The Javanese self in portraiture from 1880-1955

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Statement of Originality

This thesis is my own original work. It contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text. Research for this thesis was based on archival, primary (artworks) and secondary sources only and therefore did not warrant clearance from the University of Sydney Human research ethics Committee.

Matthew Jon Cox
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Abstract

This thesis, *The Javanese self in portraiture from 1880-1955* examines changing understandings and representations of the Javanese self in painted and photographic portraits spanning 75 years from 1880-1955. During this period, Indonesian modern art followed a trajectory from its 19th century beginnings within the domain of exclusive privilege, through the socially engaged Persagi painters to the opening of the first National art school, *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia*. In tandem there was a dramatic shift in the public’s understanding of two concepts: the modern individual and the nation state of Indonesia. The two however are not mutually inclusive and in many cases the modern individual precluded the nation. One must consider that the colonial state, rather than the Republic, was the defining structure into which many of the major players in Indonesian modern art were born and in which they operated. Furthermore, certain individuals crystallised their sense of national consciousness whilst living abroad and in many instances working in conjunction with the Dutch. In some cases the modern individual was situated in an isolated position, far outside any notions of a shared experience with an imagined community.

Whilst this thesis is concerned with the biographies of individuals and is deeply committed to a social history of art, the focus on individuals is not made in order to reveal broader assumptions regarding society, but rather to reveal nuanced and sometimes very personal expressions of modernism. Because the appearances of modernism were not always concurrent or consistent with societal modernity, we cannot plot an uninterrupted or continuous path for Indonesian modern art. Yet a number of societal changes that came about during the period from high colonialism to independence affected class structure and gender, giving rise to altered states of selfhood and new methods of artistic expression. It is precisely the complex set of transactions between the individual, larger society and the economic and political conditions of the time that this thesis sets out to articulate in order to reveal a number of significant characteristics regarding the possibilities

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of self representation in portraiture. First, the early history of Indonesian modern art is plotted in terms of cooperative relationships between Javanese aristocrats and Dutch men. Secondly, that whilst appearing conservative and pro-Dutch, these Javanese artists were critical in initiating a discourse on modern art and in establishing a position of cultural nationalism, domestically and abroad. Finally, the conjunction of the first two points demonstrates that the history of modern Indonesian art began much earlier than previously believed and, perhaps even more significantly, was attached to the idea of Indonesian cultural and national self-determination at a very early stage of its development.
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In 2011 I spent six weeks in the Netherlands looking at collections, researching archives and visiting libraries. This would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Australia Netherlands Research Collaboration (ANRC) at the Australian National University. Prior to my time in the Netherlands I was fortunate enough to attend an intensive course in reading Dutch also sponsored by the ANRC. Thank you to Helen McMartin and Dr Robert Cribb for facilitating the intensive course on Kangaroo Island and Dr Bruce Donaldson who was an inspirational teacher.

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Introduction

This thesis, *The Javanese self in portraiture from 1880-1955* examines changing understandings and representations of the Javanese self in painted and photographic portraits spanning the 75 years from 1880-1955. Due to the large body of work already dedicated to Raden Saleh, this thesis takes up after his death on April 23, 1880.² Like many other art historians, Raden Adjeng Kusnadi locates Raden Saleh as the forefather of Indonesian modern art.³ He argues further that due to the difficult living conditions in the period after the life of Raden Saleh, there were few painters of significance around the turn of the century, and it was not until 50 years after Saleh’s death in the 1930s, that any artists of value began to emerge. He dismisses the *Mooi Indië* (Beautiful Indies) group as being limited in talent and vision.⁴ Kusnadi argues that due to their limited ability to paint realistic portraits or detailed depictions of animals, as Saleh had done, they were relegated to painting imitations of Dutch expatriate painters.⁵ Instead Kusnadi identifies Basuki Abdullah as the next Indonesian painter worthy of comparison with Raden Saleh.⁶

Kusnadi is not the only art historian to make the fifty-year jump from Saleh’s death in 1880 to the emergence of Basuki Abdullah in the 1930s without due consideration of the intermediate years. Spanjaard too makes the jump, “The painter [Raden Saleh] was far ahead of his time and it took another fifty years, starting in 1930, for Indonesian painters to reappear in the western art circuit.”⁷ For others the lapse in art history extends even further to the formation of PERSAGI (*Persatuan Ahli-Ahli Gambar Indonesia* or Association of Indonesian Painters) by Sindudarsono Sudjojono

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² For an early summary see Loos-Haaxman (1968). For a later, more critical analysis see Kraus (2006, 2015); Achmad (2012); and Carey (2013), which examines Saleh’s needs and desires in having himself represented in European attire.
³ Born April 1, 1921, Magelang. Between 1942-1944 Kusnadi learned to paint in Keimin Bunka Shidosho and during this time also learned to paint portraits in an academy style with Raden Basuki Abdullah in Jakarta (Kusnadi 1990: 60).
⁴ The term *Mooi Indië* has been used in art circles since at least 1912 when it served as the title for a catalogue of Du Chattel’s watercolours depicting the Indonesian landscape. More famously it was used by Sudjojono in a derogatory fashion to criticise the perceived conservatism of early Indonesian landscape painters.
⁵ Kusnadi (1990: 64).
⁶ Kusnadi’s favouritism towards Basuki Abdullah may stem from the fact that he trained as a portrait painter with him in Jakarta during the Japanese occupation.
and Raden Agoes Djajasoeminta (Agus Djaja) on 23 October 1938. Holt, for instance, argues that modern art as divergent from the traditional, and manifest in new forms and theories, didn’t appear until the late 1930s. It should be noted that Persagi was preceeded by two other art groups: first, *Kumpulan Raden Saleh*, which was established in 1923 under the directorship of Maskan and included Soepartdi, Pik Gan, Slamet and Djojowisstra; secondly, *Kelompok Lima Bandung* in 1937, which consisted of five painters—Hendra Gunawan, Barli, Sudarso, Wahdi and Affandi. Nonetheless, both Saleh and Sudjojono are frequently attributed by art historians with the prestigious status of being Indonesia’s first modern artist, generally without any due recognition of the circumstantial changes to Indonesian society and the development of art in the late colonial period that relate the two painters to each other.

In the period between the departure of Saleh and the arrival of Sudjojono, Indonesia became engaged with world-wide trading regimes and communication systems including international mail flows (created by the Universal Postal Union, 1874); the global coordination of time (agreed upon in 1884); controls on the spread of epidemics; and commodity agreements on rubber, tin and tea. Telegram and telephone also became widespread during this time, in fact the first telephone arrived in Java in 1883, only seven years after its invention by Alexander Graham Bell. Although this was a period of dramatic change and global engagement that opened up communication and transfer of western-modern modes of organisation, education and expression, it has sometimes been relegated to the dirty history of high colonialism in which Dutch policy is seen to have pressed the indigenous population into dire economic subjugation and cultural impoverishment. Many historians, as with Kusnadi, describe the difficult living conditions and oppressive policy as having a stifling effect on indigenous cultural production. To say that the period between 1880 and 1930 was too difficult a time for Indonesian artists to make art, as Kusnadi has argued, is simply an excuse not to examine the very complex relationship between the Dutch, the Javanese elite and the dynamics of a modernising society.

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10 Balai Seni Rupa Jakarta (1976).
11 For example, Sumardjo (1949), Kam (2006) and Takenaka in Sidharta (2006).
Instead, this thesis attempts to reinstate the trace of Indonesia’s art history that has sometimes been hidden under a blanket of historical blindness overly concerned with creating an anti-colonial nationalist narrative or simply not interested in the possibilities of an art that did not “look” Indonesian. I will begin by examining the kind of portraits that were born from the complex relationship between the Javanese elite and the Dutch occupiers in both Java and the Netherlands. The second stage of the thesis is dedicated to the adversarial and hyper-masculine jostling of the Persagi painters as they attempted to establish images of Javanese masculinity. Finally I conclude with an analysis of Sukarno’s friendship with the painter Raden Basuki Abdullah and the production of portraits invested with Javanese concerns of kingship and power. These periods or moments of art production do not just sit alongside, but are rather embedded in the dramatic shifts in the public’s understanding of two concepts that developed in tandem: the modern individual and the nation state of Indonesia.

The modern Individual and the nation are, however, not mutually inclusive, and in many cases the modern individual precluded the nation. One must consider the colonial state, rather than the Republic, as the defining structure into which many of the major players in Indonesian modern art were born and in which they operated. Furthermore, certain individuals crystallised their sense of national consciousness whilst living abroad and in many instances working in conjunction with the Dutch. In some cases the modern individual was situated in an isolated position, far outside of any notions of a shared experience with an imagined community. While this thesis is concerned with the biographies of individuals and is deeply committed to a social history of art, the focus on individuals is not made in order to reveal broader assumptions regarding society, but rather to reveal nuanced and sometimes very personal expressions of modernism. Because the appearances of modernism were not always concurrent or consistent with societal modernity, we cannot plot an uninterrupted or continuous path for Indonesian modern art. Yet a number of societal changes that came about during the period of high colonialism to independence affected class structure and gender that gave rise to altered states of selfhood and new methods of artistic expression. It is precisely the complex set of transactions between the individual, larger society and the economic and political conditions of the time that this thesis sets out to articulate in order to reveal a number

of significant characteristics regarding the possibilities of new Javanese selfhoods and the manner in which they were represented in portraiture.

First, the early history of Indonesian modern art was marked by cooperative relationships between Javanese aristocrats and European men. Secondly, that whilst appearing conservative and pro-Dutch these Javanese artists were critical in initiating a discourse on modern art and in establishing a position of cultural nationalism, domestically and abroad. Finally, the conjunction of the first two points demonstrate that Javanese artists working in the period between 1880 and 1955 made a significant contribution to the expression of the Indonesian national imagination through the production of portraits at an international level.

There is much evidence of the fruitful relationship between Indonesian and itinerant European artists and photographers in the making of likenesses and state portraiture.\(^\text{15}\) Early 19\(^\text{th}\) century portraits from Bali and Java provide examples of a change in indigenous painting from narrative function to single scene portraits. The portrait of Danish entrepreneur Mads Lange made by a Balinese artist from Badung circa 1840 for example is an early non-narrative portrait in an indigenous style.\(^\text{16}\) In late 19\(^\text{th}\) century portraits by Raden Saleh and his pupil Raden Koesoema di Brata we see abundant use of attributional symbols as would be expected in European representations of state dignitaries and royalty that are used to denote rank and even divine endorsement.\(^\text{17}\) These examples mark the beginnings of a new construction of portraits conceived in the partnership between Indonesians and non-Indonesians that is a central theme of this thesis.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{15}\) For examples of the kind of portraits made by Europeans in this period see Scalliet et al (1999).
\(^{16}\) For further information on the portrait of Mads Lange and the identification of a possible self-portrait in the Siwaratrikalpa Kakawin Manuscript, see Vickers (2012: 75, 100).
\(^{17}\) Jenkins (1947).
\(^{18}\) Vickers (2012: 100).
Yet, Holt opines that portraits only appeared in the 1950s and were a strictly secular expression of the self, tied to westernised and thereby modern understanding of the individual and society.\textsuperscript{19} Furthermore, Wright asserts that aside from Affandi’s long career of painting self-portraits and a few self-portraits done by women, portraits by Indonesian artists rarely probed the psychological depths or limits of the modern existential secular individual in the way that was so fundamental to Western Modern artists' 20\textsuperscript{th} century exploration of meaning.\textsuperscript{20} The early works of Holt and Wright set the tone for further studies and their neglect or dismissal of portraiture as a significant field of study in Indonesian art has meant that there remains an absence of serious discussion on the history of portraiture in Indonesia. As a consequence the study of portraiture in Indonesia is a topic that has received little attention.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Holt (1967: 185).
\textsuperscript{20} Wright (1994: 247).
\textsuperscript{21} Two recent publications are an exception to this case, Singapore Art Museum (1998) and J. Clark (2013).
But why should portraiture merit a privileged consideration and why does it, unlike the other genres, facilitate a greater understanding of the trajectory of Indonesian modern art, especially in recuperating the unaccounted period between Saleh and Sudjojono?

I believe that the study of portraits offers an interesting model for a revision of Indonesian modern art because it combines a study of stylistic changes across time within a single genre.

In considering other genres of art that may be excluded by a dedicated study of portraiture one might consider still life and landscape painting. While a continuum of still life painting has not yet been established, the genre of landscape painting has in Indonesian art history been cast as a representation of either colonial occupation or similarly as romantic tendency to convey the Indonesian landscape to appeal to colonial tastes and fascination of the landscape. It has indeed provided an interesting case study for the transition of the painting from the colonial to the Republic, as Protschky has already argued, but unlike portraiture, landscape painting cannot provide an account for changes in artists’ perception and consequential representation of themselves and fellow Javanese subjects. Portraiture embodies the kind of self-reflectivity that has long been associated with being modern or with identifying oneself as a modern person and thereby offers a visual mapping of or correlate to the changes in societal perceptions of the self between the height of colonialism in the late 19th century and the declaration of independence in the mid-20th century. Thus this thesis problematises the use of portraiture as model to use when talking about the Javanese self, and asks how 20th century Javanese saw themselves differently from their ancestors?

There are two reasons why my study focuses specifically on pictorial representations of Javanese selfhoods. The first relates to the fact that the paths to modernism in Indonesia are various and diversified and therefore it was more important to concentrate on one path rather than attempt to cover the diversity. The second related reason stems from the fact that much of this study pertains to artists who worked prior to the establishment of the Indonesian state, and so the geography and culture of Java made for a more accurate and acute focus. For these reasons I deal with Javanese artists exclusively, except where I believe their engagement with Dutch artists is important for giving accounts of their Javanese self-hoods. This thesis does not deal with the numerous

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22 Protschky (2011)
peranakan (Chinese descendants who otherwise adopt and partake in Javanese cultural systems) photographers and artists who have gained greater recognition through the work of Karen Strassler. Not only are all the artists discussed in my thesis Javanese but they are also all men, a fact that confirms Arbuckle’s treatise that the history of modern Indonesian art has been dominated by male protagonists keen to inscribe their own masculinity in the face of colonialism. Fortunately Arbuckle’s thesis on Emiria Sunassa’s life and art makes good ground in recovering the male dominated domain towards a feminist perspective and her chapter on Sunassa’s self-portraits is a valuable precursor to my own work on portraiture in Indonesia. Mia Bustam’s autobiography also goes a long way to rectifying the orthodoxy of the national canon that revolves around Sudjojono and the male dominated field of modern Indonesian art. Whilst there is still much to do in regard to women artists, I felt the task at hand was to address the peculiarities of the national canon through an examination of portrait production in order to draw out the relationships of artists to both the colonial and Javanese thought systems.

As a genre, the study of portraiture is an important area of research because it spans the entire course of modern art in Indonesia and clearly demonstrates the particular relationships that exist in Indonesia between the biographies of artists, the public projection of new selfhoods and political change. In particular self-portraiture, like autobiography, has a particular way of connecting personal experience, memory and the imagination of the self with broader social narratives. At the same time, I am mindful of Arbucke’s warning not to engage in writing a history of Indonesian modern art based on the biographical details of artists’ lives as indexical to culture and invoked as representative of national successes. In the Indonesian case, as with art historical studies of “other” cultures, there exists the very real potential of misaligning art with the kind of cultural production that is tied to mythologies of the nation. The expectation that artists are representative of national or regional cultures oversimplifies the formal developments of art history, ignores the materiality of the artwork and is unrealistic.

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28 Arbuckle (2011:64).
The examination of the self and self-fashioning through portraiture offers a new framework for assessing the way that art operates as a function of the individual rather than of the state and provides a new point of reference for rewriting the history of Indonesian modern art. Furthermore, the study of portraiture provides a platform for the investigation of individual self-reflexivity and self-fashioning that present a more nuanced and personalised history of art making in Indonesia distinct from narratives that conflate art history with state formation which currently dominate discourses on Indonesian art history. This in turn allows for an alternative reading of Indonesian art history that is not constrained by chronological and linear models of development interpreted though the post-colonial lens of anti-colonial aspiration and national mythology building. Instead the activity of self-fashioning and of fictional self-portraiture is used to ask questions about the very nature of the national canon and its occlusion of artists who worked outside prescribed notions of national identity. By focusing on genre, aesthetic theory and the critical analysis of portrait production in Indonesia, this thesis hopes to overcome the failures, as Supangkat laments, of an art history overly embedded in the East-West confrontation and the questions of national identity.31

Writing art history in post-colonial Indonesia

The East-West confrontation and the question of national identity are two further challenges in writing about Indonesian art history. The problem with much writing on Indonesian art, as with the writing on Southeast Asian history more generally, is that it has suffered from an entrenched approach that defines Indonesian history as a comparative function of colonial history. While in many regards Indonesian history is tied to events and circumstances produced from contact with a colonial presence, foreign relations and global politics, the discussion tends to get lost in the rhetoric of East versus West.32 Such a reductive conflation of art with the assertion of either a colonial or anti-colonial position has been a deciding feature of writing on modern Indonesian art. The opposition between the colonial state and the counter colonial efforts in realising the Republic have been played out in nearly every manifestation of Indonesian art history. As a result the history

31 Supangkat (1990: 159).
32 Smail (1993: 57).
of modern art in Indonesia has remained fixated on a rivalry between generations based on perceptions of colonial collaboration on one hand and colonial rejection on the other.

This history begins with the ambivalence shown towards Raden Saleh, who until recently was disregarded by post-colonial writers of modern art because he was seen to be too European. Only after Peter Carey opened the possibility that Saleh’s painting, *The Arrest of Diponogoro* (1857) could be viewed as a demonstration of colonial subversion was Saleh reunited with the nationalist painters who constitute the modern canon. The antagonism continues between individuals and/or institutions that are deemed to sit on either side of the colonial and anti-colonial divide. Central to this divide is the oppositional positioning of Sudjojono and other members of Persagi to what is understood as the colonial aesthetics of the *Mooi Indië* painters typified by Abdullah Surio Subroto (aka Mas Abdullah) and his son Basuki Abdullah. This opposition is largely based on citations from the 1946 publication of Sudjojono’s articles relating to the public debates on Indonesian culture known as *Polemic Kebudayaan* that raged during the 1930s. The writers central to this debate found their expression in the vernacular periodical *Pudjangga Baru* (New Writer). However, while these writers were contemporaries of the modern painters, the painters, with the exception of Mas Pirngadie, were never discussed in the journal. Nonetheless, the arguments published in *Pudjangga Baru* and consequently by Sudjojono have been repeatedly engaged to define the development of modern Indonesian art in the binary terms of colonial rejection and Indonesian nationalist aspirations, or more crudely in the terms of West versus East. Issues around artists’ training are no exception. They have been repeatedly framed in terms of the European-style academy versus the community Sanggar and later ASRI (Akedemi Seni Rupa Indonesia) in Jogjakarta versus ITB (Institut Teknologi Bandung) in Bandung, derogatorily referred to as “the laboratory of the west.”

In regard to this canon built on rivalries, Arbuckle argues that, “in order for these notions to operate as nationalist discourse, they needed to be propped up by a series of gendered-based narratives about rivalry and originality.” The canon as Arbuckle found it, and perpetuated as it still is, offers

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33 Carey (1982). This interpretation has since been expanded upon by Kraus (2006).
34 Soedjojono (1946a, 1946b).
35 See Foulcher (2000) and Sutherland (1968).
36 Sutherland (1968: fn 44).
37 For further discussion on this rivalry see Spanjaard (1993).
no room for the existence of ethnic difference or feminine subjectivity. The reiteration of the nationalist canon of Indonesian art history in post-colonial text books of the 1970s and again in the auction catalogues of the 1980s champions Indonesian male painters as exemplars of the revolutionary spirit and as such produced a monolithic narrative which refutes anomalies. Hence my focus on Javanese male painters will not attempt to rectify the imbalance by introducing female or non-Javanese painters, but instead to further scrutinise what it means to be a Javanese male painter.

Conversely the activities of European artists working in what was the Netherlands East Indies, and their depictions of landscapes and people, have been viewed with a high degree of post-colonial cynicism. This equally problematic position finds postcolonial art historians navigating the perils of over-essentialising Western art as a malignant expression of Western dominance of the East. Such was the great challenge for Protschky in demonstrating how European landscape painting in Indonesia aligned with colonial ambitions to seize and dominate foreign lands.

The dialectic that ties both Dutch and Indonesian artists to opposing national agendas raises certain problems for the academic eager to write new histories of Indonesian modern art. Whilst some anthropologists and art historians remark on the importance of rewriting history from an alternative view as advocated by Dipesh Chakrabarty’s “provincializing Europe”, others highlight the ironic juncture between anti-colonialism and the colonial perspective. Smail, for example argues that the anti-colonial argument relies on the colonial for its raison d’être and to this extent emphasises the colonial position in its purist form often well beyond the colonial stance. In general agreement with Smail and commenting on the Indian situation more specifically, Nandy observes, “It is not an accident that the specific variants of the concepts with which many anti-colonial movements in our times have worked have often been the products of the imperial culture itself and, even in opposition, these movements have paid homage to their respective cultural origins.” To overcome such overwhelming reference to the colonial in post-colonial and anti-colonial writing of art

41 Protschky (2011).
43 Smail (1993: 47).
44 Nandy (1983: 3-4).
history, this thesis traces the ambiguities that are inherent in Javanese portraits as conceived through social relationships with the Dutch.

In order to address the ambiguities of colonial indigenous relationships and the various modes and specific origins of portrait production that constituted Indonesian modernism from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century, I argue for a new writing of Indonesian art history that is neither Asian-centric nor Euro-centric. Instead I advocate a recognition of both positions and call for clarity where perspective and ethical position may become conflated. In doing so I will explain how the production of portraits by Javanese artists in Indonesia and Holland demonstrates the implausibility of separating modern Javanese selfhoods from the historical realities of their colonial relationship and at the same time transcends culturally produced binaries of East-West and colonial-anti-colonial.

As previously mentioned, much writing regarding the history of Indonesian art has faced the same problems as the writing on the emergence of nation states in Southeast Asia. Frequently the discussion is undermined by a reliance on a Weberian type binary between the traditional/ non-Western and modern/Western. Strangely enough, whilst the “traditional” has been eulogised as the fortress of the non-Western, modern Indonesian art has also contrived to appear non-Western, at least in its anti-colonial position. This thesis argues instead that the “traditional”, at least since the late 19th century was never entirely non-Western and the “modern” whilst serving the Indonesian anti-colonial spirit was also conceived in dialogue with the West, largely within the rubric of the colonial state.

Many early Javanese artists collaborated with Dutch and other Europeans in forging new sensibilities and modes of artistic production. Kassian Céphas, Indonesia’s first indigenous photographer, studied under a visiting European photographer and from the mid-1880s collaborated with the physician and amateur archaeologist, Dr. Groneman in documenting numerous archaeological sites in Java. In 1901 Raden Mas Abdullah, the son of Dr. Wahidin,

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45 My understanding of the possibilities of a new art history is indebted to Smail (1993: 42).
47 Nora Taylor (2009: 26) identifies a similar phenomenon regarding the relationship of Vietnamese painters to their colonial past.
worked as an illustrator with the Dutch lieutenant and newspaper editor, Henri Constant Claude Clockener whilst studying in Holland. Mas Pirngadie was employed by the Royal Batavia Society and the Archaeological Service of the Netherlands Indies in Batavia and worked alongside the Dutch civil servant J. E. Jasper in the production of five volumes dedicated to the arts and crafts of the archipelago published from 1912. From 1919 Raden Mas Jodjana modelled and studied alongside the well know Dutch painter Isaac Israels and fellow Dutchman Chris Lebeau, well known for his graphic designs in batik and book illustration. In the 1920s a number of aristocratic Javanese men studied at the *Academie Van Beeldende Kunsten*, including Raden Mas Soebanto whose paintings found their way into Sukarno’s collection and Raden Mas Katamsi who became the first director of ASRI from 1950 to 1957. From 1934-1937 the son of Mas Abdullah, Raden Basuki Abdullah also trained at the *Academie Van Beeldende Kunsten* in The Hague and later exhibited his works a number of times in Holland.

