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ARTICLE

# "Come to Java": Colonial Tourism and the Fragile Illusion of an "Island Paradise"

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## Abstract

The proliferation of mountain resorts and the establishment of tourist itineraries in late colonial Indonesia reflected and reaffirmed colonial hierarchies of race, class, and gender. In the mild mountain climate, Europeans visited hotels reminiscent of European architectural styles, consumed European meals and enjoyed flora and fauna that reminded them of home. The location of these resorts was inspired by nearby natural, cultural, and ethnographic "wonders" that further served to emphasise colonial superiority. As spaces where pseudo-scientific concerns over race, civilisation, and the environment coalesced to legitimise colonial ideology, these mountain resorts were crucial elements in the development of a regional and national tourist network. The infrastructure needed to access these resorts and the identification of tourist destinations in the colonial era laid the foundation for many of Indonesia's contemporary tourist draws. Furthermore, thanks to a targeted international advertising campaign, these sites drew visitors both from within the Netherlands Indies as well from throughout colonial Asia and Oceania. Finally, these tourist networks traversed colonial (national) boundaries and played an important role in the articulation and experience of a shared colonial mindset. This history illustrates the extent to which contemporary tourism is profoundly shaped by the colonial discourse of power and difference.

**Keywords:** Java (Colonial Indonesia); Tourism; Mountain Resorts; Colonial Contact Zone; Everyday Resistance

## Introduction

In September 1925, the director of the popular upscale Hotel Villa Dolce in Garut, located in the mountains of western Java, made a macabre discovery. When the Australian tourist Mrs. Mary Macfie did not show up for breakfast one morning, the director went to check on his guest in her room. He opened the door to find Mrs. Macfie's deceased body, her neck and arms covered in deep cuts; a vicious murder scene in a tropical paradise.

Dutch colonial authorities interrogated the indigenous servants of Hotel Villa Dolce but initially ruled out the prospect of an indigenous culprit. Their colonial subjects were imagined as docile servants, content to provide a serene oasis for Western travellers to Java's mountains. Instead, it was widely speculated that Mrs. Macfie had been murdered by a fellow Westerner in an act of passionate vengeance, perhaps even by an assassin. The colonial press was therefore shocked when valuables belonging to the victim were found in a nearby well, turning suspicion toward an indigenous killer. The ensuing court case revealed that indigenous servants had attacked Mrs. Macfie out of anger and resentment

over their Dutch bosses' maltreatment and meagre pay. Murdering and robbing a wealthy guest would financially benefit the perpetrators in the short term while irreparably blemishing the Hotel Villa Dolce's reputation for the indefinite future.[1]

Indeed, the murder of Mrs. Macfie shattered the image of Java's mountain resorts as secluded tourist refuges—a view disseminated widely first to Dutch colonials and then on an increasingly international scale. Java's mountain hotels were depicted as havens for Western bodies to recuperate from the tropical climate, enjoy modern comforts, explore Java's natural and cultural wonders, and observe the "primitive" colonised Other. These alleged sanctuaries were deemed essential in cultivating, strengthening, and reproducing European identities, and played an important role in legitimising Dutch rule and maintaining colonial hierarchies.[2] This romanticisation of mountain resorts deliberately obscured the harsh reality of colonialism, even as the whole enterprise was built upon indigenous exploitation.

The death of an international tourist, however, made it shockingly clear that Westerners could not simply remove themselves from the exploitative nature of empire in Java's highlands (see figure 1). To use Mary Louise Pratt's turn of phrase, these were "contact zones," characterised by "conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict."[3] While violent encounters like the murder of Mrs. Macfie were rare, mountain resorts were discursive sites in which the Javanese increasingly contested colonial hierarchies of power in various ways.[4] In doing so, they exposed the inherent injustice within and fallacy of Dutch constructions of local tourism.

Analysing tourism in colonial Java as a contact zone, this article traces the evolution of meanings and values associated with mountain resorts and Western tourist experiences, starting from their imperial beginnings in the early nineteenth century through the 1930s. The development of tourism in colonial Java has received scant attention from historians, especially compared to neighbouring Bali.[5] While the focus on Bali makes sense from a contemporary perspective, the roots of tourism in Java lie deeper and were arguably more profoundly intertwined with the colonial project.[6] As this article demonstrates, tourism in Java's mountains was an intrinsic product and tool of Dutch imperialism,

[1] The murder was widely covered in the colonial press: *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* (*BN*), 21 September 1925; *BN*, 11 August 1926; *BN*, 12 August 1926; *BN*, 13 August 1926; *BN*, 16 August 1926; *BN*, 17 August 1926; *BN*, 21 October 1926; *BN*, 28 October 1926; *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (*NDNI*), 30 September 1925; *NDNI*, 27 September 1925; *NDNI*, 28 November 1925; *NDNI*, 26 February 1926. It is possible that the indigenous servants were framed; the case is presented here as reported in the colonial and vernacular press.

[2] Since the Dutch referred to themselves as both Dutch and European interchangeably in publications and official and private documents, I do the same. This tendency is reflected in the legal categorisation of the inhabitants of the Dutch Indies, which distinguished between European, Foreign Orientals (mostly Chinese), and indigenous peoples. C. Fasseur, "Cornerstone and Stumbling Block: Racial Classification and the Late Colonial State in Indonesia," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies, 1880-1942*, ed. R. B. Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994): 31–57.

[3] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992): 6–7.

[4] This article is primary focused on Java, which is home to several large ethnic groups, the primary ones being the Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, and Betawi (Malay). The term *Javanese* can refer to inhabitants of the island of Java as well as ethnic Javanese. To avoid confusion, I have tried to make these different designators as straightforward and context-dependent as possible.

[5] R. B. Cribb, "International Tourism in Java, 1900–1930," *South East Asia Research* 3, no. 2 (September 1995): 193–204; Achmad Sunjayadi, "Culturele identiteit en de bevordering van het Nederlandsch-Indische toerisme," *Neerlandica Wratislaviensia* 22 (2013): 27–39; Susie Protschky, *Images of the Tropics: Environment and Visual Culture in Colonial Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Kris Alexanderson, *Subversive Seas: Anticolonial Networks across the Twentieth-Century Dutch Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 126–32. The leading work on Bali is Adrian Vickers, *Bali, A Paradise Created* (London: Penguin, 1989).

[6] Kathleen M. Adams, "Revisiting 'Wonderful Indonesia': Tourism, Economy, and Society," in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (London: Routledge, 2018): 197–207.

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**Figure 1.** A European woman in the garden of Hotel Villa Dolce in Garut (ca. 1930), a few years after the tragic murder of Mrs. Campbell-Macfie. Source: Leiden University Library, Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) 171704.

utilised to forge colonial identities and hierarchies, and legitimise them on a global scale. It was also a site of indigenous resistance to those efforts. Mrs. Macfie's murder, though an extreme example, was emblematic of the changes taking place during the last decades of colonial rule, as nationalist ideology and explicit critiques of colonialism spread throughout colonial Indonesia. Understanding tourism's longstanding role in the colonial imaginary, Indonesians challenged Dutch discourse about the island's mountain resorts as part of that nationalist impulse.

## Mountain Tourism and the Dutch Colonial Project

Situated on a 717 metre high plateau and surrounded by volcanoes, the Sundanese town of Garut in the Priangan mountains remained fairly isolated for most of the nineteenth century. By the twentieth, it had emerged as a premier tourist destination. Garut's rising resort status was due to various factors, including opening the colony to private economic initiatives in 1870 and the 1889 construction of a railroad offshoot that brought the region within a day's travel from major cities like Batavia (Jakarta) and Bandung. Now possible to visit the area for a weekend getaway or longer stay, several modern European-style hotels as well as a renowned sanatorium appeared within a decade, leading prominent colonial newspaper the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* to proclaim, "[Garut] has a great future ahead of it."[7] Indeed, Dutch colonials flocked to Garut to enjoy the cool and pleasant mountain climate, take in scenic views, and visit sulphureous hot springs, mud pools, geysers,

[7] *BN*, 2 September 1889; *BN*, 4 August 1888. Also see: *De Locomotief*, 25 August 1896.

