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Danilyn Rutherford: Raiding the Land of the Foreigners

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On the Limits of Indonesia

ON July 2, 1998, a little over a month after the resignation of Indonesia's President Suharto, two young men climbed to the top of a water tower in the heart of Biak City and raised the Morning Star flag. Along with similar flags flown in municipalities throughout the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, the flag raised in the capital of Biak-Numfor signaled a demand for the political independence of West Papua, an imagined nation comprising the western half of New Guinea, a resource-rich territory just short of Indonesia's easternmost frontier. During the thirty-two years that Suharto held office, ruling through a combination of patronage, terror, and manufactured consent, the military had little patience for such demonstrations. The flags raised by Papuan separatists never flew for long; they were lowered by soldiers who shot "security disrupters" on sight.¹ Undertaken at the dawn of Indonesia's new era reformasi (era of reform), the Biak flag raising lasted for four days. By noon of the first day, a large crowd of supporters had gathered under the water tower, where they listened to speeches and prayers, and sang and danced to Papuan nationalist songs. By afternoon, their numbers had grown to the point where they were able to repulse an attack by the regency police, who stormed the site in an effort to take down the flag. Over the next three days, the protesters managed to seal off a dozen square blocks of the city, creating a small zone of West Papuan sovereignty adjoining the regency's main market and port. The demonstration only ended after local military units, reinforced with additional troops, staged a predawn raid on the encampment. Some two hundred men, women, and children were guarding the flag when the soldiers opened fire. Philip Karma, the young civil servant who led the demonstration, was shot in both his legs before he was arrested. It is still not clear how many of his followers were wounded, raped, or killed.²

Indonesia is in trouble, the American media has told us on the basis of events like the Biak flag raising. Riots in Jakarta, ethnic clashes in Kalimantan and the Moluccas, separatism in East Timor, Aceh, and Irian Jaya—journalists have taken all this as evidence that Indonesian national unity was never anything but "enforced." "One country, one people, one language," begins a feature published shortly after the destruction that followed East Timor's vote for independence (Mydans 1999: 1). "As a national credo, displayed on banners and placards, it sounds simple enough. But in this scattered archipelago of 13,000 islands, roiling with an untamed mix of cultures, ethnic groups, histories, rivalries, gods, and spoken tongues, it begins to seem almost im-

possible. Some people say it is" (see also Landler 1999: 1). "The forces that most overtly held Indonesia together—the grip of a dictator and the harshness of the military—have retreated," the article goes on, creating a "vacuum" that "has been quickly filled by all the repressed passions of political, religious, and ethnic difference" (Mydans 1999: 1). In the case of Irian Jaya, whose "primitive people" are "as strange and exotic to the residents of modern Jakarta as they are to New Yorkers," these differences are particularly stark (*ibid.*: 2). Unacknowledged in these assessments is not only the fact that the regime justified decades of repression and corruption by evoking and sometimes staging displays of "primordial" violence; also obscured is the fact that the same publications once portrayed Indonesia's diversity as a form of national wealth.³ Prior to the Asian financial crisis, and the combination of international pressure and domestic unrest that brought Suharto's presidency to an end, few mainstream journalists expressed any doubts about the strength of Indonesian national unity. If anything seemed to threaten the stability of Suharto's so-called New Order regime, it was the globalizing effects of development, forces that were leading urban Indonesians to oppose authoritarian rule (see *New York Times* 1996a, b; Friedman 1997; Mydans 1997).

But mainstream American journalists are not the only ones who have found themselves confronting the limits of Indonesian nationalism in the face of events like the Biak flag raising. Clifford Geertz, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, ponders the fate of Indonesia's nationalist project. Against the image of a nation born of anticolonial revolution as a "triumphalist, insurgent, liberationist power," Geertz notes that "more reflective Indonesians" are coming to question "how far this master idea, with its slogans, stories and radiant moments, remains a living force among either the country's elite or its population, and how far it has become just so much willed nostalgia—declamatory, a pretense, worn and seen through, cherished if at all by Western romantics and political scientists" (Geertz 2000: 22). Whatever we make of Geertz's prognosis on the political future of what he calls "big ideas," his reflections do suggest how recent events might challenge truths that many Indonesianists have long held dear. Much as some journalists represent primordialism as the natural state of non-Western affairs, post-war scholars of Indonesia have often approached national consciousness as a reality that it would be heresy to doubt.

Consider, for example, the first three paragraphs of Ruth McVey's contribution to a 1996 volume entitled *Making Indonesia*. The "ideological odd couple" of the nation-state, McVey opens, "has made itself into a particularly powerful focus of organization and thought, the institution which much of mankind now considers to be its proper source of social identity and center of loyalty, the apex of nearly all hierarchies, the almost unquestioned locus of power." Nation building in Indonesia is particularly instructive. "The archipelago had no common identity prior to its incarnation as the Netherlands

East Indies,” and the colonial experience pulled regions apart, as much as it united them. And yet, “something” engaged the imagination of “a significant portion of the population . . . making it willing to follow new leaders in the name of a quite new idea, that of a collective Indonesian personality.” In the wake of the revolution, the country “remained remarkably resistant to separatist tendencies,” McVey asserts, noting that the “regional rebellions” that broke out in Sumatra and Sulawesi in the 1950s were really a struggle over who should rule in Jakarta. “It is therefore worth contemplating the things that went to make up Indonesian nationalism and the ways in which Indonesian leaders used, reshaped, and suppressed these elements in an effort to transform a desire for the future into an instrument of rule” (McVey 1996: 11). For McVey, in the absence of Sumatran and Sulawesi nationalism, Indonesian nationalism is the phenomenon to be explained. Despite the exceptions alluded to in McVey’s opening comments, national consciousness, of one kind or another, stands as the norm.

Yet there is another way of interpreting events like the Biak flag raising. It is not simply that nation-states like Indonesia have reached their limits; our models of contemporary consciousness have reached their limits, as well. *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners* suggests the shortcomings of analyses that presume a seamless fit between representations of the nation as a homogeneous, territorially bounded community and the understandings one finds among people who live within the borders of a particular polity. This book calls into question the view that takes self-conscious national identity as a default condition, the natural outcome of the fact that this is a world of nation-states. There are good reasons why some scholars have taken for granted national identity—and modernity, more generally—as an object of inquiry. It would be unsavory to invoke any of the conventional alternatives to the national—the archaic, the agrarian, the primitive, the remote—alternatives that make some people’s pasts into other people’s futures (see Osborne 1995: 16; Appadurai 1996: 31). But this allergy to the thought of the limits of national consciousness has its costs. It is not only in “out-of-the-way places” that national identity can be subverted (see Tsing 1993). It also subverts itself from within.

It will be crucial to my argument, and obvious from the evidence I present, that Biak-Numfor, the site of this study, was in the waning years of the New Order regime unusually well integrated into the Indonesian nation-state by many measures. The city where the flag raising occurred was the capital of an administrative unit consisting of the islands of Biak, Supiori, and Numfor, along with the surrounding atolls. In the early 1990s, the Biak-speaking inhabitants of these islands attended Indonesian schools and universities, participated in Indonesian institutions and organizations, were highly fluent in the Indonesian national language and Indonesian national rhetorics of rule. Unlike recent ethnographic studies of resistance to the In-

donesian state, this book does not linger on practices and persons that the New Order pushed to the margins (cf. Steedly 1993; Tsing 1993). Rather, it focuses on the failure of hegemony among people who participated enthusiastically in the programs and projects of the regime. Instead of a description of marginality, this study offers a new way of reading the diagnostics of national belonging, an analytic that illuminates a sociocultural economy that stands cheek by jowl with the discourses of Papuan separatism and Indonesian nationalism, yet radically undercuts them both. I use the term “sociocultural economy” to refer to an interconnected series of spaces of representation, appropriation, and production, whose reproduction rests on a dialectic in which social action is both oriented by and recreates cultural values. My analysis of this economy will make sense of how people who acted as loyal Indonesians in the early 1990s could so abruptly switch allegiances. Not only in their secret practices but also in the very midst of their submission to the state, the individuals described in this study undermined the New Order’s authority. Scarcely the outcome of primordial attachments, the imperatives that led them to do so were no less a product of history than those that led other Indonesians to internalize national ideologies of rule.

Key to the economy I describe in this study is a dynamic I call the fetishization of the foreign. Let me state the punch line of this study plainly: to the extent that Biaks pursued the foreign as a source of value, prestige, and authority, they managed to participate in national institutions without adopting national points of view. In New Order Biak, the fetishization of the foreign resided in a web of social practices, sacred and banal, in ways of talking about intimacy and history, of producing and transacting objects, of evaluating speeches, gifts, dances, and songs. Built on observations from a range of arenas and historical moments, my evidence is subtle but suggestive. If I draw on particular bodies of theory in the course of analyzing this evidence, it is to bring unexpected correspondences into view. This study’s ambitions come into focus most clearly when placed in the context of four sites of inquiry: the nation, the foreign, fetishism, and utopia. Let us begin with the first, and the assumptions concerning identity and representation that have pervaded scholarly assessments of the forces that integrate the modern nation-state.

