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Boellstorff, TD

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Zines and Zones of Desire: Mass-Mediated Love, National Romance, and Sexual Citizenship in Gay Indonesia

TOM BOELLSTORFF

It is night; in the back of a house in the city of Surabaya at the eastern end of Java is a room where two gay men complete a new edition of the zine GAYa Nusantara (GN). At a table, Joko, one of the men, bends down over a ledger; with pen and ruler, he extends inked lines horizontally from a list of about 250 subscribers from across Indonesia, tabulating who has paid for the upcoming issue. Indra, the other man, sits before an old computer adding final touches to the new issue of the zine before sending it to a local print shop. He looks down, then up again, entering a handwritten story sent from a gay man from a small Sumatran town. All that remains is the short stack of letters from men who wish to be included in the personals section. Next to the letters lies the glossy photograph of a gay man from Bali; as this month's cover boy, his smoldering eyes will greet those who take GAYa Nusantara into their hands.

On the eastern coast of the island of Borneo, in the city of Samarinda, is a network of gay men: some hail from local Dayak and Banjar ethnic groups, and others are migrants from elsewhere in Indonesia. On this day, I am sitting in the windowless, rented room of Haru, a man from Java, when he removes a worn copy of GAYa Nusantara from a small locked cupboard. He shares each new edition with gay friends, including Awi, an ethnic Banjar from Samarinda who lives with his sister and her husband and children. None of these family members know Awi is gay, but Awi tells...

Tom Boellstorff (tboellsr@uci.edu) is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine.

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me that when he reads GAYa Nusantara he is not alone. He has even contacted GAYa Nusantara to volunteer as a cover boy; they replied that cover boys have been selected for the next several issues, but once the backlog is cleared, he too can represent a face of gay Indonesia.

These two vignettes, drawn from my fieldwork, hint at how the circulation of texts by gay Indonesians shapes notions of subjectivity and community under conditions of significant social marginalization. These texts—a relatively unknown genre of Indonesian print media—are the subject of this article. Since 1982 gay Indonesians have been producing what I will call gay zines. I use the term gay because this is the most common term for the sexuality under consideration here (others include G, homo, and bèmong). I aim to demonstrate the connections between the systems of meaning deployed by the producers and consumers of these zines on the one hand and Indonesian national discourse on the other. As a result, I italicize the term gay throughout to indicate that it is an Indonesian-language term, not reducible to the English term “gay,” despite the clear links between them. Gay men differ in many ways from gay men; for instance, they usually marry women and assume that this does not contradict their being gay, and they rarely use metaphors of the closet or speak of “coming out” (see Boellstorff 1999). Above all, gay sexuality is shaped by discourses of the Indonesian nation-state in a way that gay sexuality is not.

As privately circulated, small-scale publications, gay zines challenge definitions of “mass” media, providing unique insights into the relationship among print technologies, sexual subjectivities, and narratives of belonging. In particular, the producers and readers of gay zines do not see them as countercultural; they see the zines as part and parcel of the national character of gay sexuality, embodying and demonstrating the worthiness of gay Indonesians for social inclusion. My goal is to show how zines could hold such meaning. These zines are permeated with two zones, or discourses, of desire—homosexual desire and a desire for national belonging. Zines relate these two zones in the idea that love (cinta) can be the ultimate prestasi, a word meaning both “good deed” and “performance,” indicating to society that gay people are worthy of national inclusion. In these zines, gay Indonesians assume that prestasi must be visible to society to have these effects of inclusion. Since speaking positively of same-sex love in Indonesia is difficult, however, love fails as prestasi. Belonging is deferred, and tropes of separation permeate gay zines as a result. Thus, although same-gender desire is clearly sexual, I argue that the second zone of desire—national belonging—is sexualized in a manner not exclusive to gay Indonesians. Gay zines reveal a wide-ranging heterosexist logic of sexual citizenship at the heart of the very real “national culture” of postcolonial Indonesia.

Lesbi Zines

I base my conclusions on an analysis of over seven thousand pages of gay zine text, informed by fieldwork among gay men. Lesbi women, however, have also published zines. (As with gay, I italicize lesbi to indicate that it is not just a simple derivation from English “lesbian.”) I face a certain quandary in addressing these lesbi

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1. I have conducted a total of about two years of fieldwork in Indonesia in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997–98, and 2000, with brief visits in 2001 and 2002.
2. Lesbi is the best-known term for these persons, but lesbian appears sometimes in written and spoken Indonesian, as do lines and lèbong (gay-language variants of lesbi) or simply L.
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zines. Only a few have been published (the total corpus numbers around two hundred pages); this imbalance appears to be due not to any lack of desire to publish, but to the difficulty that lesbi women face in securing the time, space, and resources to produce the zines. (In the two cases in which lesbi women have published outside the capital of Jakarta, their zines appear as inserts within gay zines, gay men thus sharing with lesbi women their relatively greater [but still meager] resources.) Given this imbalance and since my ethnographic work with lesbi women is less extensive than with gay men, I focus on gay zines in this article. Mindful of the feminist insight that “male” and “female” are not homologous (even in Southeast Asia, where conceptions of gender complementary are widely distributed [Errington 1990; Hoskins 1998]), I wish to particularize my discussion and not allow it to be misunderstood as falsely universalizing to the experiences of lesbi women. Yet, I also do not wish to “footnote” my lesbi material (Braidocti 1997); such a move would be not only methodologically but also politically unsound, given that lesbi Indonesians consistently identify silencing as an important issue.

My path of compromise in this article is to focus discussion on how gay zines illuminate masculine conceptions of national belonging but to bring in lesbi material in a comparative vein where such data exist. In this way, I underscore some differences between lesbi and gay zines. For instance, lesbi zines are more likely to view Indonesia as a better place to live than Euro-America; they are more likely to debate the implications of invisibility; and they are more likely to express frustration with the difficulty in meeting other women, given the limitations on women’s mobility and privacy in most parts of the archipelago. Additionally, Indonesian women are affected by the state’s family principle (azas kekel11argaan) that sets forth an unattainable goal of simultaneous domesticity and career within a heterosexual couple (see, for example, Sen 1998; Suryakusuma 1996). Although men are affected by this state discourse as well, it is easier for them to fulfill the requirements of proper sexual citizenship and still sustain a gay life. (An article specifically on lesbi zines would explore these issues in more depth and would include in its analysis books published on lesbi life [Herlinatiens 2003; Prawirakusumah and Ramadhan 1988; Ratri 2000] as well as the Internet.) While touching upon differences between lesbi and gay zines, I also note some parallels between lesbi and gay zines in regard to the relationship between homosexual desire and national belonging.

Production and Consumption

In the United States, zines originated with sci-fi fanzines in the 1930s and 1940s, reappeared in the 1980s with punk counterculture, and became a full-fledged genre in the 1990s (Duncombe 1997, 6-8; Friedman 1997, 9-13). One attempt at a definition describes zines as “noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves” (Duncombe 1997, 6). In many respects, this is an apt characterization for the print media created by gay Indonesians, and for this reason, I use “zine” as the best English equivalent for these texts.

The Internet was first mentioned in a gay zine in GAYz Nusantara (1996, no. 44). Since August 1999, a handful of zines have established Internet websites, as have some individual gay and lesbi Indonesians. Since the impact of the Internet differs from that of zines, however, I do not discuss it in this article.
My primary data source is a textual analysis of the complete run of nine zines (7,385 pages of text); this represents, to my knowledge and the knowledge of these zines’ producers, 100 percent of all gay and lesbi zines ever produced from the appearance of the first such zine in 1982 up to November 2001. These zines were published in Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Makassar, and Semarang, with reader contributions literally from across the nation; three are lesbi zines and the rest are gay zines with, in some cases, occasional lesbi content (see appendix). I hone in on two elements of these zines: communication between producers and readers (editorials, letters to the zine, and personal ads) and the short stories (cerita pendek or cerpen) sent in by readers. In this category I also include the genre of true-experience narratives (pengalaman sejati), also sent in by readers, which do not differ greatly from short stories. I present images included in gay and lesbi zines to reinforce my analysis of the textual materials. A secondary source of data stems from my fieldwork—primarily in Surabaya (East Java), Makassar (South Sulawesi), and Bali—which includes interacting with lesbi and gay Indonesians as they create, read, discuss, and exchange zines. With the exceptions of K-79 and New Jaka-Jaka (NJ), I am personally acquainted with the producers of every gay and lesbi zine that has appeared up to November 2001.

One should not be surprised to find some general distinctions in this wide spectrum of zines, based on the differing political and cultural sympathies of their editors. For instance, zines published in Yogyakarta, a center of intellectual life and student activism, have tended to address issues of politics more directly than other zines, particularly following a change in editorship in 1999. The editors of K-79 (published in Semarang) treated homosexuality as a disease in need of curing more than the editors of any other zine. Such distinctions, however, are quite minor and are further mitigated by the relatively high amount of content sent in by readers.

The fairly even tenor among zines extends chronologically as well as geographically. Indeed, the continuity in zine thematics is notable, given that one might see the time period of gay zines, 1982 to the present, as a time of great change in Indonesia. I can offer several hypotheses to explain this continuity. First, the sixteen-year period 1982–98 was actually a time of remarkable stability—enforced by an authoritarian government—if compared with similar periods before it, for instance, 1965–81, 1948–64, or 1931–47. Second, 1982–98 was the period during which the gay subject position came into its own as a conceivable way of life, if one largely hidden from Indonesian society and rarely claimed as an identity. The gay subject position appears to have emerged in the 1970s, becoming a socially self-conscious national network of primarily (but not solely) urban friendship networks and occasionally organizations in the 1980s and 1990s. It originated through transforming conceptions of homosexuality from outside Indonesia, with little input from “traditional” homosexualities and transgenderisms (Boellstorff 2003).