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fumaroles, crystal clear lakes, active volcanic craters, and even a small Hindu temple. By 1926, a guidebook claimed that Garut was the "most visited place in Java for excursions," ranked "foremost among the mountain resorts in Java."[8] As home to "several of the best equipped and most luxurious mountain hotels in the island," the town gained international repute, even welcoming Charlie Chaplin twice in the 1930s.[9] This remarkable guest notwithstanding, Garut provides an illustrative example of the many resort towns that popped up throughout Java's mountains at the turn of the twentieth century.[10] Yet the origins and significance of this boom in mountain tourism had roots deep in the nineteenth century, firmly embedded in the expansion of the Dutch colonial state (see map 1).

The development of mountain retreats on Java coincided with the implementation of Dutch authority on the island. In the wake of the brutal Java War (1825–1830), the Dutch sought to solidify their political control by employing a new mode of colonial exploitation. Known as the Cultivation System (*Kultuurstelsel*), this included the extensive appropriation of Javanese labour, cash crops, and services—measures regarded as necessary to make the colonial endeavour profitable.[11] To that end, the colonial army established a garrison system that stationed military forces in every major city on the island as well as in nearby mountains to allow soldiers who fell ill in the hot and humid climate to convalesce. From the 1830s to the 1890s, mountain towns offered hospitals and infirmaries to help soldiers and other European citizens recover from tropical diseases and return to their lowland garrisons and homes in good health. Troops stationed in Batavia recuperated in Priangan mountain towns such as Sindanglaya, Sukabumi, and Cimahi; those in Semarang or Central Java recovered in Ungaran, Platungan, and Salatiga; and those in Surabaya found solace in Malang or Tosari.[12]

The Cultivation System also initiated a building frenzy throughout Java, constructing storehouses, port facilities, irrigation systems, roads, and bridges to enable access to new offices, residences, and outstations for colonial administrators. This infrastructural investment was fundamental to exerting and preserving political and economic control.[13] As part of this initiative, *pasanggrahan*—rest houses for travellers—were built along all major roads by Javanese *corvée* labour to serve as outstations for civil servants touring the island. Their syncretic architectural design combined Javanese and European construction and décor, making these buildings clear symbols of colonial authority to rulers and subjects alike.[14] This widespread network of outstations reached deep into the island's interior and mountains, where those at higher altitudes quickly became popular destinations for Dutch civil servants, administrators, and officials seeking respite from tropical discomforts. According to an 1898 survey, at least forty-three *pasanggrahan* were used regularly for the recuperation of European bodies.[15]

[8] Official Tourist Bureau (OTB; *Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer*), *Come to Java* (Weltevreden: OTB, 1926), 165.

[9] "Special Issue: Garoet and Environs," *Tourism in Netherland India* 9, no. 4 (1934); Charlie Chaplin, *A Comedian Sees the World*, ed. Lisa Stein Haven (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2014): 128-129 and 184-186.

[10] M. A. J. Kelling, "Het Hotelwezen in Ned. Indië," *De Indische Gids* 51, no. 1 (1929): 737-759.

[11] R. E. Elson, *Village Java under the Cultivation System, 1830–1870* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994).

[12] J. H. F. Kohlbrugge, "Sanatoria in Nederlandsch-Indië," *Verslagen der Algemeene Vergaderingen van het Indisch Genootschap*, November 28, 1899, 243–72; N. P. van der Stok, "Het Klimaat van Insulinde en Onze Reconvalescenten-Inrichtingen," *IG* 8, no. 2 (1886): 1418–1500.

[13] Elson, *Village Java*, 84–85.

[14] Arnout van der Meer, *Performing Power: Cultural Hegemony, Identity, and Resistance in Colonial Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021): 39–40.

[15] Kohlburgge, "Sanatoria in Nederlandsch-Indië," 243–72; J. H. F. Kohlbrugge, "Bronnen en badplaatsen in Nederl.-Indië, die tot herstel van gezondheid door Inlanders en Europeanen gebruikt worden," *IG* 23, no. 2 (1901): 883–90; Travellers Official Information Bureau of the Netherlands Indies (TOIB), *Pasanggrahans in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: 1929–1930).

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**Map 1.** Tourist map of Java. Source: Travellers Official Information Bureau of the Netherlands Indies. *Java* (Batavia: De Unie, 1939).

These early mountain retreats, while symbols of colonial authority, were not curated as European spaces. During most of the nineteenth century, the prevailing belief in the Netherlands Indies was rooted in the Hippocratic tradition, which emphasised the adaptability of the human constitution.[16] In Java, that meant that Europeans could acclimatise to the tropical environment by following indigenous customs such as dressing lightly, consuming small portions of easily digestible food, working during the cooler hours of the day, and bathing frequently in cold water. It was estimated that the process of acclimatisation—known as "seasoning"—would take about a year.[17] Medical arguments for acculturation supported a conscious policy of Javanisation of colonial rule reflected in deference etiquette, status symbols, and sartorial and language hierarchies, which impacted aspects of everyday life. Indigenous hygienic practices, food preparation and consumption, physical activities, and organisation of daily routines thus shaped Europeans' sojourns in Java's mountains.[18]

However, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, the character of Dutch colonial authority and society changed significantly and with it, the place of mountain resorts in the colonial imaginary. Mounting critiques of the Cultivation System—some moral but mostly economic—led to the system's abolition in 1870 and the gradual opening of the Netherlands Indies' economy to private commercial interests.[19] As a result, Java's European population grew rapidly, increasing from only 43,900 Europeans in 1860 (68.6 percent men) to 91,100 (61.1 percent men) by 1900, and 291,500 (52.6 percent men) by 1940.[20] Like soldiers and civil servants, these newcomers sought reprieve in the cooler mountain climate, and hotels catering to civilians sprang up throughout Java around the turn of the century.[21]

Supported by private initiatives and occasional subsidies from the colonial government, some of these hotels were established in well-known garrison towns such as Sukabumi while others grew out of existing *pasanggrahan*. This was the case in Tosari in the Tengger mountains, where in 1875 colonial authorities sold the local *pasanggrahan* to private interests who reconstructed it as a popular sanatorium, reserving six rooms for civil servants in order to receive government subsidies.[22] Unlike large hill stations such as Darjeeling or Simla in British India, Dalat in French Indo-China, or Baguio in the American Philippines, these mountain hotels were significantly smaller retreats established near Java's major towns. Meant as sites of convalescence and rejuvenation—a practice tried and tested for decades by the colonial army—a unique tourist infrastructure developed in the island's mountainous interior, a network aligned in the intention to create an environmental refuge from both the tropical climate and Java's major cities and population (see map 1).

[16] Hans Pols, "Notes from Batavia, the Europeans' Graveyard: The Nineteenth-Century Debate on Acclimatization in the Dutch East Indies," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 67, no. 1 (January 2012): 128–31.

[17] Carl Waitz, *Onderrigtingen en Voorschriften, om de Gewone Ziekten van Europeanen in Heete Gewesten te Ontgaan, en Zich aldaar Spoedig aan het Klimaat te Gewennen, Bijzonder met Betrekking tot Nederlandsch Indië* (Amsterdam: Sulpke, 1829).

[18] Meer, van der, *Performing Power*, 19–47.

[19] Elson, *Village Java*, 148–52.

[20] These statistics reflect the number of Europeans in the entirety of the Netherlands Indies, but the vast majority lived on Java. A. van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indië: Iets over ontstaan en groei," *Indonesië* 5 (1951): 97–121, 314–41, 481–507.

[21] For the proliferation of hotels and mountain resorts during the last decades of colonial rule: Kelling, "Het Hotelwezen in Ned.Indië," 737-759; "Special Issue: Hotel Number," *Tourism in Netherland India* 12, no. 4 (1937).