The Nation

“What is it that holds a nation-state together?” In her 1989 study, *National Integration in Indonesia: Patterns and Policies*, Christine Drake evaluates Indonesia’s performance in terms of four “factors of integration” that could hold the answer to this deceptively simple question. First she considers the “historical and political dimension,” which consists of “common integrative his-

torical experiences,” from “shared suffering,” to “common achievements,” to the events and epochs that make up “the common heritage of a country.” Next, she addresses the “sociocultural dimension,” which includes “shared cultural attributes . . . common language, common cultural features associated with religious practices as well as other cultural elements, and opportunities to belong to nationwide organizations and share in common nationwide activities.” Third, she assesses the “interactive dimension,” the level of contact “among the diverse peoples within a nation-state” through “movement and communication between provinces, including land, sea and air transportation links, radio, television and telephone communications, migration and trade.” Finally, she considers the “economic dimension,” which takes into account the importance of “regional economic interdependence” and “regional balance in economic development,” as well as the need for citizens to perceive “that standards of living are improving and that there is some measure of equity in the location of new industrial growth and development schemes” (Drake 1989: 2–3). Basing her analysis on statistical data collated at the provincial level, Drake is well aware of the limitations of her method—how it conceals intraprovincial inequities and the effects of interplay between factors. “Interaction” in the absence of “equity,” for instance, may prove a disintegrating force; in some situations, familiarity breeds contempt. But despite pointing to the grievances that pose a threat to Indonesian national unity, Drake ends on a cautiously optimistic note.

Indonesia remains a diverse and fascinating country, one in which great progress has been made toward the fuller integration of its many islands and peoples, yet one where enormous problems, particularly demographic, economic and political, remain. As the Indonesian government is aware, integration is a dynamic concept, a condition that has to be constantly nurtured, one where peoples of different social and cultural backgrounds and economic levels have to be bonded continually into a better functioning and more mutually interdependent whole. In this process, much has been accomplished, but much yet remains to be done, as Indonesia pursues its goal of “Unity in Diversity.” (Drake 1989: 270)

Let us leave aside for the moment the way that Drake assumes the very subject whose presence her study is designed to establish: a nation that pursues a common goal. My point for the moment is that if Indonesia seemed to be making progress toward national integration at the time of Drake’s writing, Biak-Numfor was clearly doing its small part. In all of the dimensions Drake covers, the regency scored remarkably well, especially given Irian Jaya’s reputation for isolation. Converted to Christianity in the early twentieth century, with a long history of wage labor and government service, and an even longer history of travel and trade, the indigenous inhabitants of Biak-Numfor—*orang Biak* (Biaks), as they call themselves—pride themselves on their cosmopolitan ways. Of the 92,570 people counted in the regency’s

1991 census, an estimated 66 percent were members of a single ethnolinguistic group.⁴ Speakers of an Austronesian language, Biaks make up one of the larger and more dominant “tribes” in Irian Jaya. In the early 1990s, one found Biak migrants of various vintages and socioeconomic backgrounds living in villages in the Raja Ampat Islands, in the towns of Sorong, Manokwari, Nabire, Wamena, Fak-Fak, and Merauke, in the provincial capital, Jayapura, in the national capital, Jakarta, and in distant cities that included Cardiff, The Hague, and Delft. Worldwide, at the time, there were probably around 100,000 self-identified Biaks in all.

Biaks living in Biak-Numfor clearly shared sociocultural attributes with other citizens of Indonesia, including a “common language,” Indonesian, in which rates of fluency and literacy long have been high, as I have noted, and “common cultural features associated with religious practice.”⁵ The vast majority of indigenous islanders belonged to Gereja Kristen Injili Irian Jaya (the Irian Jaya Evangelical Church, henceforth GKI), an active member of the national association of Protestant churches. As far as “membership in national organizations” goes, one simply had to note the number of adults and children wearing scouting, military, and government party uniforms to gauge the frequency with which Biaks joined such groups. On the “interactive dimension,” Biak-Numfor was home to a growing population of migrants from across Indonesia: traders and cash croppers from South Sulawesi, Sino-Indonesian merchants from Java and Bali, Ambonese schoolteachers and doctors, Sumatran military commanders, Jakarta businessmen, and Menadonese pastors, to name a few. Making their homes within the expanding boundaries of Biak City, new migrants found it easy to settle in the regency, which boasted a busy harbor and Frans Kaisiëpo Airport, the province’s first port of call for domestic flights originating in Jakarta. A crucial factor for officials planning the development of tourism in the regency, the airport was also at the time Indonesia’s first port of call for international flights originating in Los Angeles, which stopped in Biak to refuel before continuing to Bali and other popular destinations farther west.⁶

Scattered along the coastlines of Biak, Supiori, and Numfor, the majority of the regency’s villages lacked electricity and running water. But rural Biaks listened to battery-powered radios at home and watched television with urban relatives during their frequent trips to town. Although in 1992, at the beginning of my fieldwork, the eighty-mile trip from Biak’s north coast to Biak City could take as long as the flight to the United States, by 1994, when I left, a new network of roads and bridges had dramatically shortened local voyages. For those who lived in Biak City, a new satellite system was making it easier to place long-distance calls. All of these initiatives belonged to a national “Go East” campaign designed to accelerate the economic development of “neglected” provinces, such as Irian Jaya. Although many villagers still relied on subsistence fishing and farming in locally controlled waters and

on clan-owned land, growing numbers augmented their income through wage labor at the regency's cannery and plymill, or in various construction projects sponsored by the government. The master plan for Biak-Numfor projected the opening of luxury resorts and a tax-free processing zone, and officials promised that employment opportunities would only widen. Although some of my acquaintances had their doubts as to who really benefited from development, the general impression was that living standards were on the rise.

As for the first dimension in Drake's inventory—"common, integrative, historical experiences"—the situation in Biak-Numfor was complicated. The arrival of the first European missionaries in the territory (1855) and the opening of the first permanent administrative posts (1898) occurred at roughly the same time as similar events in what are now securely "Indonesian" provinces.⁷ Thanks in part to an expansion in shipping and telegraph services, in part to the intervention of a colonial army no longer encumbered by a costly war in Aceh, a devoutly Muslim polity on the western tip of Sumatra whose inhabitants fought off the Dutch for nearly thirty years, north coastal New Guinea became an effective part of the Netherlands Indies during the early twentieth century, as did Bali, Lombok, Flores, Ceram, and the Sumatran and Sulawesi highlands (Locher-Scholten 1994; see also van Goor 1986). By virtue of their ancestors' involvement in regional networks centered in the Moluccas, long the world's foremost supplier of cloves, contemporary Biaks could point to an even longer history of "shared experience" with distant peoples than could many western Indonesian groups. Needless to say, the conditions that prevailed in western New Guinea's interior differed dramatically; yet the inhabitants of more accessible areas, including today's Biak-Numfor, participated, administratively and economically, in a wider colonial world. It was not until the early 1930s that some Europeans began to imagine western New Guinea as a region that was racially and culturally distinct from the rest of the Indies; not until the late 1940s that the Dutch government enforced a divorce (see Rutherford 1998).

As I suggested in the preface, the critical historical experience for today's Papuan nationalists dates to the period between 1949 and 1963, when the Netherlands ruled western New Guinea as a separate colony, thus retaining a fragment of the Indies after Indonesia gained independence. By the time of my fieldwork, there were no longer armed separatists on the island, and the military atrocities of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, if not forgotten, could be spoken of as a thing of the past. Biak officials I met were beginning to indulge in references to "the Papuan people" and "Melanesian culture"; they took it as a sign of the progress of national integration in Biak-Numfor that these once subversive expressions no longer marked their users as supporters of the separatist cause. In 1992, the coordinators of military intelligence in Jakarta felt optimistic enough about the situation in Irian Jaya to

allow the national research institute to issue permits to foreign scholars unaffiliated with church or government projects who wished to conduct fieldwork in the province. To my knowledge, I was the second anthropologist since the 1960s to receive a visa for this purpose. In the context of the diagnostics Drake proposes, perhaps the best indication of the authorities' confidence in Biaks' membership in the Indonesian nation is the research I conducted for this book.

And yet, this study calls into question the view that would take national belonging as the automatic outcome of the factors Drake describes. In doing so, it challenges assumptions that lie at the heart of dominant theories concerning the emergence of modern nationalism. Writers who sharply disagree on the nature of the phenomenon would recognize the imprint of their thinking in various entries in Drake's list. In Drake's description of the historical dimension, one finds echoes of Smith's (1986) argument regarding the important role preexisting "ethnie" can play in providing a basis for the modern nation; Hobsbawm's (1990) discussion of the contribution of various forms of "protonationalism," based on long-standing religious and political ties, would support Drake's reasoning here, as well. Drake's emphasis on the importance of state-sponsored education and economic development in integrating the nation has affinities with Gellner's (1983) argument on the function of modern nationalism in meeting the "structural demands of industrial society." Anderson's ([1983] 1991) characterization of the mechanisms that lead to the imagining of a nation echo throughout Drake's statistics on the prevalence of telephones, televisions, radios, and newspapers: the vehicles that extend the "imagined community" to far-flung villages and towns.

