DISLOCATING SOUNDS: The Deterritorialization of Indonesian Indie Pop

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The Bandung-based "indie pop"[1] band Mocca (see Figure 1) has accomplished something few other Indonesian recording artists have managed to do: they've reached an international audience, selling over 150,000 copies of their first album alone, and touring through Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Japan, without either signing onto a major label or marketing themselves as an "ethnic," "traditional," or "world music" act. In fact, listening to their sugary, English-language songs, which combine elements of crooner jazz, swing, and folk with lo-fi indie rock, there is little to identify them as Indonesian at all. Songs like "Dear Diary" or "Once Upon a Time," which propelled them to fame in their home country and beyond, could have been written nearly anywhere by nearly anyone.

Like a number of contemporary pop and rock bands to emerge out of the Indonesian indie scene in recent years,[2] Mocca have stripped their sound and their image of overt ethnic signifiers. They experiment with a wide range of musical sources, but never those associated with their own backgrounds. They sing in English. Their lyrics stick principally to broad human themes unspecific to time and place. And in so doing, they defy easy categorization for consumption by a niche audience of world music fans. They don't play up their ethnicity; they drop it altogether like a bad habit or an outdated trend. And why not? these young musicians assert. It's not like kids in Bandung grow up listening to *degung* anymore.[3] These are children of a globalized world, raised on MTV and the Internet, and they insist on being taken seriously on the same terms as other international pop artists.

FIGURE 1. Mocca, Indonesia's biggest indie band (from their MySpace page).

If Swedish pop bands are not expected to sing in Swedish and play the nyckelharpa, then why should Mocca don sarongs and play kettle gongs?

It's not as if Mocca are ashamed of who they are or where they come from, though. Over the last decade, they have stepped forward as the face of the Indonesian indie scene, a loose conglomerate of teenagers and twentysomethings committed to producing music and media "on their own terms," that is, apart from the commercial or political interests of major corporations and state-financed institutions. They have done more than just about any other band to instill local pride in Bandung's music and through their tours of Southeast Asia and beyond, Indonesian music more generally. They have, in fact, become something of informal ambassadors for an Indonesian "buy local" movement, participating in events, expositions, and workshops that incite youth from all over the archipelago to "support the local brand revolution!"[4]

But let's not confuse our terms. The "local" Mocca advocates is not the "local" they grew up with, the construction of region and ethnicity taught in schools, paraded in public festivals, or broadcast on government television channels. Their "local" is not the "local" of a continuous indigenous tradition, a conception of space and place passed down from one generation to the next. Instead, theirs is a conception of "local" reinvented and reimagined by contemporary Indonesian

youth, a "local" dissociated from the classificatory schema of nation-state and colony, and built instead from the tropes and typologies of transnational popular culture.

There has been a marked tendency in anthropology, ethnomusicology, and related disciplines to read the "local" as if it were a kind of default mode of resistance against the hegemonic forces of global capitalism. By sticking with tradition despite pressures to "modernize" (Adams 1998; Kingston 1991; Tsing 1993), or hybridizing imported cultural forms with indigenous genres (Appadurai 1996; Condry 2001; Diehl 2002; Kulick and Willson 2002; Miller 1992), marginalized ethnic groups and citizens of developing countries maintain regional distinctiveness in the face of an emergent transnational order. In many anthropological texts, "localization" appears as a sort of "weapon of the weak" (Scott 1985), a form of insulation against an encroaching neoliberal regime. Although most anthropologists long ago discarded a theoretical framework of cultural imperialism (Hamelink 1983; Mattelart 1983; Schiller 1976) as simply "too blunt an instrument" (Taylor, personal communication, February 15, 2008) to describe the complexity, ambiguity, and ambivalence (Bhabha 1994) of the postcolonial encounter, it lives on in many ethnographic accounts as the implied threat of integration. Localization is read as a nearly heroic act of refusal.

This, however, is not always how localization is experienced on the ground. Appadurai reminds us that there is "a moment of colonization" in locality building (1996:183), particularly in a case like Indonesia's where the territory of the modern nation-state was superimposed onto a Dutch colony and trade network. Convincing the incredibly diverse, 300-plus ethnic groups of the archipelago that they are all part of the same community is a task that remains decidedly unfinished. There is a violence embedded within this process, an imposition. And for educated, middle-class youth in relatively cosmopolitan cities like Bandung, West Java, the kind of people who form indie bands, the "local" of the nation-state often feels like a trap, a barrier between Indonesia and the rest of the world. Indonesian indie bands like Mocca find ethnic, regional, and national traditions untenable as resources for creative expression, as such traditions serve to further isolate them from global youth culture and bring them into line instead with nationalist projects toward which they often feel distrust and disconnection. Such bands, then, tend not so much to "localize" transnational aesthetics, as previous anthropologists might have suggested, mixing them with indigenous cultural forms to instill them with local meaning and significance; rather, they use transnational aesthetics to challenge existing constructions of locality, supplanting the "local" of the national and colonial

past with a chosen, empowering positionality grounded in a dialectical relationship with the global.

In this essay, I explore the efforts of Indonesian indie bands to shed the old skin of placehood, those confining strictures of locality so intrinsic to earlier constructions of the national or colonial subject, and replace them instead with a reconstituted version of the local, constructed out of global pop culture resources. I argue that bands like Mocca use their music and image as tactics (De Certeau 1984) of aesthetic deterritorialization (see Deleuze and Guattari 1996). They assemble sounds and images from a variety of global styles and genres, aligning themselves with international music "movements," while distancing themselves from forms of expression associated with marginalized ethnic identities, governmental nation-building efforts, and the hegemonic categorical schema (Ortner 1989; Sewell 1992) of the international music industry. Their music and image, then, become a medium for the project (Ortner 2006; Sartre 1963) of reflexive place making (Giddens 1991), a means of redefining the very meaning of locality vis-à-vis the international youth cultural movements they witness from afar.

But I also attend to how Indonesian indie musicians, through such efforts, contribute to the further marginalization of Indonesian aesthetic and cultural forms. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1996) have argued, processes of deterritorialization are nearly always accompanied by concurrent processes of at least partial reterritorialization. In efforts to strip themselves of the imposition of locality, I argue, Indonesian indie musicians become implicated in larger transnational regimes of power (Yang 2002). They actively adopt an internationalized aesthetic, derived from the commercial media forms circulated through global capitalism, and reject as incompatible any sort of "contamination" by indigenous sounds or styles. It is a cultural logic in which "elsewhere" (see Baulch 2007) repeatedly takes precedence over "here," the novel and the different rise above the familiar and the traditional. The result is something very similar to the varieties of cultural imperialism an earlier generation of social theorists often warned against. Indie pop musicians become complicit in processes of aesthetic devaluation, lending weight and meaning to the aesthetics of the global marketplace at the expense of the homegrown variety.

