Trajectories of Memory: An Introduction

Melani Budianta and Sylvia Tiwon

The Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer ends his short story, "All that is Gone," with a critical reflection on the act of remembering:

> How long does it take to speak a sentence? The sound of his voice was but for a few moments. A momentary tremble of sound waves, and then it was gone, not to be repeated. Yet, like the Lusi that constantly skirts the city of Blora, like the waters of that river, the remembered sound of that voice, coursing through memory, will continue to flow—forever, toward its estuary and the boundless sea. And not one person knows when the sea will be dry and lose its tide.

M. Budianta (✉)
Literature Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia
e-mail: melani.budianta@ui.ac.id

S. Tiwon
Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA
e-mail: tiwon@berkeley.edu

M. Budianta, S. Tiwon (eds.), *Trajectories of Memory*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-1995-6_1

> But all that is gone, gone from the grasp of the senses.[1]

In this dense passage, the narrator begins by recalling his deceased father's words about justice and personal freedom. Yet for him, the very effort required to voice his father's advice marks the transience of sensory perception and the beginning of memory: it ends in apprehension about the precarity of memory in the passage of time.

The story traces the interplay of sense, memory, and inscription as the narrator grows from a young child to an adult in a time of turbulent transition—the *jaman edan*, a time of madness or chaos in the traditional Javanese concept of time[2]—for him personally as for the nation. The child is overwhelmed by the experiences his senses offer up, and dependent upon his parents and an aging nurse to make socially and culturally acceptable sense of them. The young adult he becomes begins to write down these memories, but paradoxically, the act of writing opens up disjunctions between the explanations his elders offered to keep him quiet and what his own, mature, acts of recall reveal. The parallels Pramoedya suggests between the child and the emergent nation are clear. Remembering the child awed by the "greatness of the people in olden days" in the stories he is told, the narrator attempts to break the seductive power (*pesona*) of the old stories and declares: "Looking back now, I see that I was like many people, both now and then, who would rather think about the past than deal with the present" (p. 6).

The gap between sensory perception and the vulnerability of memory, not only in the course of time but also in the hands of power, has been a tenacious topic in Indonesian studies. In the aftermath of the downfall of the authoritarian New Order, the predominant discourse on memory has focused on bringing to voice those silenced in the 1965–1968 purges, thereby addressing what were recognized as distortions in the narratives of

[1] English translation by Willem Samuels, 2005, of the closing passage of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's short story, "Yang Sudah Hilang" in *Cerita Dari Blora*, 1952: "Suara itu hanya terdengar beberapa detik saja dalam hidup. Getaran suara yang sebentar saja berdengung, takkan terulang lagi. Tapi seperti juga halnya dengan Kali Lusi, yang abadi menggarisi kota Blora, dan seperti kali itu juga, suara yang tersimpan menggarisi kenangan dan ingatan itu mengalir juga—mengalir ke muaranya, ke lautan yang tak bertepi. Dan tak seorang pun tahu kapan laut itu akan kering dan berhenti bertepi. Hilang."

[2] A term used by the nineteenth-century Javanese poet Ronggowarsito about the cycles of time. See Benedict Anderson's application of this to the disruptions of national revolution (1998, p. 78).

that recent past (Zurbuchen, 2005; Heryanto, 2005; Setiawan, 2006; Roosa, 2006; Adam, 2015). The turbulent *Reformasi* of 1998 (Budiman et al., 1999; Sukanta, 1999; Lee, 2016; Pramesti, 2018) also gave rise to more critical scholarship on other historical moments involving conflict and violence, such as the Dutch colonial period (Bijl, 2015; Baay, 2015; Limpach, 2016) and the Japanese Occupation (Janssen, 2010; Mariana, 2015). There has been scholarship on groups affected by these traumatic historical junctures including the Chinese Indonesians (Dawis, 2009) and the Acehnese (Grayman et al., 2009; Good et al., 2010) to name but two. There have also been works on mnemonic instruments and memorialization (Kusno, 2010) and the impact of violence on the contours of urban space (Colombijn, 2016).