[22] Kohlburgge, "Sanatoria in Nederlandsch-Indië," 243–72; *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*, 16 May 1935.

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In addition, in 1901 colonial authorities introduced the Ethical Policy—the Dutch equivalent of other European civilising missions. The Ethical Policy sought to shift justifications for Dutch imperial ambitions away from the right of conquest and toward the benevolence of colonial rule. This included a progressive agenda with investments in education, agriculture, economic development, and overall progress.[23] Moreover, unlike the patently exploitative Cultivation System, it required obfuscating the cruel realities of empire. Tourism played a significant yet underappreciated role in broadcasting this discursive shift. Dutch colonial authorities launched the Official Tourist Bureau (OTB) in 1908 and extended an open invitation for international tourists to—as the title of the agency's most published guidebook proclaimed—*Come to Java*.[24] In a notable reversal of nineteenth-century policy aimed at keeping prying eyes out, colonial officials threw the doors wide open, eager to influence international opinion about the character of Dutch rule and safeguard its imperial claims.[25] This was prompted in part by the encroachment of great powers on Southeast Asia and the fear of losing the Indies like Spain lost the Philippines in 1898. The Ethical Policy, the opening of the Netherlands Indies, and the creation of the OTB were all responses to assuage these anxieties.[26]

While Dutch colonials living on the island continued to comprise the vast majority of tourists, international travellers accepted the invitation to vacation on Java, and the quality and quantity of mountain resorts expanded rapidly in the early twentieth century.[27] This development was so successful that by 1937 the OTB claimed with significant pride that no metropolis on Java was without a satellite mountain resort "within one- or two-hours motor ride of the center of the city."[28] This was in large part due to private initiatives, the most impressive and illustrative of which was the formation of the Netherlands Indies Hotel Association (*Nederlandsch Indische Hotel Vereeniging*, NIHV) in February 1920.[29] The NIHV owned four of the most prestigious mountain hotels in Java and two in the city of Yogyakarta. The association thus owned a pair of hotels in each of Java's largest tourist destinations: Garut, the Tengger mountains, and Yogyakarta (see figure 2). All NIHV hotels underwent major renovation and modernisation and, to facilitate travel from the nearest train stations, the NIHV also operated its own car rental company.[30] As a consequence of these investments, the NIHV did not immediately turn a profit, but it did attract impressive clientele. Between 1924 and 1926, the association's four mountain hotels received an average of 36,250 annual visitors. Considering that Java's European community was approximately 192,571 people in 1930, this was a notable achievement.[31] The NIHV also actively promoted its establishments in the United

[23] Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten: vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel, 1877-1942* (Utrecht: Hes Publishers, 1981); Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950* (Leiden: KITLV, 2009).

[24] Founded as the *Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer* or Official Tourist Bureau (OTB) in 1908, the association changed its Dutch name in 1926 and its English name in 1928 to avoid being misinterpreted as a travel agency: *Officiëele Vereenging voor Toeristenverkeer in Nederlandsch-Indië* or Travellers Official Information Bureau of the Netherlands Indies (TOIB). I use *Official Tourist Bureau* (OTB) throughout the text for consistency.

[25] In 1911, foreigners were granted free reign to travel in Java and Madura, extended to all Dutch colonial islands in 1916. Cribb, "International Tourism in Java," 195.

[26] Kees van Dijk, *The Netherlands Indies and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Leiden: Brill, 2007): 1-44.

[27] Kelling, "Het Hotelwezen in Ned.Indië," 737-759.

[28] "Special Issue: Hotel Number," *Tourism in Netherland India* 12, no. 4 (1937).

[29] The NIHV was not the only association of its kind. In 1911, an Association of Hoteliers in the Netherlands Indies (ABHINI) was founded, but did not solely focus on mountain resorts or tourist destinations. The State Railways also operated four hotels. *Preanger Bode*, 6 April 1911; *BN*, 23 September 1911; *NDNI*, 8 August 1925.

[30] Kelling, "Het Hotelwezen in Ned.Indië," 737-759; *BN*, 2 December 1920; *NDNI*, 8 January 1920; *De Indische Courant*, 28 September 1922.

[31] *Volkstelling 1930, Deel VI: Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1933), 8.

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**Figure 2.** Advertisement for the Netherlands Indies Hotel Association (NIHV). Source: Come to Java (Weltevreden: OTB, 1926): 160.

States and Australia. By offering the benefits of booking vacation itineraries through a single company, together with the OTB these efforts generated about 3,200 foreign tourists annually during the late 1920s.[32]

Whether attracting domestic Dutch colonial tourists or international visitors, the development of mountain tourism was a crucial tool of Dutch empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a pervasive component of Dutch colonial experience, trips to mountain resorts were instrumental to the maintenance of colonial and racial hierarchies in the Netherlands Indies. The decision to open the island to international visitors enabled Dutch authorities to utilise these hierarchies to "sell their empire" on a global scale.[33] In service to these objectives, Dutch colonisers promoted an image of tranquillity and benevolent rule in Java's mountains—one which the Javanese would ultimately reveal as an illusion within an oppressive contact zone.

## A European Refuge in Java's Mountains

While the increasing European population on the island and colonial efforts to gain international prestige impacted the expansion of Java's mountain tourism, perhaps the most significant factor was shifting views and newfound concerns about racial and cultural purity. During the second half of the nineteenth century, biological racism—a pseudoscience of inherent racial differences—challenged theories of acclimatisation and acculturation, now arguing that it was impossible for European bodies to adjust to tropical

[32] Cribb, "International Tourism in Java," 193–204; *BN*, 8 April 1927; *BN*, 9 January 1932; *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*, 7 September 1932.

[33] Thomas G. August, *The Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890–1940* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).

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environments. Instead, Europeans in the tropics could expect physical, cultural, and moral degeneration if they did not maintain a European lifestyle and limit their stay in the colonies.[34]

Physician and anthropologist Jacob Herman Friedrich Kohlbrugge was one of the most vocal advocates of climatic determinism in colonial Indonesia and, tellingly, the longtime physician of Tosari's mountain sanatorium (1892–1906). As he could not discern any physiological differences between European and indigenous peoples, he was convinced that perceived disparities in intellectual and cultural development resulted from external factors— foremost, the tropical climate. In classic Orientalist fashion, Kohlbrugge contrasted Western progress, innovation, freedom, reason, science, and physical strength with Eastern tranquillity, collectivism, despotism, emotion, mental confusion, and physical weakness, arguing that a simple change in temperature explained the difference between the childlike colonised and mature Europeans.[35] This meant that, contrary to prior beliefs, it was impossible for European (white) bodies to acclimatise to the tropics. Kohlbrugge warned that permanent European settlement on Java would generate a process of familial degeneration and encouraged repatriation as the lone option for Europeans to avoid this catastrophic fate. However, while he concluded, "We cannot turn the West into the East and the hot East into the cool West," he reasoned that regular visits to the cooler mountain climates could temporarily stave off degeneration and extend Europeans' time in the tropics.[36]

By the early twentieth century, Kohlbrugge's views on climatic determinism and evolutionary differences had become predominant, changing Dutch colonisers' understanding of their situation on Java.[37] In 1896, these concerns prompted the colonial government's exploration of the Yang Plateau in eastern Java as a potential site for a large hill station after British Indian example. Promoted by one of its officials, J. L. van Gennep, as an ideal site for a European mountain town complete with sanatorium, insane asylum, hotel, retirement community, and agricultural colony for the European poor, effectively removing any signs of European physical weakness—the sick, infirm, elderly, and poor—from colonial society to preserve European prestige.[38] The colonial authorities embraced the project's objectives, but it was hesitant to take on the financial responsibility of constructing a full hill station, choosing instead to offer private investors subsidies to establish small mountain resorts throughout Java.[39] This decision shaped the unique Dutch colonial response to the perceived dual threat of the tropical climate and allegedly degenerative influences of indigenous society during the last decades of colonial rule, increasing emphasis on ideas of racial superiority and inferiority. A columnist for a popular weekly,

[34] Annemarie De Knecht-van Eekelen, "The Debate about Acclimatization in the Dutch East Indies (1840–1860)," *Medical History* 44, no. S20 (January 2000): 70–85; Pols, "Notes from Batavia," 120–48.

