

A CRISIS OF PERSONALITY:

Working Through Problems of Memory, Authenticity and Modernity  
in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Buru Tetralogy*

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### A Note on Spelling and Translation

This essay concerns an episode in modern Indonesian *and* Dutch history, and requires as such some careful thought about the implications of language. I have consulted sources written in languages other than Dutch, all of which I have translated personally and included, in the original, in the footnotes. These translations are imperfect and necessarily do some harm to the original. I ask the reader to indulge my renditions with patience and magnanimity.

I have also consulted numerous translations, most notably Max Lane's rendition of the Boeroe tetralogy and Willem Samuels (highly edited) version of *Nyanyi Sunyi* (*The Mute's Soliloquy*). Given the significance of bahasa Indonesia to the formation of the Indonesian nation, the mediation of these works by their translators renders them in a fundamentally different way. The works I analyze, however, are the translations; I refer to them as such by their English names. Christopher GoGwilt has discussed the implications of translating Pramoedya's work into English in a thoughtful essay, to which I direct the reader's attention.<sup>1</sup>

In this essay, I have tried to preserve the original spelling of those words that have no English translation, or carry special significance in their original context: the 'u' (as in 'blue') in bahasa Indonesia and Dutch is written as 'oe', so that 'Buru' becomes 'Boeroe' and 'Pramudya' becomes 'Pramoedya'. Words like 'volk' that carry a surplus of meaning compared to their English translation ('people') are capitalized ('Volk'). Words that do not exist in translation, like 'boepati', are italicized (*boepati*).

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Lloyd GoGwilt, "The Voice of Pramoedya Ananta Toer: Passages, Interviews, and Reflections from *The Mute's Soliloquy* and Pramoedya's North American Tour," *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003): 217–46.

During the early-twentieth century, the Netherlands and the Netherlands East Indies underwent great transformations. The retarded shift from agricultural to industrial capitalism catapulted Dutch society into modernity, with all its attendant crises. The ‘Social Question’, as issues like mass unemployment, child labor, and a general sense of decadence were referred to in public debate, bore heavy on the minds of politicians and intellectuals alike. Building in part on this background of moral decline, the (Calvinist) Anti-Revolutionary Party made a meteoric rise on the political stage since its inception in 1879, and under the leadership first of Abraham Kuyper, later of Hendrikus Colijn, would remain a dominant force in the Dutch polity well into the postwar era. Their vision of principled pluralism – the Calvinist notion of ‘sphere sovereignty’ – was institutionalized in the Pacification of 1917, and came to be known (until the late-1960s) as ‘pillarization’. Under this system, Dutch society segregated along religious and ideological lines, each segment forming a metaphorical pillar with its own social, political and economic institutions, united in the ‘roof’ of corporatist parliamentary politics. The Dutch answer to the question of nationhood in the turbulent modern age was ‘unity in division’, under the sign of God.

At the same time, the Cultivation System that had been in place in the Netherlands East Indies (present-day Indonesia), whereby a land tax was collected through the forced cultivation of exportable crops, was gradually phased out starting 1870. After a ‘Liberal Period’ of 30 years, characterized by the implementation of free markets and the inflow of European capital, Kuyper’s government in 1901 adopted what came to be known as the ‘Ethical Policy’. The Ethical Policy – an ambiguous term with wide-ranging definitions, interpretations and periodization – resembled an early-modern development policy, aimed at the improvement of the wellbeing of the Native population in the Indies. It was promulgated with remarkable consensus

across the political spectrum. In 1899, the Radical Democrat Conrad Theodor van Deventer famously proclaimed a Dutch ‘debt of honor’ to the Indies: “The restitution of those millions [of guilders extracted from the Indies under the Cultivation System] – that is the *debt of honor* the Netherlands owes to the Indies, a *debt of honor* because this acquittance is commanded not by the written rule of law, but by that higher law we call honor and honesty.”<sup>2</sup> Kuyper echoed: “... from now on, [the governing principle in the Indies should be] not domination for our own profit, but guardianship for the raising to higher standing ...” of the Natives.<sup>3</sup> While Van Deventer and Kuyper rarely agreed on anything, their efforts in the realm of the colonial came to be aligned in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

‘Education, irrigation and migration’, sounded the chorus of conscientious colonialism. When A.W.F. Idenburg assumed the position of Minister of Colonies in 1902, the situation in the Indies was grave. The influx of European capital into the ‘free markets’ of the colony did not offer relief; it merely shifted the locus of unfreedom, to borrow a phrase by Timothy Garton Ash, from the state to the private enterprise. Crop failure and famine in Java added a sense of urgency to the long-stagnant Native economy. Idenburg did not turn a blind eye to the crisis. In his view, overpopulation (the past two decades witnessed a 45 percent increase in Java alone) and a lack of productivity due to restricted access to arable land in the absence of modern industry, formed the crux of the matter. In response to these issues, Idenburg moved to implement infrastructure

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<sup>2</sup> (“De restitutie dier indische millioenen - dat is de eereschuld van Nederland aan Indië, eereschuld omdat haar kwijting niet door geschreven rechtstitels, maar door die hoogere wet, die men de wet der eer en der eerlijkheid noemt, geboden wordt.”) C.T. Van Deventer, “Een Eereschuld,” *De Gids* 63 (1899): 228.