Not all memory work is concerned with violence, but the historic scar can serve as a powerful mnemonic, as Auerbach discusses in "Odysseus' Scar" in *Mimesis*, his influential work on narrative and the representations of reality: in Homer's epic, when the scar is touched, no matter how inadvertently, it must be brought "out of the darkness of an unilluminated past, it must be set in full light" (2013, p. 6). In the Indonesian myth of Sangkuriang, the scar the mother unexpectedly touches on her visitor's head jogs her memory and reveals his true identity: he is her son and the killer of his father. The scar serves as a point of remembrance and recognition in the process of coming to consciousness. For Indonesia, slowly and often painfully emerging from a painful past, as is the case with other postcolonial countries, the importance of decolonizing also involves the act of demilitarizing, of challenging the imaginary construction of Indonesia as a zone of military authority, as a country under a state of exception. Remembering can function as a process of critical disengagement from repressive regimes of thought, but for this to be possible, new strategies are needed to avoid the construction of a unilinear trajectory with a set telos.

It is precisely with this aim of clearing a space for a plurality of memory works that this book is conceptualized. Potential readers who select books based on the word "memory" in the title may not find the common themes itemized above. The book may be defined as much by what it leaves out as by what it includes and fulfills. The project began as an effort at gathering scattered work done by scholars on diverse subjects and localities. Some of this research offers rich ethnographic data, which might not directly resonate with the dominant discourse on memory. Juxtaposing these diverse works—on the role of marginalized historical actors,

contestations of local memories, transformation of traditional arts and ritual in its transmission—we discover a new vista of multiple trajectories of memory being traced out in and about Indonesia, a quiet yet potentially transformative energy of memory work.

The labor of memory presented in this volume involves marking out and following different, multiple trajectories that we cluster along four broad themes. The first part, the "Politics of Collective Memory," covers competing or evolving representations of particular events, customs or traditions, and historical personae in official and popular expression as they are shaped by economic, political, and cultural forces. The second part deals with memories of war and peace, examining the transnational conflict and collaboration, the role of political elites and state projects in dealing with the aftermath of military aggression, and most of all the impact and responses of civilians. The third part focuses on the framing of various historical actors and figures by the state and civil societies, which transcend the dichotomy of heroes and victims. The fourth part, "Curating Memory," looks at the way Indonesian museums and museology after 1998 serve as the sites where new kinds of memory work occur.

Part I: The Politics of Memory

This part highlights four overlooked figures and moments in local histories: the forgotten role of Muhammad Masserie, an intellectual leader from Ethnic Betawi, a "rebel" from Loloda Kingdom in Maluku, a treaty made during Dutch colonial period in Kalimantan, and the quiet transformation of an oral and performative tradition from Sumatra. From Batavia to Maluku, Kalimantan, and Sumatra, from the colonial past to the present, these four chapters argue for the significance of lesser-known historical facts in understanding Indonesia's contemporary political and cultural politics.

Chap. 2 by **Siswantari Sijono** and **Susanto Zuhdi** focuses on the role of Mohammad Masserie in laying the intellectual foundation of the ethnic Betawi community through his activism in the organization of *Perhimpunan Kaum Betawi* (1923) and in the organization's newsletter, *Tjahaja Betawi*. In national history as well as in public discourse, Masserie is barely known, in contrast to the popularity of Muhammad Husni Thamrin, whose name is used for Jakarta's main street and whose pictures are used in stamps and Indonesian paper money. As Masserie's contemporary, Husni Thamrin led a more prominent political actor by joining the *Volksraad* (Colonial

Council) as a representative of a political party called Parindra (Partai Indonesia Raya). Suspected of subversion against Dutch authorities in 1941, Thamrin was put in house arrest. When he died of sickness during the arrest, Thamrin's figure rose as a nationalist martyr/hero. Replacing Thamrin as the chair of the *Perhimpunan Kaum Betawi*, Masserie, with his low-profile figure and emphasis on education and literacy, was left unnoticed. Working within an ethnic-based organization, Masserie was relegated merely as a "local" figure. Discussion of Masserie's role in the mass organization and newspaper in this first chapter can be seen as an act of remembering and balancing this gap in collective memory. This chapter not only fills the vacuum of scholarly discussion on Masserie, but also corrects the general representation of ethnic Betawi as intellectually inactive during the pre-independence period, oriented more toward an aggressive physical anti-colonial front.