[35] J. H. F. Kohlbrugge, *Blikken in het zieleleven van den Javaan en zijner overheerschers* (Leiden: Brill, 1907): 47–52, 90–101; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[36] Kohlbrugge, *Blikken in het zieleleven*, 90, 111–12, 117–18.

[37] Kohlbrugge's views were widely held: N. P. van der Stok, "Het klimaat van Insulinde en onze reconvalescenten-inrichtingen," *IG* 8, no. 2 (1886): 1418-1500; J. L. van Gennep, *De hoogvlakte van het Jang-gebergte op Java, de meest geschikte plaats voor de oprichting van een sanatorium, een krankzinnigengesticht en een Europeesche landbouwkolonie* (Semarang: G. C. T. Van Dorp & Co, 1895); J. Groneman, "Naar het Jang-gebergte," *De Locomotief*, 24 and 25 November 1897 and 2, 6, and 9 December 1897. Also see: Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900-1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995): 118-156.

[38] J. L. van Gennep, "De wenschelijkheid tot exploitatie van de hoogvlakte van het Jang-gebergte in Oost-Java." *IG* 18, no. 1 (1896): 611-644.

[39] The following provides an overview of the work of the government's committee: C. L. van der Burg, "J. L. van Gennep. Opmerkingen naar aanleiding van Dr. J. H. F. Kohlbrugge's rapport enz.," *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 17 (1900): 336-338.

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for instance, argued that the difference between Javanese and European levels of civilisation could be explained by ten degrees Celsius: "Take them away and man invents railways, wireless telegraphs, canned cauliflower, and crystal palaces."[40]

These concerns became all the more pressing as the number of European women in the colony increased, rising from 31.4 percent of the European population in 1860 to 38.9 percent in 1900. By 1940 gender parity was within reach, with women comprising 47.4 percent of the European population on Java.[41] This raised the crucial question of how to maintain colonial hierarchies of race, class, and gender in a purportedly degenerative racial, cultural, and climatological environment. In this context, mountain resorts played an important role in, as Ann Stoler puts it, "making empire respectable" and maintain European prestige.[42] It was in Java's highlands that European bodies, especially those of women and children, found protection from the tropical climate as well as from the degenerative influences of urban Javanese. To that end, hotels were transformed into ostensibly European spaces where guests enjoyed European architecture, food, sports, activities, music, literature, and company. By protecting the European physical body, mentality, and cultural identity, mountain resorts became crucial in the evolving colonial project.

Indeed, as the purported means of preventing climatological damage to European bodies, mountain resorts constituted a quintessential experience of colonial Dutch life. Regular visits to the cooler climate—reflected in popular expressions like "getting a cold nose," "going up" or "sleeping under a blanket"—were believed to counteract the harm of tropical exposure, ranging from mere neurasthenia to complete physical and cultural degeneration. Those who could afford it routinely frequented mountain retreats on the weekends, while the introduction of longer school vacations created the first peak tourist seasons in which prices were high and vacancies were few.[43] Resort spaces were so significant in the colonial imaginary that Europeans who were unable to afford mountain excursions were thought to be at risk of pining away and slowly decaying, physically and mentally. To prevent such damage to European prestige, wealthy colonials founded charitable associations that organised mountain camps for poor children. There, they would be well-fed, enjoy the benefits of the cool air, and flourish under the tender care of affluent benefactors. Some associations even acquired permanent sites near Java's major cities, such as Batavia's "vacation colony" in Sukabumi or Semarang's in Salatiga.[44] These social programs reinforced the notion of the mountains as a European safe haven in the midst of a degenerative and dangerous tropical world.

As such, a visit to the mountains was thought to bring about a rejuvenation of body and soul—that is, a restoration of Europeanness (see figure 3). Household guides and periodicals imparted on the colonial Dutch the necessity and virtues of mountain retreats.[45] Tourists disseminated the notion of rejuvenation widely, claiming, as one parent did following a trip to Sindanglaya, "My whole family recovered, the kids gained a healthy color and ate like wolves; I hardly recognized them."[46] Another tourist described the effects of

[40] Carlo [pseud.], *Weekblad voor Indië* (*WvI*), 11 March 1906.

[41] Van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," 97–121, 314–41, 481–507.

[42] Ann L. Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (November 1989): 634–60.

[43] *Preanger Bode*, 23 April 1923.

[44] *De Reflector*, 30 June 1917; *Het Indische Leven* (IL), 24 July 1920.

[45] A small selection: Ganesa [Pseudonym], "Tosari," *WvI* 4, no. 23, 29 September 1907, 456-60; "Sindanglaya en omstreken," *WvI* 7, no. 17, 14 August 1910, 262-265; "Het sanatorium "Garoet" te Ngamplang," *WvI* 13, no. 35, 10 December 1916, 822-824; "Hotel "Beau Sejour" te Lembang," *IL* 1, no. 4, 13 September 1919, 71; "De vacantiekolonie te Salatiga," *IL* 1, no. 49, 24 July 1920, 974; "Mooi Brastagi," *De Revue* 1, no. 46, 29 October 1921; "Grand Hotel Selabatoe," *IL* 6, no. 14, 15 November 1924.

[46] *Java-Bode*, September 11, 1888.

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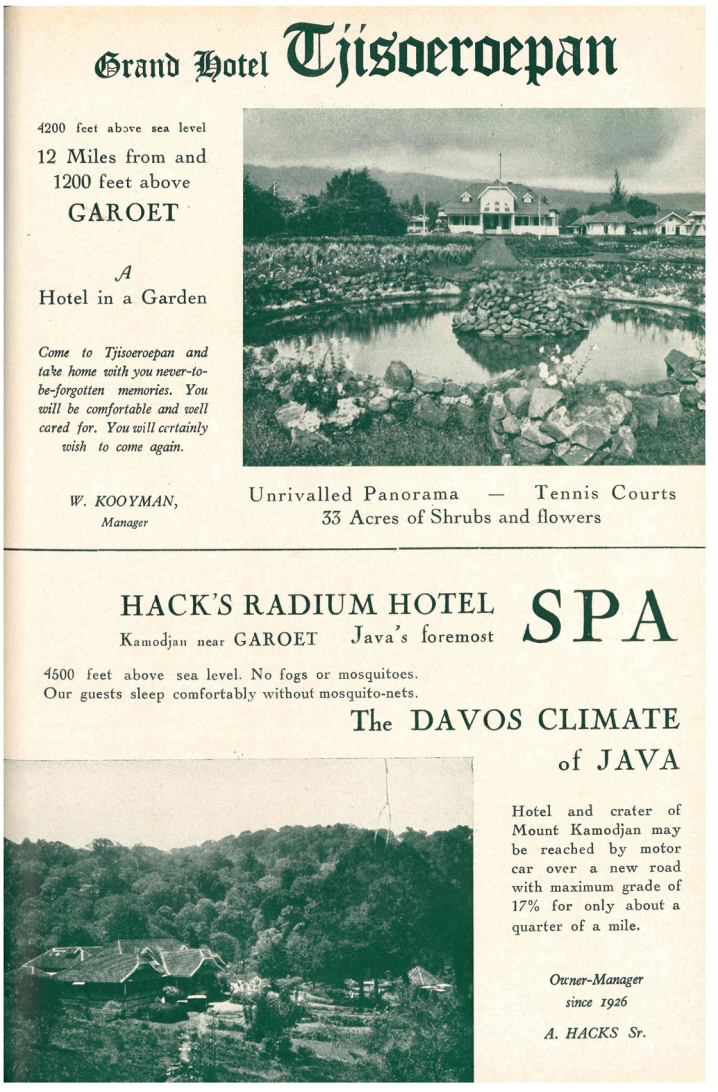


**Figure 3.** Advertisements for hotels in Garut. Source: *Tourism in Netherlands India* 9, no. 34 (1936).

"going up" as follows: "The atmosphere in mountain stations over 4,000 ft. is delightful, with a sparkling quality to the air which acts like champagne on the jaded spirits. The early mornings are so bracing! Everything is so different from life in the hot towns: waking up under warm blankets, icy cold washing water, a marvelous appetite, a glorious feeling of health and a desire to exert oneself!"[47] Moreover, accounts highlighting hotels as areas "where mothers let their kids run free while fathers . . . stay behind in a house in disarray" not only signalled colonial society's gendered division of labour, but also the view that mountain resorts were safe spaces for unaccompanied European women and children.[48] Implicit in this framework of security was a cultivated separation from the damaging influence of the colonised—also a significant aspect of restoring one's Europeanness.

