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Bogaerts, E.M.

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Author: Bogaerts, E.M.

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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 (Fathoni 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 Javanese-ness. 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/script-writer 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 ambience 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.