The writers of **Chap. 3**, **Abd. Rahman**, **Tommy Christomy**, **Susanto Zuhdi,** and **L.G. Saraswati Putri**, focus on another local hero, Sikuru from the Loloda Kingdom, one of the oldest kingdoms in the Maluku region which emerged from an Islamic family dynasty, presumably in the fifteenth century. Covering large coastal area in North Halmahera, Loloda is considered the "lost kingdom," with textual evidence found only in a colonial document after it was being put under Ternate sovereignty in 1912. In local collective memory, the story of Loloda is not only a narrative of colonial repression but a continued marginalization, even after Independence, and up to the present. The collective effort of the Loloda community in remembering their local hero, Sikuru, especially his heroic fight against the economic and political domination of the Dutch, therefore, is a political and cultural act of resistance against their present marginalization. This chapter foregrounds the context of the Loloda revolt and the intricate power relations to secure economic-political supremacy since the colonial time.

In **Chap. 4, Siti Utami Haryanti** revisits a groundbreaking event in 1894 that shaped the life of the Dayak communities in Kalimantan. From May to July 1894, over 800 Dayak tribal leaders assembled in Tumbang Anoi, upstream of Kayahan River, in Central Kalimantan, to agree upon a conflict resolution based on economic sanction, rather than the practice of head-hunting, which was then an established practice during tribal wars. The initiator of the Tumbang Anoi treaty was Dutch East Indies colonial government, with the help of Damang Batu, chief of one Dayak tribe in Tumbang Anoi. The event led to the agreement called the *Treaty of*

Tumbang Anoi, which not only banned head-hunting practice, but helped the Dutch domesticate the indigenous population, spread Christianity among the Dayak tribes, and gave opportunities for the Dutch miners to exploit the land. Going back and forth from the present to the past and back to today's context, the chapter discusses the postcolonial legacy of the Tumbang Anoi treaty. Complex and contradictory, this colonial milestone has in one aspect unified the Dayak tribes, while at the same time concocted the very forces of colonial and national modernity which eventually marginalized them. In contrast to the revival mode of the Sikuru memorialization, the Tumbang Anoi treaty, which has greatly shaped Kalimantan today, is hardly remembered by the local population. The chapter addresses this erasure of memory as an overdetermined gap to reflect amidst the controversial plan of the Jokowi government to move the capital to the heart of Kalimantan.

The last chapter in this part (**Chap. 5**), written by **Madia Patra Ismar**, **Pudentia Maria Purenti,** and **Syahrial**, follows the transformation of an oral tradition from the sacred realm of adat, to the dynamic art of modern choreography, and eventually to a screen icon. *Silek Harimau* is a sacred dance in rural Minangkabau, practiced only by a few chosen pupils of a guru, whose great master is believed to be the Tiger spirit. While being exclusively restricted, the oral tradition is transmitted trans-locally, as Minangkabau young men practiced *merantau,* or migrated outside their birthplace to find their living far from home to other islands. Shifting to other localities, the collective memory of this sacred dance was transformed into a more profane performing arts, that is, choreographed modern dance and martial arts school in urban centers, including the capital city, Jakarta, and eventually crossing national boundaries. By examining how students, gurus, and performers remember and practice this evolving art, this chapter examines the collapsing boundaries installed to separate adat from the contemporary world, the traditional from the modern. The chapter also problematizes the division of orality and the written word by showing how dancers and practitioners use their memory to move their body according to the shape of a holy inscription. Like previous chapters, this chapter addresses the complex and contradictory forces of memory work. While capital and market forces brought the *Silek Harimau* into international scale through the popular screen, fundamentalist religious force back home in the original site of the oral tradition represses it by considering it as not in line with Islamic religion.

Part II: Remembering War and Peace

This part focuses on memory at the national scale, involving transnational relations, in times of conflict or of peace. It discusses the complex ways some historical events are remembered or forgotten in scholarship, history books, or by individuals and groups affected by them. Several chapters examine different memories and the effect of military aggression on individuals and collective groups, which, in turn, engender the kind of transnational relations and activism. This part of the volume also considers state projects in the aftermath of its own military aggression, and the memories and responses of the military subjects affected both by the aggression and the state project.