Whilst excluded from this study it should be noted that the Sumatran born painter, Salim Sariochmin also enjoyed the advantages of study in Europe working alongside the French painter Fernand Léger from 1929-1932 before returning to Java to work in an advertising agency. Back in Java, Agus Djaja studied drawing with the Dutch academic Pijper who also played a pivotal role in Emiria Sunassa’s early career. In 1934, Sudjojono worked alongside the visiting Japanese painter Chiyoi Yazaki painting the temple complex at Borobudur. At that time Sudjojono was gifted a box of crayons from Yazaki and claimed that he learnt the technique of chiaroscuro from him. Furthermore we know that the houses of European painters frequently became meeting points for local artists, for example the meeting of Barli and Affandi at the home of Luigi Nobili. Such conduits of knowledge production as revealed through an investigation of biographical relationships enrich the discussion of exchange in an empirical and meaningful way that helps us understand how networks beyond Java informed the ways that Javanese artists depicted themselves. These collaborations between Javanese artists and foreign artists, be them Dutch,

48 Tashadi (1980).
49 Salim later returned to Europe and remained there for the rest of his life. While he is an interesting example of the dialogical relationship between Indonesia and Europe, he is excluded from this study because he was born outside Java. For further information on Javanese painters studying in Europe see Cox (2012).
50 Stedelijk Museum (1947) and Arbuckle (2011: 110).
51 Sudjojono (1942).
52 Arbuckle (2011: 117).
53 In 1995 the art theorist and cultural critic Jim Supangkat (1995) posited his opposition to a model of Asian art that relied on the presumption of a binary relationship between East and West and/or local and international.
German or Japanese are central to the proposition advanced by this thesis, that the modern Javanese self as projected in portraiture was informed by a dialogue with international agents living in the Netherlands East Indies and Europe.\footnote{Furthermore, for the most part, this dialogue took place in Dutch. Dolk (2012: 71) argues that for many of the Indonesian intelligentsia, aside from their vernacular, Dutch was their first language and then Indonesian.}

The understanding of the dialogical relationship as employed in this thesis is borrowed in its secondary form from Marshall Clark whose interpretation of Bakhtin was used to great effect in his work on masculinity in Java. Clark argues persuasively for an appropriation of Bakhtin’s dialogical to engage in an analysis of Javanese expressions of self in the transition from colonial subject to independent citizen.\footnote{M. Clark (2010).} The nature of this dialogue has been largely overlooked in the writing on Indonesian art where interaction has been framed in terms of “resistance”, “rebellion” and “nationalism” instead of examining the more nuanced and ambivalent relationships between individuals that give rise to a less monolithic representation of culture.\footnote{Day (2002: 27).} In addition the kind of study that relies on models of oppositional binaries between nation states runs the risk of ignoring the way knowledge was produced and disseminated in the colonial period.\footnote{Sears (1993: 3).}

This study instead looks at the collaborative relationships between Javanese artists and non-Javanese in order to articulate a more comprehensive art history that collapse the binaries of colonial and post-colonial histories of Indonesian art. McVey has argued that the answer is in writing new histories that are not restricted to the colonial occupiers or to the indigenous elite who made their appearances on the national stage via the colonial.\footnote{McVey (1978: 9).} Smail agrees that the challenge lies in bringing forth personal accounts that operate outside of the major stakeholders.\footnote{Smail (1993: 52).} Whilst this study will attempt to bring forth very real dialogue across the colonial divide based on biographies of the elite, it argues that the real issue in writing Indonesian art history lies not on the focus of colonial occupiers or indigenous elite but in the way that the selection or omission of those stakeholders is made in order to advance certain histories. For instance, the relationship of elite figures like Noto Soeroto and Raden Mas Jodjana to the colonial state in which they operated has been neglected by the New Order's writing of fervently post-colonial history.\footnote{Fakih (2014: 5).} While
acknowledging the limitations of dialogue between the coloniser and the colonised, I attempt to reveal the zones of contact and exchange of knowledge between them as a way to collapse the comprehensive binaries imposed by post-colonial writings. As Siegel asserts, the “history of the nation is made not from autochthonous sources nor from foreign borrowings but from the effects of these connections”. This is what Goh refers to as the “proper relationships in the course of knowledge production” and is something that Fakih seeks to tease out in his analysis of the way that Javanese nationalists were informed by their experiences working within the vehicle of Dutch systems of administration at home and abroad. In the early decades of the 20th century “the concept of Indonesia was still an abstract concept” and in its absence was the very concrete reality of the colonial state. The failure to recognise the colonial state as the apparatus in which many of the early artists worked is a significant shortcoming in the writing of Indonesian history. In unfolding Indonesia’s path to modernity and the history of nationalism within the depths of personal experiences, as this thesis intends, the conduits of exchange that existed outside what is currently understood to be the geo-political definition of Indonesia need to be investigated.

Why Java and not Indonesia

The issue with writing about protagonists who were active before independence and the formation of the Indonesian state is that they are often retrospectively categorised as Indonesian without due consideration of the political reality of the period. This is clearly a problem when considering the vast ethnic diversity of the archipelago and the varied experiences of individuals to the colonial world. Astri Wright takes up this point when she challenges the validity of the word “Indonesian” to describe Javanese aristocratic artists such as Raden Saleh who were painting in Europe well before the formation of the Indonesian state.

The relatively recent use of the concept and indeed the word “Indonesia” to describe the vast complexity of cultures of the archipelago has come under considerable scrutiny from

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61 Sears (1993: 13).
63 Goh (2011: 6) and Fakih (2014: 8).
64 Scherer (1975: 1).
commentators like Wright and Day. To avoid relying on the monolithic construct of either the colonial or Indonesian state and in order to establish an alternative context in which many of the key artists operated, I must first deconstruct the geographical and temporal limitations that are imposed by the use of the term “Indonesia.”

Indonesia as a nation with its own regulated national language and literature is a relatively recent development in world history. Furthermore the term Indonesia did not become common parlance in Indonesia until the 20th century. In fact Indonesia as a political idea really only took shape after 1870 when Dutch policy sought tighter control over the archipelago under the unifying banner of the Netherlands East Indies. It was not until 1917 that expat students in the Netherlands first used the term Indonesia to describe their homeland and not until the mid-1920s that the Indonesian Communist Party dropped all reference to the term Indies and took up the word “Indonesia.” By 1928 the term had become widely used by the community of Pemuda (youth movement), who exerted anti-colonial pressure, and was articulated by speakers at the first National Youth Conference that promoted the unity of “one nation, one race and one language.”

Yet whilst the idea of a unified territory may have served youthful ambitions of the early 20th century, Max Lane among others insists that a term like Indonesia implied a cultural continuity of traditional societies across the archipelago that simply did not exist. Where Lane asserts, “There was no unity, integration or even any real interchange between all the cultures of the archipelago” one can also argue that the interchange between different islands of the archipelago to the external world was not equal. On this matter Vickers argues that Java's entanglements with the world, whilst not dissimilar to Bali's, illustrate a stronger imprint of the colonial presence especially in the way that being modern was expressed. Java had a particular relationship to the colonial

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66 Day (2002: 34-35) warns against the limiting nature of discussions based on models of the monolithic state.
67 Scholte (1997: 21). On this point Elson (2008: 1) differs from Scholte and asserts that the word ‘Indonesia’ was first conceived and used by the English traveler and social observer, George Samuel Windsor Earl in 1850 in the form ‘Indu-nesians’. However he does agree that ostensibly no such country or nation of people existed until the 20th century.
69 Lane (2008: 19).
70 For more on the oath and its place in Indonesian history see Foulcher (2000).
71 Lane (2008: 19).
defined in some regards by the way that the Javanese used certain constructs of culture in negotiation with the colonial world.73

The situation during the Japanese occupation remained similar. Above and beyond the other islands, Java was the source and subject of Japanese documentation.74 The Japanese established associations on Java for the training of artists, and gathered information about its most active political cultural agents.75 With regard to the material and structural aspects of Javanese societal change as described in Anderson's account of the vernacular press and also Shiraishi’s work on industry it becomes apparent, as already remarked upon by Day, that it was Javanese who managed the transition of Indonesian societies to modernity.76 Supporting this line of thought, Kusno provides a very useful analysis to qualify Java rather than Indonesia as the correct location of early 20th century modernity in the archipelago. It is to his explanation that I turn to justify my own interchangeable use of “Java” with “Indonesia.”

It was the place that stirred the first anti-colonial nationalist sentiments in the early twentieth century and since then has been home to the majority of the key players of Indonesian politics. It was also the birthplace of the Indonesian state and the control center by which other islands in the Indonesian archipelago were coordinated... Java is an island of modernity, but it is also a place that has witnessed virtually all of the violence that has occurred throughout the life of the nation. It is thus not surprising that Java has become the center of Indonesian history and provides the repertoire for the retrieval of the memories of the nation.77

I would also like to acknowledge the other memories of the nation housed within Javanese individuals’ engagement with the world outside of Java. As I have alluded to, the imagination of both Javanese selfhoods and the nation of Indonesia were made possible through the conduit of Dutch language and culture, sometimes whilst living in Holland.78 So, in order to resituate the discourse of Indonesian modern art outside the usual polarising arguments of post-colonialism, as this thesis intends to do, it is necessary to fully comprehend the complexity and diversity of the Javanese community as existing outside the nation state of Indonesia and its geographies. In the words of Kusno, “mnemonic practices and geographical imaginings were profoundly shaped by

74 Benda, Irikura & Kishi (1965: vi).
75 Gunseikanbu (1986).
mobility, travel, and the experience of exile, rather than by any spatially bounded forms of indigenous knowledge.” This approach, which seeks to dismantle fixed notions of identity tied to nations, has been described by Goh as being part of a trend in recent scholarship to engage with the fluid nature of identity as revealed through transnational and diasporic communities. Kusno approaches the subject of national imaginings as a multi-layered and textured intersection of individual and collective intentions. These often disharmonious intentions were not formed in unison or even imagined in unison but thrown together within contemporaneous global changes. Kusno does not promote a sentimental or anti-colonial nostalgia for the pre-revolution history of Indonesia, rather he articulates the complexity of relationships that describe the tangential connections between cities, indigenous and international affairs and systems of organisation and thought.

In remaining focused on historical specificity this thesis acknowledges the inextricable ties between domestic and world developments. Whilst trade arrangements had always existed between Indonesia and many other parts of the world, the height of colonial activity in the second half of the 19th century increased the intensity with which Indonesia was drawn into the world arena and helped to define it as a separate autonomous entity.

**Alternative Modernities – an Indonesian Modernism**

The life of Soewardi Soerjaningrat (aka Ki Hadjar Dewantara) offers a very interesting example of the way Javanese memories of nationhood were formed in dialogue with the international world, and even outside of Java. In 1913, the Dutch celebrating the centenary anniversary of Holland’s liberation after the Napoleonic wars requested that their colonial subjects help finance and support the celebration. In response to this request and more generally to the celebration Soewardi penned a satirical and cutting article that pointed out the terrible irony of such a gesture. The piece, *Als Ik*
een Nedelander (If I were for once a Dutchman) questioned the moral position of the Dutch who proposed a celebration of their own independence in a country which they occupied. For this article and his involvement in the Indische party, Governor General Idenburg sent him to exile in Holland. In the Netherlands Soewardi’s political activism was further mobilised by a number of friendships with artists and writers, including Noto Soroto, Raden Mas Jodjana and Chris Lebeau. Although his exile was unwanted, the relationships he fostered and the self-reflexivity enabled by his distance from Java provided a fertile environment for his intellectual development. In exile a number of his most seminal and influential ideas regarding Javanese modes of education and cultural nationalism came to fruition. These ideas, which sought ways to express Javanese sensibilities as a method for self-determination, were not informed by an homogenous and shared experience of print-culture in Indonesia but rather inspired by his experiences living in the Netherlands and his meetings with scholars from around the world.

In fact Soewardi, talking on culture and education spoke very clearly about the benefits of “intercourse with foreign cultures” and advocated engagement rather than seclusion as a means for developing culture in an international context:

> It is important to remember that it is not possible for a culture to progress when that culture isolates itself. It must not be forgotten that isolation implies coagulation, or fossilisation, and regression or decadence, indeed the death of civilisation in the life of the people. Intercourse with foreign cultures is the way to cultural progress.\(^{85}\)

Furthermore Soewardi recommended that to successfully cultivate local identity through engagement with foreign cultures one should follow the principles of continuity, concentricity and convergence, “Continuity with our own culture, Convergence with the world beyond and ultimately with the world as a whole, in a Concentric unity-united but retaining one's own individuality.”\(^{86}\) Soewardi’s ideas of continuity, convergence and concentricity encompass a broader relationship between one’s self, culture and the larger world that engenders multi-lateral exchange rather than the reductive polarities of difference. Whilst Soewardi may not have provided any direct inspiration to Smail, one can identify some interesting parallels in Smail’s later theory of acculturation. In his attempt to quantify the process of cultural change based on adaption Smail arrived at a theory of acculturation seen through the neutral perspective of creative adaption. He

\(^{85}\) Ki Hadjar Dewantara, quoted in Radcliffe (1971).

\(^{86}\) Radcliffe (1971).
argues that when we do this, “the idea of weakness and cultural decay slides away and is replaced by its opposite, a picture of society strong and vital enough to adopt new cultural elements that appear useful to it, to grow with the times, in short to stay alive.”  

Goankar, writing on “Alternative Modernities”, takes Smail’s understanding of acculturation as creative adaption one step further and argues instead for a cultural theory of transformation. He argues that whilst a theory of acculturation can describe the transition from traditional society to modernity it does so through a set of universal and “culture-neutral operations.” Instead, a cultural theory “holds that modernity always unfolds within a specific cultural or civilizational context” which will determine different trajectories of modernity and realise different outcomes.  

Theorising of specific and diverse modernities is not new to the writing of Southeast Asian art histories. Spanjaard asserts that the 1991 conference, Modernism and Postmodernism in Asian Art, was pivotal in the formation of her own writing about Indonesian modern art. In particular she records the urgency of the various speakers in their call for an investigation of the way that the Western model of modern art was integrated differently in specific localities of the non-West.  

In fact this thesis, almost 25 years later is another attempt to respond to that call. But before I continue with my own ideas about Indonesia’s path to modernity and the interrelated discourse of Indonesian modernism I should first account for the various interpretations within the existing scholarship. Claire Holt’s Art in Indonesia Continuities and Change, published in 1967 has been a long-standing authoritative text, esteemed for its clear cartography of Indonesia’s art in transition from traditional to modern. Holt’s publication was based on personal observations and communication with artists living in Indonesia in the late 1950s, but her engagement with Indonesia, and Bali in particular, had begun much earlier. She lived and worked with the archaeologist Willem Stutterheim and shared her ideas with many others during the height of Western scholarship in the 1930s including Jaap Kunst, Pieter van Stein-Callenfels, Walter Spies, Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead. In fact it was Holt who was central to promoting Spies’  

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87 Smail (1993: 56).
89 Held from 22-25 March 1991 at the Humanities Research Centre and Department of Art History, Australian National University, Canberra. The papers were later published as J. Clark (1993).
90 Spanjaard (2003: 10).
name in conjunction with the development of modern art in Bali.\textsuperscript{92} However when it comes to the case of Java her work concentrates on presenting a continuous Javanese culture and as such the relationship of the local to the international does not receive much attention. At the same time Holt does not recognise the contribution made by artists in the diaspora or who worked in “collaboration” with the Dutch and thereby she locates the advent of modern art in Indonesia as being much after the turn of the century, “The advent of modern art in Java- the overt emergence of new forms, ideas and attitudes that drastically depart from the traditional Indonesian sphere-seems to have been late nineteen-thirties.”\textsuperscript{93} Here Holt’s conditions for modernism demand that in order for art in Java to be modern the forms and ideas that go towards producing them need to be clearly distinguishable from traditional Indonesian forms and ideas. This kind of synopsis means that art that appears similar to, or is produced in ways similar to traditional art, is precluded from participating in projects concerned with modern life or the articulation of what it is to be modern. Vickers attests that such a formulation fails to recognise that the “traditional sphere” was subject to a prior discourse with colonialism and was also based on class hierarchies within Javanese society that undermine its essentialness and uniformity as proposed by Holt.\textsuperscript{94} Furthermore Vickers asserts that, “The complexity of relationships between 'traditional' and 'modern', means that there is no single process of development from local tradition to national modernism.”\textsuperscript{95}

Wright also acknowledges the ambiguities in Javanese culture and the challenges in trying to make clear distinctions between traditional and modern in 20\textsuperscript{th} century Indonesia, “to speak of a secular world-view can only have a measure of validity when seen in conjunction with traditional world-views”. Furthermore she acknowledges the complexities and fluidity of the terms, modern and traditional, which leads her to the conclusion, “...present day Indonesia-whether in the areas of politics, education, or interpersonal interaction exhibits a mix of localised rational/modern and revitalized mystical/ traditional values.”\textsuperscript{96} Furthermore Wright asserts that the term ‘modern’ is inadequate to describe or distinguish the range of “unprecedented developments that have taken

\textsuperscript{92} Vickers (1989: 112).
\textsuperscript{93} Holt (1967: 257).
\textsuperscript{94} Vickers (1996: 7).
\textsuperscript{95} Vickers (2002: 22).
\textsuperscript{96} Wright (1994: 149).
place in the twentieth century from indigenous historical and traditional counterparts”, nor does it satisfactorily address the relationship of indigenous developments to modernism in the West.97

In general agreement with Wright, Supangkat asserts that because common understandings of Javanese culture are based on the idea of an unchanging and uninterrupted culture they fail to understand the developmental traces of modern art within Asian history. He asserts that the popular perception of Javanese culture as static and singular neglects to appreciate the long-standing assimilation of foreign elements absorbed through contact within the region and with the West.98 Supangkat clearly rejects the notion of a universal global tendency towards modernism and claims that such a proposal ignores, “the possibility that modern art was exhibiting the symptoms of pluralism”. Instead he proposes an alternative model based on a combination of local and international catalysts, “when modernism emerged in Asia [it] was not entirely due to the modernism of Europe. Local conditions and realities also motivated the emergence of modernism.”99 Supangkat’s point is further elucidated in John Clark’s Modern Asian Art (1998) where “Asian modernities” are described with tangible and tabled origins within specific regional contexts that assert a plurality of modernisms outside the Western-Euro/American sphere.100

This thesis then will attempt to mitigate approaches that have reduced the history of non-Euro-American histories to a binary conditional on the centrality of their own position. Instead it will take into account Smail’s observation of the inherent irony of anti-colonial histories, Goankar’s theory of cultural change and Clark’s discursive of alternative modernities to situate a history of Indonesian modern art that existed beyond the boundaries of national geographies in dialogue with the colonial. Clark’s reference to the endogenous and exogenous constitution of self in alternative modernities echoes Bakhtin’s terms of centrifugal and centripetal forces that permits a fluid exchange and the formation of selfhoods that exist across and between assumed binaries. So rather than the concept of an imagined homogeneous community formed in isolation from its colonial and multicultural historical reality, this thesis asserts that the Javanese in dialogue with the Dutch conceived their modalities of modernity whilst living in Indonesia and the Netherlands.101

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97 Wright (1993: 183).
100 J. Clark (1998).
101 Khoo (2006: 12-30) makes a similar argument.
This thesis concurs with Vickers, Wright and Supangkat that tradition is subject to change and so we should not be looking for signs of modernity as being significantly different from signs of tradition. However the changes that appear in the Javanese production of portraits from the late 19th century are, I believe, intimately tied to societal change in the forms of class and gender relationships that are produced through international exchanges made available by the vehicle of the colonial state. Significant figures like Raden Saleh, Kassian Céphans, Raden Mas Jodjana, Soewardi Soerjaningrat and Raden Mas Katamsi recognised largely on an international level offer evidence of local voices within the global and equally demonstrate the close ties between Javanese individuals and the colonial state. As members of the Javanese nobility they were well aware of themselves as privileged, but nonetheless differentiated, individuals with free will in the modern sense. Their modernity was a very personal affair, so rather than the idea of a whole community or even nation achieving modernity simultaneously, history is laced with individuals who arrived at a modern self-reflective perspective out of sync with their contemporaries. Their isolation highlights a disjuncture between modernity at a national level and the expression of modernism on a personal level as consistent with Clark’s analysis of the various contingencies of Asian Modernities.

The path of Indonesian modern art is therefore not continuous or chronological, nor was it the result of a singular trajectory. In other words we cannot trace modernism from its early beginnings to its end through stylistic changes but rather through a number of the main protagonists and their modes of visualising the self. And whilst it will only be ever possible to focus the study on the work of few individuals whom propelled art along a modernist course, it is nonetheless very difficult to separate those individuals from their community. Marshall Clark’s citation of Bakhtin attests to the indivisible nature of society, “Our Individuality, therefore, is never entirely private or autonomous individuality, an ‘I’; rather, each of us is a ‘we’.” To concede an inseparable relationship between the individual and the community is to acknowledge the tangible expression of the self as a tension between an individual’s claim to existence and their need to be legitimised by the community. To have one's portrait painted is, as Adams asserts, to locate an individual

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103 M. Clark (2010: 30).
among other individuals by announcing a person in a public sphere from where culturally cognitive viewers can respond by making their own associations about that individual and society.\footnote{A.J. Adams (2009: 25.)}

**A social history of art**

In order to understand the relationship between artists, the production of art and the way that it art was received within a specific historical period, this thesis continues in the tradition of T.J. Clark’s social history of art. As such it will not shy away from paying due consideration to the historical situation of its production, for in the words of Lacan, “all artistic production, including especially that of the fine arts, is historically situated. You don’t paint in Picasso’s time as you painted in Velazquez’s.”\footnote{[Lacan 1992] in D’Alleva (2005: 99).}

Furthermore I aim to account for different ways that cultural production, specifically the making and circulation of portraits was inflected by the changing relations of the individual to both the colonial state and to existing traditional hierarchies. In recognising that “…the encounter with history and its specific determinations is made by the artist [and]… inventing, affronting, satisfying, defying his public is an integral part of the act of creation.”\footnote{T.J. Clark (1973: 13, 15).} This thesis investigates the way that individuals experiencing great epochal and political change, develop new ways of visualising themselves and their communities. Watson, writing on autobiography provides an illuminating model for tracing such a relationship between the imagination and public projection of the self as it coincides with the emergence of the modern nation of Indonesia. This genre-specific methodology opens up a greater understanding of change as perceived by citizens within the nation and how their perceptions were articulated in literature. In Watson's own words, “It offers an example of how a scrutiny of one literary genre, autobiography, composed from within the nation enables sympathetic readers to develop a perspective from those currently available to them in the form of, for example standard histories.” \footnote{Watson (2000).}

Watson’s introduction reveals the potential of such a model when applied to the study of Indonesian art history and its relation to the national psyche with particular interest in the
emergence of the modern self as expressed through portraiture. The adaption of this model seems almost too simple, for if only the words “art genre” are substituted for the words “literary genre” and the word “(self) portraiture” for “autobiography” then one arrives at a suitable model for the methodology of this thesis. But to establish what this social change was and how it was manifest in the production of portraits it is necessary to trace the history of modern art to the pre-twentieth century courts of central Java.

In the late 19th the _Kraton_ or the courts remained the loci of ceremony that stood for Javanese culture and order but the Dutch had negated it’s efficacy by vacating it of its political agency. The Dutch administration had effectively thwarted the political power of the Javanese elite _priyayi_ by allocating them secondary positions in the bureaucratic and military ranks. To compensate them for their debunked political position the Dutch reinvested the _priyayi_ with a renewed sense of cultural superiority as the embodiment of Javanese artistic authenticity. This was tied to a recreation of Javanese culture and history in which the classical pre-Islamic Hindu Buddhists aspects were deemed to be a golden age and were incorporated into the myth of _adiluhung_ (the beautiful sublime). The substitution of aristocratic power with Dutch directorship also meant that the relationship between court ceremonies, as illustrations of aristocratic conventions that upheld hierarchies within Javanese societies, weakened and opened up opportunities for new Javanese power brokers who had access to new technologies of power and business. The self-portraits of Kassian Céphas, Indonesia’s first indigenous photographer located among the edifices of Java’s cultural heritage demonstrate his negotiation with the myth of Java’s classical past and signal the emergence of a “self made man”.