A distinct question of continuity arises in regard to the post-Soeharto period, that is, 1998 to the present. Given the hypothesis developed in this article concerning the relationship between nationalism and sexuality, one might reason that this major shift

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4 One letter to the editors of Jaka praised the zine because “the short stories happen to be almost exactly like my own experiences” (1986, 8:2). In a 1996 GAYa Nusantara readers’ survey, true-experience stories were the favorite genre.

5 On five occasions, I have contributed articles to GAYa Nusantara (nos. 52, 53, 73, 77, and 78). I have also been interviewed by GAYa Nusantara on several occasions (nos. 23, 24, and 41).
in the nation-state form would affect gay zines (and gay sexuality in general). A few examples of post-1998 zine materials cited in this article could be construed as indicating some kind of shift; however, for two reasons—one methodological, one theoretical—I want to caution against an everything-has-changed interpretation. Methodologically, a confounding variable exists in that every gay zine, save GAYa Nusantara (and all lesbi zines), ceased publication by the early 2000s. From conversations with zine producers and others during visits to Indonesia since 1998, I reason that there appears to have been a variety of reasons for this, ranging from a fear of militant Islam in Yogyakarta, to funding problems in Makassar and elsewhere, to group infighting or lack of subscribers. (Even during the 1982–98 period, most zines were published for only a few years.) As the single remaining gay zine continues to publish and as new gay or lesbi zines come into existence, novel linkages and delinkages between nationalism and sexuality may appear. For instance, one could hypothesize that current movements toward regional autonomy (otonomi daerah) could lead to efforts to reinterpret gay subjectivity in terms of locality and tradition. This seems unlikely, however, since these movements have tended to cast themselves in terms of revitalizing tradition, while the gay and lesbi subject positions are, if nothing else, clearly understood by those who inhabit them as novel (not originating in local tradition) and linked to national and transnational conceptions of sexuality.

My theoretical caution against assuming that the end of Soeharto’s New Order rule in 1998 might already have had a clear, consistent impact upon zines written since that time concerns the relationship between subject positions and social forces. Researchers have long known that social phenomena bear traces of their period of origin and do not shift in lockstep with broader cultural changes. As Emile Durkheim notes, “there is a close relation between what [a practice or an institution] is now and what it was in the past. Doubtless . . . it has been transformed . . . but these transformations in turn depend on what the point of departure was” (1963, 180). An instance of this from the domain of sexuality can be seen in the case of the Euro-American gay and lesbian subject positions, whose contemporary character (the notion of coming out, experiences of sexual drive and romance, conceptions of liberation, and so on) remain shaped by the late nineteenth-century sexological and psychoanalytic thinking in which they took form (Foucault 1978). Since gay zines and subjectivities are shaped by New Order discourse, it is surely significant that these zines (and the contemporary concept of gay selfhood) took their current form in the 1980s and 1990s, not in the late 1960s when the New Order first came into being.

While I heuristically term these texts “zines,” all rough equivalents are imperfect, and gay zines diverge from typical interpretations of Euro-American zines in two primary ways. First, analyses of Euro-American zines often claim that they “for the most part are the expression and the product of an individual” (Duncombe 1997, 12). Some analyses of Euro-American queer zines posit a voluntaristic sexual self who discovers (even while destabilizing) identity through zines (Barnard 1996; Sutton 1999). Although individuals shape the tone and content of gay (and lesbi) zines, in Indonesia these zines are not only the work of a collective but often also constitute that collective as a group. Second, Indonesian gay zines diverge from dominant interpretations of Euro-American zines in that the Indonesian texts rarely present themselves as alternative in the sense of rejecting accepted understandings of propriety and citizenship. Even though producers of gay zines occasionally term them media alternatif, media semi-formal, or even amateur publications (terbitan amatir), for the most part their producers and readers simply call them magazines (majalah), bulletins (buletin), or periodicals (buku seri). Although the producers of gay zines are aware of
the marginality of gay sexualities in modern Indonesia, their rhetoric is not one of alterity but inclusion—a claim that gay men are just as Indonesian as general society (masyarakat umum). Gay zines rarely leave Indonesia (i.e., they do not globalize as such), and they do not evince a strong disjuncture between producer and consumer. This is not only due to their informal circulation but also because readers contribute much of the copy, sending in short stories, poetry, letters, and images. Other readers appear in the personals section found in all gay zines, marketing themselves alongside others in search of sex, friendship, and romance.

Gay zines are usually 8.5 inches x 6.5 inches (the size of an A4 piece of paper folded in half) or more rarely the size of a full A4 piece of paper. They are typically twenty to sixty pages long (occasionally only two pages or as many as eighty) and are produced by groups of two to five gay men using Windows-compatible desktop-publishing software; in the early 1980s (and occasionally later), they were produced on typewriters, with physical cut-and-paste layout. Producers of gay zines are usually in their twenties or early thirties. One reason for this is that heterosexual marriage makes it more difficult to have the free time necessary to produce a zine; another is that because Indonesians did not start calling themselves gay in large numbers before the 1990s, there are relatively few older men who consider themselves gay. The zines are reproduced at family-run photocopy shops or print houses and distributed by hand and through mail. They rarely carry advertising, in marked contrast to most Indonesian print media since the eighteenth century (Adam 1995, 3–4). Gay zines are published without government approval and as a result are almost never sold publicly (no zine has ever had a print run over eight hundred). They are often given away for free or sold for about the same price as a regular magazine (four hundred rupiah for the first zine in 1982; six thousand rupiah for GAYa Nusantara today, or about seventy-five cents). Although reports of zine subscribers as well as my own fieldwork clearly indicate that copies of zines are circulated among friends (Jaka 1983, 11:3, 1987, 13:3; GN 1988, 3:6, 5–6:2), even if (following the estimate of some gay zine publishers) one assumes that each exemplar is read by ten persons, this translates to a total readership of at most seven thousand for any one zine and a generous estimate of eight thousand readers of all gay and lesbi zines at any point in time. To date, all gay and lesbi zines have been published in cities, but the heavy interchange among rural, semirural, and urban Indonesia means that they have a rural readership as well.

Most Indonesians who produce and read gay zines already see themselves as gay through encounters with the terms in regular mass media (see Boellstorff 2003). Since zines are published and circulated outside official channels, their consumption is rarely solitary. Most people who read zines were apparently first given the zine by someone else and often continue to exchange zines with friends, even if they become subscribers.

6GAYa Nusantara, the zine with the largest circulation, has had a print run of six hundred for most of its history (beginning in 1992 with no. 17), with a high of about eight hundred; by 2001 its circulation was down to about four hundred. GAYa Nusantara is also the only zine that has carried advertising of any consequence (usually for salons or drag events) and the only zine to have had any kind of public distribution: beginning in the mid-1990s, GAYa Nusantara has been sold at a few bookstores in Surabaya.

7Many gay Indonesians are unaware that gay zines exist, even if they live in a city where such a zine is published. The primary relationship between gay zines and regular mass media is that occasional coverage of gay zines in these media (or even news on homosexuality more generally) can generate a flood of letters to the zines. The first such example was in May 1982, when the women’s magazine Sarinah ran an article about G, the first gay zine; as a result, a number of lesbi women wrote to the zine seeking contacts and asking to become members of the organization associated with the zine (G 1983, 6:3).
The consumption of these zines sustains gay networks, rather than alienating the reader from preexisting kinship or community ties. In other words, if and when gay Indonesians begin to read zines, this tends not to isolate them but can lead to the creation of new networks through the trading of the zines.

That these zines do not appear to introduce Indonesians to gay subjectivities does not mean, however, that they have no influence on the character of these subjectivities. For instance, the longest-running and most widely distributed zine, GAYa Nusantara, combines in its name gaya (which means “style” but can also mean “gay,” with the first three letters capitalized) with nusantara (which means both “archipelago” and, colloquially, Indonesia itself). This is meant to recall the archipelago concept (wuawasan nusantara), a key trope of national ideology analogous to (if more formalized than) the “melting pot” in the United States. Since this zine began publishing in 1987, about one-half of gay groups (and several lesbi groups) have named themselves with reference to GAYa Nusantara by pairing GAYa with a “local” term, even if the group does not publish a zine. Groups named in this manner that have published a zine include GAYa Celebes in Sulawesi and GAYa Betawi in Jakarta; zines named in this manner include GAYa LESTari (GL), a lesbi zine from Jakarta; groups without zines include GAYa Siak in Sumatra, GAYa Tepian Samarinda in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), GAYa Semarang in Java, GAYa Dewata in Bali, and GAYa Intim in Ambon (which became defunct in the early 1990s). In 1993 the zine K-79 changed its name to GAYa Pandanaran (GP) (after the hero of a local myth) with the following explanation:

Di tahun ini nampaknya banyak sekali muncul organisasi GAY, semoga dengan munculnya wajah baru dengan beraneka GAYA kita akan menambah persatuan dan kesatuan antara sesama. . . .

This year we see the emergence of very many GAY organizations; we hope that with the emergence of these new faces with diverse STYLES we will add to the unity and integrity between us. . . .

(1993, 3:8)

The tropes apparent in this excerpt are common in zines from the early 1980s to the present. As indicated by the use of set nationalist phrases (persatuan dan kesatuan [unity and integrity]; aneka [diversity]), as well as the metonymic chain linking gay to gaya to nusantara, the use of GAYa is part of a larger pattern of migration, letter writing, and imagining through which lesbi and gay Indonesians see themselves as “national.” This concept underscores how the ultimate impact of gay and lesbi zines will be certainly greater than the level of readership alone might imply: as is true for mass media generally, their effects on social relations and cultural logics are multilayered and contingent.