The consequence is a destabilized sense of locality, in which Indonesian youth have not yet succeeded in constructing a coherent or consistent conception of where they stand on the world stage, nor established themselves as significant players in a transnationalized field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993). They remain, as one of my informants put it, *di tengah-tengah,* or "in the middle," no longer willing

to uphold the markers of ethnic, cultural, or national identity as an intrinsic part of who they are, and yet not fully integrated into a cultural economy of the global.

THE NEW WAVE OF INDONESIAN INDIE POP

I had known who Mocca were for a long time before I actually met them. Their 2002 album *My Diary* had sold more copies than any Indonesian indie album before or since. They were regularly played on MTV Indonesia throughout the early 2000s and had been profiled in popular magazines like *Trax, Rolling Stone,* and *Hai.* In 2008, they took home an Anugerah Musik Indonesia award (Indonesia's version of a Grammy) for "Best Alternative Production." Marin and Helvi, the founders of Mocca's label, FF/WD (Fast Forward) Records, consider Mocca their breakthrough band, the act that put them on Indonesia's musical map. Just ten years ago, however, in a very different political and cultural climate, their success would have seemed like quite an unlikely event.

When Mocca emerged on the scene in the late 1990s, they arrived on an underground musical soundscape occupied by much harsher bands, groups like Puppen, Noin Bullet, and Koil, who drew influence from punk, metal, industrial, and other aggressive styles. This was a time of political turmoil and economic recession, the last days of Suharto's New Order regime. It needed a kinetic soundtrack, something to shake off 49 years of dictatorial rule. For the middle-class art students, college kids, and recent grads that made up the nascent Bandung indie scene, this was music that captured the intensity of the times, the frustration of being brought up under an oppressive political system. It was music by youth and for youth, untouched by government oversight, untainted by commercial interests. "When I first heard it," said Ketu, the founder of Riotic Records, one of Bandung's earliest indie labels, "I thought, ok, this is my music." To him and thousands of other kids, it offered the promise of autonomy.

And that wasn't a small thing in Indonesia in those days. Since the time of its first president, Sukarno, the Indonesian government had kept a close watch over the content and themes on air and in the press, allowing only representations that supported the official government ideology of *Pancasila* and promoted the development of "responsible" and "ethical" citizens (Heider 1991; Kitley 2000; Lockard 1998; Sen and Hill 2000). They held a monopoly over Indonesian television until the establishment of RCTI, the first licensed private network in 1989, and carefully monitored radio and newspapers for "inappropriate" content. Throughout much of the 1990s, then, about the only thing mainstream media had to offer aspiring musicians was a sanitized selection of innocuous and sentimental pop, such

styles as pop Indonesia, a rhythm and blues, soul, and dance-influenced genre sung in the national language, and *dangdut,* a hybrid musical style, which fuses Indian film soundtrack instrumentation with more local *Orkes Melayu* elements. For those educated middle-class kids growing increasingly frustrated with the New Order government and looking for a way to broadcast a politicized message of change, this would hardly do. These genres were simply too complicit with the state agenda to serve as a rallying cry for disaffected youth, too timid, too tame.

So they sought new music through whatever methods they could: mail-order catalogs, photocopied zines, and well-worn cassettes passed hand to hand among friends (Wallach 2003). The international punk and metal scenes were used to being left out of mainstream methods of distribution, and had already established their own alternative ones (Baulch 2003; Spencer 2005; Wallach 2003; Wrekk 2005). Young Indonesians took advantage. They used these underground genres as important imaginative resources (Appadurai 1996), even "distinct political strategies" (Baulch 2007:3), for reworking their place in Indonesian society and articulating their discontent.

These early Indonesian punk and metal bands, however, were hardly rein-venting the wheel of rock and roll rebellion. Ketu recalls that those early days of the Indonesian music underground were full of blatant impersonators of international acts. Bands would isolate a particular foreign band with unquestioned indie cachet, those acts profiled in major "alternative rock" publications like *NME* or *Spin,* and emulate their sound, their style, and their swagger on stage down to a "t." They would become, in other words, the local version of a global band. The Balinese pop-punk group Superman Is Dead (see Baulch 2007) launched themselves into the musical ether back in 1997 as Indonesia's Green Day. Lain became known as Indonesia's Radiohead. Koil was Indonesia's answer to Nine Inch Nails. On occasion, this imitation was so transparent as to take on features of a kind of accidental parody, what Bhabha (1994) might refer to as the "slippage" or "excess" of mimicry. Bands with Mohawks of foot-long pink spikes would belt out Green Day covers to a crowd of moshing teenagers. Self-identified "racist" skinheads would show up at packed gigs in matching flight jackets and Nazi paraphernalia, pelting acts they didn't like with nasty racial epithets. Ketu was happy to see those awkward growing pains pass.

Toward the end of the Suharto regime, he explains, government control of the media began to recede, and young people's relationship with foreign pop culture underwent a significant change. Mounting public pressure from Indonesia's expand-ing middle class led the government to start reevaluating its restrictive policies on

media. Satellite dishes, already perched on rooftops across the archipelago, were officially allowed to pick up foreign-run, international channels in the early 1990s, and in 1994, the Indonesian record industry was opened to direct foreign investment (Baulch 2007). Transnational music companies like Sony BMG and Warner Music quickly set up residence in the capital city of Jakarta.

The opening of media supplied youth with an ever-growing repertoire of identity typologies, a resource bank of genres, sounds, and ideas ripe for appropriation. Among these, two resources in particular played a pivotal role in broadening the soundtrack of youth resistance: MTV (Iskandar 2006; Sutton 1999; Wallach 2003) and the Internet (Hill and Sen 2005). Marin of FF/WD recalls just how important MTV, which began broadcasting as part of the newly established private network Global TV in 1993, was to his own musical education. "It was very interesting," he told me, "because the music [they played] was very different from other music at that time. It was the time of music like Vanilla Ice, Janet Jackson, MC Hammer," pop acts drawing influence from hip-hop and rhythm and blues. MTV, however, played a much broader mix of music. It featured the pop superstars of the time, but through shows like "Alternative Nation," also showcased lesser-known rock bands like Suede, Blur, and Pulp, Brit pop icons with a penchant for irony and an eclectic musical repertoire. For Marin, these bands were something new, an alternative to both mainstream pop and the harsher, more alienating musical styles that had dominated the indie scene up until then.

David Tarigan, founder of the Jakarta indie label Aksara Records, tells a similar story. "It's like Blur opened up our eyes," he said. "Our [musical] attitudes became way more eclectic. Music doesn't have to be just one thing [,we realized]. It can be hard; it can also be soft. . . . And so a lot of bands like that started popping up." Brit pop-influenced indie bands began playing alongside punk, metal, and hardcore acts on crowded, rent-by-hour stages.

Then, when the Internet became readily available in Bandung back in around 1996, the musical floodgates were thrown wide open. "With insane ease," recalls David, "we were able to get information that we didn't even ask for." The Internet supplied a ready means for thousands of young people, at least those middle-class college and high school kids with enough time and money to regularly access it, to become hip to international aesthetics in real time.