This is not to say that these thinkers all conceive of their theories as equally applicable to a nation-state like Indonesia. Smith and Hobsbawm, despite their myriad differences, concur in the opinion that Indonesia is not really a nation at all. Citing the strains caused by ethnic, religious, and linguistic heterogeneity, both scholars place Indonesia in the company of "newly emerged states claiming a national homogeneity they do not possess" (Hobsbawm 1990: 153).⁸ Anderson and Gellner, more usefully, describe the emergence of national identity in terms that do not automatically exclude postcolonial polities; indeed, for Anderson, Indonesia serves as an exemplary case. Far from posing an intractable obstacle to the formation of an authentic nation, ethnic identities in Indonesia are the product of the same forces that gave rise to nationalism, in a world where colonial scholars and officials defined the subject of the nation before its members defined themselves (see Anderson [1983] 1991: 163–184). In his focus on the impact of colonial institutions and the categories they fostered, Anderson provides fodder for the argument that ethnicity is the product of nation formation, not the substance from which nations are formed (see Williams 1989). Such an approach provides the basis for a clearer understanding of the political implica-

tions of Indonesia's "remarkable" cultural diversity than Smith or Hobsbawm can offer. Through the sponsoring of institutions that articulated selected forms of difference, the New Order regime defused social tensions and promoted crosscutting allegiances of ethnicity and religion while suppressing forms of consciousness based on class (see Kipp 1996).

Gellner shares with Anderson the virtue of taking neither ethnicity nor nationality for granted as a natural object of human thought. Although Anderson places more stress on the affective dimensions of national belonging, and its resemblance to older affinities of kinship and faith, both theorists describe national identity as a distinctly modern phenomenon. Nations conceive of themselves as homogenous and bounded, constituted of a population of logically equivalent, if anonymous, individuals, who participate as a unit in the series of equivalent polities that make up the global order of nation-states. National identity is intimately associated with modern notions of equality and progress; Anderson's "horizontal fraternity" is envisioned as moving forward through "homogeneous, empty time." Gellner explicitly relates this new mode of envisioning identity to broader processes of rationalization. What Kant and Hume saw as universal characteristics of human thought are the historical product of social and economic forces that broke down the hierarchies and overcame the cognitive discontinuities that characterized the agrarian world. To continue to prosper—and, indeed, to exist at all—industrial society requires both specialization and equality; functions must be distinguished, but individuals, in principle, should be capable of filling multiple roles. Hence, the age of industrialization is also the age of the emergence of standardized national languages, capable of communicating context-free information between strangers. Hence, it is also the age of mass education, through which citizens come to master this new code. Only the modern state is capable of funding and coordinating an educational system that enables a rationalized society to flourish. This is why ethnic minorities, who are at a disadvantage since their language does not provide the basis for the national standard, cherish dreams of having a state of their own.

But this account of nationalism as the correlate of economic modernization suffers its own limitations, not least of which is the evolutionary trajectory it follows.⁹ It is possible to see how Gellner's model might apply to Papuan nationalism. Although their lingua franca is a dialect of Indonesian, not a separate vernacular, Irian Jayans long have faced the sort of discrimination that Gellner suggests leads to nationalism in unevenly industrializing countries. What is harder to see is what Gellner would make, for instance, not of Biaks' attendance at state-sponsored schools but of the terms in which they speak of success. Biaks are disproportionately represented in what Anderson might call the province's creole elite, a small, multilingual class of well-educated, well-connected men and women (see [1983] 1991: 52). This elite is the product of modern education, which is supposed to nurture

forms of equality that render irrelevant ties of affinity and descent. Yet, as we will see, Biaks often explain the success of individuals in terms of kinship; as Biak mothers, in particular, often told me, it is not individual merit but gifts from intimate others that enable teachers and officials to rise in the ranks. In this regard, by Gellner's measure, Indonesia might qualify as a nation, but Biaks themselves would be held back from full participation by their "traditional" perspectives. Somehow Gellner would need to explain the persistence of attributes antithetical to national integration among people who are clearly entering the industrialized world.

This study documents the reproduction of antinational apprehensions of authority, space, time, and self under conditions that theorists have assumed would lead to the formation of a homogeneous nation. But its purpose is not simply to identify the limits of the nation in a particular corner of Indonesia; it is to identify the limits of the models through which the emergence of national consciousness has been conceived. Gellner, Anderson, Hobsbawm, and Smith, despite their differences, leave equally unexamined the socio-cultural dynamics that mediate the impact of such forces as literacy, bureaucracy, transportation, and trade. In assuming that railroads, schools and markets automatically and irreversibly turn "peasants into Frenchmen," to borrow the title of Eugen Weber's famous (1976) study, adherents to this model of the modernization of identity posit a direct, causal relationship between exposure to shared technologies of representation and exchange, and the emergence of shared conceptions of self.¹⁰ This model is grounded in dichotomies, the most problematic of which is its sheer opposition between the long-distance and the face-to-face. This study, by contrast, is premised on an approach to sociality that no more presumes the intimacy of supposedly traditional relationships than it does the alienation associated with modern life. I begin with the assumption that all identities are the outcome of semi-otically mediated processes of recognition (see Siegel 1997; Keane 1997a). Entailing the objectification of a self for another, these processes have effects that are neither permanent nor assured. I approach the nation in the following chapters less as an achievement than as a limit, posited through a range of scholarly and political discourses and institutions, but never unequivocally achieved.

The discussions of the nation that have the most to contribute to my analysis are those that have examined how the production of national identity is both threatened and fueled by contradictions, which are locally distinct but spring from the vicissitudes of representation, broadly conceived. Thus Handler describes how French Canadian nationalism gives rise to "perpetual motions" in the form of "the constant doubts about national existence, the ongoing search for authentic culture, or the endless fragmentation of bureaucracies created to administer national existence and culture" (1988: 191). Handler's point is not that the Quebec nation in some sense falls short

of actualization. Rather, he argues that the very processes that produce an image of national culture as an object of desire—the “stacks of loudspeakers and paying spectators” at a staged performance of folk dancing, for example—constitute an aspect of the “culture of the situation” that eludes the totalizing effort to produce the nation as a bounded whole (ibid.: 195).

For Berlant, the limit that nationalist discourse engages pertains to the abstract identities posited by the nation form. In the United States, what Berlant calls the “National Symbolic” projects a utopia that would bridge the local and the national, an impossible site where there is no longer a gap between one’s “body and everyday life experience” and the national ideal (1991: 5, 12; see also 1997: 6). Turning to Indonesia, Pemberton’s (1994) analysis of the New Order’s cultural politics likewise foregrounds the inherently unattainable nature of the identities promoted by the state. In New Order Java, traditional culture (I: *budaya tradisionil*) acted as a “metaspook” that demanded obeisance to the generalized obligations of custom. But by virtue of its abstract character, those who submitted to the authority of custom could never fully meet its demands. An essence located at the heart of the national cultural subject, tradition was both a focus of desire and a source of anxiety. The compulsion to fulfill its imperatives fueled an unending series of rituals; one always feared falling short.

In this study, I follow scholars like Handler, Berlant, and Pemberton in stressing the limits of national identity. I assume that this identity, like any other, is only ever the product of historically specific and inherently contingent moments of representation, performances that evoke emergent abstractions, yet unfold in particular times and places, through the mediation of particular words and things. The problematic concreteness of social interaction, the underdetermined character of the “material” that mediates discourse—these aspects of representation expose national texts to multiple interpretations. But where in other studies these threats to the integrity of national identity prove crucial to its reproduction, in *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners* they serve in the perpetuation of a very different focus of interest and desire. The practices described in this study do not represent a symptom of their participants’ illiteracy in the codes of nationality. In accentuating different functions of discourse from those emphasized in nationalist ideologies and the theories they inform, these practices illuminate, if anything, a fuller sense of what it could mean to read.¹¹

The nation is a symbol, not an entity, Verdery (1993) has argued, mobilized in different ways to legitimate different regimes, which have different degrees of power to achieve homogeneity within their borders. Defined either as a correlate of citizenship or as the effect of ethnicity, history, and culture, national identities emerge as an effect of action on two levels: that of explicitly nationalist discourse and that of everyday practice, the “micro-physics of power,” à la Foucault. To appreciate how the discourses and prac-

tices described in this study could have antinational effects, one must begin with something like Verdery's formulations. But one must also delve deeper into the processes of identification on which this model of the nation as symbol rests. Žižek (1989) has criticized Althusser's (1971) account of interpellation, the process that leads individuals to recognize themselves from the perspective of the state and its apparatuses, which include, for Althusser, the mass media and such institutions as the church, family, and school. According to Žižek, Althusser obscures a critical stage in the recruitment of subjects in his description of how people respond to the ideological Other, which in Althusser's "little theoretical theater" assumes the guise of a policeman yelling "Hey you there!" This stage consists of a moment of hailing prior to identification, a moment when the subject is "desperately seeking a trace with which to identify," "for he [sic] does not understand the meaning of the call of the other" (1989: 43). Informed by a particular reading of Lacanian theory, Žižek views this "non-integrated surplus of senseless traumatism" as that which "confers on the law its unconditional authority: in other words, which—in so far as it escapes ideological sense—sustains what we might call the ideological *jouis-sence*—enjoyment-in-sense (enjoy-meant), proper to ideology" (ibid.: 43–44). Yet what Žižek describes as the "gap between the machine and its internalization" is open to other articulations. The very processes that would seem to lead to identification with the nation facilitate the nation's subversion. It is in these processes that one might look for an antinational impulse—a resistance akin to that depicted in Sakai's reflections on the difficulty of "overcoming the modern": a gesture that "disturbs the possible representational relationship between the self and the image." This resistance is not "negation, by which a subject is posited in opposition to that which it negates," but a movement to be likened to the "negativity . . . which continues to disturb a putative stasis in which the subject is made to be adequate to itself" (ibid.: 118–119).