The first two chapters in this part discuss the way Japanese occupation is remembered, both at the national level and in personal memories. Comparing it with the Dutch colonial experience, **Jacob Wray,** in **Chap. 6,** argued that the Japanese occupation was more ambivalent and was marked by "indifference." Interviewing individuals from Jakarta, Central Java, Maluku, Nusa Tenggara Timur, and Papua, he found that despite the acknowledgment of Japanese military cruelty, the memory did not generate hatred. In fact, according to Wray, postwar impression of the Japanese in the eye of Indonesians was more positive, with admiration toward Japan's advanced economy and modernity. After the 1974 student protest of Japanese monopoly during Prime Minister Tanaka's visit to Indonesia, both governments were keen to strengthen economic ties. This and the short period of occupation, plus postwar compensation, were a few factors seen by Wray as contributing to the softening of the past trauma.

Studying the transnational activism on the subject of Japanese "comfort women," however, **Katherine McGregor,** in **Chap. 7**, offers quite a different take on the issue. While Indonesians in Wray's chapter were ready to forgive the aggressor, Japanese leftist individuals with their own personal trauma of military aggression reached out to Indonesian survivors of Iu Gun Ian Fu during the Japanese occupation and advocated to compensate for their past abuses. This chapter follows the life history of three individuals born between 1934 and 1947, before and after the war—Takagi Ken'ichi (a lawyer), Kimura Koichi (a priest), and Matsui Yayori (a journalist/activist)—to find explanation for their transformation into transnational activism for Iu Gun Ian Fu survivors. Besides family suffering during the war, like in Wray's chapter, complex factors came to play as the supporting multidimensional contexts for their activism. Strongest of

all is their direct interaction with survivors that nurtured their capacity to understand "historical experience of other countries" and empathize with people outside Japan who suffered from injustice done by Japan during the war.

In the two chapters above, individuals who are affected directly or indirectly by military aggression construct their memories differently due to various factors. The question now remains: how governments, as the one responsible for the aggression, deal with the consequences of its own military operation—in lieu of the soldiers involved in the war and their families? Scholarship on the aftermath of the Vietnam War has shown the U.S. government's underplayed effort in coming to terms with the legacy of the two decades of war and the veterans' initiatives for healing (Hagopian, 2009). The subject of **Chap. 8** is the Indonesian government project in dealing with the veterans of a special operation (code-named Seroja or Lotus) in the aftermath of the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste (1978–1999). This is an under-researched topic, as scholarly attention is directed at the controversy of the aggression and the humanitarian impact. It is a rather dark area in Indonesian history for the military and paramilitary violence during the occupation and in the time before Timor Leste finally got its independence. **Tria Sri Wahyuni** and **Agus Setiawan** interviewed former soldiers, widows, and families of the unsung veterans, many of whom were disabled, about their memories and responses toward the government's rehabilitation program. The chapter describes the compensation that President Soeharto, who initiated the operation, gave to the veterans by mobilizing funding through the various foundations that he established during his tenure. Depending on their experience, veterans had mixed memories about the war, but were largely satisfied with the compensation. A differing, more critical voice was voiced within the children of the veterans, although only from one individual. The government project and the memory of the Seroja operation still need to be explored further. This chapter shows that awareness about this difficult moment in post-military aggression history is emerging among Indonesian scholars, as it is a challenging research to unpack something that was hidden while it was happening. The fact that only the militarized image comes out from the interviews shows the difficulty and challenge of demilitarization.

The last chapter in this part, **Chap. 9**, written by **Ahmad Fahrurodji** and **Susanto Zuhdi**, highlights another under-researched area in national history as well as public memory, that is, the relations between the USSR and Indonesia after Indonesian independence in 1945 and prior to the

outbreak of the Cold War anti-communist outbreak in 1965. The chapter focuses on the personal relations between Stalin, Kruschev, and President Soekarno and argues that the intimacy of the leaders served as an important factor in the political diplomacy, especially in the critical time of Indonesia's struggle for independence and sovereignty. Russia-Indonesia relations have been underrepresented in the local scholarship due to the state anti-communist ideology, even after the fall of the Berlin wall that signals the neoliberal supremacy. A renewed interest in the subject, therefore, marks a new trajectory. The chapter also delivers a "human touch" by collating personal letters of Russian leaders and by analyzing the diplomatic strategies in accommodating the individual taste and characters of Soekarno.