The marked tendency of indie bands became musical pastiche, unique assemblages of international sounds. Gone were the days of blatant imitation, the efforts to precisely reproduce foreign styles on local shores. Indonesian indie musicians began to draw from all sorts of sources, to combine styles and sounds into new

configurations. Their music was no longer loaded with explicit political content, nor united by a single resistant theme. It seemed, instead, to revel in its diversity as if it were an end in itself.

This does not, however, mean indie music stopped being political. Its political orientation simply changed with the times. When the New Order government fell from power at the end of the 1990s, the politics of indie music began to shift from a politics of regime change to a politics of access and mobility. What mattered to indie scenesters was being part of something larger than Indonesia, not simply attacking the Indonesian state. The indie music emerging from the early 2000s on was above all about autonomy—from governmental meddling, from corporate control, and from the borders and boundaries that prevent easy movement across places and times. Indie musicians began to assert their eclecticism as evidence of their very independence.

Bands, in fact, began to openly flaunt their idiosyncrasy. As Iyo from Pure Saturday put it, "Now bands pretend to be as original as possible. They actually have too many influences now," are becoming, as he sees it, muddled by an excess of divergent streams. Consider, for instance, the line up of a single gig, LA Lights Indiefest in February of 2007, a promotional stunt for a major cigarette company that doubled as a talent showcase for up-and-coming, unsigned bands. Yogyakarta's Airport Radio took the stage at the CiWalk mall in Northern Bandung in characteristic low-key style, the men in the band in sportscoats, Bennett, their female singer, in a short black dress, high heels, and veil. They played moody, synthesizer-heavy sounds, shrouded in distortion and bass, and stood silently, performing their music with seriousness and sincerity. Their performance was an expression of artsy sophistication, of cosmopolitan linkages with various global streams of electronic experimentation.

Bandung's 70s Orgasm Club, in stark contrast, beat out their own brand of Jimmi Hendrix-style soulful rock and roll, while Ade, their singer and guitarist, decked out in a skinny suit and fedora, attempted to embody the kind of mythic blues singer persona Robert Johnson had to sell his soul to achieve. Vox, from Surabaya, charmed the audience with their folksy brand of harmonized vocals, 1960s optimism, and matching brown suits, the singer's bushy beard and puffy afro demonstrating his allegiance with less fashion-driven subcultural formations. Rock N Roll Mafia (see Figure 2), finishing off the event, steered the mood back toward the synthesized retrofuturism of the 1980s.

There was very little thematic consistency to LA Lights Indie Fest, just as there is little thematic consistency to Indonesian indie music itself. But despite

FIGURE 2. Rock N Roll Mafia exhibiting their brand of deterritorialized hybridity at the Asia-Africa Convention Center in Bandung.

the diversity of acts, every one of the bands at this event seemed to be engaged in a common project: expanding the range of their mobility. They constructed their own distinctive image and sound, a conglomeration of international styles discovered through Internet resources and uniquely configured to express their own claim to access and autonomy.

The Internet, however, did more than simply provide a wider range of aesthetic resources for Indonesian youth; it also provided them with a variety of tools for actively reproducing those aesthetics for themselves. By the end of the 1990s, hundreds of college-age kids had begun using pirated recording software downloaded online to create their own albums, peer-to-peer file-sharing networks to post their own recordings, and Internet sites like MySpace and Friendster to promote them. Plus, with pirated design software like Corel Draw and Adobe

Photoshop, bands could cut and paste images they found online, tweak them a bit, and convert them into makeshift band merchandise. Bands began selling such DIY T-shirts, pins, and stickers at their concerts, outside shopping malls, and at parking lot kiosks, and formed collectives like Riotic and Reverse to more effectively distribute their gear. Eventually, these collectives solidified into semipermanent distribution outlets (called "distro" for short). They sold their own and their friends' clothing lines along with zines, music merchandise, and homemade recordings. Distros used the Internet to establish links across the archipelago, bypassing corporate gatekeepers and more conventional channels of distribution.

By the early 2000s, youth-owned distros had become the principle means of distribution for indie bands, as well as their most common source of employment. Hundreds of them had sprung up throughout the archipelago, ranging from tiny, sticker-covered shops with a funky punk rock feel to more upscale boutiques with a high-end graphic design ambience. Today, the fashion and music contingencies of the scene, organized around distros, have merged into one indistinguishable network of youth entrepreneurs.

Mocca is the first major success story of this budding indie scene. They are friends with harder-sounding bands like Koil and Puppen, share with them a DIY ethos, a commitment to independent production and "local support," but their own tastes run more toward old-fashioned crooners and big band jazz. It is a sound, Marin explained, thoroughly outside the musical spectrum of mainstream commercial radio, but still appealing to a broad cross-section of people. It has opened up new doorways and possibilities for Indonesian indie bands, giving them a means to compete for the first time with the transnational record labels that have come to dominate Indonesian music production. "This is a new wave of indie pop," Marin said.

NOSTALGIA FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S MEMORIES

I first met Mocca's manager, Buddy, one day in July 2007 when I was hanging out at *Setiabudi,* Marin's family home, which he had converted into a production, warehouse, and distribution site for both FF/WD Records and his coowned clothing label Monik/Celtic. Setiabudi is the indie scene's ground zero. Spend enough time there, I'd discovered, and I would eventually meet almost everyone who had anything to do with indie music or fashion in the city.

I was watching a couple of the employees iron "shrinkwrap" around a stack of merchandise piled up on the patio (The S.I.G.I.T.'s new album, "Visible Idea of Perfection") when Buddy came over to chat. He was a laidback kind of guy, with

a shaved head and dirty jeans, and we talked about Mocca's touring schedule, the recent use of one of their songs in a Korean television commercial, their hopes of breaking into an international market beyond East and Southeast Asia. He invited me and my partner Jessica to come watch Mocca rehearse the following day, and we gladly took him up on his offer.

Mocca's studio was modest to be sure, tucked away behind a fading turquoise-blue house that had been converted into a *warung,* an inexpensive restaurant serving simple foods. The carpet was peeling. The walls had been covered over in egg cartons to keep the sound in. Buddy offered us some bottles of iced tea, and we sat in folding chairs facing the instruments, greeting the members of Mocca as they slowly filtered in.

Mocca performed their set as consummate professionals, playing with both precision and passion, and they were friendly too, with a humility and down-to-earth quality I have seldom encountered in rock bands back home. Arina, the vocalist and principle lyricist for the band, had just picked up a couple of DVDs of *The Muppet Show* that she had ordered off of Amazon.com, and she told us about how some of the inspiration for the band's sound had come from these Jim Henson productions for children. Their latest album, for instance, included the song "Sing" from the soundtrack of *Sesame Street.* She dedicated the last song in their set, "Tomorrow," from the musical *Annie,* to us.

