Changing the Terms

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The study of the development of modern Indonesian literature is one context where overemphasis on the colonial influence has sometimes obscured other influences and assimilations. Balai Pustaka (Hall or Bureau of Books) was a Dutch colonial-government agency, active from around 1905 until World War II, whose purpose was to provide literature to the native population of the Dutch East Indies colonies. Until recently, it was considered a truism among scholars of modern Indonesian literature that the agency nurtured the development of modern Indonesian literature by introducing and promoting Malay-language novels. Thus, Andries Tjeeuw wrote, "It is no exaggeration to state that the coming into being of the modern Indonesian novel, and its popularity, was largely made possible through the existence of Balai Pustaka" (1967, 7). But in fact, Indonesian literature has always been marked by a continuing process of translation, narrative importation, genre shifts and adaptations from literatures throughout East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Arabia and Europe.

Furthermore, the view that Balai Pustaka’s intervention was primarily cultural and positive obscures a whole spectrum of Dutch ideological intentions; the agency’s political and social agenda is just beginning to be scrutinized. In this paper, I shall look at six main projects that were initiated during Dutch colonization of Indonesia: the standardization of Malay, the distribution of literature, the collection and publication of traditional oral literature, the translation of European works, the sponsorship of original
Malay novels, and the publication of magazines and newspapers. I will attempt to show how Balai Pustaka, under the guise of developing literature in the Indies, determinedly manipulated and disrupted local literary practices in the interest of promoting European values and maintaining Dutch power.

**Historical Background**

Explaining the disparate origins of the instruments of the *gamelan* (the Javanese orchestra)—which includes the *rebab*, a Chinese bowed instrument; gongs and wooden xylophones from Southeast Asia; and drums from the Melanesian islands to the east—an Indonesian friend said to me, “Look at the map. Indonesia is a basket at the bottom of Asia. Everything falls down here eventually, and gets caught.” So it is with Indonesian history, culture and literature. The region comprising present-day Indonesia consists of many hundreds of islands, with a corresponding number of languages and cultures. Historically, there has been frequent contact between Indonesia and the Indian subcontinent.

Javanese culture has traditionally dominated the area. From about the fifth to the fifteenth century, cities on Java were the centres of a succession of kingdoms or sultanates which were strongly influenced by contemporaneous Indian Hindu-Buddhist culture. As a legacy of this period, Javanese (and modern Indonesian also) contains many Sanskrit loanwords, particularly for abstract terms. The hereditary sultans of the central Javanese cities, Jogjakarta and Surakarta, still inhabit their *kratons* (courts), and still preside over a matrix of cultural practices. Schools in the *kratons* provide training in the arts, *gamelan* and, most importantly, *wayang kulit*, the leather shadow-puppet performance, the most characteristic of Javanese art forms.

Like so much else in Javanese culture, the stories told in the *wayang* originated on the Indian subcontinent: episodes from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, the Hindu “oceans of story” that trace the two families of cousins whose final, inevitable war marks the end of the Golden Age on earth. Traditionally, the textual authority of the *wayang* resided with the *kraton*; the palm-leaf manuscripts housed there were available for consultation by the *dalang*, the professional puppeteers and conductors. However, “readings” were always performed and delivered as social phenomena, enacted in night-long sessions or in a series of sessions extending over several nights. *Wayang kulit* was usually performed at weddings, christenings and other celebrations. The audience would sit in the dark in front of a screen; a light source came from behind the screen, which also concealed the *gamelan* musicians and the *dalang*, who manipulated the flat leather puppets against
the screen, speaking or singing in stylized voices. What the audience expe-
riences in *wayang kulit* then is a more or less dimly lit and flickering screen,
against which shadowy silhouettes, quickly recognizable and familiar char-
acters which embody the ideal traits of Javanese culture—refinement, loy-
alty and bravery—suddenly loom up. The characters are intentionally unre-
alistic, and whether they represent refined princes or their uncouth attend-
ants, *wayang* characters are considered supernatural, sacred, different and
better than the real person. They are cultural models for correct behaviour.
The audience already knows the characters and the formulized appellations
the *dalang* uses for each, so much so that Arjuna, Hanuman, Sita and the
others serve as shorthand for certain personality types. Literature conveyed
in this manner has a powerful socializing effect. The drowsy atmosphere of
the shared reception of familiar stories promotes a common understanding
of social norms and behavioural values, as well as the glories of history,
nationhood and battle. The *wayang* serves as a unifying setting for popular
opinion on contemporary issues, for it is customary for the *dalang* to insert
references and commentary on local events in the long section of story after
the climax.