Part III: Tracing Agency

The third part compiles four chapters about historical figures and actors, their interaction with the state and other historical forces, and most of all the way they are framed in historical narratives. In line with the argument made in the first chapter, the four chapters suggest that in discussing historical figures in post-Reformasi Indonesia, there is no longer one "same script."

Part III begins by **Paul O'Shea** (**Chap. 10**), who sets up the frame by delineating the shifting discourse of heroes and victims since the leadership of Soekarno, to Soeharto and the post-Reformasi Indonesia. What remains consistent is the link between the choice for foregrounding certain individuals as national heroes (or victims) and the regime political agenda, such as Soekarno's anti-colonial stance and Soeharto's anti-communist ideology. This chapter discusses controversies regarding state nomination of certain individuals as heroes, such as General Sarwo Edhi, which can be in line or contradictory to the perspectives of civil society actors. Similarly, the chapter problematizes the framing of heroic victims (Moenir, Adi Rukun) by using the concept of competitive victimhood.

The figure and social role of *botoh* (Javanese term, referring to a cock-fight gambler), in democratic processes in Indonesia, in **Mokhamad Sodikin** and **Abdurakhman**'s chapter (**Chap. 11**), is definitely beyond the script of hero or victim. Focusing on the democratic processes in Tuban, East Java, from the New Order to the present, the writers examine the way *botoh* transmogrify, from common gamblers into leaders in current politics. Emerging from the common folk, through his involvement in the

betting culture, the *botoh* accumulated social capital and the skill to mobilize people, which enabled him to take on the role of mediator between the elites and the masses. Seizing the opportunities of the new democratic regulation of village head regulation, the *botoh* turned elections as a form of gambling, and emerged as village leaders. Although the role of older *botoh* in Tuban decreased in the vast political changes after the Reformasi of 1998, this chapter points to the susceptibility for the larger Indonesian democratic arena to be turned into *botoh* politics.

The last two chapters of this section deal with the role of students as historical agents, vis-à-vis a repressive state on the one hand and student population in relation with nonstudent population on the other hand, categorized as *rakyat* (or the people) or the masses during a time of political crisis. **Muhamad Trishadi Pratama** and **Muhammad Iskandar**'s chapter (**Chap. 12**) examines state project in disciplining, containing, shaping, and taming student populations during President Soekarno's Guided Democracy Era (1961–1965). The chapter examines the way the state, through the minister of education, enforced state ideology called *Manipol Usdek* to university students. The writers argue that *Manipol Usdek*, an abbreviation of Soekarno's decreed political manifesto of five state ideological pillars (the 1945 constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Character), is a means for legitimizing Soekarno's power. The indoctrination was administered through a monitored curriculum, compulsory subjects, training of lecturers, and issuing regulations to ban so-called Western influences in students' lifestyle (such as dancing and partying). Ineffective and resisted by students, the whole project ended up in failure, as the subject of this indoctrination, namely student population, helped to topple down Soekarno in 1965. This chapter critically reflects on the recurring pattern of ideological indoctrination in subsequent governments: the Pancasila (called the P4) indoctrination during the Sohearto's government, and similar program initiated in the current leadership of President Jokowi.

Jonathan Peter Tehusirajana's chapter (**Chap. 13**) continues the discussion about students as historical actors, focusing on a critical contestation that occurred toward the end of Soeharto's New Order regime, three decades after the period discussed in the previous chapter. In relation to the previous chapter, Jonathan Peter Tehusirajana also remembers a project administered by the Soeharto government, similar to what Soekarno had done earlier in controlling student population. The policy to "normalize campus life/body for student coordination" (NKK/BKK policy) is

deemed to "kill campus politics" or to depoliticize student population. As it was before, the project was deemed to failure, as students became critical of the New Order authoritarianism. The chapter put two moments with differing students-nonstudents relations in contrast, the Kedungombo activism of 1985 and the student protest of May 1998. For the first, the writer proposes the concept of "*bunuh diri kelas*," in which students aligned themselves with *rakyat*, the common people marginalized by the New Order's economic developmentalism. For the second, the relations became precarious as students are pitted against nonstudent mob (*massa*). Here, the traumatic memory of Malari (abbreviation of January 15, 1974, student protest movement protesting economic mismanagement during the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka) served as a cautionary reference. This chapter argues that there is a fluid positioning and relations between student and nonstudent protestors with different framing (*rakyat, massa*) based on historical memory and circumstances.