The theme of childhood nostalgia runs deep through Mocca's music and projected image. Their latest album's CD case is shaped like a colored pencil box. Their first album's was decorated like a hardcover children's book (see Figure 3), complete with illustrations of a little (white) girl dancing with a man in a sheep suit. Made by hand by FF/WD employees, the album art evokes Lewis Carroll or Maurice Sendak, authors thoroughly outside the Indonesian literary canon. Their songs too, written primarily by guitarist Riko with lyrics by Arina, are structured with simple melodies that echo the style of European and American kid songs. It is a decidedly soft sound, utilizing instrumentation of a guitar, an upright bass, a trumpet, drums, and a keyboard, and drawing influence from a variety of light genres from a variety of places.

Arina grew up with some of this stuff, watching *Sesame Street* and listening to Broadway tunes and "old standards," and to some extent Mocca's music simply reflects her own relatively privileged background, the access to Western pop culture she had from an early age, her education (in interior design from the National Institute of Technology), and her high level of facility with English. But the rest of it she and the other members of the band learned about from friends and

FIGURE 3. Mocca's album art evokes nostalgia for a mythologized, European, children's book version of childhood (from the cover of their first album).

through actively searching the Internet and used record bins for novel sounds. This is not the music she heard on the streets of Bandung, the sounds rising "organically" from the participatory culture of urban life, but a carefully selected assemblage of musical attributes that "gesture elsewhere" (Baulch 2003:586).

Consider their song "Secret Admirer" off their first album. "Oh . . . secret admirer," Arina sings liltingly to a jazz flute and acoustic bass, "when you're around the autumn feels like summer. How come you're always messing up the weather? Just like you do to me. . . ." Putting aside for the moment that Arina is singing cute, possibly ironic lyrics in well-studied English to musical styles originating far away, the song describes seasons Indonesia does not even have. With the year divided into two moderately different tropical seasons—hot and dry and hot and wet— Indonesians like Arina can only experience autumn in other countries, or, more

likely, in the fertile grounds of their book and movie-fueled imaginations. This is light, summery music, with the sweetness of a childhood ditty, the sass of a *Seventeen* magazine cover, and the postmodern tendency to "flatten" musical history into a single sonic moment (Jameson 1992). It displays many of the preoccupations with cuteness Allison and others have noted in Japanese popular culture, a fetishization of girlhood and innocence lost (Allison 2002; McVeigh 2000) that probably accounts for some of their success in East Asia. But one thing this music is not is reminiscent of life in Bandung, with its stable tropical weather system, its crowded, tree-lined streets, and its vendors selling spicy rice dishes out of tents of plastic tarp. This is music nostalgic for other people's memories.

Mocca are not at all unique in the Indonesian indie scene for promoting this kind of placeless longing, though. Such dislocated nostalgia is common in Indonesian indie music. The Jakarta band The Adams, dressed in oppressively thick argyle sweaters and black-framed glasses, recall the 1950s American dream of the good life, the early rock and roll of Buddy Holly, and the British Invasion sounds of The Animals and The Yardbirds. Bali's The Hydrant mines American Southern rockabilly for theirs. Yogyakarta's Southern Beach Terror market themselves as an homage to 1960s surf guitar acts like The Ventures and Dick Dale.

I was particularly struck by this phenomenon when I visited the office of *Rolling Stone Indonesia* magazine in Jakarta to talk about the rising indie pop stars The Upstairs (see Figure 4) with their manager Wendi Putranto, also a writer and editor for the magazine. The Upstairs, Wendi told me, burst onto the scene with their self-produced debut album in 2002. Their singer and songwriter, Jimi Multazham, had just dropped out of Jakarta's art institute (IKJ) to pursue his own, idiosyncratic tribute to the new wave sounds of 1980s pop bands like Flock of Seagulls and Depeche Mode. With an art school sensibility, Jimi envisioned the band as a grand, vibrantly colored performance art experiment. Their live shows combine ironic rock star bravado with mindless dumb fun.

The retro theme became the principle musical and performance *konsep* (concept) of the band. They all dress in pastels, wear moptop haircuts, and era-blend mod scooter-driving aesthetics with the large, white sunglasses and furry legwarmers of 1980s MTV. The mix has worked well for them. Over the early part of the new millennium, The Upstairs rose up to become one of the biggest bands in Indonesia, with their second, full-length album released on Warner Music.

The Upstairs' wild "retro" look and fun nostalgic sound is continually cited as their appeal in popular magazines and television shows. Everyone is crazy for their throwback fashion. But the thing is, this is not a nostalgic look or sound for many

FIGURE 4. The Upstairs have their own unique take on the sound and image of the 1980s. Their new wave sound and retro look have won them legions of young fans in Indonesia (from their MySpace page).

Indonesians. During its heyday in the 1980s, new wave got close to no airtime on Indonesia's government-monitored radio stations and was difficult to find in cassette shops. To the fans that made The Upstairs big, this music was fresh and new, not old and reminiscent.

And it wasn't reminiscent for Jimi either. Born in the 1970s, Jimi was raised on a musical diet of rock and metal. He didn't discover new wave until art school in his twenties, where so many of his friends were digging into retro sounds and forming bands of their own—White Shoes and the Couples Company, Naif, and The Adams among them (Putranto 2006). He got into punk, then postpunk, then indie rock, and began to trace the musical lineages of contemporary bands he was into. So many of the bands he liked cited groups like Devo, Joy Division, and New Order as influences in magazine interviews or on their MySpace profiles, that Jimi decided to check out their music for himself. He liked what he found, and so now The Upstairs are bringing their brand of other people's nostalgia to the rest of Indonesia.

As if reversing the terms of the "imperialist nostalgia" Rosaldo has famously discussed (Rosaldo 1989), The Upstairs, like Mocca before them, seem to long for the childhood musical experiences that form the backdrop of other people's bands, for access to those varieties of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1984) that afford a dominant position in the pop culture hierarchy to groups from America, Europe, and (occasionally) Japan. These bands exhibit a kind of fascination with Western pop culture, both past and present, which betrays their own position as relatively well-off kids in a country still on the margins of the world economy, a lifestyle that, as Liechty puts it, "is simultaneously the object of intense local desire and always [just] out of reach" (2003:xi).

These bands, of course, are hardly the poorest of Indonesia's poor. As college-educated urbanites, they have greater access to economic and cultural resources than the vast majority of Indonesians, 70 percent of whom do agricultural work in rural areas and live on less than $2 per day. But they are by no means the richest of the rich either. Most of them live in student housing well after graduation, rent their Internet by the hour at ramshackle cafes in student neighborhoods. They share instruments to keep costs down, get most of their music through not entirely legal channels. Even the most successful indie bands often struggle to make ends meet. Mocca and The Upstairs, for instance, still have their day jobs. Such bands, like millions of similarly positioned middle-class kids, occupy an uncertain "space between two devalued poles" (Liechty 2003:67), the truly rich and the truly poor, with just enough access to the communicational channels of international youth culture to know what they're still missing out on.

Iyo, singer for the band Pure Saturday and Chief Executive for *Ripple* Magazine, the scene's best-known publication, describes this position as being di tengah-tengah. In his words:

> "We're a third world country still. The thing is, back in the '90s, when I was growing up . . . information was difficult to come by. And expensive too. The cool people, then, were people who went outside the country. . . . That culture [that came from] outside the country was really strong. And these days that's more what I'm familiar with. But in truth, I'm still in the middle. [We] haven't yet reached our goal. We still aren't on the same level as Europeans. We remain in the middle."