[47] "The Mountain Resorts of Java," *Java Gazette* 1, no. 7 (January 1933): 4.
[48] "Indische Films: Vacantie," *WvI* 14, 1917, 426; *Preanger Bode*, 23 April 1923.

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Envisaged as European refuges, mountain resorts deliberately conjured associations with the colonial metropole. The bungalows at Tosari's sanitorium were designed as Swiss chalets, the sanatorium in Garut as a German castle, and Hotel Nongkodjadjar in the Tengger mountains as an English country mansion. Many resorts referenced metropolitan culture by choosing European names, such as Hotel Beau Séjour (Nice Stay) and Hotel Villa Dolce (Sweet Villa)—an ironic designation for the site of Mrs. Macfie's murder.[49] Interior design and layouts similarly evoked European sentiments with restaurants, tearooms, conversation or common rooms, music rooms, billiards or recreation rooms, and libraries. These spaces had wooden panelling, wallpaper, curtains, furniture with thick upholstery, and sometimes even a Dutch hearth decorated with Delftware tiles to recreate the intimacy of a winter evening in the Netherlands.[50] Outdoor facilities served to revitalise Europeans' physical constitution as well as provide opportunities for bourgeois social interactions. Guests enjoyed tennis and golf courts, swimming pools, horse riding, and hiking trails. The landscaping enhanced the idyll of a Dutch enclave, boasting European fruit, vegetable, and flower gardens. The Dutch were also fascinated by the presence of Cemara trees, indigenous to Oceania and Southeast Asia, which reminded many of Germany's Black Forest.[51] Some resorts even created rolling meadows resembling those of the Netherlands, complete with imported cattle.[52]

Finally, mountain sanctuaries were imagined as modern spaces made possible by modern technology, engineering, and science. The expansion of railways and road networks around the turn of the twentieth century were vital in opening up Java's interior, especially its mountainous regions. Yet while trains connected Java's largest towns and reduced the time of long-distance travel, it was the car that truly enabled Dutch colonials to take to the mountains; as one colonial newspaper advertisement put it, "Ford climbs to the clouds."[53] In addition, the introduction of technology like running water, sewage systems, electricity, and the telegraph (and later telephone) provided modern comforts in these isolated areas.[54] Conveniently ignoring the indigenous communities already there, such technologies made these spaces accessible, inhabitable, and civilised within the colonial imagination, buttressing Europeans' self-perception as modern in contrast to the allegedly backward Javanese.

Of course, this idealised notion of the mountain resort was based on racist ideologies of climatic determinism and Western superiority. Foremost, however, it was built on illusion regarding the ability to not only recreate a proper European haven on Java, but also to do so in tranquil separation from the majority of indigenous inhabitants. The colonial Dutch were aware that they still shared these spaces with indigenous servants and labourers—without whom they could not reside in the highlands. In the Dutch colonial mind, the indigenous people living in Java's mountains were considered as more authentic and docile as compared to the indigenous inhabitants of the island's more populous lowlands and cities. For instance, a Dutch official described the Tenggerese of eastern Java as "as the custodians of the convivial, friendly, hospitable, peaceful and noble in the old Javanese race."[55] Unadulterated by modern vices and social and political sentiments,

[49] H. Borel, "Een Droom. Uit Tosari," *De Gids* 63 (1889): 342; *"Indie" Geillustreerd Weekblad*, 31 October 1917, 488–89.

[50] H. J. Mook, *Gids voor Tosari en het Tenggergebergte* (Firma P. Out: Koog aan de Zaan, 1916); *Bromo-Hotel Tosari* (Surabaya: Van Dorp & Co., 1925); *WvI*, 12 February 1911; *WvI*, 10 December 1916; *D'Oriënt*, 3 October 1936.

[51] Intriguingly, Cemara trees are casuarina not pines, which make up Germany's Black Forest.

[52] Borel, "Een Droom," 344; *WvI*, 10 December 1916; J. F. van Bemmelen, *Guide to the Dutch East Indies* (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1897), 76–77, 88–89; "The Mountain Resorts of Java," 1–4.

[53] *D'Oriënt*, May 10, 1924.

[54] *NDNI*, 6 May 1913; *NDNI*, 7 May 1913; *NDNI*, 8 May 1913; *De Zweep*, 14 October 1922; *De Zweep*, 21 October 1922.

[55] E. Jasper, *Tengger en de Tenggereezen* (Weltevreden: G. Kolff & Co., 1928): 8.

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the OTB's publications similarly characterised natives as "Mark Twain's 'Happy man,' who makes a cent a day more than he must spend."[56] These inventive portrayals allowed the Dutch to envision mountain retreats as safe and secluded spaces that reaffirmed their own civilisational superiority. Employing the colonised Other as one of the local attractions served to further emphasise colonial superiority and was thus fundamental to the Dutch imperial imaginary. As the murder of Mrs. Macfie so crudely illustrated, the relationship between coloniser and colonised in Java's mountains was not as mutually acquiescent as the Dutch seemed to think.

## "Pearl of the Orient": Ethnic Display as a Tool of Empire

It is no coincidence that many of Java's mountain hotels were situated near ruins from the Hindu-Buddhist era in the island's history, villages of seemingly primitive and peaceful hill peoples, and often uncultivated stretches of nature. Popular excursion destinations included volcanic craters and crater lakes in the Priangan mountains, the Dieng Plateau with its Hindu temple complex near Wonosobo, and the majestic Bromo volcano neighbouring Tosari. The indigenous people living in the mountains were often idealised as "noble savages," distinct from the increasingly more organised, nationalist, and rebellious Indonesians in the lowlands.[57] Here, the Dutch could be guardians of a more pristine environment and way of life, as wardens of a historical heritage that the lowland people could neither understand nor appreciate.

Indeed, the OTB was very intentional about promoting this aspect of travel on Java. As a nonprofit association supervised by the colonial government and supported by banks, hotels, railroads, and shipping companies, the agency's purpose was to generate tourism by "making known to the world at large the manifold wonders of Insulinde [an endearing Dutch term for the Indonesian archipelago]."[58] To that end, the OTB launched an extraordinary publicity campaign that included guidebooks, pamphlets, pocket maps, postcards, a free and accessible photography collection, and exhibits at travel shows and world's and colonial fairs.[59] These materials portrayed Java as a picturesque tropical paradise replete with both natural splendour and opportunities to explore native life, arts, and culture.[60] With grandiose titles such as *The Mecca for Tourists*, *Pearl of the Orient*, *The Wonderland*, *The Ideal Tropical Island*, *The Garden of the East*, and *The Land of Eternal Summer*, the OTB found numerous ways to highlight Java's exotic allure (see figure 4).[61]

[56] "Special Issue: Glimpses of Native Life," *Tourism in Netherlands Indies* 13, no. 1 (1938).

