati*.

The campursari character of this show allowed abundant leeway for the presence of 'issues, voices, positions and messages' (White 1992:191) that were extraneous to the actual story (the *lakon*) but had been integrated into it, becoming part of the programme flow. In the following sequences I shall analyse the commercial and New Order rhetoric represented by *Indosiar*, and, finally, *Indosiar*'s proper 'narrative'.

2 Tradition for sale: Advertising local products

From its beginning, *Indosiar* stated its commercial ideology and its competitive stance towards the other private TV stations in Indonesia. As part of a conglomerate of 'established capital interests' (Williams 1990:37), profit-making was *Indosiar*'s primary goal and the broadcasting of commercials its main source of income ((ely) 1995a). It was this discourse of commerce that initially caught the eye of the public – and elicited critical remarks.

In this section I view advertising as 'a deeply cultural process' (Reynolds 1999:85), simultaneously connecting products to local cultures and reflecting these cultures. Catherine Reynolds, who studied tobacco advertising in Indonesia, noticed the inextricable link between product branding and popular culture. 'Each brand's image', she writes, 'is meticulously designed and crafted to connect with the prevailing popular cultural values and desires of the day' (Reynolds 1999:85). Reynolds states that

indigenous Indonesian cigarette advertisements appeal to, and reflect, a fascinating collage of specifically Indonesian cultural values and desires. Indigenous advertising exploits and manipulates the traditional cultural associations of tobacco, and exacerbates the smoking 'culture' by creating quite new cultural references and themes associated with smoking. Although some of these indigenous advertisements may seem superficially similar to Western multinational cigarette advertisements, such a reading misses the subtleties of Indonesian culture. (Reynolds 1999:85)

The ways to appeal to and reflect 'specifically Indonesian cultural values and desires' (Reynolds 1999:85) in television advertisements are manifold. The identities represented in the advertisements are much more dynamic than can be covered by the denominations local and indigenous and, apart from a few exceptions, the local is never homogeneous. Besides, the advertisements are influenced by their televisual context (as they are part of Williams' *flow*), the advertisement category to which they belong and the ways they are presented: either as ad-lib or product placement, in a sequence of commercials, or unmarked, as part of the performance; in the form of a trailer and as self-references. As White (1992:171) has argued

The position and functioning of advertising is a crucial aspect of ideological analysis, because it is the place within television's textual system where the economics of the system are made manifest. With the prominent and regular display of commercials on television, the source of the network and

station income is not hidden but becomes, on the contrary, an integral part of the television program flow.

Developing a strategy to address linguistically and ethnically based markets, Indosiar adapted its advertisements to these markets and to the programmes that formed the pretext for the commercials. The questions that need to be answered here are how Indosiar localized these advertisements and how they were positioned in the programme flow. I shall go into the few instances in which advertisements catered to specific ethnic audience groups, using the Oskadon commercial as an example. I begin by putting these issues in the context of the Indonesian Broadcasting Law.

Regulating television advertising

The 1997 Broadcasting Law regulated television advertising. The Broadcasting Law differentiated between commercial advertisements (*iklan niaga*) and public service advertisements (*iklan layanan masyarakat*) (UUP 1997 Pasal 41). The private television stations were allowed to allocate a maximum of 20 percent of their total airtime to commercials. Commercial advertisements should not be used for propaganda supporting religion, ideology, politics or the promotion of the individual or a specific group (UUP 1997 Pasal 2a). Advertisements must not be offensive and/or undermine religious faiths, moral ethics, tradition, culture, or be slanted towards any racial or ethnic group (*Media Scene* 1996-1997:26). Advertisements for products like tobacco or alcohol were restricted.¹⁶³ Furthermore, all local and foreign television programmes and commercial content were subject to the approval of the Ministry of Information's Film Censorship Board (Lembaga Sensor Film, LSF). The content of commercials should be produced by enterprises licensed by the government or by the broadcasting institution itself (UUP 24 1997 Pasal 42-1). The commercials should have an Indonesian setting, feature Indonesian artists and be produced by an Indonesian crew (UUP 1997 Pasal 42-3). The legislation decreed all advertising should use Indonesian as the language of communication. As I demonstrate later, this was not always the case, although commercials spoken entirely in Javanese were rare.

Localizing advertisements

Indosiar broadcast commercials for global and local products, local both in the sense of Indonesian and sub-national. In conformity with the Broadcasting Law and suited to the context of the Javanese performances in which the commercials were embedded, the station localized the advertisements.

In his study on advertising in Sri Lanka, Kemper (2001:14) argues that the practice of advertising in post-colonial markets is pulled in two directions: one following trans-national campaigns, the other one catering to and creating local preferences by advertising in the local idiom. Both directions can be discerned in advertising on Indonesian television. Loven's analysis confirms Kemper's second argument when she states that in the mid-1990s the

¹⁶³ For detailed information about this restriction, see the advertising code of ethics of the Indonesian Association of Advertising Agencies as published in *Media Scene* (1996-1997).

Indonesian advertising industry and local advertising agencies began using ‘an increasingly local idiom – literally and metaphorically – to promote local as well as foreign products’ (Loven 2008:237). In their discussion of foreign television content, Sen and Hill (2000:121) stress the continuing dominance of trans-national advertising agencies in the local advertising business; ‘even when advertisements are domestically produced in Indonesian language, their creative control is largely in the hands of foreigners’ (Sen and Hill 2000: 121). Their findings reflect Kemper’s first argument and correspond to Appadurai’s conclusion that ‘[t]he locality [...] disguises the globally dispersed forces that actually drive the production process’ (Appadurai 1998:42). This also applies to Indosiar as part of a large international conglomerate.

How Indosiar presented and represented this local idiom is the theme of this and the following sections. The reasons Indosiar broadcast local(ized) advertisements were many. Its strongest argument was commercial, viewing ‘Java’ as a potential gold-mine. As Anthony Salim explains, the advertisements broadcast in the Indosiar programmes revealed consumer trends. The synergy between retail claim, Indofood (one of the Salim Group companies) and television helped the company to understand the market, he said (Dieleman 2007:74) – a market dominated by ratings. In order to promote the sale of its instant noodles and other products of the Salim groups even better, it fostered its traditional performance broadcasts, ‘not to get rid of its Hongkong orientated image, but rather to obtain the highest ratings’ (Wardhana 1997:133). Government regulations and legislation will also have played a role, bolstered by audience preference for ‘locally produced programs in local languages’ (McDaniel 2002:81).

The preference for local advertising can be explained by the fact that it enables audiences ‘to identify with the style, values, beliefs, institutions and behavioral patterns of the material in question’ (Chen 2004:173). Chen quotes Hoskins and Mirus (1988:500), who call this phenomenon ‘cultural discount’. In Chapter 1 I commented critically on the validity of this cultural preference view. As I argued in the introduction to my dissertation, an important factor for identification is the language use – for instance, Javanese-spoken commercials broadcast in the context of Javanese programmes targeting Javanese audiences. However, although Indosiar selected linguistically and ethnically based markets for its persuasive purposes, most of the advertisements broadcast during programmes targeting specific groups of audiences were local in the sense of national. They used Indonesian as the language of communication and identity markers referring to ‘Indonesia’, and addressed and reflected an urban middle-class environment. Instances that exemplify how these advertisements appealed to and reflected Indonesian cultural values and desires include advertisements for local products and calendar-dependent commercials.

The first category includes advertisements for local products like clove cigarettes (although some of these show an Indonesian cowboy in the setting of a Western), soya sauce (*kecap*), energy drinks, hygiene (tooth-paste, shampoo) and beauty products; and localized global products (like Sunlight soap). Government campaigns and Indosiar programme trailers persuading audiences to watch forthcoming broadcasts can also be slotted into this category.

They promoted both Indonesian and foreign products; as the Indonesian products were often produced by international conglomerates or an Indonesian branch of such a conglomerate, the precise origin of many of these products and/or the production ownership was often not clear to the consumers.

Another category of persuasive messages that represented aspects of Indonesian identity were advertisements that were linked to calendar-dependent events. An instance of a religious calendar-dependent event that has a strong impact on Indonesian businesses and is omnipresent in the media is the Fasting Month. Indosiar turned its all-day Srimulat broadcasts at the end of the Fasting Month (Idul Fitri/Lebaran) into a new tradition. The commercials drew attention to special food (breaking the fast with Indomie noodles) and Islamic attire; the station announced its religiously oriented programmes in trailers. This strategy connected its products to the context of Ramadan, at the same time as it was reflecting the culture of its audiences, a large percentage of whom was Muslim. These Lebaran broadcasts were a perfect environment for the advertisements, offering a blend of national, local and Muslim identity markers. Trailers announcing programming for Indonesian Independence Day or the fifty-first anniversary of the Indonesian military ABRI, that sponsored a Srimulat performance, belong to the politically oriented calendar-dependent events. In June 1996, in the commercial time slots, Indosiar announced a programme that was about to be aired to celebrate President Soeharto's seventy-sixth birthday on June 8. The trailer consisted of footage of Soeharto's life and career, pictures and symbols (like the Garuda Pancasila). Trailers of this type were a celebration of nationalism.

Some of Indosiar's local(ized) advertisements targeted specific ethnolinguistic groups of audiences. The sense of local in this case was determined by linguistic and cultural markers that differed from the national ones, for instance, Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese. But, in contrast to private radio stations, from which plenty of advertisements in local languages were disseminated (as they targeted specific – smaller – groups of audiences and therefore needed a sharper distinction of image/identity), advertisements on television featured local languages relatively rarely. Often, the local was connected to interpretations of tradition.¹⁶⁴ Most often, there was a mixture between Indonesian and a local language, or Indonesian with, for instance, heavy Javanese prosody and ditto accent, or Indonesian in a 'characteristic' 'local' setting, like a *pendhapa*. The advertising techniques, however, were usually global techniques.

Advertisements and programme flow

My examples of the localized advertisements reveal that these commercials were a concert of persuasive voices.¹⁶⁵ As part of the programme flow, in combination with the Javanese traditional performance genres, they addressed various identities that were not necessarily Javanese. Contrary to what might have been expected, more often than not they appealed to expressions of national rather than ethnic culture, and in most cases represented urban middle-class identities. Localizing in the sense of Javanizing (or Sundanizing for that matter) did

¹⁶⁴ See Mazzarella's auto-orientalist advertising (2003:138-141).

¹⁶⁵ Inspired by White's 'concert of voices' (1992:190).

occur, but much less frequently. Nevertheless, an advertisement like that for Oskadon became very popular, confirming Kemper's conclusion that '[t]he advertisements that always win are those that were generated locally, in a particular community' (Kemper 2001:31).

Indosiar used to group its commercial advertisements in separate blocks (in Indosiar's early years this was four times in one programme broadcast). Sometimes the blocks were marked in a specific way, or closed with a full screen logo of Indosiar; sometimes they were unmarked, and it was up to the audience – aware of the codes – to distinguish the dramatic genre(s) used for the commercials from the dramatic performance itself. Often a trailer announcing an Indosiar programme preceded the commercials, followed by the text 'This programme is presented to you by' (*Acara ini dipersembahkan oleh*), as an introduction to the commercials/the sponsors of the shows.

The organic relationship between various types of programme materials (Williams 1974:70) is stretched even farther when a blurring of genres occurred or when the content of the play and the advertisement concurred (see the Oskadon commercial as an illustration of both possibilities, later in this chapter). As both the plays and most of the advertisements belonged to the realm of performance, the creation of this blurring was a frequently adopted strategy. Particularly when the advertisement took the form of a mini-drama (Esslin 1982), genre blurring was played with. Kaplan, who investigated the link between advertisements and soaps, argues that advertisements continue the narrative flow of soap opera rather than disrupting it (Kaplan 1992:265-266). This is also true of the narratives of the traditional performance genres that '[c]ommercials prolong and maintain' (Kaplan 1992:266). This happens especially in cases of unmarked transitions from show to advertisement. This can be achieved in several ways. In the broadcast of the kethoprak play *Dewi Sawitri*, in one instance the block of commercials was presented as part of a flash-back in the story: during the audience at the court of King Atswapati, the father of Dewi Sawitri, the god Naradha is about to explain what had happened to King Dyumatsena, the father of Setyawan, Sawitri's husband-to-be. Upon uttering the words 'The story is as follows, Your Majesty' (*Critane mengkene Prabu*), the next scene was immediately overtaken by the commercial sequence, beginning with 'Minum Sanaflu', an advertisement promoting the anti-influenza drug Sanaflu. Another unmarked transition was realized by having actors/television celebrities of traditional performance genres play a role in commercials. In the same show, Srimulat actors appeared in a commercial for a lottery in a money-saving project (Simpedes, Simpanan Pedesaan) of the Bank Rakyat Indonesia.

Product placement (within the play) was often linked to a specific community and or place, known to the audiences. The same applied to enterprises mentioned within a play. The 'advertisements', not framed as such, addressed the audiences of the show, while referring to the performance context and the local enterprise. The advertising procedure itself adopted a characteristic feature of kethoprak performances, the throwing of parcels of cigarettes and letters onto the stage, to request a song and disseminate a message to the audience, the performers and/or the Indosiar crew. This custom enabled a specific form of interaction and enhanced the proximity between the public and the actors on stage and generated comic skits.

A significant part of Indosiar advertising was devoted to products of the Salim group, like Indosemen and Indofood (including the Indomie instant noodles), and, of course, Indosiar itself. Similar examples of cross-reference between products of Salim groups were to be found in other media. Most advertisers wishing Indosiar success with its third anniversary in newspaper *Kompas* (11 January 1998:15), for instance, represented companies of the Salim Group. This kind of advertising reflected the ‘local-for-local business model’ that characterized the Salim group, according to Dieleman. During the Soeharto period, the Salim group evolved into a major player, developing businesses that produced goods for the domestic market (Dieleman 2007:124). These products achieved high market shares.¹⁶⁶

Indosiar also advertised itself. In the traditional performance genres references were made to the station in various ways. Another type of self-reference was ‘inside advertising’, as Anthony Salim called it (Dieleman 2007:74). It was used to fill the free seconds left over in the advertising slots. This internal publicity (Williams 1994:81) using trailers consisted of Indosiar’s announcement of in-house productions to be broadcast in the near future, like *sinetron*, and external productions, both Indonesian and foreign. Announcements of performance broadcasts that were classified as traditional, and broadcasts of programmes framed within the ‘preserving of the culture(s) of the nation’ ideology also belonged to this category. I shall reflect on these references and the self-references that as a whole formed the ‘Indosiar’ narrative in the section entitled *Indosiar is Indeed for You*.

*The new gold-mine is called tradition*¹⁶⁷

The advertising of products specifically tailored to Javanese audiences as imagined by Indosiar and its sponsors, made use of identity markers that invoked Javanese-ness. However, only a few of these advertisements actually presented their persuasive message in Javanese, and often the language use switched between Javanese and Indonesian. Possibly broadcasting legislation made itself felt here – the compulsory use of Indonesian in all media broadcasts – , as well as the intention of the advertisers to reach as large a public as possible. This shows the difference between private radio and television advertising in the mid-1990s.

Often, explicit references were made to tradition. Consequently tradition acquired a commercial value, from which performance/performers and advertisement/advertisers mutually benefited. Tradition was covered by referring to traditional performing arts in the commercials, usually to advertise products that carried a traditional connotation, such as ‘over-the-counter-market’ products, like analgesics and traditional medicine that could be sold without prescription, and food. This kind of advertising was considered to be appealing to the main target groups of the broadcasts: rural audiences, and people working as farmers and market vendors, or as taxi-drivers in large cities, who did not buy medicines with a doctor’s prescription. The advertisements were usually constructed as miniature dramas of a restricted length (between thirty and fifty seconds) (Esslin 1982:263) and functioned as a

¹⁶⁶ ‘In 1995, the Salim group reached market shares of 90% for instant noodles and 89% for flour. In cement the market share was 38% in Indonesia, but 71% in Java where about 60% of the Indonesian population lives’ (Dieleman 2007:69-70).

¹⁶⁷ ‘Tambang emas baru itu bernama tradisional’ (Herusangh 1997:118-119).

performance within a performance. They were structured according to a fixed scheme: an exposition of a problem, conflict or threat, followed by advice and a solution leading to a happy conclusion (Esslin 1982:263). Famous kethoprak and Srimulat actors and puppeteers bridged the world of the performance and the world of the mini-performance/advertisement when they promoted products to the target audiences/their fans (for the pain-relieving ointment Remasal,¹⁶⁸ the traditional digestive remedy Puyer Waisan¹⁶⁹ and a rural money-saving programme (Simpedes)), moving back and forth between two make-believe worlds.

Oskadon Oye

Probably Indosiar's most famous advertisement in this category at the time was the Oskadon commercial.¹⁷⁰ The analgesic Oskadon was promoted in a series of mini-performances, all similarly structured. They all played on the same topic and approach and were centred on the protagonist and television star Ki Manteb Soedharsono. Ki Manteb had to interrupt his wayang kulit performance because of a sudden headache, just after his recitation of the dramatic phrase 'The earth trembled heavily' (*Bumi gonjang-ganjing*) (Figure 7.5). One of his female singers advised him to take Oskadon (Figure 7.6). The puppeteer did so and his pain was immediately relieved. He energetically resumes his performance, showing the *sabetan*, his virtuosic technique of manipulating the shadow puppets, for which he had become famous as a dhalang. The famous lines in this advertisement recurred in the different versions: When perceiving that the dhalang suddenly had a headache, the principal female singer asked him, 'Wait a minute, which story are you going to perform, Pak Manteb?' (*Sik sik, lakone napa Pak Manteb?*) (Figure 7.7), to which the answer was: 'The story will be Oskadon Oye' (Figure 7.8). To which the pesindhen choir confirmed: 'Oskadon is indeed *oye*' (*Oskadon pancen oye*). Within each commercial slot, the advertisement was shown three times, alternating with other persuasive messages. The second appearance was usually a slightly more elaborate version of the first and third ones, showing a few extra, very short shots.

The Oskadon commercial exemplified 'the use of television performers, as themselves or in their character parts, to recommend products, or to be shown using them' (Williams 1990:69), a well-known technique in advertising. Here, the puppeteer Manteb is both himself and 'acts Manteb on television in a typically televisual manner' (Mrázek 2000:166).

When the advertisement was broadcast in an environment that was mirrored in the advertisement, a shadow puppet play, the distinction between the world of the wayang kulit show and the world of the advertisement was blurred. The use of the Javanese vernacular in both the puppet play and the commercial reinforced the blur. Loven (2008:37, 254-256), who

¹⁶⁸ Remasal commercial with Asmuni and Betet Srimulat, Indosiar 1996:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BE7I8nSrF8A> [Last accessed January 2016]

¹⁶⁹ Broadcast in 1998 in the programme *Kuntilanak* by Kethoprak Wahyu Budoyo from Pare, Kediri. The drug is a product of Bintang Toedjoe (*Dari Bintang Toedjoe yang terpercaya*), a trustworthy producer, as it claims, and part of the Consumer Health Division of PT Kalbe Farma.

¹⁷⁰ One of the 1996 versions of the Oskadon advertisement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESqht1TIJIU> [Last accessed January 2016].

discusses a similar phenomenon found in Doel commercials, says that this blurring rarely occurred on Indonesian television in the 1990s.



7.5 Ow, my head is throbbing with pain.



7.6 Pak Manteb, you are having a headache, aren't you?



7.7 Wait a minute, which story are you going to perform, Pak Manteb?



7.8 The story will be Oskadon Oye

If broadcast in a kethoprak or dhagelan show, there was no genre blurring, although the link to 'tradition' and the (Javanese) linguistic context in both the performance and the advertisement remained. In the commercial slots, the advertisement was placed among internal Indosiar publicity and commercials advertising products addressing a more modern, metropolitan public, those who used handphones and Indovision hotline, Pepsodent toothpaste and Nuvo health soap.

Just as other advertisements remained connected to *sinetron laga* and *sandiwara radio*, the Oskadon advertisement captured a place in the collective memory of the Indosiar audiences in various ways. Oskadon seemed to take on an eternal life: in the variations on the advertisement, in the life of the puppeteer-celebrity-Oskadon dhalang Ki Manteb Soedharsono, and as a reference in other performances. As Mazzarella argues,

An advertisement, taken as a kind of commodity, is never finished; its elements are sources from an existing repertoire of resonances and meanings, and after being “produced,” it continues to be made and remade throughout its public career. This career [...] sometimes far exceeds the formal span of the advertisement itself. (Mazzarella 2003:21)

In a later variant from 1998, it was puppeteer Ki Manteb Soedharsono who advised the musician with a headache to use Oskadon. In a 2001 variant, the setting had changed. Ki Manteb Soedharsono still played the protagonist, wearing a traditional Javanese costume, but no longer performed the wayang kulit. For his role in the Oskadon advertisements Ki Manteb Soedharsono, the ‘Maestro sabet’ (Abbas dan Subro 1995:173ff.), earned the epithets ‘Puppeteer O Ye’ (*Dalang O Ye*), and, the ‘Puppeteer Selling *Jamu*’ (*Dalang Adol Jamu*, a traditional herbal medicine) (Abbas dan Subro 1995:310). Manteb himself used to refer to the commercial in his professional life as a puppeteer, on his website and emblazoned on his van. The Oskadon advertisement occurred in intertextual references and therefore became a reference point itself (White 1992:163) and part of metanarration (Bauman 1986:98). The following fragment of the comedy *Tembang Laras* illustrates this well.¹⁷¹ *Tembang Laras* featured the well-known female traditional vocalist and kethoprak and wayang wong actress Nanik Ramini, and famous kethoprak actor and singer Joleno, both in their roles as protagonists and referring to themselves as Nanik Ramini and Joleno. The dialogue refers to Nanik Ramini playing the role of the vocalist in some versions of the Oskadon commercial. In the fragment, Joleno’s father-in-law recognizes her, is surprised and says:

Just because you appear on the television screen every day with the puppeteer Manteb!¹⁷²

You are the most stupid woman I have ever encountered!

Stupid, what do you mean?, she asks.

The father-in-law: Every day they tell you the title of the story, but you keep on asking: ‘Wait a minute, which story are you going to perform?’¹⁷³

Judging from Indosiar’s position as one of the private Indonesian broadcasters, its image as a commercial competitor in the media market and its advertising, at first sight it is not immediately apparent how closely the station approximated government rhetoric. Only by bringing all the agents involved in the broadcast to the fore, as I have done in the case of Wahyu Kuncoro Jati, do the messages, issues and ideologies other than the purely commercial clearly emerge. In the following section I shall elaborate on this link. By framing the broadcasts of traditional performance genres in the context of ‘preserving the nation’s culture’, Indosiar introduced a new discourse into the rhetoric of private Indonesian television.

¹⁷¹ By Dhagelan Mayang Sari (Indosiar 1 November 1996).

¹⁷² ‘Dupeh kowe saben dina metu neng nggon TV karo dhalang Manteb kuwi lho!’

¹⁷³ ‘Saben dina dikandhani lakone kowe kok takon terus: “Sik sik lakone napa?”’

3 Mouthpiece of the government?

New Order policy about the promotion of traditional cultures was strongly present in the 1990s and in TVRI's rhetoric, hence it was also tackled by private television stations. If so, as the two discourses seemed to be incompatible and even paradoxical, how did Indosiar make this culture preservation discourse consonant with its commercial messages? Kitley (2004:141) argues that 'The commercial stations supported the government's political and cultural aspirations in return for access to the lucrative advertising market.' And so did Indosiar.

Culture preservation discourse

After the success of its first broadcasts of traditional Javanese performance genres in August 1995, Indosiar scheduled regular broadcasts of some of these genres, as it claimed, at the request of its audiences.¹⁷⁴ In trailers, the station announced the broadcasts, framing them with the slogan 'preserving the culture of the nation' (*melestarikan budaya bangsa*). This slogan very quickly helped to shape Indosiar's branding, that initially had been rather indistinct. For a few years Indosiar's involvement in traditional performing arts genres became part of the station's ideology. The slogan also added a persuasive message to each broadcast. In trailers, this message consisted of an invitation, spoken in Indonesian by a male voice, to spend the weekend together with Indosiar, 24 hours non-stop, to inculcate a personal love for traditional culture, a true reconciliation that would preserve the culture(s) of the nation. After this claim had been made, the genre of the forthcoming broadcast was mentioned (and visualized on the screen), with the title of the performance and the name(s) of the performer(s). A final appeal summoned the viewers to preserve the nation's culture(s), alongside, for instance, the West-Javanese genre wayang golek.

The broadcasts of traditional performance genres combined with Indosiar's rhetoric surrounding these broadcasts, corresponded with the national government's cultural policy of the preservation of national culture(s) (*melestarikan kebudayaan nasional*). The 1997 Broadcasting Legislation supported this government policy. Broadcasters were required to prioritize domestic programmes, produced either by the broadcasters themselves or by domestic production houses. Domestic programming, 70 percent of the total programming, had to focus on themes drawn from the national character and cultural roots. The co-operation between broadcasters and these production houses was meant to heighten the appreciation of the cultures of the nation, perceived as an eternal source of media programmes. The legislation affirmed that this was consonant with the aim of the broadcasters to develop and foster the values of the cultures of the nation while strengthening national resilience.¹⁷⁵ By embedding the traditional genres in the culture-preservation slogan, Indosiar embraced New

¹⁷⁴ Personal communication Panca CU, Jakarta, December 1997.

¹⁷⁵ UUP 1997 Pasal 34 (1) and UUP 1997 Penjelasan Pasal 34 (1).

Order rhetoric. While in the trailers it was national culture that should be preserved, in the Javanese programmes it was *kabudayan Jawi*, Javanese culture.

The preservation of Javanese culture (*ngleluri kabudayan Jawi*) was a recurring topic and a source of reflection. Not confined to the inside advertising during the commercial slots, it was also mentioned in the traditional performance programmes themselves. During the clowns' (*banyol*) scene in *Kuntilanak* by Kethoprak Wahyu Budoyo from Pare, Kediri, the comedians – acting as television presenters – reported that on Friday and Saturday nights Indosiar broadcast Javanese performance genres that flew the banner of Javanese cultural preservation. Later in the programme, after having read a letter from a member of the audience (encountered in a carton of cigarettes, thrown onto the stage) that mentions Indosiar's slogan (*Indosiar memang untuk Anda*), the clowns discussed the development of the broadcaster and its goal of fostering Javanese culture by broadcasting kethoprak, wayang wong and wayang kulit.

The persuasive character of the messages tended to be very explicit. Another fragment of the earlier-mentioned comedy *Tembang Laras* is an example. Seeking knowledge (*ngangsu kawruh*) for the purpose of keeping traditional artistic genres and expertise alive for future generations, is the theme of the following dialogue. The story goes as follows:

The male protagonist Joleno is seeking distraction. He visits Javanese singer Nanik Ramini and explains his goal: he very much would like to understand the Javanese singing style characteristic of the female vocalists in a gamelan ensemble, called *nembang* in Javanese. He cannot perform this Javanese singing style, but can sing popular songs, for which he uses the Indonesian word *nyanyi*. The singer: 'Oh, so you can sing in the pop style (*nyanyi*), but you cannot manage the Javanese style (*nembang*).¹⁷⁶ The discussion continues, playing on the difference between *nyanyi* and *nembang*. The female singer reacts with surprise, suggesting she does not know the difference between the two.¹⁷⁷ An illustration follows. While courting her, Joleno impressively imitates Ebiet G. Ade, a famous Indonesian pop singer, singing Ebiet's song *Camellia*. Then, much to the delight of the audiences, he adapts it to the 'Madurese' style, whereupon the female singer begins performing the popular Javanese *tembang Caping Gunung*. If he really wants to understand Javanese culture, the legacy of the ancestors,¹⁷⁸ declares Nanik Ramini, she will be happy to teach him, emphasizing that children especially need to be taught how to understand their culture from a young age.¹⁷⁹

Voicing New Order rhetoric

Indosiar's proximity to the Indonesian government was apparent not only in its approach to the traditional cultures and its rhetoric about preserving them. New Order propaganda was given abundant room in the broadcasts of the traditional performance genres. Favourite propaganda themes were the building of the nation and the country and family planning.

¹⁷⁶ J: Awit kula niku kepengin ngerti tetembangan Jawa sebab nika iku kula boten isa nembang.

N: Hmm ...

J: Nek nyanyi kula saged.

N: Ooh, yen nyanyi saged, yen nembang boten saged.

¹⁷⁷ Oh ya beda, kok ya. Oh dados carane nyanyi kaliyan nembang meniku beda?

¹⁷⁸ Nek pancen panjenengan tenan-tenan kepengin ngerteni kesenian Jawa iki rak tinggalane nenek moyang [...].

¹⁷⁹ Perlu putra putri ingkang tasih alit-alit menika perlu dipunsinauni kersanipun mangertosi kabudayanipun piyambak.

Before the arrival of television, these used to be disseminated in live performances and in radio broadcasts, by performers who had received special government training. Once disseminated by television the narratives, messages and ideologies had a much wider reach, but whether they had the same impact is questionable.

Some programmes were entirely framed within the parameters of New Order rhetoric and referred to contemporary conditions. The broadcast of the wayang kulit performance *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati*, for instance, began with an Indonesian text on the screen, explaining the meaning of the Wahyu Kuncoro Jati, a divine revelation. The *wahyu* would guard the peace of the nation and protect it from greed. The protagonist of the story needs this *wahyu* to succeed in life and in his service to the country and the nation. In other instances, government campaigns were inserted in the storyline and in the dialogues. In the broadcast of the kethoprak play *Dewi Sawitri*, family planning is discussed at length in two sequences; once during the clowns' scene, once in the final scene. The first instance occurs in a session of riddles. In a pun on words, playing on the differences and similarities of the pil KB (birth control pills) and PILKADES (Pemilihan Kepala Desa, the election of the village head), both terms beginning with 'PilKa', the clowns turn to comedy, explicitly referring to the Pil KB as part of a government programme to promote family planning. At the end of the show, when all evil has been banished and the equilibrium restored, Sawitri expresses her wish to give birth to a hundred children. Setyawan's father Dyumatsena advises her to follow the government's call in a campaign to raise the living standard of the poorest people and have just two children. In response to the government campaign, two children are enough, their gender is irrelevant. Sawitri agrees.¹⁸⁰

These examples show that New Order cultural policy and development propaganda were part and parcel of the performance genres programmed by Indosiar. Although a private broadcasting service, by transmitting them and by framing them within the national rhetoric of culture preservation and of development, Indosiar functioned as a mouthpiece for the New Order government.

In order to have its persuasive messages work, Indosiar needed audiences. In the following section, I discuss a third persuasive voice: the 'Indosiar' rhetoric. I concentrate on how Indosiar positioned itself in the broadcast flow, on its identity building within the broadcasts and its relationship with the audiences.