<sup>3</sup> (“... voortaan niet overheersching ten onzen bate, maar voorgedij ter opvoering tot hooger standpunt ...”) Abraham Kuyper, *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde: Met Nadere Toelichting Op Ons Program*, vol. 2: de toepassing (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1917), 579.

development, agricultural credit, and emigration from Java to the ‘outer islands’ of the archipelago. Under his auspices, the Indies were also relieved of their part in the Netherlands’ national debt in 1903, and a credit of forty million guilders was extended the year after. The question of education, raised by members of the opposition – notably the liberal MP Van Deventer and socialist Van Kol – was ignored. Only when elections in 1905 returned a liberal majority to parliament, did the Dutch approach change course.<sup>4</sup>

Under the leadership of liberal Minister of Colonies Dirk Fock, the colonial administration of the Indies started implementing broad educational reforms. The old institutions which educated the Javanese aristocracy to fill their place in the ranks of the colonial administration were refurbished. New ones were founded to expand the realm of Native involvement in the administration of the Indies: the Agricultural Secondary School (1903), the Teachers’ Training School (1906), a Veterinary School (1907) and a Law School (1908), among others. Between 1909 and 1912, the number of desa (village) schools grew from 723 to 2,500. Colonial officials like scholar Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje and Indies Director of Education J.H. Abendanon sponsored Javanese aristocratic youths to pursue a university degree in the Netherlands. In 1908, there were some 30 Indonesian students in the metropole.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, the ethical element in colonial politics did not preclude the concurrent military conquest of the ‘outer regions’ of the Indonesian archipelago. Between 1870 and 1909, the Dutch colonial armies undertook hundreds of expeditions to ‘pacify’ these regions – some small and short-lived, others bloody and protracted. Most notable among the latter is the Aceh War, fought

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Van Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve Publishers, 1970), 32–34.

<sup>5</sup> See “The Acceleration of Change” in Van Niel, 31–72.

between 1873 and 1903 and resulting in some 100,000 casualties; 37,000 soldiers of the Netherlands East Indies Army (most of whom were Native inhabitants of other Indonesian islands) and approximately 65,000 Acehnese.<sup>6</sup> Many an historian has ascribed these expansion wars to a ‘reluctant imperialism’ on the part of the Dutch. H.L. Wesseling, for example, has claimed that the Dutch did not truly engage in modern imperialism because they operated within a previously established sphere of influence, merely completing a project that started some two hundred years before.<sup>7</sup> More recent scholarship suggests otherwise, claiming expansion was part and parcel with the development works of the Ethical Policy.

The work of Locher-Scholten exemplifies this approach. In a collection of five studies on Dutch colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago between 1877 and 1942, she puts forth an alternative definition of Ethical Policy:

policy aimed at the real subjugation of the entire Indonesian archipelago to Dutch authority *and* at the development of the land and Volk of this region towards self-governance under Dutch auspices and according to a Western model.<sup>8</sup>

Rather than exclude one element or the other, Locher-Scholten broadens the framework and explains that both elements were mutually interdependent. That is, the object of Ethical Policy –

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<sup>6</sup> Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10–11.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Wesseling’s brief discussion of the Dutch case in H.L. Wesseling, *The European Colonial Empires, 1815-1919*, trans. Diane Webb (London, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> (“beleid gericht op het onder reëel Nederlands gezag brengen van de gehele Indonesische archipel en op de ontwikkeling van land en volk van dit gebied in de richting van zelfbestuur onder Nederlandse leiding en naar westers model.”) Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in Fragmenten: Vijf Studies over Koloniaal Denken En Doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel, 1877-1942* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1981), 201.

to prepare the Native inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago for their eventual autonomy – implies a coherent territorial entity, the Indies. And since the people of Java did not identify with those on Ambon, and the people of the Celebes (Sulawesi) may not have even heard of Lombok, they were all to be united in their subjugation to the Dutch. Locher-Scholten explains the apparent decline in Ethical Policy after the early 1920s as a ‘shifting center of gravity’ within the same definition: whereas initial focus was on the “development of land Volk”, the rising tide of nationalism and the need for peace and order demanded a shift to subjugation.

Locher-Scholten also observed that there were many continuities between domestic and colonial affairs in the Greater Netherlands during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In both the metropolitan and colonial centers of the empire, the term ‘ethical’ became fashionable. Young socialists advocated for the ethical treatment of industrial laborers. Catholics espoused the moral elevation of Dutch society by repressing prostitution, feminists through the political influence of women (a current that was named ‘ethical feminism’). Indeed, one might say, as Locher-Scholten does, that “the ‘lesser prosperity’ [of the Natives of the Indies] as colonial variant of the ‘social question’ [in the Netherlands] called on precisely this ethical consciousness.”<sup>9</sup>

The foundational view of Ethical Policy was articulated first by Abraham Kuyper. Already in 1879, when he founded the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), Kuyper advocated for a more benevolent colonial policy. In the founding principles of the party, he condemned the “exploitative tendencies” of the Dutch state and private corporations, and spoke of a “moral

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<sup>9</sup> (“... de ‘mindere welvaart’ als koloniale variant van de ‘sociale kwestie’ juist op dit ethisch besef een beroep deed.”) Locher-Scholten, 180.

obligation” the Dutch held vis-à-vis the inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>10</sup> Unlike Van Deventer’s ‘debt of honor’, which referred to the restitution of funds appropriated by the state, Kuyper’s ‘moral obligation’ indicated a broader vision of imperial relations, imbued with the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. In the latter’s view, the Dutch were the guardians of the peoples of the Indies, “appointed naturally by the past.” The Natives were, after all, “not yet socially mature and ripe enough to rise as an autonomous people.” The moral obligation of the guardian was to “lead and [raise them] in such a way that [they] can later assume an entirely autonomous position.”<sup>11</sup>

The case of modern Dutch imperialism is a peculiar one, for there has never been a Dutch François Bernier; a Paul Broca from north of the Meuse; an Albert Sarraut or a Comte de Buffon, to orchestrate an explicit racial hierarchy. To be sure, by the turn of the twentieth century, the Indies, too, had been governed largely by racial anxieties like the fear of miscegenation or the barbarity of the Acehnese; in short, by sordid racism.<sup>12</sup> But in the discourse of Ethical Policy, explicit concepts of racial hierarchy did not hold much currency. Kuyper’s notion of guardianship implied a capacity on the part of the Native peoples of the archipelago to develop. Snouck’s tutelage of Javanese youths could only depart from the assumption that they would, given the right knowledge and cultural environment, mature into modern men. Culture, knowledge and opportunity enabled a person to be independent, not her levels of melanin.