The second most important literature in the region was Malay. The
Malay language has long existed in the archipelago as a lingua franca. It
was used by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims on their way to India in the seventh
century as the language of study in the monasteries of Sriwijaya, a kingdom
on Sumatra. Later, Islamicized Malay sailors used Malay as a language of
trade in the coastal regions of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.
(The history of the region shows a pattern of cultural pluralism in littoral
districts, culminating in large polyglot coastal cities such as Jakarta and
Surabaya on Java, and comparatively insulated, traditional, monolingual
cultures in the interior.) Malay literature was dominated by three genres:
pantun, an extemporaneous short rhyme; syair, a ballad-like form; and
*hikayat*, long epic stories in verse. *Hikayat*, like the Javanese *wayang*, is a
performative genre, if much less elaborate: at night, a storyteller would
recite episodes from memory or read from printed texts to large audiences.
The two forms are also similar structurally: the epics of the performative
*wayang* and the recitative *hikayat* are characterized by plots and subplots,
which also stand well on their own. But the *hikayat* has a certain elasticity;
the stories are translations from Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian, and they usu-
ally undergo a formal shift and variations in plot emphasis and locale. In
fact, the underlying principle of literature in the region seems to be the easy
transposition of stories from place to place, with form and genre being much
more locally rooted.

The traditional, mainly oral literary forms in the region began to be
supplemented by other types of literature in the nineteenth century. By 1850,
independent newspapers were being published in several variants of Malay in the larger polyglot coastal cities. These papers were owned and operated by *peranakan* (semi-assimilated ethnic Chinese), Eurasians and Dutch private citizens. Their straightforward reporting brought new possibilities for the kinds of stories that could be told in Malay: for example, a story could be brought down out of the fantastic world and made to operate in the here and now. While literacy was still uncommon, those who could read had access to factual narrative, as well as serialized stories in the independent press. Thus began the leap in development from the oral mode and the ideal, semi-religious setting of *wayang* and some forms of *hikayat*, to the realism of modern Indonesian written literature.

As literacy increased, the independent press began publishing books in various variants of Malay, for the language was native to at least three populations: the Batavians (i.e., Jakartans), *peranakan* and certain groups on Sumatra, which is close to Malaysia. Book prices were low; publishers expected that books would be read aloud to an audience. Two main types of books were published: prose translations of great Chinese verse classics, whose audience was the *peranakan*, who were interested in Chinese culture, but who did not read Chinese; and thrillers written in Malay, which were just as improbable perhaps as the older epics and legends, but set in present-day cities and liberally sprinkled with sex and violence. The thrillers were intended for an audience seeking distraction; the violence was usually quite graphic, characters were oversimplified, the supernatural figured prominently in the plots and coincidence was rampant. The plot of *Seitang-Koening*, a thriller written by Raden Mas Tirto Adhi Soerjo, a journalist whose title suggests that he was a member of one of the princely families of Java, is summarized by C.W. Watson (1971): a *njai* (native wife or mistress of a Dutchman) is blackmailed into sleeping with an Arab to whom she is in debt. At the critical moment, however, they are interrupted by the Dutchman bearing a rifle, who in turn extorts a large sum of money from the Arab. Hilarity ensues. The language and independent nature of these productions made them antithetical to the colonial government of the time, and spurred the foundation of Balai Pustaka as a corrective measure.