4 '*Indosiar is indeed for You*' – Who is You?

In presenting the 'Indosiar' voice, the station made ample use of proximity, played with co-presence and applied concepts like belonging and locality as markers of identity.

¹⁸⁰ Dyumatsena: Loro, lanang wadon padha wae. Manuta adan-adan pamarintah sing saiki lagi wae bakal ngentasake uriping kawula ana ing garising kemiskinan. Lha nek kowe nduwe anak satus, mangka kowe ora bisa ngopeni, ha ya jenenge kowe mung bakal nyithak kere ana ing sajroning praja, he!
Sawitri: Ngestokaken, ngestokaken.

The station constantly reminded television viewers that they were watching Indosiar. It did so using several techniques to present itself, refer to itself and create the ‘Indosiar branding’. The Indosiar logo was shown throughout the entire broadcast in the left upper corner of the screen. In trailers of other programmes to be broadcast by the station, the logo and the slogan ‘Indosiar memang untuk Anda’ were often used, either spoken or written (or both). Other instances of self-reference have been discussed in the section ‘Tradition for sale’.

Direct references to Indosiar occurred within the programmes themselves. Indosiar’s slogan was frequently inserted in the dialogues, as in the following example from the comedy *Tembang Laras*, in the dialogue between the two protagonists:

N: Rather than taking an afternoon nap
 J: Yes
 N: Let’s amuse ourselves in Tugu Square, in front of the Town Hall of Malang
 J: Yes
 N: Watching Indosiar
 N & J: Which is indeed for You!¹⁸¹

The reference to Indosiar in the performance played on the familiarity of the Javanese audiences with the famous actors and singers who regularly appeared live on stage and on television – in this case Nanik Ramini and Joleno. The following happened: Entering the (empty) stage, representing Nanik’s house, RM Sosro Joleno asks her servant (*batur*) whether she is indeed the vocalist with the beautiful voice he knows from the Indosiar television station. The servant confirms this, and the vocalist, after entering, answers ‘hesitatingly’ that, if she is not mistaken, probably she is the one to whom the man is referring:

J: Is it correct that this is the house of the person who claims to sing so well [in the Javanese style]?
 B: Is this correct? Yes, indeed it is.
 J: Whose beautiful voice I have heard on the television station Indosiar? Are you she?
 N: If I am not mistaken [...] that is me, I think.¹⁸²

The sequence refers to the station, its programming of traditional art forms featuring Nanik Ramini as a singer and to the Oskadon advertisement (in which she played the role of the traditional singer who recommended the analgesic Oskadon to the puppeteer, stricken by a sudden headache).

Often, the crew and the technological devices used during the recordings (like cameras) and the constraints of the medium were mentioned. These references were usually made during a comic scene, often by the clowns. Each time this happened, a shift occurred between the idea of liveness and the idea of being televised. The references revealed the presence of

¹⁸¹ N: Eh timbang sare sore-sore

J: Yak

N: Mangga dolan dhateng Lapangan Tugu, ngajeng Bale Kota Malang

J: Yak

N: Sinambi mriksani Indosiar

N & J: Memang untuk Anda!

(Dhagelan Mayang Sari)

¹⁸² J: Menapa leres niki daleme sing sok pinter nyindheni?

B: Menapa leres? Lha injih leres.

J: Sing suwantene sae menika ingkang kula pirengaken wonten tipi Indosiar menika menapa sampeyan niku?

N: Menawi boten klentu menika [...] kula kinten-kinten.

the media, and the character of the programme as a media genre.¹⁸³ Hence, not only were those who watched the show on television made conscious of the media's presence; the audiences attending the live performance and the recording of the programme were also continuously reminded of Indosiar's presence and the coming into being of the television programme during the live performance. For example, in a letter employees of the Toeloengredja Hospital who were watching the live performance *Dewi Sawitri*, requested the clowns to sing the popular Javanese song *Gethuk* and dedicate it to the Indosiar crew, wishing them luck with their work and with their encounter with the performing troupe, Kethoprak Siswo Budoyo. In *Wahyu Kuncoro Jati*, when Petruk urged the vocalists not to take too long to introduce themselves because the performance has to fit the Indosiar time schedule, he was referring to the constraints of the medium.

By leaning on its continuous self-reference and self-presentation on all possible levels – in its branding, the programme flow, the trailers, the products of the Salim Group and the references to the media constraints –, Indosiar itself had become part of the show.

Multiple audiences

The entertainment business needs both live audiences and 'those hypothesized by audience researchers' (Frith 2000:203). Mediated performance must refer to 'unmediated sociability', since it is the real spectacle with a real crowd that is appealing to both audiences and sponsors (Frith 2003:211). If 'Indosiar is indeed for you', the question then is: Who is the 'You' (*Anda*) Indosiar was targeting? Becker (1979:49) discerns two separate types of audience at every wayang performance. There is an essential audience, without whom the play is pointless, he writes, and an immediate, non-essential audience, 'who may or may not be present and who in some sense overhear much of the drama'. Spirits, demons and creatures, gods, and ancestors form the essential audience of a wayang show and are normally unseen. In an analogy to Becker's view, in my investigation of Indosiar's spectators, I use the terms visible and invisible (rather than Scannell's absent) audiences.

There are several ways in which live audiences are present during a broadcast. Usually every now and again Indosiar cameras focused on the people who were physically present in the performance space during the show. Therefore the audience was visible to those watching the television broadcast – as such, they became part of the programme and hence performers – a tactic that might enhance the 'live' character of the broadcast (Auslander 1996:202-203). Appadurai calls them props 'in a grander performance staged for the benefit of television viewers'. In this role, the live audience provides the television audience with evidence of the spectacle (Appadurai 1998:101), engendering a sense of proximity between those at home and those attending the performance and visibly present in the programme. These audiences themselves underwent a collective experience of attending the performance, participating in and reacting to it, and interacting with the performers. They also witnessed and experienced the recording by Indosiar: the presence of cameras, cameramen and other crew members, the lighting and the sound amplification devices, to name but a few. In sequences not visually

¹⁸³ See Jurriëns (2004:151) who discusses this phenomenon in the Sundanese radio programme *Dongplëss*.

focusing on the audiences, their presence could become obvious from an audible response like laughter or screaming, especially during the clowns' scenes, and from the parcels containing money, cigarettes and/or letters with requests for songs and dedications they threw onto the stage during the performance. Often these letters were written in Indonesian, not Javanese. The comedians/clowns read them aloud made joking comments. In this way they put members of the public on stage, not physically but by reacting to them, by reading their letters and mentioning their names, and by addressing them directly.

Nevertheless, the largest part of the audiences consisted of invisible spectators: those who were watching the television broadcast. They watched in small communities (family, friends) in separate spaces (their living-rooms, a collective room in the village) and were separated from the actual performance space. These invisible audiences, wherever they were, were also addressed directly during the performance, for example by a spectator's letter, thrown onto the stage, sometimes revealing glimpses of their identity.

While the live performance was held in a specific location, for instance, in Pare, Kediri, the TV audiences were composed of people living in Java and Javanese-speaking people elsewhere in Indonesia. Those who watched the programme at home did not enjoy the same collective experience as those who attended the performance in Pare. However, they did possibly identify themselves with the audiences who attended the unmediated performance. Since the broadcast was not a direct transmission of the performance in Pare, the audience was also separated in time from the performance in Pare.

Invisible spectators were definitely very important to Indosiar. Commercially speaking they were the most valuable since they were the potential purchasers of the products presented in the commercials. As they watched the broadcast, because they were physically invisible, the TV station assumed the audience role and analysed their habits and needs as target groups.¹⁸⁴ They were the ones who were addressed by the actors and products of the commercials. Although invisible, they represented the essential audiences of the performance, as potential customers, the 'market'.

Conclusions

For more than thirty years, the broadcasting of Javanese performance genres had been the monopoly of TVRI, in particular the regional TVRI stations of Yogyakarta and Surabaya (later also Semarang). TVRI's broadcasts of regional cultural expressions were part of the New Order cultural policy to build an Indonesian identity and culture on the basis of the apices of regional cultures. But also, and this point is often overlooked by media researchers, they were part of the policy of the regional stations that advocated the representation of regional/local cultures in which they were embedded and with which they identified. Initially, none of the Jakarta-based private television stations had been interested in broadcasting these genres with any frequency, and the public's call for more local programming had been

¹⁸⁴ See Baudrillard (1990:30): 'TV is watching us, TV alienates us, TV manipulates us, TV informs us'

shelved. Local content consisted mainly of locally produced soap serials and battle dramas with a local touch. In 1995, Indosiar, the then last of the five private television stations that was granted a licence, began the regular broadcasting of performance genres in vernaculars. Tantalized by the sheer number of ethnic Javanese inhabitants – a huge business opportunity – Indosiar was the first private station to begin to address these potential viewers by nationwide broadcasting performance genres it categorized as traditional. The requirements set down in media legislation must have been another incentive behind Indosiar's decision, as the government had summoned the industry to expand the amount of local content in its programming. Another perhaps influential consideration was the success of TVRI Yogyakarta's broadcasts of kethoprak sayembara in the early 1990s. Now, the broadcasting of genres like wayang kulit and kethoprak was no longer the prerogative of the national and regional TVRI stations, but also became part of the private entertainment industry.

The moment Indosiar entered the market and decided to broadcast the traditional performance genres – at the request of its audiences, Indosiar claimed – it disseminated Javanese culture on a much larger scale and to a much wider audience than the regional government stations. Nevertheless, on the creative level, it was surpassed by TVRI Yogyakarta. Indosiar exuded an aura of modernity, glamour and glitter and an image of a cosmopolitan station based in the commercial centre of Indonesia. This contrasted with its conservative choice of broadcast material, that was easily available, and the equally conservative presentation of the material, produced at low cost. Although Indosiar owned the most advanced equipment, most of the producers were engineers or technicians, ill informed about performing arts. This ignorance was reflected in the way the performances were televised. TVRI Yogyakarta, on the other hand, suffering under the image of being oldfashioned and hampered by a restricted budget and the inadequate equipment at its disposal, succeeded in creating new genres inspired by traditional performance genres. Kethoprak sayembara is a good example of such an innovative development.

The traditional genres that Indosiar broadcast had been detached from their original context, they were de-regionalized and de-localized (see Thompson 1996:94), but simultaneously re-embedded in new contexts and spaces. There is a second sense in which the genres were partly de-localized: as they were broadcast in a commercial environment, they provided a context for and supported commercials that promoted the local (in all senses) and foreign products, many of which were presented according to global advertising conventions and style. In short, instead of being embedded in ritual or ceremony, the performances were embedded in commercials. To an increasing degree, the world of the traditional Javanese performing arts became part of the television industry. They functioned as the common ground between producers and audiences, in which 'a common cultural-linguistic competence, shared knowledges and understandings' (Scannell 1995:13) created proximity between the programme and the viewers. Because of their repeated exposure, not only the performance genres themselves, also the advertisements and the government messages belonged to the common ground. Indosiar's presentation of multiple persuasive messages and ideologies resembled the presentation of this rhetoric in the past. Examples like *Tanah*

Sabrang and *Mas Soema Bojong* had proven the efficacy of deploying common ground to make the viewers sensitive to persuasion. Conversely, because of this common ground, more and more television and references to television became part of the world of the mediatized Javanese theatre. Javanese culture had become business, a commodity, bound by the constraints of commercial television.

When applied to the commercializing of Javanese traditional performing arts by the Jakarta-based private television industry, Thompson's idea that traditions 'were refashioned in ways that enabled them to be re-embedded in a multiplicity of locales and re-connected to territorial units that exceed the limits of face-to-face interaction' (1996:99) can be interpreted in a less literal sense. As I have shown in this chapter, Indosiar was operating in a complex field of forces. It simultaneously accommodated multiple persuasive narratives in its broadcasts of traditional performing arts programmes, thereby re-embedding the performance genres in a multiplicity of ideological layers. Actually, this concert of persuasive voices had always been a characteristic of these performance genres that therefore offered fertile ground for the incorporation of messages from the televisual (and other) context(s). When re-discovering Java, Indosiar accommodated apparently paradoxical narratives, serving both commercial and New Order government needs. However, for pragmatic reasons, Indosiar succeeded very well in navigating smoothly between these multiple narratives.

The station broadcast regional, in particular Javanese, performing arts for commercial purposes, to promote the businesses of the Salim group (and hence also Indosiar) and other advertisers. However, it presented the shows of traditional Javanese performance in the framework of the culture preservation narrative. Its also disseminated government development messages. In short, the private station that was regularly reproached in public discourse for its overly commercial stance, accommodated government ideology and approximated the ways in which national and regional TVRI stations broadcast regional performance genres, just as Yampolsky (1995:716-717) had predicted. With the preservation discourse and especially the persuasive messages about government policy, Indosiar moved into the field of government television. At the same time, the framework of 'preserving the culture of the nation' contributed to the strengthening of Indosiar's initially vague branding.

The concert of persuasive voices is also reflected in the advertisements, in Indosiar's self-representation and in the representation of the local. Java was perceived as a potential gold-mine, precisely the argument needed to begin broadcasting traditional Javanese performance genres. The messages and narratives of the commercials mingled with the narratives of the stories performed. Most of the commercials displayed a contemporary Indonesian setting and were spoken in Indonesian. Only in a few instances were the advertisements entirely conceived with reference to the cultural environment in which they were broadcast and the audiences they targeted, the ethnic Javanese market. Some of the advertisements adopted the style and conventions of the performance genres, as well as using the Javanese language, and/or were enacted by star performers of the traditional genres, blurring the borders between the narrative of the traditional performance and the commercial.

Because of the limited choice of cultural genres – just a few icons of traditional performance – that Indosiar broadcast on a regular basis, the station’s concept of the ‘nation’s culture(s)’ (*budaya bangsa*) to be preserved was narrow and did not permit any representation of Indonesia’s multicultural society. In the hands of Indosiar, this concept had been narrowed down to some specific performance genres by some specific ethnic groups. Indosiar’s choice tied in with the New Order’s ideas about the contributory role of regional cultures to the national culture, and was determined by fixed ideas on Javanese aesthetics (see Chapter 2) bolstered by presuppositions about the taste of Javanese audiences. At the other hand, precisely because of these genres, the station created a bond of proximity with its fans, seducing them and making them malleable to further persuasion. The framing of traditional performance broadcasts in the *budaya bangsa* concept functioned as an appeal to the audiences to endeavour to make the culture preservation project a success in a partnership with Indosiar.

By their continuous exposure of ‘Java’, the private TV stations were said to support Javanocentrism, while actually – by playing a role in the development of the traditional cultures that were to be found in Indonesia, not only the Javanese – they would be able to and should decentralize (Garin Nugroho in Wijaya 1997:114-5). The representation of the Javanese local through performance genres, limited and stereotyped as it was, followed New Order views on regional cultures and their representation in the media (see Chapter 1). Because of this limited scope, somewhat exoticizing Javanese culture, Indosiar was accused of Javanizing (*men-Jawa*). In fact, the total amount of Javanese programming was very small compared to the overall programming of the station. Nevertheless, exactly because of this focus, Indosiar had set the trend for other broadcasters who copied the formula or developed new TV genres inspired by traditional Javanese performances like kethoprak humor.

However, for Indosiar, the success of its Javanese programming was not reflected in the ratings or in an equal profit from advertising revenues. After the monetary and economic crisis, private broadcasters abandoned the regular broadcasting of the more traditional regional performances. What they did keep in their programming – even up to the present – was comedy based on traditional performance genres.

8 *Mbangun Desa*: From government information to infotainment¹⁸⁵

Familiar. Den Baguse Ngarso is a unique name. The character is truly fictive. Den Baguse was born of a very popular programme, a production of TVRI Yogyakarta, named *Mbangun Desa*.

In this city, there is an unwritten rule: do not pay a visit during *Mbangun Desa* broadcasts.

They say, the host might ask his guest to wait until the end of the programme.
(Joko Indro Cahyono 1994b:52)¹⁸⁶

Familiar, *akrab*. Such was the characterization of *Mbangun Desa*, in its time a very popular production of the Yogyakarta TVRI station. Den Baguse Ngarso, *Mbangun Desa*'s antagonist, 'a truly fictive character' with a compelling name, received most attention of the viewers of the series. However hyperbolic and the very antithesis of Javanese hospitality, the unwritten rule not to pay a visit during *Mbangun Desa* broadcasts represents how much in its heyday *Mbangun Desa*, a rural development programme, featured in people's lives and in public opinion.

Rural broadcasting (*siaran pedesaan*) was set up as a medium by which the Indonesian government could pass on informative messages to local villagers (Chu, Alfian, Schramm 1991:46; Priyono 1994:175-181). To voice the government's missions, elaborate use was made of the government-owned electronic mass media, whose main task was to improve the regional villagers' knowledge and skills and encourage the people in rural areas to become more actively involved in supporting the development (*pembangunan*) of the local standard of living and prosperity (Sudarmiyono, 1995:127). The government devised the programmes as part of a transmedial network. Both Radio Republik Indonesia and Televisi Republik Indonesia broadcast rural development programmes. Development information was also disseminated in print in newspapers and magazines in a special section known as *koran masuk desa* (newspapers enter the village) (GBHN 1983 in Aziz 1994:334).¹⁸⁷ The contents of several development programmes resemble other informative and persuasive programmes. Kitley perceived intertextual associations between *Siaran Pedesaan* and the programmes *Si Unyil* and *Ria Jenaka*, all 'produced to build consent for the national development program'. He sees a 'a blurring of generic characteristics and a sameness of content' (Kitley, 2000:120-121).

The success of the rural broadcasting programmes cannot be seen apart from the task of the social organizations of newspaper-reading, radio-listening and television-viewing groups.

¹⁸⁵ *Mbangun Desa*: Developing the Village.

This chapter is an elaborate and reworked version of the paper '*Mbangun desa*: From government information to a nostalgic representation of Javanese village life' (2001).

¹⁸⁶ *Akrab*. Den Baguse Ngarso adalah sebuah nama yang unik. Tokoh ini benar-benar fiktif. Den Baguse lahir dari salah satu acara yang sangat populer produksi TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, yakni *Mbangun Desa*. Di kota ini, ada peraturan tak resmi: jangan bertamu selagi ada acara *Mbangun Desa*. Kabarnya, tuan rumah bisa menyuruh menunggu tamunya sampai acara itu usai.

¹⁸⁷ Ketetapan MPR RI No. IV/MPR/1983.

These *kelompencapir* (acronym of *kelompok pendengar, pembaca dan pemirsa*), as these organizations were called, gathered regularly to discuss the contents of the media information and disseminated the government messages to their fellow villagers (Sudarmiyono 1995:127; *Surat Keputusan* 1995). The *kelompencapir* were founded in 1982 and grew rapidly and extensively. In 1996 there were about 90,000 groups, each consisting of about thirty people (Buchori 1996:29).¹⁸⁸ Also village co-operatives supported these development programmes.

Although the national media determined the character of the various rural broadcasting programmes, these information programmes had an impact on the identity of the media themselves. The national broadcasting institution TVRI was often referred to as rural television (*televisi pedesaan*), because of its many programmes focusing on rural topics designed for village audiences (Buchori 1996:28).¹⁸⁹ From the national perspective, *siaran pedesaan* broadcasts were tailored to the aims of the national government that defined television as a development medium (Aziz 1994:334).¹⁹⁰ Developing the country and the nation was one of the main priorities of the New Order regime, and all the media were assigned a role in the grand plan. In 1981 the broadcasting of commercials on TVRI was banned in order, President Soeharto claimed, ‘to focus television more on facilitating the [national] development program and to avoid the detrimental effects [of advertising], which do not promote the spirit of development’ (Kitley 2000:64). This ban on advertising and the concomitant loss of revenue made the station more government- and hence development-oriented (Kitley 2000:68).

From an international perspective, the use of mass media to disseminate government information on subjects like family planning, health issues, improving the position of women, illiteracy and so on, was not typically Indonesian; it was happening worldwide. Kitley (2000:331) says, ‘Indonesian television is best understood as guided by the theory of development communications, and in that way it is similar to television in “developing” countries such as China, India, and Malaysia’.¹⁹¹ Nonetheless, Indonesian media practices did have their own peculiarities. The ways the *siaran pedesaan* programmes were produced and disseminated by the Indonesian media, and how they were received by Indonesian audiences, were specific to the country, even to the different Indonesian regions. The ways in which the development themes were cast also differed from locale to locale. In Yogyakarta, for instance, television as a medium played an important role in the rise and fall of the development series’ popularity among Yogyakarta and Central Javanese inhabitants.

¹⁸⁸ On *kelompencapir*, see McDaniel 1994:239-240; Quinn 1996. Film Discussion Groups are a comparable phenomenon. See Yang (1994) on such groups in China.

¹⁸⁹ These included *Bina Tani*, *Bina Desa*, *Yang Berkarya*, *Kotak Pos 3256*, *Perbincangan*, *Potret Desa*, *Asah Terampil*, *Timbangan Pendapat* (Wahyudi 1994:10). Chu, Alfian and Schramm (1991:46) mention the programmes *Dari Desa ke Desa* (From Village to Village), *Desa Kita* (Our Village) and *Daerah Membangun* (The Region Develops) that were specifically designed with village audiences in mind. TVRI Yogyakarta also broadcast programmes like *Menapak Hari Esok* and *Wawasan Mitra Tani* (Marsono 1994), *Liputan Pedesaan* and *Sambung Rasa yang Berkarya* (Arsip Sepekan 1994).

¹⁹⁰ GBHN 1983, Ketetapan MPR RI No. IV/MPR/1983 Bab IV D4 (Penerangan dan media massa).

¹⁹¹ On Indian development television, see Mazzarella 2012.

In this chapter I discuss *Mbangun Desa* (Developing the Village), a rural development programme created by TVRI Yogyakarta, on the basis of fragments of the series and the scripts, reviews and articles in newspapers and Javanese-language magazines, and interviews with the producers, script-writers and actors. The study of *Mbangun Desa* offers another instance of localized persuasion, different from but nevertheless showing similarities to localized persuasion through the advertisements on commercial television I discussed in the previous two chapters. Originally designed as a government programme to inform and persuade inhabitants of rural areas, *Mbangun Desa* developed from an overt propaganda medium into infotainment. The programme catered to more than just the Indonesian government and its development messages. In a mixture of various styles of presentation, the multiple narrators and agents conveyed an amalgam of topics, messages and ideologies in intersecting and coexisting narratives, genres, appeals and modes of address (White 1992:191). While keeping to the mission of developing the people by means of information and instruction, the producers of the programme were convinced that the entertaining character of the series and the preservation of local culture in the modernizing world needed to be foregrounded too.

My first point is that, just as the kethoprak sayembara serials and the programme *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* did, *Mbangun Desa* became popular because of the ways in which it produced ‘the local’. As I explained in my introduction to this research, I see the local as ‘a complex phenomenological quality’. It does not only represent a specific geographical space, but also encompasses common ground and co-presence (Scannell 1995:13). Because of this specific production of the local, the whole series breathed *akrab*-ness, familiarity, designed to capture the attention of the audiences, that was after all the goal of the programme’s persuasive character. My second point is that, while this representation of the familiar made the series so attractive in a specific period, it caused the entertaining character gradually to prevail over the persuasive messages. TVRI’s mission to make persuasion more effective was actually self-defeating.

In the following sections, I demonstrate how the series was constructed to allow it to approach its audiences closely – a form of pre-persuasion. *Mbangun Desa* was strongly tied to the locations that were the setting of the series, to TVRI Yogyakarta and to Yogyakarta as a region. It was characterized by the use of the Javanese vernacular (in various forms) and by representations of local cultural expressions. I concentrate on how the producers and the crew imbued the setting, the contents, cast and characters, language use, humour, the persuasive and cultural messages with ‘the local’, permitting audiences the potential to engage in an *akrab* feeling. First, I offer some historical background to the creation of the programme.

1 *Mbangun Desa*: Developing the Village

On 24 September 1968 *Mbangun Desa*, a production of the local television station TVRI Yogyakarta, saw the light of day.¹⁹² Government information was presented directly by showing experts on the spot, talking to the farmers in the rice-fields and teaching them how to improve their farming methods or how to use fertilizers.

This dialogic form was considered effective because the development themes were being discussed openly in the (imagined) presence of the audiences. Both the government officials and the farmers were as it were representing themselves and the political and social groups to which they belonged. The 'story', depicting the meeting between the experts and the farmers, was developed in a simple, linear way. No use was made of any entertaining devices (Setyadi et al. 1995:15ff.), like dramatic scenes performed by professional actors or local cultural expressions. The topics treated were connected to the following subjects: clothing, food, housing, education, health, jobs, population and family planning, transmigration, co-operatives, the role of women and development, local industries, tourism, environment, saving energy, legislation and national discipline, national defence and safety, and so on (Wahyudi 1994:23).

The top-down persuasion and one-way communication did however not lead to the results the Indonesian government and NGOs had hoped for. Besides, the tone of the programmes was often perceived to be patronizing (*Kini TVRI rajin* 1981). Because the broadcasting organizations in Southeast Asia focused almost solely on mobilizing mass participation in development programmes, they failed to serve the tastes of the viewers, as McDaniel has concluded (McDaniel 2002:73). Disinterest grew among the target groups.

Several dynamics, however, caused changes in the audience approach and presentation of informative content. New views had been developed as a result of studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s by Unesco and other international institutions, as well as by government departments, NGOs and academic institutions in Indonesia.¹⁹³ These views, that were discussed during national and international seminars, stressed the importance of a grassroots approach and the need to step up audience participation. In the meantime, the launching of the Palapa satellites had altered the Indonesian mediascape. They provided the villages with instant communication and television (Chu, Alfian and Schramm 1991:257), and enabled them to receive foreign content. These developments had an inevitable impact on the televised development programmes, including *Mbangun Desa*. Inhibited by its radio-like and chronological presentation of the facts and total absence of suspense, *Mbangun Desa*, dismissed by its audiences as awkward (*kaku*) and unfamiliar (*kurang akrab*) (Setyadi et al. 1995), was not very popular. Ahmad Sofyan, who had produced the programme since the

¹⁹² Personal communication by Ahmad Sofyan, Yogyakarta 22 January 1998. See also Marsono 1993. Priyono (1994:175) says that before the broadcasting of *Siaran Pedesaan* on a national level in 1981, the Yogyakarta TVRI station had been broadcasting *Mbangun Desa* to regional audiences since 1969. This initiative was followed in 1978 by TVRI Surabaya. Kitley 2000 also mentions 1969 as the beginning of *Mbangun Desa*.

¹⁹³ The bibliography in Oepen (1988) gives an idea of the research that was conducted in that period.

early 1980s, realized the knowledgeable and critical attitude of the public required a new approach. The former format, featuring specialists from government institutions who communicated the information *in situ*, no longer worked. These institutes, eager to disseminate as many messages as possible to the audiences, tended to forget about the artistic aspects and their oversight had made the series boring ((a) 1994c). The view that television was not just a medium to inform its viewers, but also to entertain was rapidly gaining ground. The target groups had shifted, Sofyan added, from rural audiences to general audiences. Thus, to make the persuasive messages strike home, the producers conceived a new format, presenting a story in each episode, involving professional actors from the Yogyakarta-based Teater Gandrik Troupe and combining entertainment with information.¹⁹⁴

In 1988 a workshop on Development Broadcasting (*Siaran Pembangunan Televisi*) was organized as a co-operation between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Netherlands ((Hrn/Rsv)-a 1988). It was decided that all future TVRI programmes disseminating government information should be based on thorough research and should represent specific realities with which the people had to contend. They also should apply the 'local approach' technique, and strive to approximate the local idioms as these were used in the different regions ((Hrn/Rsv)-a 1988).

In October 1990, a new *Mbangun Desa* was ready to face its audiences. This time the programme enjoyed an unparalleled success. The production and broadcasting of *Mbangun Desa* survived the abolition of the Department of Information in October 1999 (Van Dijk 2001:547) and the dissolution of the *kelompencapir*. Even as TVRI Yogyakarta was facing the fierce competition of private national and international television broadcasts, *Mbangun Desa* remained on the screen. It lasted until 2008.

2 Creating a Javanese rural setting

TVRI Yogyakarta transformed *Mbangun Desa* into a series that soon captured the viewers' attention, not because of the government messages, but because of its setting (a 'traditional' Javanese village), its main characters and guest stars, its storyline and its use of the Javanese language and culture. I use the term series as a drama category in the sense defined by Williams: each episode of a series is normally self-contained, but certain regular characters recur, thus building up through several items (Williams 1990:80). Indeed TVRI's idea was to maximize entertainment (*memaksimalkan unsur hiburan*) and to present information without patronizing (Ahmad Sofyan in (gea) 1993a). Humour and suspense gained the upper hand (Setyadi et al. 1995:21), while identification with 'Javaneseness' played an important role as well. During its heyday the thirty-minute programme, that was broadcast once or twice a month, earned the title of TVRI's primadona as it was viewed by tens of thousands of people from all layers of society, both rural and urban, in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java ((gea) 1993a).

¹⁹⁴ Ahmad Sofyan in (gea) 1993a, and personal communications during several meetings in 1998.

Production

One broadcast of thirty minutes cost ten days of preliminary work, including the writing of the script, the preparation of the location, three or four days' shooting and the editing of the material into a finished product. The target was one episode a month. The production was low budget. In 1994, for example, the relatively small amount of Rp. 700,000 was spent per episode.¹⁹⁵

Employing simple technical devices and one camera, exterior and interior takes were shot in the village. Studio recordings were ruled out. The material was edited into short fragments, focusing on the different storylines. In the studio, music and extra sounds produced by a synthesizer were added. During the recording, extensive use was made of the script (*naskah acara siaran*), usually written by Heru Kesawa Murti, a well-known Yogyakarta actor, co-founder of the Gandrik Theatre Troupe and character voicing the persuasive messages in *Mbangun Desa*. The scripts contained a meticulous description in Indonesian of the scenes, indications for the takes and for the accompanying music, sound (and the absence of sound), as well as indications of the way the dialogues should be spoken. Although completely committed to paper, the Javanese dialogues were personally interpreted by the actors and enlivened by improvising on the written text.

Setting: 'When the real is no longer what it was'¹⁹⁶

Villages on the outskirts of Yogyakarta provided the setting for the new series.¹⁹⁷ These villages were deliberately chosen to build an emotional link between the village-dwellers and the programme, engender empathy among the villagers and build alliances with the local viewers. After all, as producer Agus Kismadi said, the series was of the people, for the people and by the people (*dari masyarakat, untuk masyarakat, oleh masyarakat*).¹⁹⁸ TVRI employed various strategies to represent the local and enhance *akrab*-ness.