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<sup>10</sup> (“baatzuchtige neiging”; “zedelijke verplichting”) Cited in Locher-Scholten, 182.

<sup>11</sup> Kuyper, *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde, Tweede Deel*, 2: de toepassing:580.

<sup>12</sup> For a succinct study of race relations in the Indies, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

And yet, it took the (violent) intervention of a foreign power to end the Dutch occupation of the archipelago. It is difficult to say when their presence would have expired, had Japanese troops not landed on the shores of Java in 1942. Devoid of a timeline, or even a set of criteria for the emancipation of the Natives, Kuyper's notion of guardianship did not indicate any significant change in power were to take place soon. As late as 1928, five years before he would resume his post as Minister of Colonies, Hendrikus Colijn wrote: "... even though [the Natives] received a dose of Western knowledge, they remained ... completely estranged from the root of our entire Western civilization."<sup>13</sup> This observation led the influential statesman to the conclusion that the colonial administration ought to change course from their support for nationalist activity, to tempering it with greater scrutiny and, if necessary, a firm hand.

How are we to make sense of this apparent contradiction? Did the doctrine of guardianship imply an issue of development or one of an immutable Native essence? The Calvinist vision of Dutch colonialism has received remarkably little attention in the existing scholarship. The lack of explicit racial ideologies has led most historians to categorize the Dutch case as distinct from other forms of modern imperialism. While there are certainly important differences between the Dutch and, say, the French case, reducing Ethical Policy to a mere development project precludes the possibility that it affected not just the peoples of the Indies, but the Netherlands itself, too. Over the course of this essay, I will look beyond the existing scholarship to the realm of historical fiction, in order to rethink the conventions of the Dutch historiography of modern imperialism. First, I will discuss in greater detail the condition of that

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<sup>13</sup> ("... al ontvingen zij een dosis aan het Westen ontleende parate kennis, aan den wortel, waaruit onze geheele Westersche beschaving opkwam, bleven zij ... volstrekt vreemd.") H. Colijn, *Koloniale Vraagstukken van Heden En Morgen* (Amsterdam: De Standaard, 1928), 14.

historiography, as well as some methodological considerations in trying to avoid its pitfalls.

Next, I will introduce an alternative observer of history and draw from his work a different view of memory, history and modernity. In doing so, I hope to work through both the history of Ethical Policy and the way in which it has been inscribed in the history of the Netherlands and Indonesia.

## 1. Methodological Considerations

... whatever befalls [writers], their personal experience is also the experience of their people, and the experience of their people is also their personal experience. A part of this experience, small or large or the whole lot, will erupt in their writings, and will return to their people in the form of new realities, literary realities. That is why the truth of fiction is also the truth of history.<sup>14</sup>

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1992

Kuyper's vision of colonialism as a form of guardianship promotes an understanding of history that has largely remained unquestioned in Dutch historiography. In 2000, Dipesh Chakrabarty published his seminal book on postcolonial theory, *Provincializing Europe*, which helps us to understand the fundamental assumptions that underwrite both Kuyper's worldview and the histories that have been produced about it. Chakrabarty is an historian who has written for *Subaltern Studies*, the influential postcolonial journal founded by Ranajit Guha in the late 1970s. In *Provincializing Europe*, he develops a sustained critique of a scholarly tendency he terms 'historicism': "the idea that to understand anything it has to be seen both as a unity and in its historical context." What Chakrabarty criticizes is not the notion that to understand anything, it must be analyzed in its historical context. Rather, he suggests that the big concepts of

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<sup>14</sup> Cited in Razif Bahari, "Remembering History, W/Righting History: Piecing the Past in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Buru Tetralogy*," *Indonesia* 75 (2003): 88.

modernity – capitalism, democracy, the ‘political’ – are made to look as “something that became global *over time*” and originate in Europe.<sup>15</sup> Instead, Chakrabarty insists there is no one, monolithic form of political modernity that simply happens to be rooted in European thought. In his view, history is not a linear progression, no “measure of the cultural distance ... between the West and the non-West” as a notion like Kuyper’s guardianship implies.<sup>16</sup> But because these modern concepts have mediated the colonial encounter, they bear a contradictory relationship to “the experience of political modernity in a country like India” – that is, a formerly colonized country.<sup>17</sup> Such concepts, Chakrabarty concludes, are both indispensable and inadequate in understanding that experience.

To understand how modern Dutch and Indonesian nation and statehood were shaped by their colonial encounter thus requires something more than the Western concepts of modernity on which (Western) historians tend to base their work. Over the course of the past two decades, historians of modern imperialism have started contemplating what such a different narrative might look like.<sup>18</sup> Gary Wilder’s *The French Imperial Nation-State* (2005) represents one version of this current. To dispel the pervasive view of imperialism as an obstacle to France’s republican ideals, or an aberration from its republican tradition, Wilder introduces the writers of the Négritude movement into the conversation on French ‘colonial humanism’ – a reform

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<sup>15</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Chakrabarty, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Chakrabarty, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Prominent amongst them are, for example, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

movement not unlike the Ethical Policy.<sup>19</sup> Despite some shortcomings (most notably, his lackluster archival research), Wilder's monograph presents an insightful history of French imperialism. What he suggests is that the complicity of a metropolitan political project (French republicanism) in colonial exploitation affects its structural stability in a fundamental way, and that the intellectuals whose lives were mediated by this imperialism are the keenest observers of its dichotomies.

To destabilize the existing scholarship on Ethical Policy and understand how Dutch nation and statehood are rooted in the colonial encounter, I turn to such an observer who tells perhaps the most coherent story of this history: Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The dialogue I seek to produce between Pramoedya and the historians on the one hand, and between the author and Kuyper on the other, makes this essay a rather unconventional project in writing history. It is at once an historical study of twentieth century, transnational developments in state and nationhood, and an historiographical argument. Pramoedya was a writer of fiction, not an historian. His work, however, is deeply historical. And yet, I do not consult it as I would a primary source in any other historical dissertation. This essay casts Pramoedya as both historian – for the writer comments on the nature of history, memory, testimony and their interplay – and agent of history – for he played an active role in shaping modern Indonesia. What I seek to produce is an argument for writing history as a means of making history; that is, an argument for an approach to writing history that is reflexive, self-critical, and always situational.