In their role as colonizer, the Dutch saw themselves as different from the larger European powers. As C. van Eerde (1914) explained in “Omgang me inlander”:

When history calls upon small nations to engage with energy and intelligence in the demanding work of empire, a little country such as Holland provides better guarantees than larger nations to implement the appropriate policies. Bigger European countries have a proclivity to use brute force in colonial administration—a blunt vio-
lence that is grounded in their self-assurance as a society that can wield superior political and military might. Large countries tend to ignore the gradual adjustment process and evolutionary development that indigenous people must go through in order to achieve a higher level of civilization. (qtd. in Gouda 1995, 25)

Small the Dutch certainly were: in the East Indies they were grotesquely in the minority even at the height of their power. In 1938, there were 30,000 Dutch soldiers controlling a population of 70 million. This “little country” relied on scholarship to provide the leverage necessary to “implement the appropriate policies,” which varied over time from the control of trade routes in the early days under the Dutch East Indies Company to the virtual enslavement of farmers in the plantations of the nineteenth-century Culture System.

Throughout the period of their colonization of the Indies, the Dutch carefully studied the local law, art, music, ethnography, botany and so forth, in order to be able to insert themselves effectively into the existing power structure. As they moved inland—in classical colonial fashion—they succeeded in controlling local rulers by various well-informed tactics such as backing malleable candidates, exploiting rivalries and appealing to greed. Local princes and sultans became Regents of their districts—highly paid employees of the Dutch government—but the real ruler was the Dutch Resident. Under the Culture System—which brought in revenues totalling about one-third of the Dutch national income—peasants were forced to grow cash crops—mostly coffee, indigo and cloves—for the Dutch to export. The Regent’s salary was partly dependent on his ensuring that the farmers in his district meet the quotas set by the Dutch; traditional agriculture—rice cultivation—was slighted, and great suffering ensued.

The horrors of the Culture System were graphically described in Max Havelaar, the bestseller by Multatuli (c. 1900). Under this curious, Javanese-sounding pseudonym (which means in Latin “I have suffered much”), E.W.W. Douwes Dekker reveals the untenable position in which the Dutch put the local aristocracy, and describes how promises of prestige, status and multiple benefits from dependence made despots of the most well-meaning of the Javanese aristocracy. The publication of Max Havelaar in the Netherlands at the turn of the century galvanized opposition to the Culture System in the same way that Uncle Tom’s Cabin influenced the abolitionist movement in the United States. Popular opinion in the Netherlands gave rise to a shift in colonial policy: the Culture System was dismantled, and a series of reforms, known collectively as the Ethical Policy, came into being with an emphasis on native education. Teachers’ colleges and native schools were established throughout Indonesia, and several
Minangkabau graduates of the Teachers' College at Bukittinggi, near Riau—home of the Malay dialect privileged by the Dutch—became mainstays of Dutch efforts to shape its Indies subjects.

**Standardization of Malay**

The Dutch impulse to study and codify extended to the field of linguistics. Malay was used by the Dutch as a lingua franca, partly in continuation of regional practice and partly because Javanese—the native language of about two-thirds of the area’s population—is an extremely difficult language with five increasingly refined vocabularies, the choice of which indicates the relative social positions of the speakers. The Dutch were evidently unwilling to risk mistakes when every misspoken or misunderstood word could threaten the perception of Dutch superiority. The promulgation of Malay, a “foreign language” for the Javanese, therefore put both the Dutch and the Javanese on an equal footing.

But which variant of Malay was used? When they adopted Malay as the language of colonial administration, Dutch lexicographers elected to “standardize” the language to what they deemed “the classical dialect,” as spoken in Riau, on Sumatra. Dictionaries and textbooks were therefore written in Riau Malay, as was all of Balai Pustaka’s Malay-language output. Thus, the Dutch became arbiters of language itself. People who used non-Riau Malay as a first or second language found themselves speaking a devalued language—“servant” or “market” Malay.