In 1901 the Ethical Policy announced new education and welfare reforms that supported educational opportunities for the non-elite population and programs for improving health and

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109 In Java, the sultans of Jogjakarta and Surakarta were allowed to stay in place, but as C.A. Bayly states, ‘the descendents of the Sultans of Mataram were transformed into equals of low European officials even more abruptly’ (Schechner 1990: 38).
economic growth.\textsuperscript{113} This policy implemented attitudinal changes in the Dutch elite towards their colonies who saw their new role in terms of a colonial cultural mission.

This ‘mission’ turned its attention towards the documentation of ethnographic material that went hand in hand with an interest in unifying territories under the Dutch East Indies. Mas Pirngadie collaborated with the Dutch civil servant J. E. Jaspers to document in 5 volumes the art from across the archipelago. This relation was similar to that between Céphas and Groneman, before him yet he doesn’t appear to have been so self-reflexive about his role in reproducing Dutch modes of visualising Indonesia. His depictions of people remain closely related to the production of types, and his only surviving self-portrait, decorated by Dutch medals, suggests that he felt comfortable with his status within the colonial world, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

Before 1901 access to education in Indonesia was restricted to the elite, namely members of the aristocracy who possessed the appropriate funds and status. Figures like Dr Wahidin, the father of the illustrator and painter Abdullah Surio Subroto, graduated from the STOVIA school for native doctors and later became a founding member of \textit{Budi Utomo}.\textsuperscript{114} The organisation, \textit{Budi Utomo}, established in 1908, was extremely significant in maintaining ties between young western-educated Javanese and developing a discourse of cultural nationalism. Its members were clear that the marriage of Dutch education and spiritual integrity was the way to revitalise Javanese society.\textsuperscript{115} Dr. Wahidin’s ties to the central Javanese courts, and friendships with the Dutch scholar Dr. Hazeu illustrate the significant links between the Javanese courts, European scholarship and forms of Javanese cultural nationalism.

By the second decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century a number of descendents from the Paku Alam and Mangkunegoro royal houses in central Java were living and studying in the Netherlands. Among them were the artist Raden Mas Jodjana, the writer Noto Soeroto and the political activist cum pedagogue Soewardi Soerjaningrat. This generation, informed by the ambitions of \textit{Budi Utomo} advocated a unifying national art and culture that expressed Indonesian identity whilst maintaining the importance of Javanese traditions and aesthetics. Jodjana imagined a new future based on the proud expression of Javanese culture on the international stage. His self-portrait and portraits of

\textsuperscript{113} Vickers (2005: 16-17).
\textsuperscript{114} For more details on the life of Dr. Wahidin see Tashadi (1973) and Suryaningrat (1917).
\textsuperscript{115} Ricklefs (2007: 217).
other cultural ambassadors made by using wood-cuts no longer seek recognition from the colonial state but are rather confident assertions of Javanese subjectivity, as discussed in chapter 4.

These early artists present isolated cases of modernism galvanised in dialogue with European colleagues. Nevertheless, their attitudes were a necessary condition for the later, more overtly nationalistic developments. As such they behaved as an elite mediating group that established the beginnings of a domestic art discourse tied to claims for equality in the international arena. 116 I say this because while artists like Mas Abdullah, Kassian Céphas and Raden Mas Jodjana may appear as isolated cases of modernism, their kinship and friendships ties with the persons behind Budi Utomo and Taman Siswa prove to be a vital link between the Javanese elite and the foundations of counter-colonial education and artist training centres.

Shortly after his return to Java, Soewardi founded the Taman Siswa school program which established schools all over Java between 1922 and 1937. Young Indonesians, although now educated, found themselves culturally dispossessed and without the opportunity to fulfil their new potential in government or commercial employment they turned to political action. Educated within a western style school system, empowered by their proficiency in Dutch language and political thought, they were well braced to take up positions as agents of national change. 117 This new generation, known as kaum terpelajar (educated fraternity) or kuam muda (youth fraternity), engaged in political activity and modern life as exemplified and represented by advertisements for literature, cinema and photographic studios in the newspaper of the same name. 118 Likewise, disenfranchised urban painters of this generation came together under associations where they were able to share knowledge and materials. The establishment of Persagi, the Association of Indonesian Painters, in 1938 by Sudjojono and Agus Djaaja functioned within a similar context to other social and political groups of the period and was integral in galvanising solidarity and establishing bonds among budding artists.

118 Frederick (1989: 26) compares them to an intelligentsia but resists attributing this name to them because whilst they did write and speak about their communities and behave as an educated voice they did not singularly or, as a group, identify with this role. Abdoel Moeis was the chief editor of Kaum Muda, a Malay language newspaper published in Bandung everyday but Sundays and holidays.
As part of establishing their own position as cultural and political ambassadors they expressed dissatisfaction with earlier attempts at cultural nationalism constructed as it was within the experiences of the Javanese elite. This was achieved through an assertion of a “hyper masculine” position in opposition to the previous generation of painters and their ties to the colonial state.\textsuperscript{119} This generation of modern painters othered the feminine and valorised the "artist as hero" as a way to elevate their own sense of masculinity in confrontation with the colonial.\textsuperscript{120} Chapter 5 of this thesis is dedicated to looking at portraits of Indonesian women that construct feminine models of Indonesian selfhoods to serve male expressions of modernity.

Furthermore, as Gouda asserts, the newly forged hyper-masculine position also demanded as part of its own constitution a departure from usual Javanese \textit{halus} (refined) behavioural norms and aesthetics. In the words of Gouda the generation of modern artists who emerged in the 1930s created a new national art by adopting an aesthetic premised on hyper-masculine and \textit{kasar} (unrefined) modes of behaviour.\textsuperscript{121} As a result, portraits produced by these painters were realised in a more overtly emotional and unrestrained painting style that challenged the aesthetic qualities of \textit{adiluhung} or the beautiful sublime as propagated by early elites in collaboration with Dutch scholars.\textsuperscript{122} In the self-portraits of painters like Sudjojono, Sukirno, Bahuruddin and Affandi we find expressions of defiance and masculinity that convey something of the existential dilemma of modern life and assert a masculine self as a union between modern painter and political activist. These self-portraits that intend to reclaim a sense of self through varying degrees of masculine expression are discussed in Chapter 6.

Modern Indonesian art can be described in terms of changes that initially dwelled in the expression of \textit{priyayi} culture, a culture closely linked to the colonial state and one that afforded its members great educational privileges, to an overtly more radical position, that was housed within class distinction and expressed through not just an anti-colonial position, but an anti-colonial position that challenged the \textit{priyayi}’s relationship to the colonial state. This challenge was constituted by

\textsuperscript{119} Use of the term ‘hyper-masculinity’ to describe indigenous responses to colonialism is best expressed in Nandy (1983).
\textsuperscript{120} Arbuckle (2011: 34).
\textsuperscript{121} Gouda (1999: 171).
\textsuperscript{122} M. Clark (2010: 8) argues that if we examine the life and work of Pramoedya, interviews, novels etc we find that he understands the myths and traditions of Java to be equally confining as those imperial dictates of the Dutch. To support this argument Clark sites Anderson’s remark that Pramoedya is ‘crossing swords’ with his Javanese heritage.
modern painters’ desire to sever themselves from \textit{priyayi}, as represented by the court customs and aesthetics, and was expressed in a decidedly more aggressive and emotionally charged manner of painting which hoped to represent the attitudes and situation of the broader population (\textit{rakyat}).

After 1945, Sukarno, whilst championing the \textit{rakyat} publically, demonstrated a tendency to favour the revitalisation of the types of portraits found in the pre-twentieth century Javanese courts that perpetuate symbols of status and power. In other words, he turned away from overtly confrontational portraits as examples of the challenges of modern life, preferring instead imagery that invoked the mythologies of Java’s Hindu-Buddhist heritage. Basuki Abdullah became the favourite painter of Sukarno, and it is through him that Sukarno was able to visualise his fantasies for sexual and divine power. The state portraits of Sukarno and his collection of allegorical beauties will be discussed in chapter 7.

This study of the Javanese self in portraiture 1880-1955 problematises the disjuncture between global and local modernisms through the framework of John Clark’s alternative modernities. The articulation of the various modes and specific origins of cultural production that are recognised as constituting modernism will be achieved through the kind of social history of art advocated by T. J Clark. The complexities of post-colonial writing will be addressed by looking at the ambiguities of colonial indigenous relationships, in particular the role of the indigenous elite as key agents in expressions of modernism through an application of Nandy and Bahktin

In sum this thesis will examine new experiences of being Javanese and their representation in portraiture, by tracing individual and community methods for negotiating power through assertions of self. In the period of high colonialism, in the last quarter of the 19th century, tensions between the Javanese elite, the larger population and the Dutch state intensified. Consequently certain chasms appeared in the understanding of the Javanese self as social changes undermined the hierarchies of the Javanese courts and opened up opportunities for new forms of social mobility and individual expression. Portraits were inflected and occupied with registering global trends in technological and political developments that introduced the camera and the formation of new

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{123} Many other scholars have argued that Suharto, even more so than Sukarno, re-established the dictums of halus values as an indicator of a new golden age in the form of the New Order. See Pemberton (1994:9).
\bibitem{124} J. Clark (1998).
\bibitem{125} T. J. Clark (1973).
\bibitem{126} Nandy (2001) and Bahktin is applied via M. Clark (2012:28-37)
\end{thebibliography}
communities based on ideology rather than kinship ties. Individuals asserted new subjectivities made possible through technology, mobility or social change. I will argue how in some cases these subjectivities were expressed as a means for propagating Javanese cultural norms, in others it was an overtly masculine rejection of those norms and a new positioning of the nationalist self. The term, hyper-masculine, as coined by Nandy and invoked by Arbuckle will be used to describe the ways that Javanese assertions of the self altered in their relationship to the colonial state and Javanese cultural norms.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{127} Nandy (1983) and Arbuckle (2011).
Chapter One: The Self and Portraiture in Java

Portraiture is a representation of a person that can be understood as a likeness or an effigy of a person, a symbol of that person’s social status or an identification of a particular type of person. Many different philosophical and technical approaches have been applied to creating portraits. In some cases physical likeness, facial features and physique have been carefully recreated to form a life-like impression of the sitter. In others the character or intellect of that person is conveyed using externalised attributes including physique, deportment, books, weapons, clothing etc. In the context of Renaissance painting, John Pope Hennessy defines this type of portrait as an “augmented portrait.”\(^{(128)}\) Portraits of a particular social group, as exemplified by Frans Hals’ and Rembrandt van Rijn’s 17th century group portraits of civic guards, are grouped by common attributes such as clothing and tools of their trade. Royalty instead might be framed within certain stylistic symbols and compositional conventions defined by the genre of State portraiture within a given period. This type of portraiture reveals tendencies beyond the individual, sometimes tending to the generic and in other cases to the ideal.\(^{(129)}\) Alternatively, as is the case with much modern portraiture, especially self-portraits, the goal of portraiture is an investigation of internal attributes, psychological state or personality. Ultimately portraits aim to publically reveal something about the social significance of the subject and how that person fits into larger social networks.

This chapter asks how portraiture, a genre embedded in European art histories, provides a suitable model for an examination of Indonesian art? First I look at existing definitions of portraiture and what these might mean in the Indonesian context. Secondly, I give an account of pre-modern Javanese portraiture and plot the ways that the function of portraiture and the Javanese understanding of the self was transformed by the colonial cultural mission and the arrival of new technologies. I then establish the history of portraiture during the period of colonialism, its modes of production, circulation and reception. Whilst primarily concerned with describing the context of portrait production in Java, this chapter initiates an exploration of the way that the history of

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\(^{(129)}\) Jenkins (1947).
portraiture in Java reveals a dialogical relationship between colonised and coloniser that describes a distinctly Javanese transition to modernity.

**How can the genre of portraiture be applied to the Javanese context?**

In her book, *Portraiture*, Shearer West aims to give a comprehensive account of the history of portraiture. West however excuses herself from addressing portraiture in the Asian traditions, based on an orientalist proposition that aligns the West with an obsessive concern with the face as a signifier of individuality, as opposed to non-Western cultures that she determines are less interested in the individual and more concerned with the community.

West asserts that there exists an absence of facial fascination or at least facial expression as an indicator of personal and individual responses in non-Western art. Such a proposition places the art of portraiture within the domain of Western culture as a function of the Western social construction of the individual usually prescribed in a manner of self-awareness defined as modern. West argues further, “The assigning of a specific identity to a represented face and body is thus a strongly Western phenomenon.”

Such analysis is not uncommon in the treatment of Asian portraiture. Lefèvre remarks on the sparseness of scholarly attention to Asian portraiture in comparison to the large weight of books, papers and exhibitions devoted to portraiture in the European tradition. This imbalance was born in part from the biases of scholarly thought on the nature of portraiture itself, which according to Lefèvre, posits portraiture as a Western invention and therefore not apparent in Asia until the arrival of Europeans.

Holt and Wright, commenting on Indonesian portraiture more specifically, follow this argument when they state that portraiture in Indonesia only appeared in conjunction with a modern self as a conjunct of Western modes of thinking in the mid-20th century. Do the implications of these claims mean that portraiture in Asia, or at least the two-dimensional type on paper and canvas, only came into existence in conjunction with the emergence of the modern

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130 Durrans asserts that revealing individuality via the face has not been the only means or always the priority of portraiture in the history of European art. See Yoshida & Durrans (2008: 268)
132 Lefèvre (2011: 1).
individual as an autonomous agent and as a representation of the self? Or was it the case that the act of painting portraits and having ones portrait painted transformed the understanding of the self as Werner Kraus asks, “How did Western pictorial representations transform the aesthetic of Asian minds?”

In looking for a way to think about portraiture outside the Euro-American rubric, two comparative studies on non-Western portraiture in India and China provide an interesting point of departure. Lefèvre’s research of Indian portraiture concerns itself with a religious-sculptural mode of portrait production that existed prior to the arrival of the Mughals or the British. Spiro examines the production of Chinese portraits within the framework of social relationships and hierarchies. Both authors concur that portraiture performed different functions, assumed different forms and was received in different contexts according to local demands. Spiro argues that the multiple functions of portraiture to operate on aesthetic and social levels explain the enduring interest in portraiture. Furthermore she argues that all portraits are bound by a triangular relationship between maker, subject and viewer where each side of the triangle is equally important to the proper functioning of the portrait. In this sense, artists and subject are equally creative agents in the production of the portrait.

For Spiro, the second condition of portraiture is that the viewer must be able to make the connection between the person represented and the function of the portrait. This definition provides for inclusion of narrative paintings that include portraits and sculptural or painted portraits that serve religious functions. For Lefèvre the inclusion of religious portraiture is important because it allows us to think about the way that the function of a portrait serves to give it definition. In fact Lefèvre’s definition of portraiture confirms Spiro’s, albeit in a slightly different formulation. In his account, the production of a portrait begins with an “intent” which is the agreement between an artist and subject to intend to represent the subject in some way. This is consistent with Spiro’s idea of an equal and shared understanding between maker and sitter. Secondly, the portrait must be perceived by the viewer as a representation of the subject.

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135 Lefèvre (2011).
137 Spiro (1990: 2).
addition, or as a reconfiguration of Spiro’s point about the viewer being able to identify the function of the subject, Lefèvre argues that the specific function of a portrait is what makes it different from other images and why it may be located in different contexts to other images.\textsuperscript{139} For Lefèvre then, likeness is important to the extent that it is needed to serve the function of the portrait.\textsuperscript{140} Similarly Spiro asserts that the representation of identity is the primary task of likeness. Furthermore she asserts that such a representation does not in fact need to be an accurate resemblance of physiognomy but rather an accurate likeness of character or at least a projection of an ideal.\textsuperscript{141} State and religious portraits, for example, that seek to establish the presence of religious and/or political power by providing a proxy of, or conduit to those sources of power are not tied to accurate likeness but are rather a demonstration of an ideal. With the conjunction of Spiro and Lefèvre’s conditions for portraiture in mind, I believe I have an adequate model for looking at portraiture in Java.

\textbf{From pre-modern to modern portraits}

Portraiture can function either as a likeness of a person or instead a representation of a certain ideal that is either attained by a given subject or which is aspired to by that subject. By looking at pre-modern portraiture in Indonesia through this lens, I will demonstrate how, during the peak of colonialism, the function of portraiture in Indonesia changed from a purely religious function to one that included important secular and political functions.

Firstly I look at Singasari and Majapahit sculptures of royalty that, whilst not offering an accurate likeness of the person, remained as a site of memory and reverence. In these sculptures the features of the subjects tended towards the ideal, in other words they took on the appearance of an ideal king or queen rather than the appearance of the historical person. Nonetheless they were still understood to represent that person. The type of honorific pre-modern examples of royal portraits underwent a cultural and material transformation during the period of colonialism. I believe however that a continuity can be established between the stone sculptural portraits located in

\textsuperscript{139} Lefèvre (2011: 18).
\textsuperscript{140} For further discussion of the relationship between function and likeness see Brilliant (1991: 7-8).
\textsuperscript{141} Spiro (1990: 9).
temple complexes and the 19th century photographic portraits of central Javanese royalty hung in palaces and homes.

Secondly I look at accounts found in manuscripts across Java and Bali describing the use of portraiture as a tool for procuring and/or possessing a loved one. In these examples, as was also the case in Europe, a male suitor would request a portrait of a potential female partner. The issue of the portrait’s faithfulness was of course of great concern. Too faithful a likeness might prove to be unflattering and cause the suitor to reject his bride to be. A portrait that exaggerated the beauty of the sitter might at first prove to be successful but later have even graver consequences, especially if the suitor perceived himself to have been deliberately deceived.

I begin by looking at the pre-modern Singasari and Majapahit examples of royal portraits and compare them to the 19th century photographic and painted portraits of central Javanese royalty. Many scholars working with concepts of portraiture that are conditional on facial likeness and individual expression have refuted the possibility that Singasari and Majapahit sculptures of kings and queens could be examples of pre-colonial portraits. Reichle, for example, argues that because no attempt was made by the artisans to divert from their conventional stylistic devices for describing physiognomic or facial features, Singasari sculptural images cannot be regarded as portraits.

Reichle focuses her analysis on two sculptures currently located in the Museum Nasional Jakarta. The larger piece, standing at more than four meters tall, has a colossal presence adding to the already threatening depiction of the demonic figure bhairava who holds a dagger and skull cup whilst crushing a platform of human heads under foot. The second figure, Prajñaparamita, which represents, in contrast, the epitome of serenity and meditation, sits cross-legged with her head bowed. Both representations have been associated with historical figures, bhairava with the 14th century Sumatran King Adityawarman and Prajñaparamita with Ken Dedes, the first queen of the Singasari dynasty. At least four high quality Prajñaparamita personifications of the female goddess dating to the 13th and 14th centuries have been found in Java and Sumatra. Reichle asserts

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143 Scholarship in other parts of Southeast Asia offers different conclusions. See for example Coedes (1960).
that from at least the early 19th century locals referred to the statue not as Prajñaparamita but as Ken Dedes, the daughter of a Mahayana monk who was to become first queen of the Singasari dynasty. Sometimes the sculpture might be attributed a persona through its placement within a certain temple complex, through literary allusion, or through inscriptions on the sculpture itself. Reichle concedes that it was usual to create a commemorative temple and a sculpture of a deity associated with the king during his lifetime. In literary accounts of kingship, such as the Nagarakrtagama, some kings are said to be posthumously united with a deity. It is very possible then that this type of sculpture acted as a posthumous portrait when the human king would take on divine status.

Many scholars like Reichle, are nevertheless reluctant to categorise the sculptures as portraits. Klokke also identifies some of the sculptures as having a clear relationship to certain historical kings and queens based on their iconography and textual sources. Furthermore she observes that in ancient Indian traditions even when historical persons were represented in portraiture their individual features were not depicted in likeness, rather they conformed to conventionalised and idealised facial features. Yet she refutes the possibility that the sculptures are portraits or memorial statues and argues instead that they are the personification of a kingly ideal to unite with a deity and attain the ultimate truth. Reichle agrees with Klokke, that although the pieces may have connections with Kings, their individual features were not represented and the statues in fact acted not to memorialise the king or queen but to aid transcendence to the next world.

Both scholars reveal their own prejudices concerning the nature and purpose of portraiture that I believe fails to place the sculptures in their correct context. In as much they align themselves with the understanding of the portrait as a physiognomic likeness of an individual they fail to see the different functions of portraiture as outlined in the model offered by Spiro and Lefèvre. They also fail to see the relationship between those types of portraits and the concepts of kingship as outlined by Heine-Geldern who identifies a recognition of power and entitlement of Southeast Asian royalty based purely on iconography. Heine-Geldern provides many examples where kings have been

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147 Reichle, 2007, p1.
149 Heine-Geldern (1942).
usurped by another through the simple act of placing oneself in the correct attire and the correct location, as signified by the micro cosmological planning of the city.

With such an understanding of the transfer of entitlement, the personal features of the king are unimportant and therefore statues of successive Kings and Queens may exhibit little difference, in fact the tendency would be to maintain the ideal. In this regard they would conform very closely to Brilliant’s definition of state portraits, which he asserts are not portraits of individuals, but rather the embodiment of authoritarian power. In such images, the regalia of the courts and the paraphernalia of statehood remains consistent in providing the required indicators of status, in fact it is the attributional qualities of the vestiges of the king that denotes power rather than the man himself. In this type of portrait the face is an impersonal and secondary means of identification. What remains most important in maintaining the concept of entitlement and statehood is that one is adorned with the appropriate items of statehood.

By the late 19th century the exhibition of state portraits within the homes of Dutch officials living in Indonesia was very common, as described by Louis Couperus:

> In the white spaces between the doors of the rooms hung either mirrors in gilt frames, their lower edges resting on marble console tables, or lithographs - "paintings" they call them in the Indiës of Van Dyck on horseback, Paulo Veronese received by a doge on the steps of a Venetian palace, Shakespeare at the court of Elizabeth, and Tasso at the court of Este; but in the biggest space, in a crowned frame, hung a large etching, a portrait of Queen Wilhelmina in her coronation robes.

Couperus does not seem overly concerned with accuracy. The deliberate generalisations of the titles and attribution by Couperus aided him in demonstrating that in matters of art, Dutch-Indies society was rather undiscerning. For Couperus they were more interested in projections of status rather than art, as seen in their inability to differentiate between paintings and lithographs. The paintings he refers to conform to a tradition of depicting painters and their royal patrons that derives and builds on Alexander the Great’s visit to the studio of Apelles, and includes Leonardo at the court of Francois I and the Dutch example of the *Princess of Orange in Van der Helst’s studio* (1860) painted by H.J. Scholten. The subject matter brings together the genres of

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151 Yoshida & Durrans (2008: 268-269)
152 Couperus (1922: 49).
153 For a discussion on the representation of painters at the courts of their patrons see Levey (1981).
individual portraiture, state portraiture and allegorical painting in its presentation of the classical masters of music, letters and art in the company of their royal patrons. These were very much the types of paintings hung on the walls of the Dutch administrative offices, as we know from the much earlier publication by the Danish architect and draughtsman Johann Wolfgang Heydt. Whilst employed by the VOC, Heydt contributed to the *Allerneuester Geographisch- und Topographischer Schau-Platz von Africa und Ost-Indien*, 1744 including plate XII (1739), the interior of the VOC headquarters in Batavia and XIII, the interior of the Great hall of Governor General Adrian Valkeniers.

**Figure 3** Plate XII, 1739, the interior of the VOC headquarters in Batavia and XIII, the interior of the Great hall of Governor General Adrian Valkeniers from *Allerneuester Geographisch- und Topographischer Schau-Platz von Africa und Ost-Indien*, 1744. Image: Scalliet, Marie-Odette, Koos van Brakel, David can Duuren, and Jeannett ten Kate, 1999
Comparing Heydt’s plate with Couperus’s description we find close similarities which leads to two possible conclusions. Either Couperus relied on Heydt’s illustrations as inspiration for his novel, or the works were still available for viewing in Batavia some 200 years later where Couperus saw them.\textsuperscript{154}

The public exhibition of painted and photographic portraits in the halls and homes of Dutch administrators instilled a respect for Dutch nobility within the local population. Just as a portrait might be exchanged as a gift between two rulers as an assertion of equality and a sign of sovereignty, the Javanese royalty also began to exhibit portraits in their own homes.\textsuperscript{155} As documented in a late 19\textsuperscript{th} century photograph made by Kassian Céphas the arrangement of portraits in the Jogjakarta Kraton was an integral way of acknowledging and exercising power. In this photograph we see that photographs and paintings were hung side by side which suggests that they operated in the same visual economy, yet it is a photograph, not a painting that remains as evidence of this practice. At the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century photography more than any other medium became the preeminent mode for visualising and documenting the lives of Javanese people.