The opening shot of each episode set the rural atmosphere in which the story would unfold: in the midst of green rice-fields, surrounded by trees with rustling leaves, the villagers were going about their lives, while the sound of a cock crowing or a traditional Javanese song injected an idyllic tone. The inhabitants came and went, met each other, worked or enjoyed performances, encountered interrelational and other problems and solved them. However, the setting was tranquil and clean. No vendors, motorbikes or cars disrupted the peace. No sounds of radios or television sets were heard, except when dictated by the script, no sawing or hammering of house constructors. The streets were empty of people, except the characters of *Mbangun Desa*: the vendor selling brooms, calling out "Puuuu, sapu", children playing in the dusty lanes, Dhik Padma, anxiously hiding under the trees from her brother who wants to

¹⁹⁵ Personal communication Ahmad Sofyan, 22 January 1998. Rp. 700,000 corresponded to US\$ 323.96.

¹⁹⁶ 'When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning' (Baudrillard 1994:6).

¹⁹⁷ In 1994, for instance, the hamlets (*dusun*) Randubelang and Semail, in the village Bangunharjo, Sewon, Bantul ((a) 1994a); in 1997-1998, Jetak, a hamlet in the village Sidokarto that is in the area of Godean (Sleman, Yogyakarta), where I witnessed a recording in 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Personal communication Agus Kismadi, 27 June 2001.

give her in marriage to a close relative, or Den Baguse Ngarso, whining and grumbling as usual. Villagers were involved when the drama needed their presence: in walk-on parts, acting the role of villagers during a local dance performance or at Den Baguse Ngarso's wedding ceremony and reception. As discussants, they reflected on the programme contents and the issues raised in gatherings that were organized a few weeks after a broadcast. As onlookers, they witnessed the filming in their village, after the crew had taken charge of their natural habitat to transform it into the *Mbangun Desa* village.

The imaged world consisted of a representation of traditional rural Java that had been in touch with the global, symbolized by radio and television sets, mobile phones and karaoke, but had not been touched by it. Even though in actual fact traditional Javanese village life was continuously being reconstructed, the TVRI production team did strive for authenticity. The producer told me that, because of encroaching urbanization, to maintain an 'authentic' setting, the crew had to move several times, each time farther away from the city of Yogyakarta. Although for many years the national government had been promoting the building of brick houses, the walls of an 'authentic' village house in the series were still made of woven bamboo (*omah gedheg*). Developments in the 'real' village had overtaken the 'original' quietness, symbols of modernity disturbed the picture of 'reality', hence the recordings had to take place in another setting. Although the scenery was live, the way it was used by and for the medium TV, made it into a mere décor, a rather idyllic representation of a remote 'traditional' Central Javanese village, a simulation cut off from its referentials (Baudrillard 1994:2) – referentials that slowly but surely were disappearing. When asked why he considered this representation of a Javanese village so important, the producer said he wanted to create a village of nostalgia, because that was what the people liked (*nostalgia, karena disukai penonton*).¹⁹⁹ Nostalgia, a central mode of image production and reception (Appadurai 1998:30), was used as a device to make the series more alluring to the viewers. The representation of an idealized village suited this rhetoric. Consequently, *Mbangun Desa* was said to present a dream village (*desa impian*) (Hariadi SN and Ons Oentoro 1996:64), in which conflicts were solved easily, quickly and smoothly.

Research carried out in 1996 by Hariadi SN and Ons Oentoro (1996:61-65) revealed that the villagers were well aware of the fact that the *Mbangun Desa* village was no more than a representation of a rural environment. This fictional locale had been specifically designed to voice government messages, not to discuss the villagers' actual struggles and solve their complex problems. How could television do this, they asked, in a thirty-minute episode? Researchers claimed that the purpose of the programme *Mbangun Desa*, to paint a portrait of a village in the development era, had actually become a portrait of development itself. It showed how the development programmes were carried out (Hariadi and Oentoro 1996:61-65). Both the awareness of the villagers and the perception of *Mbangun Desa* as a portrait of development conform to the reflexive character of media.

¹⁹⁹ Personal communication by Ahmad Sofyan, August 1999.

Cast and characters

To make *Mbangun Desa* more lively, the then producer, Ahmad Sofyan, involved members of the Yogyakarta theatre group Gandrik. He had realized that, if information were to be disseminated effectively, this exercise would need more than just the presence of government experts who bestowed their expertise and knowledge patronizingly on the villagers. The Gandrik actors could and would influence and change the presentation, adding new dimensions to the programme.

Gandrik was founded in Yogyakarta in 1983, in a period in which the New Order government promoted ‘modern theatre with an indigenous, populist flavour’ (Hatley 2008:138). The troupe performed modern Indonesian theatre, inspired by local Javanese folk plays and traditional theatre and music genres derived from a multitude of locations (*Brigade Maling* 1999). In its plays it featured present-day themes and social criticism, expressed by humour and parody. In their performances, the actors strove to blur the boundaries between the stage and the audiences.²⁰⁰ Although known and appreciated by the public for their *sampakan* style, ‘a new mode of performance’ (Hatley 2007:96) that was introduced by Gandrik and its predecessor, Jeprik, the group later tried to move away from this label (*Brigade Maling* 1999). Hatley describes the term *sampakan* as ‘derive[d] from the simple, repetitive gamelan piece *sampak*, which accompanies fights and other energetic action in wayang and other forms of Javanese theatre. Applied to the new style of play, it suggested simplicity, lack of subtlety, and dynamic vigour’ (Hatley 2008:137).²⁰¹ As Hatley (2008:143) states, Gandrik attracted and entertained a cross-section of the population. Middle-class audiences attended its live performances and ‘the mass of ordinary people’ watched them on television. Likewise, familiar as they were to the Javanese/Yogyakarta public, the Gandrik actors infused *Mbangun Desa* with their own popularity. Most of the Gandrik actors were experienced television and film performers and this influenced the staging of their plays.²⁰²

Gandrik’s contributions to *Mbangun Desa* were manifold. The use of performance to entertain and educate ordinary people (Hatley 2008:139) and reflect ‘on issues of immediate interest and concern to audience members’ (Hatley 2008:141) had been concerns of the group. These attitudes suited both the approach of *Mbangun Desa* to entertain and educate rural audiences and the topics discussed. More of its contributions can be found in their modelling of the character typology and the introduction of other influences from traditional regional theatre forms, the presence of ‘Yogyakarta’ as expressed in the language use, the puns and the characteristic humour, and their acknowledged proximity to the Yogyakarta audiences. Nevertheless, the worlds of Gandrik and *Mbangun Desa* differed significantly in the aims and character of the mediation: Gandrik’s theatrical role was to be critical and sharp. In *Mbangun*

²⁰⁰ <http://www.kuaetnika.com/gandrik.php?ver=ina> [Last accessed July 2013].

²⁰¹ On Teater Gandrik, see Hatley (1995:58-60, 1999:276, 2004:72, 2007:96, 2008:137-148).

²⁰² See, for instance, *Mas Tom* (2002), an adaptation of Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, that was transposed to the Yogyakarta’s batik business scene of the 1980s. The contemporary drama was given a cinematographic touch (Hasani and Poer 2002). Almost all the Gandrik actors had performed in the sinetron *Badut pasti berlalu* (Indosiar 2002), Heru Kesawa Murti, Susilo Nugroho and Sepnu Heryanto played in *Mbangun Desa*, and Djaduk Ferianto and his brother, Butet Kertaradjasa, frequently appeared on television and acted in the children’s movie *Petualangan Sherina* (Hasani and Poer 2002). The 2013 critical comedy *Gundala Gawat* made use of audiovisual techniques and animation (Lutfie 2013).

Desa there was no room for this, hence the more subtle approach to the outside world (Hariadi and Oentoro 1996:63).

Heru Kesawa Murti and Susilo Nugroho wrote the scripts for *Mbangun Desa* and appeared in the series as actors. Sepnu Heryanto and Yayuk Kesawamurti, other Gandrik members, joined the club.²⁰³ Together with Sudiharjo they formed the *sanggar* Lima Sekawan (the Gang of Five studio). This studio was founded to keep the interests of Teater Gandrik separate from the *Mbangun Desa* interests. In co-operation with popular guest actors, *bintang tamu*,²⁰⁴ and occasionally with villagers, the five protagonists carried the series.

The inhabitants of the *Mbangun Desa* village were represented by these ‘Lima Sekawan’, five characters each with his or her own typological features, representing specific human traits.²⁰⁵ The most popular character, after whom the series was often called, was Den Baguse Ngarso,²⁰⁶ performed by Susilo Nugroho. He was rich, stubborn and cocky, a feudal man who sometimes tried to appear more clever than he was (*sok pintar*). He expressed himself using a highbrow vocabulary, occasionally deteriorating into offensive language. Ngarsopareng was the story’s antagonist, but he was good at heart. In many episodes he had to be convinced that he was wrong. Pak Bina, played by Heru Kesawa Murti, the playwright, was an informal character. He was moderate, rational, intelligent and active, and protected those who needed it. Pak Bina was a negotiator (*musyawarah*) who was an arbitrator in conflicts. As he voiced the messages of the authorities, he became an authority himself; protecting the source credibility in his role, he tried to persuade his conversation partners. Sepnu Heryanto as Kuriman puts a ‘businessman’ (a *bakul*) on the village stage. Kuriman was materialistic, liked to weigh up the pros and cons of everything, and he bore a grudge against people and was arrogant. Sranta, played by Sudiharjo, was Ngarsopareng’s servant. He was honest, patient and good-natured, and poorly educated. His wife, Yu Sranta, a role of Yayuk Kesawamurti, was active and tended to give in easily. She was involved in a local women’s organization. The characters did not develop over the course of time. Their portrayal and their stereotypical features were inspired by the typology of kethoprak and Javanese wayang characters.²⁰⁷ Pak Bina and Den Baguse Ngarso carried the series, and attracted the most attention. This was obvious in the way both the producers and newspaper articles dwelt on their characteristics and roles.

Whereas in the previous format, the gap between those who gave the information and those to whom the information was directed, had been enormous, in the new format ‘the authority’ was presented as being one of the villagers, those who were being taught. The aim of this change was to enable the easy identification of the television audiences with the inhabitants of

²⁰³ In Teater Gandrik’s *Brigade Maling* (1999), of these four, only Heru Kesawa Murti was performing.

²⁰⁴ Like comedian Yatie Pesek and actress Tatiek Wardiyono (Joko Indro Cayhono 1994:53).

²⁰⁵ The typologies are based on interviews with Ahmad Sofyan (among others on 22 January 1998), on Hariadi and Oentoro (1996: 61-65), (Tulus DS/Job)-h 1993, *Djaka Lodang* 1 January 1994, and on the descriptions of the characters in the *Mbangun Desa* scripts.

²⁰⁶ His full name, Den Baguse Ngarsopareng, was not often used.

²⁰⁷ I am very grateful to Mas Eko Santoso Ompong who drew my attention to this similarity.

the *Mbangun Desa* village and, consequently, participation in the learning process. Since sources of information should have faces that can be trusted, to vindicate the veracity of the message, it was further helpful that the actors were not only popular as characters in the series, but also known as persons in 'live' (non-mediated) contexts.

On the other hand, the typical features of the main dramatis personae did draw the viewers' attention to something else. The gestures, the mimicry and the dialogues reminded the audiences of the acting practises of the Gandrik theatre troupe, and especially the language use and parody, irony and satire (*Heru Kesawa* 1997), while the humour and jokes provoked laughter. Consequently, the fictional world of the Gang of Five remained fictional, but captured the audiences. They recognized the codes and enjoyed themselves. Since the episodes did not initially conclude with a cliffhanger, the fans did not expect a continuation of the story. A repeated exposure to the adventures of their favourite *Lima Sekawan* in a recognizable setting was what was promised for the next broadcast. Hence, the 'field of tension between the fictional and the real' (Ang 1993:50) was maintained.

Contents

The presentation of the message in another format and style was innovative. Embedded in a story, the message was made part of the narration in an apparently natural manner. Non-fiction was dramatized and turned into fiction.

Within the confines of a fixed format, variation was put in the contents. Each episode, called a *lakon*, a term used in traditional Javanese drama, told a different story, always revolving around the same main characters. One or two story-lines introduced the issue that had to be tackled. In half an hour, the 'inhabitants' of the Javanese village were confronted with a problem that caused suspense or raised emotions, whereafter Pak Bina, the wise man, intervened and helped them to solve the problem, giving them the information needed/the persuasive message. Informative topics ranged from a healthy living environment, nutrients for pregnant women, the optimal use of the area surrounding the house, co-operation among villagers, transmigration, the importance of discipline to all kinds of legislative issues. In short and sometimes dramatic scenes, the different storylines were developed in a simply structured way; sometimes in a chronological order, sometimes making use of flash-backs. The simultaneity of certain actions was suggested by the editing and montage. The pace was rather slow, especially compared to the glamorous productions of the private Indonesian television stations.

In spite of the new format, the dissemination of government information remained important. In many interviews published in magazines and newspapers, the producers stressed that the main mission still consisted of providing information and supporting the rural people trying to improve their standard of living. However, now they strove to present the material in a natural way, without sounding too pedantic (*tanpa menggurui*), they claimed (Ahmad Sofyan in (gea) 1993a). The themes were chosen because of their topicality. Social and cultural problems and all kinds of topics connected to village life were tackled – but political issues were avoided (Cahyono 1994b:53). As the contents were often linked to special events,

like Independence Day or the Day of the Co-operative, or specific circumstances, like the economic crisis in 1997-1998, the series gained currency.

The National Department of Information (Departemen Penerangan) was not the only body that provided the producers with themes to be expanded; local government institutions on different administrative levels like the National Family Planning Board of the Province of Central Java (Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional, *BKKBN Propinsi Jateng*)²⁰⁸ or the Information Department of the City of Yogyakarta (Departemen Penerangan Kotamadya Yogyakarta, Deppen Kodya)²⁰⁹ actively contributed to the programme's content. Even after the abolition of the National Department of Information in October 1999, government institutions continued to sponsor *Mbangun Desa*. Increasingly, however, the role of local NGOs as contributors to the programme began to grow. Nevertheless, the script-writer and producer of the series were keen to retain their independence as far as possible. This desire for independence had an effect on the financial aspects of the production, that constantly had to be kept low-cost (Hariadi and Oentoro 1996:64).

*An electronic medium of persuasion and information*²¹⁰ – Genre

From the point of view of genre, *Mbangun Desa* remains difficult to define. The various people who were involved with the programme used different labels when they tried to classify the programme.

In a personal communication, Ahmad Sofyan called the series Javanese drama (*sandiwara bahasa Jawa*).²¹¹ Although this term stresses the dramatic and entertaining characteristics of the series, TVRI did not consider the programme to belong to the drama department, but to the sub-section Reporting and Information (Subseksi Reportase dan Penerangan). During the same interview, Sofyan also used the term 'infotainment', explaining that the viewer was lured in by entertainment, then informed. The local Javanese magazine *Djaka Lodang* called the series a soap opera (*sinetron mBangun Desa*) (Indriyasiwi 1994). Heru Kesawa Murti, *Mbangun Desa*'s most active playwright, used several terms as well. In 1993 he said that the aims of the programme were to package the conflict of the story in a sinetronic (soap opera) touch (*mengemas konflik lakon itu dalam sentuhan sinetronis*) (Heru Kesawa 1993). In an interview with the local newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, he referred to the series as a sitcom (*komedi situasi*) (Heru Kesawa 1997). In her exposé of the Gandrik Theatre Group, kethoprak expert Hatley calls *Mbangun Desa* a television comedy sketch (2008:141).

Whereas in the early days it was clear that the programme was disseminating information, whose origin and genre were obvious to the viewers, the new style and format made the classification of the programme as a specific genre more diffuse. Interviews have shown that *Mbangun Desa* was usually bracketed together with *kethoprak*. Both performance genres were associated with the concepts traditional and local.

²⁰⁸ *Mbangun Desa* 1984.

²⁰⁹ *Di layar TV* 1984.

²¹⁰ 'Media persuasi dan penyuluhan elektronik' (Hariadi and Oentoro 1996:65).

²¹¹ On 22 January 1998.

3 Approximating local idioms

The 1988 workshop on development broadcasting advocated a local approach. Producers of development programmes – with respect to their informative and persuasive aims – were recommended to approximate the local idioms as they were used in the Indonesian regions. The production of the local encompassed language use and cultural expressions, the term local idiom referring to *kearifan lokal* ('local wisdom') rather than to just the vernacular.

Language use and persuasive messages

The narration in *Mbangun Desa* was carried by the spoken dialogues more than by the visual images, and supported by sound. Consequently, the programme contained features of traditional Javanese theatre (like *kethoprak*) and oral traditions.

In their 'daily' conversations, the *Mbangun Desa* 'villagers' used the Javanese vernacular, just as Javanese is the mother tongue of most of the Javanese, their first language of communication and reflection and the vehicle through which to express Javanese culture. However, as with the language use in the programme *Obrolan Angkring*, the Javanese spoken was not the 'proper' Javanese, the language that is taught in schools and discussed during the Javanese language congresses. However, in contrast to *kethoprak* in which specific styles of Javanese are spoken and *Obrolan Angkring* in which *ngoko* is usually used, the characters in *Mbangun Desa* more often than not tended to speak *basa madya* and *ngoko*, a reference to quotidian language use and suggesting an everyday rural atmosphere. Script-writer Heru Kesawa Murti said Jakartan youth jargon (*prokem*), slang, reversed speech (*walikan*) and Indonesian had been incorporated in the dialogues for communicative purposes. As he explained in an interview during the 2001 Javanese Congress in Yogyakarta, when it was all said and done not all media needed to use the standard Javanese (*Heru Kesawa Murti* 2001). As such, language use was part of the representation of contemporary village culture. Fans often commented positively on this in their letters to TVRI.

Javanese was also used to 'translate' government legislation into the conversational style of the local language and represent government discourse, the original message of which was spoken in Indonesian. Usually Pak Bina took the role of messenger, addressing the people in their own language, but also using the language of authority. He conveyed the informative texts in a mixture of legal jargon and explanations in Indonesian, pronounced in a Javanese accent and spoken respecting Javanese etiquette. In between, a translation and more explanations were given in Javanese. Although the producers tried to avoid a pedantic tone, the message was conveyed in a persuasive and rather pompous way, akin to Javanese *piwulang*, a traditional Javanese manner of instruction. To the audiences it was clear that when THE authority spoke, a different kind of language and a different mode would be used to that the *Mbangun Desa* villagers spoke among themselves in regular dialogues or when they made puns. Conveying the message, Pak Bina acted as the wise intellectual of the village who was trying to dismantle old customs and assist his fellow villagers in the intricacies of

legislation. Gradually, over the years, also other characters conveyed loaded messages, but did so more indirectly.

The episode *Nyurung karep* (March 1998) offers an example of Pak Bina explaining Indonesian legislation about child welfare (Undang-Undang Kesejahteraan Anak) to a fellow villager. One of the story-lines in this episode concerns the daughter of a seller of meat-ball soup (*bakso*) who has to leave school to assist her parents in their business. Pak Bina explains to the girl's father the possibilities of combining school and work. He indicates the regular high school system and the Open School system (SLTP Terbuka). Referring to a recent Family Legal Awareness meeting (Keluarga Sadar Hukum, Kadarkum) (Pompe 2005:202) in the village, he clarified the relevant clause as follows, switching between Javanese (in the explanation) and Indonesian (for the juridicial text, here in italics):

Indeed, according to the law... a child has rights.

This reminds me: recently, on Tuesday Pon the Kadarkum symposium in the village hall tackled *the legislation on child welfare*. This law mentions that *children have the right to have access to services that will enable them to develop their social and existential capacities that fit in with the culture and identity of the nation and so become good and useful citizens*.

That's more or less the story.

Now, when your daughter wants to continue her education and go to junior high school, this falls within the category of developing one's capacities. That's the long and the short of it. *The rest* is up to you, after all your children want this themselves.²¹²

While explaining the legislation, Pak Bina pretended not to be the source of the information alias authority himself. He referred to the Kadarkum village meeting at which he had learned this, he said. Alluding to this event that had been organized for the villagers, Pak Bina shaped a common frame of reference and strengthened source credibility, making the message more easily acceptable to the recipients. This kind of persuasion is pretty direct. Examples of more indirect persuasive messages will feature in the final section of this chapter.

Humour and suspense

As humour and parody are part and parcel of Javanese culture, they were important devices in *Mbangun Desa*. They ensured that the situations represented were even more recognizable to the viewers. Besides, parody was the instrument used to put the representation of the local and the national into perspective. Typical aspects of Javanese culture were taken as a basis for this parody, as a mode of reflection, to explore whether Javanese was able to tune in to contemporary developments (*Heru Kesawa* 2001).

Susilo Nugroho and Sudiharjo have stated that comedy (*kesenian lawak*) is the most suitable medium for the communication of development messages. Therefore they (and the

²¹² Anak kuwi pancen nduwe ... secara hukum nduwe hak.

Aku kok malah dadi kelingan: wingi, Selasa Pon wingi neng bale desa Sarasehan Kadarkum sing rembug soal UU tentang Kesejahteraan Anak, neng nggon Undang-Undang kuwi dikandhakke yen *anak berhak atas pelayanan untuk mengembangkan kemampuan dan kehidupan sosialnya sesuai dengan kebudayaan dan kepribadian bangsa untuk menjadi warga negara yang baik dan berguna*.

Kira-kira ngono kuwi.

Nah anakmu kepingin neruske le sekolah kuwi, neruske neng SMP, klebu nembangke kemampuan. Ning ya kuwi. *Seterusnya* ya ming mangga kowe, wong ya sing ngarahke ya anak-anakmu dhewe.

other members of the Lima Sekawan) invariably resorted to verbal and other forms of humour in their performances (Tulus DS/Job)-h 1993). This tactic corresponds to the humour of the clowns in wayang, kethoprak, ludruk and Srimulat when they communicate government messages and ‘tell the truth’. Hatley argues, ‘Humorous performances conveying government information have a long history in Yogyakarta in the form of *dagelan Mataram*, Javanese language comedy skits’ (Hatley 2008a:305). As I have demonstrated in the Introduction to Part II, in colonial times even the Dutch took advantage of the authoritative position of the clowns to get their messages across.

However, although *Mbangun Desa* developed into comic drama (*didramahumorkan*),²¹³ it did not become a comedy factory (*pabrik tawa*), says Heru Kesawa Murti. Despite the humour and the comedy, the mission to disseminate information remained ever present. Therefore, suspense was given a key function in all the episodes (*Heru Kesawa* 1992); its mission to arouse and retain the curiosity of the viewers.

Local culture

Another layer of narratives, genres, appeals and modes of address can be found in the representation of local culture. Alongside the informing and persuading of audiences, the preservation of local culture had emerged as another aim of the programme. Several strategies were used to represent local culture. Cultural events and traditional ceremonies celebrated in villages were made part of the setting and incorporated into the storyline. A horse dance (*jathilan*) performed in Semail, Bangunharjo (Bantul), became part of the narration, for instance ((cr11) 2001b). In the episode *Kakung putri padha wae* (Men and women are the same), a discussion on gender relations was embedded in a storyline about a group of young villagers rehearsing for the performance genre *gejog lesung*. Dancing and singing to the rhythmic percussion sounds obtained by beating on and in a wooden rice-pounder, the *lesung*, they prepared for the celebration of Hari Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge Day),²¹⁴ while Siniwaka obstinately insisted that the organizing committee should arrange a karaoke performance. The two parties, the young villagers representing tradition and the adult Siniwaka representing modernity, were juxtaposed. In this episode, members of an existing *gejog lesung* group enacted the performance.

Another strategy consisted of a reconstruction of cultural expressions, played by actors, representing local villagers, while some of the local villagers – inhabitants of the recording locale –played themselves. We could see Den Baguse Ngarso trying to get a *campursari* group together (Deskim 19), and in several episodes we could hear a character vocalize traditional Javanese poetry (*tembang macapat*). For various reasons, the original ceremonies or performances were depicted only in part – a characteristic of representation. For instance, when Den Baguse Ngarso was married for the second time, a traditional Javanese wedding ceremony was staged. In this reconstruction and reinterpretation of the ceremony, the programme only paid attention to most important stages, and even then in a condensed form,

²¹³ <http://www.indonesia.com/bernas/082001/04/UTAMA/04hib1.htm>

²¹⁴ Hari Sumpah Pemuda commemorates the Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) at the Youth Congress on 28 October 1928: One motherland, one nation, one language.

whereupon a man in a village who had watched the broadcast claimed that the wedding was fake since important parts were lacking. I shall return to the relationship between ‘the real’ and ‘the represented’ in the final part of this chapter.

The presentation and representation of local culture had both functional and aesthetic purposes (Surjodiningrat 1982:13). They were not only used to preserve Javanese culture. One of the aims was to present traditional art forms to members of the younger generation and to show them how it used to be,²¹⁵ addressing feelings of nostalgia. As in other TVRI Yogyakarta programmes like *Obrolan Angkring*, they were also an asset to improve communication, enable identification and establish alliances with local audiences to facilitate the penetration of *Mbangun Desa*’s messages in a quasi-homely atmosphere.

4 Audience contact

If it were to succeed in ‘developing the village’, TVRI Yogyakarta needed audience participation. It resorted to various strategies to interact with those whom it imagined to be the *Mbangun Desa* audiences. In their turn, the audiences had several channels at their disposal to respond to the programme in various ways.

Print press and radio were involved in propagating *Mbangun Desa*. Preceding each broadcast, the contents of the forthcoming episode were announced in the magazines *Mekar Sari* (in the section Koran Mbangun Desa) and *Djaka Lodang* (in the section Koran Mlebu Desa), and in the regional newspaper *Bernas*. Interviews with the producer of the series and the script-writers and actors were published in the Yogyakarta newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*. The series also attracted critical attention in *Minggu Pagi*, the *VISTA-TV* magazine and Jakarta-based newspapers. In his efforts to promote special broadcasts like *The Week of Mbangun Desa* (*Sepekan Mbangun Desa*), producer Ahmad Sofyan also relied on local government radio services (Radio Siaran Pemerintah Daerah, RSPD) all over the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java and disseminated brochures (*Sepekan Mbangun* 1994, Sobirin 1994, Marsono 1994).²¹⁶

Initially, *Mbangun Desa* targeted a rural public, the majority of whom earned their living by farming. In its heyday, these rural viewers were joined by an urban public, including students, urban intellectuals and middle-class people who fell into the habit of watching the programme. Until May 1996 *Mbangun Desa* was broadcast all over the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java. In April 1995, when the new regional TVRI station in Semarang began transmitting and *Mbangun Desa* disappeared from screens in Central Java, its many fans grew restive. They complained *en masse* since it was not only impossible for them to watch their favourite development information programme, other productions of TVRI Yogyakarta like kethoprak and popular quizzes were also no longer available. Initially TVRI Semarang chose to ignore the complaints and refused to relay the programmes produced by the Yogyakarta station. In response to the overwhelming demand of its audiences

²¹⁵ Personal communication Agus Kismadi, 27 June 2001.

²¹⁶ 20,000 in 1994.

and the attention the local mass media devoted to this topic, eventually the Secretary of the General Directorate of Radio, Television and Film (*Sekretaris Dirjen RTF*) urged TVRI Semarang to relay the most popular productions of TVRI Yogyakarta ((sam) 1995). By the end of August 1995, TVRI Stasiun Semarang had begun to relay the broadcasts on a temporary basis, one year only, just until it had developed its own formats. After the official launch of TVRI Semarang by the Indonesian president on 29 May 1996, the station stopped these relays (MH 1995:58). In short, the expansion of TVRI by the addition of the new station in Semarang and bolstered by the strong political backing it received from the local governor affected TVRI Yogyakarta negatively, turning it into the competitor of the Semarang station.

The producers of the programme claimed that they catered as much as possible to audience needs and wishes and that they provided space for their voices, both in the content and context of the programme and in off-air activities: they looked into requests to change the broadcasting schedule, increase the broadcast frequency (to twice a month in 1994) and to transform the programme into a serial with a continuing storyline ((abi/gea) 1993). Other suggestions and requests from the public that were met included locating the *Mbangun Desa* village in the Banyumas area instead of Yogyakarta, henceforth it would feature speakers of the Banyumas dialect and give glimpses of Banyumas culture (*Paket Mbangun* 1993, Cahyono 1994b:53). It acquiesced in requests to play a walk-on part in the programme or to obtain a picture of the Lima Sekawan. Some viewers asked the producer to tackle a problem with which they were personally confronted.

One way to establish firmer contacts and relations with the audiences was the organization of *The Week of Mbangun Desa*, consisting of the broadcasting of the programme daily in a specific week. The purpose of these *Mbangun Desa* weeks was to obtain information about the effects of the programme on the audiences ((gea) 1993b), to stir up *Mbangun Desa* fever (Cahyono 1994b:53), to evaluate the series' popularity among the general public ((sam) 1994) and win back the hearts of the public (Marsono 1994) and, finally but very necessarily, to attract sponsors.²¹⁷ To achieve these goals, TVRI Yogyakarta combined on-air activity with a quiz (*quizz berhadiah*). Viewers were invited to choose their favourite programme out of the seven *Mbangun Desa* broadcasts of the week and give arguments to support their choice. The quiz was open to individuals and groups – members of the *Kelompencapir* and Farmers Groups (*Kelompok Tani*). The sponsors provided the prizes, including a hand-tractor, colour TV sets, radio-compo sets, agricultural equipment and the capital to begin a business (Gatot Marsono 1994). In 1993 the TV station received around 65,000 postcards with audience reactions,²¹⁸ not only from the areas within its reach, the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java, but from other places as well; in 1994 the number of postcards rose to more than 90,000.²¹⁹ Contests between *Kelompencapir* Groups on the provincial level featured in *Mbangun Desa*; the winners joined in the national *kelompencapir* contest ((SAB) 1986).

²¹⁷ The question was whether they still enjoyed watching the programme, or whether they had grown bored ('apa pancen isih didhemeni, apa wis padha bosen') (*Sepekan Mbangun* 1994).

²¹⁸ Setyadi et al., 1995 give 65,145 on p. 6 and 64,043 on p. 21; most newspapers give 65,000.

²¹⁹ Setyadi et al. (1995:22) give 89,936; *Kompas (TVRI Yogyakarta mengacu* 1994) gives 95,000.

Another incentive consisted of the letter-cum-present system (*surat berhadiah*), rewarding the senders of every first ten letters offering criticism and containing suggestions for improvements that TVRI Yogyakarta received after a *Mbangun Desa* broadcast. TVRI organized this in co-operation with *Koran Mlebu Desa*, *Mekar Sari*, *Djaka Lodang* and *Bernas*, the local magazines and newspaper that published a synopsis before the broadcast of an episode (*Mbangun desa* 1996).