[57] "Special Issue: Glimpses of Native Life".

[58] TOIB, *The Netherland Indies: A Jubilee Album Issued to Commemorate the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the TOIB of Netherland India* (Batavia: TOIB, 1933).

[59] The OTB hired photographer Thilly Weissenborn for its publications. Anne Maxwell, "Thilly Weissenborn: Photographer of the Netherlands East Indies," *History of Photography* 44, no. 2–3 (July 2020): 128–50. Some of the agency's stakeholders produced complementary guidebooks, such as the aforementioned NIHV, the State Railways, and large shipping companies like the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM). The Java Motor Club created maps and road signs in collaboration with the OTB. *Garoet en Omstreken: Een opwekking tot toerisme en een handleiding voor toeristen* (Batavia: N.V. Drukkerijen Ruygrok & Co.,1921); *Grand Hotel Sanatorium Garoet (Java)* (Batavia, 1925); *Tropical Holland: The Archipelago of Eternal Summer; Information for Travellers to the Dutch East Indies* (Amsterdam: KPM, 1925); *Visit Java: Information for Travellers* (Amsterdam: KPM, 1925); *Automobielkaart van de Java Motor Club van Java en Madeoera* (Toptgraphische Inrichting, 1918); *Elfde Jaarverslag van de Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer over 1918* (Batavia: Javasche Boekhandel & Drukkerij, 1919).

[60] Cribb, "International Tourism in Java," 193–204.

[61] OTB, *Java: The Land of Eternal Summer; The Mecca for Tourists* (Batavia: Kolff, 1925); TOIB, *Java, the Ideal Tourist Resort* (Amsterdam: J. H. de Bussy, 1930); *Trips in the Isle of Java: Useful Information for Travellers in Java* (Weltevreden: Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer, 1912); OTB, *Java, the Tropical Garden of Eden* (Batavia: OTB, YEAR); *Java the Wonderland* (Amsterdam: 1910).

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**Figure 4.** *Java, The Land of Eternal Summer*, picture postcard, The Official Tourist Bureau (ca. 1920s). Private collection.

Due to this campaign, the number of international visitors from Australia, the United States, Britain, France, and their respective Asian colonies increased rapidly on the eve of the First World War, growing from a few hundred to more than four thousand annually, and returned to prewar levels in the 1920s.[62] While these numbers may seem low, they reflect that international travel was a privilege for global elites—the lucky few who could spare time and money to tour the world.[63] More importantly, from the OTB's

[62] These statistics can be found in the OTB's annual reports and Cribb, "International Tourism in Java," 197.

[63] Starting in the 1920s, international tourists often visited Java as part of an around-the-world tour, staying four to five days as a stopover to Bali, which became the latest tropical paradise. For instance, in 1921 the shipping company Raymond & Whitcomb brought one thousand tourists to Java for five days. *Dertiende Jaarverslag van de Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer over 1920* (Batavia: Javasche Boekhandel & Drukkerij, 1921); Mikko Toivanen, "Java on the Way around the World: European Travellers in the Dutch East Indies and the Transnational Politics of Imperial Knowledge Management, 1850–1870," *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 134:3 (2019), 47–71.

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perspective these wealthy visitors offered both a welcome economic injection into the colony and opinions that carried significant geopolitical weight.

The OTB pitched Java as a wild yet safe space where one could experience the "romance of the east" while enjoying the "comfort of the west." In the island's mountains, they could explore natural and historical wonders and experience indigenous culture and society, all while relishing "up-to-date hotels luxuriously equipped for [visitors'] comfort and health," excellent cosmopolitan cuisine, and multilingual staff.[64] Intended to legitimise the Dutch imperial project to foreign visitors, tropes idealising tropical scenery and ethnic culture were mainstays of the OTB campaign, playing into fantasies of what paradise ought to be and intentionally disguising empire's essential cruelty. As Susie Protschky argues, the "image of a fertile, tranquil countryside governed quietly and from afar by a benevolent force was central to Dutch claims to sovereignty over Indies landscapes."[65]

To that end, the OTB directed visitors away from coastal cities and into the island's mountainous interior, suggesting that was where tourists would find "authentic natives." Modern Javanese who worked in offices and factories, drove cars, took the train, read newspapers, and joined political associations were conspicuously absent from OTB propaganda. Rather, promotional materials depicted an image of indigenous Javanese wearing traditional clothes, creating traditional arts and crafts, and enjoying traditional *gamelan* and *wayang* performances. In other words, tourists were assured they would encounter colonised inhabitants who were quiet, calm, content, and safe, free from the "conflicts and political passions that shake other lands."[66] A trip to Java's mountains would thus enable visitors to experience a tropical paradise and observe local culture in a way that imparted the altruism of Dutch colonial rule.

## Trouble in Paradise: Mountain Tourism as a Contact Zone and Javanese Resistance

The startling murder of Mrs. Macfie in Garut momentarily broke the spell of the Dutch colonial imaginary. News of the dreadful event dominated headlines in the colonial press for weeks and the subsequent trial was reported extensively throughout the year.[67] Violent incidents were not uncommon in colonial Java, but the murder of a Western tourist shattered the illusion of peace and order in the island's mountain resorts. Critical reports in the Australian press questioned Dutch competency and Java's safety as a holiday destination. In one article, an Australian woman described her visit as a terrifying experience: "The people swarm like ants on a rubbish heap. Each one carries a kris and knows more ways of getting rid of human life than you or I ever dreamed of." She declared, "[I] did not feel safe till I have been a year out of Java."[68] Concerned about the risk to international tourism, the OTB tried to contain the damage and dispel the notion that the Javanese were deceitful and dangerous. The agency claimed that the unfortunate murder of Mrs. Macfie was an aberration, insisting, "there is no country on the globe which is safer to travel in."[69] However, while the OTB went to great pains

[64] TOIB, *The Romance of the East, the Comfort of the West in Java, Sumatra, Bali* (Batavia: TOIB, 1931).

[65] Protschky, *Images of the Tropics*, 147.

[66] "Special Issue: Glimpses of Native Life".

[67] Nine years later, the "Garoet murder case" also served as the premise of a detective novel—certainly a rarity in Dutch colonial literature: Jan Palet [Anita Rambonnet], *De Moord in het Berghotel. Een Indische Speurders-Roman* (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1934); Doris Jedamski, "The Vanishing-Act of Sherlock Holmes in Indonesia's National Awakening," Doris Jedamski (ed.) *Chewing over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2009): 349-379.

[68] "Silent Javanese: Traveller's Theory of Mrs. Macfie's Murder," *Sun*, September 26, 1925.

[69] "The Garoet Tragedy," *Inter-Ocean* 6, no. 10 (October 1925): 687–88.

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**Figure 5.** The "contact zone": Dutch children on ponies escorted by two Javanese servants. KITLV, 55046.

to preserve the myth of harmonious and benevolent Dutch rule, for a moment the façade had dropped.

The murder case revealed that mountain resorts, and tourism more generally, were not exempt from the everyday tensions of colonialism. Indeed, despite the cultivated illusion of secluded and peaceful retreats, these were contact zones, fraught with the conflict, inequalities, and coercion inherent to colonialism. Mrs. Macfie's murder signalled what many Javanese had understood all along: that this illusion, while powerful, was ultimately fragile (see figure 5). Moreover, it indicates that colonial exploitation was not passively endured, but resisted in a variety of ways.