Under intense pressure from the IMF, the World Bank, and the international community, Indonesia, over the last 30 or so years, has undergone a gradual shift toward economic deregulation and free-market reform (Nevins and Peluso 2008;

Harvey 2005). One of the consequences of this shift has been an enormous expansion in Indonesia's industrial sector and a massive restructuring of social and economic power (Nevins and Peluso 2008:8). Something like an Indonesian "proletariat" began to emerge to meet manufacturing demands, a social sector of lower-rung factory workers, largely from rural and poorer backgrounds. A professional and managerial sector also began to develop in tandem with this proletariat, seeking to take advantage of new opportunities.

Bands in the Indonesian indie scene tend to come from this latter group, widely referred to in Indonesia as the *kelas menengah baru,* or "new middle class" (Dick 1985; Heryanto 1999; Robison 1996; Werner 1999). Their parents are employed in emerging enterprises, the civil service, and the professional sector, and on graduation from university, they themselves tend to work in white-collar and creative professions, often at distros, or within the broad networks of music and fashion production that constitute the indie scene. Their middle-class status, however, made possible by recent changes in the Indonesian economy, is often unstable and uncertain, newly attained and easily lost. It is, as Liechty describes, a tentative position they must continually work to promote and secure "in the face of competing claims in the market" (2003:18). These are not the elite of the colonial past, with inherited privileges and powers far beyond the indigenous majority, nor the cronies of the Suharto regime, who used their relationship with the government to amass enormous fortunes, but instead a group of newfound, and rather tenuous privilege, rising to greater economic standing through the industrialization of the 1980s and early 1990s, and nearly losing it all during the Asian Financial Crisis of the late 1990s. Today, on the verge of a possible global recession, their status remains anything but certain.

Indie musicians, then, in aligning themselves with an internationalist aesthetic, adopting other people's musical nostalgia as their own, work to carry out a "middle-class project" (Liechty 2003), to actively position themselves within a shifting hierarchy and carve out a place for themselves on what remains unsteady social terrain. They work to demonstrate their own cosmopolitanism as testimony to their middle-class status, their taste and style as markedly different from the poverty-stricken majority. Whereas "most Indonesians," particularly those from rural and lower-class backgrounds, listen to dangdut and pop Indonesia (Fredrick 1982; Lockard 1998), indie kids prefer the relatively obscure styles popping up in the global underground. Whereas the imagined "mainstream" (Thornton 1996) of Indonesian youth adopt as their personal aesthetic whatever is currently popular, indie kids actively construct their personal tastes by exhaustively searching the

Internet, combing through the dustbins of musical history for a style that sets them apart from the hordes, makes them *tampil beda* (stand out), and appear *unik* (unique).

The nostalgia of indie bands, then, is a strategic nostalgia, a nostalgia of those denizens of the industrializing world seeking to take their place on the global stage, while simultaneously positioning themselves locally as sophisticated in their tastes and middle class in their sensibilities. It is as much a spatial as a temporal nostalgia, a longing for what lies just beyond easy reach.

BEYOND NATION AND COLONY

Of course, this longing for a life beyond the boundaries of the archipelago is nothing new for Indonesians. Mrázek (2002) describes the "Indonesian dandy" as a character type that appeared in the Netherlands Indies as early as 1915. In contrast to the peasant majority of the archipelago, the dandy donned the garb of Western European fashions and adopted a "new theatricality" (Mrázek 2002:141) in his movements, speech, and style. The dandy dived "into things modern" (Mrázek 2002:143), developed an obsession with neatness (2002:144), and constructed a persona of "somebody in between, an enigma" (2002:149), neither of the archipelago nor the Western world toward which he so ardently strived.

It can also be argued that Indonesian nationalism itself has always been part of a similar project. Just as communism sought to free the masses from the opiate of religion, nationalism sought to free Indonesians from the shackles of regional traditions. For its early subscribers, Indonesian nationalism implied a transcendence of the bounded space, a promise of newfound mobility based on a faith in modernity and progress. It sought to construct an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) out of the hodgepodge ethnicities that peopled the 13,000 islands of the Dutch East Indies, to unify the archipelago behind a utopian fantasy.

Locality, expressed in Indonesia through the concept of daerah, first emerged as a classificatory scheme of Dutch colonialism, a way of dividing up the archipelago into different, but manageably different, regions. It was a useful way of conceptualizing the colony, enabling Dutch authorities to modify their patterns of government according to local social and cultural demands. It also helped keep the people of the archipelago from conceiving of themselves as a single social unit, and hence rising up united against the Dutch.

Early Indonesian nationalists, however, sought to overthrow this "divide and conquer" version of regional diversity by forging the idea that the incredibly diverse

residents of the archipelago could be conceived of as a single people (Anderson 1972; Siegel 1997). Daerah, or region, was made subservient to *negara,* the nation. On achieving independence from the Dutch, the newly formed government sought to weave together the diverse, regional identities of the archipelago into an imagined national tapestry through education (Atkinson 2003), mass media (Brenner 1999), propaganda campaigns (Rutherford 1996), public festivals (Sutton 2002), theme parks (Pemberton 1994), and other conspicuous displays of unity. A vast bureaucracy affiliated with the Department of Education and Culture attempted to shape ethnic traditions into controllable, innocuous expressions of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika,* unity in diversity, the official state motto (Sutton 2002:21). Under such conditions, the individual ethnic group became little more than an expression of national identity, or in the case of the Balinese, a set of generalizable exotic signifiers useful for marketing the region to outsiders (Robinson 1995; Vickers 1989).

In the process, ethnic traditions often became a stale, hollow version of themselves, museumified, standardized, and frozen in time (Kuipers 1998), hardly the kind of dynamic, living force that makes alternative definitions of self possible. In the case of ethnic identities outside the canon of official representation, locality became a force of marginalization and exclusion, which, as Tsing points out, may serve as a rallying cry for resistance (Tsing 1993), but more often simply perpetuates the feeling of isolation and powerlessness. And the nation has hardly fared better as a unit of identification for contemporary youth. Nations have a way of creating their own cages. The promise of mobility found its limits in the *fiskal* tax (of around $100) imposed on anyone hoping to leave the country. It found its limits in the longtime domination of national airwaves by a government monopoly, by an ingrained regime of self-monitoring and censorship. And it found its limits in an unstable local economy unable to fulfill its promise of progress.

It is no wonder, then, that young people in the urban centers of Indonesia find few resources for creative expression in such local identification. The "local" they have known has become almost irredeemably tainted, first by colonial authority, and later by the nationalist project. For Indonesia's new middle class, it is simply too easy to see beyond the confines of the nation-state, and yet it remains difficult to move beyond them. The middle class remain di tengah-tengah, no longer content with what Indonesia can provide, but unable to become full citizens of the "world community."