Direct contact was made with members of the audience in discussions after the programme was broadcast. The episode *Manten anyar* (Newlyweds), for instance, was evaluated in a discussion with the inhabitants of the village Dayu (Gadingsari, Sanden) in Bantul on 11 August 2001. Present were the TVRI producer, some of the actors and representatives of the sponsoring organization, the Institute for the Study and Development of Women and Children (Lembaga Studi Perempuan dan Pengembangan Anak, LSPPA), who wanted to gain an insight into how the programme content was received in the village. The villagers who had played themselves as villagers in the episode and those who had watched the programme joined in the session.²²⁰

The popularity of the *Mbangun Desa* characters, an important asset in the creation of *akrab*-ness with the viewers, spread beyond their life on the screen. When *Mbangun Desa* artists made an appearance in other television programmes or in off-air TVRI or other activities, their presence always attracted large audiences. For example, from 13 December 1994 to 15 January 1995, the famous kethoprak troupe Siswo Budoyo performed at the Sriwedari Theatre in Solo. The final performance of the series was staged in collaboration with members of the *Mbangun Desa* troupe, Den Baguse Ngarso in particular, and with the popular Javanese artists Yati Pesek and Didik Nini Thowok. Audiences from various towns in the Solo area flooded the performance premises. Before this event, after Den Baguse Ngarso and the Surabayan comedian Kirun and friends had joined Siswo Budoyo as guest actors, the income of the troupe had increased significantly ((Asa) 1995).

The artists performed at events organized to disseminate government development messages, for instance, to make people aware that they had to pay taxes. Their comic performance was their forte in conveying these messages ((Tulus DS/Job)-h 1993). When they contributed to social welfare activities, they expressed their solidarity with the people. Susilo Nugroho alias Den Baguse Ngarso performed comedy for the victims of the earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2006, for example. Together with some fellow comedians, he entertained the people and seized the opportunity to criticize the official aid agencies' slowness to act. One of his jokes, presented as a pun on words, tackled the postponement of financial aid from the government (Sulistyawaty 2006). Whenever the actors who performed the *Mbangun Desa* characters participated as speakers in external activities, they were invariably associated with their role in the series, again blurring the fictional and the real. This association has continued to the time of writing.

²²⁰ After the evaluation and discussion I attended personally the producers gave me a written report of the event.

The public responding

The public had several channels through which it could discuss its reception of *Mbangun Desa*, make its wishes, questions, requests and criticism known and offer suggestions to improve the programme. Its members sent letters to the editors of the print press with whom the *Mbangun Desa* staff co-operated, contacted those responsible for the programme and the actors at TVRI Yogyakarta directly. The letters came from inhabitants of the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java, from people from a variety of social backgrounds (but mostly middle class), gender, age and profession. All the while, the audiences imagined as ‘the’ target audience were not really represented in these letters – their voices were presumed to be represented by the *kelompokcapir* and the farmers’ groups. Some of the letters to the station were written in Javanese, but most of those I saw (of December 1995 and January 1996) were in Indonesian.

The majority of the correspondents in the mid-1990s confirmed the discourse on the programme in the print press: the viewers said they looked forward to watching the programme, even if they had to do so at the neighbours’ as they did not yet own a television set. From young to old, they gathered in front of a television set, impatiently waiting for the broadcast to begin. Afterwards they liked to discuss it with their colleagues at the office or their fellow pupils at school, imitating the characteristic dialogues and typical expressions (like Den Baguse Ngarso who indicated his disapproval with the expression ‘*Sengit aku!*’ (How awful)).

The letters also reveal why *Mbangun Desa* was so attractive to the public:²²¹ the use of Javanese, easier for older villagers to understand than Indonesian, its entertaining and educative aspects, the familiarity with the main characters of the series, the incentives to develop the villages, the efforts to combat poverty and to inform the people and make them more knowledgeable were praised. The formulaic expressions that conformed to the Orde Baru development ideology and rhetoric were striking. One writer referred to the incentives offered in the programme to improve rural environment, and closed her letter with an enthusiastic ‘Come on! Let’s get on with development!’ (*Ayo! Terus membangun!*). The communicative character of the programme, representation enabling identification and the relevance and effects of the issues it tackled were mentioned. In particular the comic aspects of the programme, especially Den Baguse Ngarso’s humour, received much attention in the letters. *Mbangun Desa* was called an attractive regional show (*tontonan ‘daerah’*), that did not seem traditional when it was compared to conventional kethoprak and was refreshing when compared to the westernized movies and soaps on TV and to foreign programmes (in one letter referred to as ‘Chinese kethoprak, India-style drama and Latin American telenovelas’) that were dismissed as boring.

Criticism was levelled at the overacting of Den Baguse Ngarso (the writer of the letter acknowledged that he was a fictive character, but wondered if such a character would be encountered in the ‘real’ world). Some considered Pak Bina’s style of communicating information too patronizing. However, the heaviest criticism was reserved for the content of

²²¹ See also the outcome of Hariadi’s and Oentoro’s research (1994), conducted in several villages in 1996, about the reception of *Mbangun Desa*.

the programme and the representation: the audiences saw *Mbangun Desa* as pure fiction, unrepresentative of real village life and it did not offer solutions to the social and economic problems with which they as real villagers had to cope.

Various letters contained suggestions. These ranged from using different spaces as shooting locations to introducing more contemporary environments into the programme. Hot topics at the moment that were being talked about in Yogyakarta or Indonesia should be paid more attention. One letter-writer tackled a more central problem with which TVRI was confronted. If it were to compete with the private television stations, TVRI should be allowed to resume broadcasting advertisements, he wrote. This would raise the quality of its broadcasts (Agus Trie Prasetyo 1994).

These responses from the public demonstrate the insight the audiences had into the workings of the media and how they reflected on the multiple persuasive voices that were woven into the *Mbangun Desa* broadcasts. In the next section, I shall show how the *Mbangun Desa* staff produced the local, thereby shaping a familiar context in which to present the persuasive messages.

5 Persuasive voices: Men and women are just the same²²² – An example

Originally *Mbangun Desa* carried the development messages of the national government, but from the 1990s sponsoring by local government institutions and NGOs became more frequent.

In 2001, TVRI Yogyakarta broadcast a series of seven *Mbangun Desa* episodes that were produced in co-operation with the Institute for the Study and Development of Women and Children (Lembaga Studi Perempuan dan Pengembangan Anak, LSPPA). Taking up on one of the main topics of concern of this NGO, the series raised the issue of gender (in)equality, hence the title of the first episode, *Kakung putri padha wae*, men and women are just the same. This theme recurred in all the seven episodes. Because it was set in different situational contexts and conveyed in different ways by means of spoken text and images, the producers could approach the theme from various angles. The traditional interpretations of gender-dependent divisions of labour were countered by scenes depicting some of the protagonists crossing the gender divide. This was presented in several ways.

In the second episode, for instance, we see how Pak Bina is sweeping the floor and washing the dishes, while his wife Bu Bina is out running her own business. At a certain moment, Yu Sranta asks Bu Bina whether she can borrow a kerosene stove as her own needs repairing and her husband is not at home to do this. Bu Bina then invites Yu Sranta to use her kitchen. Whereas Pak Bina usually formulated the main message to be conveyed to the villagers – as he also continued to do in other episodes of this serial – , in the second episode it is his wife Bu Bina who pronounces the message. She explains to Yu Sranta that by dividing the work-load, her family did not differentiate between male and female, whether

²²² *Kakung putri padha wae*.

adults or children. They were all able to tackle the jobs that had to be done at home. After all, what is known as work does not differentiate between men and women, she concludes.²²³ This scene presents the viewers with a problem in a recognizable situation, facilitating their process of identifying. The solution to the problem is to be found in the message about gender equality. Direct persuasion is avoided, as is the case in the example about Child Welfare Law (in the episode *Nyurung karep* of March 1998), but was directed towards one of the protagonists of the show as part of the story.

The discussion of the gender issue culminated in the fifth episode, entitled *Manten Anyar* (Newlyweds), featuring Den Baguse Ngarso's second wedding, after his divorce from his first wife. The immediate reason for featuring this theme was that the actress playing Den Baguse's wife had commitments elsewhere, so a new actress had to be introduced – a wonderful mixing of the real and the represented, the live and the mediated world. Her character was similar to that of Den Baguse Ngarso's previous wife: *galak* (fierce). In this episode, the traditional Javanese wedding ceremony was represented in three short scenes: the arrival of the bridegroom and his retinue in procession at the house of his future parents-in-law; the meeting of the bride with the bridegroom (*panggih*) and the bride washing the right foot of the bridegroom (Figure 8.1); the wedding reception.



8.1 The bride washes the foot of the bridegroom



8.2 Maiti asks her grandmother about the meaning of the ritual

This way of representing a Javanese wedding ceremony in the episode *Manten anyar* was commented on during the earlier-mentioned evaluation and discussion with inhabitants of Dayu village in August 2001. Apparently, the friction between realism and fictionalism was the main source of criticism. One of the villagers participating in the discussion said he was left dissatisfied as the ritual was incomplete (*kurang puas dengan pakem karena ada kekurangan*): according to Yogyakarta tradition, a wedding ceremony should include a ritual

²²³ Bu Bina: Nek ten keluarga kula, ning niki nek ten keluarga kula lho yu nggih, padha. Kula, bojo kula, anak kula lanang, wedok padha. Nek kula tinggal kesah, bojo kula ngliwet, ndamel wedang, ngenget jangan. Kompor rusak, nek mas Bina seg repot nggih kula sing ndandani. Anak kula sing lanang, resik-resik, ngewangi kula nggoreng lawuh. Padha yu. Kajenge saged mbagi peran. Gaweyan kula isa ditandangi bojo kula. Gaweyane anak kula wedok isa ditandangi anak kula lanang. Tur sing jeneng damelan niku rak mboten mbedake lanang wedok ta yu. (Episode 2, scene 24, dialogue 52-54, script Heru Kesawamurti LPPDES2)

meal (*slametan*). This was omitted from the programme. Another missed the actual celebration of the marriage (*adegan ijab-ijaban*). The producers, pointing to the media constraints, claimed that, as each episode lasted only thirty minutes, time constraints meant the choice of scenes was very limited.

The second scene, depicting the bride pouring water with flower petals over the bridegroom's foot, was reflected upon twice in the episode. After the wedding, one of the village children, Maiti, her feet in a bucket full of water, asked her grandmother about the meaning of this ritual (Figure 8.2). Her grandmother explained that it showed the wife paying her husband respect.



8.3 Maiti: 'It is not fair!'



8.4 Pak Bina (left) and Den Baguse Ngarso discussing the Marriage Act

Maiti wonders why Den Baguse Ngarso did not perform this ritual for his wife. She thought that as a husband he should have done so too.²²⁴ Later, when Maiti asked her grandmother whether the same had happened at the wedding of her own parents, the answer was far from clear. The issue was discussed again in a play, put on by the village children who imitated Den Baguse Ngarso's wedding. But there was an important difference: Maiti, who took the role of the bride, wanted her bridegroom – in the play and at her 'actual' wedding in the future – to wash her foot too.²²⁵ It was not fair, she exclaimed, that only the wife showed her husband respect but the husband did not reciprocate (Figure 8.3). Tuman, the boy playing the role of Maiti's bridegroom was nonplussed and did not know how to react to Maiti's request. He just stared at her, speechless. Pak Bina, who had been watching the children's play, commented on Maiti's request, agreeing with her point of view. His statement reinforced LPPSA's mission: in all contexts women and men were equal and should be treated equally. Maiti's friend, Enggar, represented yet another point of view: she wanted to skip the ritual

²²⁴ Yu Dalimuk Sapu: Mantene putri, den ayu Ngarso, wingi kae mijiki sukune mantene kakung, den baguse Ngarso, kuwi ki nadhakke supaya den ayune Ngarso bekti karo garwane, den baguse Ngarso kuwi.

Maiti: Ning den baguse Ngarso kok ora mijiki den ayune Ngarso mbah? Lho den ayune Ngarso rak ya garwane den baguse Ngarso ta, den baguse Ngarso rak ya kudu bekti karo garwane ta? (Episode 5, scene 13, dialogue 31-32, script Heru Kesawamurti LPPDES5)

²²⁵ Maiti: [...] sesuk nek aku dadi manten, aku arep njaluk, sikilku ya diwijiki karo bojoku. Dadine aku ora ming mijiki sikile bojoku. Wong lanang bekti karo wong wedok rak ya oleh ta, mbak?
and: Saiki gentenan aku sing diwijiki! Mongsok sing diwijiki ming cah lanang thok? Mongsok sing ngabekti ming cah wedok thok? Ora adil, ora adil. Cah lanang mestine ya isa ngabekti karo cah wedok.

altogether at her future wedding. She did not want to indulge in rituals whose meaning nobody no longer understood.²²⁶

As the narration continued, in this and the next episode, the discussion returned to Den Baguse Ngarso and his wife Mayoni, and the questions of which of the two should chair the planned meeting at their house and whether Den Baguse Ngarso had to accept his wife's offer to fund the ritual white porridge ceremony (*jenang sungsuman*), as he could not afford it himself. Both Bu Bina and Pak Bina intervened in the discussions. Bu Bina explained to Mayoni that the equality between husband and wife was regulated in the Government Marriage Act (Undang-Undang Perkawinan). Pak Bina went even further and, in a dialogue with Den Baguse Ngarso and Kuriman (Figure 8.4), quoted from the Marriage Act – presenting the persuasive message loud and clear:²²⁷

Well, Clause 31 of the Marriage Act clearly states: *the rights and position of the wife are in balance with the rights and position of the husband when sharing their life and household in society*. But I only know this because I attended the Family Legal Awareness meeting in the village hall. But it's up to you. I am merely replying to what you asked me just now. If I didn't answer your question, you would accuse me of being arrogant.

In order to tackle the gender issue, the series made use of a context familiar to the Javanese audiences: the preparations for a wedding and the wedding ceremony itself. Each separate episode presented further opportunities to discuss topics about social issues. In the seventh episode, for instance, Yu Dalimuk (Maiti's grandmother who cycled around the village to sell brooms) decided to visit a community learning centre and take an English course. Her decision disrupts Den Baguse Ngarso's plans. He wants her to work for him. The other villagers who wanted to help her to attend the school also find their plans in disarray. This situation was used to explain the aims and mission of the Community Learning Center (the Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat, PKBM),²²⁸ that offered all kinds of extra-mural education. Agus Kismadi argued the messages were conveyed subtly (*halus*), for example, by neither quoting from nor referring to Indonesian legislation on the issue.²²⁹

The weight of the topics discussed was countered by comic scenes and by the scenes focusing on expressions of Javanese culture. The *gejog lesung* sequence that I described in the section about local culture is a good example. The episode told the story of the village youth practising a traditional dance and music genre while another inhabitant of the village, who thought *gejog lesung* to be old fashioned, wanted to organize a karaoke evening. These scenes

²²⁶ Enggar: Nek aku, suk nek aku dadi manten, aku arep njaluk ora nganggo wijk-wijakan, ora nganggo bandhem-bandheman suruh, kaya mantene den baguse Ngarso wingi kae, timbangane ora ngerti tegese. (Episode 5, scene 26, dialogue 63-72, script Heru Kesawamurti LPPDES5)

²²⁷ Wong neng nggon UU Perkawinan (pasal 31) kuwi ki ya wis cetha disebutke kok; *Hak dan kedudukan isteri adalah seimbang dengan hak dan kedudukan suami dalam kehidupan rumah tangga dan pergaulan hidup bersama dalam masyarakat*. Ning iki lehku ngerti ya ming merga melu saresehan Kadarkum neng Balai Desa kae. Ning ya mangga lho. Aku ya ming sakderma njawab lehm u takon mau kang. Mengko nek ora njawab diarani priye, sombong (Episode 5, scene 33, dialogue 95-97, script Heru Kesawamurti LPPDES5). For this episode, the *Mbangun Desa* team also co-operated with the Kanwil Departemen Kehakiman dan Perundang-undangan DIY (District Office of the Department of Justice and Legislation of the Special Region of Yogyakarta).

²²⁸ See <https://pedulimasyarakat.wordpress.com/pusat-kegiatan-belajar-masyarakat-pkbm/> [Last accessed June 2017].

²²⁹ Personal communication Agus Kismadi, Yogyakarta, 27 June 2011.

‘embody the value system of the people including their attitudes, beliefs, customs, philosophies of life, behaviour patterns, even thought processes’ (Feliciano 1982:9), or, in other words, *kearifan lokal* (local wisdom). They functioned as the common ground between the producers and the audiences and also created a sense of co-presence, not only in the technological televisual sense, but also in the meaning of live co-presence.

Conclusions

From a sheer propaganda medium controlled by the national government, *Mbangun Desa* developed into a medium disseminating information from local government institutions, and to a co-operation between the producers and performers of the programme and local NGOs, thereby shifting its attention from government interests to the interests of groups in local society. The national government remained present in the idea of having begun the transmedial rural development programmes (*siaran pedesaan* and *Mbangun Desa*), the idea that the local rural people should be educated and developed and the legislative clauses quoted in the broadcasts about specific topics. Nevertheless, in the course of time, coinciding with the shift in Indonesian politics and the mediascape, ‘the local’ came steadily to the fore. Initially a programme of an informative character, *Mbangun Desa* transformed into infotainment in which the information was wrapped in drama, in which the entertainment aspect prevailed.

The national, official government discourse was the *raison d’être* for this programme’s creation and for the use of the medium television. This discourse was present in every episode. However, the embedding of the national discourse in a local discourse, drawn from local theatrical concepts and conventions, almost pushed the official discourse into the background. In fact, while the use of television to mediate patronizing Jakartan ideas had bridged the physical distance of hundreds of kilometres, the programme might have made the epistemological distance between national discourse and local practices even bigger. The national (ideas, language, perception of the local, information, legislation and development/*pembangunan*) had been localized (Javanized); government persuasion has been dramatized, made into theatre, or even more aptly: a soap opera (*sinetron*). Precisely because of its local approach and its thoroughly Javanese character, *Mbangun Desa*’s effort to ‘go national’ never really got off the ground. Although bearing this purpose in mind some episodes were spoken in Indonesian, the cultural context depicted in the series failed to catch the imagination of audiences among other ethnic groups; Javanese-ness was too pregnantly present.

The series was made attractive by the packaging of the information and the provision of an overwhelming common ground. ‘The local’ in the sense of ‘a complex phenomenological quality’ (Appadurai 1996:178) was produced in the setting, the representation of what was apparently everyday life, the story, the presence of the Lima Sekawan and their acting style, the use of Javanese, local cultural expressions, the word-play and jokes, the suspense. It was this common ground that enabled the audiences to develop a familiarity (*akrab*-ness) with

Den Baguse Ngarso and his fellow *Mbangun Desa* characters and their adventures. The television medium had influenced and changed the representation of government legislation and information, making use of Yogyakarta theatre. Vice-versa, television made the actors permanent *Mbangun Desa* characters: even in daily life encounters with fans, the actors were addressed by their *Mbangun Desa* names, famous soap stars alike. When they attended off-air TVRI happenings or cultural or social gatherings, they attracted special attention. However, the reasons students, intellectuals, residents of the city of Yogyakarta, or inhabitants of remote villages in the vicinity of Yogyakarta enjoyed watching the programme were probably different.

On account of the presence of various agents and narrators whose aims and messages diverged, *Mbangun Desa* had become multigeneric. The viewers knew how to distinguish the different narrators (national and regional government institutions, including TVRI, NGOs, *Mbangun Desa* producers, the characters and also the actors, the performers of the regional performing arts genres) of the different messages (the storylines, regional culture(s)/*budaya daerah*, the information mission/*misi penyuluhan*) and how these should be evaluated. They perceived the discrepancy between the seriousness of the government discourse and the humour and irony in the presentation of the story.

The programme sharpened the awareness of those watching in rural areas, reminding them that they were Javanese and that they were villagers. They participated neither in the national world, nor in the city/the metropolitan life and everything that belonged to it. The illusion, created by the local representation of life in a Javanese village, allowed those watching and enjoying the series to forget the problems of daily life for half an hour once (or twice) a month. What remained for the inhabitants of Sidokarto and the other villages in Yogyakarta was the laughter and fun generated by the humour, the jokes and the stupidity of the main characters of *Mbangun Desa*, embodied on screen by their favourite actors. What also remained was a sour taste of disillusion because, instead of offering solutions to the problems, the series elicited a twofold nostalgia: the longing for an idealized rustic village, tranquil and clean, where problems were simple and solved easily – as offered on the television screen; and the longing for the city, as depicted in Jakarta-made or foreign soaps, in which there were no problems at all (Hariadi dan Oentoro 1996:65).

Examining the effectiveness of the persuasive messages conveyed in *Mbangun Desa*, meanings diverge significantly. Obviously there was a discrepancy between statements about the need to develop the people using media broadcasts to guide them to enlightenment (Adrianto et al. 1997/1998:113) and the way village audiences proved quite capable of joining metanarratives and reflecting on both the programmes they watched and the government's communication strategies.

Part III

Mediating the local: Javanese performance on local television

Introduction²³⁰

Today defining, celebrating and defending the local has become the stuff of innumerable newspaper articles and editorials, seminars, television talk shows and neighbourhood conversations. (Hatley 2004:63)

Having focused on representations of tradition (Part I) and the localizing of persuasion (Part II), this part of my dissertation examines localizing practices and representations of the local by and on local television stations, and the discourse about this topic. Both private and public television in the Special Region of Yogyakarta will be scrutinized, with a few sideways glances cast at local television elsewhere in Indonesia. Special attention is paid to representations of Javanese cultures, within the constraints of and opportunities offered by these new local broadcasting industries. My first contention is that the concept of 'the local' acquires meaning in the mediating practices of the local television stations. The second that, because of their commercial interests, local television stations do offer a much more diversified representation of Javanese identity in the content of their programmes than used to be the case under the New Order regime or than is acknowledged in contemporary public discourse led by local intellectuals.

In Chapter 9, I sketch the emergence of a whole new local broadcasting industry in Yogyakarta, that offered opportunities to counter existing monopolies by representing local cultures. Some insight into the regulation of local broadcasting is indispensable to pinpointing the issues at stake. In Chapter 10, I introduce an approach to the production of the local that differs from the approaches in the first two parts. Having zoomed in on a specific Javanese performance genre (kethoprak) in Part I and analysed the agents involved in the production of the local in Part II, the localizing strategies will now take centre stage. I discuss the localizing strategies of the newly established Jogja TV and relate them to the practices of the long-standing TVRI Jogja, that (as TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta) had been broadcasting local productions since 1965. In some instances, I refer to other local Javanese TV stations whenever a comparison is useful. The conclusions to the Chapters 9 and 10 will be presented in Chapter 11. They form the prelude to my reflections on the key concepts – the local, proximity and tradition – on the basis of the outcome of this study. But first I would like to dwell once more on the concept of the local.

²³⁰ My paper 'Mediating the local: Representing Javanese cultures on local television in Indonesia,' based on Part III, was presented at the 7th Asian Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore, the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 18-20 July 2012); in a reworked version it was published in *JSEAS* 48-2 (June 2017):196-218.

Looking into the local

The heightened awareness of local identity fostered by regional autonomy and the ideology of participatory democracy (Hatley 2008:53, 66) in this era was new. Under the New Order the development of a national Indonesian identity had been extensively promoted by the government and national television. As I have shown in the Introduction to this dissertation, the idea of Java (and the other Indonesian regions) as ‘a single comprehensible entity’ (Antlöv and Hellman 2005:4) with a homogeneous Javanese culture ignored the various Javanese sub-cultures and identities. The changes that took place at the end of the twentieth century were the catalyst that allowed the expression of a variety of local identities on television.²³¹ The local still remained a contested concept within the context of television in Indonesia and, before tackling the mediating of the local in the new era, some reflection is required.

Two fundamental questions need to be addressed to straighten this out. Firstly, we should ask what is meant by local in the context under scrutiny. Then we should go a step farther and investigate how television, a global medium, becomes local – in a sense to be clarified later in this introduction. In the first question, the local emerges as a multifaceted concept. As I argued in Chapter 1, it can be used in reference to both the national, and the local/regional – meaning sub-national, regional or sub-regional, after which its meanings are honed by political, ideological, geographical and other factors. As a category of legislative practice, the local is used in the Indonesian Broadcasting Law as one of the markers to define and regulate broadcasting. I shall return to this issue when discussing the 2002 Broadcasting Law in Chapter 9.

My second question ponders the localizing processes of the television industry. Studies of the localizing of media products often perceive the local as national. Both Kitley (2004) and Coutas (2006) discuss the localization of foreign formats in Indonesia on the national level. The term indigenization as used by Chan and Ma (1996) is less confusing. Nevertheless, here I shall keep to the term localizing in the sense that television stations adapt their programmes to the cultural circumstances of the locus of Yogyakarta and to what they imagine fits the wishes and needs of their target audiences – I use the word ‘imagine’ here as the local television industry in Indonesia based its representations of the local on habit rather than on solid market research.

Work on local television and localizing processes in a non-Indonesian context – both Asian and other, as television is a global medium – has been valuable to my research as it has offered comparative views. This includes the article by Chen (2004) on domestication strategies in Taiwan, Weber’s study of the localizing of the global in China and the 2010 *Media History* issue concerning perspectives on localizing the transnational in regional television, edited by Catherine Johnson and Andreas Fickers.

In the case studies highlighting localizing strategies of TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV, I pay special attention to the workings of proximity to show how the television stations construct identity and represent local cultures. As I have explained in the Introduction to my dissertation, proximity reveals the processes taking place ‘at the local sites of cultural

²³¹ On this topic, see also Jurriëns 2004 and Loven 2008.

production' (Winichakul 2003:6). This does not mean I shall neglect the national and global forces that are simultaneously presented and represented in local broadcasting, as these together with the local constitute a shared space (see Chapter 1; Coutas 2006:389). To find out how broadcasters use proximity and design their programmes 'so as to *relate to their audiences* in specific, inclusive, and cooperative ways' (Hutchby 2006:10-12), I have based my analysis mainly on the study of television broadcasts and the self-identifying practices of the television industry. I have related these to the materials mentioned in my Introduction – Indonesian legislative texts, articles and essays published in Indonesian newspapers and magazines, programme descriptions and broadcast schedules; interviews with local media practitioners and performing artists and the witnessing of the recording and production of several television programmes.

9 Local broadcasting in the twenty-first century

The founding of local television stations broadened the spectrum of the Indonesian televisionscape: representing the (sub-national) local, to the local audiences these stations functioned as a window to the place they called home (*kampung halaman*) (Djadjoeri 2005). National television and nation-wide broadcasting private television did not provide any or enough space to allow this (sub-national) local identifying. Presenting familiar colours and flavours in the form of local phenomena and faces, with local entertainment and vernaculars as its mainstay, local television built an emotional relationship with its audiences. Hence it became a new stage on which local artistic genres could present themselves (Djadjoeri 2005).

As these new developments began to occur, the print press emphasized the potentials of local broadcasting; it might fill in the lacunae not covered by commercial stations broadcasting from Jakarta. Above all, the presentation of (aspects of) *kearifan lokal* (local genius) would strengthen the local people's self-confidence and pride in the culture of the community to which they belonged (Sayoga 2004). It was also a wonderful opportunity to correct stereotypical and caricatural representations of people from the regions broadcast by 'Jakartan' television programmes (Gunawan 2004). From an aesthetic point of view, the new stations were expected to package their messages in alternative ways, that could open the way for different nuances to flourish. This would be a counterweight to the westernization of culture and the capitalization of the media (Sayoga 2004). What had not yet been clearly visible at the beginning was the platform that the local television industry would offer local elites and institutions. The power of these elites and institutions increased significantly in the wake of the decentralization processes that took place in post-Soeharto Indonesia (see Robison and Hadiz 2004:19; Ida 2011:21). Examples in Chapter 10 will clarify this.

1 A new local broadcasting industry

Television may be an industry of cut-throat competition, but local businesspeople aren't afraid to invest in new stations. Two privately run TV stations – RB TV and Jogja TV – were established this month, with Tugu TV to follow next month. The three stations are confident that they can capture the hearts of Yogyakartaans, with down-to-earth programs and news on Yogyakarta and its vicinity.

These sentences formed the opening of an article published in *The Jakarta Post* on 11 September 2004, entitled 'TV stations explore local traditions' (Susanto 2004). The article informed its readers of new developments in the Yogyakarta mediascape, also touching on a series of interesting topics that demonstrated the complexity of the local television world.

The new Jogja TV station was established by GBPH Prabukusumo, the brother of the Yogyakarta Governor, Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, creating an important and influential connection to the *kraton*, the sultan's palace, to capital from those in the environs of the court and to the *kraton*'s prestige, not to mention the prince's personal business networks.

The article did not acknowledge the active role the director of Bali TV, Satria Naradha, and the Bali Post network played in the founding of Jogja TV,²³² but it did mention that Bali TV, 'which also focuses on local traditions and culture in its shows' was going to 'train employees and produce joint programs'. It also did not refer to Jogja TV's board member Oka Kusumayudha's Balinese origin and his position as editor-in-chief of another local medium, the newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*. The main investor in RB TV (Retjo Buntung TV) was the Retjo Buntung Group, a business network experienced in financing private radio stations in the province, of which Radio Retjo Buntung, on air since March 1967, was the most popular.

According to *The Jakarta Post*, the two television stations would try to establish close contacts with local enterprises and production houses, as well as with local audiences. Both Jogja TV and RB TV were going to focus on traditional subjects and local news, to counter the content of programmes broadcast by Jakarta-based stations, 'which mostly focus on city living rather than local culture'. These 'have proved unpopular here, as they aren't relevant to locals. They are also expensive to air.' At the same time, RB TV had invited the Voice of America and the German television station Deutsche Welle to supply programmes.

Tugu TV, then on the point of being launched, 'targets youth as its main audience', thereby tapping into different segments of the audience and advertising markets (Susanto 2004). However, it failed to realize its potential and never got off the ground. In March 2012, RB TV began operating under the aegis of Kompas TV. In 2011 another local private TV station was launched, the religiously oriented ADI TV, affiliated with the Muhammadiyah, the major Indonesian Muslim organization.