While the OTB touted the benevolence of colonial policies and international tourism, discussions in the vernacular press show that few Javanese were convinced. A contributor to the Sundanese newspaper *Sipatahoenan* captured the sentiment of the colonised, exclaiming that Java was no tropical paradise nor a "garden of the east"—a reference to Eliza's Scidmore's famous travel book of the same name. It was, rather, a "zoo" in which its inhabitants were displayed for the amusement and entertainment of outsiders.[70] The zoo analogy highlighted the inherent inequality and nonconsensual nature of the colonial relationship, where the colonised ("captive animals") were disciplined by and exploited for the benefit of the colonisers ("zookeepers"). Like zoo animals, the Javanese were stripped of their agency and reduced to a curated ethnic panorama that, in the eyes of tourists, fulfilled "a preconception of what a paradise ought to be."[71] Moreover, as other articles pointed out, this context economically benefited the coloniser and harmed the colonised. *Kaoem Moeda* (The Youth), for instance, reported that the local

[70] *Sipatahoenan*, 21 May 1929; *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche Pers* (*IPO*), no. 47 (1929); Eliza R. Scidmore, *Java: The Garden of the East* (New York: Century Co., 1897).

[71] OTB, *Java: The Land of Eternal Summer*.

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population around a lake near Garut lost income from boat rentals and fishing after a European opened a guesthouse that also rented boats to tourists.[72]

Alongside concerns about social and economic exploitation, critiques in the vernacular press also focused on the distorted reality that Dutch authorities presented to tourists. In an issue of *Soeara Pemoeda Mataram* (Mataram Youth Voice), a newspaper published by the *Jong Java* (Young Java) and *Pemoeda Indonesia* (Indonesian Youth) youth associations, an author playfully subverted colonial discourse by satirising an international tourist's impressions of Yogyakarta in Java's cultural heartland. Using the pseudonym J. A. van Echt—an ingenious wordplay meaning "real Javanese" in Dutch—the traveller is impressed with the broad asphalt roads, neat sidewalks, modern streetlights, lush parks, and beautiful houses in the spacious and hygienic European garden town.[73] He tours the nearby temples of Mendut and Borobudur and enjoys the scenic *sawah* (rice paddies) before taking the express train to Batavia to reboard an American cruise ship. Here, the author flips the script, observing that most indigenous readers, accustomed to "smelly mud pools, pitch-black streets at night, dusty roads, and stagnant rivers," would not recognise Van Echt's description of their hometown. Asking why colonial authorities are "beautifying European neighbourhoods instead of improving indigenous ones," he argues that it is because "tourists don't visit these areas and Europeans don't live there." Sarcastically, the "real Javanese" notes that this uneven misrepresentation is supposedly in the best interests of the colonised, as it attracts tourism. Exposing the fallacy of colonial portrayals, the author delivers a scathing critique, asserting that the Javanese must keep up appearances so that tourists don't see that Yogyakarta—and by extension Dutch colonialism—is like "a white polished marble tomb from the outside, adorned with statues of angels and silver asphodels, but inside a stinking mess."[74]

That the colonial imaginary misrepresented reality was, of course, not completely lost on tourists. Visitors to Java's mountain resorts could see that these were far from exclusive spaces for Westerners; the façade hardly hid the presence of indigenous people and society. As one traveller noted, although these spaces might appear European, the "resemblance is only fleeting, for the tropics will out, if only in the colour of the natives' skins!"[75] Indeed, the tourist experience in Java's mountains depended on the labour and service of the colonial Other. Most resorts were established near existing indigenous villages, which provided hotels and sanatoriums with necessary menial labour and provisions. These servants were omnipresent, handling cleaning, laundry, cooking, dishwashing, meal service, gardening, luggage, and maintenance duties, among others. Europeans performed some of these tasks—for instance, that of chef—but most were considered too lowly and humiliating and relegated to indigenous labourers. Thus, contact with colonised servants constituted the bulk of tourists' daily interactions.

That such interactions were likely rife with disrespect is apparent in an OTB booklet offering useful Malay vocabulary for English-speaking tourists (see figure 6). Consisting mostly of commands—i.e., "Be quiet," "Be quick," "Bring me [generally an alcoholic beverage]," "Don't," "I want," and "Go away!"—the OTB's recommendations clearly conveyed the routine contempt directed toward the colonised, also extending that right to Western visitors. Phrases such as, "Look out," "One of the tires is flat," "That is enough," "Wait for an answer," and "Go slowly" also suggest to the tourist that the indigenous population is careless, lazy, inattentive, and reckless. Likewise, the now derogatory Malay term for

[72] *Kaoem Moeda*, 9 April 1919; *IPO*, no. 15 (1919).

[73] The pseudonym also cleverly incorporates the Dutch practice of using multiple initials and a preposition for the surname.

[74] J. A. van Echt [pseud.], "Plaatselijk Wee," *Soeara Pemoeda Mataram*, 3 April 1929.

[75] "Mountain Resorts of Java," 3.

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**Figure 6.** Cover of the OTB's A Brief Malay Vocabulary with a Few Useful Phrases and Sentences Rendered into Both the English and the Netherlands Language (Batavia: Kolff, 1940).

servant, *djongos*, was translated to the English "boy"—i.e., "Be careful, boy"—a loaded and racist term in the Anglophone world denoting someone considered to be socially, culturally, and racially inferior. And tellingly, the booklet did not include any language indicating politeness or courtesy toward natives; translations for mundane civilities like "please" and "thank you" are nowhere to be found.[76] Such materials made it clear that indigenous people were there to serve Western tourists and should be treated accordingly.

However, the lines between coloniser and colonised were not quite as stark as Dutch propaganda suggested. Access to colonial resorts did not depend on one's skin colour or ancestry but on one's affluence, and some well-to-do Javanese also participated in mountain tourism. As Henk Schulte Nordholt argues, Javanese elites and the nascent middle classes—consisting of civil servants, teachers, medical personnel, railway employees, and journalists—were exposed to the Western cultural sphere, as reflected in consumer patterns, lifestyle, and ideas about the nuclear family. Embracing mountain resorts as leisurely and recuperative retreats became part of this desire to "abandon traditional habits

[76] TOIB, *A Brief Malay Vocabulary with a Few Useful Phrases and Sentences Rendered into Both the English and the Netherlands Language* (Batavia: Kolff, 1940). Hans Meulendijks reached similar conclusions regarding *Come to Java* in "Tourism and Imperialism in the Dutch East Indies: Guidebooks of the Vereeniging Toeristenverkeer in the Late Colonial Era (1908–1939)" (Master's thesis, Utrecht University, 2017), 79–80.

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and to become the new cultural citizens of the colony."[77] Some traditional elites bought into these ideas as well. For instance, the *susuhunan* (traditional ruler of Surukarta) and prince of Pakualam (a principality in Yogyakarta) visited Tosari with their entourages in 1928.[78] The sultan of Yogyakarta even invested in constructing a mountain resort in his own territory of Kaliurang, while the *susuhunan* did the same on the slopes of Mount Lawu.[79]

Vernacular literature, such as Marco Kartodikromo's *Student Hidjo*, also exhibited mountain resorts' appeal to the emerging Indonesian middle classes.[80] The famous novel follows Hidjo, a quiet, Western-educated son of a Javanese merchant sent to the Netherlands to pursue a university degree. While the book primarily details Hidjo's alienating experiences in the Netherlands, it also tells the story of what happens to those he leaves behind on Java. Among them is his fiancée, who falls ill—probably with neurasthenia—and travels with her family to a resort called Baratadem to recover in the mountains. Renowned for its cool climate, stunning natural environment, and recuperative qualities, Baratadem is not a real place but a play on the words *Barat*— meaning "West"—and *adem*—meaning "cool." That is, the name itself is a reference to the "cool West," in contrast to the "hot East." Marco Kartodikromo's clever wordplay reflects an insider's knowledge of the ways that Javanese elites and middle classes embraced European concepts of hygiene, health, and status. He used his novel to ridicule the cultural significance of these spaces as imagined by the coloniser and critique the Javanese who accepted these meanings. The presence of elite Javanese in what were deemed Western spaces—and such cultural criticism of their participation in colonial tourism—further demonstrates the fragility of the illusion presented by Dutch authorities.