In examining practices that play on the limits of the nation, it is not the goal of this study to excavate a perspective that would be self-consciously oppositional. Rather, what one finds described in the following chapters are genres of practice that only serve to marginalize national identity to the extent that they posit alternative sources of value, identity, pleasure, and power. These genres are performative, in the sense that they both presume an audience and wield the power to create the very realities to which they refer (see Austin 1976; Derrida 1982: 307–330; 1988; Parker and Sedgwick 1995). The category of the foreign, which gives coherence to these genres, is no more to be taken for granted than that of the nation. What Žižek and Sakai present as a theoretical possibility emerges in this study as a sociocultural construct, no less the product of a particular history than was the New Order national ideal. To understand the foreign, as I use the term in this study, one must consider the wider political settings in dialogue with which it emerged.

The Foreign

In the depositions taken by the Biak police during the weeks following the flag raising, one finds no indication of the brutality with which the army cut short the demonstration.¹² Military witnesses describe the end of the protest in antiseptic terms: troops finally moved in to “clean” the site. But one does get a sense of the attributes of Philip Karma, the leader who persuaded people to join the gathering at grave risk to their lives. Karma, who was thirty-eight years old at the time, was born of elite Biak parents and raised in Jayapura, the provincial capital. He went to college in Solo, a Central Javanese city, then completed a management course in Manila, before returning to Jayapura to work at the governor’s office in the Department of Training and Development. Karma told his interrogators that he got the idea for the July 1 protest from reading a study published in Indonesia, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka (The Free Papua Organization Rebellion)* (Djopari 1993). When he learned that the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Free Papua Organization’s Declaration of West Papuan Independence would fall on July 1, the idea of leading a flag raising simply popped into his mind. Karma just happened to be on Biak in late June, having stopped on his way back from a business trip to visit his ailing father, a former regent who had retired to his natal village. But when he heard that they had raised the Morning Star flag in Jayapura, he recruited his siblings to help him find leaders in Biak City who were willing to do the same.

Once a crowd had gathered under the water tower, Karma read a declaration, written in Indonesian. Those present pledged not to lower the flag until UN Secretary General Kofi Annan arrived to hear the Papuans’ demands. Rumors that powerful foreigners were on their way to the site reportedly swept Biak City, as did stories that the flag raising had been broadcast on CNN. But Karma appealed not only to international agencies in his speeches; he also claimed privileged knowledge of the national scene. He presented an analysis of Indonesia’s economic woes and the corruption of its leaders, representing the nation-state as a sinking ship and the province as a lifeboat. Karma told his followers not to fear military reprisal; the government would not dare to violate their human rights for fear of losing sorely needed foreign aid. Echoing official speeches on Irian Jaya’s development, Karma declared that the Indonesian government had failed to develop the province’s “human resources” (I: *sumber daya manusia*); independent West Papua would educate its citizens for free. Karma explained to his followers that the independence movement was in accordance with the Indonesian Constitution of 1945, which proclaimed that all people had the right to self-determination. He also told them that the movement was not in violation of Pancasila, the official ideology that the New Order required all Indonesian organizations to adopt

(see Kipp 1996: 107–108). After Karma's release from prison and dismissal from the provincial bureaucracy, he repeatedly appeared at political gatherings wearing his Indonesian civil service uniform, albeit with a Papuan flag affixed to his lapel.

One must appreciate the circumstances under which the depositions regarding the flag raising were taken—in all probability, under duress. Yet Karma's testimony, along with that of other witnesses, emphasized themes I often heard when Biaks discussed individuals with authority and power. On the day of the flag raising, Karma told his interrogators that he had “freed West Papua,” with the help of people whose names he did not know. Although it is likely that Karma was protecting his supporters, his statement calls to mind the comments of elite Biaks I met during fieldwork when they returned to the island to intervene in local affairs. The fact that Karma knew few people in the regency confirmed his status as someone who had spent much of his time in distant places. He might not have known his supporters, but they knew him—as the successful son of a regent who had served in the highlands, as someone with access to resources from abroad. As I noted in the preface, in New Order Biak there was a word for such leaders, a term that gathered into one category western Indonesian migrants and civil servants, the citizens of distant nations, and indigenous teachers, scholars, and officials. They were all known as “foreigners” (B: *amber*)—and some were “big foreigners” (B: *amber beba*)—these men and women who had either originated from or sojourned in the Land of the Foreigners (B: *Sup Amber*). This foreign land could be the provincial university, it could be the regency bureaucracy, or it could be a place like England or Japan. A trader from Java, a social worker born on Biak, and I, the resident American anthropologist—we were all “female foreigners” (B: *bin amber*).

In a postcolonial setting like Biak, it is in some respects unsurprising to find a heightened concern with persons and objects defined as foreign. For some analysts, the effort to negotiate a relationship between the local and the foreign reflects the dilemmas of colonized and formerly colonized communities as they attempt to create a space for new nations in a global order where wealth, power, and influence are unevenly distributed. Partha Chatterjee has attacked on various fronts models of nationalism that take third-world movements as merely derivative of a universal process initiated in the West. In his analyses, the alien origins of the dominant models of the state and civil society become a factor with which nationalist thinkers must contend (1986; see also 1993). Similarly, Orlove and Bauer (1997a, b) have argued for an analytic approach to imports in Latin America that reads into the demand for foreign commodities the predicament of members of postcolonial nations, who strive to be indigenous and cosmopolitan, all at once. By obtaining goods defined as European or American, Latin American elites have long signaled their membership in a global community of nations; at

the same time, these societies set limits on how much foreignness one may acquire without losing one's national sense of self. Through the consumption of commodities, postcolonial elites contend with the problem that national self-consciousness rests on an ability to see one's culture and society from the perspective of an outsider. The need to prove oneself in the eyes of powerful foreigners translates into a desire to prove one's capacity to acquire foreign things.

Refracted through Orlove and Bauer's model, the valorization of the foreign one finds in Biak looks like a member of a larger species of postcolonial phenomena. But a closer acquaintance with the history of Indonesian nationalism places the dynamic in a different light. Nationalism in the Indies arose in response to a new alignment between the foreign and the local, well after the "natives" succumbed to the allure of European goods. Scholars have dated the birth of Indonesian nationalism to a period that saw the displacement on Java of the "mestizo" world that characterized the earlier colonial period (Onghokham 1978; Rush 1983; Taylor 1983; Tsuchiya 1986, 1990; Shiraishi 1990; see also Stoler 1989a, b). As an effect of policies that limited the immigration of European women to the Indies, the colony's nineteenth-century ruling class consisted of a mixed-race population of Indo-European planters and officers, Chinese merchants, and the native nobles through whom the Dutch nominally governed Java and the Outer Islands. This elite combined a taste for the fashions of Europe with "native" household arrangements and a predilection for indigenous displays of respect. In certain respects, this society reproduced an older tendency to domesticate foreign elements, which Wolters (1982, 1994) attributes to early Southeast Asian politics and associates with the region's flexible methods of reckoning kinship and substantive conceptions of power (see also Reid 1988). But at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, when new laws, policies, and technologies initiated fresh waves of migration from the metropole, a growing community of pure-blooded European planters, officials, and their families oversaw the "modernization" of the Indies. The tiny class of Dutch-speaking natives that was cultivated to serve in the expanding administration was confronted with novel communications from Europe and beyond.

Anderson ([1979] 1990) captures the complexity of this class's experience of modernity in his oft-cited discussion of Soetomo, an early nationalist, who copied his European teachers by learning not to copy. Forsaking the principles of Javanese pedagogy, which privileged imitation, Soetomo became a good Indonesian, acceding to a novel position that was neither European nor Javanese. In Siegel's (1997) treatment of the birth of Indonesian national consciousness, the interaction between the foreign and the national proves even more convoluted. In Malay-language novels published in the vernacular press, the emergence of a national subject involved the domestication of wider possibilities for identification. At the beginning of the period, native

authors were translators, who created original works at the same time that they reacted to messages from abroad. According to Siegel, the heady sense that they were being addressed as foreigners led these authors to insert commentary into their translations, assuming a new voice as one might don another's dress. These works were followed by novels that depicted the birth of a new form of hierarchy, in which nationalist leaders guaranteed the authenticity of one's newfound identity. The thrill of finding that one could pass as someone different gave way to the assurance that such an experience could only signal recognition of Indonesian-ness within oneself.