Representation and the Crisis of Context

As noted earlier, this article focuses on the intersection of two of the most pervasive discourses or zones in gay zines—homosexual desire and a desire for national

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Footnotes:
8Letters to the editor indicate cases of persons who—for fear of discovery or the fact that they live in an area where they do not know any lesbi or gay persons—obtain a single copy of a zine, then subscribe to the zine and do not share the zines with others. In such cases, the act of subscribing to the zine does not reduce social networks; it simply fails to strengthen them or generate new ones.
9In a twelfth-anniversary retrospective, the editors of GAYa Nusantara noted that the term nusantara “illustrates clearly that this group is national scale (berikala nasional), meaning for the Indonesian gay people” (1999, 62:23).
belonging. While occasionally the topic of explicit commentary, these discourses (and their intersections) are often implicit. The analytic which I bring to this material parallels that commonly found in ethnography, in which the goal is not simply to report what people say they do but also to interpret the broader cultural grammars within which their invested actions make sense to them, even if, as in the case of language itself, such grammars are not always available for conscious reflection.

A growing debate in media studies, sometimes called the “crisis of context,” asks whether one can understand mass media in isolation from the everyday milieu in which they are produced and consumed (Schlecker and Hirsch 2001). Although fieldwork informs my analysis, I do not attempt to show that the cultural logics that I find in gay zines are present in other contexts. This is partly due to limitations of space. Additionally, however, I am uneasy with the idea that there is nothing to learn from texts in themselves, as documents that crystallize and comment on culture. The demand that every textual analysis comes paired with fieldwork is indicative of a particular theory of knowledge, which Marilyn Strathern terms “merography”:

Merography (literally mero = part, graphy = writing) is about the way in which Euro-Americans make sense of things by describing them as part of something else. . . . However, as Euro-American knowledge conventions posit the a priori uniqueness of all given entities (individuals, objects, actions, events, etc.), “nothing is in fact ever simply part of a whole because another view, another perspective or domain, may redescribe [write] it as ‘part of something else’” (Strathern, 1992: 73). A priori uniqueness entails that while, for instance, two individuals may be described as part of the same contexts of occupation, religion and age, there will always be another context that will exclude one of them. Every analogy is thus bound to be a partial one.

(Schlecker and Hirsch 2001, 71)

It thus follows that “the turn to ethnography in media and science studies indicates the ambition of researchers to combine multiple contexts, hoping to garner ever more knowledge” (Schlecker and Hirsch 2001, 75; emphasis in original). In two respects, my analysis remains merographic: it aims to shed light on gay Indonesians more generally, and I bring together two zones of desire into an interzone in which greater understanding can take place. I frame this intersection of discourses, however, not as a whole composed of parts, but as an unstable conjunction. Taking a cue from gay Indonesians, I employ the archipelago metaphor as one mitigating strategy, which is why I find the spatial metaphor of zones to be a useful complement to the auditory metaphor of discourse. An archipelago is whole and part: it does not have a clear external boundary marking it off as part of something else, yet it incorporates what appear to be internal wholes in the shape of bounded islands. As Indonesians are keenly aware, archipelagos are not described but delimited; their boundaries are not given. An archipelagic methodology is antimerographic in that it participates in the constitution of the subject of study. It gestures toward an alternate ethnography that can “acknowledge that description and what it describes are not separable. . . . [W]ith this re-envisioned ethnography, each description is understood to contain within itself that which it describes. Here, part and whole collapse into one” (80).

I also attempt to resist a merographic framework by questioning the distinction between text and context. Such a division takes for granted what should be the target of analysis: the entextualizing processes by which things or ideas come to be seen as set apart from any particular context (Silverstein and Urban 1996, 10; see also Silverstein 1992). For many gay Indonesians, zines are not just texts but also a primary
context through which they understand their desires for homosexuality and membership in a national gay reading public: "Where else are we free to be open (terbuka) if not in GAYa Nusantara?" (GN 1991, 15:8). \(^{10}\) I thus treat these zines not as artifacts but as socially situated processes that concretize, comment upon, and communicate key aspects of the gay subject position. I do not imply that all gay Indonesians think exactly in line with the cultural logics found in zines but, rather, that they find such logics intelligible even if they disagree with them. Zines provide a window into broader systems of meaning. Many Indonesianist anthropologists have had great success in examining texts from an ethnographic perspective (Rodgers 1995; Siegel 1997; Watson 2000). Although such work often has a historical emphasis, Akhil Gupta’s admonition regarding the use of newspapers is pertinent to zines:

> Obviously, perceiving them as having a privileged relation to the truth of social life is naïve; they have much to offer us, however, when seen as a major discursive form through which daily life is narrativized and collectivities imagined. . . . Treated with benign neglect by students of contemporary life, they mysteriously metamorphize into invaluable “field data” once they have yellowed around the edges and fallen apart at the creases. And yet it is not entirely clear by what alchemy time turns the “secondary” data of the anthropologists into the “primary” data of the historian. (Gupta 1995, 385)

Of course, although gay zines present many dimensions of the gay world and affect its character, the zines are not isomorphic with that world and their producers are not necessarily representative. Even though lower-class groups have created zines, in general producers of zines—like producers of mass media in general—are better educated (but not necessarily wealthier) than readers. \(^{11}\) One founding member of Jaka cited among others Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre in his editorials (1985, 4:2, 5:2, and 1986, 6:2, respectively). This issue of social status is a point of commonality between gay and lesbi zines: the form for entering oneself into the personals section of MitraS provides three options (in English) for “last education completed”: high school, academy, and university. In 1997 the editors of New Jaka-Jaka (a more recent gay zine published in Yogyakarta) apologized for the lateness of the July edition by noting that “a large number of our members have been busy with their end-of-semester exams” (1997, 2:3).

Perhaps the most salient consequence of this disjuncture is that producers tend to be better informed than readers about lesbian and gay communities and movements outside Indonesia. Lesbi producers of zines, in comparison with the predominantly working class lesbi women whom I have met through my fieldwork, are better linked to Indonesian and transnational feminist movements (including the Indonesian

\(^{10}\)Many letters to gay and lesbi zines express this sentiment. As one woman said with reference to the lesbi zine MitraS, “Through this bulletin I pour out my feelings” (MitraS 1998, 2:13); as a gay man from the troubled region of Aceh phrased it, “since I got to know GAYa Nusantara, I’ve started to feel calm in my heart” (GN 2000, 76:11). One man from Surabaya wrote that “since I’ve married, I’ve had to reduce my gay activities greatly, . . . but I can still observe my world through GN” (GN 2000, 76:8).

\(^{11}\)For an example, Dédé Oetomo, who has played a major role in two of the most influential gay zines, G: Gaya Hidup Ceria and GAYa Nusantara, is a professor of anthropology and linguistics at Airlangga University, a recipient of a PhD from Cornell University, and well known to Indonesia scholars (through academic publications, political work, and participation in language-study programs) as well as the Indonesian public (he is one of a handful of gay Indonesians willing to be identified in the general mass media as such).
Similarly, gay producers of zines are better linked to Indonesian and transnational HIV/AIDS prevention networks than the average gay man. A second disjuncture, linked to the first, is that the producers of zines tend to be more politicized than other gay or lesbi Indonesians. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the 1993 imaginary interview (wawancara imaginer) in Jaka-Jaka (J) between a “member of the editorial staff” and “an imaginary gay character” (1993, 4:15–17). When asked why the number of gay men seems to be increasing, the imaginary character replied that, “in my opinion, what’s increasing isn’t the total number of gay people but that more gay people are brave enough to open themselves” (15). When the interviewers pointed out that gay Indonesians are not well accepted by society, the imaginary character counters that “there will always be colonialism (penjajahan) of all forms. The remaining problem is whether those who are colonized will accept that or not. . . . If our freedom fighters had thought ahead of time whether they had the military strength to expel the Dutch, we certainly would not yet be free” (16–17). In Indonesia imaginary interviews can be used to caricature public figures (see Sulistyo 2002). This presents a difficulty in the case of gay men, however, since very few gay Indonesians think of their sexualities in such explicitly politicized and public terms (only a literal handful are willing to be identified as gay by the general mass media). Perhaps for this reason, the producers of Jaka-Jaka were compelled to fabricate an interviewee, a circumstance that makes the ties between the gay subject position and national discourse all the more intriguing.

In this imagined interview, the producers of Jaka-Jaka forge a corollary to the imagined national community—the imagined gay national subject. Although the politicized dimension of this imagined subject diverges from many gay Indonesians’ self-understandings, it shares with them a desire for national belonging. This idealized political gay subject speaks of opening oneself (membuka diri) to the world in general—a rough analog to the notion of coming out in many Euro-American queer communities. In the Indonesian context, this is an unusual use of the “opening oneself” metaphor, which usually refers only to participation in the gay world (dunia gay) to the extent that heterosexual marriage is not seen as incompatible with gay subjectivity (see Boellstorff 1999). For instance, a gay man will refer to a city as terbuka, implying not that gay men in that city are open to the public, but that they are open to each other and meet in parks, discos, and other locales in large numbers.

The hegemony of national discourse appears in the linkage of nationalism to this unusual notion of coming out to society in general. For instance, those relatively small number of gay Indonesians who know of the English term “coming out” usually translate the phrase not as membuka diri, but memproklamirkan diri (to proclaim oneself, a reference to Sukarno’s 1945 proklamasi of an independent Indonesian state), 17 Augustan alias proklamasi (referencing Indonesia’s Independence Day), or merdeka (freedom, a key term of the anticolonial struggle) (GAYa Betawi 1993, 6:14, 7:17, and 1994, 12:16, respectively; see also the discussion of the English term “coming out” in GAYa Nusantara [2001, 86:17]). There are even phrases such as merdeka atau mati (freedom or death, also from the anticolonial struggle [GAYa Betawi 1994,

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12This group is incorporated into the coalition under the Sexual Orientation Minority Sector.