Part IV: Curating Memory

The chapters in this part take us behind the scenes of what are commonly seen to be designed as seamless, uncritical spectating, often with a singular, linear line of history—connected to ideology. Behind these initiatives is the need to decolonize the museums, using the perhaps very technical language of new curation theory and practice. The Indonesian museum has served as a storage of post-independence bricolage from out of colonial collecting, to the unilinear historical trajectory of nation (already Old Order, New Order rivalry—the militarization, the loss of other voices). This pile of memory is what is now being unwound, with a new poetics in which the authorial ethos is decentered, allowing interaction, inviting individual memories perhaps toward the demilitarization of the image.

The first chapter in this part, **Chap.** 14 written by **Suprayitno** and **Kresno Yulianto Soekardi**, relates to previous chapters on students (Chaps. 12 and 13) by focusing on youth's perception on the Indonesian National History Museum. This is a set of diorama display underneath the National Monument. Planned by President Soekarno in 1959 to instill "spirit of patriotism among Indonesian youth in the future," the museum was only completed under the New Order government, which altered and finalized the exhibition. As Katherine McGregor (2003) has shown, plan and final exhibit of the diorama of the Indonesian National History Museum was the result of ideological battles between Soekarno's socialism

and Soeharto's strategy to erase Soekarno's legacy and instead highlight the role of himself and the New Order. The New Order final version kept two period-themes proposed by Soekarno, which were the greatness of the past and which was contrasted to the bleak colonial period. The third period, which was initially designed for the future of Indonesian socialism, was changed to "The Age of Resurrection to Greatness." What Suprayitno and Kresno Yulianto Soekardi's chapter contribute to the existing knowledge is to examine how young people born after the Reformasi (the end of the New Order) make meaning out of the display. Using the PMM (personal meaning mapping) as their method, the writers produce quantitative tabulation of the changes (vocabulary, breadth, depth, and mastery) before and after seeing the diorama. The chapter shows that depending on their education background and interest in history, most young people were indeed affected positively by the diorama (correcting or confirming their knowledge, adding new insights). What is interesting in the findings is that male visitors responded more to the theme about the "Greatness of the Maritime Era" and "the Age of Resurrection to Greatness," which show strength and virility, while women are affected by the "Darkness of Dutch Imperialism," presumably appealing to empathic feeling of suffering. Another finding is the disappointment of some young visitors for not finding Reformasi heroes such as President Gus Dur, and the critical questioning of the diorama depicting Soeharto receiving the command letter of March 11 that justified Soeharto's rise to power.

Chapter 15 is a comparative study of curatorial practice at two different museums, the State National Museum and the Kolong Tangga Toy Museum owned by a nonprofit organization in Yogyakarta. The writers, **Mawaddatul Khusna Rizqika** and **Wanny Rahardjo Wahyudi**, apply new museology theory to evaluate the curatorial management of the two museums. The chapter contextualizes the two museums and their contrasting curatorial characters. The State National Museum is a postcolonial legacy, which was used to display colonial power over Nusantara regions. The writers show that while adjusting to the new vision and mission, it is still a challenging task for the curators to give new framing for its collection. With intricate structure of departments, the curatorial management of this state museum is highly structured and bureaucratic and often shows overlapping task and job division. Lack of human resource and expertise compromises the quality of collection. The language of curation is scientific and formal, and the exhibition creates a distance toward the collection. The Kolong Tangga Museum, with a focused collection and clear

target audience (children), in stark contrast, has a much simpler structure, and therefore could afford flexibility and creativity. With only one curator, who happens to be the founder and the owner of most of the donated collection, the museum curatorial practice is handled almost single-handedly. Limited funding, which is not a problem in State National Museum, is a challenge for the small museum. The curatorial language is informal and colloquial, with a more interactive approach and themes relevant to current social and environmental issues.