**Distribution of Literature**

The organization that became known as Balai Pustaka effectively came into operation around 1905 as an arm of the commission for native education. The first substantial history of the agency was written by Doris Jedamski, who noted that most of the previous references to Balai Pustaka were vague and unexamined (along the lines of Teeuw’s comments above). Jedamski examined primary source materials, including memos between the agency’s heads and their superiors in the Netherlands, and the agency’s periodical publications. In the memos, she uncovered explicit statements confirming that as the agency grew, its goal became social manipulation via monopolistic control of all modes of literary production in the Indies (Jedamski, 1992).

The agency’s initial goal was modest. Dutch educators in the Indies were of the opinion that new readers (adults and children) and their teachers in rural areas, away from the active publication environment of the coastal
cities, needed books. Over the next five years, a complex and highly organized bureaucratic apparatus was slowly assembled to meet this goal. In 1913, D.A. Rinkes, who had joined the agency a few years earlier, became its head. By 1917, the increase in Balai Pustaka's activities justified its establishment as a separate bureaucratic entity, which was headed by Rinkes until his retirement in 1926. Subsequent heads of the agency followed Rinkes's blueprint, and Balai Pustaka continued to operate under Dutch control until the Japanese invasion of Indonesia in 1942.

Rinkes was, it seems, a visionary of social manipulation. He understood explicitly what others may have only intuited: controlling the literature of the people of the Indies would be a means of controlling their aspirations, values and actions. Literature, then, would be a tool in the Dutch campaign to "uplift" its native subjects (van Eerde qtd. in Gouda 1995, 25).

Collection and Publication of Traditional Oral Literature

Even before Rinkes had articulated his vision for the manipulation of literature, Balai Pustaka's efforts had already had profound implications for social control. Relying heavily on the cadre of Bukittinggi-educated Minangkabaus, in particular Nur Sutan Iskander, who worked as a translator and author with Balai Pustaka for thirty years, the agency began reworking Javanese and Malay epics. These epics, as well as oral narratives and traditional tales from various ethnic groups like the Minangkabau and Minahasa, which had been collected and recorded by earlier Dutch ethnographers, were bowdlerized, translated into Riau Malay and sometimes transposed from the realm of legend to modern-day settings for publication. The ostensible aim of this activity was to preserve impermanent oral literature and provide readers with stories more suited to their taste. But in fact, the Dutch had placed themselves in the position of arbiter of the people's own culture. They sought to deracinate the living narratives that had been templates of cultural identity. And most profoundly, they sought to change the modality of literature in the Indies from performative to written. No longer would stories be heard and experienced in the ornate performances of the wayang; no longer would the experience of the culture's central text be enlivened by the social nature of its reception. Under Dutch intervention, literature became a commodity to be individually consumed, just in time for the axiomatic last phase of colonial economics, when the colony became less valuable as a provider of natural resources, and more valuable as a market for manufactured goods from the "motherland."

On many levels, the traditional wayang performance was a threat to the Dutch. In its episodic, non-linear form, the wayang was a parallel world,
in and out of which the audience could drift at will. The Dutch were absent from the wayang world or they (very occasionally) appeared as dangerous buffoons. In the wayang, authority--texts, voices, worlds--resided not with the Dutch, but with the dalang and the kraton. Thus wayang reinforced and was reinforced by indigenous power structures. It is set in the Golden Age, allegorically the period of Javanese empire. The audience’s identification with the wayang world is so intense that, sometimes, it is as if reality is on the other side of the screen and the real world is only shadows. The Dutch did not want to cope with that. There were also practical concerns. In the wayang performance, the dalang comments on local events from a traditionalist stance, thereby focussing public opinion away from Western values. In addition, performative literature like the wayang generates crowds, a real danger to the numerically tiny Dutch presence.