Photography is a unique medium in that it can take the form of both a likeness and an icon. The photograph can provide a direct trace of a sitter or an image as an icon that stands in place of the

\textsuperscript{154} We know that they cannot have still been hanging in the VOC headquarters because it was torn down in 1809. It is possible that the paintings survived and were stored elsewhere like other objects found in the original plate. See Bloembergen & Eickhoff (2012).

\textsuperscript{155} Protschky (2012).
sitter and is generally found in the genres of religious or state portraiture. An icon doesn’t have to be a faithful likeness but it does need to demonstrate the attributes of the sitter. In other words the iconic image needs to exhibit the appropriate iconography within a hierarchy of signs that indicate to the viewer the sitter’s social or religious function. The 19th century photographs of Javanese royalty were iconic images as much as they presented a proxy for the sultan who wasn’t present but who was recognised through the inclusion of the appropriate attributes. In the absence of the sultan the image functioned as a symbol of his power that demanded regard and reverence. Whilst these images owed their formal compositions to European precursors they operated in a similar way to the earlier Majapahit and Singasari portraits.

The relationship between photographs of Indonesian royalty and pre-modern Hindu-Buddhist sculpture is comparable to the Thai case as articulated by Peleggi. Yet whilst both the sculpture and photograph are shrouded in Hindu-Buddhist concepts of the divine and moral kingship, the materiality of the photograph demanded different "readings" and expectations that were historically situated. The 19th century painted and photographic portraits of Javanese royalty were not dissimilar to pre-modern sculpture in that they served as proxies for the bodies of rulers but their function was no longer strictly relative to a socio-religious context. Hung in the visitors’ hall of the Kraton besides the portraits of foreign dignitaries, such portraits were contextualised within the international relations of the day and served to demonstrate the political legitimacy of the ruler. The portraits thus took on a secular function. Furthermore, in the case of the photographic portrait the ruler could demand a portrait as an acute likeness to himself and thereby establish himself more clearly as an historical identity as well as a divine ruler. As a consequence of the pictorial conventions being more closely aligned with European modes for depicting royalty and members of state the performance of reverence, obedience and loyalty towards images of royalty, whilst familiar to the Javanese, took on new meanings within the colonial framework. Portraits or likenesses of Indonesian people also took on new meanings with the arrival of technologies introduced through the colonial state. The concern and issues around verisimilitude that were

156 A photographic portrait is both an index and an icon because it is a direct trace of the physical presence of the person (via light) and because it resembles that person. See D’Alleva (2005: 31).
158 Peleggi (2013: 90).
159 Olausson (2001).
expressed in century court literature came to find themselves reiterated by members of the Javanese elite, like Kartini, who reveled in the camera’s capacity to produce accurate likenesses.

There is a 16th century European tale in which a wife, upon seeing a portrait of her husband becomes confused and assumes the life-size likeness is in fact her husband rather than his double.\textsuperscript{160} A less serious example is provided in the literary adventure of 1681 by Jean François Regnards that attests to the continued practice in the Dutch lowlands of soliciting prostitutes through their painted depictions.\textsuperscript{161} Similarly 19\textsuperscript{th} century English Royal Academy painters were frequently employed in the task of portraying the visages of marriageable beauties. Such images became the subjects of books filled with engravings of beautiful women, a tradition that was taken up by the first photographers.\textsuperscript{162} Such a tradition was also alive in India where the story of Malavikagnimitra by Kalidasa tells of King Agnimitra who falls in love with the young maiden, Malavika after seeing her portrait.\textsuperscript{163}

Stories that tell of love found through pictorial likeness also excited audiences in Indonesia. In Weatherbee’s assessment of Javanese histories compiled by Raffles, a similar story appears in which the painted and sculpted likeness of a Javanese princess, is mistaken for the real thing. Dewa Macuwet demanded a Majapahit princess for his brother Kebo Wiwaha. A portrait was painted of a beautiful woman and presented to the Balinese king. Deceived, the Balinese sent a wedding party to Java.\textsuperscript{164} Holt gives another Indonesian example when she makes reference to C.C. Berg’s translation of the Kidung Sunda in which a painter from the Majapahit court is dispatched to West Java to paint the portrait of a Sundanese princess who is being courted in marriage,

\begin{quote}
When the king took possession of the portrait he was entirely enraptured with it. The longer he looked at it…the greater impression it made on him…it was as if she had taken possession of his innermost self, as if she were hovering before his eyes; and he could not get his fill in caressing her as if she were already sitting in his lap.\textsuperscript{165}
\end{quote}

Florida and Vickers also relate similar stories told in Java and Bali. In Java, the \textit{Babad Jaka Tingkir} recounts a story about the court painter Jaka who, having been commissioned to paint a portrait of

\begin{itemize}
\item[160] Schneider (1994: 14).
\item[162] Perry (2006: 92).
\item[163] Lefèvre (2011: 27).
\item[164] Weatherbee (1978: 84).
\item[165] Translated from Dutch by Holt (1967:191).
\end{itemize}
the King’s wife, was banished because its faithfulness to her physical attributes aroused jealousy within the king.\textsuperscript{166} In Bali the same story is told, but it is the ruler of Klungkung who punishes the painter Sangging for his intimate portrait of the Queen.\textsuperscript{167} Even though such stories are numerous, there is no visual evidence to support them, which suggests that the stories were in fact musings on the potential of an image to present a faithful likeness of reality. In both cases an issue arises when the portrait is seen to reveal too much about the sitter, or is too faithful a likeness as to betray the real person. It is almost that in painting the Queen’s portrait, the painter has possessed her with his eye and his body. Florida explains this in terms of the painter seeing too much, or knowing too much about the inner workings of the court, in other words gaining access to the magic and power of the courts inner sanctum.\textsuperscript{168} There is something about the efficacy of the portrait to deceive, to create a likeness so convincing as to be a surrogate for the real that is unnerving for the ruler. Could someone really know, and in this sense have carnal knowledge of the Queen by holding a portrait of her in his hands?

Such a proposition was clearly a threat to the ruler. Later generations were amused rather than threatened by the potential of an image to stand as a proxy to the person. When photography arrived in Java in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century the question of likeness came to the fore once again. Excited by the indexical qualities of the photograph to retain the trace of its subject many commentators of the day, like Kartini, reveled in the amazing images they saw and remarked on the faithful reproduction of a friend or of themselves. She praised photography’s graces and remarked on the circulation of photographic portrait in social networks, "Before he came here he made our acquaintance at Soerabaja through our portraits."\textsuperscript{169} Aside from commenting on the portability of the photograph, Kartini reveals a fascination, belonging to both the pre-modern and modern worlds, in the portrait’s capacity to generate such a persuasive likeness as to convince others that they have met with the subject. From a painted portrait of a queen to the portable photographic portrait of Kartini, both held in the hands of a possible suitor-lover, there is a continuity in the desire to know another through the portrait. Yet due to changes in technology and new pictorial forms, the aspiration was no longer restricted to kings but available to young boys and girls. Here

\textsuperscript{167} Vickers (2012: 21).
\textsuperscript{168} See Florida (1987).
\textsuperscript{169} Kartini (1985 [1911]: 74).
the photograph provided Kartini with a new sense of herself as a desirable young woman whose image circulated in social circles beyond her own travels.

**Javanese anxieties about the self and modern portraiture**

Some argue that the major difference in today’s understanding of the soul and the self is that whilst in the past the soul was modeled on a constant essential sameness in relation to divine eternity, today’s self is understood as a fragmented constitution quite removed from a broader world view. The 17th century philosopher, Locke was seminal in developing the modern concept of the self that carried into portrait painting. Likewise Montaigne’s notion of the changing self was an important step in the formation of modern understanding of the self as impermanent and constantly changing as opposed to the ancient self which was understood to be stable and embody a universal human essence. Artists such as Holbien, Titian and Durer announced a new way of visualising the self as promulgated by Montaigne and others, as a self having its own agency and autonomy but also a self that was reflexive.

In the romantic period an emphasis was placed on the individual’s personality and individuality as prompted by thinkers in the tradition of Rousseau. This understanding of self is defined not simply through self-awareness but through emotional self-searching, as it seeks a life of complete self-expression. In Europe the desire to reveal an expressive self in relation to nature and the world frequently found its form through enlightenment thought and romantic sensibilities. These two divergent philosophical positions informed the moral outlook of colonisers as they sought to negotiate their relationship to the Other. For Nandy, the combination of romantic sensibilities and enlightenment thought fuelled the desire to control nature and to establish a colonial cultural mission. In the late 19th century, English and Dutch colonisers were inflected with these dual motivations that gave them a different understanding of their purpose in the world. This change in their understanding of the enlightened self, announced a transition from a form of colonisation

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170 Barresi & Martin (2006: 5).
175 Nandy (2001).
driven by economic imperatives to one driven by a civilising mission. Critical to this assessment is the idea that the self is not fixed but is instead formed as part of fluid negotiation that is culturally and historically specific. The idea of a changing self provides one with a model to examine changes to the self within specific historical periods and thereby recognising points of departure, moments of transition and residual elements in the construction of self. So then, how did modern Javanese see themselves in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the Dutch colonial presence reached its zenith, and how was this different from earlier understandings of the Javanese self?

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the period in which my research is focused, European ideas of the self were informed by the prevailing contention extolled by the competing virtues of Romantic and Positivist thought. I argue that the same competing virtues had profound resonance in Java, particularly among educated and artistic circles. A new community forged its existence in the liminal space between tradition and modernity that articulated the being of a dialogical self – a self born of Javanese aristocratic privilege and shaped in the image of European Enlightenment. 20th century writers frequently explained and celebrated the new century with terms like "new dawn", an "awakening" and "new light". The imagery of a new dawn remains consistent in the writings of both local and foreign commentators. The transition from darkness to light was used to explain epochal change in terms of traditional concepts as well as to express excitement about the potential of modernity. Some western commentators, Robert van Neil for example, align this awakening from darkness as a transition from tradition to modernity as a direct result of western schooling that differentiated a “scientific-rational attitude [from] a mystical-animistic attitude.” Anderson agrees that the relationship between tradition and modernity does not relate specifically to time periods but rather to a change in attitude or consciousness. In other words changes in self-recognition were concurrent with epochal cultural change, something the Javanese recognised as a real and dynamic component of life.

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177 See Freeland (2010) for a discussion on the construction of self and the narrative self in portraiture.
178 A concrete example is the formation of the Indies Association (Indische Vereeniging-IV) in Nov 1908. Encouraged by the retired Dutch official J.H. Abendanon, a small group of priyayi living in the Netherlands bonded together to promote the interests of students in the Netherland and keep contact with what was happening at home. They embodied a mix of both enlightenment thinking and cultural nostalgia.
179 van Niel (1960: 221).
The Surakarta court poet R. Ng. Ronggowarsito envisioned the close of the century as the beginning of the end, a period of chaotic and prolonged darkness, a collapse of the cosmological order delicately held in balance by the presence and aptitude of the Sultan. In 1873, not long before his death, he penned *Serat Kala Tidha* (Poem of a Time of Darkness). The poem’s cynical tone suggests that the period of darkness in which the Javanese found themselves, entrapped by colonisation, was a period without end. His pessimism induces him to conclude that there will be no Just King in the future and that the axis of the universe will be forever unbalanced.

Whilst Anderson identifies Javanese concepts of time as originating in Sanskrit writings on cosmology that describe time as a sequence of ages (*yuga*) rotating in a circular fashion from a ‘Golden Age' through less glorious periods until the evil time (*kaliyuga*), he claims that Javanese concepts are more closely linked to the rise and decline of power. Furthermore, he asserts that the Javanese do not really conceive of graduation or decline in terms of time, but rather as two distinct periods of order and disorder.\(^\text{181}\) Strangely the Dutch too saw Java’s decline in terms of two distinct periods, which begs the question to what degree the two perceptions were intermeshed? This question is further complicated by Ronggowarsito’s collaborative work with the Dutch scholar A.B Cohen.\(^\text{182}\) But rather than see decline as a result of their own presence, the Dutch believed it had more to do with the arrival of Islam. Their idea of reviving the Hindu-Buddhist aspects of Javanese culture as a counter to the perceived threat of Islam involved a detailed analysis and codification of culture according to categories, styles and classical canons.\(^\text{183}\) Whilst Hindu culture was seen as the golden age, Islam was seen as a dark age upon which the civilising project of colonialism would shine a new light.

This division of culture meant that the Javanese began to identify with either the Hindu or Islamic aspects of themselves. This division was augmented along social hierarchies. The royalty, through their blood lines and the maintenance of high culture *adiluhung*, could connect to their pre-Islamic Hindu world, those others “polluted” by Islam would have to wait for a more general Hindu revival made possible through the colonial project. Whilst clearly paternalistic and racist, this type of logic

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\(^{181}\) See Anderson (1990: 34-35).
\(^{182}\) Florida (1987).
\(^{183}\) Fakih (2014: 31)
nonetheless held some appeal with Javanese men who really believed in the revival of Java through a reinstatement of the past. At the same time, the understanding of Java as a ruin of its previous Hindu self caused great concern for Javanese people. Fakih argues that the idea of a culture in decline, and the age of darkness described by Ronggowarsito made it difficult for Javanese people to act with any sense of self-assuredness in their projects of cultural advancement. According to Fakih, this created a kind of schizophrenic Javanese self that was split between a construct of an idealised past that could be upheld by high court culture, and the term *adiluhung*, and low village/market culture. For those caught in between, there was refuge and opportunity through Dutch mechanisms of social improvement.

Instrumentalist thinking as an exponent of scientific investigation readied to demystify the superstitious and fugitive mannerisms of the Romantic became a significant prop for colonial approaches to their “Oriental” colonies well into the 20th century. The establishment of institutions such as the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Batavian Society for the Arts and Science) in 1788 and the *Vereeniging voor Oudheid-Land, -Taal en Volkenkunde te Jogjakarta* (Society for Archaeology, Geography, Language and Ethnography of Yogyakarta) in 1885 presented the kind of colonial project of knowledge-gathering that legitimised their activities as being part of a cultural mission for the advancement of all societies. However, the documentation of Javanese culture by Dutch scholars, sometimes in collaboration with Indonesian photographers and artists like Céphas and Pirngadie, had the effect of producing an image of culture as reified and fixed that induced a romanticised perception of the past. This construction of a complex culture stemming from a glorious past was then set as a reference point from where Java’s decline could be plotted. In this way scholarship presented societal change through the lens of cultural decline and its potential rebirth through Western models of science and education.

Soetomo, a student at STOVIA, who studied in Holland from 1919 to 1923 and was also a leader of Budi Utomo, embodied all that was youthful (*muda*) and developed (*maju*) about a new generation of educated elite. His autobiographical memoirs *Kenang-Kenangan* demonstrate the

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187 The Dutch scholar C.M. Pleyte opined that there was little to be gained from developing Indonesian arts and crafts because it was deeply entrenched in unchangeable cultural traditions. See Bloembergen (2006: 254).
188 Nazumi (1972: 34).
way that Javanese at the end of the 19th century negotiated changing conceptions of the self through a discourse of epochal change. Supporting Anderson’s observations regarding the relationship between attitudinal change and epochal change, Soetomo describes altered states of reflexivity as conditional to the passage of time from one period to another, from zaman dahulu (past epoch) to masa sekarang (current times).189 Others, like the nationalist Sutan Sjahrir asserted that Java could only be saved through European science and thought, “To me the West means effervescence, surging life, the dynamic. It is Faust whom I love and I am convinced, that only the West, in this dynamic sense, can liberate the East from its slavery.”190 In this way a sense of one’s own altered consciousness could be externalised and articulated through a discussion around changes in culture.191 One then expressed one’s subjectivity in relation to a construction of zaman dahulu exemplified by adiluhung, a reified Javanese culture, or an aspiration to the future embodied by western science and education, or invariably a combination of these two.

Because these modes of thinking about being Javanese were constructed through the framework of Dutch scholarship or alternatively taught by Dutch teachers in schools, most educated Javanese experienced a sense of historical anxiety via the conduit of the Dutch language. Kartini’s letters, in which she lamented the conditions of Indonesian women, or in which she praised the remarkable potential of photographic and painted likenesses, or commented on the skills of local craftsmen, were all made in the Dutch language pregnant with its own aesthetic and stylistic discernments. Citing the introductory lines of Kartini’s first letter to her pen-friend Zeehandelaar in 1899, in which she remarks, ‘Ik heb zoo verlangd kennis te maken met een "modern meisje"’ (‘I have so wished to make the acquaintance of a ‘Modern girl’’), Tsuchiya asserts that the very word “modern”, borrowed from the Dutch is itself a principle signifier of the new age which had arrived via the Dutch. Furthermore he argues that this word "demarcates the new age of the twentieth century from the colonial society of the nineteenth."192 This was not simply a case of using Dutch language to express Javanese ideas. Many of the first activists were in fact educated in Dutch and whilst Javanese remained their mother tongue, the Dutch language permeated their way of thinking about the world - the Dutch language was in many ways their own language.193 It offered the

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189 Anderson (1979: 223).
190 Sjahir (1945: 60-61; 127).
191 Anderson (1979: 231).
192 Tsuchiya (1990: 75).
193 Tsuchiya (1990: 78).
vocabulary and access to certain epistemologies such as political ideology, unionism and art history.

In 1916, writing in Dutch for a Dutch journal printed for readers in Indonesia and Holland, Noto Soeroto reviewed an exhibition of paintings by Th. Van Lelyveld. In that review Noto Soeroto confirms his knowledge of European art history, of the different genres of paintings and means of expression and remarks on the individual successes and failures of different paintings,

   Remarkable also is that of the fifteen pieces in the show only three landscapes and one still life are found. The remainder are portraits and head studies... He has found the middle ground between objective ethnographic study and subjective art. In the handling of the material, more or less impressionistic, understood even so that he uses an exotic subject matter, occasionally also cultural anthropology...he has got the details without lapsing into copy.194

In sum, Noto Soeroto is writing about an art history which is as much his own as it is European, the notion of “otherness” doesn’t apply. Indonesian artists and cultural commentators like Noto Soeroto were very familiar with the general themes of European art. Through education and the viewing of primary and printed secondary sources they became cognitive of the European visual vocabulary and fluent with its pictorial language.195 It is not enough to question whether the paintings and portraits of early Indonesian artists were informed by a European visual vocabulary, the more important question is to ask how they claimed this vocabulary as their own?196 In this regard Javanese painters and photographers might be described as mapping out an alternative modernity, expressed by an altered and reflexive understanding of themselves as individual agents on an international stage. In the words of Goankar this is the moment, “where a people "make" themselves modern, …where they give themselves an identity and a destiny.”197 And although some like Noto Soeroto suffered an extreme crisis of identity in regard to what Soeroto described as his pedagogic father Holland, and his loving mother Indonesia, he wanted to “reach a synthesis between his Javanese self and his acquired Western culture.”198

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195 The dissemination and understanding of European art practice and history in Java occurred well before the Regnault exhibitions of the 1930’s, establishing that the history of Indonesian Modern Art needs to begin much earlier than the arrival of Sudjojono.
196 In this regard the development of Indonesian art history is comparable to Tscuchiya’s (1990: 76) remarks on Indonesian nationalism existing as a discourse within the language of the coloniser.
Modern portraits

To address the way that western educated artists might hope to reconcile their Javanese self with their newly acquired Western self, I return to Soeroto’s comments about the nature of portraits in the Th. van Lelyveld exhibition. He writes, “The remainder are portraits and head studies... He has found the middle ground between objective ethnographic study and subjective art”. But what is this middle ground, is it also a way of reconciling the character of Dutch scholarship to objectify Javanese culture with the desire to express a newly awakened Javanese subjectivity, to balance the instrumentalism of the enlightenment with the sentiments of romanticism? Furthermore how does it help us understand the different trajectories of arts training within the colonial state that led one to produce studies in the service of ethnography or instead to make portraits expressive of subjectivity?

In the chapter 3, I examine the careers of early 20th century artists to see how their training and careers led them to produce images of people that tended towards the characterisation of an ideal rather than likeness. I discuss how illustrators like Mas Abdullah and Mas Pirngadie worked in the modern world of the illustrated press yet maintained their ties to Dutch constructions of Java. Mas Abdullah didn’t produce any portraits that we know of, but he did work as a newspaper illustrator in Holland where he made a number of caricatures. He was the first Javanese artist in a long line to make caricatures and so presents a new form for expressing a Javanese subjectivity. Similarly Mas Pirngadie left only one self-portrait, but he did produce a number of figure studies and volkstypen (lit. folk types). He initially worked for the Batavian Society for the Arts and Science and then as an illustrator alongside the Dutch civil servant and ethnographer, J. E. Jaspers producing technical drawings of types of objects and people. Volkstypen were of course integral to colonial methods for visualising the colonised through the lens of scientific objectification. Equally they served to excite the curiosities of audiences at home regarding the nature of people in the exotic east. Pirngadie was quite significant in helping Jaspers to construct a lexicon of Javanese patterns and designs that seemed intended to hold modernity at bay.

As already mentioned many Javanese came to learn about their own history and culture through the Dutch school curriculum. Because many Javanese felt uneasy about their co-option into the
Dutch system they adopted the spiritual as a means to combat both western domination and its realisation in the material world. Others artists like the photographer Kassian Céphas and the print maker and painter Raden Mas Jodjana played with self-portraiture to express ideas about the Javanese self in a deliberately ambiguous way. The self-portrait as a site for either asserting or narrating one’s self has been described by Bond and Freeland, and was taken up by Arbuckle in her treatment of Emira Sunassa. In accounts of a narrative formation of the self, we invent ourselves as though characters in a novel that is no more than a self conceived fictional account of our own identity pieced together from things from our past in order to create a cohesive narrative from where to project ourselves into the future. The fictional account is in fact who we really are, it is not a false account, but simply a subjective one. In this regard we are reminded that self-portraits are not necessarily clear indicators of personal subjectivity or cultural persuasion but instead reflect as much as they inform the individuals position towards social networks and affirm sometime conflicting moments of being. On performing a particular kind of ethnic self on an international stage a number of scholars have remarked upon Asians artists who, in attempting to cultivate new selves in negotiation with the other, have reverted to a performance of cultural difference. Whether the case of Céphas and Jodjana demonstrates a retreat to the Javanese spiritual world from the anxieties of the modern world or, instead, a modern performance of self will be discussed in chapters 2 and 4.

In the 1930s a new generation of Indonesian artists emerged. Their political direction was more radicalised but their anxieties about the role of Javanese culture in a modern Indonesia persisted. By the time of their emergence a whole generation of Modern European painters, including people like Van Gogh, Picasso, Cezanne and Gauguin had long established their careers as a deliberate departure from the academic realism of the saloons. Their paintings, which circulated in Java in printed form or the Regnault exhibitions, revealed the complexity of the modern psyche through a new approach to painting and opened up new ways for young Javanese painters to think about

204 Cohen (2011) and Mathur (2011).
cultural transition in Java.  

Whilst the myth of modernism was born from “fictions of new beginnings as a way to reclaim”, painters in Java retrieved a sense of self through a position of hyper-masculinity that confronted the validity of an ambiguous Javanese self.  

These painters, led by Sudjojono, rejected the association of earlier Javanese artists with Dutch artists and thereby announced themselves as the new avant-garde. No longer content to represent themselves in the guise of colonial status or to perform some kind of homage to the sanctity of a Javanese golden age, the new painter preferred to locate himself irreverently, cigarette in mouth, amidst the urban dwellings of Java’s modern world. The unveiling of the ordinary and its elevation to worthy subject in art undermined the existing hierarchies of academy painting that emphasised the noble and sublime qualities as exemplified by the paintings of Raden Saleh.  

In the words of Sudjojono, good art, “conveys reality, doesn’t look to the greatness of ancient times, in Majapahit or Mataram… but instead the art of high value is that which originates in our daily lives.”  

In other words the myth of adilhung, of reified polite Javanese culture was superseded by the myth of modernism.  