13In one case, such networks help fund the zine Media KIE GAYa Celebes in Makassar on the island of Sulawesi, which focuses on gay men, although lesbi women and especially waria (male-to-female transvestites) are often addressed as well.
Gay zines often oscillate between this notion of opening oneself to the whole world and the more common sense that the gay world need not intersect with the regular world. A gay man once wrote to an advice column in New Jaka-Jaka with the problem that he also wanted to marry a woman and was not sure which world he should choose. The publishers recommended that the person “just take up both of them, live in two worlds” but also emphasized that in the gay world he should “struggle against the injustice and colonialism against yourself as a gay person” and “free (memerdekakan) yourself” (NJJ 1997, 4:13–14). This exchange, in which contrasting views of heterosexual marriage are juxtaposed without comment, illustrates a broader point: the disjuncture between producers and readers is less complete than it might first seem. This is mainly due to gay zines’ extensive use of materials mailed in by readers (often 75 percent of an issue’s contents originate in this way). Subscriber surveys conducted by GAYa Nusantara indicated that, while some readers are certainly well educated, others are of average schooling, often from small villages outside the political, economic, and cultural hegemony of Java.

Love and Nation in Indonesian Print Media

Personal narratives have deep public resonance in twentieth-century Indonesia, where the process of growing to adulthood and traversing a life is often recalled in terms similar to those used to think about society and the past in a more general sense. . . . In other words, Indonesian historical memory and personal memory are both animated by certain closely related key scenarios and social images, and societal histories and personal narratives interpenetrate.

(Rodgers 1995, 3)

Gay zines link personal narrative, love, and national consciousness in a manner consistent with tropes of Indonesian literature. Late colonial literature brought together nation, people, and language through the power of love (cinta, less often kasih sayang or kasih), particularly around the conflict over “arranged” marriages (associated with tradition) versus “love” marriages (associated with modernity and nationalism). Such conflicts figure centrally in nationalist literature, condensing debates over tradition, modernity, choice, and collective identity (see Alisjahbana 1966, 30–31). This literature frames love as selfless when directed toward the nation or hoped-for spouse: “[N]ationalism and love are linked because through it, peoples are mixed and a new authority is created” (Siegel 1998, 16). This is a love that “demands recognition” and is “inseparable from the struggle for progress” (Siegel 1997, 140); by definition, it breaks from ethnoculturalized custom (adat). This national love reproduces the nation over time through heteronormative procreation, but its force inheres more directly in its ability to fashion a proper citizen-subject. Proper love makes you a proper citizen. For this reason, the failure of national love is not barrenness, but sickness (sakit)—an unnational love that can kill:

What would the cure for love sickness be if not proper recognition, that is, recognizing cinta for what it is: the power to compel recognition. More precisely, it is the power to compel recognition of desire transformed into idealism. That idealism is directed towards the advancement of the Indonesian people. At that time [in the 1920s and 1930s], this meant not independence and not equality. It meant rather the possibility of having a certain identity. One which marked one as progressive. A progressive person was in touch with the modern world outside the Indies.

(Siegel 1997, 146; emphasis added)
Thanks to a love that operates through choice rather than arrangement, Indonesian national literature enacts the "twin approach to constructing a modern self and imagining a modern society," whereby "in gaining a modern self, [Indonesians] gain a modern vision of the world, and vice versa. Selfhood becomes permeated with political meaning" (Rodgers 1995, 44). In the decades before independence, love, modernity, and national belonging became interlinked. This pattern's legacy continues to shape Indonesian literature and society, where arranged marriages are now quite rare and both women and men are typically assumed to play an active role in choosing their future spouses (Hatley 1997; Hull 2002; see also Brenner 1998; Tiwon 1996; Watson 2000). This is a love that does not just happen to a person through arrangement but is also performed through choice.

Performatives depend on cultural context: only an umpire can declare "strike!" and only a judge or jury can pronounce someone "not guilty" in a court of law. The ability of love to compel national recognition in Indonesia depends on a modern conception of heterosexual desire (normal or hetero). Gay love does not give one national belonging: heteronormativity lies at the heart of national cinta. When marriage is arranged, sexual orientation is secondary. However, when marriage hinges on choice—on a relational, choosing self animated by love—that self and that love fail, are sick, if not heterosexual. Choice, to be national and modern, must be heterosexual choice; through heterosexuality, self and nation articulate.

While being lovesick (sakit cinta) is, as James T. Siegel notes, a powerful theme in Indonesian nationalist literature, "sick person" (orang sakit) is ironically now a term that some gay Indonesians use to refer to themselves. How can a sick love complete its circuit of recognition? This is the crucial question addressed implicitly and explicitly in gay zines, the question for which prestasi will be the answer. Love for gay Indonesians is also a desire for sexual citizenship. A key point in this regard is that although gender and sexuality obviously intersect and are mutually constitutive, they are also analytically distinct and one should not conflate them. Even though gay Indonesians address a sense of failure (to belong) in gay zines, they do not experience this in terms of gender per se. They do not feel that they are failures as men; they do not feel, for instance, that they are male-to-female transvestites (waria or banci). Although waria, who are acknowledged if often ridiculed members of Indonesian society, have never published zines despite having the educational skills to do so, zines have proven to be an important and enduring means by which gay men reflect upon and make claims for a national belonging that feels beyond their grasp.

First Zone: Homosex and Homolove

One zone of desire in gay zines is homosex: the representation, discussion, and celebration of sexuality between men (or between women in the case of lesbi zines). Positive discussion of homosexuality appears in virtually no other Indonesian mass
media beyond these zines, in which such discussions are a constant theme of personals, editorials, dictionaries of gay language, guides to outdoor meeting areas (tempat ngeber), and images (see figs. 1–4).

Moreover, homosexuality is a guiding force in the narratives that make up the bulk of gay zines.

Rarely do these images and narratives of homosexuality present explicit sex (see figs. 3–4 for exceptions). Obviously this is not because gay Indonesians are uninterested in eroticism, nor is this simply to avoid censorship, since zines are not published through legal channels anyway. When publishers of gay zines politely reject requests for sexually explicit stories or images, they cite not a fear of censorship, but the possible foreclosing of recognition, of acceptance by society (diterima oleh masyarakat). The zine should be proper ( sopan), a wish expressed not only by publishers but by readers who send in letters complaining of explicit representations of sex. The most striking example of this took place in 1993, when GAYA Betawi (GB) published two fifth issues. The first fifth issue contained explicit representations of sex between men (both line drawings and reproductions of Euro-American gay pornography). The editorial in the following issue noted that the first had been found invalid (tidak sah) because it had “gone against the ethical codes of journalism and society” (GB 1993, 5:3). This is the only case of any gay zine republishing an issue. The following issue noted that the general magazine Jakarta-Jakarta had covered the zine (and the organization that produced it) for the first time but had unfortunately focused on the sexually explicit issue, giving the impression that gay men were only interested in sex, when in fact the goal of the zine and organization was to create unity (persatuan, a nationalist term) among gay men and to motivate them to do positive things for society (GB 1993, 6:24–25).

Despite this deemphasis on sex, erotics remains present in zines, appearing in stories that speak of sexual acts (often in veiled terms) as well as imagery that emphasizes the face (and often the partially clothed body). One difference between gay and lesbi zines is that there have been very few images of lesbi women and none in any state of undress. Images of lesbi women are typically in the form of drawings, while images of gay men are fairly evenly divided between photographs and drawings. This does not seem linked to the admonitions against showing the female body in Islam, since eroticized images of Indonesian women are common in contemporary Indonesian advertising and entertainment. The absence of photographs of lesbi women seems instead to flag questions of visibility (see figs. 5–6). While few gay men wish to appear in electronic or print media, even with a false name, a surprising number are eager to appear in zines as cover boys, providing photographs and even home addresses. The number of gay men willing to be photographed is still small in absolute terms, but even fewer lesbi women are willing to be photographed; a greater tendency to be dependent on either a husband or family members for financial support—or if higher class to be in a career in which female propriety is emphasized—makes such visibility an even greater risk.