Translation of European Works

By 1917, Balai Pustaka had expanded its production of appropriate literature by translating and publishing European and Malay stories and novels, and ensuring their distribution throughout the colony. Because massive government funding underwrote all aspects of production, the agency-sponsored book prices were much lower than those distributed by independent publishers. Sophisticated sales techniques were employed: Balai Pustaka “bookmobiles” circulated through the villages, usually parking in front of the village headman’s house; and Balai Pustaka also had the monopoly on small libraries set up in each new village-school. By 1923, there were 623 Balai Pustaka libraries stocking Malay-language originals or translations, for example, Alexandre Dumas’s Trois mousquetaires, Marah Rusli’s Siti Nurbaya, Rudyard Kipling’s Jungle Book, Jules Verne’s Le tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours, the Syair Siti Amina (see Ali 1991, 83). The language of translation and publication was Riau Malay. According to reports, some of the translations were fairly faithful to their originals, while others, true to the kind of story-shifting that occurs in Indonesian literature, transposed settings from Europe to familiar locales, and sometimes even changed the genre. For example, Teeuw mentions that Justus van Maurik’s popular short story Jan Smees, set in the slums of Amsterdam, and relating Jan’s struggle with demon rum, became Si Djamin dan Si Djohan in Merari Siregar’s translation. The translated version sets the action in a poor section of Jakarta, and substitutes opium for rum. The realistic short-story genre is changed to the more elevated tone of the hikayat (though the situation is more sordid than in the typical hikayat); and two Javanese characters—Djamin and Djohane—replace Jan, the Dutchman (1967, 54). There is also a version of Baroness Orczy’s The Scarlet Pimpernel reset in the Indies.
It is noteworthy, but not surprising, that most Balai Pustaka translations are children’s fiction—gripping adventure stories, suitably compelling for new readers, but not necessarily intended for adults. Indeed, the Ethical Policy’s custodial ideal for the colonial situation translated neatly into a parent/child model that necessarily infantilized the people of the Indies.

Balai Pustaka’s standards for selecting texts to be translated and distributed were clearly stated: no overtly religious content, no political views contrary to the Government, nothing of low moral character. Literature should “cultivate awareness” and “promote good upbringing” (Ali 1991, 59). However, in her research, Jedamski (1992) uncovered a less public set of criteria, which were proposed by Rinkes, accepted by his superiors and reflected in the periodicals examined. Rinkes believed that the key to modernization (that is, Westernization) was to undermine traditional authority by highlighting situations where people ran into conflict with the adat (local law, customs or practices), and providing literary models for flouting it. Jedamski identifies three specific aspects of Westernization which Rinkes considered important: time, money and hygiene. Books should teach local workers how to participate in the shift from a barter economy and agricultural labour governed by the adat and based on the sun and the rain, to a wage-based economy where clean, punctual workers sell their time for money so as to buy consumer goods. By undermining the adat and controlling the process of modernization, the Dutch sought to lead the natives toward a new phase of colonization, and away from any nationalist tendencies.