In Chapter 6, I ask how the self-portraits of this period confidently announce the maker’s arrival as a modern artist. For the first time since Raden Saleh we see the self-portrait in the studio where, equipped with his tools of the trade, brush, easel and mirror, the painter affects the likeness of the modern painter. In many we see the conjunction of likeness and ideal as the painter depicts himself as both person and modern painter, or person and revolutionary figure. From this time on portraits were used by artists and patrons alike to demonstrate their allegiance or aspirations to certain ideological positions.  

In Chapter 5, I examine the ideal roles attributed to women in Javanese society and the way they were represented in portraiture. The allegorical portrait of mothers, for instance, tied women to ideals of women’s roles and nation building. There was also a counter-ideal found in the modern
portraits of prostitutes. This was the ideal of the working classes, the ordinary person and was a method for painters to identify with the conditions of the people (rakyat). The “schizophrenia of the Javanese self” that articulated a split between an ideal of high culture housed within the rhetoric of the reified courts, or in contrast, the low culture of the factory, the street or the market place, begun to take hold in the consciousness of the modern painter.\textsuperscript{209} The painter’s indulgence in sexual fantasy located in the portraits of urbanised women, prostitutes and market vendors is just one aspect of the painter’s ambition to disassociate from Javanese high culture. In the tradition of Courbet and Manet, the depiction of societies nefarious other-worlds becomes a way to challenge perceptions of morality and value where “basic desire, doesn't have to be seen as a dead weight holding us back from spiritual ascent, but is to be whole heartedly embraced.”\textsuperscript{210}

Yet whilst Sudjojono may have adopted positivist political principles, rejected conservative ideals and embraced objects and scenes of everyday life as a way of undermining hierarchies of value, he still held onto romantic ideas about the charisma of the artist, as demonstrated by his remark that “What gives value to the painting is not convention, but the soul of the painter.”\textsuperscript{211} We see here Sudjojono’s subscription to romantic assumptions about the exceptional sensibility of the artist to conjure emphatic and inspiring visions of humanity.\textsuperscript{212} For Sudjojono, the task of the artist was not to reproduce the world in an objective, scientific way. Instead, painting was the pursuit of giving expression to the inner soul.\textsuperscript{213} He would later refer to this as the Jiwa Ketok or visible soul.\textsuperscript{214} So whilst Sudjojono did not advocate a retrieval of a self found in the glories of Java’s antiquated past he was not ready to completely abandon the romantic as a strategy against the scientifically-informed secular self.

It was not until Sukarno began to amass his own collection of art that we see a return to a kind of self-fashioning that relied on mythologies of a glorious pre-Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist age. In chapter 7, I discuss the way that the portraits commissioned from the court painter Basuki Abdullah and in the allegorical portraits of his wives as goddesses, Sukarno aspired to align and legitimise

\begin{footnotes}
\item[209] Fakih (2014: 26).
\item[213] Soedjojono (1946a: 11).
\item[214] Sidharta (2006: 43).
\end{footnotes}
himself through demonstrations of classical and divine association.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have discussed an alternative model for portraits that describes portraits as serving different functions within different societies and have demonstrated the links between pre-modern and modern portraits in Indonesia. I have discussed the altered states of selfhood that emerged as part of the colonial discourse and the way that photography in particular served as an adequate tool to negotiate those changes. In closing I have introduced the core concerns of each chapter and outlined how they will address the relationship between different states of selfhood and their manifestation in portraiture.
Chapter Two: Kassian Céphas: the visual economies of photography and technologies of the self (1880-1901)\textsuperscript{215}

Late-19\textsuperscript{th} century colonial reforms based on enlightenment principles provided increased education and employment opportunities for the non-elite. Concurrently the public perception of the Javanese aristocracy came under closer scrutiny, as new socially mobile individuals emerged. As a consequence traditional hierarchies were undermined, leaving many members of Java’s elite either anxious about maintaining the status quo or on the other hand excited about the future.\textsuperscript{216} In the context of dramatic societal changes in the period of high colonialism and, in what many commentators of the day saw as an epochal transition, the photograph became the medium in which the discourses of colonial enlightenment and indigenous subjectivity were imbedded.

This chapter explores the potential of the camera as a symbol and tool of technological modernity to engender a new mode of seeing oneself.\textsuperscript{217} The photographer Kassian Céphas (1845-1912) who worked alongside the Dutch physician and amateur archaeologist, Isaac Groneman (1832-1912), used the photographic image to express a modern subjectivity, forged in a dialogue between Dutch constructs of an idealised Javanese past and the promise of new futures. In this chapter I first examine the formal qualities of Céphas’ state portraits, used as a means of representing aristocratic presence and order. I then situate Céphas’ work in the context of Dutch scholarship, particularly the documentation of archaeological sites. I conclude by looking at the way Céphas was able to use self-portraiture to construct an image of himself as an interlocutor between the colonial and Javanese worlds.

\textsuperscript{215} Technologies of the self is a term and set of concepts borrowed from Foucault. See Luther, Gutman & Hutton (1998)
\textsuperscript{216} The situation can be likened to that of colonial India where Nandy (1983:11) argues that it was not until the British Empire became interested in the idea of a civilising mission that their rule begin to express a cultural superiority and in turn raise alarm with the indigenous elite.
\textsuperscript{217} Pinney (2010: 145) asserts that the arrival of the camera as a technological device disrupts culture and opens up a new political space in which subjectivity can be projected.
The ambiguous nature of photography in colonial Java

In colonial Java, the camera was a sign and an instrument of western modernity. It could be used in the causes of modern society to document the construction process of a railway line, to identify criminals and “types” or as a tool to create nostalgia for things past and images of the sublime. Its versatility in creating images to simultaneously support an imagination of a pre-modern Java and a modern Java located it at the heart of a psychological crisis regarding endeavours to link Java’s future with the imagined glories of a pre-colonial past. The editors of photographs for the journal *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud & Nieuw*, for example, used photography to both articulate and document their concerns about the changing world. On one hand, romantic fascination with the fragmentary condition of life invoked a regard for nature and memory that informed the use of photography as a means for preserving the myth of a reified Javanese culture. On the other hand, photography was employed as a tool of scientific investigation in the study of natural sciences and anthropology. These two competing and sometimes conflicting uses of the camera became an important point of consideration for some Javanese like Raden Adjeng Kartini and Kassian Céphas who saw in the camera, the potential to reveal their ambiguous relationship to the modern colonial world.

Raden Adjeng Kartini (1879-1904) is widely regarded as the first Indonesian feminist and integral to the development of Indonesia’s national agenda. She was born into an aristocratic family and grew up in the Regent of Jepara’s residential compound in East Java. As a result of her determined activism promoting education for women, the first High School for Javanese girls was established posthumously in her name by the Minister for Instruction, Religion and Labour, J.H. Abendanon. The creation of the school was integral in collapsing inequalities between girls and boys in Java and the divide between Javanese feudal society and modernity. Although the introduction of modern modes of organisational structure such as the schoolroom and school curriculum were fundamental in transforming aristocratic children enmeshed in parochial culture into adults educated in global politics, the classroom was nonetheless structured and informed by colonial

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218 For further reading and essays on these themes see Groeneveld et al (1989) and Newton (2008).
219 Mrazek (2002) argues that the Dutch used photography in a completely unsympathetic attempt to distil an Indonesia for their own imaginations.
imperatives. Her own life, complicated by the difficult negotiations between the world of the Javanese aristocracy, colonial friendships and the emancipation of all Indonesian women is reflected in the following her remark, “Who shall lead the people out of the dusky realm of fairytales into the light of work and reality? And then, when superstition is cast off, we do not want the poetry to be trampled under foot.” Kartini’s desire for change from the “dusky realm of fairytales” was offered metaphorically by the camera which promised the possibility of shining a light on the future whilst also holding fast to the poetry of the past. Kartini's understanding of photography very much expressed the ambiguity of her own position in regard to the past, embodied by the Javanese old world, and the future illustrated by the European modern world. Strassler opines, and I concur, that she was not fundamentally different from those who used it to support a colonial presence in Indonesia and argues that she too was caught in the trappings of romantic nostalgia for familiarity and tradition deemed to be on the verge of dramatic change, as reflected in the following passage,

I wish so often that I had a photographic apparatus and could make a permanent record of some of the curious things that I see amongst our people. There is so much which we should like to preserve, so that we could give outsiders a true picture of us Javanese.

Strassler identifies Kartini’s elevated position within and between two communities, the Javanese and the European, as one of distance. Strassler attributes this distance to the double gaze of the elite native. Her identification of Kartini’s distance between two communities might be alternatively explained by Kartini’s apprehension regarding the ambiguity of the photographic image and furthermore by the potentially alienating practice of capturing such an image. Strassler is perhaps referring to what Sontag identifies as the falsifying abstraction afforded by the mechanical interruption of the lens into life. Kartini’s state of excited anxiety at not being able to capture a likeness of her sister for memories sake as expressed in the following citation clearly demonstrates the type of abstraction of life to image as identified by Sontag: “On her head jeweled flowers on spirals were fastened. So veiled and crowned, it was as though she had stepped from a page of the ‘Thousand and one nights.’ Sister looked like one of the fairy princesses...What a pity

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222 Strassler (2010).
that she could not have been photographed in it.” Kartini appears confused by romantic sentiment and the paradoxical promise of the camera to reduce an event to an image whilst at the same time to immortalise that very event as its “true” trace. Her confusion or anxiety about the camera’s capacity to reproduce a memory is an apt metaphor for an individual preoccupied with strategies for engaging scientific instrumentalism in the rebirth of a memory of Java’s past. So rather than identifying Kartini’s position of distance as engendering a “double gaze”, I argue instead that Kartini’s fascination with the camera engenders a self-reflexivity and a concrete way for Kartini to articulate the complexity and ambiguity of her own position between Java’s past and present. Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest that Kartini ever used a camera so she was not in a position to exercise a “double gaze.” In the case of Kassian Céphas, Strassler’s analysis maybe closer to the truth. For a man oscillating between two cultures and also trained and efficient in producing photographs, he was able to invest within the photograph a duality that inflects a “double gaze”, as discussed later in this chapter.

An introduction to studio photography in Java

In Java, as elsewhere, the advent of photography and the photographic portrait altered the way that portraits and the people they represented were circulated and received. The photographic portrait, in comparison to its painted predecessor, was an easily portable, relatively inexpensive, displayable and exchangeable icon of an individual. Its availability, of course owed largely to the same properties being true to the camera itself, the relative low cost of the machine, its portability and ease of use. For these same reasons photography was embraced equally and at the same time around the world. In other words there was very little lag in the use of photography say in London and in Delhi, or in The Hague and Batavia (Jakarta). The world’s first portrait studio opened in New York in 1840. Only four years later, in June 1844, Adolph Schaefer began making Daguerreotype portraits of individuals in Batavia. The first photographic studio in Batavia was opened in 1857 by the English firm Woodbury & Page. There were many other itinerant

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224 Kartini (1964: 159).
225 Adolph Schaefer originated from Dresden and was working in The Hague by 1843. He was commissioned by the Minister of Colonies to make photographs of Javanese antiquities. He arrived in Batavia in 1844 and in 1845 made 58 daguerreotypes of Borobudur (Groeneveld et al 1989: 49).
photographers who worked in makeshift studios and found work in the Javanese courts including the Swedish photographer Cesar Duben (1819-1888) who advertised portraits and landscapes and the Belgian painter and photographer Isidore Van Kinsbergen (1821-1905) who is said to have taught himself photography from a book he acquired after his arrival in Java.\textsuperscript{226} It is most likely one of these two men who taught Indonesia’s first indigenous photographer, Kassian Céphas whilst he was working as an apprentice in the Sultan’s court in Yogyakarta.\textsuperscript{227} Given the evidence of his watercolours, Céphas was probably trained as both photographer and painter.\textsuperscript{228} In fact many painters worked alongside photographers and combined their expertise to develop images of comparable visual currency. This meant that the studio photographer was patronised by the same members of the aristocracy and social elite that supported the painter. The painter and photographer were sometimes the same person, that is to say the contractor employed to make the photographs for the family album or the carte de visite was the same person who produced the artwork for the album cover or an oil painting depicting the same subjects.

It was not uncommon for classical poses and pictorial devices found in painting to be used in the staging of photographs and vice-versa. Lighting, emulsions, papers, exposure times, lenses and even retouching were employed to manipulate the photographic process in the imitation of painting.\textsuperscript{229} Pictorial props such as the column, the position and posture of the sitter and even the drapery common to both painted and photographic portraiture in its early introduction demonstrate the close relationship between painted and photographic compositional logic in late-19\textsuperscript{th} century Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{226} Loos-Haaxman (1968: 204).
\textsuperscript{227} Guillott (1982: 61) argues that due to confusion arising from Javanese concepts of conception and birth his actual birthdate is a year earlier in 1844. Knapp (1999: 5-6) asserts that Céphas was born to indigenous parents Kartodrono and Minah, dismissing claims by other authors that Céphas was the coveted son of the Dutch man Frederik Bernard Franciscus Schalk. Furthermore the issue of Céphas’ mentor is still unresolved. De Graff (1981) has argued that it was van Kinsbergen, Knapp (1999) that is was Camerik and finally Newton (2008) has suggested that it was Cesare Duben. Personal communication from Werner Krauss (2016) establishes Camerik as the confirmed teacher of Céphas. It also suggests that Camerik may have instructed Céphas in watercolours as well.
\textsuperscript{228} It is possible that he learnt to use watercolours from Dr. Groneman who was an amateur watercolourist.
\textsuperscript{229} It is likely that prior to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Indonesian photographers bought their materials from agents in Singapore or from itinerant photographers who travelled between Singapore and Indonesia. G.R Lambert, for example, worked in both Singapore and Indonesia. His studio advertisements in Singapore attest to the use and sale of photographic equipment including bromide, plantinotype, allumina-silver and chlorosilver-collidion. See The Singapore Free Press & Mercantile Advertiser. Singapore, 1895, p. 1.
Iconography of the royal court portraits

The first generation of American photographers borrowed backgrounds, lighting and poses from 18th century painted portraits and they were no less keen to maintain the ideals of likeness that inhabited those same paintings.\textsuperscript{230} Up until the 20th century American and European photographers had no need to develop a new visual language for portraits. Similarly Clark contends that in 19th century Asia, painting and photography operated within the same visual economies.\textsuperscript{231} In as much as both mediums were enlisted to present the subject within a certain visual economy of political and cultural relations, I agree that the situation in Java was the same.

The potential to produce a photographic image of oneself was appealing to 19th century rulers of Southeast Asia who used them to affirm their own significance in global and domestic politics, sometimes adopting visual vocabulary common to their European correspondents and neighbouring countries.\textsuperscript{232} Photographs of Javanese royalty were given as reciprocal gifts to European monarchs and were hung alongside them in Javanese palaces. Céphas made a very interesting photograph that documents the audience gallery of the Yogyakarta kraton decorated by numerous painted and photographic portraits.

Figure 5 Kassian Céphas, De voorgalerij van de woning van de sultan in de kraton van Jogjakarta, (The front gallery of the home of the Sultan in the Kraton in Jogjakarta), albumin print, 16.5 x 22.5 cm, 1880. KITLV 42758

\textsuperscript{230} Cage (1997: 123).
\textsuperscript{231} J. Clark (2013: 67).
\textsuperscript{232} For a discussion on Thai royal photography see Veal (2013: 1).
In all at least 17 portraits hang above the line of chairs put in place to receive guests. Pemberton has argued that the chair, more than anything else, was orchestrated as a Javanese tool for marking power relations. The empty chairs hint at the purpose of the portraits in as much as both operate as a proxy to a real entity and serve to demonstrate the ideal ordering of personal relations. In this photograph we can see that the chairs are arranged in a way to serve the hierarchies of the court and allocate each guest a proper position in relation to the central royal couple, whose chairs are marked by the decorative addition of two embroidered horses facing each other in perfect symmetry. Hanging behind these two throne-like chairs are two framed portraits of Javanese aristocracy. The one on the left is a man standing in military attire, with his sword hanging from his left hand while his right hand appears to rest upon a map of Java. In most regards the compositional arrangement and the inclusion of attributional objects is comparable to that of Raden Saleh’s painted portrait of Hamengkubuwono VI dated to 1860 and still in the Yogyakarta kraton collection.

![Image of Raden Saleh, Hamengkubuwono VI](image.png)

**Figure 6** Raden Saleh, *Hamengkubuwono VI*, oil on canvas, 1860, Yogyakarta Kraton collection. Image: John Clark.

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234 After communication with Werner Krauss (2016) I am led to believe that the image in the photograph is in fact Raden Saleh’s painting of Hamengkubuwono VI.
The figure on the right is a seated man, his legs are pendant and his feet rest on an elongated stool. He wears a *kain panjang* (long cloth) around his waist that is tucked up to reveal short trousers. His hands rest on his legs, giving the effect of a dignified yet relaxed pose as illustrated in an early lithograph of Hamengkubuwono VI by an unknown artist.

![Figure 7 Hamengkubuwono VI, chromolithograph or photochrome after the photograph of Isidore van Kinsbergen, Yogyakarta kraton collection](image)

Whilst each portrait in the photograph has been given an index number, and would have at some point been identified, the list has since been lost. We are left with a handwritten caption that reads to the effect, “Here is the Sultan of utmost rank and other visitors to the kraton who without
exception were also of high rank.” Even without knowing the identities of each sitter, three things remain clear. First, 19th century paintings, lithographs and photographs in Java operated within a shared visual economy. Secondly, portraits of Javanese aristocrats shared their pictorial conventions with contemporaneous portraits of Europeans. Thirdly, the orchestration of signs of status either through the adoption of props or costume was a deliberate strategy to pictorialise different modes of recognition rather than reveal some inner workings of the subject. In the years after Céphas took this photograph, he went on to make a large number of studio portraits of the Hamengkubuwono royal family and in many examples he remained consistent to the two central models. The standing man in military attire framed within Western allegories of power and the seated man with legs apart surrounded by the Javanese signs of power, the court regalia known as *ampilan*.

I first examine the model of the seated man that sought to situate the sultan in a discourse of Javanese cosmological order. Both colonial and Javanese patrons of photography were well aware of its indexical qualities, or the causal relationship of the photograph to the subject, as distinct from the paintings’ intentional relationship to the subject. The understanding that a photograph captured reality appealed to colonisers keen to document their achievements and technological advances in the context of their cultural mission and equally to the Javanese royalty keen to maintain proof of their claims to cosmological significance. In the case of official and ceremonial portraits, where any expression of the subjective nature of the man might be regarded as threatening or undermining to the kingly figure, the camera could be trusted to provide an objective outcome. However, significantly, the Javanese aristocracy were also aware, or became aware through their relationship with the photographer, that the photograph could also be used to contrive an image. They understood that when people are photographed the dialectic between their resemblance and their social presence is complicated by a set of transactions between the symbolic and the imagined that arises from their public circulation and reception. In other words the indexical qualities of a photograph are prone to a number of transformative and interpretive interventions made by the camera operator and the sitter. In 19th century Java such interventions

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235 Author’s translation.
236 A photographic portrait is both an index and an icon, because it is a direct trace of the physical presence of the person (via light) and because it resembles that person. See D’Alleva (2005: 31).
237 The intentional relation of the painting to the subject does not guarantee the existence of the subject, whilst the causal relation of the photograph to the subject provides proof of the subject (Neil and Ridley 2002: 196).
can be defined by the creative orchestration of symbols of power. The 19th century photographic portraits of Javanese royalty held a public and religious significance rather than a personal or artistic one. They reveal little about the personality of the sitters. Instead they exhibit a sombre aesthetic that solicits an objective regard. The members of royalty appear as almost beyond the human, definitely beyond the personal, as abstract truths of cosmological scale that demand respect and subordination.

As state portraits they were the embodiment of authoritarian power and the symbol of a long bloodline that distinguished them from the ordinary and imagined them as the ideal. The ideal for which they stood was further augmented by the inclusion of certain objects known for their association with Javanese systems of power. The *ampilan* were the very objects that expressed the status and position of a person within the palace hierarchy. The standard regalia of the Yogyakarta court, consisting of 8 items made from precious metals that symbolise different attributes of the sultan, are illustrated in the photograph below. From left to right they are: 1. a golden peacock; 2. a deer symbolising swiftness of mind and action; 3. a giant snake (*naga*) symbolising might and responsibility; 4. a handkerchief box symbolising cleansing of stains from the soul; 5. a lantern symbolising the giving of light to those in darkness; 6. a conical powder container symbolising benevolence; 7. a goose symbolising purity; 8. a rooster symbolising bravery.

![Photograph by Kassian Céphas, in Groneman, De Garebeks te Ngajoyakarta, 1895](image)

*Figure 8* Photograph by Kassian Céphas, in Groneman, *De Garebeks te Ngajoyakarta*, 1895

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239 Jenkins (1947: 1).
240 van Beek (1990: 48).
The Sultan of Yogyakarta also has a small golden throne called a *dampar* that he sits on during public occasions with his feet resting on a small stool with a betel-nut box, a golden spittoon and other objects placed around him.\(^{241}\)

![Figure 9 Photograph by Kassian Céphas, in Groneman, *De Garebegs te Ngajoyakarta*, 1895](image)

This photograph has an uncanny similarity to the earlier image by Céphas, in that we find another empty seat awaiting a sitter. Furthermore, in the absence of the Sultan the attributes of power remain unmoved, as symbols fixed in place they do not just locate the sultan within a particular guise of power they in fact represent the sultan. The idea that these objects are not just symbols of the ruler but legitimising is echoed by Heine-Geldern, who identifies a mode for recognising power and royal entitlement based purely on iconography as discussed in chapter 1.\(^{242}\) Following this logic a ruler is legitimised by the simple act of placing himself in the correct attire and the correct location. The personal features of the sultan are unimportant to the photographer, Céphas, who understood that his task was to represent and maintain the ideal located within the iconography.

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241 van Beek (1990: 47-50).
242 Heine-Geldern (1942).
The sobriety and austerity exhibited in his photographs is therefore not a technical deficiency as suggested by Guillot, but in fact an intentional effect meant to present the ideal appropriate to modes of Javanese expression and comportment defined by the value of *halus*. The principles of *halus* demand that the aristocrat behave in an elegant manner expressed by body posture that demonstrates an inner harmony, restraint and flexibility. If a ruler gives into selfish desire, for example, he will find himself in conflict with these basic principles and thereby shamed and powerless. Following this logic, proper conduct embodied by proper appearance is essential for maintaining cosmic harmony. The subject is found seated upright and faces his audience in a perspective of precision and symmetry as a means for expressing order and the subject’s centrality in cosmological terms. The symmetry and the frontality of the images are such that if split down the middle, two mirror images would remain, invoking the position of the Sultan as the axis of the universe, the balanced centre of cosmological order. This tendency is relatively consistent across Southeast Asia at the time, and might possibly be explained in terms of either the iconography of Chinese ancestor portraits or the iconography of Bhadrason (pendant leg or European posture) Buddha, which circulated widely in Southeast Asia by the 8th century. The broad positioning of the legs of the Javanese rulers also suggests the aggressive stance of certain *wayang* figures. An examination of the *wayang* reveals an iconography densely encoded with complex political and philosophical attributions that appear formal and rigid and yet, as the epistemological systems of Javanese belief, dictate that they must also accommodate ambiguity and inversion. To this end, Brandon’s description of the values of *halus* and *kasar* as manifest in the *wayang* is a good starting point.