The article in the *Jakarta Post* highlighted the main challenges and problems with which the newly developing television industries had to cope at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The largest challenge to local TV stations like Jogja TV and RB TV were the attempts made by other TV stations to tap the local market. On the defensive, Jogja TV and RB TV, each vying with the other to be the first private local television station in Yogyakarta, had to carve out a niche in an already existing infrastructure of broadcasting institutions in the region. Besides the national (TVRI Pusat) and local (TVRI stasiun Yogyakarta) TVRI stations, up to that time the public had only had access to a growing number of big private Indonesian TV stations then still broadcasting nation-wide – as the Broadcasting Law, requiring all stations except for TVRI to broadcast locally and co-operate with local networks, at that point had not yet been fully implemented – and to several global TV stations. Broadcasting institutions located elsewhere explicitly targeting the ethnic Javanese inhabitants of Yogyakarta were another source of competition for the television stations in Yogyakarta. One example is the Surakarta-based Terang Abadi Televisi (TATV) that positioned itself as a contemporary institution that continued to be involved in culture.

²³² Personal communication Oka Kusumayudha, *komisaris* Jogja TV, on 13 March 2009.

2 Trendsetters

The establishment of two local television stations in Yogyakarta was a direct result of the new Regional Autonomy Law and the subsequent new Broadcasting Law. One of the first initiatives to establish a local television station in Java was taken in Surabaya, where Jawa Pos Media Televisi (JTV) set the trend. JTV went on air on 8 November 2001. On its website it claims to have been the first local television station in Indonesia (*JTV merupakan* [n.d.]).²³³ Actually, the first local private broadcaster in Indonesia was Pekanbaru Televisi (PTV), established in Riau in 2000. Due to financial losses and a lack of personnel, it had suspended broadcasting the following year (Suryadi 2005:135). Riau TV (RTV), '[t]he most prominent private local television channel', was established on 20 May 2001. As a commercially oriented station, it was financed by PT Riau Media Television (RMT) under the umbrella of the Jawa Post Syndicate' (Suryadi 2005:136).

JTV was designed to be a local television station with a hint of the metropolitan (*televisi lokal bernuansa metropolis*) (Dewanto et al. 2001), that would not yield in any way to the nation-wide commercial broadcasting institutions. Its slogan on the website of the association of the local private television stations in Indonesia, the Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia (ATVLI), 'Creating a true regional autonomy via local broadcasting media in East Java',²³⁴ reminded visitors to the site of the new developments in Indonesia at the time. With its tagline 'Satus Persen Jatim' (A hundred percent East Java), JTV from its start focused on broadcasts with a local content, giving preference to live and interactive formats. It relied heavily on off-air activities to build up strong ties with local society, especially members of middle and lower social classes. JTV broadcast in Indonesian and in the Javanese dialects of the cities of Surabaya and Malang and the area of East Java in general (*bahasa Suroboyoan, Malang and Jawa Timuran*). The use of the Surabayan dialect in specific programmes contributed to its popularity,²³⁵ at the same time leading to severe criticism. Its slogan 'Local, naughty and massive' (*Lokal, nakal dan massal*)²³⁶ showed the determination of a broadcasting institution that wanted to remain faithful to its principles: being independent, objective and honest, and capable of participating in business.

It was, however, Bali TV, launched in May 2002, that became exemplary for other local private TV stations, like Jogja TV ((08) 2009). As Picard (2005:123) states,

[w]ith the backing of the provincial authorities, religious institutions and community leaders, this private channel, owned by the proprietors of the Bali Post media group, has been given the permission to foster Balinese culture and religious identity, with a view to promoting the development of tourism.

Bali TV's broadcasts target potential audiences of Balinese, non-Balinese and non-Indonesian origin: Hinduism, the representation of Balinese traditional culture – as constructed by Bali

²³³ 'JTV merupakan televisi lokal pertama di Indonesia' (<http://jtv.co.id/about-us/> [Last accessed September 2015]).

²³⁴ 'Terciptanya Otonomi Daerah yang Sesungguhnya melalui Media Penyiaran Lokal di Jawa Timur' (<http://www.atvli.com/link.asp> [Last accessed 2009]).

²³⁵ See Arps and Van Heeren (2006:289-325) on the use of this dialect in *Pojok Kampung*.

²³⁶ <http://www.jtv.co.id/> [Last accessed September 2015].

TV – in contemporary Bali, and the Balinese language are given a prominent role. Besides, the station addresses Indonesian identity by wielding symbols representative of this national identity, and by broadcasting some programmes in Indonesian. Several programmes and commercials in foreign languages are directed towards the expat community and at tourists and visitors of Bali.²³⁷

As are JTV and Bali TV, Jogja TV is a member of larger media networks: JTV belongs to the Jawa Pos network, Bali TV and Jogja TV to the Bali Post Media Group (Kelompok Media Bali Post).²³⁸ They determine their branding by addressing and representing local identity, an identity that has been (re-)constructed by the television stations themselves. They claim to preserve traditional local cultures, and provide a link to contemporary trends. However, they also address Indonesian national identity in various ways, and broadcast programmes of foreign origin and with foreign content.

3 Countering monopolies

Whereas ‘the local’ had not been an issue before – during the New Order period the unremitting focus was on the use of the national language and the constructing of a national identity and national culture to which regional cultures contributed – the new era called for a change in attention. This phenomenon is not typically Indonesian. In a wider context, research has pointed out the relationship between the emergence of a global capitalism and the growth of concern about the local as a site of resistance and liberation (Dirlik 1996:22).

The establishment of local private television stations all over the country fitted into the tendency in post-Soeharto Indonesia towards democratization, deconcentration and decentralization. For more than twenty-five years, government-controlled Televisi Republik Indonesia had been the sole television station broadcasting in Indonesia until, from the late 1980s, the first private television stations, owned by family members and cronies of President Soeharto, were established. Since then, the Indonesian television industry had been dominated by these Jakarta-based private media. Even in 1999 when five new broadcasting permits were issued by President Habibie, ‘as such diversifying both the television landscape and patterns of ownership’ (Loven 2008:329), and cable television had been established (Sen and Hill 2000:132), this did not reduce the ‘Jakartan’ hegemony. Because they monopolized both media ownership and media content, using a restricted number of (cheap) media formats, often based on imported formats, and disseminating fairly uniform information, the television stations and their products were accused of not representing Indonesia’s multicultural diversity. Sen and Hill (2000:16) argue that, ‘with the exception of radio, all regional cultures (even that of the pre-eminent ethnic group) effectively had only minority status in the national culture industries’.

To break this monopoly and to enforce diversity of content and ownership, a reorganization of the infrastructure of the television industry was called for. This would also

²³⁷ www.balitiv.tv [Last accessed May 2014].

²³⁸ On these media networks, see Ida 2011.

solve the problem of the congestion of the broadcasting frequencies caused by the Jakarta-based commercial television stations, whose allocation would have to be revised. The movement that instigated this call for change consisted of enthusiastic and idealistic intellectuals, artists, media practitioners and specialists, and representatives of media organizations. The latter included 'leading figures from the Indonesian Newspaper Publishers Association' who 'established the Indonesian Press and Broadcasters Forum (MPPI) to lobby for changes in legislation governing the media' (Kitley 2003:108-9). They had been inspired by the *spirit reformasi* and the feeling of euphoria that flooded the country after Soeharto's resignation.²³⁹ If these aims were to be achieved, serious competition between television stations was felt to be essential. Besides, the audiences needed to be offered alternatives, enabling them to choose between more diversified kinds of news, information and entertainment, and to participate actively in the production and consumption of media products.

A new Broadcasting Law would form the legal basis for the democratization of the Indonesian televisionscape, in which local broadcasting was given priority.

4 Regulating local broadcasting

The 32/2002 Broadcasting Law was ratified on 28 December 2002 by President Megawati Sukarnoputri and was later amended in 2007.²⁴⁰ It differentiates between public, private, and community broadcasting services and pay television.²⁴¹ It defines the tasks, functions and responsibilities, form of organization, ownership, and resources of each category. In the following I focus on public and private broadcasting services.

Public broadcasting services are established by the state and are the only broadcasting services licensed to broadcast nationwide. They should be independent, neutral and non-commercial in character, and provide services in the public interest. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, public broadcasting is taken care of by the centrally broadcasting Jakarta-based Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) and the regional TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, later called TVRI Jogja.

The local character of the private broadcasting services is defined in terms of capital, management and broadcasting area. The main part of the starting-up capital as well as the administration and management of a local television station should be in the hands of the local community of the region in which the TV station is located.²⁴² Furthermore, private broadcasting services are only licensed to broadcast to a restricted area, namely: the area

²³⁹ Personal communication, among others in March 2009, by Oka Kusumayudha (Jogja TV), Sunardian Wirodono (independent media practitioner and specialist), Tri Suparyanto (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia Daerah Yogyakarta), and Jimmy Silalahi (Asosiasi Televisi Lokal Indonesia, Jakarta).

²⁴⁰ *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia nomor 32 tentang penyiaran*, 2002, <http://ibau.bappenas.go.id/data/peraturan/Undang-Undang/UU%20No.%2032%20Tahun%202002%20Penyiaran.pdf> [Last accessed May 2014] (hereafter *UUP 32/2002*).

²⁴¹ On community broadcasting services, see Jurriëns 2009, and Nazaruddin dan Hermanto (2009).

²⁴² *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 31 (6).

surrounding the location of the broadcasting service or the area of a regency or city.²⁴³ Hence, the act of broadcasting itself should become local, 'local' here to be defined by the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, in co-operation with the government.²⁴⁴ The new legislation proposed these changes in the set-up of the private broadcasting services for two purposes: 'to prevent the monopolizing of ownership and to support healthy competition in the field of broadcasting' (UUP 32 Pasal 5 g), and to achieve the actual decentralization of the private media. Therefore, concentration of ownership and control ending up in the hands of one person or one corporate body (*badan hukum*), either in one or in several broadcasting areas, should be restricted. Cross-ownership between private broadcasting services, both radio, television and other services, and/or print media, should also be kept within bounds.

Use of the national language – good and correct Indonesian – , both oral and written, is compulsory, except if broadcasting in regional or foreign languages. Regional vernaculars (*bahasa daerah*) can be used whenever the broadcast has local content and, if necessary, to support certain programmes. Foreign languages can only be used as the language of communication in accordance with the requirements of the programme. These programmes should be subtitled in Indonesian or can be dubbed (the latter to a maximum of 30%).²⁴⁵

At least sixty percent of the daily broadcasts of the private television stations should consist of Indonesian productions.²⁴⁶ The 2005 government regulation added the stipulation that the broadcasts should be local, meaning they should consist of local content (*muatan lokal*),²⁴⁷ that is however not specified in more detail.

The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia, KPI) was established upon requirement of the new Broadcasting Law,²⁴⁸ and was meant to bridge the interests of the people, the broadcasting institutions and the government.²⁴⁹ In its regulations it set local programmes apart as a separate media category. Nowhere, however, does KPI identify the meaning of local content, except that broadcasting institutions should respect the norms and values of the religions and cultures of the multicultural peoples of Indonesia.²⁵⁰ Only in the December 2009 revised KPI regulations they were defined as broadcasts with local content comprising events, issues, story backgrounds, and human resources, to be used to develop the culture and potential of the specific regions.²⁵¹ This addition did not really clarify the matter.

²⁴³ *Peraturan Pemerintah 50/2005* (hereafter *PP 50/2005*), Penjelasan atas Pasal 13.

²⁴⁴ *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 18; *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 1 (4-5).

²⁴⁵ See *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 38 (1-2), and Pasal 39 (1, 2 and 3); *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 16 (1-6). For certain programmes sign language was allowed to be used.

²⁴⁶ *UUP 32/2002*, Pasal 36; *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 14 (2).

²⁴⁷ *PP 50/2005*, Pasal 34 (5); Penjelasan atas Pasal 34 (5).

²⁴⁸ *UUP 32/2002*, Bab I Pasal 1 (13).

²⁴⁹ *Peraturan Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia nomor 02 tahun 2007 dan nomor 03 tahun 2007 tentang pedoman perilaku penyiaran dan standar program siaran* (hereafter *Peraturan KPI 02/2007*) (Yogyakarta: KPID Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2008), p. ii.

²⁵⁰ *Peraturan KPI 02/2007*, Bab II Pasal 4 c, p. 8.

²⁵¹ *Peraturan Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia nomor 02/P/KPI/12/2009 tentang pedoman perilaku penyiaran (P3) dan standar program siaran (SPS)*, Bab I Pasal 1 (12), http://www.kpi.go.id/download/regulasi/P3-SPS_2009.pdf [Last accessed May 2014].

Local content?

Whereas legislation and regulations remained vague about the meaning of local content, it was one of the main topics of public discourse about local television in Indonesia in the first decade of the twenty-first century. All parties with an interest in the establishment of local TV stations were involved in these discussions, from local television managers to academics specialized in communication, journalists, *budayawan* (art practitioners and philosophers), producers and artists. Nevertheless, also in these discussions the topic was rarely defined in detail, while only a few persons went into the matter seriously, grasping explicitly what exactly was meant or should be meant by the local.

The discussions often tended to be based on the conviction that local culture is homogeneous. The discussants seemed to take it for granted that television stations broadcasting in the Special Region of Yogyakarta would represent the ethnic Javanese who are the majority in the area and use the Javanese language. But no attempt was made to differentiate between the various Javanese sub-cultures. Furthermore, Yogyakarta was a magnet for migration and consequently its population had become mixed, in the ethnic, social and religious sense. How would it be possible to define regional identity in order to determine what the *muatan lokal* of the local broadcasts should be? In practice, the defining of 'local identity' proved complicated. These factors, and the need for uniqueness in order to differentiate themselves from local media in other regions led to a redefining of local cultures. In the next chapter, I shall look at how the television institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta themselves provided meaning to the concept of 'local content' in the developments since 2002, the year the new Broadcasting Law saw the light of day.

Among the few specialists who added depth to the discussions, Veven Wardhana and Indra Tranggono deserve a special mention. They both pointed out various weaknesses and omissions in the law and the regulations, and their effects on the representation of local cultures. The arguments of both authors also emphasized the importance of cultural and emotional proximity in programmes featuring local content.

The absence of a definition of *muatan lokal* caused media-watcher Veven Wardhana to wonder how both the KPI and the Ministry of Communication and Informatics would interpret the concept, if at least they were willing to contribute to the discussion. Rethinking several media models in which the concept had been given significance in the past, he concluded that the meaning of *muatan lokal* remained limited to localities that were local, with old or ancient values, not in need of any discussion or dialogue, but continuing to be museumified (Wardhana 2010). Often, he concluded, local locales in the past had functioned only as a setting that had not been linked to the contents of the programmes. Wardhana does not understand why the designers of the new broadcast law had come up with the idea of making local broadcasting compulsory, apart from intending to allocate local producers part of the productions.

Author and culture practitioner Indra Tranggono was one of the few critics who actually tried to define *muatan lokal* (abbreviated to *mulok*). Indra Tranggono thought that TV stations whose orientation was affiliated with local content should be adamant about the meaning of

mulok. Local content, he writes, was connected to eight matters: Views of life or values of traditional cultures like the great narratives that constitute the frame of reference for the public, which the author categorizes as *kearifan lokal* (local genius); the history of the development of the people's cultures; regional languages; physical public works, like architecture, handicraft, cooking; aesthetic and non-aesthetic public behaviour and expressions; social environment; natural environment; local belief systems. As broadcast content, *mulok* should reflect the culture's identity, and the character and creativity of the people who supported that culture (Tranggono 2010).

As its meaning had not been specified in the new Broadcasting Law, both authors aired their concern about the position of the local within the new broadcasting industry. Their fears also expressed their mistrust in the capacities of local television stations to value the local as a dynamic cultural capital, rather than simply sticking to ossified forms of traditional culture. Wardhana was afraid that the local would be interpreted as a static and outdated concept. Tranggono feared that the power of the market would pluck the soul out of local culture. On the other hand, It could be argued that this hiatus in the legislation offered the local television industries opportunities and gave them the freedom to present alternative views on the local.

In the following chapter, I shall demonstrate how two television institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Jogja TV and TVRI Jogja, provided meaning to local content.

10 Televising the local in the Special Region of Yogyakarta

In the competition for audiences between transnational and domestic media, ‘domestic production can become even more commercial, garish and explicit than the western “originals”’ (Sreberny 2000:115). At the same time this competition can have stimulated the creation of ‘new programming formats, indigenized media products, alternative news frames’ (Sreberny 2000:115).

This describes exactly what happened with the local broadcasting institutions in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. These broadcasting institutions, both public and private, adopted various strategies to localize television, to define themselves as local within the Indonesian televisionscape, to represent local cultures and to compete with other domestic and global television. They firmly linked their image to the region, by broadcasting programmes in Javanese, by localizing foreign formats and productions. They also featured local expressions of culture and established local alliances. By regularly organizing off-air activities they set about addressing local communities, both as potential audiences and as potential advertisers.

1 The local as branding: The image of Yogyakarta²⁵²

Branding is a particular kind of audience address. It is constructed by means of cultural identity markers that represent *kearifan lokal*, as I shall clarify below with an example of TVRI Yogyakarta’s internal publicity. It also reflects and resonates the cultural circumstances in the environment in which it is at work. An analysis of any station’s branding reveals the ways in which the television industry imagines its audiences.

In defining their branding, both TVRI and the commercial television stations in Yogyakarta link themselves explicitly to their geographical locality and its inhabitants, turning to concepts like tradition and local wisdom, and using regional vernaculars. They all retain the longstanding idealized image of Yogyakarta, composed of local and national identity markers. This image is soundly based on an interpretation of cultural, linguistic, political, economic and historical arguments. The city is perceived as icon of education (because of the presence of Gadjah Mada University and its historical foundation, and other educational institutions that attract students and academics from all over Indonesia and abroad), of culture (because of the *kraton* as ‘the centre of Javanese culture’, and the wealth of artistic and cultural activities in the city) and of tourism. The city’s role during the independence struggle, when it was capital of the Republic, burnishes its special position. In short, this idea of Yogyakarta as an imagined community (Anderson 2006) and *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1984-92) is constructed on local tangible and intangible heritage, and leans heavily on a glorious past and its legacies, but contemporary issues are by no means neglected. Actually, this image is not new as it had already been used by TVRI Yogyakarta in the New Order period (see Chapter 3).

²⁵² Citra Yogyakarta.

TVRI Yogyakarta's internal publicity to announce the programming of 14 July 2001 serves as an example of how images and sounds convey (part of) this construct. The young female presenter, dressed in a batik kain and a pink kebaya and a traditional brooch, addressed its audiences in Indonesian. Visible in the background was a map of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, on which (stereo-typical) symbols of Yogyakarta appeared and disappeared. To the south of the map the ocean, to the north the summits of the principal volcanoes surrounding Yogyakarta could be seen. It showed a strong resemblance to the representation of the ideal city in a (traditional) wayang kulit performance. In traditional shadow puppetry, a realm backed by mountains and facing the sea is prosperous, harmonious and flourishes under a just and righteous rule.

Recognizably Yogyakarta were images of buildings that were part of the cultural heritage (Tugu, the white tower, surges up to the clouds; the Prambanan temples), of important events/ceremonies (the marching kraton troops during the Sekaten festival and the food-mountains), the clock (*ngejaman*) in Yogyakarta's main street, Jalan Malioboro, and the sultan's palace. This focus on the local was cut off when the text appeared: 'TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta is now connecting to the Central TVRI Station in Jakarta.' The text made the link between the (regional) local and the national visible, simultaneously emphasizing the fact that TVRI Yogyakarta was not the centre nor was it independent.

Within this given context, every television station in the region claims a unique identity, so as to differentiate itself from the others. For instance, Jogja TV says that it uses up-to-date contemporary technologies, but never loses sight of local classic traditions. Brandishing its slogan 'Never-ending tradition' (*Tradisi tiada henti*), Jogja TV has made local content its most important asset and culture into its 'primadona' (Kusuma 2007).

TVRI Jogja forms a separate case. Founded in 1965 as TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, it was intended to develop culturally diverse programmes devised for local audiences. After the October 1965 political coup, it became totally dependent of the national TVRI station (Kitley 2003:98). In the post-Soeharto era, for many years the station found itself in a paradoxical situation, because of the outcome of a combination of tasks, requirements and facts that were incompatible with each other. In 2005, when the government decided on TVRI's status as a public broadcasting service,²⁵³ TVRI returned to its basic principle: the Indonesian public would be the be-all and end-all of its broadcasts. Herein would lie the difference with the private broadcasting services (Atmowiloto 2006). This new status did offer TVRI Yogya opportunities, even though it was still hampered by financial problems and would now also have to compete with local commercial broadcasters. With the slogan claiming TVRI Jogja is 'our public media' (*TVRI Jogja media publik kita*),²⁵⁴ the station profiled itself by focusing on culture, educating its audiences rather than just entertaining them, establishing a closer relationship with the public in all locations and of all social classes, and being non-

²⁵³ In 2005, a new government regulation (Peraturan Pemerintah nomor 13/2005), building on the 2002 Broadcasting Law, instructed TVRI to become a public broadcasting service (Lembaga Penyiaran Publik, LPP, also called TV Publik). See also Darmanto 2009, Sukirman 2006.

²⁵⁴ Recently the slogan became '*TVRI Jogja memang istimewa*', which in 2016 was Javanized in '*TVRI Jogja pancen istimewa*' (TVRI Jogja is indeed special) (see Chapter 11).

commercial. As in the past, it continually reconfirmed its strong link to the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Before the changes, the station had been popular because of its broadcasts of Javanese performances, like wayang kulit and kethoprak, and of programmes considered to be typical representations of Yogyakartaan Javanese identity. In its new guise, it was looking for new possibilities to fill in the concept of *muatan lokal*. On the other hand, it did its utmost to keep its old successes going. These included the serialized *Kethoprak Sayembara*, then still a new media genre, based on traditional kethoprak (see Chapter 5), and *Obrolan Angkring*, a programme with a strong local content, categorized as local entertainment, featuring actual themes in a local setting (see Chapter 3). As TVRI Jogja did no longer have to comply with Indonesian government requirements, it looked for new, local partners.

Icons referring to the locality are used in the branding of the local television stations, as can be seen in the stations' identification and in the leaders of programmes featuring local content. The images and sounds conveying (part of) this construct include historical, cultural and natural landmarks, important events and ceremonies and gamelan music. In this respect, TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV differ from each other only in the selection and editing of the icons, not in the way they represent the locale and link themselves to this representation. All the while, the nation remained 'an important unit of representation, legislation, and collective address' (Mazzarella 2004:352). Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin argue that this is especially the case in those countries 'where the state has been the prime actor in the creation and regulation of media networks' (2002:11), and this is true of Indonesia. Although representing Javanese identity and addressing ethnic Javanese audiences in (a section of) their programming, the larger frame of reference of the local broadcasters is Indonesia, their main language of communication is the national language, Indonesian. Even in Javanese broadcasts – that represent only a limited percentage of the entire programming – this still lingers on in the background.

I shall now examine three other strategies that are used to localize television and to represent the local, namely: the localization of global formats, the featuring of local cultures and the establishment of local alliances.

2 Localizing global formats

When television as a technology was imported into Indonesia, existing formats of media genres like news programmes, talk shows, foreign film productions and advertisements were adopted and localized, meaning they were Indonesianized. This introduced the global alongside the national as yet another larger frame of reference. Later, the local television stations adopted these global formats to the regional circumstances, in Yogyakarta this meant that some of the formats were Javanized and identity markers specific to Yogyakarta were added to them. In order to understand how global television categories like news programmes and talk shows were adapted to the local circumstances, it is necessary to study what precisely made them into 'culturally specific' genres that were 'temporally limited' (Feuer 1992:139).

News programmes

One of the means to address local identity and to attract local audiences is by focusing on local news. News is a crucial element in the construction of regional audiences (Johnson and Fickers 2010:100). Therefore, television programmes featuring local news from a local point of view and presented in Javanese were a novelty. In this case, local should be read as sub-national, referring to a restricted geographical and cultural space.

In their tracking of indigenization processes in Asian television programming, Chan and Ma signal the function of local television news as the basis for national consensus and solidarity (Chan and Ma 1996:51). This is also what used to happen in Indonesia. Local should be read here as domestic, national. Until the late 1990s, the production and dissemination of news in Indonesia was controlled by the Indonesian government. News formed the heart of the television programme schedule at that time (McDaniel 1994:242). The transmitting of the national TVRI news had been compulsory for all television stations, and only some local radio stations broadcast news programmes in local languages.

Slowly but surely TVRI's news monopoly was weakened by the growth of competition. For commercial reasons, at the outset the private broadcasters experimented in the fringes (Sanyoto 2002:88) of the state monopoly and claimed part of the news space by broadcasting alternative news bulletins, at first focusing on soft news and human interest stories.²⁵⁵ These news bulletins were also presented in Indonesian. Other alternatives to the national news programmes were the foreign news broadcasts received by satellite dish (Kitley 2000:211, Sen and Hill 2000) and spill-over transmissions from neighbouring countries (Kitley 2000:212).

The local news market became more competitive after the actual implementation of the 2002 Broadcasting Law. In 1 December 2009, for example, SCTV began broadcasting a local version of its early morning news programme *Liputan 6* five days a week in Yogyakarta. It was presented in Indonesian and targeted viewers from the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Solo and Klaten. It focused on regional cultural items, including those with an artistic or cultural flavour (Widiyarso 2009), light subjects and information on culinary topics and artistic expressions like music and comedy. *Liputan 6 Yogyakarta* also offered room for 'citizen journalism', consisting of light audiovisual news from the public from Yogyakarta and its surroundings (SpLoclNews/PRSCVT 2009). But also TATV (Terang Abadi Televisi), based in Surakarta and using two transmission towers the most powerful of which is located in Pathuk, Yogyakarta, fished in the same pond. It broadcast news programmes in several styles and speech levels of Javanese, depending on the target audiences and the topics. Besides, its programme *Jogja Hari ini* – broadcast daily from 18.00 to 18.30 hrs, except on Sundays when it broadcast *Jogja sepekan* at the same slot – was directly targeting the inhabitants of Yogyakarta.

²⁵⁵ The first alternative news programme was RCTI's *Seputar Jakarta* (Around Jakarta) that later developed into *Seputar Indonesia* (Around Indonesia). See Kitley (2000:260-262), Atkins (2002:100), Sanyoto (2002:88). It became RCTI's biggest source of income after it was developed into a current affairs programme (Atkins 2002:100).

During the New Order, news programmes ‘serenaded the activities of state officials and promoted the state ideology’ (Kitley 2003:100). In the private television industry, news had become a commodity and was used by media-owners to secure their economic and political interests (Ignatius Haryanto 2011:108). This was equally the case with the new local private television broadcasters.

The local news programmes reported on events in the region: political events (elections), the local economy (a good cacao harvest, the rising price of rice), natural disasters, crime, local cultural expressions and social and religious events like weddings or circumcision ceremonies. The topics were presented in an adaptation of the standard global news format. They consisted of a studio presentation of the themes, followed by a more detailed coverage of each topic. Every item was covered by the screening of visual footage, shot in locale, accompanied by a voice-over of the local reporter, sometimes with an interview with an official, a specialist or a person involved in the topic concerned. Both private and public broadcasters showed the advertisements of their sponsors during the news programme. The big difference lay in the style of presentation and the language use according to the station and the programme.

While the national TVRI station used to transmit *Berita Nusantara*, a news broadcast featuring local and regional news, presented in Indonesian, as were the national news (*Berita Nasional*) and the news of the world (*Dunia dalam Berita*), the new local television institutions and the regional TVRI stations provided news in local languages.

As speakers of Javanese highly value the correct use of language etiquette, several considerations had to be taken into account when deciding on the ‘mode of direct address’ (Tolson 2006:7) to be used in Javanese news bulletins. To keep the audiences watching, ‘the onus is then on broadcasters to speak to us in ways we want to be spoken to, in ways which enhance our domestic environments and do not detract from them’ (Tolson 2006:8). This implies that it is crucial that television stations meticulously assess which language style best fits the expectations of the viewers. After all, as Tolson states (2006:16), identities are ascribed to audiences in the ways they are addressed. The controversy caused by the use of the Surabayan dialect in *Pojok Kampung*, a news programme of the afore-mentioned JTV Surabaya, is a good illustration of the significance and impact of language choice in a news programme. Lingual etiquette was the touchstone that elicited either praise or criticism of the audiences (Arps and Van Heeren 2006:309), and ‘in particular the coarseness or even offensiveness of its language’ was commented upon (Arps and Van Heeren 2006:313).²⁵⁶

Speakers of Javanese use a complicated system of rules and conventions governing language use to express degrees of politeness, courtesy, respect or appreciation towards the person(s) one is addressing or referring to (Arps et al. 2000:31). For that purpose, they have different speech styles at their disposal; *ngoko*, *basa* and *basa madya* are the main ones. *Ngoko* is used in familiar circumstances. *Basa* is spoken when one wants to be very polite. The use of *basa* can also be affected by ideological grounds, as I have discussed in Chapter 2. The intermediate speech style is called *basa madya*.

²⁵⁶ See also Hoogervorst (2008:74-5) on this topic.

In order to decide on the speech style to be used in its Javanese news programme, TVRI Jogja organized a seminar. The outcome of the discussions was that TVRI Jogja should use the polite and refined speech style, *basa*.²⁵⁷ TVRI was convinced that inhabitants of Yogyakarta would be unwilling to accept the use of *ngoko* in a television programme, as this speech style was only used in communication with persons with whom one is familiar.²⁵⁸ The choice of *basa* might have been influenced by the link between the image of the station and the court-related (*adiluhung*) branding of Yogyakarta.²⁵⁹ Jogja TV – possibly because of its connection to the *kraton* – also opted for the use of the polite speech style, to show its respect for its audiences, it explained.

That the use of Javanese speech styles other than *basa* in news programmes in fact does not have to be a hindrance to the viewers was proved by the news broadcasts of TATV. Its morning news, *Kabar Awan*, and evening news, *Kabar wengi*, were presented in colloquial Javanese. While the news topics were introduced in *ngoko*, the speech style intended for use in familiar circumstances, some of the discussions with audiences who called the station to air their comments and opinions were held in *basa*. TATV's daily evening news, *Kabar Wengi*, highlighting the crime news in Surakarta, Yogyakarta and Magelang, used *ngoko* throughout the entire programme. TATV's daily afternoon news programme, *Trang Sandyakala*, featuring news about the former residency of Surakarta²⁶⁰ and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, was presented in the very polite Javanese.