Finally, while there is little information offering the perspective of indigenous servants, the advent of the Indonesian nationalist movement in the early twentieth century suggests that they contested colonial hierarchies when they could. A few notable examples locate such resistance within tourist spaces and revolve around the figure of Cokroaminoto—the charismatic president of Indonesia's first and largest mass political organisation, *Sarekat Islam*. The colonial press held Cokroaminoto almost personally responsible for transforming the allegedly naturally docile, servile, and submissive Indonesians into activist, rebellious, and demanding colonial subjects. Under Cokroaminoto's leadership and guidance, the Sarekat Islam was founded in 1912 and developed into a broad emancipatory movement demanding respect and equality for Indonesians.[81] By the end of the decade, this resulted in heightened social tensions, leading to a deadly standoff in 1919 between colonial authorities and local farmers in the tourist's paradise of Garut. The incident became widely known as the 'Garut Affair' and gained notoriety when the government alleged that an underground group of the Sarekat Islam had instigated colonial resistance among the local peasantry, raising fears of widespread revolt. In the eyes of the colonial press the affair evidenced the spread and radicalisation of the national awakening, while the vernacular press blamed colonial

[77] Henk Schulte Nordholt, "Modernity and Cultural Citizenship in the Netherlands Indies: An Illustrated Hypothesis," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (October 2011): 440.

[78] *De Indische Courant*, 1 August 1928 and 17 October 1928.

[79] Janianton Damanik and Destha T. Raharjana, "Tourism of the Javanese Monarchy during the Dutch Colonial Era," in *Tourism and Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, eds. Ploysri Porananond and Victor T. King (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 183–98.

[80] "Student Hidjo" appeared as a serial in *Sinar Hindia* in 1918. It was published as a novel the following year. Marco Kartodikromo, *Student Hidjo* (Semarang: Masman en Stroink, 1919).

[81] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926*, Asia East by South 091360110 (Ithaca etc: Cornell University Press, 1990): 103-108.

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exploitation.[82] Unsurprisingly, the OTB's publications ignored incidents like these as international tourists were to remain oblivious to the anxieties percolating underneath the surface of the colonial imaginary.

In the wake of the Garut Affair, Cokroaminoto travelled to a resort in Tosari to recover from ongoing health problems in 1920. When the news of his visit broke, the colonial press responded with a mixture of elation and indignation. Although relieved to hear of Cokroaminoto's illness, speculating whether it signified the end of his political career, there was also considerable anger about his choice to stay in one of Java's premier mountain resorts. Tosari's sanatorium and hotels were renowned destinations for convalescents and attracted Europeans from throughout Southeast Asia. Intended as a secluded space where Europeans were shielded from the tropical climate as well as interactions with more assertive Javanese from the cities, Cokroaminoto's visit was perceived as yet another threat to colonial prestige and supremacy—a colonial subject deliberately breaching a cultivated and imagined Western sanctuary.[83]

As it turned out, concerns about Cokroaminoto were not unfounded. The Dutch considered Tosari to be a safe haven where the local population—the Tenggerese—were amicable to their presence. Here they did not have to worry about nationalist or anticolonial sentiments. Yet Cokroaminoto's visit abruptly revealed that the friendly mountain community was not immune to activist ideas. On the contrary, the leader of *Sarekat Islam* found the local population very sympathetic to his cause and helped organise a local branch of the association before his departure. Just a few weeks later, the servants at the Sanatorium Tosari went on strike after the facility's European chef dismissed an indigenous employee. The colonial press was stunned at this show of solidarity in Java's highlands where "any sign of a popular movement" had been lacking. Dismayed, a Dutch reporter concluded "even in the deepest mountains, the times had changed and with the times, the people."[84] In contrast, the vernacular press celebrated these events and proudly proclaimed "such are the Tenggerese of these times!"[85] In consultation with the sanatorium's administrator, the fired servant was ultimately allowed to return to work while the European chef was fired instead. This incident and others like it were subtle reminders that the Dutch might be able to avoid the impact of the tropical climate in the mountains, but no longer that of the national awakening. Such actions challenged the belief in unmitigated health, safety, and colonial dominance in Java's tourist spaces.

## Colonial Baggage

In 1925, just a few years later, the murder of Mrs. Macfie in idyllic Garut would shatter the illusion even further. While Dutch authorities initially deemed it unthinkable that a native near these mountain resorts could commit such a heinous crime, the discovery of an indigenous culprit revealed the grave miscalculations permeating colonial discourse. Java's mountain tourism and its role in legitimising the Dutch imperial project required a certain amount of romanticisation to obscure the harsh reality of colonialism. But as the character of the contact zone in Java's mountains evolved, Javanese critiques, resistance, and this exceptional murder case exposed the colonial imaginary as something fragile, constructed, and ultimately false.

[82] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 113-114. Michael Francis Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011): 209-211.

[83] *BN*, 31 May 1920; *Preanger Bode*, 8 June 1920.

[84] *BN*, 12 July 1920. Also see: *BN*, 10 July 1920; *NDNI*, 12 July 1920; *NDNI*, 9 August 1919; *De Locomotief*, 12 July 1920.

[85] *Oetoesan Hindia*, 3 May 1919. Also see: *Oetoesan Hindia*, 12 February 1920, *IPO*, no. 7 (1920); *Titir*, 21 January 1926; *IPO*, no. 5 (1926): 241.

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In colonial Java, Dutch authorities infused the island's mountains with their own meanings to serve their imperial project—meanings that contrasted sharply with traditional Javanese perspectives. Historically, these were not climatological refuges offering protection for white Western bodies, but the abodes of spirits and deities interacting with and living in a parallel world. Veneration of Java's mountains was deeply rooted in animistic beliefs that preceded not only the arrival of the Dutch but also that of Hinduism and Buddhism in the first millennium. Moreover, contrary to the suggestion in Dutch guidebooks, Java's mountains were not wild and uninhabited spaces. While not densely populated, many of the island's inhabitants lived in its mountainous interior, most famously the Sundanese of West Java and the Tenggerese of East Java. And as evidenced by tombs, temples, and sanctuaries, Javanese ascetics, pilgrims, and worshippers ventured into the uplands too.[86]

The Dutch rejected these Javanese interpretations as mere superstition—evidence of their primitiveness—and replaced them with the meanings and associated values described in this article. But although Dutch authorities infused mountain resorts with colonial hierarchies of race, class, and gender, imagined as safe spaces for white upper-class bodies, by the last decades of colonial rule Javanese elites and the middle classes too claimed these spaces and their colonial meanings. The persistence of these colonial meanings into the era of independence is indicative of the permanence of colonial discourses and the difficulty of decolonising tourism. These resorts remain as contacts zones and discursive sites between Indonesia's new elites, international tourists, and the inhabitants and workers of Java's highlands.

Perhaps among the most important legacies of the history of mountain resorts as environmental refuges in the colonial era is their endurance, not only as tourist sites, but as representations of ideas from a bygone era. The Dutch authorities, embodied by the OTB, shaped the narratives around, as the editors to this special issue astutely observed, "what to see and how to see it" and thus defined the "sites to be consumed" by tourists.[87] This colonial baggage is instilled in Java's mountains and tourist itineraries and continue to shape contemporary tourist experiences. To uncritically follow in the footsteps of the coloniser is thus a delicate pursuit, one that risks downplaying the semiotics and politics that infused this colonial baggage.[88]

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[86] Peter Boomgaard, "The High Sanctuary: Local Perceptions of Mountains in Indonesia, 1750–2000," in *Framing Indonesian Realities: Essays in Symbolic Anthropolgy in Honour of Reimar Schefold*, eds. Peter Nas, Gerard Persoon and Rivke Jaffe (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003), 309.

[87] Andreas Greiner and Mikko Toivanen, "Colonial Baggage: An Introduction."

[88] Joseph M. Cheer and Keir J. Reeves, "Colonial Heritage and Tourism: Ethnic Landscape Perspectives," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 10, no. 2 (February 2015): 1–16; https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2014.985224.

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