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<sup>19</sup> Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the World Wars* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2005).

## 2. The Prose of Resistance

Pramoedya Ananta Toer was born and died an Indonesian. Given the fact he was born on Java in 1925, at the dusk of the Ethical Policy, and spent a quarter of his adult life incarcerated by various regimes, his lifelong – if flailing – exercise in modern citizenship is astonishing; for the better part of his life, he struggled to retain his humanity in the face of dehumanizing forces. Growing up in the small town of Blora, Eastern Java, Pramoedya (as he is properly referred to in the Indonesian vernacular) did not attend one of the government schools founded under Ethical Policy. The educational reforms that proliferated during the 1910s slumped in the few years preceding his birth. Given that most graduates of the European schools found ready employment in the expanding ranks of the colonial administration, however, the demand for schooling among the Natives never subsided. As the various organizations that sprang up during the first two decades of the twentieth century turned away from cooperation with the colonial administration, they sought to fill the void left by government inactivity.

‘Wild schools’, run by Native organizations outside the supervision of the colonial administration, turned increasingly inward. A notable example is Soewardi Soerjaningrat’s *Taman Siswa* (Garden of Learning) schools. Inspired by the ideas of Maria Montessori while exiled in the Netherlands from 1913 to 1918, Soewardi – who would become the first Minister of Education in Soekarno’s Republic – sought to return to the “cultural history” of Java and advance modern education from there, placing emphasis on the “traditional skills and values of Javanese life; music, dance, and character formation.”<sup>20</sup> At a school not unlike Soewardi’s, Pramoedya’s father worked ceaselessly as a nationalist educator.

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<sup>20</sup> Van Niel 219-221

If Pramoedya was an Indonesian before anything else, it was because his Indonesian identity was figured *against* that which he opposed: ‘Javanism’ and the colonial. As a young man, he renounced the Javanese prefix ‘Mas’ of his family name – Mastoer – because it placed him in the aristocratic realm of social relations. As a writer, Pramoedya used bahasa Indonesia rather than his native Javanese, for similar reasons: “Javanese was just the right instrument to carry out oppression. To be more precise, using Javanese corners people into knowing precisely where they stand in the social hierarchy.”<sup>21</sup> If the vernacular and equalizing character of bahasa Indonesia – an outflow of the vernacular Malay spoken by peasants and merchants in the archipelago for centuries – is one source of its appeal to Pramoedya, its unifying nature is another. In an interview in April 1999 with Matthew Rothschild, editor for *Progressive*, Pramoedya explains: “I write my books to make the nation as one. I write using the Indonesian language because that language is a bond that unites us.” When asked whether his nation-building chronicles are anti-colonial, Pramoedya responds: “The spirit is anti-colonial because I was socialized from childhood to be anti-colonial.”<sup>22</sup> Pramoedya’s fiction flourishes where the two – Indonesian and anti-colonial – meet.

As an Indonesian, Pramoedya initially lauded the Japanese invasion of the archipelago in 1942. After completing a course in radio engineering at a vocational school in Soerabaja, he moved to the Japanese-occupied capital of the Indies, renamed Jakarta, to work for the Japanese news agency Domei. As a stenographer and speed-typist, Pramoedya was introduced to his

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<sup>21</sup> Cited in GoGwilt, “The Voice of Pramoedya Ananta Toer: Passages, Interviews, and Reflections from The Mute’s Soliloquy and Pramoedya’s North American Tour,” 236.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Rothschild, “Pramoedya Ananta Toer Interview,” *Progressive.org*, April 12, 1999, <http://progressive.org/%3Fq%3Dnews/1999/04/3334/pramoedya-ananta-toer-interview/>.

lifelong favorite tool: the typewriter. When the British and Dutch re-occupation forces landed on Java in August 1945, he joined the Badan Keamanan Rakyat, a civil defense unit, as their press officer. A year later, he started working for the Voice of Free Indonesia, the radio station of Soekarno's Nationalist Party. But in 1947, at the onset of the first of two military expeditions by the Dutch to reclaim the archipelago, Pramoedya was arrested for possessing 'anti-Dutch documents' and interned at Boekitdoeri prison.<sup>23</sup>

This first episode of incarceration provided the impetus for Pramoedya's long and turbulent career as a writer of (historical) fiction, starting with the publication of *The Fugitive* soon after his release. While the critical acclaim with which the book was received launched the writer into a meteoric rise as public intellectual during the first decade of Indonesian independence, Pramoedya would forever produce his best writing under the most adverse conditions – and adverse conditions he would meet. Pramoedya's fate closely mirrored that of Soekarno's Republic: tremendously popular at the onset but headed for a swift yet brutal demise, garnering fierce opposition all along the way.

Until recently, and much to Pramoedya's personal horror, very little was known concretely of the events of 1965. Before January 2018, no detailed account of this period in Indonesian history had ever been put forward, but the general understanding of what happened goes something like this: In the evening of September 30, 1965, six senior military officers were forcibly taken from their homes, to be executed in the morning. The 'Thirtieth of September Movement', whether led by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) or right-wing military officers, triggered a brutal 'counter-coup', led by General Soeharto of the Indonesian Army.

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<sup>23</sup> See introduction by Willem Samuels to Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Mute's Soliloquy: A Memoir*, trans. Willem Samuels (New York: Hyperion East, 1999).