Every day at prime time,²⁶¹ Jogja TV broadcasts *Pawartos Ngayogyakarta*, the Yogyakarta News. It was just one of Jogja TV's news programmes presented in Javanese, alongside *Pawartos Enjing* and *Pawartos Sonten*, the morning and the afternoon news.²⁶² Jogja TV also broadcasts a local news programme in Indonesian, *Seputar Jogja*. *Seputar Jogja* is categorized as hard news, offering the latest updates on politics, economics and current events happening in Yogyakarta and its surrounding areas in a formal way. The television station categorizes *Pawartos Ngayogyakarta* as soft news, as it presents items concerning human interest, local history, art and culture, and local events in an entertaining style. These items alternate with advertisement blocks, and commercial sponsors are mentioned in running text banners as well. *Pawartos Ngayogyakarta* is presented by newsreaders, male or female, wearing an outfit inspired by traditional Javanese dress, and it follows a fixed format, that over the years remained the same. The presenter in the studio opens the programme, addressing the audiences with 'Salam Indonesia' (Hello Indonesia) (Figure 10.1). Komisaris Oka Kusumayudha said that the purpose of this greeting and of the pin of the red and white Indonesian flag worn by the news readers, is to define the television station's branding: The local identity is presented as part of the Indonesian identity.²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Personal communication Agus Kismadi, July 2012.

²⁵⁸ Personal communication RM Kristiadi, 23 March 2009.

²⁵⁹ On the *adiluhung* character of Javanese, see Chapter 2.

²⁶⁰ 'se-eks Karesidenan Surakarta', as TATV calls it.

²⁶¹ In 2009 at 19.30 hrs., in 2014 at 19.00 hrs.

²⁶² At present both programmes are not broadcast anymore.

²⁶³ Personal communication Oka Kusumayudha, 13 March 2009.



10.1 Jogja TV - *Pawartos Ngayogyakarta*: Salam Indonesia!

Pawartos Ngayogyakarta combines the polite speech style of Javanese with a swift and dynamic style of presentation, while the prosody follows a kind of international standard for the reading of news programmes, not the prosody that was once connected to the use of *basa* and/or traditional settings. Sometimes during interviews, other speech styles might be used, depending on the interlocutors. With a market-seller, for example, the reporter uses the intermediate speech style *basa madya*. Often the interviewees speak Indonesian, usually with a strong Javanese accent. Possibly, the televised news is considered to be an official environment in which one is unaccustomed to speaking Javanese; at least this was not done under the New Order. If Indonesian is spoken, the reporter at the locale summarizes the interview in the voice-over in *basa*.

All *Pawartos Ngayogyakarta* programmes include a sequence called *Awicarita*, in which Javanese shadow puppet characters are introduced to the public in a *wayang kulit*-like setting. Every episode used to close with the sequence *Pitutur*, containing traditional Javanese teachings on cultural values and moral behaviour, presented in both Javanese and Indonesian. These sequences within the news programme can be looked at from various angles. Both *Awicarita* and *Pitutur* add a unique local cultural flavour to the news programme. They refer to local traditional culture and values and a traditional Javanese manner of instruction (*piwulang*), and address *kearifan lokal* as the shared competence between producers and audiences. They confirm the link of Jogja TV to the kraton, considered the icon of Javanese culture and the centre of its preservation. At the other hand, these sequences can also be perceived as a continuation of the educational character of New Order broadcasting.

As it had become relatively independent of the national TVRI station, and perhaps inspired by the success of the other local TV stations, TVRI Jogja began broadcasting *Yogyawarta*, a thirty-minute daily news programme in Javanese. It focuses on issues of importance to village life, farming, health and local culture.²⁶⁴ The local TVRI station also broadcasts *Berita Jogja*, a news programme in Indonesian focusing on the locality of Yogyakarta. *Yogyawarta* is presented in a formal style, that does not deviate much from the TVRI news programmes of the New Order period. Similarly, the topics raised often still concern local government matters and include ceremonial news.

The local television stations did not confine their efforts solely to the Javanese culture of Yogyakarta, the (sub)cultures from its environs were not overlooked. The programme *Inyong Siaran*, produced and broadcast by Jogja TV, is a good example. It featured Banyumasan news about social and economic topics, art and culture, tourist sites and traditional food.²⁶⁵ Two female presenters in the Jogja TV studio introduced the topics. The studio recordings were alternated with audiovisual footage of the topics raised, with voice-overs by local reporters and interviews with local people. The language of presentation was the Javanese dialect characteristic of Banyumas. *Inyong Siaran* targeted students and other inhabitants of Yogyakarta of Banyumasan origin. Among audiences of non Banyumasan origin, the programme was popular because they liked the sound of the Banyumasan dialect.

As in his research on TVRI news programmes during the New Order period, Kitley focused on the national news bulletin, and not on *Berita Nusantara*, the news broadcast featuring local and regional news, a comparison with the Javanese news programmes examined here is not justifiable. Nevertheless, some characteristics of the national New Order news do seem to have been adopted by TVRI Jogja, quite a logical step as the station built on the practices of its predecessor, TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta. But also Jogja TV has adopted some of these characteristics, including featuring ceremonial events and officials (now local, whereas before state ceremonies and officials were featured) and retaining the still rather formal presentation style. Furthermore, the news programmes are neutral, scripted reportages, meaning the television journalists offer 'a scripted explanatory and descriptive narrative voiced over edited material recorded by the camera man or woman at the scene of the event' (Scannell 2009:E4). They refrain from any unscripted assessments, comments or critical reflections (Scannell 2009:E4). The use of Javanese, however formal, the more dynamic and personal approach of the presenters who introduce themselves to the viewers and the foregrounding of local issues are what make these news programmes different. TATV's Javanese news (and that of the afore-mentioned JTV) diverges from this distinguished Yogyakarta style.

Both types of broadcasters are aware news is a commodity, hence the importance of selling time slots to advertisers. In the case of private television, the news sequences are alternated with commercial breaks. The public broadcasting service presents the commercial sponsors after the news bulletin. Both also show advertisements in running texts.

²⁶⁴ Personal communication Agus Kismadi, June 2012.

²⁶⁵ Banyumas is located in the southwest of Central Java. Banyumasan is the adjectival form.

An examination of these Javanese news programmes reveals a double ‘vernacularization process’, a term coined by Appadurai (1996:102). Initially, the national television station adapted the global news format to local (Indonesian) circumstances. The TVRI news was characterized by a formal presentation style, the use of the national language and a focus on matters Indonesian. After Reformation and the establishment of regional autonomy, local broadcasters moved away from the national news presented in Indonesian. The methods they applied to localize the news, including the use of local languages and the choice of local topics and events, were determined by their specific area of reach. Generally speaking, their style of presentation became less formal and more relaxed, moving towards contemporary global presentation styles.

We may conclude that language use in the news programmes displays plenty of variety; it gives a voice to sub-cultures, no longer confining itself to the cultures of the court cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta and the main dialect of these courts that had become the standard Javanese. Jogja TV and TVRI Jogja have secured their status quo by opting for a conservative choice with the use of formal Javanese. In contrast the Javanese used in news broadcasts like TATV’s *Kabar Awan* and *Kabar Wengi* does reflect a trendier approach to the language. It ties in with the dialects and styles used by local radio stations and in contemporary artistic performances, both live and mediatized.

By choosing a certain format and offering a range of topics, these local news programmes have helped ‘to produce a feeling of belonging and cultural affiliation’ (Johnson and Fickers 2010:100). The framing of the programme, the language use and the costumes and body language of the news presenters supplemented the working of proximity.

Talk shows

Jogja TV’s *Pocung* and TVRI Jogja’s *Karang Tumaritis*, both live broadcasts, are examples of how the concept of a talk show has been Javanized. The programmes are based on a similar formula: An interactive dialogue, guided by a host who, with one or more specialists in the studio, discusses a topic and replies to phone calls from members of the external audiences. With these talk shows, by raising issues related to *kearifan lokal* (local wisdom), both television stations claim to have preserved the refined cultural heritage of the ancestors that is considered to be relevant in contemporary pluriform Yogyakarta.²⁶⁶

The title of the programme *Pocung* refers to a particular verse form in traditional Javanese poetry, *tembang macapat*; *Karang Tumaritis* refers to the home village of Semar, the quintessential god and clown in the Javanese wayang theatre. The leaders of *Pocung* and *Karang Tumaritis* frame the context – thereby defining the programme’s identity – by a combination of auditive and visual elements, all referring to aspects of Javanese culture: Gamelan music (performed on a gamelan or a keyboard), shadow puppetry, traditional literature and architecture.

²⁶⁶ As formulated in the 2012 programme descriptions of TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV.

The setting of *Pocung*, the music, the costumes, the formal language use including the prosody, the body language of the presenters and the style of discussion represent a courtly image of Javanese culture, associated with being aristocratic, refined and learned in specific topics. Javanese history, in particular court history, cultural heritage and etiquette are tackled seriously, and backed up by quotes from authorities. After the first slot with commercials, people from various areas in Yogyakarta and Surakarta phone in to ask questions. The majority speak *basa*.

Karang Tumaritis is presented in the studio of TVRI Jogja, in a setting composed of a mixture of traditional and modern elements. The atmosphere is less formal than in *Pocung*, and the specialists wear a contemporary variant of the traditional costume. Yogyakarta culture is a main topic of discussion, but ‘tradition’, its loss in contemporary Java and the urge to preserve it also crop up regularly (Figure 10.2). Other topics include Javanese culture in general, Islam and the younger generation(s). The show ends with announcements of the upcoming cultural performance agenda and a final message from Semar. Although the main presenter of the show speaks Javanese consistently, the language of communication among the guests is mixed: Javanese in different speech styles – *basa*, *madya* and *ngoko* – and sometimes Indonesian. As such, it approaches the continuous code-switching taking place in daily conversations among native speakers of Javanese in familiar circumstances. It seems that Indonesian is used as an escape route, when one automatically tends to speak in *ngoko* while the televisual context – according to the etiquette adhered by the programme participants – would not accept informal speech. According to the programme’s producer, the purpose of this natural use of code-switching was to create a more egalitarian atmosphere than that in the programme’s predecessor, *Pringgitan*, in which *basa* was used.²⁶⁷

The setting, the topics of discussion, the language use and the musical intermezzi are not the only parameters that define the degree of Javanese-ness of these talk shows. Proximity and familiarity are important factors in determining the local character of the broadcasts. The live intervention in the broadcasts by the phone-in, in which the callers mention their names and the locality in which they live, creates a specific link between the audiences at home and the ‘actors’ in the studio, between the broadcasting location and the habitat of the callers. Hence, ‘the relationship between spatial and virtual neighborhoods’ (Appadurai 1996:189) is fairly close-knit. Often, as in radio programmes, interactive guests who call in are recognized by the presenter of the talk show, either when they say their name or just by the sound of their voice. This gives an idea of the popularity of the shows, and of their scope and area of reach. Consequently, Bu Ayub from Kulonprogo and Pak Harjono from Plaosan play an important role in contributing to and confirming the local character of *Pocung* and *Karang Tumaritis* (Figure 10.3).

²⁶⁷ Personal communication RM Kristiadi, March 2009.



10.2 'Oh, you're afraid that *Karang Tumaritis* is too traditional!'



10.3 Jogja TV - *Pocung*: Bu Ayub from Kulonprogo phoning-in

3 Featuring local cultures

A third strategy to localize television and to represent the local consists of featuring local culture in various forms and formats: Traditional performance genres (wayang kulit; kethoprak), hybrid genres categorized and/or perceived as traditional (*campursari*, *pop Jawa*), as well as new media formats based on local traditional genres (*Obrolan Angkring*, *Cangkriman*). In this section I give examples of all three categories.

Local performing arts genres

To the television industry the presence of a large variety of cultural resources in Yogyakarta remained an enormous potential reservoir to be explored and transformed into interesting broadcasts.

The industry was well aware that Indonesian audiences have a long history of direct interaction with mediated forms other than television, for instance dramatic performance (Coutas 2006:387). The similarities between performance and television, both sharing a ‘huge capacity for oral performance techniques that foster a “doubleness of imagining”’ (Lindsay 2002:336), might have contributed to the success of these genres in the electronic media.

Just as broadcasting institutions did under the New Order, local television stations disseminated Javanese performing arts genres they categorized as traditional. TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV’s broadcasts of various kinds of local performance were nevertheless a world away from the uniform, neatly constructed TVRI representations of regional and local cultures that used to be recorded at the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah National Park in Jakarta. The stations’ approach to local culture also diverges from the perceptions of local culture extant in the New Order period. Above all, the success of the stations now depended ‘on their capacity to bring the richness of local cultural sites and practices to the screen’ (Ida 2011:20-21). Besides, local broadcasts were being used to counter the monopoly of the Jakarta-based television stations (Ida 2011:20-21). But also, broadcasts featuring local culture were increasingly being used to support regional politicians and other elites, as I show in the section about the establishment of local alliances.

However, to make these performances alluring to new, in particular, younger audiences, they were often adapted. For instance, Jogja TV recorded night-long live wayang kulit performances and broadcast them in daily one-hour episodes. It also broadcast kethoprak in a shortened version. It was designed to be reminiscent of watching a film in a cinema, according to Oka Kusumayudha. This new approach was meant to make wayang kulit broadcasts appealing to younger audiences living in the outskirts of the Special Region of Yogyakarta.²⁶⁸

TVRI Jogja had been broadcasting wayang kulit since its establishment, either as transmissions of live performances that were recorded on location with several cameras, or of studio performances, attended by audiences, recorded and edited before the transmission. The station continued its long-standing co-operation with other local media, the newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat* and the radio station RRI Yogyakarta, and with the Yogyakarta branch of the puppeteers’ association Pepadi (Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia) in its transmissions of wayang kulit performances from the court premises, the Sasana Hinggil Dwi Abad, every second Saturday of the month (Budhiarto and Murdoko 2009). These live transmissions were relayed by Jogja TV and RB TV (Marsono 2009). Hampered by a limited budget, for a while in 2011 TVRI Jogja abandoned the broadcasts. Nevertheless, the station continued to co-operate with local institutions and governments who organized shadow puppet performances for special occasions that were recorded and transmitted by the station. In short, joining in

²⁶⁸ Personal communication Oka Kusumayudha, 13 March 2009.

with local communities, it benefited doubly: it created close contacts with the agents involved and acquired cheap local content.

When audiences began comparing its wayang kulit broadcasts to those of private television stations, TVRI Yogyakarta did not always come out well of this comparison, as the private media had set a new norm for the mediation of traditional performing arts. They broadcast performances by popular, well-known puppeteers, supported by beautiful, neatly dressed female singers and young musicians. To recapture the attention of the audiences, TVRI Yogyakarta therefore tried various ways to innovate its wayang kulit broadcasts. Among these novelties was what was called *wayang kulit interaktif*, an initiative devised to augment audience participation in the TVRI broadcasts. During the broadcast of this new media genre in March 1999, by phoning in into the programme the public had the opportunity to influence the performance by making suggestions, expressing criticism and requesting musical pieces (*gendhing*). The *Obrolan Angkring* group led the interactive process (Jay 1999; nn 1999).

All kinds of other local performance genres were featured by the local television stations. Through their intervention these stations played an important role in preserving and developing traditional genres, and in supporting local performing artists (Kusuma 2007). One item on the programme to celebrate Jogja TV's third anniversary in 2007 was a three-day *jathilan* (horse dance) festival, held on the northern palace square in the city of Yogyakarta. The programme attracted plenty of attention from both potential festival participants and audiences (Dude 2007). The goal of the festival was to preserve local culture, in particular at grassroot level, and to promote a folk genre (*seni kreasi rakyat*) that was slowly but surely being neglected, claimed Jogja TV. Conforming to its motto, Jogja TV stated it was countering the increasing presence of foreign cultural elements, alleged to have unmistakably threatened the existence of local cultures, even persuading the local people to abandon the indigenous culture of their region. In making these statements, Jogja TV put itself on the same line as New Order ideology and discourse that continuously repeated the preservation of local culture discourse and the need to keep external, potentially negative cultural influences at bay. This ideological stance actually camouflaged the broadcaster's use of local culture for purely commercial ends.

Local events considered to be of great importance were paid special attention in separate programmes. For two days, on 8 and 9 May 2008, Jogja TV covered the wedding of the third daughter of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana X. In between the consecutive ceremonies, in Jogja TV's studio specialists discussed the Javanese wedding ceremony (Pribadi 2008). This shows that not only the newsworthiness of the event was decisive for Jogja TV to cover it, beside confirming the station's link to the court, but also the cultural background. In 2010 Jogja TV claimed it would broadcast the Sekaten and Garebeg Maulud ceremonies, that commemorate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, live and exclusively; the same events would also feature in the music programme *Langenswara*. In its announcement of the programmes, Jogja TV's website gave a short introduction to the ceremonies.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ <http://www.jogjatv.tv/berita/14/04/2010/jogja-tv-live-sekaten-dan-garebeg-maulud> [Last accessed May 2010].

Hybrid genres categorized as traditional

A different kind of entertainment that gives expression to local identity could be found in programmes featuring traditional music genres (putting amateur gamelan groups in the spotlight in Jogja TV's *Langen Laras*), regional pop music (in TVRI Jogja's *Pop Daerah*) and music considered traditional like campursari. Campursari is performed in residential areas in which the majority of the population are ethnic Javanese, in Yogyakarta and Central and East Java (Supanggih 2003:1). In this case, local content is determined by ethnicity and social class rather than locality. All television stations in Yogyakarta used to have at least one campursari programme. The televising of this music genre boosted the fame of certain campursari artists and led to a rise in the number of live performances of campursari groups (Djadoeri 2005).

New media formats based on local traditional genres

Local traditional performance genres inspired the TV producers to create new television genres that in all their aspects – the setting, actors, characters, topics, presentation, audiences and sponsors – catered to mediated Javaneseness.

Obrolan Angkring, discussed in Chapter 3, was one of the rare programmes that have been able to bridge the transition from the New Order period to the Reformation with all its changes in the Indonesian televisionscape. Broadcast regularly, with only an absence of six months between January and June 2001,²⁷⁰ its strong Yogyakarta-affiliated content was considered to contribute to the *genius loci* ((cr11) 2001a). Categorized as local entertainment (Jay 2000), it featured 'real' 'Javanese' actors, trained to perform in Javanese for Javanese audiences, well versed in Javanese jokes and puns. They acted and improvised in the typically Javanese way of performing traditional drama on stage, in this case mediated by television. The audiences were familiar with this kind of acting and joking and appreciated it greatly. Those present in the TVRI studio during the recordings were directly involved in the show in several ways: their laughter during the joking became part of the show, they took part in a lottery for the *Obrolan Angkring* T-shirt contest and, at the end of the performance, the food at the foodstall was shared with the audience, making the 'common man [...] part of the event' (Bosnak 2006:110). Lastly, the show was sponsored by local entrepreneurs.

The local stations kept on creating new programmes that concentrated on the culture of the area within reach, linked to tradition – mainly in the sense of Thompson's hermeneutic and identity aspects of tradition. Since 2010 the Javanese-language quizz *Cangkriman*, a weekly one-hour programme of TVRI Jogja, has striven to keep traditions alive and to discuss Javanese language and culture on a high level, all done in a sympathetic and civilized atmosphere, as the programme criteria note. The quiz tests the knowledge of the participants

²⁷⁰ RM Kristiadi said the TVRI management banned the programme because of its outspoken social criticism (Personal communication RM Kristiadi, March 2009). When it was replaced by *Teve Kafe*, the programme's many fans protested. The newspaper *Minggu Pagi* declared this showed that the station's management did take their audiences seriously when making decisions about programming (Rachman 2001).

in four domains: Javanese culture and tradition (*Mbabar Kawruh*); Javanese speech styles, requiring the participants to give the very polite *krama inggil* variants of *ngoko* words (*Kerata Basa*); wayang characters, presented by a puppeteer behind a screen (*Bapak Pucung*); and their mastery of polite Javanese, with questions chosen by the audiences who attend the recording of the show in the studio (*Lantip Waskita*). A team of specialists adjudicates the answers. The keroncong orchestra, Prisma, and a female singer keep the spirits of the participants and the audiences up. For its content, TVRI Jogja co-operates with the Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta and the local Language Centre, and for the sponsorship of the show and the prizes for the participants with local enterprises that manufacture local articles like batik. The quiz-master and the participants (two female, two male) interact with each other in *basa*, in a fluent, intellectual and easy-going atmosphere, away from the prosody and body language that is appropriate to the *adiluhung* ideology I discussed in Chapter 2. The example of *Cangkriman* proves that programmes in which *basa* is spoken can succeed in connoting modernity and informality in a polite way.

4 Establishing local alliances

A fourth strategy to localize television and to represent the local is achieved by setting up alliances with artists and audiences, enterprises and advertisers, administration, government and other local institutions, production houses and so on.

Popular local artists – dancers, musicians, theatre and television personalities – are invited by local television stations to act as hosts of and entertainers in shows. Dancer-entertainer Didik Nini Thowok explained the inherent mutual loyalty and co-operation, in particular between TVRI and local artists. TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta had been very important to him personally at the beginning of his career. The station had acted as a patron, providing him with opportunities to display his new creations on screen. He was happy to continue the good relationship and help out TVRI whenever they needed a host who, because of his popularity, would attract large audiences, even though the honorarium available was only small.²⁷¹ Other artists think the same way. Nevertheless, this loyalty does not stop the artists from performing in the productions of other TV stations in Yogyakarta and elsewhere. For instance, on the occasion of Jogja TV's first anniversary, Didik Nini Thowok performed the opening dance.

For many artists from Yogyakarta, television has been an important medium that has underpinned their work. The tight relationship between television and traditional performing arts has assumed influential proportions in the survival of these artistic genres. Television has played a decisive role in keeping the art forms alive or letting them disappear. The local television stations themselves needed a strong dose of idealism when programming regional culture, as they constantly ran the risk that low ratings would influence advertising (Kusuma 2007).

²⁷¹ Personal communication Didik Nini Thowok, March 2009.

'Live' contact with local communities is essential to the local TV stations. It allows the stations to relate directly to their audiences 'in specific, inclusive, and cooperative ways' (Hutchby 2006:10-12). Making outdoor recordings and broadcasting from local landmarks enable mutual identification and bonding, particularly when the public is involved in the programme. This is equally true of the off-air activities organized by the television stations, to celebrate the station's anniversary, for instance, or to make a contribution to social welfare. The alliance is strengthened particularly when audiences are given an active role in the programmes as performers: reacting to the show as they attend the recording in the television studio, phoning-in to programmes with requests, questions and comments, or performing as a musician with the local gamelan group in a televised music programme. More recently, Facebook and other social media have begun to play an influential role in linking audiences to television stations and to specific programmes.

Moeran (referring to Bourdieu) argues that these activities show the inextricable link between the economic and cultural characteristics of the medium television. When they participate in and report on special events, the television stations accumulate cultural and social capital (Moeran 2001:29-30). By associating themselves with these events and their sponsors, the stars and artists involved and the audiences, they 'create [their] own cultural logic and currency which can be converted by recognized rates of exchange into economic capital' (Moeran 2001:29-30). Particularly when applied to Javanese television stations and their off-air activities this view makes good sense, as this area has the largest audience potential in Indonesia. In the long run, close contacts with its audiences from various social, cultural and economic backgrounds might result in economic profit.

Generating income and local content

Lack of funding and lack of content are among the problems with which local television industries have to contend. To generate income from local sponsors on a regular basis, several strategies are employed by the local television stations. Establishing contracts with local government authorities, political elites and educational institutes is one of those strategies to guarantee a regular source of funding. The local authorities buy time slots and deliver contents – and sometimes also audiences – , while the television stations take care of the technical aspects of mediation and the actual broadcasts. Both private local television and local TVRI have been fishing in the same pond and engage with the same authorities and business partners.

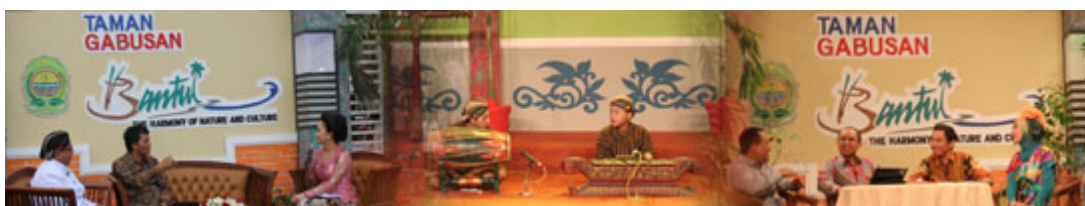
An important source of income for the private stations is generated by the advertisements of local and national enterprises. One of the principal objectives of the 2002 Broadcasting Law was to create opportunities for local businesses to derive profit from the local commercial television stations by advertising, thereby acquiring a share of the advertisement cake. Initially it was rather an uphill battle for the local TV stations in Yogyakarta to attract local advertisers, but slowly their interest of the latter grew. However, contracting national companies for the commercial slots was more rewarding than courting local companies, on the levels of income, impact, and prestige. The sorts of products advertised in either local or

localized commercials include tea and coffee, traditional medicine and beauty products, and local financial services (Figure 10.4).



10.4 Teh Kepala Jenggot (Tea Commercial) (Pawartos Ngayogyakarta)

Both TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV have co-operated with the local government authorities to generate income. After decentralization, these authorities had become more powerful – Ida (2011:21) calls them ‘local “little kings”’. In collaboration with the local television stations, they communicate local government policies and development programmes to the public, and reap political benefits and prestige.



Jadwal siaran acara Taman Gabusan di TVRI Jogja setiap hari Selasa pukul 16.00 WIB.

Hari/Tanggal	Tema	Tempat	Keterangan
Selasa Pahing, 28 Mar 2017	HUT RS Panembahan Senopati	Studio 1 TVRI Yogyakarta Jl. Magelang km 4.5 Yogyakarta	Narasumber 1. Wakil Bupati Bantul 2. Direktur RS Panembahan Senopati Bantul
Selasa Kliwon, 21 Mar 2017	Dukungan Sistem Informasi Desa terhadap keterbukaan informasi publik	Studio 1 TVRI Yogyakarta Jl. Magelang km 4.5 Yogyakarta	Narasumber 1. Nugroho Eko Setyanto SSos, MM (Kepala Dinas Kominfo Bantul) 2. Elanto Wajoyono (CRI)
Selasa Pon, 14 Mar 2017	Jelang Musda Dekranasda Kabupaten Bantul 2017	Studio 1 TVRI Yogyakarta Jl. Magelang km 4.5 Yogyakarta	Narasumber 1. Hj. Erna Suharsono (Ketua Dekranasda Kab. Bantul) 2. Amir Panzuri (Ketua Panitia Musda Dekranasda Kab. Bantul th 2017)
Selasa Wage, 24 Mei 2017	Bersama Lansia dan untuk Lansia	TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta	Nara sumber 1. Bapak Drs. Sulistiyo, SH, CN, M.Si (Asisten I Bidang Pemerintahan dan Kesra DIY) 2. Bapak H. Abdul Halim Muslih (Ketua Komda Lansia Kab. Bantul) 3. Bapak Drs. Wagiyo, SH (Ketua Panitia Peringatan Halun Kab. Bantul)

10.5 TVRI Jogja’s *Taman Gabusan* schedule at the Bantul government site

The format of a talk show has often been used to feature local authorities and institutions; it has no complicated technical requirements, is easy to organize and to mediate, and cheap to produce. The shows are sponsored by a direct allocation to the television stations from the budgets of the regional Representative Councils (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD). The informative content is mixed with performances of local dance and music genres.

TVRI Jogja as well as Jogja TV have a co-operation with the government of the Bantul regency of Yogyakarta. TVRI Jogja broadcasts *Taman Gabusan*, whose schedule is published on the site of the Bantul government administration, listing the programme themes and the names of the speakers (Figure 10.5).²⁷² In 2009, both Jogja TV and RB TV relayed this weekly thirty-minute programme.²⁷³ Jogja TV broadcasts *Gardu Projotamansari*, a co-operation with the Bantul Representative Council. The programme is announced on the DPRD website and its Facebook page.²⁷⁴ 'Political' advertisements for local and regional elections candidates and live debates between these candidates are another interesting source of income for television stations. These co-operations between TV and sponsoring local government authorities do however receive criticism, as they are undoubtedly a restriction on the broadcasters' independence, not to mention their critical stance.

A good example of a programme with a strong local identity that floats on an alliance with a local political party is TVRI Jogja's *Pangkur Jenggleng*.

Pangkur Jenggleng

The programme came into being in 2003. When Amien Rais, a former leader of Muhammadiyah (a major Islamic NGO in Indonesia) and then chairman of the PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, the National Mandate Party) ran for the presidency, he needed local backing and proposed to TVRI Jogja to make a joint programme featuring local culture.²⁷⁵ Initially the co-operation was in the hands of the Pusat Informasi Amien Rais (PIAR), the Amien Rais Center, a Yogyakarta-based institution (Figure 10.6). Later it was taken over by the Hanafi Rais Center, run by Amien Rais's son Hanafi (who stood for the local elections in 2011 but lost). The centre has a strong Islamic background.

²⁷² <https://bantulkab.go.id/tamangabusan/> [Last accessed March/April 2017]

²⁷³ TVRI Jogja programme description 2012.

²⁷⁴ <http://dprd.bantulkab.go.id/> [Last accessed April 2017]. See also: <https://www.facebook.com/1294823603895682/photos/a.1350585358319506.1073741841.1294823603895682/1350585444986164/?type=3&theater> [Last accessed April 2017].

²⁷⁵ Personal communication RM Kristiadi, 27 June 2012.



10.6 TVRI Jogja - *Pangkur Jenggleng*:
Symbol and running banner of sponsor PIAR

TVRI categorizes *Pangkur Jenggleng* as staged comedy (*komedi panggung*).²⁷⁶ The programme combines local entertainment with discussions relevant to everyday life. These are linked to social phenomena and current events occurring in Javanese society.²⁷⁷ Each episode is carried by two comedians and several guest stars, and features a story containing a comic dispute, a discussion on a cultural topic and a moral, conveyed by an old wise man (Figure 10.7).



10.7 Come here and I will tell you – ‘Kene, kene, tak kandhani’
TVRI Jogja - *Pangkur Jenggleng*: Pak Ngabdul instructing those present

The title refers to comedian Basiyo of the local radio station Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), who became famous for his *Pangkur Jenggleng*, a comic performance of a traditional

²⁷⁶ Compare to TVRI’s categorization of kethoprak as *drama panggung*, staged drama (<http://anangwiharyanto.wordpress.com/>) [Last accessed 2012].

²⁷⁷ Personal communication Heruwati, 11 July 2012.

gamelan piece, *pangkur*. It joined in with the popularity of the radio broadcast *Pangkur Jenggleng*. The programme features all kinds of traditional Javanese performance genres: *karawitan* (gamelan music), *sindhenan* (female vocalizing) and *macapatan* (singing of traditional Javanese poetry), dance, *lawak* (comedy), sometimes *pedhalangan* (shadow puppetry) and kethoprak, all performed by local artists. The music that accompanies the performers is played by the orchestra of the local radio station, the Karawitan RRI Yogyakarta. As the producer wants the show to exude a traditional aura, contemporary campursari has been re-modified into more classical gamelan style music. The performers speak different styles of Javanese in a very natural sounding way, and sometimes a mixture of Javanese, Indonesian and English, as people would do in daily conversations with persons with whom they are familiar.