While the previous two chapters evaluate the curatorial practice of the museum and the audience engagement, the last chapter, **Chap. 16**, written by **Putri Haryanti** and **Irmawati Marwoto**, takes another practical step in combining the two. After evaluating the exhibit at the Gallery of Honor in the Presidential Museum of the Republic of Indonesia, Balai Kirti, the writers argue that there is a hollow space, empty of historical narratives in the display of each of the 6 Indonesian presidents, thus making the exhibit devoid of both "wonder" and "resonance." This contrasts with the wealth of references that can be found in the popular memorialization of the six presidents in various media and monuments in the country. Based on literature reviews and interviews, the writers then propose six narrative themes and design various activities for engaging with the audience. This chapter is public history in the making, implementing new museology theory to construct collective memory for the larger audience.

The whole part shows museums as sites of contestation, an arena to decolonize the past and to reach toward new audiences, especially the youth. The chapters also unpack ideological mechanics behind the image, the diorama, and also the bureaucracy of curating. This last part might seem technical, but it is a new kind of memory work done by generations of Indonesian, whose public history had been rigidly controlled by previous regimes.

Memory Work

While it is crucial to observe the plurality and connections of memory work presented above, as well as the traps that lie in wait, we need to be cautious perhaps of touching yet another scar. In her novel on memories of the spice trade, *The Ten Thousand Things*, Maria Dermout (2002) confronts the quest to find the past in order to disinter it. The narrator begins with the conceptualization of memory as an accessible, located object: "The remembrance of a human being, of something that happened, can

remain in a place, tangible almost—perhaps there is someone left who knows of it and thinks about it sometimes." In no time, this easy access becomes complicated, as memory is reduced to mystery: "Here it was different again: with no foothold anywhere—nothing more than a question! A perhaps?" This is followed by a series of questions: "Did lovers embrace? Did they say goodbye? Did a child play there? Who was standing there? But the only answer is silence" (p. 6).

In the process of finding ways to unlock the mysteries from the past that continue to haunt the present, the protagonist recounts what her son learned from the son of their native servants: "'Listen!' he says, 'the beginning of it all is to listen!'" (p. 98). These words speak of layers of transmission, not only from one generation to another, but from one social position to another. Concealed in this advice or warning is a condescending tone that signals the master's inability to listen to lesser stories; the inability of those who bear the privilege of authority—even past authority—leads to a repetition of the patterns of an un-innocent past: "repetition, repetition, nothing but repetitions linked to one another. Again and again the same, and again and once more" (p. 45). In Maria Dermout's novel, the deafness against lesser memories is fatal, leading to the death of the protagonist's son, precisely the person she wished to protect by disinterring these memories and bringing them to light. Who are the people they fail to listen to? These are the people who bear different memories, people who are made servants or mere vessels for the exercise of a "civilizing" power.

For Indonesia, dismantling authoritarian narratives of the past has long been a critically important, often dangerous, task. In the early years of the twentieth century, Mas Marco Kartodikromo's early effort to rewrite the Javanese chronicle of kingship, the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, from a people's perspective (Munasichin, 2005, p. 186; Chambert-Loir, 2018, p. 12) and the poetry he wrote from the prison, *Syair Rempah-Rempah* (1918), were direct challenges aimed at both European colonialism and indigenous forms of feudal adaptation to the pressures of global capital. Even earlier, R.A. Kartini had articulated this necessarily double plot line of critical narrative, though in the early twentieth century writing was seen as an act that took place in the public arena, where no "good" or "moral" woman had any place. In *Madilog*, Tan Malaka presents an imagined park to memorialize alternative world and national heroes. In their 2008 edited volume on writing history, *Perspektif Baru Penulisan Sejarah Indonesia,* Nordholt, Purwanto, and Saptari remind us of another double danger in the inscription of the past, in the two dimensions of writing about what happened

("*apa yang terjadi*") and what is said to have happened ("*apa yang 'dikatakan telah terjadi*,'" p. 1). They remind us also that interpretation cannot be separated from the writing of history, and that the methodologies we use must engage the subtle, the less tangible dimensions of the narratives we produce about our past (p. 3). In the conclusion, we find ourselves returning to Pramoedya's reflections on narrating memory, the transcience of the real, and the role of writing not so much to preserve the past in its pristine purity, but rather to engage with the gaps that writing opens up.