Sponsorship of Original Malay Novels

Balai Pustaka was to provide diverting alternatives to the burgeoning independent publishing industry, where nationalist tendencies were already being noted. Both the overt and covert standards endorsed by Balai Pustaka can be traced in its sponsorship of original Malay novels, most of which were written by Dutch-educated Minangkabaus. These novels were usually formulaic, containing the following elements: conflict between young and old; conflict between Western values and the adat; tragic, forced marriages where these conflicts are played out in favour of Western ways (Situmorang 1981, 36). The formulaic plot consisted of young lovers separated by the girl’s family, who forces her into marriage with a repulsive older man. By the end of the novel, the couple and the older man have all died. The best-known of these Malay novels is the still-popular Sitti Nurbaya [Miss (or Princess) Nurbaya] by Marah Rusli. From the very first chapter, the novel’s “modern,” Western bias is obvious: the young couple, Nurbaya and the virtuous Samsulbara, are described approvingly as looking Dutch from a distance; the two characters representing the adat are portrayed as unsympathetically as possible; the ubiquitous, rapacious and scheming aunt is there;
and of course, the horrible rich old man, the Datuk, who manoeuvres Nurbaya’s father into giving her to him in marriage. Tragedy ensues when Samsulbara learns of Nurbaya’s despairing death. He joins the Dutch army to help quell a tax revolt led by the Datuk, and is killed in battle. Sitti Nurbaya is particularly interesting because it superficially identifies with Western values as required by Balai Pustaka, but the genre in which it is written is fundamentally a descendant of the hikayat form. Rinkes’s touchstones—time, money and hygiene—are right in the first chapter of Sitti Nurbaya, where the sparkling clean young couple are checking the clock as they wait impatiently for the old, outmoded family servant to drive them home from school. However, the elevated tone, the quasi-royal, non-representational characters, the frequent pauses for genteel dispute, the length of the novel and its episodic structure are all hikayat elements.

Publication of Magazines and Newspapers

Rinkes’s fear of the indigenous press was prophetic. During the 1920s, the nationalist movement and the independent press mushroomed. In addition to thrillers and adaptations of Chinese classics, independent publishers began producing novels with nationalist themes. As Jedarnski noted, in “the domestic newspapers, nationalist and communist movements were the focus of attention,” while various Balai Pustaka periodicals “brought features of the quality of The National Enquirer or Reader’s Digest” (1992, 35). At the same time, Dutch-educated native intellectuals were gaining access to Western literature without Dutch intervention, reading in the original languages, or in translations put out by private publishers, authors that Balai Pustaka considered too agitating or immoral to be translated, such as realists with clear political agendas like Émile Zola and Mark Twain. An excellent novel of the period, Suwarso Djojopuspito’s Out of Harness, originally written in Sundanese and subsequently translated by the author into Dutch, and published in the Netherlands, was rejected by Balai Pustaka (Teeuw 1986). Set in a milieu of student nationalism, the novel portrays one woman’s struggle to balance her identity as a wife and her existence as an autonomous person. The works of novelists, activists and journalists often overlapped in the Indonesian situation during the 1920s and 1930s. Using the vernacular Malay, which was starting to be known as Bahasa Indonesia, the unifying “language of Indonesia,” they produced reportages, journalism, fiction, theory and polemic.

Dutch efforts to mediate the cultural exchange between Europe and the Indies, and to divert its subjects from discussions of independence, were breaking down. The beginning of the end of Balai Pustaka’s control of the Indonesian literary system was its rejection of Armijn Pane’s Belenggu
[Shackles] in 1939. Belenggu, about the inner lives of three contemporary Indonesians involved in a love triangle, is considered the first "psychological novel" in Bahasa Indonesia. At the urging of his friend Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, who was an editor at Balai Pustaka, Pane submitted the work only to have it rejected on the grounds that it insufficiently condemned adultery: nobody died, as was customary. This showed that when a novel is not about conflict between a Westernized native and the *adat*, but portrays modern Indonesians trying to keep abreast and move with a changing nationalist society, the material is too hot for Balai Pustaka to handle.

Pane and Takdir published Belenggu themselves, and went on to found the independent literary journal *Pujangga Baru* [New Poetry]. In its first publication, in 1933, Pane proposed the following explicit connection between nationalism and the need to establish a new national literature, free of the influence and valuations of the Dutch:

An old teacher will shake his head when his pupils in their compositions do not pay attention to the grammar which he has taught them. The idioms which are always found in writings of former times are utterly rejected and discounted by them as cliches which are utterly meaningless and which no longer have any effect on them, and they employ their own idioms, their own symbols... During this change, the new literature—indeed like the society—is looking for stability, is looking for a firmer foothold, at the same time establishing a unifying literature and a unifying language, which is different from the Malay spoken at Deli, Riau, or any other region, and which is the language of general culture needed by these people; that is the Indonesian language. (qtd. in Teeuw 1967, 31)

Note that Pane pointedly rejected Riau Malay, the dialect standardized by the Dutch.