*Wayang* puppets may be so described. Judistira, of the Pandawas, is one of the most alus of *wayang* figures. His body build is delicate, his foot stance is narrow, his nose is thin and sharply pointed, his eyes are almond-like slits, and he looks modestly almost straight at the

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244 van Beek (1990: 44-46).
245 van Beek (1990: 47).
246 The Sultan and Susuhan held many titles that express their centrality to the universe. For instance the complete name of the Sultan of Jogjakarta is Sultan Hamengkubowono Senopati Ingalogo Abdurrachman Sayidin Panoto-Gomo, Kalifatullah, meaning approximately, ‘the Sultan who controls the universe, Commander in Chief, Servant of the Lord, Lord of all believers.’ See van Beek (1990: 47).
247 Recently Phoebe Scott (2013) made some interesting connections between modern portraiture in Vietnam and works executed in the Vietnamese courts in the style of Chinese ancestor portraiture. The fact that Bhadrason type Buddha are still found in aristocratic collections in central Java such as the bronze figure in the Radya Pustaka Museum in Solo suggests that at the very least in was a mode of representation not unknown to the Javanese aristocracy in the period when the opportunity to be photographed arose.
ground. These are all very alus features to the Javanese. On the other hand, the ogre king, barandjana, whose body is fat and bulging and covered with mats of repulsive hair, whose foot stance is broad and aggressive, whose nose is bulbous..., whose eyes are large, round and staring, and who haughtily looks straight out is kasar in almost every possible way.\textsuperscript{248}

Whilst this description identifies the extremes of \textit{halus} and \textit{kasar} characteristics, many of the wayang characters exhibit fluid qualities that oscillate between the two. Brandon continues to identify 6 character types that express the decline from \textit{halus} to \textit{kasar}. The highest class exemplified by the characters Yudistira, Arjuna, Irawan, Sumbadra and Surtikanti is as described above. The second type known as \textit{lanyapan}, whilst almost identical, have the added and perhaps conflicting characteristic of activeness and aggression.\textsuperscript{249} This type is exemplified by Srikandi, Kresna and Karna.\textsuperscript{250} While they are small and extremely refined, the usually-rounded sarong of a refined figure is normally tucked up to reveal a pair of silken trousers, as is the case with many of the royal portraits of central Java.\textsuperscript{251} Could it be then that the portraits of royal sultans with widely-placed feet and direct outward gazes are an invocation of this character type that expresses the utmost in refined behaviour but also aggression?\textsuperscript{252} Moreover, were they an assertion of divine power in a period when their real political power was under threat by the Dutch colonial presence. Could these photographs offer an image as a site of memory, like the court literature of late 19th century that was pregnant with masculine sexual potency in an attempt to re-establish the masculinity of traditional hierarchies?\textsuperscript{253}

A number of scholars have also suggested that the increased public performance of ceremony among the Javanese royalty was a strategy to assert presence and significance in a period of decreasing authority.\textsuperscript{254} Citing court literature as one example, Anderson asserts that at this time the ruling class displayed “even greater pomp... to conceal the reality of increasing impotence.”\textsuperscript{255} Furthermore he asserts that their power had been deflated to the point that their presence was a mere image of their former selves.\textsuperscript{256} I have already discussed the state portrait as a proxy for the

\textsuperscript{248} Brandon (1970: 41).
\textsuperscript{249} Brandon (1970: 49).
\textsuperscript{250} Sukarno was named after Karna, an attribute he used to great advantage as discussed in chapter 7.
\textsuperscript{251} Brandon (1970: 49).
\textsuperscript{252} Nandy (1983: 20) makes the point that Indian nationalists adopted the aggressive and hyper-masculine attributes of the anti-hero found in classical texts.
\textsuperscript{253} Florida (1987) has remarked upon the increased assertion of masculinity in late 19th century court literature.
\textsuperscript{254} Among the most notable are Pemberton (1994) and Anderson (1990: 201).
\textsuperscript{255} Anderson (1990: 201).
\textsuperscript{256} ‘the sunans and sultans had become levende wayangpoppen [living wayang puppets]’ (Anderson 1990: 201).
ruler, but with regard to Anderson it should also be noted that the photograph might serve to operate as a reminder for authority in its absence. Theorists have argued that the photograph is a trigger to memory and that photographic portraits can serve as an explicit act of remembrance. In fact, it has been said that the photograph can be used to support ritual remembering. In this regard the photographs of Javanese royalty might be read as an index to a communal public memory, a sacred location protected from colonial intervention - a place of Javanese cosmological order. Yet, although it is tempting to read these portraits in terms of protest, subversion or resistance as Protschky does, it is more likely that they are demonstrations of the Javanese modes of wisdom and leadership that demand clever and gentle negotiation as a central tenant to maintaining power and order.

In this context we are reminded of the example of the Sunan of Solo, Paku Buwono X who was regarded by Javanese of his time as the Ratu panutup (the last King) because he was able to perform the role of the royal ascetic and preserve peace and order even though this meant bowing to the colonial power every step of the way. In this mode of performance, there is a kind of reduction of power to its image that is not diminished by western concepts of power but is still differentiated from it. For Pemberton the differentiation between the Javanese mode of being (cara jawa) and the Dutch mode of being (cara walandi) could be expressed and embodied by the seemingly superficial aspects of costume. The adoption of western codes of dress, including medals presented by western dignitaries, was not motivated by aesthetic considerations but by the aspirations of the aristocracy to display recognised icons of status that would invoke the appropriate level of regard from Europeans and Indonesians alike.

Interestingly the adoption of military attire by the Javanese was not something that occurred in response to the Dutch but rather to the French. Due to the collapse of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) in 1800 and the fall of the Netherlands to Napoleon, the French took over the colonial administration of Java for a short period between 1806-1811. When Marshal Willem Daendels 

257 Whilst Barthes and Kracauer have argued that the precision of the photograph inhibits memory, others have argued that it acts like a mirror to the memory. For a discussion on photography and memory see Batchen (2004).
(Napoleon's only non-French marshal) arrived in Java on Napoleon’s orders in 1808 he introduced military ranks as titles for every official both European and Javanese. Thus began the tradition of Javanese aristocracy wearing military uniforms as a demonstration of status. For the princes of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo) who held the rank of lieutenant-general in the KNIL (Royal Dutch Indies Army) the public display of the general’s uniform was a demonstration of rank and status. Military attire was worn on public occasions and in the photographer’s studio where photographs for public circulation would be made. The versatility and purposeful use of clothing as attribution is clearly demonstrated by Céphas’ commissioned photographs of Javanese royalty, which show them alternating between elaborate Javanese clothing and Dutch military uniform. Sukarno’s adoption of the military uniform is a logical evolution of male anxieties regarding the proper presentation of ones masculine power conceived during the colonial period and symbolised by the military uniform tailored and maintained in a state of crispness and white cleanliness, as will be discussed in chapter 7.

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262 See Carey (2013), whose work on the significance of costume for Saleh also demonstrates Saleh’s awareness of the performative aspects of self-representation.

263 The situation was similar in Japan where Emperor Meiji had himself and his wife photographed in court attire and then himself photographed alone in military attire. Similarly the Thai King, Rama IV (Mongkut) had himself photographed in the uniform of a French field marshal.

264 See C. Adams (1970: 81-82) for Sukarno’s perspective on the sense of masculinity and order embodied by the white suit.
Céphas’ standing portrait of Hamengkubuwono VI in military attire borrows its compositional arrangements directly from earlier photographs and paintings, such as those made by the painter Raden Saleh. Céphas uses an almost identical composition, props and positioning of the sultan in order to imitate the conventions that had long been used to express European conceptions of power and ideas of cultural sophistication. The two adjacent photographs of Hamengkubuwono VIII, made by Céphas on the same day, clearly demonstrate the perpetuation of the early models documented in his own photograph of 1880. These two portraits do not narrate a fluid transition from one style of dress to another as emblematic of social change but rather the ambitions of the sitter to have their power legitimised in both European society and the Javanese world. In the photo on the left Hamengkubuwano VII is seen in his military uniform that signalled his title of honoury Major-General. He only wore it on the occasion of European festivities. The patch-work jacket worn in the photograph on the right was believed to have talismanic properties and was strictly to be worn by the sultan only.  

Changes in fashion did occur, and many are documented in the photographic medium, however, the attribution of photographic representations depicting members of the aristocracy in different attire as an authentic historical documentation of cultural transition is problematic. It is worth

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265 Knaap (1999: 30-31)
remembering that the people photographed were members of the elite and as such can only be understood to represent that minority community. Secondly, the purpose of much photography was commemorative and like its painted counterpart was staged in its performance of certain events. As such, dress would conform to the particular occasion be it a wedding, a religious festival or ritual, the signing of an agreement or a public parade. Photographs of the Indonesian elite of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century do not provide an accurate chronological record of changes in fashion nor do they reflect individual persuasion toward reactionary or progressive politics, rather they depict a general process of assimilating different guises of power. The similarities between Céphas’ photographs and earlier examples are a tribute to the academic techniques and practices of Javanese painters and photographers to represent a stately ideal in a consistent way.

Kassian Céphas and Dr. Isaac Groneman: Dutch scholarship and photography

In the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, court ceremony was an important means by which the courts could maintain public perceptions of regal authority and cosmic order. However some scholars have argued that aspects of culture understood to be indexical of Javanese court tradition and ritual were in fact emblematic of a certain degree of displacement. Photographic projects that sought to document court ceremonies like the one undertaken by the Dutch physician and amateur archaeologist Dr. Groneman and the Javanese photographer Kassian Céphas, invariably exhibit a combination of these conflicting sentiments.

Céphas had a close relationship with the courts of Central Java. He had worked as an apprentice in the courts of Hamengkubuwono, Sultan of Yogyakarta, where he received his training as a photographer and was appointed at the official court photographer of Hamengkubuwono VII in 1871. A short while afterwards he was also appointed as the wedana-rodonas or hoofd-ordonnans (chief communicator) between the kraton and the Dutch resident. The combination of

266 On this point this thesis diverges from Gelman Taylor’s (1997: 44) understanding and “reading” of photographs as historical documents to Indonesian history.
268 The date of his appointment to court photographer remains contentious. Knapp (1999) and Newton (2008) claim he was appointed in 1871, while Guillot (1982: 66) cites his commencement at 1875.
these two positions made him a central figure in the Dutch fetishisation of the Javanese courts via the medium of photography.

Dr. Isaac Groneman also worked for Hamengkubuwono VII. As early as 1872 he sat for a portrait by Céphas, who had been appointed as palace photographer the previous year.\textsuperscript{269} A year later Céphas made another portrait of Groneman and one of his wife, Johanna Amalia Groneman-de Wilde. Following that he made at least three cabinet card format portraits of Groneman in 1881, 1896 and 1897. A note written on the back of the last one records Groneman’s weight of 97 kilograms and reveals that these portraits were used not only for professional purposes but recorded more personal aspects of his life. Aside from their professional relationship the two men formed a strong friendship that served to undermine colonial binaries and establish Céphas as a pioneer of modern Indonesian photography.\textsuperscript{270}

In 1888 they published their first collaborative project, \textit{In den Kedaton Jogjakarta: Oepatjara ampilan en toneeldansen}, the result of efforts to document different ceremonies and dance in the Yogyakarta palace. Groneman understood the limitations of the project and whilst he felt the photographic stills would heighten the readers’ experience, he also cautioned that they were not an adequate substitute for the live performance.\textsuperscript{271} Nonetheless he set out to document the dance as comprehensively as possible and paid great attention to details concerning costumes, sequences, mythical themes etc. At the same time he was responsible for introducing changes to the choreography and groupings of the dancers to accommodate his own taste and the pragmatics of capturing the performances on camera.\textsuperscript{272} For Céphas the occasion marked the first time his work would be published for a wider audience and so he did his utmost to present good quality work. In fact due to technical difficulties only 16 collotypes were of high enough quality to make it into the publication.\textsuperscript{273} Slow exposure times meant that it was not possible to photograph the dancers in movement, while to avoid the use of magnesium light the dancers were taken from their usual

\textsuperscript{269} Prior to his arrival in Yogyakarta Groneman had himself and his family photographed by Woodbury & Page in Bandung. See KITLV image resource.
\textsuperscript{270} Guillot (1982) argues that without the friendship of Groneman, Céphas would have remained unknown. Knapp (1999: 23) likewise concludes that personal and individual relationships were frequently more important than issues of race or nationality.
\textsuperscript{271} Ouwehand (2014).
\textsuperscript{273} In some editions the collotypes were published separately as is the case with the example in the Sydney University Library Collection.
stage inside the throne hall to the courtyard outside where there was much more natural light. Sometimes different shots were made in different areas according to spatial requirements.

Furthermore Céphas, like any photographer, was particular about how he composed each photograph, including and omitting certain things. Groneman was also specific about which scenes and actors were to be captured on film, in effect controlling how the overall story would be narrated. So whilst the project may have been conceived as a form of documentation, the high level of artistic direction executed by Groneman and Céphas alters the significance of the work. Rather than a documentary account of court ceremony and dance, the publication should be regarded as the product of two highly creative and aesthetically conscious imaginations as they grappled with the potential of the camera.\(^\text{274}\) Here, the ambiguous qualities of the camera are revealed as both an instrument to document reality but also to contrive reality. With this project Céphas learnt that the camera could never offer an entirely objective account and is always informed by the perspective of its operator, a point that he used to his advantage in later projects with Groneman.

In 1890 when Groneman was commissioned by the Vereeniging voor Oudheid-, Land-, Taal en Volkenkunde te Jogjakarta (Society for Archaeology, Geography, Language and Ethnography of Yogyakarta) to document the restoration of Borobudur, he employed Céphas to take the photographs.\(^\text{275}\) Archaeology was the most-documented subject by photographers working for the colonial administration but the way that Céphas approached the field and his own interplay with it presents some interesting differences, as will be discussed in the next section.\(^\text{276}\)

**Céphas’ theatricality of the self disrupts the colonial archaeological project**

In the last decade of the 19th century Céphas appears as a shining example of the emerging *petit bourgeois* who employed either their technical or business skills to accrue social status through the accumulation of wealth. Up to this point Javanese custom and notions of status and power were based on the idea that legitimate power attracted wealth. The pursuit of wealth in itself was a sign

\(^{274}\) Ouwehand (2014).

\(^{275}\) Both men were members of the Society.

\(^{276}\) Siegel (2005: 22).
of weakness and moral decay. However, with the dissolution of priyayi power a new financially independent class emerged.\textsuperscript{277} Céphas, who lived and operated his studio in Loji Kecil Wetan, in the residential quarters of the petits Blancs was precisely one of those individuals who established his status based on successful commercial enterprise.\textsuperscript{278} Alongside his role as the official photographer of the court, he worked on numerous projects with Groneman and ran his own professional studio from 1877 until his death in 1912.

As proof of the success of his public projection as an individual reliant only on his own skills, the eulogy printed in the Dutch language newspaper De Locomotief memorialises Céphas using the English term, “self-made man”.\textsuperscript{279} As part of his claim to social and financial independence he pursued equal legal status with the Europeans. In 1891 Céphas and his two sons were granted European legal status as confirmed in the Staatsblad No. 221.\textsuperscript{280} Knapp suggests that his interest in European legal status related to the large social and business networks that he had with his European client base rather than any personal inclination to assimilate with European culture.\textsuperscript{281}

The legal implications of European status would definitely have opened up more avenues for business, but it was his skill in operating between different social spheres that made him, aside from an exemplar of the modern entrepreneur, a very successful photographer.\textsuperscript{282}

By working within the courts and outside, Céphas was a conduit between the aristocratic function of the palace and the commerce of the street.\textsuperscript{283} As previously discussed, he was also the man responsible for communication between the court and the Dutch resident. Céphas’ mobility between two, sometimes conflicting, spheres and his ability to disengage and reconnect himself at will with both the Javanese and European communities differentiated him and enabled him to form

\textsuperscript{277} Brenner (1991: 66).
\textsuperscript{278} The petits Blancs as defined by Guillot (1982: 59) included retired militia, administrators, merchants and those who expanded the public works and the railways.
\textsuperscript{279} De Locomotief, Monday 18 November 1912.
\textsuperscript{280} From a young age Céphas had a number of engagements with both European religious and legal organisations. Beginning when he was just 15 years old on 27 December 1860 whilst living with a Protestant couple he was baptised and took the name Céphas. Céphas is the Aramaic equivalent of Peter which he used as his family name. Because it was not legal for non-Europeans to take Dutch names, Céphas was required to use Aramaic rather than its Dutch equivalent, Piet. See Guillot (1982: 64).
\textsuperscript{281} Knapp (1989: 17).
\textsuperscript{282} Quoted from an 1896 publication by Lion-Cachet in Guillot (1982: 61).
\textsuperscript{283} Florida (1993: 20-26) asserts that there had always been a more fluid connection between the inner sanctum of the courts and the village than usually recognised by Dutch scholarship.
an identity in affirmation of self rather than in opposition to the other.\textsuperscript{284} For many, the pressure of his position, located between different and sometimes opposing worlds may have caused a great deal of personal anxiety, instead it seems that Céphas was able to create a sense of agency from this liminal position.\textsuperscript{285}

In 1890 when Céphas documented the reliefs carved in the terraces of Borobudur he produced 164 images. Amongst the architectural monumentality of Borobudur, four of those photographs, numbers 86-9, feature the lonely and likable figure of an elderly man with a proud moustache. The man is none other than Céphas. By inserting himself among the stupa(s) of Borobudur, Céphas creates what might be Indonesia’s first photographic self-portrait. He sits in a relaxed pose and looks at the camera with the expression of quiet self-assuredness as if to say “I’m happy here, this is where I belong.”

![Céphas, Self-portrait at Borobudur, c 1890, albumin silver photograph, 16.7 x 21.8 cm, National Gallery of Australia 2007.1830](image)

He seems to caress the stone work rather than stand upon it and is depicted as being in simpatico with his architectural surrounds, especially when compared to the usual bravado expressed in the postures of European archaeologists photographed standing defiantly on the highest peak. Céphas critiques the assumed objectivity of the archaeological project and at the same time is able to construct a counter imagination of the indigenous to that which circulated within the dominant

\textsuperscript{284} Knapp (1989: 17)  
\textsuperscript{285} Guillot (1982: 73).
visual discourse of colonial photography. In other words the camera has enabled him to redress, “the superficialities and prejudices that informed the typical Orientalist picture.”

By inserting himself in the documentation of Borobudur Céphas has asserted his own agency and thereby also a Javanese subjectivity within the construct of Javanese history and the projects of cultural restoration driven by Dutch scholarship. Whilst projects of cultural restoration were embedded in Dutch modes for demonstrating the strength of their own theories regarding a “golden age”, they were also very relevant to Java’s cultural elite. Men like Dr. Wahidin and Céphas advocated the restoration of Java’s cultural legacy as way to generate pride among the Javanese, seeing themselves as “the holders of the keys to Dutch-conveyed budi and, implicitly, to the resurrection of the Buda age.” The fact of Céphas’ membership to the Archaeological Society further illustrates his ambiguous relationship to Dutch scholarship and the assertion of a Javanese subjectivity. With this in mind, portraits of Céphas seated pensively, or resting a tender arm on the shoulder of a Buddha statue in the central hall of Candi Mendut are not only a powerful record of his involvement in the restoration of the temple but a metaphor for the restoration of the age of the Buddha.

Figure 14 Kassian Céphas, De fotograaf K. Céphas bij het Boeddabeeld in tjandi Mendoet, albumin photograph, 1890, 21.5 x 16 cm. KITLV 40202(left) and KITLV 12217(right)

286 Céphas’ intersection of the self-portrait with the colonial archaeological project can be compared to the Iranian photographer Anton Sevruguin. See Navab (2002).
289 Restoration was underway by the time of Céphas’ photograph in 1900 and was completed in 1904.
When Céphas began to photograph himself among the cultural sites of Java, thus acting out a narrative, he fulfilled the criteria of performative photography that requires the photographer to take on the role of both object and subject. In doing so he demonstrated his own self-reflexive modernity. The transition from documentary to performative photography in Céphas’ oeuvre marks the fundamental difference between 19th century and modern portrait photography in Indonesia. With these self-portraits Céphas stakes his claim not only as Indonesia’s first indigenous photographer but as Indonesia’s first modern photographer.

Céphas’ theatrical self-portraits served as a metaphorical stage from where he could perform his identity and make certain assertions about the world in which he lived. For Céphas the self-portrait, “emerges as a strategy for social commentary which implicitly recognises the self as one inscribed within social and ideological constructs of identity.” These self-portraits present Céphas’ orchestrated projection of himself as a photographer, a man aware of his own agency and capacity to effect change, in other words a modern man. His self-portraits are evidence of a self-reflexivity that lies at the heart of modernist values.

**Concluding remarks**

In this chapter I have demonstrated the ambiguous nature of the indigenous elites’ relationship with Dutch scholars and administrators in the construction of a Javanese self, based on notions of an essential otherness. Whilst the revival of Javanese culture as a subject of scholarship had the dual and ambiguous effect of stifling the political agency of some of its main agents whilst opening up opportunities for others like Céphas to pursue careers in modern modes of cultural expression. The publication of Javanese court dance carried out in collaboration with Groneman in the late 1880s gave Céphas firsthand experience with the challenges of the photographic medium in

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290 For a discussion on performative photography see Annear (2007).
291 Although the timer had not yet been invented which permits the photographer to pose as the subject and simultaneously depress the shutter button as the operator of the camera I use the term self-portraits to establish Céphas as the author of the photograph’s conception and composition. In the practical application of making these photographs Céphas would have directed his assistant, possibly his son Sem, to depress the shutter button.
292 The idea of a metaphorical stage is borrowed from Soerjoatmodjo (1999).
293 Lee (1998: 8-9)
producing an image as pure document, as commented upon by Kartini. His portraits of the Javanese aristocracy in the Hamengkubuwono court demonstrate the way that photography was used as artifice for producing an image as an ideal, either European or Javanese. Furthermore his work with the aristocracy to contrive their image in either a Javanese or European way, through changes in costume and the inclusion or exclusion of certain attributional signifiers allowed Céphas to think about the photograph as a site of creative subjectivity.

His work with the aristocracy and his earlier projects were informative when he later came to the idea of making self-portraits. Céphas’ approach to his self-portraits, his deliberate positioning of his body among the sacred architecture of Borobudur clearly derives from his experiences with the staged and orchestrated management of both the dancers and the aristocracy. In other words, Céphas appropriated the performative aspects of his earlier projects to contrive an image of himself that sat comfortably between a construction of the past and the announcement of a new future. He is affecting a “double gaze”, as a member of the colonial Archaeology Service and the new social class of Javanese financial elite. Yet these portraits mark the emergence of an individual whose social and political status is not determined by attributional signifiers but by the projection of an individuated subjectivity. For Céphas, the photographic portrait no longer needs to be a pictorial representation of social ranking or philosophical ideal but rather a technology for producing a projection of one’s subjectivity. Whilst Céphas’ use of the photographic portrait as a platform to perform new ideas about the self was not immediately taken up by subsequent artists working in Java, in the next chapter I discuss the way that artists developed new subjectivities working between the worlds of the Javanese aristocracy, Dutch scholarship and commercial enterprise.
Chapter Three: Technical drawing, illustration, caricature and volkstypen (1901-1931)

In this chapter I begin by exploring the normalising aspects of Dutch scholarship on the Javanese courts and the narrow ground from which modern art could emerge between technical training and the popular press. I discuss changes to the colonial mission, in particular the Ethical Policy of 1901 and its meaning for the Javanese elite (priyayi) who had contacts with both the Javanese courts and Dutch scholarship. As a consequence of the policy, traditional social hierarchies underwent change and new employment opportunities arose for educated priyayi and the emerging middle classes in fields such as schools, hospitals and the vernacular press.

I then look at the way newspapers and publications provided gainful employment for budding Indonesian artists to test their hands at documenting Indonesian folk art and illustrating. Whilst portraiture was not the focus of this type of employment, it did offer scope for the development of caricatures and volkstypen (lit. people types). I also examine the way that the documentation of Indonesia’s technical arts offered chances for training and mobility and how these employment opportunities marked a transitory ground between technical drawing and the trajectory of professional artists.

In describing the transitory ground between ethnography and art, I examine the careers of Raden Abdullah Surio Soebroto (1878-1941) and Mas Pirngadie (1875-1936) who were both born into aristocratic families and went on to work in the civil service and publications in the 20th century. In the previous chapter I looked at the way Céphas, who was both a servant of the Yogyakarta court (abdi dalem), and an employee of the Society for Archaeology, Geography, Language and Ethnography of Yogyakarta, was able assert his own subjectivity in the intersection between colonial and Javanese worlds. In this chapter I ask how Mas Abdullah was able to reconcile his aristocratic pedigree with employment as an illustrator. Likewise I examine how Mas Pirngadie negotiated his sense of self in relation to the objectifying effects of Dutch scholarship and his own
gainful employment as a Dutch civil servant. In assessing the careers of these two men I survey the differences between *volkstypen*, caricature and portraiture and ask how these differences played out in the early history of modern Indonesian art.