According to these analyses, the emergence of national consciousness in Indonesia entailed the end of a dynamic in which an elite gained prestige by incorporating alien attributes. To understand how the relationship to the outside world one finds on Biak diverges from this plot, one must consider more closely the New Order concept of *amber*. I first encountered the word *amber* in a nineteenth-century grammar written to acquaint missionaries with Mefoorsche, the name initially given to the dialect of Biak spoken by the natives among whom the first evangelists settled (see van Hasselt 1868: 35). Like “Wonggori!” (Crocodile!), “Amberi!” (Foreigner!) was used as an expletive, as something someone might shout in anger, fear, or surprise. No doubt this usage referred back to an era when the sultans of Tidore, who nominally governed the region, sent war fleets to attack recalcitrant villages (see Kamma 1947–49). By 1855, when the Dutch and German Protestants who founded New Guinea's first mission post first arrived in the region, the foreigners whom coastal groups encountered included Malay traders and the occasional European officer, conducting a tour of New Guinea's “unpacified” northern coastline. In their conversations with the missionaries and, presumably, among themselves, Biak speakers called these individuals *amber*. Later on, the category expanded to include not only the European evangelists but also the Ambonese Christians whom they imported to preach the Word. It was only after the mass conversions that swept the region in the early twentieth century that Biak teachers and evangelists became foreigners themselves.

But the idea that outsiders and their objects possessed a special potency that could be transmitted to others predates this shift in the field of reference of *amber*. Early reports describe how Papuan mothers would hold up small children in front of the missionaries' houses so they could absorb the power that supposedly emanated from their walls (Kamma 1972: 270). This practice finds an echo in Kamma's (1982) description of the voyages that Biak seafarers took to Tidore. Adventurers from the Raja Ampat Islands, the Bird's Head Peninsula, and what is now Biak-Numfor undertook long journeys in enormous canoes to deliver tribute to the sultan. Trading and raiding along the way, forging metal weapons to sell to or use on populations lacking this skill, they arrived in the Moluccas with a cargo of massoi bark, bird skins, and slaves, which they traded for beads, iron, porcelain, and cloth (see also

Kamma and Kooijman 1973). The travelers turned over their tribute to the sultan's vassals on the island of Halmahera. But they always proceeded the rest of the way to Tidore to pay homage at the sultan's court. Prostrating themselves before the throne, the Papuans claimed that they were absorbing *barak*, the Biak version of the Arabic word for the magical power that pervaded the sultan's person and surroundings. Along with imported objects, which the Papuans used as ceremonial wealth, and Tidoran titles, which they passed down to their descendants, the voyagers carried *barak* back to their communities. Upon disembarking, the travelers shook hands with their relatives, who then rubbed their own faces with the *barak* they had received.

The travelers stored the foreign goods they had acquired in their homes, to be used as bridewealth and on other ceremonial occasions. Like the *barak* they absorbed on their faces, the gifts given in life-cycle feasts were seen as protecting their recipients and endowing them with exceptional powers (see Kamma 1972: 270; 1976: 235; 1982: 62; compare Munn 1986: 105–128; Keane 1997a: 76). Tidore thus appeared to the Papuans as the source of valuables that served as evidence of a voyager's prowess, and of a potency that provided others with the ability to travel. This distant place provided the currency of value, in both of its functions: in the form of objects that reflected a person's past achievements, and in the form of an invisible substance that conveyed the capacity to act (compare Graeber 1996). In their talk about how children could be made into foreigners, New Order Biaks, as we will see, articulated assumptions about value and embodiment that bore the traces of this long history of commerce with distant centers of wealth and coercion. They still saw foreignness as an attribute of distant polities that individuals could incorporate by way of their exchanges with intimate others. Individuals like Philip Karma still seemed capable of absorbing the status, authority, and potential for violence associated with an alien state. Future leaders did this during the period of my fieldwork, not by identifying with foreign perspectives but by wearing foreign potency upon their skin.

The Biak-speaking Papuans, like their New Order descendants, were not up to something entirely unique in their treatment of foreign lands as a source of value and authority. As I mentioned above, historians have described a similar tendency to incorporate the foreign as a distinctive trait of precolonial Southeast Asia. The lowland polities of Java and mainland Southeast Asia had a long history of adopting outsiders' symbols, narratives, and objects; closer to Biak, Tidore's sister polity Ternate featured a ruler in the seventeenth century who called himself "Sultan Amsterdam" (Andaya 1993: 177). Smaller groups in the region's remote islands and highlands developed their own methods for appropriating foreign elements, often through shamanism and ceremonial exchange (see, for example, Atkinson 1989; Tsing 1993; McKinnon 1991; Hoskins 1993). Finding similar practices in Biak is somewhat ironic, given that western New Guinea is generally depicted as not

belonging to Southeast Asia (see, for example, Defert 1996: 22). But Southeast Asia is not the only place where such practices are evident; according to Helms (1988, 1993), “traditional” societies throughout the world have turned resources from afar into a pillar of local rule (see also Orlove and Bauer 1997a: 18).¹³ For analysts who emphasize the ideological underpinnings of all systems of sociality, it is only to be expected that people will represent the origins of value in an alienated form (Sangren 1993; see also Turner 1977). In a crude sense, such formulations are as old as *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, where Durkheim describes how what seems “alien” to “human social relationships” comes to stand for their source ([1912] 1965: 245–255). For the purposes of this study, however, it is not enough simply to note these ethnographic continuities. The valorization of the foreign is not simply a trait of Biak culture; it holds clues as to the historical processes by which what appears as culture is produced.

For it is critical to place depictions of Biak encounters with Tidore in their proper historical context. That entails considering two distinct settings: one in which Biak-speaking seafarers delivered tribute to Tidore, and another in which Biak speakers recounted narratives describing these trips. In both cases, one finds treatments of authority that stand in tension with the forms of hegemony held to prevail in the region at the time. Andaya describes the precolonial sultanates of Tidore and Ternate as forming a kind of family: an order whose members’ common interests and perceptions were expressed in shared myth (1993: 82). Yet the seafarers who delivered tribute to Tidore clearly diverged in their understandings of the gesture from the sultan, who interpreted their prostrated bodies as a sign of submission to his will. The sultan rewarded at least one group of Papuan visitors with permission to plunder his territories on their way home (Kamma 1982: 73). Arguably, for these “notorious pirates,” the seizing of foreign value began at the sultan’s court. If the travelers’ performances, from a local perspective, turned obeisance into theft, a similar mismatch in perspectives comes into view when one considers where Kamma (1982), on whom Andaya draws, received his information on the voyages. Recorded by missionaries at the end of the 1880s, the eyewitness reports Kamma cites depicted events that could have occurred no earlier than the start of the nineteenth century. Andaya used Kamma’s article as evidence of the nature of the precolonial order; yet it seems likely that Kamma’s account of the delivery of tribute refers to events that occurred well after the seventeenth century, when Tidore lost much of its autonomy to the Dutch.¹⁴ Where Andaya attributes reports of Tidoran aggression to the rapacious demands of the Moluccas’ new European rulers, Biak memories do not draw a sharp distinction between the violence and the value associated with Tidore. They date the delivery of tribute to the same period that featured attacks by the Tidoran war fleet, which increasingly sailed in the company of Dutch ships. Even in a period when regional poli-

tics were already adulterated by European forces, a period that saw the gradual emergence of “rationalized” forms of rule, some Biak speakers continued to turn what looked like an act of submission into a raid.

The foreign in Biak is a historical category. I mean this not merely in the sense that it is the product of these islands’ history on the frontier of powerful polities. Nor do I mean this merely in the sense that what is defined as foreign has expanded and shifted as Biaks’ relationships with outsiders have evolved. If the foreign has a history, it is because it is a category with historicity; it can only be grasped as the outcome and precondition of processes that unfold in time. No less than the nation, the foreign as it appears in this study is an object of indestructible longings, which aim at a goal that can never fully be reached. It is only by grasping the fetishistic character of this protean notion that we can understand how a dynamic with roots in a supposedly precolonial past could prove so central in relations with a post-colonial state.

Fetishism

Philip Karma’s vocabulary, his privileged knowledge, his position in the government—all could be read as proof of encounters in the Land of the Foreigners. Recalling Karma’s experiences in distant, possibly dangerous lands, these attributes pointed to the leader’s special capacities, the unusual powers that drew a crowd to hear his words. Even a pastor sent by the authorities to persuade Karma to call off the demonstration was struck by what one might call his charisma. Reportedly, the pastor returned from the meeting to tell friends and neighbors about the heavenly light that shone in Karma’s eyes. But Karma’s authority was not simply an effect of his personal talents. The appearance of charisma depends on what one might call protocols of visibility, paradigms invoked and reproduced in real-time events that define what is happening as the token of a type (Anderson [1985] 1990). Nor was his authority simply the outcome of objective conditions, such as the strength of the institutions he mentioned. The United Nations could only lend its force to Karma’s cause by virtue of a presumption that the orator and his followers shared—their expectation that words could serve not only as a vehicle of referential meaning but also as evidence of their speaker’s experiences in an absent scene. This presumption, and others, coalesced in an ideology of a sort analogous to that described by recent analysts of language ideologies, who have examined how particular, necessarily partial, understandings of the functions and capacities of language both shape and are shaped by linguistic interactions (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994; Kroskrity 2000; see also Silverstein 1976). Karma’s audience, like the audiences of the seafarers of old, partook of an ideology that, in an explicit and implicit fashion, turned what is foreign into a source of agency and an object of desire.