The programme is characterized by Javanese humour, involving the musicians and the audiences in the studio directly – hence its popularity among the audiences. A few years ago, the waiting-list to attend the studio recording was one year; at the moment of investigation about three months. Everything is done to include the viewers in what happens on stage and give them a good time, to enable them to identify with the expressions of (traditional) Javanese and to make them captive, ready to receive the messages, together with the audiences at home. The audiences are recruited from local Muslim communities, mosques and Quran classes. The majority consist of women, elderly men and children, all wearing the uniform of the group to which they belong, often Muslim attire (Figures 10.8 and 10.9).



10.8 *Pangkur Jenggleng*: Audiences in the studio (December 2009)



10.9 *Pangkur Jenggleng*: Audiences in the studio

The sponsor Hanafi Rais, who usually attends the recordings, is regularly addressed during the programme, and the dialogues contain direct references to the medium of television, more specifically to TVRI Jogja. The centre takes care of the honoraria of the guest stars who perform in the show. TVRI claims that there is no direct relationship between the programme contents and the sponsor, a statement that obviously chooses to neglect the presence of persuasive messages in some of *Pangkur Jenggleng*'s episodes. A running banner with the name of Rais' organization frequently appears on the screen, visually affirming his sponsorship. Several slots in the broadcast are filled with advertisements for local banks and catering facilities, the other sponsors of the show.

Several interpretations for the popularity of the show have been given. They touch on Javanese-ness, proximity and the local, and nostalgia. Hanafi Rais has claimed that *Pangkur Jenggleng* is the most popular programme at TVRI Jogja. He attributes this to the fact it features local performance genres that belong to the Javanese.²⁷⁸ According to the head of the station, the programme has achieved such heights of popularity because it reveals the true meaning of local strength and identity. At a time when everybody owns a TV set, television audiences appreciate programmes that feature local culture, he explained ((hrd) 2003). Bondan Nusantara thinks that there is another reason *Pangkur Jenggleng* attracts these large audiences. Whereas most programmes try to persuade television viewers to turn into consumers, in this case TVRI Jogja offers the audiences space to gather in front of the stage, watch the performance together and interact with the performers – just as used to be the case in non-mediated traditional performances.²⁷⁹

Pangkur Jenggleng exemplifies how a televised performance categorized as traditional plays a role in ‘negotiating local power, money and religion’ (Richter 2006:188-189). The alliance between TVRI Jogja as a public service broadcaster and the Hanafi Rais Center as representative of a political party has however elicited critical reactions from the public and the press. Hanafi Rais himself has said he sponsors the show because he is a devotee of traditional Javanese art. But it is exactly this sponsorship that calls the neutrality of TVRI as a public service broadcaster into question. After it had become independent and neutral as required by the 2002 Broadcasting Law and the 2006 Government Regulation, TVRI should have left government and political party services behind.²⁸⁰ Whereas under the New Order period in its programming the government station supported Golkar, the party of the civil servants, it had now turned its attention to a local political party. While Hanafi Rais did deny his support for *Pangkur Jenggleng* was for purely electoral purposes, election campaigns were actually discussed in several broadcasts ((Cdr)-s 2009); the *Pangkur Jenggleng* guest stars invited the audiences in the studio and at home to support specific candidates in the Indonesian parliamentary and presidential elections (*Kenapa TVRI* 2014). Despite this overt electioneering, in its public relations the television station itself has continued to stress the importance of maintaining an independent and neutral character ((E013/M008) 2010). The advertisements in the commercial slots contradict yet another requirement of the Broadcasting Law, that it should be of a non-commercial character. Lastly, public television should provide services in the public interest and offer space for multicultural and pluriform contents, and not for political or economic interests ((IRE) 2010). But neither the legislative power nor the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission seem to have had the power to stem the tide of these developments.

²⁷⁸ Personal communication Hanafi Rais, 2 July 2012. See also *Pangkur Jenggleng* 2012.

²⁷⁹ Personal communication Bondan Nusantara, 2 July 2012.

²⁸⁰ On TVRI’s lack of neutrality, see also Veven Wardhana 2002:163 ff.

11 Mediating the local: Concluding remarks

Two main issues are dealt with in these concluding remarks. The first one is a practical issue and questions the actual effects of the 2002/2007 Broadcasting Law on presentations of Javanese performance and representations of Javanese in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The second issue is more theoretical. It concerns the intricate link between the Javanese local and proximity in televisual production practices in Indonesia. This link is crucial to the framing of ideologies, to identifying practices of the television industry, to addressing the audience in metadiscourse on local performing arts genres and in the representation of Javanese. I shall reflect on the purport of the local and how it is shaped in the context of that part of the television industry under investigation. And I shall consider the factors that could enhance proximity in the processes of producing the local. Representations of Javanese will be the theme of the Epilogue.

1 How local is local broadcasting?

The analysis of Javanese television programmes in Part III shows how the concept of the local acquired meaning(s) in the practices of the television industries and in the actual processes of mediation. The localizing strategies discussed there are not new. They had already been successfully applied by the national and regional TVRI stations ever since they were set up, and also (partly) by the private television industry, as I have demonstrated in Part I and II. The change lies in the availability of a large potential for the choices offered to the television audiences. Compared to broadcasting in the New Order period, the establishment of local private television stations has introduced not only a diversification of the Indonesian commercial television networks in general. On a smaller, much more local level, it has enabled another kind of diversification, making more space (and air time) available for local content in the literal sense of the word, for local expressions of culture, and local language varieties and dialects, serving up more diversified kinds of news, information and entertainment. In the case of the Special Region of Yogyakarta this means that not only is 'Javanese' culture represented, it can now be Javanese culture from Banyumas, for instance, with its own characteristics and dialect. Another example is that Yogyakarta performance genres are tailored to Yogyakarta audiences. Under the New Order period, television promoted the building of a national identity and focused on the unity of the country, the nation and the national language, but nowadays much more attention has turned to diversity. The emphasis in the national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, shifted from the oneness, the *tunggal*, to the diversity, the *bhinneka*. Hence, local broadcasts address and represent Javanese identities, rather than one Javanese identity – the former idea of homogeneous local cultures has been put aside. However, the larger frame of reference remains the nation, Indonesia, the Indonesian language and legislation.

Although the televisual situation in Yogyakarta is very specific and cannot be generalized, it can still be compared to television in other parts of Indonesia in which similar processes are happening: local television stations, despite their use of global technology and television formats, and despite their commercial interests, do offer a much more diversified representation of local identities in the content and form of their programmes than used to be the case under the New Order regime, indeed more than is acknowledged in contemporary public discourse led by local intellectuals.²⁸¹

Nevertheless, a few critical comments are in order. After Krishna Sen and David Hill had interviewed media workers and audiences in Yogyakarta in the 1990s, they concluded that ‘neither saw their “locale” reflected in the nation’s media’ (Sen and Hill 2000:16). In my discussions with media workers in 2009, I discovered that they felt their locale was reflected in the media, but not often enough and not yet as diversified as was meant by the 2002 Broadcasting Law. After all local content – relating to the locus of Yogyakarta and its cultures – still takes up just a small percentage of the entire programming. Moreover, it took almost a decade before the 2002 Broadcasting Law began to be fully implemented – meaning that private TV stations licensed to broadcast only locally actually did so; in the period under scrutiny in this part, covering the decade after 1998, ‘the giants’ in Jakarta were still broadcasting nationwide. This did have repercussions for the diversity of ownership and content. The new broadcast legislation was intended to enforce this diversity of content and ownership. Its goal was to provide the audiences with alternatives, enabling them to choose between more diversified kinds of news, information and entertainment, and to participate actively in the production and consumption of media products. It was expected that a reorganization of the Indonesian mediascape would lead to a democratization, deconcentration and decentralization of the media. Local broadcasting was given priority; the ‘Jakartan’ monopoly had to be broken. Looking at the consequences this had for the private local broadcasters, in this case Jogja TV, and local public stations, in this case TVRI Jogja, we could ask questions about whether these aims have been achieved.

I shall begin by looking at the diversity of content, summarizing how the local is represented by TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV. For the first time in the history of Indonesian television, the news was presented in the Javanese vernacular. Earlier, the national TVRI news and the news bulletins of the Jakarta-based private TV stations had always been presented in Indonesian. Only in a limited number of other broadcasts Javanese was used as well. Both stations present a variety of local cultures and sub-cultures. Depending on the programme genre, the topic and the target audiences, multiple styles of Javanese language have been used, ranging from the very polite to the colloquial, and to mixtures of Javanese and Indonesian as they occur in everyday conversation. Room is given to non-standard sociolects (like youth language) and dialects (like Banyumasan). By doing so, the television stations have paved the way for the diversification of Javanese in official contexts away from the Central Javanese dialect that for a long time had functioned as ‘the’ standard. Viewed positively, local television in twenty-first century Indonesia has contributed to imbuing

²⁸¹ This is in line with Suryadi’s conclusion about ‘the (re)presentation of regionalism in Indonesian radio’ (2005:150-51).

Javanese with a modern, lively and dynamic aura, achieving a ‘defolklorization’ of regional languages in the media (Arps and Van Heeren 2006:314; Hoogervorst 2008:72). This development fits into the trend of an increasing use of Javanese in contemporary popular cultural expressions, like hip hop and pop music. We should realize, however, that broadcasts featuring Javanese performances remain marginal phenomena. Nevertheless, while the Jakarta-based private television stations provided ‘city-based culture and lifestyles that have very little connection with [the] daily realities’ of members of lower social classes and the rural population (Lim 2012:9), local television offers access to entertainment that is actually connected to the daily lives of these audiences. Whether the reorganization of the Indonesian mediascape has actually provided all audiences in Indonesia with sufficient alternatives from which to choose still needs investigation. Real diversity of content is only available to those who have access to pay television and the Internet. Only they can choose between diverse kinds of news, information and entertainment. The people who attend the recording of the TVRI Jogja programme *Pangkur Jenggleng* and watch the broadcast of this programme on television afterwards belong to the lower social strata. Their economic and social circumstances preclude their access to cable television and the Internet, depriving them of the chance of a proper choice. Furthermore, neither TVRI Jogja nor Jogja TV allow active participation in content production. Only community radio and television and the social media actually do this (Jurriëns 2009a, b, c; Lim 2012:12).

The second question that springs to mind, considering local private television stations from the perspective of ownership and the networks to which they belong, is whether the denomination ‘local’ is really applicable. The Bali Pos Media Group, owner of Jogja TV, for instance, is active in print media, radio and local television broadcasting in Bali and elsewhere in Indonesia (including Semarang TV in Central and Surabaya TV in East Java), as well as non-media industries. As these media networks dominate information streams and serve the economic and political interests of their proprietors, this has a definitive effect on the diversity of news content.²⁸² The possible consequences of this concentration of the ownership of local private TV stations in the post-Soeharto period have however not been tackled by the local government or the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (Ida 2011:16).

Other influences that should be appraised lie in the political and commercial spheres. After the passing of the Broadcasting Law, a public service broadcaster like the regional TVRI Jogja should have been independent, neutral and non-commercial in character, providing services in the public interest, offering space for multicultural and pluriform contents. However, for budgetary, political and other reasons this has not happened. Sponsorship by local government – for instance of *Taman Gabusan* – and/or political parties – for instance of *Pangkur Jenggleng* – gives room to the voices of these institutions. Like TVRI Jogja, Jogja TV has provided space for the messages of its local political allies – as in this case *Gardu Projotamansari* –, thereby restricting pluriformity, and approximating the character of New Order government television. On the other hand, TVRI Jogja has acquired features of private television, allowing advertising in the commercial slots of its Javanese news programme

²⁸² On media ownership and dominance of information, see also Jurriëns 2002:192-196, Ida 2011, Jurriëns 2016 and his analysis of Wardhana’s work on the Indonesian media oligopoly.

Yogyawarta and other shows. Initially, the branding of both broadcasters and the bulk of their local programming was very similar. Here the similarity ends: Jogja TV has increasingly used local content for commercial reasons, but TVRI Jogja has retained an interest in entertaining and informing local viewers for more ideological purposes. My conclusion is that by having multiple loyalties local private and local public broadcasting services have interpreted and implemented the new legislation pragmatically. In doing so, they have both adopted each other's characteristics.

Sanyoto argues that '[d]espite the many changes, the media remain very much in the control of élites with the power or money to manipulate their content'. While media power during the Orde Baru period was obviously in the hands of Soeharto, his family and cronies, it is now 'more fragmented and diffuse' (Sanyoto 2002:102-103). Rachmah Ida perceives a mirroring in 'the pattern of local media corporations and their local political and economic roles' between the Soeharto and the post-Soeharto eras (Ida 2011:21). This does not seem to be a concern limited to Indonesia. In their 2003 conclusion to a comparative review of regulatory spaces in Asia, the authors state that

'industry concerns dominate public interest concerns throughout the region and are assisted in doing so by a range of nationally differentiated modes of co-option and collusion between state authorities and domestic operators.' (Kitley 2003:17-18)

With some adjustments, this statement still stands. In the case of the local broadcasting industry, I would prefer to say that industry and government concerns dominate public interest concerns, and that they are assisted in doing so by a range of locally and nationally differentiated modes of co-option and collusion between local state authorities and operators. Nevertheless, we should pay attention to the artistic input that has escaped from this generalizing idea, for instance, in TVRI Jogja's creative development of new programmes inspired by traditional genres.

Finally, when considering local television from a technological perspective, 'local' refers to the restricted area of reach, as required by the 32/2002 Broadcasting Law. However, local television stations often cover areas beyond the borders of these restricted areas. Moreover, the law does not regulate 'the complexities of modern broadcasting practices which flow from convergence and transnationalisation' (Kitley 2003:110) or from digital broadcasting that began to develop around 2012. While on the one hand local television has acquired various characteristics of radio, and the term narrowcasting would more aptly cover its practices than broadcasting, live streaming and on-demand audiovisual media services have the opposite effect. These developments demand that we reconsider the meaning of the local in more depth.

2 The production of the local

In my discussion of the intricate link between the Javanese local and proximity in televisual production practices in Indonesia, I shall commence by examining the purport of the local within the context of the Indonesian television industry.

This is the point at which to return to Appadurai's locality – that I call 'the local' – as a complex phenomenological quality, as I stated in the Introduction to this dissertation. The author viewed the local 'as primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial' (Appadurai 1996:178). We should however reconsider his view. Appadurai developed his ideas on the basis of research conducted in the 1990s, when the globalizing effects of the media dominated academic discourse in anthropology and cultural studies. The greatest emphasis was given to the effects of media technology and to their potential to enable and stir the emergence of communities that were said to transcend physical place, causing the local to be no longer 'the prime referent of our experiences' (Featherstone 1996:63). Appadurai uses the term deterritorialization for this process. However, as Jackson rightly argues, 'while globalization has altered the relationship between local discourses and geographical spaces, those discourses have not been completely uprooted from specific locations on the surface of the planet' (Jackson 2006:121). To grasp this phenomenon, Jackson suggests undertaking 'an empirical task to map the actually existing relationships between discourses and spatiality in the contemporary world' (Jackson 2006:121). Building on Jackson's suggestion, in view of my research topic, I would suggest mapping the actually existing relationships between the production of the local and spatiality in contemporary Indonesia. When doing this, we need to take social strata into account as well. Connection and contiguity are determined not just by physical location and physical territory, but vary in response to various other factors, including class (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:19-20).

A short flashback will show how the relationship between the Javanese local and spatiality changed in the course of time. For this purpose, I shall widen my scope again, from a concentration in Part III on television in the Special Region of Yogyakarta to Indonesia as a whole. This allows me to summarize the journey televisual performance in Javanese has undertaken in the history of the Indonesian televisionscape, as I have sketched in this dissertation. From its beginnings, the national TVRI station broadcast local productions featuring the local. The local was given a certain shape and content, and was brought into play for representative, informative and persuasive purposes. It became part of and was integrated into the constructing processes of a national identity and national culture. As the area of reach expanded, representations of the Javanese local increasingly reached audiences all over the Archipelago. This caused the local to become (partly) detached from its specific geographical (regional or subnational local) space. When the local was perceived to be part of national culture, however, it became part of the local in the sense of national. Soon, the regional TVRI stations in Yogyakarta, and later Surabaya and Semarang, acquired a prominent role in the production and dissemination of the Javanese local in the New Order discourse. They confirmed the scalar and spatial aspects of these representations of the local. From 1988

onwards, commercial stations joined the Indonesian television industry. Initially broadcasting locally, they rapidly expanded their reach and then broadcast only nation-wide, while being based in Jakarta. Their presentations of the local were very restricted (as they focused on a limited array of specific cultural expressions from specific regions), and supported their commercial and persuasive aims alongside New Order discourse (the idea of a national unity and identity; averting unwanted influences from abroad and the preservation of the nation's culture). They were delocalized in a double sense (Chapter 7). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the increasing attention being paid to the local has changed the character of the production of the local. Local television stations have begun to broadcast the local as part of local (sub-national and sub-regional) identity and to represent local genius. Their goal is to present and represent the local as part of a multi-cultural Indonesia, while simultaneously proliferating the diversity of the local.

Linking this information to Appadurai's claim that 'principally due to the force and form of electronic mediation' there has been a steady erosion of the relationship between the spatial and the virtual (Appadurai 1996:198), we have to conclude that in the Javanese (and Indonesian) context of local broadcasting his views are not valid. The concept of proximity – that will be discussed in more detail below – proves instead that the contemporary production of the local by Indonesian television is indeed relational and contextual, but nonetheless closely tied to a specific geographical location and local scale – despite the technological innovations that would allow Javanese to watch their favourite programmes in non-Javanese environments elsewhere in the world. Therefore, contrary to what Appadurai (1996:179) has written, in the Javanese world of Yogyakarta, spatial localization, quotidian interaction and social scale are more or less isomorphic – if we disregard the potentials Internet and live-streaming offer at present. This is especially true of viewers from the lower social strata like the *Pangkur Jenggleng* audiences who will spend most of their lifetime in the same locale and who so far have no access to cable television and the Internet.²⁸³ In such an instance, proximity in a literal (physical) sense is dominantly present. However, the local in Javanese programmes can be defined by more than one geographical space and hence become multivocal, as programmes usually represent the Javanese local and the Indonesian, and audiences identify with both. Pertinently, the Javanese local is not homogeneous; it is defined by geographical, social, linguistic and other parameters. Therefore, Javanese-ness can only be described and understood in the actual context in which it occurs.

Another factor that supports my criticism of Appadurai's theory is the active role of the local audiences in the mediation processes. After all, they are the centre of focus of the television industry. As I have stated in the Introduction to this dissertation, the act of performing reveals meaning because of the people who make the representations. Among these agents, audiences play a prominent role. In my threefold approach, I have demonstrated how the audiences as agents have contributed to the production of the local in various ways. It all begins with the decision to watch a specific show and enjoy it (or not). Several examples in this dissertation present an insight into audiences' responses: their reflection on the contents and form of a programme and on representations of the local; their contemplation of

²⁸³ With a special thanks to Farabi Fakhri who confirmed my assumption (25 September 2015).

issues relating to the real and fictional; the discussions after the show, either government-instigated, as in the case of the *Kelompencapir*, or on a more individual basis; their excitement, criticisms and objections, the questions they ask, the suggestions they make, their imitations of a specific character, and so on. Audience participation encompasses attending a recording in the studio or off-air activities and therefore enhancing the live character of a show, laughing audibly during a comedy sketch, phoning in or playing a walk-on part, watching the filming in their village, taking part in a quiz, throwing a package containing a letter with a request on stage. These examples show how the presence and participation of these local audiences – visible and invisible – have added to the issues, messages and ideologies that have shaped the local character of a programme. They also demonstrate how television has facilitated encounters and interaction between various contributors to the production of the local in the locations in which the recordings took place.

3 Proximity

In this study I have paid great attention to proximity, the crux of television. As my materials and analyses have proven, it is essential in the production of the local and plays an influential role in the mediation processes. I have introduced the concept as ‘a sense of nearness that manifests itself at the physical, cognitive and/or emotional level’ (Introduction). When representing the local – in the sense of ‘a complex phenomenological category’ –, proximity works on several levels in the mediation process. Although ‘[l]ocal identity is not established by the mere facts of proximity’ (Keane 1997:37), the role of proximity in the cases discussed is undeniable.

Most research about proximity and television has focused on content and cultural proximity. First and foremost, however, proximity is inherent in the medium television. It is a means to establish a nearness with the audiences, essential to keep them watching. As my analysis has demonstrated, Scannell’s concepts of co-presence and common ground play a dominant role in the efforts of the Indonesian television industry to attract the attention of the viewers. Television suggests physical proximity by simulating co-presence with its viewers (Scannell 1991:2). Its aim is to bridge the spaces of recording and reception, to simulate a closeness between the event that is represented and the invisible audiences (Scannell 1996:80). The phoning-in in talk shows and the presence of the audiences in the TV studio strengthen the closeness between the audiences and the medium. When the presenter of a show recognizes the voice or accent of a person calling, this heightens the sense of immediacy, a term used by Lindsay (2002:336). The other phenomenon that reinforces interaction between producers and audiences is common ground, a ‘shared competence’, that to Scannell (1996:13) is a ‘precondition of any kind of social interaction (including the kind that broadcasting represents)’, meaning is born through shared competence. Common ground includes not only ‘a common cultural-linguistic competence, shared knowledges and understandings’ (Scannell 1995:13), but also the common knowledge people have about the medium television (Sharratt 1980:284).

Among the aspects of common ground that enhance the workings of proximity are the features of orality and the public's insight into the functioning of media. Both Lindsay (2002) and Jurriëns (2004) elaborate on the similarity between the media of television and performance. As both are oral in character, this facilitates an easy fit between performance, television and an orally orientated society like Indonesia. Agreeing with an approach to television as a medium for oral performance (Lindsay 2002:325), nevertheless, in the televisual context of my research, I want to point out the importance of visual features beside speech and sound, and the role of the camera gaze and the editing that determine the final product, the television programme – however obvious this statement may be. Therefore, the acquaintanceship of the public with the constraints of television should be emphasized. It certainly enables identifying and hence the emergence of a cognitive and affective response on the part of the viewers, apart from their familiarity with the oral qualities of the medium television. This leads to *akrab*-ness, intimacy or familiarity, a qualification most often used in Indonesian recensions of television programmes, when describing and analysing the attraction of productions with local (here Javanese) content for television viewers. It is linked to geographical, ethnic, cultural and ideological epistemologies – television is embedded in local society, a proof that the media are social institutions. But it is also connected to the habit of watching, as the shared knowledge about 'television', both morphological and contentual, is indispensable to the production of meaning.

Returning to the production of the local by television institutions in Yogyakarta, in terms of ideology and branding, tailored to address their audiences, they link themselves to an image of the city with its connotative meanings. This image is a construct that seems to have become fairly fixed and stereotypical in the course of time. It is connected to a geographical and mental space and romantic and nostalgic ideas, that appeal to feelings of belonging and proximity.

Proximity is at work when alliances are established with members of the local society, with local artists and audiences, the local administration and government institutions, and of course advertisers. Its influence is to be found in content, style of presentation and language use. Local language in particular, as an indispensable part of the common ground, can be 'an important tool for creating an intimate bond with local audiences' (Jurriëns 2004:101-2), together with other aspects of *kearifan lokal*. Unquestionably this also applies to the broadcasts of Javanese performance genres that are categorized as traditional and new genres based on tradition. The 'communal dimension' of these traditional genres is evoked in the broadcasts of recorded live shows or by having audiences with whom the viewers at home can identify in the studio.²⁸⁴ A programme like *Pangkur Jenggleng* benefits from the sense of community it offers to the audiences; community in the sense of a shared space, the shared experience of watching the show with fellow aficionados, for those in the studio of interacting with the artists, and a shared cultural proximity. The participants of the kethoprak sayembara quizzes shared another sense of community, visualized in the piles of coupons the regional

²⁸⁴ The 'communal dimension' is a term used by Yampolsky (1995:714). See also Lindsay (2002:336) who calls television in Indonesia 'a most powerful forger of community'.

TVRI stations showed them before announcing the winners. The role of the local producers should not be overlooked. The majority of the staff of TVRI Jogja and Jogja TV are Yogyakarta born and bred; their closeness to the area, its inhabitants and cultures is reflected in the programmes. If cultural proximity is framed as tradition, as in the Oskadon advertisements, persuasion can become easy because the commercials will have been imprinted on the collective memory for quite some time. Habit is another factor. Since most Javanese audiences are used to being exposed to local performance genres, in the words of Coutas, they are used to interacting with media texts (Coutas 2006:387), including televised performance. Habit also includes familiarity with television formats and the serial character of most of them (Scannell 1995:8), and with the rhetoric of the agents involved in the production of the local because of repeated exposure. Lastly, proximity enables easy identifying and self-identifying when the categories of belonging and attachment are addressed in relation to particular territories and localities (Lovell 1998:4).

These identifying practices are essential to the workings of proximity: an identifying with Javanese performance, the genres, protagonists or audiences, and/or with the specific circumstances, setting or culture portrayed in the programme; an identifying with the community (or communities) to which one feels one belongs. Television stations in Indonesia apply the technique of what they call the 'local approach' very consciously, striving to approximate the local idiom (in the widest sense) of the different regions, especially in development broadcasting. However, research has shown that cultural proximity is not a *conditio sine qua non* for a television show to be successful, and that proximity is often based on perception. Both Iwabuchi and Larkin mention the existence of a perceived proximity between the culture presented in a specific media production (Japanese drama series, Indian Hindu films) and the culture of the target audiences (in Taiwan, Muslim Hausa in Nigeria) (Iwabuchi 2001:67, Larkin 1997:411) and viewers worldwide appreciate the Danish television series *Borgen* (Sjouwerman 2015). These examples show how flexible people are when engaging with two of the main characteristics of television in the production of the local: co-presence and common ground. It also reminds us not to restrict our focus to cultural proximity when studying the relationship between the production of the local and proximity, as I have demonstrated in this dissertation.

4 Epilogue: Images of Javanese

The central question of this dissertation has been how people make use of national, regional, local, public and private television in Indonesia – each in their own way and with their own goals – to represent the local. In particular it has tried to discover how they construct images of Javanese through the production and dissemination of performance. My focus on televisual performance in Javanese has revealed the dual role of television: it is part of culture and simultaneously contributes to culture (Introduction). Special attention was devoted to a specific genre (kethoprak) that is categorized as traditional (Part I), to the agents involved in the mediation processes for persuasive purposes (Part II) and to localizing strategies (Part III).

These themes have provided an evidence-based insight into how television, when it produces the local, has taken and takes account of proximity enhancing factors to engage with its audiences and into how the audiences took part in these processes. They also revealed how the media industry, based on the ways in which these audiences have been imagined and addressed, has shaped images of Javanese-ness.

In the first section of this chapter, I have dwelt on the concepts of the local and proximity; in this epilogue I shall reflect on the constructing of Javanese-ness in relation to audience address. Shedding some light on a very recent and interesting development enables me to visualize the shifts that occurred in the period under scrutiny (1988-2008) more sharply. As audience address most distinctly reveals the ways the viewers are imagined, I shall focus especially on branding and on language use. Both the television industry's self-identifying practices and its approaches to language use on television have been in a continual state of flux. They influence presentations and representations of local performance. This focus will reveal the shift in views about audience address and the concomitant changing perceptions of Javanese-ness. TVRI Jogja's series of new station identifiers that it created in 2016 forms the framework of my discussion.

TVRI Jogja is indeed special

A plane lands in Yogyakarta, a foreign female student arrives.



We follow her during her visit to the city and its environs; the accompanying text, that takes the form of sung and rapped lyrics, sings the praises of why Yogyakarta is so attractive to tourists and of TVRI Jogja. Images show the student walking in front of TVRI Jogja, where she takes a selfie, visiting Tugu, eating *gudheg*, a famous local jackfruit dish, from a box of plaited bamboo (*beseakan*) in a little guard-house in the ricefields with a group of Indonesian friends. The perspective switches from the student, what she is doing and her new experiences to her perception of the surroundings and the people. The images switch quickly back and forth between urban and rural views and shots taken on the TVRI Jogja premises, between students in a classroom, young people and children dancing, schoolchildren in a red-and-white uniform, a young Indonesian lady in a maize-field wearing a traditional blouse and a bamboo hat (*caping*), later joined by a young man.



We see a parade of people wearing Javanese dance-costumes and masks (*kirab budaya*), farmers joyously dancing in a ricefield that has just been harvested, guys hiphoping in front of the main TVRI building and the dancing male and female presenters of the *Jogja in the News* bulletin (*Jogja dalam berita*). A bird's eye view of the dancing group in the street reveals Hanuman, the white ape from the Ramayana, and Gathutkaca, a favourite protagonist in the Mahabharata, in the centre of the group. The dancers look up at the camera, raising their arms to the sky. As the camera zooms out, the superimposed logo of TVRI Jogja appears (Figure 11.1).²⁸⁵



This station identifier has generated a number of sequels, showing different versions of the same theme. They include the Pirates of the Carribean, the *kampung* (village) and the *dangdut* versions.



11.1 Stills of the 'TVRI Jogja is indeed special' station identifier (2016)

Audience address and images of Javaneseeness

For the series of new identifiers with which TVRI Jogja has reaffirmed its branding, the station has resorted to an eye-catching format and style. The identifiers show an entirely different form of audience address from that of past identifiers and present different images of Javaneseeness. These developments did not occur in a vacuum. As I shall demonstrate, they

²⁸⁵ Fanfare TVRI Jogja Kompilasi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eSV3iqWtqc>

are interwoven into contemporary political, economic, social and cultural processes. After all, branding reflects and resonates with the context in which it functions.