**Orthodoxy and Ornamentation in the Javanese courts**

Fakih argues that late 19th century Europeans retreated to classical myths and ideas to remedy their anxieties regarding the alienating and homogenising aspects of capitalism. Because capitalism succeeded in reproducing itself outside of Europe through the vehicle of colonialism, myth also infiltrated colonial historiographies. In Indonesia, Dutch scholars, influenced by the theosophists sought new myths to answer and soothe the uncertainties of the modern age. Like their precursors in Europe, these myths were also housed in classical antiquity. The myth of a golden age or the cult of *adiluhung* (the beautiful sublime), as Florida terms it, was born from a theosophical fascination with a “spiritualized codification of Javanese culture.” Conveniently for the Dutch administration, the promotion of antiquated Hindu-Buddhist aspects of Javanese art challenged the modernising effects of Islam and created an atmosphere where it was difficult for the Javanese to establish links between culture and politics.

From the mid19th century, Dutch scholars had direct contact with the bearers of Javanese literature and culture at the heart of the *kraton* (royal palace). Wilkens (1813-1888), for example, who wrote a treatise on *wayang* and Javanese history worked at the Javanese language institute in Surakarta that had been established in 1832. Dutch scholars also had contact with the court poets or oracles (*pujangga*). For example, A.B. Cohen Stuart was assisted by Ranggawarsito to produce translations of court literature, published as *Brata-Joeda, Indisch Javaansch Heldendicht* in 1860. However, *Pujangga* such as Ranggawarsito, operated in a complex web of relationships between Javanese culture and its intellectual ordering in Dutch language publications. In fact,

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295 Florida (1987: 3).
297 Tsuchiya (1990:81).
298 Tsuchiya (1990: 81).
300 For example Ranggawaristo refused an invitation to travel to Holland and support the first publication of the Bible in the Javanese language. Personal communication with Kraus (2016)
towards the end of the century, Ranggawaristo's became increasingly cynical of the reality of Javanese cultural agency embodied by the court.  

As with court literature, Dutch scholars played a significant role in the standardisation of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet theatre) and *wayang wong* (‘human’ puppet theatre). The standardisation of dialogue, costumes, expression and musical accompaniment had the effect of abstracting wayang from its political dimensions and reducing it to a formalist aesthetic performance. This refined aesthetic became increasingly mannered and standardised under the pressure of Dutch scholars and administrators. Beginning in the mid-19th century, the full impact of this standardisation was realised by the 1920s when wayang schools were established in the courts of Jogjakarta and Surakarta (Solo). Such codification, perhaps contrary to the theosophist aim of reviving the golden age of Javanese culture, had the reverse effect of distilling that culture and making it an empty symbol of the past.

Pemberton argues that as a result of the transfer of power from the Javanese courts to the Dutch state, increased value was attributed to the “traditional” aspects of Javanese culture and the performance of Javanese court ritual. Others too have argued that because the Sultans had no real power, ceremony became self-referential and was transformed from function to art through Dutch scholarship. Schechner states that “If the activities were not transformed into “art” in the Western sense, into objects of aesthetic pleasure, they would surely perish…” The terrain where modern art could begin to define itself was narrowly confined by the dialectical relationship between the codification of court ritual and traditional arts, informed by a preoccupation with *adiluhung*. This is comparable to the Indian situation, described by Pinney as a colonial process of fetishisation where art is stripped of its religious, societal and political functions and reduced to an object of aesthetic appreciation. In Indonesia this process included the establishment of museums such as the Radya Pustaka Museum in Solo in 1890 by Raden Ad. Sosrodiningrat IV

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301 Florida (1987: 8-9)
302 Schechner (1990: 26).
303 Schechner (1990: 26).
305 Schechner (1990: 38).
where manuscripts and Hindu-Buddhist art was collected and admired as a symbol of Java’s pre-Islamic golden age.\textsuperscript{308}

\section*{1901: The Ethical Policy, a turning point}

The year 1901 was marked by a number of important events that changed the course of history in Indonesia. The birth of Sukarno, the future president of the Republic gives the year a retrospective significance. But the introduction of the Ethical Policy pushed Dutch-Indonesian relations into a climate of change making Sukarno’s subsequent ascension possible. In 1898, the young Dutch Queen Wilhelmina was crowned. She was immediately required to appease growing public concern regarding civil unrest in Indonesia. According to prevailing liberal voices, the unrest was largely due to the exploitation of disenfranchised farmers and the deteriorating welfare of the rural and urban poor. The Dutch debt to the Indies was to be repaid in the form of the Ethical Policy, ratified by Queen Wilhelmina on 17 September 1901 under the guidance of the Prime Minister, from the Christian Anti-Revolutionary Party.\textsuperscript{309} The Ethical Policy was a cultural mission, with ideological resonance and temporal coincidence with other forms of European liberal imperialism – notably the ‘white man’s burden’ of the Anglophone world and the French mission civilisatrice.\textsuperscript{310}

In the same year that the Ethical Policy was ratified, Céphas was requested to photograph a wayang beber (scroll painting) collection for the Dutch scholar and teacher of Javanese language, G.A.J. Hazeu. Around the same time Céphas arranged for a photograph of himself with Hazeu and Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo to be taken on the back steps of Wahidin’s house.

\textsuperscript{308} For notes on Buddhist sculpture in the museum collection see Revire (2012: 138).
\textsuperscript{309} Vickers (2005: 16-17).
\textsuperscript{310} Protschky (2015:11).
Wahidin founded the cultural nationalist organisation *Budi Utomo* in 1908. He was also the father of Abdullah Surio Subroto and the grandfather of Basuki Abdullah.\(^{311}\) He was the family doctor to the Paku Alam royal house and thereby a colleague of Groneman.\(^{312}\) He was also a good friend of Notodiredjo of the Paku Alam house, whose grandson Noto Soeroto was a friend of Soewardi. This photograph provides critical evidence that the seedlings of modern Indonesian art were nurtured by the same people who fostered educational initiatives and a nationalist agenda. From these origins, 20\(^{th}\) century Indonesian modern art embarks on a trajectory as an endeavour concerned with the documentation of cultural heritage codified under the colonial project.

Whilst these men were concerned with the documentation of the *wayang beber*, Bloembergen argues that the Ethical Policy announced a turn in Dutch interest from Hindu-Buddhist to indigenous culture.\(^{313}\) Contemporaneously, the organisations *Oost en West* and *Boeatan* were established in 1899 in the Hague for the promotion and sale of Indonesian technical arts and ethnographic objects. Likewise experiments with batik wax were conducted at the School of Arts

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\(^{311}\) There is still some discrepancy as to whether Wahidin was the natural or foster father of Surio Subroto. My account is based on Tashadi (1973:15).

\(^{312}\) Besides his professional occupation as a physician, Groneman was an amateur archeologist and collaborated with Céphas on a number of projects.

\(^{313}\) Bloembergen (2006: 267).
in Haarlem and trade fairs were taking place across Java with awards handed out to the best craftsmen.

The shift in colonial interest from pre-colonial Hindu-Buddhist art to the art of the inlandsche (natives or people from the interior) was very likely correlated with colonial expansion into the outer islands of the archipelago and the viability of commercial opportunities. In order to achieve the aims outlined in Queen Wilhelmina’s declaration, these territories needed to brought under a single entity and to this end Dutch military campaigns, acting in the name of civilisation, “pacified” Aceh, suppressed the Balinese on Lombok and “modernised” Sumatra, Maluku, Borneo and Sulawesi.314

Alongside the need to control these territories for financial gain was a need to document the types of people who lived in them. This was achieved in part through racial stereotyping, justified along pseudo-scientific lines that emphasised the validity and significance of empirical measurements,315 Men like Jasper and Pirngadie undertook extensive research to properly document the people, their daily activities their cultures and their art. They travelled into the interiors most probably along the roads recently paved by the Dutch military, with all kinds of measuring devices, pencils and paper, callipers and also cameras. Along the way, the two men came across types of people and pictorial scenes to document.316

The format for such depictions had already been well established as volkstypen and landschappen (landscapes). Volkstypen were a genre of colonial pictorial representation used to aid the visualisation and categorisation of different ethnographic and occupational types or classes of people. Conversely, they also served to confirm more romantic notions of the exotic. Often they were presented alongside landschappen as a guide to the terrain and to unite the vision of the ethnic person with their particular environment. In the 1883 publication Landschappen en volkstypen van Nederlandsch-Indië, for example, Java and Sumatra have their own section while Borneo, Sulawesi and the Maluku islands are grouped together.317

316 A newspaper report ‘Een Javaansche landschapsschilder’ in De Sumatra Post, 8 June 1909 describes their tour of the archipelago and the beautiful scenes they came across.
317 Willink (1883).
This type of publication also demonstrates the ways in which the categorisation of people via the *volkstypen* was augmented and recontextualised with new printing processes and photography, as remarked upon by Legène,

> The ways in which the photographs were decontextualised… and reformatted in new material… reflect the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in both the Dutch colonial cultural tradition of documenting and measuring difference and the colonial policy.…

*Volkstypen* circulated in Europe via postcards, publications and exhibitions where enlarged images were used to impress visitors and smaller cropped images were printed and sold as maps and other novelties like playing cards.

The English psychologist and anthropologist Francis Galton, who was also the cousin of Charles Darwin, had a keen interest in the potential of photography to systematically identify types of people. In line with earlier physiognomic analysis, Galton believed that certain facial features could be used to identify types of people. This line of thinking was of particular interest in the field of criminology and in the colonies of Britain and Holland photography and fingerprinting went hand in hand with consolidating order. In 1901, the same year as the Ethical Policy came into play, photography was adopted by the police in Batavia and years later, in 1917 fingerprinting was also introduced. The newly implemented systems of control and punishment were complemented by educational and training facilities designed to keep children off the streets. On one hand, *volkstypen* were augmented by fingerprinting and photography to more accurately identify criminals, while on the other Dutch men were opening up orphanages to accommodate and train the urban poor with different technical skills.

The dualistic aspects of the Ethical Policy gave rise to a number of criticisms and it is generally understood that the implementation and public perception of the policy was highly factionalised in Indonesia and Holland. Yet it is also true that some members of the Dutch public were of the

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321 Bracönier (1916-1917). It should be noted that a school known as *Het Korps Pupillen* offered technical training in drawing for the disadvantaged children of Dutch soldiers and Javanese women in Gombong as early as 1849.
opinion that the rise of trade exhibitions was proof of the positive effects of Dutch policy on Indonesian cultural and economic growth.\textsuperscript{323} The quality of Pirngadie’s paintings and the success of his career as an artist were also regarded by some as a clear indication of the positive effects of the colonial cultural mission on Indonesian cultural life. In fact the art of Pirngadie was compared to the writing of Kartini as exemplifying a level of sophistication made possible through the friendship of a Dutch mentor.\textsuperscript{324}

At the same time Dutch policy used the single term \textit{priyayi} for both aristocrat and civil servant, distorting both the function of the royalty and the role of the civil servant.\textsuperscript{325} This meant that the bastions of feudal tradition maintained by the older generation of \textit{priyayi} were transformed by a younger generation, educated and interested in the dynamic possibilities of modernity. This blurring of status and the transformation of Javanese men as members of the aristocracy into educated employees of either new industries or the civil service, opened up new networks of collaboration. Not only did progressive elites find affinity with Dutch representations of power and adopt them as a means of extending their own presence, they also adhered to some of the same value systems.

This new elite took advantage of their birth rite whilst projecting themselves as members of the modern world. They wore Western clothes, spoke Dutch, studied and worked as doctors, schoolteachers, civil servants, journalists, illustrators, commercial artists and photographers.\textsuperscript{326} As modern individuals they demonstrated altered modes of behaviour and formed new relationships that gave them a sense of belonging to a differentiated urban and literate middle class.\textsuperscript{327} The privileged upbringings of Abdullah Surio Subroto and Mas Pirngadie gave them access to Indonesian and Dutch elite networks that, in turn gave them opportunities to develop their artistic careers through collaboration with Dutch entrepreneurs and scholars. Both have been highly criticised for their perceived empathy or collaboration with the coloniser and their style of landscape painting has been negatively aligned with the colonial romanticisation of a sublime Indonesian landscape. Whilst it is not my intention to disprove the association of \textit{Mooi Indië}

\textsuperscript{323} Bloembergen (2006: 268).
\textsuperscript{325} Vickers (2005: 36).
\textsuperscript{326} Kartodirdjo (1988: 196).
\textsuperscript{327} Kartodirdjo (1988: 196).
paintings with colonialist expansion or with a perceived idealisation of an exotic country, I believe that the careers of Mas Abdullah and Mas Pirngadie need to be reassessed in terms of contemporaneous societal change and their contributions to the development of portraiture in Indonesia.

**Raden Mas Abdullah, Rivai and Petit: Journalism and Illustration**

Raden Abdullah Surio Soebroto, also known as Mas Abdullah bin Wahidin and more simply Mas Abdullah was the eldest son of Dr. Wahidin and had one younger brother, Dr. Sulaiman Mangunhusodo. Mas Abdullah had at least six children, three of whom grew up to become artists. Sudjono Abdullah trained under his father and was a considerable landscape painter. Tridjoto, a sculptor, was recognised as an important woman artist. Like her brother Sudjono, she did not receive specialist training, nonetheless she was able to produce work of high value. The third, Raden Basuki Abdullah, whose exploits as a landscape and portrait painter are well known, is discussed in conjunction with his patronage under Sukarno in chapter 7. Two other sisters married high profile men, one a doctor and the other a bank director in Puroworedjo. The third sister lived with the family of Prof. Mr. Djojodiguno in Yogyakarta. According to Tashadi the fact that three of Wahidin’s grandchildren children became artists is a proof that art ran in the blood, body and spirit of Wahidin. The fact that Wahidin's children and many of his grandchildren dedicated themselves to either art or medicine, or married medical doctors, demonstrates the close links between educated elites and art in the early 20th century.

Mas Abdullah began his career studying medicine in Batavia, but did not enjoy it and enrolled in the police service instead. Before long he had moved to West Java to take up a position as an engineer in a soap factory. However he didn’t last long there either and returned to Yogyakarta at which point his father thought it best to send him to the Netherlands. Mas Abdullah travelled to

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328 Dr. Wahidin also had at least one adopted son, whom he schooled until graduation as a doctor. It is this man, Dr. Muljo Taruno who Tashadi (1973: 16) relied upon for information regarding the early family life of Abdullah Soebroto.

329 Her sculpture can be seen at the Adisucipto military airfield in Yogyakarta and the Banteng Sculpture at the grave of the Madiun heroes. See Tashadi (1973: 17).

Holland in 1898 on the invitation of Mr. L.D. Petit, the Director of the Leiden University Library. Once there he began studying at the Voorbereidende Tekenschool (Preparatory Drawing School) in Leiden where he completed three years training. After completion and with the assistance of Petit, Mas Abdullah continued his studies at the Academy in Amsterdam. While studying in Amsterdam he lived with fellow Javanese, Abdul Rivai who was working as a journalist for the newspaper *Bendera Wolanda*. In April 1901, through his contact with Rivai, Abdullah began work as an illustrator for the newspaper.

*Figure 16 Title page of Bandera Wolanda (Adam, 2007)*

*Bendera Wolanda* was an Indonesian language newspaper published in Batavia and edited by Dutchman Henri Constant Claude Clockener Brousson, a first lieutenant of the Dutch infantry who had developed an interest in journalism while working as a correspondent. The paper’s title translates as “Dutch flag” and it was advertised as being for soldiers and students, however it seems such an appeal to Dutch nationalists may have been a ploy for funding. Brousson was not a zealous patriot but an idealist and deeply committed to ethical reformation. He had associations

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331 Poeze, van Dijk & van der Meulen (1986: 35).
332 Tashadi (1973: 16).
334 Only a couple of years later Brousson, who had been observing the activities of the *peranakan* and *pemuda* grew excited about establishing a new paper that was free from government funding and therefore could be more radical.
with the *Indische Bond*, considered by some to have leftist leanings and was also rumoured to have wanted to convert to Islam. According to Adam the paper was not produced to serve the Dutch military administration but was in fact intended to inform the local population of issues abroad and provide moral sustenance more generally. To attract subscribers the paper listed many overseas contributors including Abdul Rivai and Pangeran Hario Sasraningrat, captain of the Paku Alam Legion in Jogjakarta. Mas Abdullah worked on the paper for the first eight issues, but after this photography rather than drawings were used to illustrate the paper. In the first issue of the paper in April 1901, a brief comment was made about the marriage of Queen Wilhelmina to Duke Henry of Mecklenburg-Schwerin on 7 February 1901. The caption informs us that Mas Abdullah bin Wahidin was responsible for the illustration of Queen Wilhelmina in her bridal dress.

![Figure 17 Mas Abdullah, Untitled illustration, Bandera Wolanda, April no. 1, 1901 (Adam, 2007)](image)

In the May (no.1) issue a story about Guangxu, the eleventh emperor of the Qing dynasty features illustrations by Mas Abdullah.

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335 The *Indische Bond* was a union of Dutchmen and Eurasians founded in 1898. The newspaper ran into trouble with Dutch authorities (who partly funded it) when it published an article that compared Islam favorably to Protestantism but was allowed to continue under the proviso that it would no longer deal with religious issues. Adam (2007: 21-22)


Mas Abdullah’s illustrations demonstrate strong line, detail in the clothing and his ability to evoke character. Others employ wit and sarcasm. Some of his work verges on cartoon, others on caricature. Caricature, from the Italian word “to overload”, describes a way of depicting someone that accentuates or exaggerates his or her features, often in a demeaning and nearly always humorous way.\textsuperscript{338} Because it can undermine the seriousness of the subject, it has been deemed a lesser art than portraiture. Nonetheless, it has been said that, “caricaturists acted as portraitists, inasmuch as they studied the distinctive features of their sitters and used them as a stamp of identification.”\textsuperscript{339} In the June (no. 2) issue Mas Abdullah had the opportunity to inject political satire in his caricature of Chamberlin.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure18.png}
\caption{Mas Abdullah, \textit{Radja Tjina ‘KWANG SU’} (details), Bandera Wolanda, May no.1, 1901 (Adam, 2007)}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{338} West (2004: 35).
\item \textsuperscript{339} West (2004: 36).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Whilst no portraits painted by Mas Abdullah have yet come to public knowledge it is possible to argue that his early work for the newspaper provided important opportunities to observe, consider and think about the depiction of people. I believe that the task of illustrating current events and important people, including caricatures, provides sufficient proof of his ability to make portraits. It is also possible to suggest that Mas Abdullah passed on some of his drawing skills to his son, Basuki Abdullah, who was the foremost portrait painter to Sukarno.

Mas Abdullah later moved to Paris, where he spent two years studying in a studio. We don’t know to which studio he was attached but we do know that a number of other Indonesian artists were also drawn to the ateliers of Paris. Sariochmin Salim for one is known to have worked as an apprentice to Fernand Léger for a couple of years in the early 1920s. Raden Mas Jodjana, who studied painting and printing at the atelier of the decorator J. Dunand and who frequently mixed

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341 Salim began living in Paris from 1923 at the age of 15. He claimed to have been self-taught and to have spent two years studying and working alongside Fernand Léger, which culminated in two exhibitions in Paris in 1937 and 1939.
in Parisian art circles, probably knew Salim.\textsuperscript{342} And of course, much later in the early 1930s Mas Abdullah’s own son, Basuki Abdullah spent a short time living and working in Paris, perhaps also with Salim.\textsuperscript{343}

From Paris, Mas Abdullah returned to Java, where he became well known as a water-colourist and landscape painter. Due to his overwhelming success as a landscape painter his earlier work has unfortunately been overlooked. Regarded in Indonesian art history as someone who lacked creative talent and perpetuated the \textit{Mooi Indië} style, Mas Abdullah’s illustrations have been largely ignored. This is a significant oversight, being the result of an art history that operates on the simplistic division of painters into two distinct camps, namely the \textit{Mooi Indië} and social realists or Dutch sympathisers and nationalists.

While working as an illustrator, Mas Abdullah developed another interesting motif. The picturesque Indonesian rice field and blazing sun so frequently associated with the \textit{Mooi Indië} school is found here in 1901 as a decorative motif filling the spaces between the text.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Mas Abdullah, \textit{Untitled illustration, Bendera Wolanda}, 1901 (Adam, 2007)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{342} Bonneff & Labrousse (1997).
\textsuperscript{343} Salim returned from Java to Paris in 1936 and stayed there until 1939. Basuki finished his studies in The Hague in 1937 and then ventured to Paris for a short while before returning to Java.
This was not an appropriation of Dutch expat painters living in the Indies but rather an adaptation of The Hague School landscape painting resituated in the memories of Mas Abdullah, who found its visualisation a reminder of his home country whilst living abroad.

**Pirngadie and Jasper: Indonesian *Kunstnijverheid***

Mas Pirngadie was born into an aristocratic family in Banyumas, a district of central Java. He is sometimes referred to as coming from Surabaya, probably due to its proximity to Probolinggo, the town of his mother’s birth and his early career in the nearby town Pasuruan. It was in Pasuruan that Pirngadie received lessons in drawing from Otto Carl Freiherr von Juncker Bigatto.\(^{344}\) In 1898 he began working as a civil servant at the Land Registry office in Pasuruan where he was responsible for the layout and production of lithographs. During this time he furthered his drawing skills with Jozef W. Huysmans.\(^{345}\) Huysmans was a military draughtsman and by 1903 had become the official draughtsman of the Botanical Garden in Bogor.\(^{346}\) Before his 30th birthday Pirngadie had already established himself as an accomplished lithographer and artist. In 1904, a Surabaya newspaper advertised his watercolours and drawings for sale at a shop known for selling “Inlandsche Nijverheidsproducten [indigenous craft products]”.\(^{347}\)

It is not clear how Pirngadie came to know Johan Ernst Jasper (1874-1945), perhaps it was through their mutual employment in the civil service, or perhaps through social circles in Surabaya. Jasper was born into a family of mixed Indo-Dutch descent in Surabaya and grew up in the surroundings of his father's photo studio. In 1895 he was appointed as a low ranking civil servant and, stimulated by the Ethical Policy, worked with an accentuated interest in the living conditions and culture of Indonesians.\(^{348}\) He developed an interest in art and culture and in 1900 he published an essay on Javanese pottery. In the same year he founded the Indies branch of the organisation East and West (The Hague).\(^{349}\) Both his role in the civil service and his natural interests made him an ideal

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\(^{344}\) Otto Carl Freiherr von Juncker-Bigatto (1864-1928) was a German artist who taught a number of Indonesian students of which Pirngadie was the most talented. Personal communication with Krauss (2016)

\(^{345}\) ‘Delische Kunstkring,’ *De Sumatra Post*, 10 April 1923 (no page).


\(^{347}\) Soerabaijasch Handelsblad (1904)


candidate for a government-sponsored survey of indigenous technical art and applied arts. In 1906 Jasper and Pirngadie took up the assignment and began travelling through the archipelago, taking notes, collecting specimens, making drawings, paintings and photographs. Jasper’s research and the assignment more generally was part of the new colonial imperatives tied to the Ethical Policy, aiming to link territorial consolidation with social and economic growth. Products sourced and documented by Jasper and Pirngadie served both domestic and international markets and fairs that encouraged technical innovation and awarded outstanding participants.  

The commercial aspect of this kind of promotion did not go unnoticed by some Indonesians who saw the commoditisation of Indonesia’s technical and folk arts as just another form of colonial exploitation. Radical leftist journalist Mas Marco, for instance, was vocal about his disapproval of the fairs, and openly criticised the motives of the 1914 Colonial Exhibition in Semarang as colonial profiteering at the expense of the Javanese,

Colonial exhibitions are not needed by the Javanese… For those clever (well educated) ethnic groups it benefits them not a little, because they can copy all those things they see there. But, for the majority of Javanese like us, the exhibition does not really serve any purpose… Instead the exhibition can undermine the work of those people who are still ignorant… Evidence: look at the batik industry. This industry for 10 years already, one could say was the product of Javanese people, and furthermore any western production was the result of Javanese skills. But what is the situation now?… Now instead there is already batik cloth from Europe that is better and cheaper.  