No less than the allure of imported porcelain, or the transmissible potency available in Tidore, Karma's authority depended on his followers' recognition. And this recognition, in turn, rested on his audience's participation in what I referred to above as a sociocultural economy—a system of production, representation, and exchange, encompassing an interconnected series of sites, locations in a geography at once imagined and concrete (Soja 1989). From distant courts and capitals to the intimate interior of a Biak home, value circulated through this geography in a particular form. The historical settings of the flag raising and the voyages to Tidore are not to be conflated. But both illustrate how one might apply an analytic concept that proves critical for exploring the economy that fostered the subversion of New Order nationality in Biak: that is, the fetishization of the foreign. The term “fetishism,” as opposed to “valorization,” or simply “belief,” allows me to capture a dynamic encountered on multiple levels: in the content of narratives, in formal patterns of narration, in institutions that materialize values, and in values that mediate appropriations of the material world. The concept proves useful in illuminating the workings of ideology, for it takes us beyond a perspective that approaches beliefs as misrepresentations of social reality to one that attends to how social reality is generated (see Marx [1867] 1967; see also Žižek 1994). In the same way that Marx argued that the fetishism of commodities was not simply a mystification but a constitutive element of the capitalist economy, I show in this work how the fetishization of the foreign was, in the early 1990s, constitutive of a particular sociocultural order. This order's “secret” resided less in the webs of meaning that mediated a cultural experience of the world than in the reproduction of the values people pursued.

The word “fetishism” has negative connotations, no doubt related to its long-standing deployment as an accusation leveled against “irrational” others. But there are historical reasons why the concept is suited to the analysis of cultural boundaries, as recent studies suggest (see Spyer 1998). These works draw inspiration from Pietz's (1985, 1987, 1988) genealogy of the fetish, which reveals how the concept, developed under the influence of Hegel ([1822] 1991), Marx ([1867] 1967) and Freud ([1922] 1963, [1927] 1963, [1938] 1963), originated in the sixteenth century. The word *fetisso* was first used in the settlements that sprang up along the coast of African Guinea as part of a new commerce in gold and slaves. The birthplace of the fetish, as Pietz describes it, has much in common with what might be called the birthplace of Biak's fetishization of the foreign. The trading zones of coastal Guinea and coastal New Guinea were both frontiers, properly belonging neither to the natives nor to those who confronted them from the West. But when I deploy the term “fetishism” to describe Biak modes of appropriation, it is with the goal of tracking a particular dynamic, not simply noting shared

traits, however significant they might be for an understanding of the genealogy of my analytic tools.

My analysis brings together divergent traditions of thought on the fetish. Like Pietz and Spyer, I am interested in a historically specific border phenomenon. Like Turner (1991) and Sangren (1991, 1993, 1995), who have worked from a particular reading of Marx, I am concerned with the ideological status of representations of the foreign as the outcome and precondition of the production of Biak “selves.” But my understanding of fetishism goes further than a sociological reading that finds the value of the fetish in a society’s productive power, in that I focus on the way in which the fetish’s paradoxical nature relates to its ideological-cum-historical role. Freud ([1922] 1963, [1927] 1963, [1938] 1963) presents the fetish as an ambivalent site of uncertain knowledge and incommensurate value (see also Derrida 1986: 211). One will recall that Freud interpreted the fetish as a substitute for the mother’s missing penis, embraced as a “compromise formation” that enabled the child simultaneously to acknowledge and deny the possibility of castration. The fetish reassures its adherents that nothing is missing, but it also reminds them that something might be, which means they need the fetish all the more. This inescapable cycle of desire and disavowal is what accounts for the border-straddling character of the fetish: the utopian dreams it incessantly rekindles, the way it works all the better because it fails.

For my purposes in this study, the structure of consciousness associated with the Freudian fetish is more relevant than its narrowly sexual content. In anthropological analyses, as in psychoanalysis, the fetish has functioned as the site of stubborn desires, which are reproduced through the very actions through which their bearers struggle to satisfy them. Consider Spyer’s (1997) discussion of the ideas and practices associated with sea wives, underwater spirits seen as crucial to the livelihood of pearl-diving villagers on the Indonesian island of Aru. Spyer depicts the sea wives as a fetish that mediates between local society and the global economy that encompasses it. The sea wives offer pearls that could liberate Aruese divers from debt, but they also demand repayment in store-bought plates and jewelry. Through these gifts, the divers reproduce their obligations to Sino-Indonesian shopkeepers and the allure of the watery women who perpetually promise to release them from their economic plight. In Sangren’s (1991) analysis of Chinese religion in Taiwan, Ma Tsu statues, covered with incense, appear to worshipers as an embodiment of magical power. But the residue is the trace not only of gifts of gratitude from those whom the goddess has helped but also of offerings burnt by others who seek her aid. Like the divers described by Spyer, these worshipers reproduce the very values that orient their practices through their recourse to a fetishized figure of power.

Taken as a moment in the reproduction of social relations and as a focus of

disavowal, the concept of fetishism encourages these analysts to attend to constitutive contradictions, rather than reducing social phenomena to some preexisting force. On an elementary level, the fetishistic quality of the foreign, as it orients Biak practice, becomes clear when one considers the ambivalent nature of the category *amber*. Recall the early appearance of the word in mission grammars as an expletive, “an exclamation or oath, esp. one that is obscene” (*American Heritage Dictionary* 1982: 477). As I noted, the word might have evoked the sporadic attacks Papuan communities suffered at the hands of powerful outsiders. Yet the referent for such an expletive is not a particular entity; it is a particular frame of mind: the wonder, shock, fear, or anger that led Biak speakers to shout “Amberi!” What is fetishized in the economy this study examines is not what Pietz (1985: 7) describes as an irreducibly material object, but an irreducibly inexpressible experience. But while it denotes the unfamiliar, unprecedented, startling, and excessive, *amber* is nonetheless a Biak word. Through this paradox, in which an utterance tames the very strangeness it seeks to name, *amber* participates in the undecidable structure of the fetish. The truly foreign would be unthinkable, utterly resistant to categorization. The foreign, in whatever language, is already domesticated, from the moment it enters discourse in local terms.

Far from residing only on this level of abstraction, this fetishistic structure is discernible in the concrete settings in which Biaks living under the New Order dealt with this regime that in so many ways impinged upon their lives. In the first half of this study, I examine different arenas in which the Land of the Foreigners, a category that includes spaces associated with the Indonesian nation-state, was reproduced as a fetishized source of value, pleasure, and authority. In chapter 2, I consider the production of intimacy and social identity in the context of Biak families. I show how marriage, in particular, provided a setting in which social action reproduced the foreignness that oriented desire. Through an exploration of the relations of debt and displacement that define the intimate core of Biak kinship, I examine how my consultants constituted alien realms as a reservoir of inexhaustible wealth, which they used to recall, if not resolve, the loss of sisters and daughters to other groups. In chapter 3, which covers magic, music, and dance, I show how these genres of performance represent alien persons, objects, and places as a source of startling yet pleasurable experiences. The most striking example is Biak *wor*, a song form whose poetic structure reproduces the surprise said to inspire every song. At the same time that *wor* offered its New Order-era composers a way of responding to strange and shocking events, it ensured that encounters that might otherwise have seemed banal were recurrently coded as new. Chapter 3 shows how the pursuit of pleasure fueled an aesthetic that stressed the foreignness of national settings and institutions. It sets the stage for chapter 4, which examines how the pursuit of authority fueled interpretive practices that recreated the untranslatability of Christian and na-

tional texts. Comparing the performances of three big foreigners, I show how their translations of the Bible and New Order government rhetoric created an image of the Land of the Foreigners as the origin of communications whose full significance remained forever opaque.

In all of these chapters, one finds men and women emphasizing characteristics of words and things that other actors have downplayed in order to convey the impression of commensurate values, orderly routines, and transparent, transmissible meanings. Their practices mobilized, in a fetishistic fashion, the potential for alienation inherent in every social gesture, every instance of exchange, thought, or speech. This is not to say that these practices somehow reflected a more truthful understanding of the nature of representation and the wider geographies in which my consultants lived. Under New Order conditions, the more Biaks pursued the powers of outsiders, the more outsiders' viewpoints eluded them. In their quest for recognition from a local audience, they obscured a force that was omnipresent in the regency, in the form of national institutions and apparatuses that encouraged them to see themselves through very different eyes.