The series of new station identifiers consists of variations on a theme.²⁸⁶ They are a joyful celebration of the local as represented by the station. Featuring local people, they link contemporary 'Jogja', Javanese pop music and rapping, tradition, cultural heritage and global cultural expressions. Both visually and aurally the station presents itself in a combination of references to Yogyakarta, Javanese, Indonesian and non-Indonesian identity markers and to various epistemologies and modes of presentation. The series is eye-catching for a number of reasons. The identifiers are undeniably very lively, brimming over with fun, humour and slapstick; a stark contrast to the serious character of their predecessors. Another conspicuous difference with the past is the perspective of the presentation. While previously station identifiers and other internal publicity were presented from TVRI's point of view (see the example of 14 July 2001 in Chapter 10) (the station presented and represented itself through the people and their locale, the latter receiving most attention), now the inhabitants of and visitors to the vicinity present 'their' view of the station and its context (the people present and represent TVRI Jogja); at least this is the impression one gets as a viewer. How does the station go about constructing these audiences? In the sequel described above, we see the images through the eyes of a foreign female student (or tourist) who arrives in Yogyakarta by plane and takes photos throughout her visit. We see young people (in ricefields, students, schoolchildren in red-and-white uniforms, children in a street in an urban environment), TVRI presenters, singers and rappers, people in a parade wearing Javanese dance costumes and masks, people watching the parade, Hanuman and Gathutkaca and so on.

The identifiers consist of two parts. Just as their predecessors did, they focus on the local and on features that have been defining the station's branding for many decades (see Chapters 3 and 10). In fact, the locale of Yogyakarta has been turned into a concept. Visually and audibly in the sung and rapped lyrics (Javanese original in the footnotes), they introduce Yogyakarta as a site of tourist interest and a very agreeable city to visit. First, they refer to four landmarks that are positioned geographically on one axis and are intertwined with each other in local history: the mountain (*gunung*, representing the volcano Mount Merapi), Tugu (a famous city monument), the sultan's palace (*kraton*) and the ocean (*segara*, referring to the Segara Kidul, the Southern Ocean).²⁸⁷ These icons refer to epistemologies of the past, to the history of the Yogyakarta court and its mythical relationship with the mountains and the sea. The attention then turns to popular local foods²⁸⁸ and the educational institutions in the city.²⁸⁹ All of this can be seen on TVRI Jogja²⁹⁰ in various programmes for young and old.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Fanfare TVRI Jogja Kompilasi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eSV3iqWtqc>; Fanfare TVRI Jogja Angkringan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzQGpQVOIw>; Fanfare TVRI Jogja Kampung: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9y20n3ohTE>.

²⁸⁷ Lyrics: Paling penak dolan ning Kutha Jogja / Isa ndelok gunung, tugu, keraton lan segara

²⁸⁸ Paling penak mangan ning Kutha Jogja / Iso mangan gudheg, gethuk, geplak lan liyane

²⁸⁹ Paling penak sinau ning Kutha Jogja / Seka sekolah tekan kampus akeh lan komplit

²⁹⁰ Kabeh mau ana ing acara tv / Acarane TVRI Ngayogyakarta

²⁹¹ Acara TVRI warna-werna ragame / Seka cah cilik, gedhe, gedhe meneh / Loh, Ha... Kok cilik?

In the second part of the clip, various genres and programme categories are mentioned.²⁹² Although these stereotypical identity markers have been used in almost all Yogyakarta TVRI identifiers (and also play a role in the station identifiers of Jogja TV), their presentation is new.

The slogan

Both parts of the identifiers end with the refrain, *TVRI Jogja pancen istimewa*, the Javanese version of TVRI Jogja's most recent slogan, 'TVRI Jogja is indeed special'. Brandishing this slogan, the station affiliates itself with the logo and tagline of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, *Jogja Istimewa* (Yogyakarta is special), that was rebranded in 2015 ((*Fat/Liz* 2015; *Yogya harus* 2015). By replacing the tagline 'Never-Ending Asia', the city government has shifted its focus from the global to the sub-regional local, from Asia to Yogyakarta. On the team who evaluated the people's suggestions for the new logo was Marzuki Muhammad, alias Kill the DJ (about whom more later). This was part of a large PR campaign, designed to boost the development of tourism in the region, with a special eye on cultural tourism (possibly linked to the plans for the building of a new local airport). The launch event was imbued with extra lustre by a cultural parade (*pawai/kirab budaya*) and performances of local music and dance genres on the court premises (Pagelaran Kraton) (Rudiana 2015; *Yogya harus* 2015).

A brief look at TVRI Jogja's slogan over the course of time demonstrates how the status and loyalty of the station has undergone several changes. In the New Order period, the slogan *TVRI menjalin persatuan dan kesatuan* (TVRI forging national unity and union) endorsed the station's support for the national government ideology. *TVRI Jogja Media publik kita* (TVRI our public medium) was introduced when the station made its debut in the public media constellation. By using *kita*, the inclusive 'our', it stressed that public TV is everybody's television. TVRI's spatial proximity to the Special Region of Yogyakarta as a geographical and cultural entity and as a historical and political construct was explicitly reconfirmed in the slogan *TVRI Jogja memang istimewa* (in the Indonesian version used in 2015). This became even more localized in the partly Javanized version *TVRI Jogja pancen istimewa* in 2016. The Indonesian term *istimewa*, special, was retained to confirm the link to the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta) and the retention of the Indonesian pronunciation of Jogja was necessary to keep the rhyme in the refrain.

The Javanizing of the slogan has been one of the station's strategies to address a linguistically and ethnically based (Javanese) market explicitly. Following the trend set by the local news bulletins (Chapter 10), the new identifiers are the outcome of vernacularization processes. Vernacularization has occurred on the levels of space (geographical, ideological and emotional), as I have just demonstrated, and of presentation style and language use.

²⁹² Kabeh mau ana ning TVRI! / Seka dhagelan, jagongan, nganti jaged-jogedan / Ragam ilmu budaya nganti teka-teki / Informasi, Ekonomi, Politik lan Berita / Jogja dalam berita

Style of presentation

In their presentation style, TVRI Jogja's identifiers tie in with and build on earlier hip hop successes. The city has become a thriving centre of local(ized) hip hop music. Rapping texts in Indonesian and Javanese, inspired by classical literature, have made Marzuki Mohamad, alias Kill the DJ, famous and won him great popularity among Yogyakarta youth. His song *Jogja Istimewa*, performed with other members of the Jogja Hip Hop Foundation and launched in November 2009, was an instant hit.²⁹³ Ear-catching as it was, the text and tune of this ode to Yogyakarta Javanese-ness soon became familiar to Yogyakarta inhabitants, young and old from every sort of background. Radio, Youtube and Facebook enabled an easy dissemination and offered creative minds the opportunity to put their own version of the song online. In the clip, shots of the group's performance on the court premises and audiences singing along alternate with shots of groups of people – traditional court troops of soldiers, dancers and musicians and well-known performers – marching through the city in a cultural parade to the Northern Court Square. Together, they represent the ideological and cultural branding of the city.²⁹⁴ With this song, Javanese hip hop was perceived to have become part of the 'special' character of Yogyakarta (Sarwindaningrum 2010). Kill the DJ claims that from its launch *Jogja Istimewa* had become a song of the citizens of Yogyakarta, a soundtrack for those who love their traditional roots and culture, and a support in their struggle to have their rights recognized. Couched in a traditional groove and inspired by traditional Javanese literature and historiography, the purpose of Marzuki's composition is to actualize history and boost local pride by underlining the role of the local citizens during the independence struggle.²⁹⁵ The song contains reference to the region's campaign to maintain special (*istimewa*) status, a subject of fierce discussions between the local and national governments and among inhabitants of the region. However, as Kill the DJ denied any political intentions, later he distanced himself from his creation and refused to perform it any longer.²⁹⁶ However, TVRI Jogja's slogan is an unmistakable reference to the contemporary political situation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and the debates on its special status and is a re-affirmation of the station's loyalty to the court.

The identifiers reveal how the new style of presentation is representative of the changing views about the position adopted by local TV stations towards their audiences. Having chosen a specific performance genre and singing and rapping in Javanese to convey the message, enhanced by a rhythmic editing of the images and sounds that carry the tempo and beats of the pop and hiphop music, TVRI Jogja has added a new facet to its branding. It has deviated

²⁹³ This ensemble, called Ki Jarot, consists of Marzuki Mohamad, alias Kill the DJ (alias Chebolang), Jahanam and Rotra. Watch the clip at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F18vJTtX_Ns. See also <https://killtheblog.com/2011/01/05/membedah-lirik-jogja-istimewa/> [Last accessed 30 April 2017].

²⁹⁴ Another cultural parade was held in Yogyakarta in 2014 to support Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla in their presidential campaign. Kill the DJ performed his song *Bersatu Padu Coblos Nomer Dua* (United to vote number two), that he composed with Balance, on a stage in front of the kraton. At the end of the rally and show, he performed *Jogja Istimewa* (Nugraheni 2016).

²⁹⁵ 'menjelma sebagai soundtrack bagi kehidupan warga Jogja yang mencintai akar tradisi dan kebudyaannya, dan penyemangat perjuangan atas hak-hak mereka sebagai warga Jogja' <https://killtheblog.com/2011/01/05/membedah-lirik-jogja-istimewa/> [Last accessed 30 April 2017].

²⁹⁶ <https://killtheblog.com/> [Last accessed November 2017].

from both the representation of locally interpreted global identifier formats and from the identifiers representing classical Javanese (*adiluhung*) culture it broadcast before.²⁹⁷ This choice signals the station's resolution to engage with its audiences in new ways. Since television was first introduced into Indonesia, the general idea had been that performance genres perceived to belong to the realm of tradition would appeal to audiences associated with linguistically and ethnically based markets. Rural audiences would have made up the majority of these putative target audiences, but members of the middle classes were also not overlooked as potential viewers. Both groups were seen as aficionados of traditional genres linked to a specific locale and local culture. Hence these programmes were thoroughly imbued with the (traditional) local. In Javanese performance on national, regional and private television in the New Order period, the traditional forms prevailed overall. New television genres were either based on or inspired by tradition. Images related to nostalgia and the past were used to entertain and inform the viewers; in programmes devoted to development or those intended to be commercially persuasive, recourse to tradition was used to equip viewers to tackle the future better. Although TVRI Jogja's new identifiers still touch upon the past (in its references to local icons) and nostalgia (in its references to local food and rural settings), they have now created a branding that transcends heritage and nostalgia. The *TVRI Jogja pancen istimewa* production has announced a new stance: one that accepts 'heterodox ways of speaking the language, making music, or interpreting the traditions' (García Canclini 1995:xxx), actually resembling the way the performance genre *kethoprak* has been accommodated to the changes in its surroundings. It is interesting that it is precisely TVRI Jogja, often stigmatized as old-fashioned (*kolot*) and rather rustic (*ndesa/ndesani*), that has recognized the contemporary dynamics of Javanese-ness.

Language use

Vernacularization in the literal sense of the word occurred on the level of language use. The choice of a specific vernacular and speech style for the purpose of direct address in news bulletins, station identifiers and advertisements, demonstrate how very much language lies at the core of new developments.²⁹⁸ In the past, the station presented itself using Indonesian, the national language – in jingles, voice overs and running banners. Now it opts for the Javanese vernacular – in the singing, talking and rapping of the people – , thereby contributing to changing perceptions of local identity. Language use has had to be tackled delicately as it expresses a person's position and attitude towards the addressee and the person spoken about, and by extension how television perceives its viewers. Once the station used to link itself to the *adiluhung* features of the court city, and in its local news bulletins addressed audiences in *basa* to express politeness (see Chapter 10), but in the recent PR activities it has also switched

²⁹⁷ Identification call of TVRI Jogja (2010), as an example of a locally interpreted global identifier format: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK6InYx_WWs. To commemorate TVRI Jogja's 50 anniversary in 2015, the identification call featured Javanese dancers in an ancient temple-like environment, with a voice-over in Indonesian declaring the slogan 'TVRI Jogja memang istimewa': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELRjyu3rjuQ>.

²⁹⁸ See the abstract for the panel 'Language at the heart of change: Performance in Indonesia' (Strawson, Nugraheni and Bogaerts 2016).

to addressing its potential audience in *ngoko*, conveying familiarity. *Ngoko* is the ‘mode of direct address’ (Tolson 2006:7) used in all the lyrics of the new station identifiers. This change in language policy has had an impact on the branding of the station – shifting from courtesy (expressed by the use of *basa*) to *akrab*-ness (represented by the *ngoko* speech level) – and on how the station, in the words of Tolson (2006:16), ascribes identities to its audiences.

As my research has shown, the renewed attention being directed to the position and use of vernaculars versus the national language and foreign languages in public space in twenty-first-century Indonesia has enabled a shift in paradigm. This has led to the increasing exposure of and a subsequent diversification of Javanese language (and culture) in a public context. This new reality confirms Quinn’s suggestion ‘that Javanese language and literature are establishing a more prominent profile in the eyes of the public than was the case when the New Order collapsed more than a decade ago’ (2012:77). Local television has certainly contributed to giving Javanese a modern, urban, lively and dynamic image. It has also contributed to freeing Javanese from the image of being a split vernacular (see Chapter 2). In Java, in local news bulletins, broadcasters have stripped the language of its traditional and *adiluhung* image and used Javanese (both *basa* and *ngoko*) to express contemporaneity.²⁹⁹ The new identifiers represent the colloquial Javanese that belongs to the sphere of popular culture – the language is now a means to express emotions and to be used for creative purposes in contemporary Indonesian society. This vernacular to which the media has given a platform is seen as part of living and thriving cultures that pertain to Javanese identities (both plural) and allow room for linguistic and cultural diversity.

The trend of addressing television audiences in colloquial Javanese had been set by Surabayan JTV and Surakartan TATV. It was they that began broadcasting local news programmes using familiar Javanese speech styles as *ngoko*, dialects and sociolects. The dialects of the North Coast and East Java especially have gained a prominent role in local broadcasts, but also Banyumasan. In Javanese literature this sort of reader’s address, although neglected in Javanese Language Congresses, had been present for a long time (see Chapter 2). Other local private and public stations decided to use *basa* (as Jogja TV and TVRI Jogja did), adapting the prosody usually ascribed to the use of *basa* to the presentation style used in contemporary news bulletins.

Although TVRI Jogja no longer claims to act as the artistic and cultural barometer of the region, in reality it still does retain this role. Conforming to this (former) function, TVRI Jogja has shaped the new station identifiers as sensors of the surrounding atmosphere, reflecting on and representing changes in local cultural life, while, just as before, they still indicate the spatial and ideological proximity of the station to the region and the court and to the citizens of Yogyakarta. The identifiers demonstrate how TVRI Jogja’s branding has developed from conservative and ‘Yogyakarta’- and institution-focused to contemporary and

²⁹⁹ Not all local broadcasters working in a multi-lingual environment use local languages in their news programmes. Tarakan TV in East Kalimantan, for instance, has chosen Indonesian, as only few inhabitants are able to understand the local language, Tidung (Djadjoeri 2005).

'Jogja'- and audience-focused. In its endeavours to generate meaning, it has been continuously expanding the common ground between producers and audiences. The 2016 TVRI Jogja station identifier is just one example of how audience communities are distinguished by the style by which they are imagined and addressed. Language is a prominent identifying parameter in this process. People sharing a categorical attribute like language identify themselves as members of such a group (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:15). However, music and dancing are also prominent identifying parameters, as the new station identifiers have demonstrated.

The station has (once more) acknowledged the close link between the medium of television and Javanese 'performative art' (see Introduction), aware of the similarity between both media and their orally orientated character. Whereas former identifiers consisted of images, sound and restricted language use, the focus has now shifted to displaying the language of 'the people' with all its oral qualities and capacities and the physical actions and camera movement. The representation in the identifiers appeals to the collective experience of watching, singing along and sharing the pop song and the rapping of *TVRI Jogja pancen Istimewa*. This sense of active participation and togetherness, closeness and interaction between performers and audiences, just as in traditional performance, enhances proximity. As a result, the television performance of happily dancing, singing and rapping people has transformed the image of the station, a source of entertainment, into entertainment itself.

Ana candhake ...

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Samenvatting

Het medium televisie is getuige van en draagt bij aan politieke macht, economische structuren, sociale veranderingen en culturele betekenissen (Fickers and Johnson 2010). Studie van televisie, in Indonesië alom tegenwoordig, biedt ons daarom een bijzondere kijk op de Indonesische maatschappij. Deze dissertatie benadert Indonesische televisie vanuit het standpunt van Javaanstalige performance. Performance wordt gebruikt in de brede betekenis van het woord, zoals gedefinieerd door Bauman (1992) als een vorm van communicatief gedrag met bijzondere nadruk op het esthetische aspect, geplaatst in een bijzonder kader en uitgevoerd voor een publiek. Bovenal is deze studie een pleidooi voor een diepgaand onderzoek naar de rol van proximateit (*proximity*) bij de productie, verspreiding en receptie van lokale televisieprogramma's.

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe televisie Javaansheid verbeeldt, bedoeld om de aandacht van potentiële kijkers te trekken en vast te houden. Het is zowel thematisch als chronologisch opgezet, hanteert een interdisciplinaire benadering en is empirisch gestoeld. Mijn corpus bestaat uit een brede waaier aan televisiegenres: van theatrale genres en drama tot praatprogramma's en ander vermaak, nieuwsberichten, infotainment en reclame. Ik heb uitvoerig gebruik gemaakt van interviews, publicaties in Indonesische kranten en tijdschriften, brieven van kijkers, wetsteksten, scripts, programmabeschrijvingen en overzichten en televisiewebsites. De structuur is opgehangen aan drie thema's: het representeren van traditie, het lokaliseren van persuasie en het mediëren van het lokale. Ik heb voor deze drievoudige benadering gekozen uit nieuwsgierigheid omdat ik wilde ontdekken welke resultaten de studie van televisie vanuit verschillende perspectieven zou genereren. Indien samengevoegd zouden die uitkomsten, in de vorm van een mozaïek, de vele facetten van het televisielandschap kunnen laten zien, terwijl de dynamiek van het televisuele proces kon worden behouden. De focus op de productie van het lokale vormt de rode draad, waarbij het lokale als complexe fenomenologische kwaliteit, in tegenstelling tot wat Appadurai (1996) beweert, niet alleen relationeel en contextueel is, maar ook nauw verbonden aan lokale schaal en specifieke geografische locaties. De analyse steunt op een aantal case studies van Javaanstalige performance op de televisie.

Centraal staat de vraag hoe mensen gebruik maken van nationale, regionale, lokale, publieke en commerciële omroepen in Indonesië – elk op zijn of haar eigen wijze en met eigen doelstellingen – om het lokale te representeren en, in het bijzonder, hoe zij beelden van Javaansheid creëren via de productie en de verspreiding van performance. Javaanstalige performance wordt door de Indonesische televisie ingezet voor verschillende doeleinden: om kijkers te entertainen en te informeren, om het lokale/het regionale te representeren en om een bijdrage te leveren aan de constructie van een nationale cultuur, om het traditionele levend te houden en te koesteren, voor persuasief oogmerk (zowel commercieel als voor propaganda-doeleinden), als tegenstem die diversificatie vertolkt tegenover globale of Jakartase invloeden,

en om uitdrukking te geven aan multiculturalisme. Discursieve praktijken over lokale, nationale en globale culturen in de elektronische audiovisuele media in Indonesië en het metadiscours over deze onderwerpen in de uitgezonden genres zelf vormen het raamwerk waarin deze kwesties worden geplaatst.

Dit onderzoek richt zich op de continuïteiten en veranderingen in inhoud, vorm en status van Javaanstalige performance door en op de televisie vanaf het eind van de tachtiger jaren van de vorige eeuw tot het eerste decennium van de twintigste eeuw (1988-2008). Doordat de dissertatie twee decennia beslaat en het resultaat is van longitudinaal onderzoek, biedt zij een historisch overzicht van het ‘televisualiseren’ van Javaanstalige performance binnen de dynamiek van de context en van het steeds complexere televisielandschap van Indonesië. De op linguïstische gronden gebaseerde keuze om getelevisualiseerde Javaanstalige performance te bestuderen, leidt tot inzichten in de bijzonderheden van dergelijke uitzendingen en in hoezeer zij verschillen van Indonesischtalige televisieprogramma’s. Uit deze keuze vloeien ook beperkingen voort. Javaanstalige (en andere etnisch- of linguïstisch-geaffilieerde) programma’s beslaan immers maar een klein percentage van de totale programmering. De meeste televisieprogramma’s zijn Indonesischtalig en richten zich op een breed publiek, ongeacht etnische of geografische afkomst. Religieuze programma’s, frequent aanwezig op de Indonesische televisie, maar in de periode van het onderzoek niet Javaanstalig, worden ook buiten beschouwing gelaten.

Het inleidende Hoofdstuk 1 schetst het theoretisch kader en de kernconcepten van dit proefschrift: het lokale, proximateit en traditie. De verschillende definities van het lokale en traditie worden binnen de Indonesische context en in een historisch kader geplaatst. Zo kan het lokale worden gedefinieerd als nationaal, regionaal of (subregionaal) lokaal. Traditie was nadrukkelijk aanwezig in het Nieuwe Orde discours en verdient daarom in al haar aspecten aandacht bij de studie van televisie. Proximateit is een essentiële eigenschap van televisie (Scannell 1995). Het medium suggereert fysieke nabijheid door mede-aanwezigheid met de kijkers te simuleren. Op basis van gemeenschappelijke cultureel-linguïstische vaardigheden, kennis en begrip (*common ground*) tussen producenten en de kijkers ontstaat er betekenis. Dat gebeurt ook omdat kijkers de wetmatigheden van het medium televisie en de televisiegenres doorgronden en het erbij horende taalgebruik (her)kennen.

Het discours over Javaanse taal en cultuur in de onderzochte periode beïnvloedde keuzes met betrekking tot het taalgebruik op de televisie. Hoofdstuk 2 schetst de normen en waarden die tot stand kwamen tijdens debatten over dit taalgebruik op Javaanse taalcongressen en tijdens bijeenkomsten van andere fora. Twee visies zijn dominant: het Standaard Javaans is een erfenis van een verfijnde en verheven cultuur en dient als zodanig te worden geconserveerd. De andere visie legt de nadruk op de vele stijlen en vormen die het Javaans kent en op het toepassen van deze lokale taal als hedendaags creatief instrument.

Deel I concentreert zich op het televisualiseren van een specifiek Javaans performatief genre, *kethoprak*, om te illustreren hoe traditie, een in deze periode frequent besproken concept, op televisie op velerlei wijzen werd geïnterpreteerd en een flexibel karakter kreeg. Een open

houding tegenover innovatie en de wens om gelijke tred te houden met de ontwikkelingen in de maatschappij bleken een middel om traditionale uitvoerende kunsten levend te houden.

Hoofdstuk 3 laat zien hoe TVRI Stasiun Yogyakarta, het eerste regionale televisiestation, tegelijkertijd de nationale stem verwoordde en het lokale verbeeldde. Tijdens de oprichting kreeg deze zender de rol van artistieke en culturele barometer van de regio toebedeeld. Inzicht in de programmering moet uitwijzen of dit nog steeds het geval was in the negentiger jaren en zo ja, op welke wijze de zender erin slaagde deze doelstelling te bereiken. Het televisiestation ontwikkelde een sterke merknaam (*branding*) en kwam de kijkers tegemoet door de programma's te doordrenken met allerlei vormen van proximateit. Hoewel het de educatieve en ontwikkelingsprogramma's van de nationale overheid ondersteunde en bijdroeg aan het totstandbrengen van een nationale identiteit en cultuur, was dit regionale televisiestation meer dan louter een verlengstuk van de nationale TVRI. Dank zij de bijdragen van lokale producenten, vaak zelf uitvoerend kunstenaar of cultuurbeoefenaar, en inspiratie halend uit lokale traditionele uitvoerende kunsten, ontwikkelde het zijn eigen performance stijlen en nieuwe televisiegenres.

Hoofdstuk 4 besteedt aandacht aan kethoprak als voorbeeld van een Javaans dramatisch genre dat telkens opnieuw, vanaf het ontstaan meer dan een eeuw geleden, omgevingsinvloeden heeft geabsorbeerd en geïntegreerd. Ik onderzoek hoe dit genre, in essentie een Javaanse aangelegenheid, zich ontwikkelde van een modern urbaan commercieel performance genre tot een genre dat het predicaat 'traditioneel' kreeg, geheel in lijn met het Nieuwe Orde discours.

Aan de hand van twee case studies verkent Hoofdstuk 5 de categorieën 'kethoprak op de televisie'', met als voorbeeld het op televisie uitgezonden stuk *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* (De kroning van Prins Mangkubumi), en 'televisiekethoprak', met als voorbeeld het genre *kethoprak sayembara* (kethoprakseries-met-prijsvraag). Voortbouwend op deze verkenning bespreek ik de belangrijkste effecten van het televisualiseren van kethoprak. De case studies illustreren mijn argument dat innovatie van zogenoemde traditionele uitvoerende kunsten heeft geleid tot hun behoud. Ze tonen ook aan hoe hecht TVRI Yogyakarta, het genre kethoprak en zijn beoefenaars met elkaar verbonden waren.

Deel II behandelt de wijzen waarop informatie, persuasie en propaganda gelokaliseerd werden. Ik richt me op uitzendingen van Javaanstalige performance, in het eerste geval met commerciële doeleinden, in het tweede om informatie te verspreiden. Op grond van deze uitzendingen krijgen we inzicht in de bijdrage van de betrokkenen (in hun hoedanigheid van agens) en wordt het amalgaam aan boodschappen, verhalen en ideologieën blootgelegd, geïntegreerd als ze zijn in de flow van de programma's. De analyse van de bij de mediëringsprocessen betrokkenen onthult hoe zij balanceren tussen verschillende, vaak paradoxale ideologieën.

Hoofdstuk 6 licht nader toe hoe Indosiar, opgericht als vijfde commerciële zender in Indonesië, een branding creëerde nadat het Java als potentiële markt had herontdekt. De zoektocht van de zender naar een specifieke identiteit en enkele initiële reacties op zijn beleid bieden waardevolle achtergrondinformatie. Die vormt de basis voor Hoofdstuk 7, waarin

eigenaarschap, zakelijke en andere netwerken en de identiteit van Indosiar als commercieel bedrijf en als deelnemer aan het Indonesische mediabestel aan de orde worden gesteld en de hiermee samenhangende stemmen, boodschappen en ideologieën die in de programmering worden vertolkt. Het rurale ontwikkelingsprogramma *Mbangun Desa* geeft in Hoofdstuk 8 een ander voorbeeld van gelokaliseerde persuasie. Oorspronkelijk ontworpen als overheidsprogramma om plattelandsbewoners te informeren en te overreden, ontwikkelde *Mbangun Desa* zich van openlijk propagandamedium tot infotainment. Net als de kethoprak sayembara-series en het programma *Pangeran Mangkubumi Wisuda* werd *Mbangun Desa* populair omwille van de wijze waarop het het lokale produceerde en het een sfeer van *akrab* (vertrouwdheid) ademde, erop gericht om de kijkers aan de buis te kluisteren. De representatie van het vertrouwde leidde er ook toe dat het onderhoudende karakter geleidelijk aan de overhand kreeg over de persuasieve boodschap.

Deel III richt zich op praktijken van lokalisering en representaties van Javaanse culturen binnen de mogelijkheden en restricties van de nieuwe televisie-industrie die in de eenentwintigste eeuw werd opgezet. Als eerste betoog ik dat het lokale als concept betekenis verwerfde in de mediërende praktijken van de lokale televisiestations omdat de mediawetgeving hier in gebreke bleef. Ten tweede toon ik aan dat lokale televisiestations, ondanks hun commerciële belangen, in hun programmering een veel ge diversifieerder representatie van Javaansheid boden en bieden dan het geval was tijdens het regime van de Nieuwe Orde. Hoofdstuk 9 laat het ontstaan zien van een volledig nieuwe zendindustrie in Yogyakarta, die kansen bood om zich af te zetten tegen bestaande monopolies door lokale culturen te representeren. Ik ga in op de regulering van lokale televisie om de belangrijkste kwesties die hiermee samenhangen te kunnen vatten. Hoofdstuk 10 gaat in op hoe lokale zenders, zowel publieke als commerciële, zich verschillende strategieën toeëigenden om televisie te lokaliseren, om zichzelf als lokaal te definiëren binnen het televisielandschap van Indonesië, om lokale culturen te verbeelden en om de competitie aan te gaan met andere Indonesische en globale televisiezenders. Door hun uitzendingen in het Javaans en door het lokaliseren van buitenlandse formats en producties verbonden zij hun imago sterk met de regio. Ze gaven lokale cultuuruitingen een belangrijke plaats in de programmering en sloten lokale allianties. Op allerlei wijzen wendden ze zich tot lokale gemeenschappen, die ze als potentiële kijkers en/of potentiële adverteerders beschouwden.

De conclusies van de Hoofdstukken 9 en 10 worden gepresenteerd in Hoofdstuk 11. In dit laatste hoofdstuk weerleg ik Appadurai's visie aangaande het lokale en reflecteer ik op de resultaten van deze studie vanuit het oogpunt van mijn kernconcepten. In de Epiloog krijgen deze extra reliëf in het perspectief van enkele zeer actuele ontwikkelingen.

Curriculum vitae

Els Bogaerts was born in Brasschaat, Belgium, in 1955. She obtained MA degrees in Germanic Philology and Theatre Science (University of Antwerp, Belgium) and in Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania (cum laude, Leiden University, the Netherlands). For five years she studied Javanese, Balinese and Sundanese dance and music at Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia (now Institut Seni Indonesia) and Javanese court dance with Rama Sasmita Mardawa at Pamulangan Beksa Ngayogyakarta in Yogyakarta, Central Java.

She lectured at Leiden University (1986-2002), focusing on Javanese language and culture and modern media in Indonesia. In Leiden, she co-ordinated several international academic programmes. At the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) in Amsterdam, she co-ordinated the research programme ‘Indonesia across Orders; The reorganisation of Indonesian society, 1930-1960’ (2002-2008).

An enthusiastic lecturer/teacher, she has given guest lectures and talks for a wide public, as well as organized series of talks, lectures, performances and dance demonstrations. She is particularly interested in performing arts in Southeast Asia, the interface between art and science, the effects of cultural encounters, culture and decolonization, and electronic media.

She has contributed to and co-edited several volumes. Her publications include: “‘Whither Indonesian culture?’” Rethinking “culture” in Indonesia in a time of decolonization’ (Leiden, 2012); ‘Beyond empire and nation’ (with Remco Raben, Leiden, 2012); ‘Recollecting resonances. Listening to an Indonesian-Dutch musical heritage’ (with Bart Barendregt, Leiden, 2013); ‘The installation of Prince Mangkubumi: Performing Javanese history’ (*Wacana* 17-3 (2016):473–505); ‘Mediating the local: Representing Javanese cultures on local television in Indonesia, 1998-2008’ (*JSEAS* 48-2 (June 2017):196-218).

She began her research on Indonesian television as a member of the pioneer programme Verbal Art in the Audiovisual Media of Indonesia at Leiden University and wrote her dissertation as an independent researcher, affiliated with the Leiden Institute of Area Studies.