After 16 years of uninterrupted, authoritarian rule, Soekarno met his demise. Suspected members and sympathizers of the PKI and its affiliated organizations were rounded up and summarily killed by Soeharto's military 'New Order' regime. As many as one million people perished in the Indonesian killing fields, prisons and concentration camps.<sup>24</sup> But in 2010, Jess Melvin left the government archive in Banda, Aceh with undeniable proof of what Soeharto had always denied: that the Indonesian military, under his command, planned the 1965 massacre. Eight years later, her groundbreaking discovery resulted in her first book, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder*.<sup>25</sup>

Two weeks after the assassination of the military officers, Pramoedya was captured by the military, shifted through various (overflowing) prisons on Java, his personal library scorched. After four years of incarceration in various penitentiaries on the island, Pramoedya, together with 12,000 others, was transferred to the remote Boeroe Island Penal Colony in the Moluccas. He would never be told what he had been arrested for, something that clawed at his very soul, even though he knew perfectly well that his public support for Soekarno and his general dissidence made him a natural target for any authoritarian regime. Between 1969 and 1979, Pramoedya and his fellow prisoners slaved away on Boeroe, developing the island into a colony by hand. Despite the looming specter of hunger, torture and death, he managed to write, after 1975, using materials he received from a General and a visiting reporter. On more than one occasion, however, his work was confiscated and destroyed.

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Samuel Willem's introduction to Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Scott, "The Truth about the Killing Fields," *The New York Review of Books*, June 28, 2018, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2018/06/28/truth-about-indonesia-killing-fields/>.

As Pramoedya explains in a foreword to the (English translation of a) compilation of notes from Boeroe, his writing was mediated by repression: “Had these materials fallen into unwanted hands, they no doubt would have been the reason for yet another interrogation. Thus the opportunities I found to write very much depended on my intuition for safety.”<sup>26</sup> In addition to the letters, notes and lists of the dead and missing compiled in *The Mute’s Soliloquy*, Pramoedya wrote two historical novels about Indonesia during pre-colonial times, as well as a quartet of novels about Indonesia’s ‘National Awakening’ in the early-twentieth century. The latter, compiled and rewritten as the Boeroe tetralogy after his release, are the focal interest of this essay.

Even though Pramoedya was, in the words of Indonesian poet Goenawan Mohamad, “the prose writer par excellence”, and even though the Boeroe tetralogy was written in the 1970s, he has much in common with the writers of Negritude. Like these 1950s poets, Pramoedya’s work is infused with a Hegelian spirit that engages poetic language in an exercise of reversing colonial discourse. It demonstrates the colonizer’s dependence on the colonized, as well as the (necessarily) asymmetrical impact of their encounter. The work of all these writers is, fundamentally, a human exercise. What Robin Kelley says of Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* – that it “speaks in revolutionary cadences, capturing the spirit of its age” – applies equally to Pramoedya’s novels: their entire being reflect their author’s protest, in both form and content, to the structural extermination of people’s humanity.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Mute’s Soliloquy*, ix.

<sup>27</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 7.

If Pramoedya did indeed form part of the “tidal wave of color”, his membership was seriously delayed.<sup>28</sup> As I have mentioned before, any attempt to engage the Boeroe tetralogy in an historical analysis of the early-twentieth-century National Awakening quickly runs into trouble: its author is separated from the events by several decades of already historically-condensed time; the historical characters and events in the novels are not corroborated by historical evidence; and his account of this period is written entirely in light of later, catastrophic events that evidently distorted the narrative. But all this is for good reason. Unlike Césaire, who served as deputy to the French National Assembly for Martinique, Pramoedya was forcefully isolated from his country’s fate. Neither he nor the protagonist to his tetralogy ever had the chance to confront a listening audience – or any audience, for that matter. What the Boeroe tetralogy makes abundantly clear – and what I believe qualifies it as a piece of anti-colonial literature of the same stature as *The Souls of Black Folk* or *Black Skin, White Masks* – is that the Dutch colonizer, even under the (supposedly benevolent) Ethical Policy, found ways to demarcate freedom, autonomy and self-determination by denying the humanity of the colonial subject, and that this sin lingers under the surface as an unanswered – if not unasked – question.

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<sup>28</sup> This is how Malcolm X once described the flourishing of anti-colonial literature in the long decade succeeding the Second World War, referring to the work of authors like W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, George Padmore, Albert Memmi, and so on. Cited in Césaire, 8.

### 3. On the Verge of Humanity

“Without hesitation we can be convinced that we possess intellectual goods the inhabitants of Java still lack. Whether [their] environment presents a lasting obstacle to the digestion of these intellectual and moral nourishments, only the future will tell. History does not give us the right to decree this a priori.”<sup>29</sup>

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, 1908

“Dr. Snouck Hurgronje ... has undertaken a valuable experiment with three Native youths. The purpose: to find out ... whether their scientific knowledge and learning from school is only a thin, dry, easily shattered coating on the surface, or something that has really taken root. This scholar has not yet come to a decision.”<sup>30</sup>

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth of Mankind*

Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s Boeroe tetralogy is a work of extraordinary caliber, and every reader must grapple with that reality. Spanning nearly 1,500 pages, the four volumes of Pramoedya’s monumental work – *This Earth of Mankind* (*Bumi Manusia*), *Child of All Nations* (*Anak Semua Bangsa*), *Footsteps* (*Jejak Langkah*), and *House of Glass* (*Rumah Kaca*) – cover the lives of some 80 characters of the course of two decades. Each installment tells its own story, and the first three center on – and are narrated by – a young Javanese man, Minke. In *This Earth of Mankind*, Minke is the only Native student at the elitist European *Hoogere Burgerschool* (HBS). Enamored with modern science and learning, he rebels against his Javanese heritage. As the son of a *boepati*, Minke is intimately familiar with the humiliating traditions of Javanese

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<sup>29</sup> (“Zonder aanmatiging mogen wij overtuigd zijn, dat wij geestelijke goederen bezitten, die de bevolking van Java nog mist. Of het klimaat voor de digestie dier intellectueele en moreele voedingsmiddelen eene duurzame verhindering zal opleveren, kan slechts de toekomst leeren. De geschiedenis geeft ons geen recht, dit a priori te decreteren”) Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, “Blikken in Het Zielenleven van Den Javaan?,” *De Gids* 72, no. 3 (1908): 446  
Translated by author.