References

Adam, A. W. (2015). *Melawan Lupa, Menepis Stigma: Setelah Prahara 1965* (Resisting the Forgotten, Dispelling the Stigma: Post-1965). Penerbit Buku Kompas.

Anderson, B. (1998). *Spectres of Comparison: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*. Verso Books.

Auerbach, E. (2013). *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton University Press.

Baay, R. (2015). *Daar Werd wat Gruwelijks Verricht: slavernij in Nederlands*-Indië (There Was Some Gruesome Execution: Slavery in the Dutch East Indies). Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep.

Bijl, P. (2015). *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance*. Amsterdam University Press.

Budiman, A., Hatley, B., & Kingsbury, D. (1999). *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia*. Monash Asia Institute, Monash University.

Chambert-Loir, H. (2018). *Sastra dan Sejarah Indonesia: Tiga Belas Karangan* (Indonesian Literature and History: Thirteen Essays). KPG and Ecole française d'Extreme-Orient.

Colombijn, F. (2016). The Production of Urban Space by Violence and its Aftermath. *Ethnos Journal of Anthropology, 83*(1), 58–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2016.1138983

Dawis, A. (2009). *The Chinese of Indonesia and their Search for Identity: The Relationship Between Collective Memory and the Media*. Cambria Press.

Dermout, M. (2002). *The Ten Thousand Things*. NYRB Classics.

Good, M. D., Good, B., & Grayman, J. (2010). Complex Engagements: Responding to Violence in Postconflict Aceh. In *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions* (pp. 241–266). Zone Books.

Grayman, J. H., Good, M. J. D., & Good, B. J. (2009). Conflict Nightmares and Trauma in Aceh. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry, 33*(2), 290–312. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-009-9132-8

Hagopian, P. (2009). *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*. Univ of Massachusetts Press.

Heryanto, A. (2005). *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging. Routledge*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203099827

Janssen, H. (2010). *Schaamte en Onschuld: het verdrongen oorlogsverleden van troostmeisjes in Indonesië* (Shame and Innocence: The Repressed War Past of Comfort Women in Indonesia). Nieuw Amsterdam.

Kartodikromo, M. M. (1918). *Syair Rempah-Rempah* (Poetry of Spices). Druk. N.V. Sinar Djawa.

Kusno, A. (2010). *The Appearances of Memory: Mnemonic Practices of Architecture and Urban Form in Indonesia*. Duke University Press.

Lee, D. (2016). *Activist Archives: Youth Culture and the Political Past in Indonesia*. Duke University Press.

Limpach, R. (2016). *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (The Burning Kampongs of General Spoor). Boom.

Mariana, A. (2015). *Perbudakan Seksual: perbandingan antara masa fasisme Jepang dan neofasisme Orde Baru* (Sexual Slavery: A Comparison Between the Period of Japanese Fascism and Neo-fascism of the New Order). Marjin Kiri.

McGregor, K. E. (2003). Representing the Indonesian Past: The National Monument History Museum from Guided Democracy to the New Order. *Indonesia, 75*, 91–122.

Munasichin, Z. (2005). *Berebut kiri: pergulatan Marxisme awal di Indonesia, 1912–1926* (Snatching the Left: Early Marxist Struggle in Indonesia, 1912–1926). LKIS.

Nordholt, H., Purwanto, B., Saptari, R., & Purwanto, B. (Eds). (2008). *Perspektif Baru Penulisan Sejarah Indonesia* (New Perspective on Writing Indonesian History). Yayasan Obor Indonesia, KITLV-Jakarta.

Pramesti, R. (2018). *Chinese Whispers*. Digital Novel: Rani P. Collaborations.

Roosa, J. (2006). *Pretext for Mass Murder: the September 30th Movement and Suharto's coup d'etat in Indonesia*. University of Wisconsin Press.

Setiawan, H. (2006). *Kidung Para Korban* (Songs of the Victims). Pakorba.

Sukanta, P. O. (1999). *Nyala panyöt tak terpadamkan*. Flower Aceh.

Toer, P. A. (2005). *All That is Gone* (W. Samuels, Trans.). Penguin Books.

Zurbuchen, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. NUS Press.