It should be no surprise, then, that middle-class Indonesian youth often feel disconnected from the identity resources of nation, region, and ethnicity, find them ill-equipped to the task of self-making and scene making, and prefer instead

to enact through their music and fashion what Lipsitz has referred to as "strategic antiessentialism" (Baulch 2007; Lipsitz 1994), that is, of intentionally complicating, ignoring, or avoiding inherited identity types. As Vata, one of my informants and friends involved in the Indonesian indie scene said to me, late one night, as we chatted on the sidewalk outside Reddoor Distro in Yogyakarta with members of the band Nervous, "Why would we want our music or our style to be Indonesian, anyway? Indonesia is an idea that was pushed on us. It's not something we chose."

THE "LOCAL" IN "LOCALIZATION"

A good deal of scholarship in cultural anthropology has been devoted to disproving the alarmist notion, popular among critics of capitalism and antiglobalization activists, that globalization is homogenizing the world's population, replacing dynamic cultural and ethnic diversity with an undifferentiated Americanized blandness (Appadurai 1996; Hefner 1997; Miller 1992). Anthropologists like Condry (2001) and Diehl (2002) remind us that Western musical forms do not simply assert themselves over existing musical traditions; they are incorporated into local life in complex ways, "localized" to make sense in new social and cultural contexts. When music is separated from its source of origin, made *schizophonic,* to use the term popularized by Feld (1994), the messages encoded in the music itself are destabilized, and thus, decoded in often unpredictable ways in their specific sites of reception (Hall 1980).

Under the anthropological gaze, with its focus on specific localities rather than sweeping global processes, the fear that that world's population is homogenizing has begun to disintegrate, and locally specific practices of contestation and hybridization have become more and more evident (Dickey 1998; Ginsburg et al. 2002; Hahn 2002; Larkin 2002). Anthropologists working in Indonesia in particular have stressed that the island nation, as a centuries-old trading center and diverse collection of ethnic groups, is particularly given to syncretic (or hybrid) cultural forms. The tradition of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) attests to the influence of Hindu elements (Keeler 1987) on the largely Muslim Javanese, and the diverse practices of Islam throughout the archipelago, even the most fundamentalist, remain infused with mysticism and local animism (Beatty 1999; Bowen 1993; Geertz 1960). In Indonesian popular music like *kroncong* (Becker 1975), *jaipongan* (Manuel and Baier 1986), and dangdut (Fredrick 1982), hybridized aesthetics are the norm, combining imported musical styles with indigenous sensibilities and languages.

This anthropological emphasis on localization has served as an important theoretical counterweight to popular theories of cultural imperialism, attesting to

the creativity and ingenuity of situated social actors operating within myriad regional contexts. But it too often ignores the historical specificity of the "local," seeming to take for granted a preexisting indigenous conception of self and Other, here and elsewhere that somehow imposes itself onto imported cultural forms or fuses with them to produce syncretism and hybridity. Much of the literature fails to elucidate the fluid and often contradictory processes that constitute place making in the first place. The "local," after all, is a highly unstable construct, produced in dialogue with larger abstract spatial units—the nation, the colony, the global economy—and it is continually being remade, reinforced, and challenged by those situated social actors who live with it every day (Appaduarai 1996).

As such, it is unclear in much of the contemporary anthropological literature exactly what is meant by the "local" in "localization." Who's local are we talking about here? The "local" of the nation-state? The former colony? The local as it's imagined by an outside observer or as it's understood by the people occupying a particular location?

It should be mentioned that the term *local,* borrowed directly from English or sometimes Indonesianized as *lokal,* actually appears quite frequently in indie scene discourse. It routinely popped up in conversation, was peppered throughout nearly all of my interviews, and was pasted onto T-shirts, printed onto posters and fliers. It has become something of a mantra of the scene, an incitement to action. "SUPPORT OUR LOCAL MOVEMENT," commands a flier for the Yogyakarta distro expo. "SUPPORT TO OUR LOCAL PRODUCT," exclaims a sticker for Eighty-Three Clothing Company. But the term, as they use it, is not a neutral description of place. It has nothing to do with tradition or nation, with any kind of "essence" that could sum up a people and present them in a tidy little package to the rest of the world. This is not the local of the colonial or nationalist past, nor is it the "local" discussed in so many anthropological accounts, the local that rises up in imagined opposition to a hostile cultural takeover.

The "local" circulating through indie scene discourse describes a relationship with the global, rather than a region, nation, colonial state, or even indigenous cultural tradition. It is a term of participation over isolation, autonomy over autocracy, and as such, it seeks to replace the earlier terms of *daerah* (region) and *negara* (nation) still imposed from on high. This "local" describes a position on the global map, rather than a distinct, regional body. It is a "local" about place, but not bounded by place, a term of participation in global culture, supplanting older models of distinction and isolation.

It simply does not make sense, then, to describe the indie scene appropriation of global aesthetics as "localization." Indie scenesters use the global to construct a new model of the local, rather than fit transnational forms into preexisting "local" configurations. They are actively internationalizing their music, not localizing international music.

The indie pop emerging from the Indonesian indie scene is hybrid to be sure. It's a mixture of diverse musical elements. It's got jazz in it, vocal styles borrowed from the "old standards" of the U.S. song book, some new wave, some postpunk, some samba, some British, and Swedish pop—but it is a deterritorialized hybrid, a hybrid devoid of any intentional contribution from the cultural aesthetic of its producers. This is music intentionally indiscernible from music happening elsewhere.

When I asked Indonesian indie musicians about what distinguished their music from similar music being produced in other countries, the answer I almost uniformly got was *tidak ada* ("nothing"). Members of Sleepless Angel told me that since the music (in this case, thrash and metal) comes from "over there" (the United States and Europe), there isn't really anything locally distinctive about it. Fonso, of the Yogyakarta indie rock band Nervous (see Figure 5) answered the question of whether there was anything locally distinctive about his music with a brief "no" and added *semua dari Barat* ("it's all from the West"). The foreign origin of his music is, in fact, a point of pride.

I have the distinct, and somewhat uncomfortable memory of the production crew from Cerahati Studios, an independent video production house in Bandung, presenting some of their work to the British Council in efforts to forge international linkages and acquire possible financial support. I had seen a number of Cerahati's productions and was impressed with the quality and creativity of their work. I was quite surprised, then, that they chose to show the Council a rather drab and uninventive video clip of Iyo from Pure Saturday, walking morosely through the cold streets of Paris. It had just about every cliché of the standard romantic ballad, short flashbacks revealing the end of a relationship, and plenty of shots of Iyo staring forlorn into the distance, and spoke little of Cerahati's artistry. But Khemod, one of the key creative producers behind Cerahati, introduced the video proudly, explaining to the Council in excellent English that Pure Saturday is a local band with strong influences from British bands like The Cure and The Smiths. "You know these bands?" asked Gustaff, the organizer of the event, to which the two members of the British Council delivered a dry, unenthusiastic "Yes, of course."