<sup>30</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth of Mankind*, trans. Max Lane (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996), 144–45.

feudalism; he is made to crawl over the floor and clasp his hands in obeisance when he visits his father. When he starts his career as a journalist, he caters to a European audience. In the second volume, *Child of All Nations*, Minke encounters forms of modernity that are not rooted in Europe. He meets members of the Chinese Young Generation, implicated in the overthrow of the Ching Dynasty; learns about the Philippine Revolution and the writings of José Rizal; and looks to Japan with admiration and envy, as the only peoples awarded the same legal standing in the Indies as the Europeans. The third and axial novel, *Footsteps*, bears witness to the National Awakening of the Indies, and that of Minke himself. As he grows increasingly frustrated with his Dutch colonizers – whom he formerly considered his ‘teachers’ – he turns away from them and towards his own people, founding various political organizations and critical publications. At the end of the novel, he is arrested and sent into exile. The fourth installment, *House of Glass*, retells the plot of *Footsteps* from the perspective of the police commissioner responsible for his capture, Jacques Pangemanann.

Pramoedya writes with simple, realist prose, but is uniquely capable of bringing his characters to life through rich (inner and interpersonal) dialogue. The narrative is interspersed with reflections by the narrator, speaking to the reader from an indeterminate point in time, after the events have already taken place. The opening pages of the tetralogy illustrate:

In the beginning I wrote these short notes during a period of mourning: She had left me, who could tell if only for a while or forever? (At the time, I did not know how things would turn out.) ... Thirteen years later I read and studied these short notes over again. I merged them together with dreams, imaginings. Naturally they became different from the original. Different? But that doesn't matter! And here is how they turned out.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 15.

Minke introduces himself as the narrator of this story, a braid work of history and biography. As he admits to ‘merging’ his notes with ‘dreams, imaginings’, he foregrounds his subjectivity in retelling the events of a distant past. Read against the start of the narrative below, his voice is mature and suspicious:

I was still very young, just the age of a corn plant, yet I had already experienced modern learning and science: They had bestowed upon me a blessing whose beauty was beyond description.<sup>32</sup>

The immediate disjuncture between Minke’s mature and suspicious voice on the one hand, and his youthful and enthusiastic voice on the other, emphasizes the contingencies of memory and subjectivity; his knowledge of “how things would turn out” has changed his memory of the events, as reflected by the teleogenic plotting of the novels.

Pramoedya’s emphasis on subjectivity and the contingencies of memory and interpretation is compounded by his use of historical materials. Like Minke’s manuscripts in the novels, Pramoedya’s Boeroe tetralogy is itself a compilation of notes, or rather, a reconstruction of his archival materials that were destroyed upon his arrest in 1965. The books as such are also interspersed with historical figures, organizations, texts and events. Even the character of Minke is (loosely) based on the life of Tirta Adhi Soerjo, the founding father of Indonesia’s vernacular press. As Razif Bahari has observed, “The very skill with which the author succeeds in blending his fictional and his historical characters makes it almost impossible to say which is which.”<sup>33</sup>

That Pramoedya’s biography enters into the novels as well – most notably through Minke’s exile

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<sup>32</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Bahari, “Remembering History,” 76.

– only strengthens their ambiguity. In the center of it all, the reader is left to make sense of the interlacing stories that are told, struggling to sort fact from fiction.

In the space Pramoedya opens up for the telling of his story, through the story of Minke, as a part of history, the protagonist's inner convulsions take center stage. The author's ability to capture Minke's internal conflicts in response to the most minute details of his relation to his colonizers, his family, his friends and his nemeses is what makes the novels so impressive. In the words of Chris GoGwilt, "Pramoedya's work registers as personal, literary, and historical experience the seismic shocks of twentieth-century decolonization."<sup>34</sup> It is at once deeply historical – Pramoedya is a keen observer of the dichotomies of *Dutch* colonialism – and strangely universal – by opening the window to Minke's inner life, Pramoedya enables the reader to relate to Minke on the basis of their shared humanity. Where the two meet, where the work "registers as personal, literary, and historical experience", the Boeroe tetralogy demonstrates how the particular Dutch form of colonialism ('ethical imperialism') kept the Native subject on the verge of humanity, just outside of it.

Early in *This Earth of Mankind*, Minke is forcibly returned to his hometown by the police to attend his father's crowning ceremony as *boepati* of the district. Minke abhors the excessive festivities and the decadent audience in attendance of the event. His father is livid when he sees Minke for the first time in several years, for his son has estranged himself of his family. But when the Assistant Resident of the district, also in attendance, invites Minke to his home, father's anger subsides. Urged by his mother to comply with the invitation, Minke departs for the home of the Assistant Resident, only to be received by the Dutchman's daughters. Miriam and

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<sup>34</sup> Christopher Lloyd GoGwilt, *The Passage of Literature: Genealogies of Modernism in Conrad, Rhys and Pramoedya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

Sarah are slightly older than Minke. They quickly find joy in pestering Minke with constant questions about school, his teachers, and what he is learning. Minke is suspicious of their intentions: “I felt that, without knocking, they were about to open the door of humiliation.”<sup>35</sup>

Miriam, on the other hand, is confident and at ease, someone who likes to “Fight at our first meeting, but be friends afterwards, perhaps forever.” Immediately after she tries to reassure Minke with these words, she launches her attack:

“My ancestors may have been more stupid than your ancestors, Minke. Your ancestors were building paddy fields and irrigation systems when mine were still living in caves. But that’s not what we want to discuss. Look, at school you’re taught that thunder is only the clash of positive and negative clouds. Benjamin Franklin is now even able to build a lightning rod. Yes? While your ancestors have a beautiful legend – the story that I have heard – about Ki Ageng Sela, who was able to capture the thunder and then lock it up in a chicken coop.”

Sarah burst into laughter. Miriam became even more serious, observing my face as twilight reached its climax. Then she let fly her puzzle:

“I believe you can accept the teachings about positive and negative clouds because you need the marks to pass. But be honest, do you believe in the truth of this explanation?”