What gay and lesbi zines emphasize is not sex but love. Reading over seven thousand pages of zine text, I did not find a single issue of any gay zine in which the topic of love does not appear; often two or three articles will have cinta in their titles. A first clue to this discourse of love is a particular semiotic chain: sexual acts (kissing,
Figures 1 and 2. Objects of male and female homosexual desire (Jaka 1985, 5:1; GL 1994, 3:16 [inside GN 31]). The erotics involved can concern desire for bodies (fig. 1) or sexual acts (fig. 2).
Figures 3 and 4. Explicit homo sex and sex with Euro-Americans (K-79 1993, 16; GN 1988, 4:31).
Figures 5 and 6. Women as flowers: a symbol of lesbi community and social invisibility (GL 1994, 5:1 [inside GN 28]). The text identifies the zine as part of the "Archipelago Lesbian and Gay Network" and open to all ethnicities. On the back cover, a flower with the caption "develop yourself."
anal penetration, rubbing genitals together, and so on) are distinguished from generalized sexual lust (*nafsu* or *birahi*), which in turn is distinguished from love. One reader of *GAYa Nusantara* complained of sexually suggestive images by invoking this chain: ”I don’t want to be a hypocrite because even I have a million sexual desires. But, what is more valuable than all that, friends, is *Cinta*. Love is what’s given me the strength to live this long. . . . What will happen if we continue to allow lust to hold the reins of this life, which is already set apart?” (*GN* 1988, 3:6-7). In a short story from 1991, Andre confronts his gay friend Yuzo, who seems interested only in sex. Andre confesses his love to Yuzo, who asks, “Why have you been avoiding me?” Andre replies: “Because you just think of me as a sexual object! I can’t live like you, switching partners and forgetting them. I desire a proper and *normal* life like *hetero* people, to meet someone and fall in love with them so as to live together. I can’t live prioritizing sex over love” (*GN* 1991, 15:29-30). In one installment of a comic strip that ran in *Jaka* from August 1985 to December 1986, the protagonist (named Jaka, or “bachelor”) becomes promiscuous after his lover, Tomo, marries a woman. Tomo learns of Jaka’s behavior, and in the final two panels (fig. 7, bottom right corner), he confronts Jaka at the gym: “This is the image of ‘gay’ that you present to me! Apparently it’s true that you’re just chasing satisfaction of your lusts!” In the following issue, Jaka runs away to Europe and with the help of a white boyfriend—whom he does not love—sets up a salon business. Sitting alone at night, he confesses to himself: ”Now I can buy anything I want with my money, but what I need now is ‘love’! Where I can share good and bad times, serve his needs. That has no price. . . . Oh, how beautiful it would be!” (1986, 6:14). When a man who saw himself as *normal* had sex with another man and wanted to know whether he might be gay, the editors of *GAYa Betawi* responded: ”To become gay is not just proven with same-gender sex but other factors like the feeling of love. . . . If after that event you continue to have same-sex relations with the addition of feelings of love, . . . it could then be said that you are gay” (*GN* 1997, 16:24). Employing nationalist language, an article sent to *K-79* in 1993 noted that ”love unites (mempersatukan) us. . . . Without love we are nothing, creatures without connection. . . . When will it be that we can find a pure love that is not based on lust and selfishness?” (4:7-8).

The pattern is clear: sex is displaced onto desire and then onto love, with each term more valorized than its predecessor. Desire is presented as unidirectional, while love is framed as inherently relational and thus social, proper to a citizen-subject who gives and receives. In Foucauldian terms, this is not repression but an incitement that beckons sex and desire into the service of love. This incitement takes the form of discovery that the desired Other reciprocates love; that is, the desired Other recognizes a person as gay. Even when self-knowledge is the theme, recognition usually figures prominently. In the short story ”I Reach for My Love,” the protagonist, Koko, is in high school and attracted to Yogi, a young man one class ahead of him. Yogi has been following Koko around, but Yogi’s motivations remain obscure to Koko while he is *masih bodoh*, or ”still stupid” (a phrase often used in nationalist literature to refer to premodern ways of thinking). One day, however, ”as we were walking home, Yogi

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16 The only context in which sex consistently appears in gay zines is in articles on preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Such articles are fairly common in gay zines (and rare in lesbi zines) because many are funded directly or indirectly through HIV-prevention programs, in most cases international development agencies. One result of this funding is that these articles usually consist of dry lists of sexual practices and discussions of risk and risk reduction shaped by public-health discourse.
Figure 7. The valorization of love over desire (Jaka 1985, 5:12).
explained the contents of his heart to me. Before he had spoken very long, it was clear that the path of his life was almost identical to my own autobiography (otobiografi). My feelings at that point were like a fish splashing into the water, or a bowl meeting its lid” (Jaha 1985, 1:11-14).

There is joy in discovery, and discovery in these narratives is the discovery of recognition; it is a climactic, almost orgasmic, moment, as when fish meets water or bowl meets lid. For some gay men but especially for lesbi women, the period prior to discovery is marked by isolation, a sense of being an island alone in a sea of heteronormativity (see fig. 8). Since it is self-evident to gay Indonesians (and other Indonesians) the concept that gay originates neither in locality nor tradition, the moment of discovery—when one is recognized, when the desired Other becomes a desiring Other—replaces feelings of isolation with a sense of belonging to a national homosexual community. This founding in the nation shapes the sense of an imagined archipelagic communion with lesbian and gay persons across the national archipelago and outside Indonesia as well (see fig. 9). These implicit cultural linkages among zines, isolation, and an archipelagic imaginary occasionally become the topic of commentary (see fig. 10). In an archipelagic twist on the trope of the deserted island, a man dreaming of food finds a zine parachuted to him as a source of sustenance. Behind the image (meant for an Indonesian readership where everyone lives on an island) is an archipelagic zone of homosexual desire, with zines connecting “islands” of persons and communities.

Separation

In the short story “A Thought,” the protagonist, Iwan, falls in love with a normal friend, Soni. He decides that he must be honest about his self (jati dirinya) and asks Soni, “if you had a friend who turned out to be gay, what would be your reaction?” Soni replies that he would feel “just as usual,” and a surprised Iwan tells Soni that he is gay and loves him. Soni then admits that he has a “secret” of his own: he is gay and
Figure 9. Translocal community: the hangout (tempat ngeber) “Kalifornia,” located on a bridge near a major shopping mall in central Surabaya (GN 1994, 29:28).

Figure 10. Zines linking persons beyond their “islands” (GB 1993, 6:30).

reciprocates Iwan’s love. Iwan is shocked by the dual discovery: “Soni, who’s always being chased by women, who’s handsome, who’s smart, who has so many achievements (prestasi), is gay too!” Iwan is full of happiness but the following week learns that Soni has moved to Australia without leaving word (GN 1997, 51:35). Iwan, and the zine reader, are left in the dark.

If discovery involves recognition by the now-desiring Other, in gay zines this circuit usually leads to separation. “Happily ever after” stories in which two gay men
share a household or sustain an ongoing relationship are rare. Gay zines portray separation as the inevitable complement to discovery: one recounting of a gay man’s life in Yogyakarta concluded that, “like the classic gay story, he had to be separated from his boyfriend” when the boyfriend left town to continue his schooling (NJJ 1997, 3:26). Sometimes a general sense of social rejection leads to separation. In the true-experiences story “Separation” (“Perpisahan”), the gay protagonist tells his lover that they must separate after two years because the protagonist’s mother has discovered the relationship: “You forget that we live in society, we cannot live apart from it, and we can’t just do anything we want. Sometimes society can be more cruel than we suspect” (GN 1994, 30:20).

Lesbi and gay zines often portray some force as causing separation by coming “between” love. In the true-experiences story “Between Love and Greed,” Rion, a lesbi woman, falls in love with Mira—glamorous, beautiful, and married to Franz. Franz thinks that Rion is just Mira’s friend and allows them to spend time together. Rion and Mira discover love for each other, and Mira leaves Franz; but because Rion cannot keep Mira in the glamorous lifestyle to which she is accustomed, “Mira decided to return to Franz’s embraces” (GL 1994, 5:8-9 [in GN 28]). In another true-experiences story, “Between Duty and Love,” the gay protagonist falls in love with a civil servant temporarily filling a position in a small Central Sulawesi town. Once his two-week shift is completed, the civil servant’s duty is to return to Manado (North Sulawesi). On their final night together, the civil servant begs for forgiveness in national terms: “We both serve the needs of our country and people” (GN 1993, 22:20). In a third such story, “Between Love, Parents, and Studies,” Edo, a gay man from Biak, a small island near the island of New Guinea, encounters problems when his boyfriend’s former lover calls Edo’s parents to tell them that Edo is having sex with a man. Edo’s fanatically Christian parents beat him and forbid him to see his lover. Here, the boyfriend’s former lover commits a kind of anti-prestasi that separates Edo from both gay community and family (GN 1997, 49:23-28).17

The overall dynamic of gay zine narratives, then, is one of discovery followed by separation from a beloved Other. Gay Indonesians discover recognition, but the person who makes this recognition possible—the gay lover—is placed beyond reach. This narrative structure predominates despite the fact that it is not a simple reflection of gay experience. While their lives can be hard, many gay men do continue same-sex romances after heterosexual marriage. The attraction of these narratives lies in how they narrativize and concretize a belief that to be gay involves a profound sense of separation. What gives this separation its special sting in gay zines, a sense not just of desire thwarted but also of selfhood called into question? The answer lies in the nexus between love and nation.

Second Zone: National Sexualities

While the first zone of desire is concerned with homoex and homolove, the second relates to the sense that the gay subject position has a national scale. Three factors sustain this linkage to national culture: language, a deemphasis of the local and ethnic (which are often conceptually conflated [Boellstorff 2002]), and a deemphasis of Euro-

17For other narratives of separation, see NJJ 1997, 2:17–21; GN 1988, 2:13–21; GN 1997, 49:23–28.
America. All gay (and lesbi) zines ever published have used Indonesian, never an ethnolocalized language such as Javanese, Balinese, or Batak, except for occasional terms suggesting local color.18 Since zines are published informally, this use of Indonesian is not simply kowtowing to state policy. My fieldwork indicates that publishing a zine in any other language has simply never occurred to these Indonesians. Why make zines inaccessible to so many potential readers—the “we” referenced so often in zine writing?

In line with foregrounding the national tongue, gay zines invoke an Indonesian personhood. While those calling themselves gay may think of themselves in ethnolocalized terms—as Bugis, Javanese, and so on—in some aspects of their lives, in regard to their sexualities, they think of themselves as Indonesians. One motivation for this is that the term gay appears to be understood universally not to be an indigenous concept—I know of no cases in which one learns the meaning of gay from one’s family or tradition. Such distancing from ethnolocality is encapsulated in names such as GAYa Betawi and GAYa Celebes, in which terms indexing ethnolocality are subsumed in the pattern GAYa X. Since adjectives follow nouns in Indonesian, this pattern ontologizes the national; the “local” term appears as modifier and GAYa (based on GAYa Nusantara) as the subject. To my knowledge, almost every appearance of ethnolocality in gay zines has occurred when Dédé Oetomo has published articles on so-called traditional homosexualities and transgenderisms (collected in Oetomo 2001). These articles appear under the rubric adat nusantara (customs of the archipelago). The articles also frame the persons involved as outside the imagined readership of gay zines. Their customs are presented as interesting, but never to my knowledge are they set forth as providing an autochthonous pedigree for gay subjectivities (and never for lesbi subjectivities, since such traditional homosexualities and transgenderisms are almost exclusively associated with men).