Thus one finds in the social arenas depicted in these three chapters a dynamic not unlike that evident in nationalist discourse: one in which the pursuit of an object proves incessant, for the quest reproduces the very conditions that prevent satisfaction. But this fetishism is associated with different visions of agency and personhood than those associated with membership in a modern nation-state. Unlike New Order nationality, as Pemberton and others have described it, foreignness was envisioned as occupying not the soul of a person, but rather the surface. Those who sought authority by virtue of their access to the Land of the Foreigners faced a different contradiction from that faced by those who claimed to express their innermost cultural selves. In their pursuit of recognition, the actors I consider in this study faced what Stewart describes as "the paradox of willed possession" (1995: 36; see also Keane 1997b; Du Bois 1993). They had to present their words, gestures, and objects as evidence of something other than their own intentions, and yet they had to be able to take credit for conveying them. They had to adhere to expectations regarding authoritative action that required the seat of agency to appear as displaced. In light of this dilemma, it is no accident that Biaks saw the skin as the surface that absorbed the invisible potency of foreign objects and places, as we shall see. As an intimate interface between the locality of an interior and an alien, outside world, this hybrid surface allowed Biaks to make absence present, as it were—to lay claim to the potency of arenas like the bureaucracy, while maintaining the alien character of such sources of power.

One can do more than just infer this conception of agency as a form of "practical consciousness" evident in quotidian interactions (Kroskrity 2000: 19). One finds a vivid figure of Biak fetishism and its contradictions in narra-

tives and practices associated with Koreri, the name given to the messianic movement that has recurred throughout the region's colonial and postcolonial history. Kamma (1972) includes incidents from migrant communities in the Bird's Head and the Raja Ampat Islands, as well as the islands now included in Biak-Numfor and nearby Yapen-Waropen, when he documents 45 outbreaks of Koreri occurring over 112 years. In each case, followers gathered to welcome Manarmakeri, literally "The Itchy Old Man," the Biak ancestor believed to be the secret origin of foreign wealth and power. The Itchy Old Man embodies the disavowal at the heart of Biak sociality—the simultaneous recognition and denial that the foreign is a local creation. Yet this Old Man is by no means unambiguously local. The source of Manarmakeri's power is his itching skin, a repugnant substance that is the effect of an action—scratching—that literally reproduces its own cause. But the myth does more than just epitomize the logic of a sociocultural economy based on the fetishization of the foreign; it also marks the limits of this economy. Which takes us to a final site of inquiry, the utopian moment when the foreign, the local, and the national coincide.

Utopia

As most Papuan nationalists can tell you, the Morning Star depicted on the flag that flew over Biak City and other towns in the province refers to a central episode in the myth of Manarmakeri. The Itchy Old Man, it is said, gained the secret to creating foreign wealth and potency from this celestial body, whom he caught stealing palm wine from his tree. During my fieldwork in the early 1990s, older people hesitated to sing songs or tell stories associated with Manarmakeri, for fear of being labeled separatists by the Indonesian military. Even though the commanding officers I met seemed far less versed in local prophecy than some Biaks imagined they were, my friends' anxieties were not utterly unfounded. The Koreri movement of 1939–43, which was the most violent and tenacious in the long series of colonial-era uprisings, featured leaders who turned the messianic expectations associated with the myth in an explicitly political direction. The woman who started the outbreak, a healer named Angganeta Menufandu, appeared to her supporters as New Guinea's new queen. During the period of extended colonial rule that followed World War II, Biaks caught with Koreri paraphernalia such as loin clothes, flags, and magic sticks sometimes landed in jail (Galis 1946; de Bruyn 1948). Whereas under Dutch rule officials associated Koreri with the specter of Indonesian nationalism, under Indonesian rule, they associated the movement with the Free Papua Organization (I: Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or OPM). And, indeed, some of the guerrillas who hid in Biak's forested interior during the 1970s reportedly gained

strength and courage by singing and dancing to Koreri songs (Kapissa 1980). Papuan nationalists claim Koreri as part of a broadly shared Papuan heritage of resistance (Sharp with Kaisiëpo 1994). Analysts have noted that, in the 1980s, nationalist intellectuals made a special effort to revive interest in the myth (Osborne 1985: 99; see also Defert 1996: 361).

In his speeches at the flag raising, Philip Karma never mentioned Koreri, although listeners accustomed to contemporary prophets' tendency to employ Christian terms may well have read millennial references into his messages. Still, it is possible to identify loose parallels between the demonstration and the World War II-era uprising. Both movements began through the initiative of leaders with experience outside the islands. Both movements occurred following the collapse of seemingly permanent regimes—the New Order, following the Asian financial crisis, and the Dutch colonial state, following the Indies' invasion by Japan. Both movements engaged followers in long bouts of singing, dancing, and praying, in growing encampments that leaders swore not to disband until the longed-for transformation occurred. The followers of both movements saw this transformation as foreshadowed by the arrival of messages and persons from abroad. Both movements began peacefully and grew increasingly more aggressive. In both cases, followers went on a violent rampage after the massacres that brought each uprising to an end. This is not to say that the flag raising failed to express recognizably nationalist aspirations. It is simply to point out what may have lain behind the protesters' remarkable courage: the fact that many envisioned international acknowledgement of the Papuan nation as leading to an eschatological transformation. The raising of the flag was supposed to elicit the arrival of powerful outsiders and engage the force of the divine.

Scholars of millenarianism have tended to classify Koreri as a "cargo cult": an organized effort to obtain, through ritualized methods, the commodities and authority possessed by outsiders (Lanternari 1963; Worsley 1968; Burridge 1960, 1969). As recent studies have suggested, however, the various movements that have classically fallen under this rubric are considerably more complicated in their origins and aspirations than the label would lead one to expect (Lindstrom 1990, 1993; Kaplan 1995; Tuzin 1997; Lattas 1998; see also Clastres [1975] 1995).¹⁵ In lay person's terms, one can describe Koreri as a utopia: an imagined state of pleasure and perfection. Biaks past and present have captured the essence of Koreri, a Biak word that means "We Shed Our Skin," with the Biak phrase "K'an do mob oser," "We eat in one place." "Eating in one place. Everything we ask for will happen," explained Domingus Warseren, a descendant of Biromor, one of the Koreri prophets discussed in chapter 6. He described how Biromor provided a sign of the coming transformation by standing on the shore and summoning a fish for his astonished followers to eat. The author of a long manuscript on the World War II uprising elaborated on Domingus's observation that the

phrase also meant, “We will become a nation.” The participants wanted to “hold the power themselves. Sort of like nationalism. They didn’t have any education; they didn’t have any bureaucratic skills. But with the messiah, all that would change.” Justina Wakwar, who was present at Angganeta’s encampment, stressed another component of the dream. The dancers were after “Koreri, which is promised in the Bible. The living and the dead will be as one.” Transforming a local topography and redrawing a global geography of power, the return of Manarmakeri was seen as obviating the need to toil or travel; no longer would Biaks have to raid distant places to earn recognition or simply to survive. But to speak of the earning of recognition in the context of Koreri is somewhat misleading, for with the return of Manarmakeri, there would no longer be any differences between Biaks and foreigners or among Biaks themselves. With the “opening” of Koreri, believers would participate in the recursive impulse epitomized in the Itchy Old Man’s condition, with Manarmakeri’s interminable cycle of suffering transformed into his followers’ interminable cycle of pleasure. The distinctions generated by the fetishistic pursuit of the foreign would collapse as the faithful entered the unending state of “eating in one place.”

It is not only in lay persons’ terms that one can call Koreri a utopia. Louis Marin (1992) has described the emergence of the notion of utopia at the dawn of European modernity (see also 1984). Finding its paradigm as a fictive geography in More’s book by the name, this new notion of utopia arose in conjunction with a new configuration of concepts, engaging such terms as “horizon,” “limit,” and “frontier.” In such phrases as the “limitless horizon,” words that once designated the boundaries of vision and power came to express dreams of infinity. Evoking both “no place” and “the happy place,” utopia, in Marin’s words, “names the limit, the gap between two frontiers or two continents, the old and the new worlds.” Koreri, as an imagined space and state, diverges in important respects from the phenomenon analyzed by Marin. Koreri is not located in a fictive site beyond the horizon; it is anticipated as arising on Biak when the foreign and the local converge. Nevertheless, borrowing from Marin’s description of utopia, Koreri could be described as deploying “a strange nominal figure of the frontier (horizon, limit), that is to say, a name that would constitute a distance, a gap neither before nor after affirmation, but ‘in between’ them” (1992: 411).¹⁶ Evoking frontiers that are not only spatial but also conceptual, Koreri arises in between the two scales of sociality, Biak and Indonesian, that intersect in this study, each oriented to an object that can only be approached after the fashion of a mathematical limit: the foreign or the national as such. Moreover, to borrow from Marin yet again, Koreri “is not an image or a representation . . . it is the monogram of the art of pure fiction on all these boundaries and frontiers that human thought sketches out so as to achieve a knowledge shared by several human beings, that human will marks and displaces to

become a collective power and to accomplish itself in common action” (ibid.: 412–13). Marin draws on Kant for the opposition between the image and the monogram, the former being the “product of the empirical faculty of reproductive imagination,” the latter “a product of pure a priori imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible” (ibid.: 412). Marin’s definition is useful in evoking the way Koreri figuratively articulates the logic of social action in Biak, along with a particular way of envisioning the wider world.