Now I knew that she was testing my inner character. Yes, a real test. To be frank, I’d never asked myself such a question. Everything had just seemed to flow smoothly, requiring no questioning.<sup>36</sup>

Minke and Miriam did become friends afterwards, forever. When Miriam returns to the Netherlands soon after the two meet, they keep up a correspondence. Miriam is always amicable, and she truly admires Minke. But as the passage above illustrates, her friendliness conceals a stabbing skepticism that strikes at the very heart of Minke’s being. The Boeroe tetralogy is rife with encounters like the one between Minke and Miriam, and each one of them is underwritten,

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<sup>35</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth*, 141.

<sup>36</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 142.

on Minke's part, by an urgent imperative to prove himself capable of independent thought. The reader cannot help but wonder: Why does the question of his inner character inflict such anxiety? What is Miriam really asking Minke, and would she ask a Dutch student the same questions?

Minke returns to Soerabaja and graduates from the HBS. After some time, he moves to Batavia, the capital of the Indies, to start his studies at the School for Native Physicians, STOVIA. He befriends a liberal Dutch journalist, Ter Haar, who invites Minke to an exclusive audience with a liberal member of the Dutch parliament on a visit to the Indies. Minke is the first Native to set foot inside the exclusive Harmonie Club as a guest instead of staff, and everyone is well aware of it, including Minke himself: "every pair of eyes rained their curiosity down upon me. ... I felt like a monkey that had been put in the wrong cage."<sup>37</sup> But Van Kollewijn, the MP, and Van Heutsz, future Governor-General of the Indies, shake his hand and praise his writings. Van Kollewijn speaks of the Ethical Policy, though not by name; he invokes Van Deventer's phrase, the 'debt of honor', and insists the Natives "must be helped to become equipped to deal with the new times." Soon after, he poses a question to his attentive audience:

Is it actually possible for a Native to develop a personality, a character, of his own? I am sure this is an issue that none of you have ever really considered. The development of a personality, of individual character, is a sign that a man and his times are in harmony.<sup>38</sup>

In Van Kollewijn's harrowing question sounds an echo of Miriam's earlier one: is the Native capable of grasping what he is offered on a deeper level than the superficial understanding she needs to replicate it to "get the marks to pass." But whereas Miriam questioned Minke's

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<sup>37</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Footsteps*, trans. Max Lane (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996), 37.

<sup>38</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 39.

allegiances (to European science and learning as opposed to the folklore of his ancestors), Van Kollwijjn insinuates ‘personality’ is a prerequisite for modernity. Asked against the backdrop of Ethical Policy, the question implies a contingency: only when the Native “and his times are in harmony” will she be capable of “dealing with the new times” independently. Again, the question posed to Minke is not repeated to the Dutch themselves: the “educated Natives” who must be prepared “to enter the modern age” require something more than European schooling.

By exposing the inner life of a Native subject in the Indies, Pramoedya is able to reveal a dynamic in imperial relations that has remained concealed to the Dutch historian who works with the colonial archives. Those sources imply Ethical Policy was a progressive approach to the issue of imperial relations, concerned not with the essential, but with the surmountable. The psychiatrist J.H.F. Kohlbrugge, for example, contended that “nothing could be found in the psyche of the Javanese that is not also present in that of the European, and vice versa.”<sup>39</sup> And yet, the refrain of ‘personality’ that confronts Minke throughout his life implies a belief that there is something essentially different about the Native subject; the ‘personality’ of the unemployed laborer in the Netherlands – that is, the subject of the Social Question – remains unquestioned. If there is nothing essentially different about the Native subject, why is her ‘personality’ questioned? And what would it take to bridge the divide?

The reader of the Boeroe tetralogy is introduced to the formal Dutch view of the Javanese only in the fourth installment, when Minke has been sent into exile and replaced by his captor as narrator of the story. Pangemanann, the police commissioner responsible for Minke’s capture,

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<sup>39</sup> (“dat er niets in de psyche van den Javaan gevonden wordt, wat niet ook bij den Europeaan aanwezig is, en omgekeerd.”) Cited in Snouck Hurgronje, “Blikken in Het Zielenleven van Den Javaan?,” 435–36.

visits the state archives in Buitenzorg to research nationalist movements in Southeast Asia. There he meets Meneer L., a Dutch archivist, with whom he will frequently discuss ‘Native affairs’.

Meneer L.’s views on the Javanese condition are instructive:

So it all began during the glorious days of the Majapahit Empire, as told by Tantular. All religions are the same. And as a result religion and all principles themselves disappeared. The Javanese were left without any guide in life. Foreign merchants introduced Islam to them. These merchants were at heart people who needed to gain the friendship and trust of the Javanese so they naturally tended toward making compromises. If some other religion had been introduced to the Javanese at that time, using the same methods, then the Javanese would have adopted it just as easily, along with the friendship of whoever brought it, so as to accommodate to the new situation. They had lost the principles that they had been taught by the religion of their ancestors. They received no new principles from their new religion. This was the period of the spiritual and philosophical decline of the Javanese and this is why they were not able to resist the Europeans.<sup>40</sup>

Through a long and humiliating history of defeat, so Meneer L. claims, the Javanese fell from great civilizational heights. As a people, the Javanese “lost the principles” of their ancestors, “received no new principles” in their place, and are bound to move in circles under the pressure of European domination. Meneer L. emphasizes the accommodating nature of the Javanese and the absence of religious guidance as the roots of their condition.

Meneer L.’s analysis of the Javanese echoes that of a prominent Dutch politician and supporter of the Ethical Policy, who writes:

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<sup>40</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass*, trans. Max Lane (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996), 114.