The world beyond Indonesia plays a relatively minor role in gay zines. Although they occasionally reprint news clips or lengthier articles on gay or lesbian life in the non-Euro-American world (e.g., the Philippines or Brazil), such reportage is intermittent, appearing only sporadically in short stories, poetry, or letters sent in by readers. Euro-America itself (which for most Indonesians includes Australia and New Zealand) does appear in these zines but is not emphasized. Although gay Indonesians clearly understand gay to be derived in part from the Euro-American concept of gay, it is portrayed in national terms. This does not mean that linkages to Euro-American homosexualities are erased or denied: an archipelagic relationship pertains in which gay Indonesians are one island in an openly acknowledged, even celebrated, global archipelago of homosexuality. Such a sense of global belonging with regard to sexuality in no way precludes anti-American or antiglobalization views with regard to political and economic issues. Gay zines sustain this archipelagic relationship by referencing Euro-America, but these references are intermittent, in keeping with the fact that most gay Indonesians do not speak English or any Euro-American language, have never traveled outside Indonesia, and have met lesbian or gay Euro-Americans rarely, if at all. Gay zines have incorporated Euro-Americans since the early 1980s in the form of drawings (see fig. 4) or characters in short stories; recall the white boyfriend

18The only language other than Indonesian that ever appears in gay and lesbi zines is English. Short stories and personals sometimes contain English words or short phrases. GAYa Nusantara ran a one-page “Summary in English” from 1994 to 1997 (nos. 25–47), and lesbi zines have occasionally included entire articles in English (reflecting the high educational status of most of their producers).
of Jaka (see fig. 7). Euro-Americans also appear in stories as tourists falling in love with Indonesian men, and Euro-American gay men have sent in personals to gay zines since their beginnings. In 1998 GAYa Nusantara even ran what was jokingly termed the “white-guy edition” (edisi bule) (no. 54) which included tips on how to respond to personals from white men.

Despite these varied ways in which Euro-America figures in gay and lesbi zines, however, its footprint is quite small. Like nationalism, which originated in Euro-America but is now seen by Indonesians as authentically Indonesian, these sexualities are considered to be founded in the archipelago.

**Invoking the Nation**

Beyond these implicit references, the nation figures as a zone of desire explicitly, as the background against which gay selfhood and community play themselves out. This appears most succinctly in terms such as “Indo*G*sian people” (bangsa Indo*G*sia) (GN 1994, 25, 40), in which G (gay) is literally implanted into the core of “Indonesia.” More extended references to the nation are common in editorials. In the first issue of GAYa Nusantara, the publishers justified the incorporation of nusantara in the zine’s name as a reminder of “the special national/archipelagic (khas nusantara) lives of lesbi and gay people, which we hope will be reflected and supported by this bulletin” (1987, 1:6). When a reader complained that early GAYa Nusantara zine covers had too many images of shadow-puppet theater, the publishers replied, “there has been an effort to give GAYa Nusantara’s covers themes of the archipelago’s culture” (GN 1988, 3:6). Six years later, the zine commemorated Independence Day (August 17) with a cover featuring two men standing side by side; one held the red-and-white Indonesian flag, and the other held the gay rainbow flag originating in San Francisco, modified with two vertical red-and-white stripes recalling the national flag. That month’s editorial explained:

This August we remember an important event, the proclamation of Indonesian independence 49 years ago. This event could take place . . . because of a surge of new thinking from the beginning of the twentieth century that resulted in nationalism . . . . The lesbi and gay movement can be compared with this national movement. . . . It’s clear that in the communities of the archipelago there have always been homosexual relations, . . . and with the coming of modern civilization there have appeared comprehensive homosexual identities. But, only in the 1980s did homosexual identities become a foundation for a struggle for emancipation and self-empowerment among us. Particularly in the 1990s, we see clearly the development of gay groups in our network that gain attention of observers within and outside the country.

(GN 1994, 32:3–4)

Such framing of homosexuality in activist terms by GAYa Nusantara’s editors is one of the clearest discrepancies between these zines and the everyday lives of gay men, for whom such understandings are rare. What is shared by even the most blatantly political zine writing and everyday gay life, however, is a sense of desiring recognition by the nation. This dynamic can be found in other gay and lesbi zines. The premiere issue of MitraS noted that “there is definitely no place for the gay and lesbi to act as freely as those who live on the western half of the globe, . . . but that doesn’t mean that gay and lesbi in the western countries are always more lucky than
we who live quietly in Indonesia" (1997, 1:8). Invoking the nationalist trope of land and water, the editor of K-79 noted that through the zine "we can meet with friends of the same fate throughout our lands and waters (tanah air) without any barriers" (1993, 2:6). The editors of GAYa Betawi noted from early on that their zine was for gay men from the "whole archipelago" (diseluruh nusantara) (1992, 2:1). The editors of Jaka-Jaka once noted that the goal of the zine (and the organization connected to it) was to "build" gay people full of skills and self-esteem, so that they could give their best to the "people and nation" (bangsa dan negara) (1993, 5:15).

Readers also draw on national imagery in gay zines. The cover boy interviewed in the issue of K-79 noted above implored readers to "support the unity and integrity between us" (1993, 2:7). Such phrases are common in letters to zines: one reader sent "greetings to the brotherhood of the Indonesian lands and waters" (persandaran tanah air Indonesia) (GB 1997, 15:4); another exclaimed "how beautiful it is to have gay friends from the whole archipelago.... We must be united in line with the third of the Pancasila [the unity of Indonesia]" (GN 1995, 37:15). Often the appeals found in personal ads are for "friendship with people like me from across the archipelago." They sometimes have an explicitly nationalist referent, as in the case of a Sumatran man who wrote that "with a foundation in democracy we struggle for freedom for gay people, like other normal human beings" (GL 1982, 1:13). The emphasis is on a national community, and never to my knowledge has a personal ad requested someone from a particular ethnicity or region—in contrast to heterosexual personal ads in Indonesian magazines, which usually specify a desired ethnicity. The desire is for persons from the whole archipelago (se-Nusantara, setanah air, or se-Indonesia). As one person put it, "after I appeared in the personal ads, I got many letters from friends of the same fate as myself from every corner of the archipelago. My perspective (wawasan) broadened concerning the gay world so full of joys and sorrows" (GN 1993, 24:11; see also GL 1994, 3:6 [in GN 31]).

Prestasi

In the quiet of my days, / Even at night there is no song.
My heart barren, / My soul fed up,
You come like a lamp, / Lighting up my heart,
Bathing my soul, / Humming the rhythm of love.
Let the periodical GN / Continue victorious and free.
Come friends! Let us make merry / This environment, this place,
Full of peace and joy / For the sake of the GN periodical's mission.

(GN 1990, 12:16-17)

These invocations of the nation as place occur simultaneously with the invocation of a complementary practice; gay zines construe citizenship as an active process, not as a static category of membership. Such practices are called prestasi in gay zines. This term bears colonial traces; it derives from the Dutch prestatie, a noun meaning "achievement" or "feat"; the verbal form can mean "achieve" and "perform." In standard Indonesian, prestasi also means both to achieve and to perform. Like any performance, prestasi requires observers: "hidden prestasi" is an oxymoron. As a result, when gay Indonesians refer to prestasi, it is always with an audience in mind, and with one exception noted below, the national or general society (masyarakat umum) is that

19My thanks to Leena Avonius for reminding me of this point.
audience, not the gay community. *Prestasi* can be helping directly, such as adopting a child or caring for a sick relative, or it can be a personal achievement that reflects favorably on one's community, such as going on the hajj to Mecca if Muslim or succeeding in one's career. The distinguishing characteristic is that it is positive and fosters social connectivity, in contrast to selfish actions with destructive or centripetal consequences. *Prestasi* is often described as leading to success (*sukses*), a key New Order state term for the exercise of proper citizenship (Pemberton 1994, 9). The editor of *K-79* once set forth a Gay Seven Charm Program (*sapta pesona gay*), including closeness (*keakraban*) and social solidarity (*kesatuyakawanan sosial*). This concept transforms the Seven Charms devised by the New Order government as principles for encouraging tourism in the early 1990s (e.g., safety and cleanliness), but this gay *prestasi* is conceptualized with reference to national society.

The idea that gay persons can do *prestasi* just as well as other Indonesians is a frequent theme in zine editorials. The publishers of *Jaka-Jaka* once wrote:

> We all know and perhaps already feel the attitudes and behaviors of most hetero people toward gay people. . . . Is it right that we be "goat-class" citizens who only have sex? Of course not! There are many gay people who have reached the heights of status. . . . Gay people have qualities and abilities equal to anyone else. . . . To have meaning and respect, one must have a high level of self-worth and self-respect. For that, one must have *prestasi*.

(1993, 4:11)

Another Yogyakarta zine mused that "*Prestasi* . . . will become a fortress strong enough to repel those minor tones [of social disapproval]" (NJ 1997, 4:6). In 1998, during the worst period of Indonesia's currency crisis, an editor of *GAYa Nusantara* congratulated gay Indonesians for continuing their activities, noting that these activities "have an extra value for Indonesian gay people in the eyes of hetero society, [showing] that we continue to exist and carry out positive activities" (1998, 55:5). Zine readers also care about *prestasi*, as illustrated by an article entitled "What Can Homos Do?" written by a reader of *GAYa Nusantara* from Malang in East Java:

> We are becoming aware that although we are fated to be gay there are still many things that we can do for ourselves, our families, society, our beloved country and people, the Indonesian people. . . . We must "go public" with our activities . . . and mix with regular society, for instance with social activities that serve society, like rehabilitation centers for handicapped children, the insane, beggars, the homeless, and so on. . . . What's most important is that these efforts have a humanistic character (beyond the goal of helping our own people, but rather aiding humanity in general).