To the degree that Koreri does not simply figure the fictive origin of social differences but also promises an eschatological transformation that will collapse the social world, this Biak utopia is also an apocalypse, in Bull’s (1999) sense of the term. Bull argues that all societies, in setting up the dichotomies that define social life and human thought, must contend with the contradiction presented by the indeterminate, those forms of impurity that both mediate and undermine conceptual distinctions. Unlike sacrifice, which commemorates the destruction of the indeterminate, or taboo, which regulates its presence, apocalyptic practice projects into the future an eschatological moment in which indeterminacy is reincorporated into everyday life. Bull’s model accounts for many characteristics of Biak prophecy, above all the way that the “scapegoat,” an old man excluded from his community, becomes the “apocalyptic hero” who will someday return (1999: 76).¹⁷ But Koreri, as we will see, is not simply the byproduct of a universal predilection for dualism; one must approach the movement by way of the pragmatics of discourse, and not simply the universal structures of the mind. In this study, as the previous sections would suggest, I set Koreri in the context of what Keane (1997a) refers to as the “risks of representation”—those vicissitudes that stem from the fact that all identities are the product of recognition, a process dependent on media whose qualities render them vulnerable to subversion and loss. As Marin’s formulations suggest, and the relationship between prophecy and day-to-day practice in Biak makes clear, these risks never appear transparently to social actors; the limits of representation are only discernible in figural form.

What concerns me in the second half of this book, where I take up the problem of Koreri, is not merely the apocalyptic, utopian character of the movement but also its recurrence under particular historical conditions. The challenge is not simply to draw connections between myth and prophecy, and the dilemmas of Biak sociality; it is to chart the conditions that have led Biaks to anticipate Manarmakeri’s return. Given that Koreri promises reunion with the origin of foreignness, it should not be surprising to find that the apocalyptic longings associated with Manarmakeri have arisen at times when colonial and postcolonial authorities have pressured Biaks to see themselves through outsiders’ eyes. Koreri is not simply a particular solution to a universal problem; it has provided, more importantly, a figure of the limit

associated with a particular form of fetishistic desire. One finds a dynamic in Biak that is akin to that depicted by Abraham and Torok (1986, 1994), who account for the resilience of a historically specific form of fetishism, in which the other whom one might otherwise “introject”—that is, internalize as a point of reference for viewing one’s identity—becomes “incorporated” as an alien body within the self. Rather than consciously perceiving themselves as they would appear to a beloved parent or sibling, Abraham and Torok’s patients became their loved ones, possessed by thoughts and impulses that were not their own. To borrow Abraham and Torok’s terms for a purpose unlike that for which they were coined, one could say that through Biaks’ collective social practices, the foreign has been incorporated; it has not been introjected. The foreign has remained the object of a “contradictory and therefore utopian hope” that one will gain access to pleasures that others have promised, yet never fully allowed one to enjoy (1994: 116). At moments when Biaks have suddenly seen themselves from the perspective of outsiders, and thus discovered something new within their own society and culture, the startling closure of the gap between self and other has elicited a utopian reaction. In the place of the emergence of new conceptions of identity, believers have awaited the miracle of eating in one place.

Through Korero, the force of national institutions and economies has been acknowledged, but only through narratives and practices that have projected their effects across an eschatological horizon. In chapter 5, I begin my exploration of how Biaks’ conversion to national-cultural forms of subjectivity is both figured and deferred with a close reading of the myth of Manarmakeri. My analysis, which sets the myth in the context of narratives recounting the emergence of a modern Christian subject, reveals how the narrative provides an origin and endpoint for the fetishistic practices described in chapters 2, 3, and 4. I show how the conditions allowing for the adoption of new identities are registered within the myth, at the same time that their realization is postponed. In chapter 6, I consider the history of Korero uprisings in the context of the forces of modernization that worked to integrate north-coastal New Guinea more fully into the Indies. At the same time that I place these uprisings in a broader historical context, I show why it makes sense to think of Korero as more than merely a colonial invention (cf. Lindstrom 1993; Kaplan 1995). I focus on the changes that led up to the 1939–43 movement, exploring how missionary and government attempts to produce a docile Papuan subject set the stage for Manarmakeri’s return. In chapter 7, I return to the recent New Order past to examine how men and women of different classes and generations responded to official efforts to revive Biak tradition. Here, I show how the recognition of outsiders, under conditions that seemed to herald Biaks’ integration into the nation, had mildly millennial effects.

In each of these failed apocalypses, these evocations of utopia, one sees an acknowledgment of what Biak “foreigners” had to deny in order to sustain

the alien basis of their authority—the degree to which national and global institutions and economies thoroughly penetrated local lives. But one also sees a figure—a monogram, in Marin’s sense—of the dilemmas of sociality in Biak. Not just an effect of physical distances, the foreignness described in this study at once conjures and obscures what would be truly alien: the presence of a difference that could never be anticipated, never named. Refracted through these forms of domestication, one can discern something like that which “bears and haunts” discourse in every historical and ethnographic setting (Derrida 1976). But that does not mean that the dynamics I depict are any less the product of contingencies born of a particular era, of particular places and times.

Envoi: Between Awakenings

Beginning with an ethnographic analysis of practices observed in the early 1990s, ending with an investigation of the utopian crossings of Koreri that runs from the nineteenth century back to the recent past, *Raiding the Land of the Foreigners* explores the limits of the nation by way of what one might call the history of a particular New Order present. In Pemberton’s study of the politics of culture at the height of the New Order’s hegemony, he confronts the impossibility of fixing a definitive origin for the culturalist discourses and practices that lent legitimacy to the regime. He selects the relocation of the palace of the sultan of Surakarta, through Dutch East India Company intervention, as exemplary of the “seminal contradiction” that sustained New Order national-cultural longings. This choice, he admits, finds its rationale in “the conditions of New Order cultural discourse, conditions demanding that origins be repeatedly recovered” (1994: 25). The event is critical due to its elaboration in subsequent historical moments, and not because of its status as the intrinsic beginning of colonial hegemony, as such. Although the focus of this study differs in significant ways—not least in its relation to the New Order regime—any attempt to fix an origin for the fetishization of the foreign runs up against a similar historiographical dilemma. As Freud concluded, not only is it impossible to ascertain the reality of the trauma that gives rise to the fetish; reality is in some sense beside the point, given a dynamic that produces its own phantasmatic origin ([1918] 1963). In the case of Biak, this phantasmatic origin might be imagined as the trauma of first contact across a cultural boundary. Yet, as this study shows, such a boundary is only conceivable as the product of the very practices in which the fetishization of the foreign can be discerned.

This is not to argue that the fetishistic logic depicted in this study is in some sense eternal. It clearly reflects Biak’s position in a regional and global geography that has taken on new configurations over time. It emerged in

dialogue with colonial and postcolonial policies and practices, reflecting the problematic position of New Guinea in the Indies and the Indonesian nation-state. Although there is no way to fix an origin for the dynamic that informs them, one can, with some imaginative effort, date the emergence of the general configuration of practices this study describes. In New Order Biak, people not only valorized unprecedented experiences and alien things, turning signs of disruption into signifiers of identity; they also valorized alien narratives. The most celebrated of these narratives was that contained in Christian texts. If one were asked to name the year when the Christian Bible began to appear as a translation of local myth, a logical candidate would be 1908, when communities on the islands that make up today's Biak-Numfor began to embrace Christianity. This evangelical victory occurred during the mass conversions that swept northwestern New Guinea in the years following the establishment of a permanent government presence in the region. The Dutch Protestant missionaries who officiated over this "awakening," after fifty years of preaching to the Papuans more or less in vain, were quite aware of the risk that the Biaks who converted saw their action as inaugurating a messianic transformation. And yet, during this period when colonial steamships and soldiers finally reached the region, they welcomed any indication of the breaking of a Christian dawn.

Like the awakening of Papuan Biak that has followed the fall of the New Order, the awakening of Christian Biak involved the efforts of an individual who mediated between local society and a wider arena. Philip Karma's predecessor, in this regard, was a native evangelist named Petrus Kafiar, a former slave who became a Christian after mission leaders bought his freedom from some local warriors who had captured him in a raid. Raised in an Ambonese family, educated on Java, versed in the niceties of Scripture and fluent in Dutch and Malay, Petrus Kafiar appeared in mission publications as a model for the "saved" Papuan to come. But Petrus Kafiar was also a foreigner *avant la lettre*. His ability to persuade so many Biaks to convert to Christianity rested in part on the efforts of individuals on the islands who lured him home in order to claim him as their kin.

The story told in this book unfolds in the interval between the awakenings led by Petrus Kafiar and Philip Karma. Although I argue that the fetishistic dynamic on which I focus has proven remarkably resilient, that does not mean that I take it as a permanent fixture of social life on Biak; its fate in post-New Order Indonesia remains to be seen. Yet the particular ways in which New Order Biaks played upon the limits of national identity bear witness to a dynamic that has persisted across major periods of transformation. To catch a first glimpse of the basis of this persistence, let us begin at the dawn of an era, with the rivalry and longing that led to Petrus Kafiar's return.