In its manipulation of all aspects of the Indonesian literary polystem, Balai Pustaka was involved in what may have been a unique attempt to create ("falsify") a cultural discourse concerning "happy" Westernized native subjects and the benevolent paternal Dutch. But, Pane acknowledged and predicted a parallel discourse, ultimately more vigorous: the true discourse of Indonesia, in part descending from the classical performative genres of wayang and hikayat. Despite some government censorship, Indonesia literature today includes the vernacular Malay press, reportages, serialized stories, thrillers and adaptations of Chinese classics published in Jakarta. Its themes are innumerable, but the reader of modern Indonesian fiction will be struck by two particular commonalities. Works by Javanese authors very frequently incorporate wayang. In Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Perburuan* [The Fugitive], for example, wayang is both a part of the plot (a performance is taking place in the background of the action) and a structural model...
(the perspective is bounded by the *wayang* stage: a character ducks down behind a bush, out of the reader's consciousness; a character delivers a monologue aloud, alone, as though on stage). In other novels, the characters have *wayang* names or certain constellations of relationships are plucked from the *wayang* world and played out in a modern-day setting. The second commonality is the portrayal of nation formation, often in its most dramatic phase, the war of independence.

Arguably, the preoccupation with the war of independence against the Dutch puts Indonesian literature in the postcolonial category, as it is defined in *The Empire Writes Back*. Referring to Asian and African novels, the authors write:

> they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tensions with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences with the imperial center. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, 2)

True, many modern Indonesian novels foreground "their differences with the imperial centre," but I propose that their project is less to engage the West, than to celebrate nation formation. Western critical discourse on non-Western literature is, ultimately, as inadequate as Balai Pustaka's attempts to control the cultural discourse of emerging Indonesia.

Pane was a pioneer in the development of a local critical discourse on the text-based phase of Indonesian literature. However, scholarship is not new in the area. Local scholarly constructs have long provided a framework within which material has been judged and ranked and performed. This scholarship is now concerned with building a typology of Indonesian fiction. It indicates that Western histories of Indonesian literature have overlooked local forms that underpin it and influence its development, in terms of both structure and story. In Indonesia, as elsewhere, the development of the "novel" coincides with the shift from a predominantly oral tradition to one where written texts are the norm. However, nowhere else, to my knowledge, was such concerted social control by a colonizing power attempted during the transition. The Dutch project was to discredit traditional Indonesian values and to direct cultural discourse away from emerging discussions of nationalism. But a real literary polysystem expresses the true cultural discourse of its time and place. In the end, Balai Pustaka's influence on Indonesian literature was inconsequential.

**Notes**

1. The colonial Batavia.
2. It would be interesting to investigate the progress of these stories as they move back and forth in shifting languages and genres. Why is a particular text chosen? How does it change as it moves from one literary system to another? What is its impact on the host system? What other changes does it undergo within a particular system, in terms of genre shifts?

3. Among the Western authors translated and published were Alexandre Dumas, W.F. Oltmans, Mark Twain, Hector Malot, Baroness Orczy, Rudyard Kipling, Jules Verne, Pierre Loti, Robert Louis Stevenson, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Hans Christian Andersen, Arthur Conan Doyle, Grant Allen, Molière.

4. In keeping with the genre shifting that occurs frequently in Indonesian literature, Sitti Nurbaya was made into a film and a television series. And as an example of how stories remain constant, but meaning shifts over time, Teeuw mentions a revisionist reading of Sitti Nurbaya which turns the story’s meaning on its head: as a tax evader and fighter against the Dutch, the Datuk is viewed as a nationalist hero, and Samsulbara, his enemy, is considered a stooge of the Dutch.

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**Novels**