(1995, 39:33-35)

As a reader of *GAYa Nusantara* from the town of Kisaran explained in an essay to the zine, "our gay friends who are elites and celebrities with influence must have the courage to open themselves, to show the Indonesian government that gay people have *prestasi* and *sukses* in all matters and compare to hetero people. In this way, it's hoped that the opinion of society and the Indonesian government will change of its own accord" (2000, 65:33). A cover boy from the town of Mojokerto, when asked his opinion about Indonesian society's view of gay men as only interested in sex, replied that "the reality is indeed that gay people are always equated with sex. It's up to how we as gay people change that judgment. We can do it with showing our positive attitudes. We can show our *prestasi*, so that maybe that judgment will eventually go away, and society can accept our existence to the fullest" (GN 1999, 59:13-14). The
A short story appearing in the final issue of *Jaka* closes with a scene in which the protagonist, a young man, reveals himself to his parents. With tears in his eyes, his father says “you are still our only son, and you make us proud. No matter what choices you make in your life, what’s important is that you become a person who takes care of himself and is useful to society” (*Jaka* 1988, 18:15). Nine years later, a gay man’s confessions in the successor zine to *Jaka* echoes this theme: “My mother would be sad if I engaged in free sex [English in the original] or other frivolous things without reigning myself in. Even if my gay-ness (kugyan) is seen as a shortcoming, I just keep working to be a good child who’s devoted to his parents, a good Muslim who prays regularly, a good student with good prestasi. In short, I want my mother to be proud of me. Even though I’m gay, I prove that I’m much better than those who are hetero” (*NJ*) 1997, 4:12). Such statements consistently emphasize that sex does not qualify as prestasi.

Given this performative model of citizenship, the act of publishing zines could itself be framed as prestasi, the only prestasi not directly oriented toward the general public. The editorial in the premiere issue of *GAYa Nusantara*, reflecting on the activities that the zine was to undertake, declared that “all of it has one goal, the acceptance of gay and lesbi people as a group with the same rights and responsibilities in Indonesian society” (1987, 1:2). This sensibility is shared by lesbi zines. As one editorial in a lesbi zine proclaimed, “*Swara* will become our pages that give voice to us” (*Swara* 2000, 1:7). In the premiere issue of the lesbi zine *MitraS*, the editors expressed frustration that “there isn’t a bit of media that can become a forum for information and communication for us in Indonesia, like what’s been carried out by gay men with their *GAYa Nusantara*, . . . so we found the courage to try publishing this ‘special’ bulletin after consulting with brother Dédé Oetomo” (1997, 1:3). Thus, “beginning from a feeling of concern about the fate of lesbi media that are always appearing and then disappearing to unknown places, four lesbi women in Jakarta met to discuss the possibility of publishing a newsletter. From this discussion came a serious agreement. ‘There must be lesbi media!’” (*Swara* 2000, 1:6). In 1985 a zine reader from Medan (North Sumatra) wrote: “As a gay who could be called a veteran [because of his age], I am very proud and touched by your efforts and creativity. In the life of gay people, whom almost all people think of as just interested in satisfaction and not to be taken seriously, you emerge bringing a mission that is fundamental for the whole gay society (masyarakat gay). Through these media, we can open our eyes clearly” (*Jaka* 1985, 5:3).

I have encountered this sense of zines as prestasi in my fieldwork. One afternoon in Surabaya, I received a phone call from a gay man who said he was part of a group that had been involved in entertainment but now wanted to engage in more “serious activities,” in particular a new zine (which he termed a bulletin). The group knew of my work and wanted to know if I would be willing to provide an exclusive interview. I agreed and met them at a boarding house where several gay men and a lesbi woman rented rooms. The interview was one of many occasions of reverse ethnography in my fieldwork, where my thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors became the fodder for gay or lesbi theorizing about homosexuality in Euro-America. Once finished with a series of questions—beginning with my height, weight, favorite foods, and hobbies and ranging from my life in the United States to my impressions of Indonesia—I was asked not to tell any other zine-publishing groups of the interview (interview November 15, 1997). The explanation was that “we don’t want people to hear about the zine before it is published, in case it isn’t a sukse”—in other words, if it failed to be prestasi. On another occasion in a different city, I remember speaking with a gay
Table 1: Zines and Zones of Desire

| Desire for                  | Justified through | Unfulfilled desire construed as                      |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| First Zone                  |                   |                                                      |
| Second Zone                 |                   |                                                      |
| Interzone                   |                   |                                                      |
| gay partner                 | gay love          | separation from gay partner                         |
| national belonging          | prestasi          | nation withholds recognition                         |
| gay national belonging      | gay love as a prestasi | nation withholds love from the gay person           |

man who was one of only two people with editorial responsibility for a zine that once had a much larger volunteer staff. When I asked why he persisted in publishing the zine, he replied, “I feel a responsibility to make sure the zine doesn’t die because many mass media in this country (negara), especially gay media, do die out” (interview August 19, 1997). For gay Indonesians, then, prestasi is a good deed that sets in motion a cycle of moral exchange whereby society, in repayment for the prestasi of gay Indonesians, will accept and receive (terima) them. Through prestasi, gay Indonesians express a desire to overcome separation and be reunited with the nation.

The Interzone: Cinta and Sexual Citizenship

PGY Yogyakarta

Datang dengan cinta,
Berjuang dan berupaya / Demi hak sesama.

Dengan semboyannya, / Gaya hidup ceria,
Giat berkarya demi negara dan nusa bangsa.

Ayo kawan semua, / Gulung lengan baju,
Mari bahu membahu, / Jangan ragu-ragu,

Tunjukkan pada dunia / Gahwa kita sedia.
Baktikan jiwa membangun bangsa Indonesia.

Yogyakarta Gay Brotherhood

Yogyakarta

Comes with love,
Struggles and labors / For the sake of equal rights.

With our slogan, / The style of a happy life,
Working energetically for the state and island nation.

Come all friends, / Roll up your sleeves,
Let us stand shoulder to shoulder, / Don’t hesitate.

Show the world / That we are ready.
Devote your soul to building the Indonesian people.

(Jaka 1987, 14:3)

In the first zone of desire, zines portray gay sexuality as moving on a continuum away from sex; its endpoint is a relational self formed through the discovery of, but separation from, love. In the second zone of desire, zines portray gay Indonesians as desiring national belonging—a trope of overcoming separation, a trope of recognition depending on prestasi. A crucial cultural logic animating gay zines—and, I would argue, gay subjectivities—emerges in the intersection of these two zones of desire. (With the critique of merography in mind, I do not interpret this interzone as a deep structure or organic whole; I see it as a contingent but consequential effect of these zones of desire’s copresence.)

In this interzone, love itself emerges as the implicit prestasi qualifying gay Indonesians for sexual citizenship (see table 1). The paradox, as well as the source of the particular sting of exclusion and separation found in gay zines, is that gay love remains almost completely hidden from society. Gay love fails as prestasi because the postcolonial nation rejects homosexuality; it will not act as an audience authorizing
it. Recall the key position of love versus arranged marriages in debates over modernity in Indonesian literature. Gay Indonesians presume that heterosexual Indonesians are citizens by default; they may choose a spouse, but their relation to the nation is "arranged." Gay Indonesians, however, lack this relationship to the nation: the implication of the cultural logics of gay zines is that gay Indonesians must secure national belonging through active choice. Choosing the nation as the object of gay love stands as the prestasi that could in theory lead the nation to end its disavowal (see fig. 11). Gay desire for national belonging fails to overcome separation: it is a sick love.

Zines thus present love as the ultimate prestasi, proving gay Indonesians are equivalent to normal Indonesians (see fig. 12). As the publishers of Jaka once noted, "our differences with hetero people don’t need to be blown out of proportion. In fact, if we respect each other, we can stand shoulder to shoulder and build this beloved nation and people. . . . As a minority that’s ‘put down,’ we have to show that our patriotism and nationalism don’t fail to compare!" (Jaka 1988, 17:2). An article sent to GAYa Nusantara, "Between Love and Lust," uses the trope of between-ness to set forth love as prestasi:
The lives of gay people are scrutinized and marginalized by hetero people, above all in regard to love. They accuse gay people of not having feelings of love, but only lust and desire. As one of many gay people in this country, I feel very apprehensive about this accusation. . . . [If gay men love each other,] we gay people will still be scrutinized, but the comments will change: "Wow, look at the example that gay couple is setting!" In that way, hetero people will slowly become impressed with the model of gay love. I have a friend who is a lesbi woman and who lives in peace, having built a household with her lover. They sail their prosperous ship of life and have even adopted a child. It's the same with a gay couple who works as lowly trash collectors. . . . Although they live in a simple home, their strong love shocks hetero people. . . . If gay people form lasting relationships, society itself will be taken aback and not reject us. . . . Let us hope that gay people are aware that we do not live only to fulfill our lusts, but that love is the ultimate thing.

(1989, 11:31-32)

Despite this optimism, separation haunts the interzone: gay zines voice a clear awareness that gay love for the nation is not reciprocated. This dynamic is illustrated by fantastical short stories, two examples of which are given below. In these parables, gay love magically produces the prestasi that should make it worthy of recognition,
but the prestasi leads to separation—dooming the love to a nonsexual plane and exiling the beloved from the nation.