History testifies that in the fore-Indies [the Indonesian archipelago prior to Dutch colonization], under Buddhist leadership, a not insignificant evolution of higher forces took place on Java. One can still see, at least in the centers [of the island], how at that time a higher civilization penetrated not just the Javanese man, but also the Javanese woman. They are utterly polite and affable, refined rather than crude in their shapes, and everyone knows of the power that came forth from Java until the fourteenth century. Whether the Islam is partially culpable for the slump in their civilization that has occurred since then is beside the point, but the historical fact is that the Javanese have lived through a period when they far transcended [their current] peasant way of life.<sup>41</sup>

The author? None other than Abraham Kuyper. The same narrative, the Decline and Fall of the Javanese, served as part of Kuyper's justification for Dutch colonial guardianship. Pramoedya's observations thus clearly resonate with the history of Ethical Policy. What is less clear, however, is where 'personality' and the Dutch view of the Javanese condition intersect, and whether they represent, in the view of the colonizer, a cultural or essential difference.

When the European characters in the Boeroe tetralogy question Minke's 'personality', they often confront him with a version of Kuyper's view of the Javanese. In a letter to Minke, Miriam repeats the words of her father: "The gamelan translates the life of the Javanese, a people who are unwilling to seek, to search, who just circle around, repeating, as in prayers and mantras, suppressing, killing thought, carrying people into a dispirited universe, which leads them astray, where there is no character."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Kommer, a Eurasian journalist and friend of Minke's, points to the circular motion of Javanese life: "Look around you. Natives are so still, so quiet, so

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<sup>41</sup> ("Nog ziet men het, althans in de centra, aan den Javaanschen man niet alleen, maar zelfs aan de Javaansche vrouw, hoe er eertijds een hooge beschaving binnendrong. Ze zijn uiterst beleefd en voorkomend, eer fijn dan plomp in hun vormen, en men weet wat macht van Java tot in de 14de eeuw is uitgegaan. Of de Islam er mede schuld aan heeft, dat alle hoogere beschaving sinds inzonk, zij daargelaten, maar het historisch feit ligt er toe, dat de Javanen voorheen een periode hebben doorleefd, waarin ze zich ver boven den boerenstand hadden opgewerkt.") Kuyper, *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde, Tweede Deel*, 2: de toepassing:592 Translated by author.

<sup>42</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *This Earth*, 193.

alone – they never speak with anyone outside themselves. Day and night their lives revolve around just one pivot, in the same space, in the same circle. Busy with their own dreams. Just the same thing over and over again.”<sup>43</sup>

The words of Miriam and Kommer depict the Javanese as a people who have fallen out of tune with the times, who cannot keep up with the (linear) course of history professed by Kuyper and the Ethical Policy writ large. What is lacking, in their view, is progress – the same concept of progress that underwrites the idea of guardianship when its object is to “prepare educated Natives to enter into the modern age.”<sup>44</sup> Pangemanann succinctly articulates this view in response to Minke’s manuscripts (the first three volumes of the tetralogy):

The forward march of history is the movement of humanity all over the world, the life trajectory of humanity. Whoever defies history, whether a group, a tribe, a people, or an individual, will fail.<sup>45</sup>

Such a vision of history allows the colonizer to conflate the notion of ‘personality’ and that of a Javanese cultural slump; it distills the latter in the essence of the Native subject by placing her behind Europe on the linear “life trajectory of humanity.” In other words, that which Ethical Policy set out to change – the cultural, spiritual or intellectual condition of the Natives – it actually ends up essentializing through the purposefully ambiguous notion of ‘personality’. Pramoedya’s work illustrates how this essentializing dynamic functions through Minke’s transformation.

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<sup>43</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Child of All Nations*, trans. Max Lane (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996), 55.

<sup>44</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Footsteps*, 38.

<sup>45</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass*, 178.

Over the course of the Boeroe tetralogy, Minke struggles with the feudal ways of his people, the Javanese. Initially, enamored with European science and learning, he refuses to engage with his cultural heritage forthrightly. He writes in Dutch, catering to a colonial audience. But as he grows older and is exposed to the dichotomies of Dutch imperialism more often and more severely, he starts to question his faith in Europe. He travels around Java and a handful of other islands across the archipelago, writes in the vernacular Malay, founds political organizations and seeks to understand his own people in a new light; he experiences his own awakening, much like Indonesia writ large. Towards the end of *Footsteps*, when Minke visits various branches of his organization, the Sarekat Dagang Islamijah (SDI), he reaches a different conclusion about the ways of his people, that form of mysticism he calls ‘Javanism’:

This people of mine had become isolated from the development of science and modern knowledge, deliberately isolated by their European conquerors. They were the residents of colonialism’s special nature reserve.<sup>46</sup>

Pramoedya does not view ‘Javanism’ as something imposed on the Javanese by an outside power, nor does he come to reject modern European concepts like liberty and democracy. On the contrary, he often seems to despise his own people and continue to idealize that which is European. But as the passage above illustrates, this is a limited understanding of Pramoedya’s worldview. The resolution Minke comes to just as he is about to be forcefully removed, is that Dutch colonial interference fossilized Javanese society, harnessing its most troublesome aspects to their own rule. Javanism is neither alien to the Javanese nor an expression of some natural Javanese essence; it is a product of colonization, which, in the words of Aimé Césaire “prolongs

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<sup>46</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Footsteps*, 375.

artificially the survival of local pasts in their most pernicious aspects” by “graft[ing] modern abuse onto ancient injustice.”<sup>47</sup>

The “literary reality” Pramoedya constructs in the Boeroe tetralogy captures both the universal and the particular aspects of modern (Dutch) imperialism. It filters a turbulent episode of Indonesian history through the life of a young man to foreground those aspects of that imperialism which exist beneath the surface. In doing so, Pramoedya is able not only to capture the spirit of the age in the very form of his art, he also raises some important questions about the related notions of history, memory, authenticity, and modernity. But Pramoedya is no mere observer of history; he is an agent of it as well. As an author of historical fiction, Pramoedya writes the Indonesian nation into existence at the time when its fate was most precarious. More than anything else, therefore, the Boeroe tetralogy tells us that our most fundamental principles are mediated by history, and must be assessed critically if we are to cleanse them of their complicity in the atrocities of that past.

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<sup>47</sup> Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 34.

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