FIGURE 5. Yogyakarta rock band Nervous, dressed in a style inspired by the New York postpunk outfit Interpol. Their look is meant to signify their participation in an indie scene beyond Indonesia's borders.

Showing the video was a misfired attempt to demonstrate to the British Council just how cosmopolitan the Bandung indie scene is. To Khemod, Gustaff, and Cerahati Studios, it showed that a band from Bandung can also participate in an international music movement, that Indonesian bands can play British-style music too. But to the British Council members, what Cerahati Studios had managed to convey was simply how derivative Indonesian music can be.

The two groups were approaching the video clip with very different evaluative criteria. To the British Council, the clip's value, or lack thereof, lay in its distinctiveness, its difference from similar productions coming out of the United Kingdom. Its lack of obvious local characteristics marked it as uninteresting. But for Cerahati Studios, and the greater Indonesian indie scene of which they are a part, the video's value lay in its commonality with British productions. Cerahati was staking its reputation on its own internationalism. Its foreignness was its strength, the very basis of its "local" worth. Indonesian indie bands, thus, continually navigate their place in the local music scene through their imagined relationship with global culture, evaluating their own positionality as musicians "bifocally" (Fischer 1986; Peters 1997), ever conscious of how their style fits in with larger currents in

international music and, at the same time, eager to be perceived at home as "with it" and cosmopolitan.

Nowhere, however, is the importance of internationalism to the indie construction of locality as apparent as in the use of English in indie songs. Wallach (2003) has pointed out that "underground" bands in Indonesia have historically used English for a variety of reasons, including bypassing government censors and reaching out to an international audience. In today's indie scene, no longer faced with the strict censorship of the past, the latter goal has decidedly eclipsed the former. English, it was often explained to me, is the language of indie music. The bands that influenced Indonesian bands sang in English, so they do too.

To sing in a regional language would classify a band instantly as *musik daerah* (regional music), of interest only to a small, regional audience, and by extension as *kampungan,* or provincial. To sing in the national language of *Bahasa Indonesia,* however, is to sing in the language of pop Indonesia and dangdut, the most popular musical styles in the country. It runs the risk of making a band sound pedestrian and commonplace, no different than all those other musical acts broadcast in heavy rotation over the mainstream radio. It aligns a band with the commercial interests of the national recording industry, promotes an aesthetic too easily palatable and comprehensible to the peasant majority. In many bands' minds, to do so is to "sell out" one's indie integrity. To sing in Bahasa Indonesia is to attempt to attract as large audience an audience as possible. It is a cynical act.

To sing in English, then, is to thumb one's nose at commercial interests and differentiate oneself from the general populous. It reduces a band's audience base to the discerning few, to other indie music fans of similar background and education. It cements a band's goal of remaining on the margins of the Indonesian recording industry, positions them as middle class and cosmopolitan. But it also has the added, and seemingly contradictory benefit of making it at least theoretically possible for a band to extend their audience base beyond the boundaries of the archipelago. "The fantasy of global success" (Silvio 2007) is a significant motivating factor for most indie bands. It is always on bands' minds, no matter how unrealistic the goal may be. Bands, after all, are not against *sukses* as such. No one wants to have to keep their day job. But they are against sukses that compromises their self-concept, success that exposes them as "merely Indonesian," provincial and out of touch, still stuck in the cage of nationalized locality.

There is little doubt, then, that Indonesian indie music has occidentalist (Carrier 1992; Coronil 1996) and "xenocentric" (Wallach 2002) tendencies. This is music whose musicians see the symbolic indicators of place as tainting their

authenticity, ethnic, regional, and national markers as unnecessary cultural baggage. Consequently, Indonesian indie bands play an active role in promoting the cultural ascendancy of international cultural forms. They become de facto advocates for the innumerable aesthetic streams that accompany the spread of free-market capitalism worldwide, and they help secure the status of ethnic and regional traditions as irrelevant at best, déclassé and complicit with the state agenda at worst. Like the "local" in national, colonial, and scene discourse, the "global" has become something of an "ideal type" (Weber 1978) for Indonesian youth, an imagined, unified field (Weiss 2002) of deterritorialized culture, a borderless utopia composed of an infinite number of elsewheres.

CONCLUSION

Indonesian indie bands have become active agents in the construction of a new formulation of Indonesian locality, a locality depleted of "local" aesthetics, devoid of reference to ethnicity, region, and nation, which revels in its diversity and flaunts its liberation from place as its defining feature.

But if the global has become the basis for this reconstituted local, then what does this say about the fate of older aesthetics or cultural forms, those markers of ethnic, regional, and national placehood that used to be so intrinsic to local identity? Do they have any place in contemporary youth culture at all? And if not, isn't this evidence of widespread cultural imperialism, the domination of regional cultural forms by an encroaching global capitalist regime?

The short answer, I would concede, is "yes." The recurrent devaluation of indigenous aesthetic forms evident in indie music combined with a marked preoccupation with individuated expression reminiscent of "the culture of neoliberalism" described by Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) and Harvey (2005) strongly point to the scene's incorporation into an emergent, global economic order. The cultural logic (see Jameson 1992) of indie practice is compatible with the aims of global capitalist expansion, and it seems to actively buttress and support it.

The problem, however, with applying a cultural imperialist argument to Indonesian indie music is that it ignores the role youth themselves have played in establishing and maintaining the ascendant status of international musical styles. It presents youth as victims, rather than active agents of social change, and ignores the ways Indonesian youth actually encounter and make use of global aesthetics in daily life.

This is, after all, hardly the New Order Indonesia of the early 1990s, where young Indonesians had only one government television station and a single private

channel to choose from (Kitley 2000; Sen and Hill 2000). This is an Indonesia faced with the politics of "plenitude" (McCracken 1997), where the potential resources for the formation of personal taste are nearly infinite. The deregulation of media and the expansion of Internet resources have substantially weakened any single would-be media hegemony.

These days, young, relatively well-off Indonesians, like millions of youth from similar backgrounds nearly everywhere, can readily access media products from all over the world. They don't have to wait until they are available on national stations or in corporate-owned record stores, and they don't have to settle for overblown Hollywood productions either. They can, and do, draw from a truly international selection, that includes media products from the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Japan, Korea, Jamaica, and Brazil, among other places, and from all scales of production, from the truly DIY to the undeniably corporate. Moreover, they have more power than ever before to manipulate the texts and products that come their way. They can post their own media productions online, network with other amateur producers, and use readily available open source or pirated software to remix and rework any number of existing media texts, all with relative autonomy from corporate or state control. Transnational media conglomerates still produce and disseminate a disproportionate percentage of media texts, but more than ever their hegemony is being contested by competing independent producers.

Today most urban middle-class Indonesians discover new music groups and genres through scouring online databases, downloading and trading MP3s, or picking their friends' brains for their own recent musical acquisitions, not simply by tuning into MTV or taking *Rolling Stone*'s word as gospel. Adorno and Horkheimer's conception of a culture industry that manufactures the tastes of its audiences (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944) is hardly an apt description in this case. Establishing one's own taste, rather, is done both consciously and reflexively (Beck 1997; Giddens 1991; Lash 1994), and is practically a part-time job in the indie scene. It requires hours a week devoted to finding and assessing foreign music, alongside new local indie bands, and hours more debating its merits with friends.