In one such story by a GAYa Nusantara reader from Jakarta, the married protagonist works as a geologist at a remote oil field in Sumatra. Soon after his unhappy wife leaves for Java, he meets a handsome young man, Nana, along the road near a forest. Nana follows the geologist to the oil-field camp, where he sits next to the geologist as the geologist ponders a map. “Nana, watching over my shoulder, with a smile said that from this place to this place there would certainly be oil. When I asked him how he knew he only smiled.” They become lovers and Nana’s test wells are rich in oil. The boss is elated with this prestasi, for which the geologist takes credit.

Nana continues to find oil on behalf of his beloved geologist and even heals the boss’s fever. Eventually the boss gives the geologist a promotion to Jakarta, but Nana is silent. “When I asked if it was because I had a wife in Java, he said no. Finally he just said that he wanted to return to the area where I first found him.” Nana disappears into the forest; suddenly, an old gray civet cat approaches the geologist. The cat kisses his feet and, “strangely, appears to be crying,” then leaves. The geologist then sees an old man who says the forest is inhabited only by a 230-year-old civet cat that can take human form. “Now I live alone, my wife left me because I didn’t pay attention to her. . . . Oh Nana, I love you so much” (1996, 44:17–21).

In another story by a reader from the city of Solo, the protagonist, Calvin, falls in love with a fellow college student, Harold. One day Calvin sees a brilliantly written thesis with the same title as his own in Harold’s room. There is a note: “I will leave after I find what I’m looking for.” Harold explains that he has been expelled for having sex with a professor and that Calvin can use his thesis. That night they have sex; the next morning, Harold is gone. When Calvin finds Harold’s grandmother and asks where Harold might be, the shocked woman replies chat Harold died a year previously, “before he could graduate. He was disappointed with his schooling and killed himself. He left a message that he would leave if he found what he was looking for, but I didn’t understand. Maybe you are what he was looking for. I beg of you, stay here with me, so that Harold can be at peace” (GN 2000, 74:35–36).

In these stories, fantastical gay men perform prestasi for their beloved, bringing them success in national society, but the love recognition that should ensue does not come to pass. Both end in separation. Even short stories without fantastic elements often present this same dynamic, as in “A Red Orchid for Kresna,” sent to GAYa Nusantara by a gay man from Purworejo. In this story, Kresna is the childhood friend of Har, the protagonist, but as they grow older, Har’s feelings become stronger: “What is this feeling? Is it love? . . . Does that mean . . . I’m a gay person?” (2001, 82:32). Eventually Kresna tells Har that he reciprocates his love, but in fear Har runs away and marries a woman. This separation is set to end when Har, realizing that he is gay, divorces his wife and returns to Yogyakarta to find Kresna.20 He arrives at Kresna’s house to find the family in an uproar: Kresna, whose parents rejected him after learning that he was gay, went to work at an orphanage and recently donated a kidney to a young orphan—the orphan was saved, but Kresna died from complications. Har, filled with the pain of separation, writes to Kresna in his diary: “I have found the true meaning of love. . . . Today, you are no longer a gay person who dies without honor, but a knight who has fallen in shining armor” (34).

20In other words, Har does not appear to believe that he can be gay and married to a woman at the same time; as noted above, such attitudes, while present among gay men for years, are still the minority view (see Boellstorff 1999).
If gay zines bring together homosexual desire and a desire for national belonging under the sign of love as prestasi, it is only logical that gay zines could be construed not only as prestasi but also as something loved (see fig. 13). Professions of love to zines have been frequent since the zines' beginnings, sometimes mixed with fears of separation: "I've fallen in love with Jaka; what's more, if I can get to know other lovers (pencinta) of Jaka, the feelings will be a million times greater" (Jaka 1986, 7:3); "it's like Jaka has become the heart of our people (jantungnya kaum kita)"; "I fell in love with Jaka at first sight, and it grows deeper and deeper. I feel fearful and sad when I imagine Jaka disappearing" (Jaka 1986, 8:2; see also GN 2001, 81:47).

Zines sometimes even appear as agents of love. Toward the end of the story "A Million Lamps of the Heart," the author-protagonist, Ar, is in his last year of high school and has met another student, Budi. One day Budi invites Ar to his house while Budi's parents are still at work:

In the bedroom, Budi straightaway took off his shirt and pants. Wearing nothing but his underwear, he opened a bookcase, took out a magazine (majalah) and gave it to me. I started to read the magazine; its black-and-white cover just had a big G surrounded by gaya hidup ceria and the edition's number. Seeing me read the magazine, Budi smiled shyly and approached me.

"What about it, Ar. . . ."
"Sure, Budi," I replied. "Now?"
"Yes, now." Immediately I took off my clothes. . . . Suddenly we were kissing. . . .
"If I'd just known before, Ar—" he said.
"What would you have done?" I interrupted.
"I would have done like this!"
And right away he moved on top of me. Now I feel that I'm not alone anymore. Now I have a friend of the same world as me, in other words who also likes those of the same sex. Not just that. There is still something else. What? That magazine! Yes, that G bulletin. Now I feel that with the publication of that magazine I can get many friends who have the same feelings and joys as myself. Before I found that G, I felt my world was dark. Now that I've found that G I feel it's not so dark anymore. Now my world is bright and clear because a million lamps of the heart shine together.

This zine within a zine flags the interzone in which homosexual desire and a desire for national belonging come together: the “million lamps of the heart” is the gay archipelago itself, the national network of gay men whose sexual desires find form through the prism of national discourse. The links between zines, love, and nation appears even more explicitly in the short story “Selingkuh,” a term which means “dishonest” or “corrupt” in standard Indonesian but among gay men refers to having sex with a man other than one's boyfriend (I have never heard gay men refer to sex with a wife or girlfriend as selingkuh). In this story, Adam and Sam are lovers who each, unbeknownst to the other, takes out a personal ad in GAYa Nusantara to find a new sex partner (the very zine in which the story appears) (2001, 83:27–32). When Sam receives a reply, he is excited:

Yess! Sekali lagi Sam bersorak-sorak bergembira, bergembira semua, sudah bebas negri kita, untuk s'lama-lamanya .... Aduh, sampe keterusan nyanyi-nyanyi lagu perjuangan ....

Yes! Once again Sam shouted with happiness, everything was happy, our nation is now free, for all time .... Oh my, to the point that I inadvertently sing a song of the struggle ....

When Sam’s joy leads him to sing a song from the anticolonial struggle, he breaks character (as in the “million lamps of the heart” story above) to address the zine reader directly. When Adam receives his reply and is preparing for his blind date, he showers and dresses himself “carefully and in the shortest possible time (like the proclamation) (kayak proklamasi aja)” (GN 2001, 83:29). Proklamasi refers to the famously short (two-sentence) Declaration of Independence read by Sukarno on August 17, 1945, Indonesia’s Independence Day. These are ironic and joking references to the nation, but the joke’s bite comes from their appearance in a zine which, like all zines, regularly contains writing that employs nationalist discourse. Of course, it turns out that Adam and Sam have unknowingly chosen each other's personal ads; when they learn this, they celebrate their renewed love with a night of raucous sex. This story’s author is from Ponorogo, the region of Java where “traditional” homosexual relations between warok actors and their gemblak understudies originated, yet there is no mention of this tradition; gay love and gay belonging are national matters.

In the interzone, then, homosexuality and national belonging come together under the sign of love. As zines are produced in the interstices of everyday life and read in stolen moments on a bed or in a friend’s room, gay men imagine a new Indonesia. Through this national romance, they desire recognition from a nation lover where now there is only separation. This is the story behind the story, so to speak, of gay zines. How might I leave the reader with an appreciation for the raw emotional sensibility of this implicit, unattainable interzone? It would be to construe Indonesia, the nation itself, as returning the gaze coming from the faces of gay men on zine
covers. A nation that at long last turns to the gay Indonesian and looks you right in the eye, that accepts your prestasi and closes distance. An Indonesia that beckons you and in that impossible moment is consumed by homosexual desire. An Indonesia that gathers you, finally, into the warmest of embraces and whispers in your ear—"you are loved." And you are home.

Appendix: Background Data on Gay and Lesbi Zines

| Zine                              | Abbreviation used in this article for this zine | Years published | Published in     | Notes                                      |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| G: Gaya Hidup Ceria               | G                                              | 1982-84         | Semarang         | first gay zine                            |
| Jaka                              |                                                | 1985-88         | Yogyakarta       | second gay zine                            |
| GAYa Nusantara                    | GN                                             | 1987-present    | Surabaya         | some former staff from G; gay zine (with some lesbi content) |
| GAYa Lestari                      | GL                                             | 1994            | Jakarta          | first lesbi zine; published inside GN      |
| MitraS                            |                                                 | 1997-98         | Jakarta          | lesbi zine; some former staff from MitraS  |
| Swara Srikandi                    |                                                 | 2000            | Jakarta          | lesbi zine; some former staff from MitraS  |
| Jaka-Jaka                         | JJ                                             | 1992-94?        | Yogyakarta       | some former staff from Jaka; gay zine      |
| New Jaka-Jaka                     | NJ                                             | 1997-99?        | Yogyakarta       | some former staff from Jaka; gay zine      |
| Gaya Betawi (Buku Seri IPOOS)     | GB                                             | 1994-98         | Jakarta          | gay zine                                  |
| K-79/GAYa Pandanaran              |                                                | 1993            | Semarang         | gay zine                                  |

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Abbreviated Sources

- **G**: Gaya Hidup Ceria (G)
- GAYa Betawi (GB)
- GAYa Lestari (GL)
- GAYa Nusantara (GN)
- Jaka-Jaka (JJ)
- New Jaka Jaka (NJ)

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