I would suggest, then, an alternative reading to those models of globalization, frequently used in our discipline, that continue to understand the forces of global capital as a monolithic power to be resisted at all costs through myriad forms of localization. Indonesian indie pop groups are not the victims of globalization; they are its accomplices, its coconspirators. Their preference for international musical elements over local musical forms probably does reveal an

internalization of inequality, the subjugation of Indonesian youth to new, diffuse forms of transnational power (Yang 2002), but it is not a passive subjugation. Instead, middle-class Indonesian youth are active agents in both establishing the ascendant position of transnational cultural forms in local life and devaluing local aesthetic and cultural forms as unusable and déclassé. They are consciously working to build a transnational soundscape of deterritorialized aesthetics, a domain of personal expression and experimentation that is detached from the imposition of "the local."

Indonesian indie pop musicians forge a collective definition, not through the resources of ethnicity, region, or nation, not from the distinctive experiences of their own upbringing, but from the international pop culture discourses that define contemporary experience for youth nearly everywhere. They assert citizenship in a "flexible" (Bauman 1998; Ong 1999) world economy, practicing a form of what Bhabha (2005) has referred to as "vernacular cosmopolitanism," demarginalizing and deisolating in a transnational context in which being bounded by place has become "a sign of deprivation and degradation" (Bauman 1998:2).

This could be interpreted as a new phase of globalization, beyond the commercial maneuverings of transnational corporations, beyond the scheming, behind-the-scenes dealings of international financial institutions, a globalization, as it were, from "the ground up" (Lysloff, personal communication, February 1, 2008). But then, globalization has long taken such a form. The dandies of the colonial era asserted themselves into the global arena through their personal style and cosmopolitan taste in much the same way as today's indie scensters. Their access to information wasn't nearly as good, but the effect of their actions was very much the same. They, like the indie scensters of today, worked to solidify social difference on the ground level according to variable access to informational flows. Their international cachet served as testimony to their superior social positionality.

No doubt, then, the social ramifications of indie production are a mixed bag. On the one hand, the young people involved in the indie scene are helping break down the hegemony of international corporations over youth trends. They have provided a viable alternative to both the major label music industry and the state-run media, producing a much greater variety of sounds and enabling a much broader range of youth to participate directly in the industry. Moreover, they have promoted a range of identities for youth to occupy outside the scope of official representation, undermining in the process those imposed national and colonial versions of ethnic authenticity that young people have come to find oppressive and limiting.

On the other hand, indie scenesters have themselves constrained the scope of permissible subject positions to occupy and live through, rendering irrelevant any form of expression associated with the regional, the rural, or the poor. And in doing so, they are actively upholding the hegemony of transnational aesthetics over indigenously produced ones. The middle-class Indonesian youth behind the indie scene are actively engaged in the construction of a "territory" beyond the boundaries of region and nation, a global field of power that perpetuates and reinforces social differences on the ground-level based on one's ability to participate in transnational culture. In the long run, such a regime may prove to be equally oppressive, even for the middle-class youth who have the upper hand in this status game. It can, and probably will, fuel ever-more active forms of conspicuous consumption, contribute to the production of increasingly crippling social anxieties and preoccupations. But for now, for the Indonesian indie scenesters taking part in it, this act of shedding the baggage of colonialism and nation-state, of deterritorializing the self through dislocated sounds, is at least experienced as an act of liberation.

ABSTRACT

Anthropologists often read the localization or hybridization of cultural forms as a kind of default mode of resistance against the forces of global capitalism, a means through which marginalized ethnic groups maintain regional distinctiveness in the face of an emergent transnational order. But then what are we to make of musical acts like Mocca and The Upstairs, Indonesian "indie" groups who consciously delocalize their music, who go out of their way, in fact, to avoid any references to who they are or where they come from? In this essay, I argue that Indonesian "indie pop," a self-consciously antimainstream genre drawing from a diverse range of international influences, constitutes a set of strategic practices of aesthetic deterritorialization for middle-class Indonesian youth. Such bands, I demonstrate, assemble sounds from a variety of international genres, creating linkages with international youth cultures in other places and times, while distancing themselves from those expressions associated with colonial and nationalist conceptions of ethnicity, working-class and rural sensibilities, and the hegemonic categorical schema of the international music industry. They are part of a new wave of Indonesian musicians stepping onto the global stage "on their own terms" and insisting on being taken seriously as international, not just Indonesian, artists, and in the process, they have made indie music into a powerful tool of reflexive place making, a means of redefining the very meaning of locality vis-à-vis the international youth cultural movements they witness from afar.

Keywords: Indonesia, youth culture, media, globalization, localization, indie music, aesthetics, class

NOTES

1. The term *indie pop,* most closely associated with bands like The Smiths and Primal Scream, was originally used to describe a style of popular music emerging out of the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s. It was a genre deeply influenced by 1960s rock, folk, and psychedelia, and tended to use quirky and often ironic lyrics. The term is used in Indonesia today, however, to describe a broad variety of melodic and accessible genres produced on independent record labels. It describes less a style of music than a style of production.

2. Following the example of Mahon (2004) and others, I use the word *scene* to refer to the network of participants involved to varying degrees with "indie," or "independent" production in Indonesia; that is, musicians, fashion designers, magazine writers, and so forth, who produce and distribute their products without intervention from large commercial companies and production houses. The term *scene,* as opposed to the more institutionalized *subculture,* is meant to capture the flexibility and impermanence of youth cultural formations, and describes a social field characterized by interconnections between multiple, differently situated social actors with varying degrees of participation.

3. A gamelan musical ensemble from Sunda, the western region of Java, that utilizes a pelog musical scale, a variety of kettle gongs, hanging gongs, a bamboo flute, and a stringed rebab, among other instruments. Degung is one of the most melodic and recognizable of Indonesian gamelan styles.

4. From the Web site for KICKfest, Indonesia's largest exposition for independent music and fashion, held annually in Bandung and now in several other major Indonesian cities.

Editor's Note: Cultural Anthropology has published a number of essays on music, including Jonathan Shannon's "Emotion, Performance, and Temporality in Arab Music: Reflections on Tarab" (2003); René Lysloff's "Musical Community on the Internet: An On-Line Ethnography" (2003); and Amanda Weidman's "Gender and the Politics of Voice: Colonial Modernity and Classical Music in South India" (2003).

Cultural Anthropology has also published additional essays on Indonesia. See, for example, Tom Boellstorff's "Playing Back the Nation: *Waria,* Indonesian Transvestites" (2004); Celia Lowe's "Making the Monkey: How the Togean Macaque Went from 'New Form' to 'Endemic Species' in Indonesians' Conservation Biology" (2004); and Webb Keane's "Knowing One's Place: National Language and the Idea of the Local in Eastern Indonesia" (1997).

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