In fact many of Marco’s concerns regarding the commercial nature of the exhibitions, whilst targeting the colonial project more generally, would have had personal connotations for people like Pirngadie and Jasper. Many of Jasper’s collections acquired from this type of fair informed cottage industries in Holland or ended up in Dutch museums. From a similar fair in Surabaya in 1909, Jasper purchased a significant number of textiles that were later displayed at the Brussels World Fair of 1910 and then became part of the collection of the Koloniaal Museum in Haarlem in 1912.  

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351 Kartodikromo (1914a). My translation.
352 Van Hout (2010: 123-124). The museum in Haarlem was incorporated into a new Colonial Institute in Amsterdam in 1910, which relocated to new premises in 1926, a grand building known today as the Tropenmuseum.
It is perhaps no coincidence that Banders, the director of the Haarlem School of Arts, situated right next door to the Koloniaal Museum, began carrying out his research on wax and dyes for the production of batik in Europe. The connection between the collecting, display and sale of Indonesian technical arts demonstrates that there was a definitive relationship between the cultural mission as mandated by the Ethical Policy and opportunities for commercial gain. Jasper and Pirngadie’s research, published in five richly illustrated volumes as Inlandsche Kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch-Indie between 1912-1930, is a prime example of the synergy of these two purposes. Like the collaborative work done on dictionaries before them, this kind of project fitted a pattern that continued well into the 20th century.

A slightly earlier publication in which Jasper and Pirngadie collaborated with E.C. van Manen (1873-1915) to produce a catalogue of Indonesian crafts and dance is another good example of the links between collecting, scholarship and the economy. The text and photographs were by Jasper, while smaller technical drawings were made by Pirngadie and other illustrations by van Manen who had only just arrived in Indonesia. Van Manen’s drawing of a Sundanese woman depicts a seated woman, unidentified except for the attribution of ethnicity. With no name, her pensive and passive posture whilst slightly sentimental and less stylised is consistent with volkstypen. As an example of the kind of art produced in the Ethical Policy period, it is indicative of the paternalistic Dutch imagining of the inlandsche (natives) asan impoverished people in need of assistance.

354 By 1913 the second volume had reached the Raffles Library in Singapore and was considered an important resource for local and international artists.
355 The scientific journal Djawa published between 1921 and 1941 is another good example of the continuing collaboration, with an editorial staff made up of 3 Dutchmen and 2 Indonesians (Tsuchiya 1990: 92).
357 For more information on van Manen see Haks & Maris (1995: 177).
At almost the same time of the latter publication, Pirngadie’s sketchbook from his travels with Jasper presents a standing Bugis woman. Pirngadie dated, signed and titled this drawing *Studie van [een] Boegineesche Vrouw* (Study of A Bugis Woman). The fact that it is signed means that Pirngadie considered it worthy of his name, however the fact that it is titled “study” suggests that it was not a finished work and was going to be used as a catalyst for a later work.
Comparing this drawing to that of van Manen provides the opportunity to delineate the differences between *volkstypen* and portraiture and to assess the direction of Pirngadie’s art in relation to portraiture. Although the woman is also nameless in Pirngadie’s sketch she is given more presence. This drawing appears to exhibit an aspect of empathy that is not sentimental but rather a sincere attempt to render the character of the sitter. This is in part due to the unfinished quality of the work that reveals the process of drawing and thereby positions Pirngadie in proximity to the sitter as he observes her and draws her. The drawing reveals, through its own process, a memory of Pirngadie standing in front of the woman, an actual event where two people stand in relation to each other. Here we have an artist in the presence of the sitter.

In this case Pirngadie’s work finds the fine line between ethnographic study and subjectivity that Noto Soeroto confirmed to be sign of good art. However in other instances his work clearly met the expectations of ethnographers. Pirngadie was highly regarded for his *volkstypen* that were perceived to exhibit great ethnographic accuracy. His watercolours of batik patterns (probably in the KITLV in Leiden) also attracted positive appraisal, “More attention is deserved …of the watercolours of Mas Pirngadie, the stand-outs are the landscapes and his *volkstypen* painted with deep soga-roodbruin of the batiks customarily worn by the nobility.”

As part of the Paris Colonial Exhibition (*Exposition Coloniale Internationale*) in 1931 the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences provided three large ethnographic maps of Indonesia. They were hung alongside each other in teak frames to make up the entire geography of the archipelago. On the maps Pirngadie “inscribed a total of 78 heads depicting different people from the archipelago. Below them were interesting casts of Buddhist and Hindu art alongside ethnographic objects from the colonial institute.” According to a report at the time the heads had been painted from photographs. It is even probable that some of them were the photographs made by Jasper and Pirngadie on their research tour of the archipelago. According to Mrázek this type of display had the effect of eliminating the subjectivity of people and flattening entire groups of people.

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358 Noto Soeroto (1917).
behind glass as a distorted representation of country. Even a commentator of the day recognised them, not as character studies, but as purely ethnographic plates.\textsuperscript{362}

Aside from his commissioned work producing illustrations for publications and fairs, Pirngadie was an artist of note and exhibited his watercolours in Indonesia as early as 1904.\textsuperscript{363} Spanjaard asserts that Pirngadie furthered his training with the Dutch landscape painter Du Chattel (1856-1917).\textsuperscript{364} However this suggestion, has led to Pirngadie being misaligned with the \textit{Mooi Indië} landscape painters. If Pirngadie did meet Du Chattel it was probably through their mutual acquaintance, Jasper, whilst Du Chattel was touring Java.\textsuperscript{365} Du Chattel, working in the style of The Hague School painters, made a large number of watercolours and paintings whilst in Indonesia between 1908 and 1910. When he returned to Holland he exhibited his oil paintings and watercolours at the Pictura Dordrecht Gallery in 1910 and in 1912 just the watercolours at Pulchri Studio in The Hague. Twelve watercolours were subsequently published in 1913 as \textit{Mooi Indië: Afbeeldingen in Kleuren van Twaalf Aquarellen}.\textsuperscript{366} This is probably the first time the term \textit{Mooi Indië} was used in print to describe the landscape paintings of Indonesia and it means that, while Pirngadie has been retrospectively maligned with this genre he was painting landscapes well before the use of the term.

It should also be noted that, aside from the obvious differences in geography, in style and mood the Du Chattel watercolours of the Indonesian landscape were not significantly different from his paintings of the Dutch countryside exhibited posthumously in 1918.\textsuperscript{367} In fact a sketchbook from Pirngadie’s travels with Jasper demonstrates that he was looking at the landscape in a number of different ways.

\textsuperscript{362} Mrázek (2002: 105).
\textsuperscript{363} See advertisement for his “Indische Landsceappen” in \textit{Soerabaijasch Handelsblad}, 27 July 1904.
\textsuperscript{364} Spanjaard (2003: 27).
\textsuperscript{365} Jasper (1910) published on Du Chattel in Indonesia. The meeting between Pirngadie and Du Chattel is suggested in the article in the \textit{Algemeen Handelsblad}, 17 May 1912 and the chronology in Rossum Du Chattel (2006).
\textsuperscript{366} Du Chattel (1913). Three editions were published between 1913 and 1931.
\textsuperscript{367} See exhibition catalogue \textit{Eere-tentoonstelling van schilderijen en aquarellen van wijlen den heer Fred. J. du Chattel} (1918).
Pirngadie moves from location to location, from port to inland, plotting his travels in a temporal and spatial sequence as he goes. His travels with Jasper would also have contributed to a sense of Indonesia as a united archipelago under the Dutch. In many ways his behaviour resonates with the colonialist projects that combined territorial expansion with knowledge gathering. But these are not just the travels of a coloniser keen to document new territories. For Pirngadie the landscape
was often inflected with very personal memories. For instance in the top-right corner of his sketch of a Malay cemetery in Probolinggo he noted, “De 3e Kidjeng van voor naar achter is het graf van mijn schoonmoeder” (The 3rd gravestone nearest to the back is the grave of my lovely mother).

Figure 27 Mas Pirngadie, *Koeboeran Malajoe Probolinggo*, 20 November 1906, pencil on paper, 20 x 13 cm. KITLV 36D526

The sketchbook, with drawings dated and laid out in chronological order, is not just a compilation of unrelated drawings. The sketches are a timeline of Pirngadie’s travels that narrate his movement through space. The notion of time that is built into the pages of the sketchbook is similar to that found in the newspaper illustrations that record events as they unfold. In both cases Mas Abdullah and Mas Pirngadie worked with certain chronologies and were made aware of a new sequential sense of time that would have affected how they thought about their own lives. Even the newspaper reporting on Pirngadie plots out a neat map of his activities. He was reported to have exhibited at Saritjin Galleries in The Hague in 1912. In 1914, he is again reported to have exhibited in The Hague, this time at the art shop and gallery Boeatan. Back in Indonesia his pictures were for sale as part of a Kunstkring exhibition in Buitenzorg (Bogor). He exhibited paintings in 1920 in Batavia and in 1923 he is reported to have exhibited his etchings at the Medan Hotel in Medan. By 1925 he was widely recognised at home and abroad, as demonstrated by the comments made

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368 See *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 17 May 1912.
370 *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 24 February 1914.
by Noto Soeroto in *Oedaya*, published in February 1925. In this bilingual double-page spread Mas Pirngadie is described as a modern Indonesian painter. The attribution of “modern” to Pirngadie is interesting because it calls into question the standard art historical reading of his work, which is usually cast in the conservative school of *Mooi Indië* landscape painters. Remarkably, Noto Soeroto also identifies him as a painter whose style is specifically non-Javanese,

Mas Pirngadie… one of the most well-known modern Javanese painters. He works with the technique and the point of view of European painters, thereby we cannot say his work has specific Javanese characteristics.\(^{372}\)

Noto Soeroto’s remarks on Pirngadie’s painting style reflect his thoughts on an Indonesian national art that embodied forms of cultural nationalism with a revival of Javanese aesthetic values, as discussed further in the next chapter. For Noto Soeroto, Pirngadie’s paintings clearly did not exhibit either of these qualities. Just a few years after the publication of this review, in 1928, Mas Pirngadie was awarded the silver medal of honour in acknowledgement of his dedication and contribution to the civil service. In the same year he painted a self-portrait wearing the medal.\(^{373}\)

![Figure 28](image)

**Figure 28** Mas Pirngadie, *Self-Portrait*, 1928, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm, collection of Duta Fine Art Museum Collection, Jakarta. Image: KITLV 15505

This was the kind of portrait that the Javanese elite hung in their homes to signal their realisation of status within European society.\(^{374}\) Pirngadie is dressed in the customary attire of a Javanese civil servant, his newly acquired medal is included as would be expected, and his expression conveys a neutrality, neither proud nor submissive, that conforms to early photographic portraiture. There


\(^{373}\) Kam (2006).

\(^{374}\) See the comments made by Resink in Mrazek (2010: 187).
are other features too that mimic the characteristics of photography. The three-quarter perspective of the sitter, whilst not definitive or exclusive to photography, was common in that medium. Likewise the cropping of the figure is compatible with the new ways of seeing introduced by the cropping of photographs seen in criminology, *volkstypen* and other publications. Pirngadie does not attempt to portray himself in the full body portrait typical of the 19th century Governor General portraits and the Céphas portraits of Javanese royalty. In fact the absence of Pirngadie’s hands and the restraint of his arms, held tightly next his body, suggests that the portrait may have been painted from a photograph.

Aside from those features that correlate to contemporaneous photographs, this portrait exhibits features of late 19th century European portraiture executed in the manner of academic realism including the sombre hues that were associated with masculinity. Another portrait painted by Pirngadie in the same year depicts his wife in the same sombre hues. In fact, the two paintings are very similar in many respects. The size of the canvas and the frame are identical. One would think that they were made as a pair to be hung alongside each other, except that they don’t operate as a pair in the sense of 19th century couplings in which each partner was painted seated or standing facing in the direction of the other. Instead both Pirngadie and his wife seem to be looking upwards to the left from a seated position, as though they were looking to the same point. This suggests that they were in fact seated in the same chair, against the same dark background and looking at the same camera when their portraits were first produced.

![Figure 29 Mas Pirngadie, Portrait of his wife, 1929, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm. Image: KITLV 15506](image)

Footnote: 

375 Woodall (1997: 5).
With this in mind it is almost certain that Pirngadie painted these portraits from a photograph. Painting people from photographs was of course something that Pirngadie did again for the 1931 Paris Exhibition. Like those later ethnographic plates, these two portraits of Pirngadie and his wife are depicted in an impartial and almost objective manner, they have not be flattened behind glass but neither do they appear to have pushed loudly against it. They are very matter of fact and do not contain the performative aspects of the earlier Céphas self-portraits nor are they encoded with a distinctly Javanese aesthetic as in the woodblocks of Mas Jodjana, discussed in the next chapter. They lack the kind of psychological investigation that is the trade-mark of the later portraits of Sudjojono, Affandi, Harijadi and Sudarso.

Pirngadie’s two painted portraits are quite the opposite of the caricatures made by Mas Abdullah that exhibit exaggerated expressions and accentuated facial features. In many ways they do not appear significantly different from a police identification shot or an ethnographic drawing of Javanese man and woman. Yet they are still portraits. Knowing that Pirngadie made them towards the end of a long career painting landschappen and volkstypen, it is perhaps not surprising that the portraits he made of himself and his wife have a similar air to them.

Concluding remarks

Mas Abdullah and Mas Pirngadie both experienced a changed sense of time due to their work in newspapers and publications that reported on events as they happened. The reporting of events in a diarised or sequential narration of the self within the context of time was an essentially modern experience that changed one’s sense of self and time, and that “fits the experience of the disengaged, particular self.”376 This altered state of reflexivity, facilitated by the newspaper format in particular, exhibited a break with old understandings of epochal change from zaman dahulu (past epoch) to masa sekarang (current time) and also provided the readership with access to common knowledge and shared experiences.377

Their mobility also afforded them opportunities akin to the coloniser. Nonetheless they did not use this advantage to make any forthright political comments or reconsider their agency in terms of national self-determination. Instead both men used their connections to consolidate their own positions as successful members of elite society. However they should be recognised as a conduit between the normalising aspects of the Javanese courts which hosted Dutch scholarship and the beginnings of the professional artist as a vocation in 20th century Indonesia.

Both men were instrumental in establishing an artistic practice in the country and acted as important teachers to the next generation. Their respective students went on to be the two most prominent, and rival, painters in Indonesian modern art history - Abdullah and Sudjojono. With these two painters in mind that we can see how two different, yet parallel, trajectories for portraiture opened up. Basuki Abdullah continued the tradition of the court painter, or the artist who paints in the service of the administration. Whilst never declaring a loyalty to Javanese values, Basuki was implicit in Sukarno’s reassertion of Java’s golden age. Basuki painted portraits of women that tended towards an ideal, not unlike the volkstypen his paintings of Thai, Arab and Balinese girls attempted to locate characteristics of different women with their respective geographical origins. These allegorical portraits served Sukarno in establishing himself as the legitimate ruler of Indonesia. The second artist, Sudjojono, represented a rejection of elite values and an abandonment of a reified Javanese culture in the 1930s. Sudjojono turned away from his own teacher, Pirngadie, and found the expression of the old, the ugly and distasteful a refreshing way to think about a kind of portraiture that exhibited the subjectivity of the ordinary person.

378 One might consider however that their paintings of the Indonesian landscape may have flamed the spirit of national pride in Indonesians by reminding them of the beauty of their home-country. (Karaus:2016)
Chapter Four: Performing the Javanese self in Exile (1913-1935)

This chapter looks at the way Javanese living abroad were able to reconfigure ideas about budi and the myths of adiluhung to perform new modes of Javanese selves whilst living in a state of exile, in particular the editor Noto Soeroto (1888-1951), the dancer and artist Raden Mas Jodjana (1893-1972) and the prominent pedagogue and nationalist Soewardi Soerjaningrat (a.k.a) Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889-1959). I use the term “exile” in the context of colonialism to include a range of psychological states of otherness instigated by either physical or intellectual interruption to usual states of self. I do not use the term “cosmopolitanism” because, like his friend Rabindranath Tagore, Noto Soeroto did not advocate a kind of “colourless cosmopolitanism”, but rather the collaborative benefits of friendships in his endeavour to establish racial and cultural individuality as the key to universal understanding. Noto Soeroto and Soewardi Soerjaningrat’s interest in Tagore’s educational ideas were based on a desire to promote ideas of Javanese nationalism in an international context. Like Tagore, they sought to do this through building friendships and liberal methods of dialogue. However whilst they sought greater equality for Java on the international playing field, they believed this could only be achieved by a cultural elite based on Javanese ideas of “wisdom” and leadership.

Hailing from the Paku Alam and Mangkunegara royal houses of central Java, the three men were clearly members of Java’s cultural elite. The Paku Alam family played a significant role in producing talented cultural ambassadors in the fields of art, journalism, music, literature and education. Aside from Soewardi Soerjaningrat and Noto Soeroto who were cousins, Raden Mas Soerjopoetro, the brother of Prince Paku Alam VII, was significant in the expression of

379 For a discussion of Edward Said’s use of exile and other similar terms such as cosmopolitanism and diaspora in the context of colonial art history see Mathur (2011).
381 Collins (2012: 123).
382 Tsuchiya (1987).
Javanese musical ideals in Europe. The third man, Raden Mas Jodjana, was instead fostered by the Mangkunegara family and in particular Mangkunegara VII who was himself a friend of Tagore and had translated his work into Javanese. Later in 1933 he published the Dutch language treatise, explicated from theosophical ideas about "true" inner "meaning", on wayang which according to Florida exemplified the links between theosophical circles, Dutch Javanologists and the Javanese elite. Jodjana, like his mentor was also deeply involved in the promotion of Javanese culture abroad and made a series of portraits that reflect those interests and offer a poignant example of the negotiation of subjectivity in exile.

**Javanese artists in the Netherlands and Indonesian Cultural Nationalism**

In the previous chapter I argued that the serialised documentation and exhibition of central Javanese court art by scholars, archaeologists, European artists and local artists effectively erased its political agency. With the exception of Kassian Céphas, who had the capacity to intervene in the colonial ordering of his world, the focus of western scholars on “correct” chronologies, texts and the restoration of a golden age generally muted the political agency of Javanese cultural agents. This was not the case however in the European context where Javanese activists, journalists and artists were able to draw empathy for their cause, and support for their political aspirations, through the rejuvenation of Javanese culture or budi as a form of political activity and national pride. Their pursuit of a spiritual and cultural renaissance realised through budi was encouraged by the theosophical circles in Europe and Java. The rhetoric of budi as self-cultivation and cultural endeavour provided a link between “mystical ways of attaining self-sufficiency and spiritual integrity and of achieving new status through self-improvement.” This link is vital to understanding the development of modern art alongside the activities of cultural nationalists in Indonesia and Europe.

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385 Kraus (2016)
386 Florida (1987: 3)
387 Florida (1987: 2) asserts that the idea of a golden age in Javanese court arts was nothing more that a reinstatement of Dutch prejudices tied to evolutionary theory and their own historical contribution to art and literature. For a discussion on the way the practices of dalang were normalised within a discourse of the canon, see Schechner (1990: 33-34).
388 Fakih (2014: 40).
The activities performed in Europe to largely European audiences, while challenging Anderson’s conception of the “Imagined Community,” conform to his observations regarding Javanese insistence on traditional values and the expression of knowledge via etiquette as a way of preserving sovereignty.390 It is this very expression of Javanese budi, acted out in conjunction with European organisations and to a foreign audience that is central to the assertion of Javanese cultural nationalism abroad.

In general agreement with Anderson, Lane argues that nationalists were united by their shared experience of colonialism and not by ties to tradition or by conventional societal exchange.391 However, not everyone had an equal experience of colonialism, and in fact some enjoyed many benefits including international travel. As communities in Indonesia began to recognise some commonality, either through the unions, cultural or religious organisations that voiced anti-Dutch sentiment, there was a small community of Javanese intellectuals living abroad who were very actively working with Dutch colleagues in shaping an imagination of an independent Javanese nation.392 From the turn of the century to the 1930s the small stream of Javanese men from aristocratic backgrounds who studied law, engineering and art in the cities of Holland built friendships with fellow students and other professionals.393 It was their experience of travel, distance and exile that provided a fertile environment for thinking about ideas of nation.394

In the second decade of the 20th century a number of the Javanese intellectuals, dancers and artists living in Holland began to collaborate with Dutch organisations and individuals to promote Javanese culture in the Netherlands. Whilst superficially appearing as a benign series of theatrical and dance performances that excited the Dutch imagination of the exotic Other, these performances were pregnant with the aspirations of Javanese intellectuals who challenged the political association of the two countries. In many cases they were produced and even performed by some of Indonesia’s most prominent and historically significant nationalists.

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391 Lane (2008: 19-20).
392 For more on Indonesian nationalists in the Netherlands see Elson (2008: 21-45).
393 In 1909 it is estimated that only 23 students were studying in the Netherlands. See Elson (2008: 8) and Poeze, van Dijk & van der Meulen (1986: 64).
In 1913 when Soewardi arrived in Holland after his expulsion from Indonesia, the *Indische Vereeniging* (Indies Association) had already been established for 5 years. Initially like *Budi Utomo* in Java, which was also established in 1908, it did not present itself as an overtly political organisation and was more or less concerned with maintaining links between various individuals and confirming a Javanese aristocratic presence. In these early years most of its members were from the aristocratic families of central Java, including Noto Soeroto who was president from 1914-1917. In 1916 when Noto Soeroto and Soewardi founded the organisation’s periodical, *Hindia Poetra* and Raden Mas Jodjana took the position of secretary, the organisation began to express a more politicised agenda. In March of the same year the organisation staged the first of its Arts Evenings. The arts evenings were a great success in enlightening the Dutch public and establishing a platform to promote Javanese culture as the exemplar par excellence of an Indonesian self-determining culture.

![Figure 30](image)

Figure 30 Unknown, Noto Soeroto (left) and Soewardi (right), The Hague, c 1916

At the heart of its success was the considerable charisma of its three central protagonists, Soewardi, Noto Soeroto and Raden Mas Jodjana, who not only performed with the aid of other Javanese students, but more importantly built strong friendships with a number of Dutch supporters. This chapter further examines the dynamic and fruitful relationship between Noto Soeroto, Soewardi, Raden Mas Jodjana and the Dutch artists Chris Lebeau and Isaac Israels. I conclude by looking at

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395 Ingleson (1975).
396 For political changes affected by the arrival of Soewardi see Ingleson (1975). For Jodjana’s involvement see Bonneff & Labrousse (1997: 227).
the way certain ideas about the Javanese self were germinated by the mutual enthusiasm of those relationships, and the portraits that were born from them.

**Noto Soeroto: Thinking about an Indonesian modern art**

Noto Soeroto was born into the *Paku Alam*, the son of Noto Diredjo, cousin of Paku Alam VII and grandchild of Paku Alam V. Noto Diredjo, for example, set up a study fund with the assistance of the Free Masons to send his son, Noto Soeroto and other students abroad. Alongside their passion for the arts, the Paku Alaman boys were well versed in politics and combined their two interests in the form of cultural nationalism. Noto Soeroto’s upbringing was informed by the ambition to strengthen the cultural ties of the population without relinquishing traditional hierarchies between the governing elite and the mass of the population. His vision of a symbiotic cooperative between his new home (Netherlands) and his country of origin was highly applauded among the artists, actors and intellectuals he met at clubs in The Hague, like the Wigwam and De Club.

He was in fact a well-liked and popular man, sought for his theories on art, culture and politics, a thinker, a pensive man, a philosopher almost and certainly a cultural idealist... His elusive and inconceivable behaviour were altogether fitting the development of Western art after 1900, characterised as it was by aestheticism, exoticism, humanism, mysticism, symbolism, and so on. Noto Soeroto was an amiable man of integrity who had many friends, particularly in the artistic circles of The Hague. For a while he was a central figure in the city's cultural life, admired and loved for his wise and conciliatory behaviour. He was in great demand as a speaker by all sorts of idealistically orientated societies.

Noto Soeroto was a cultural idealist and cultural nationalist, as such his ideas about a national art were largely informed by his ideas about Javanese art. They were further complicated by his ambition to realise a union between the East and West, as evoked by the organisation of the same

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397 Protschky (2012).
398 Noto Soeroto finished high school in The Hague and went on to study law in Leiden, however he dropped out and pursued writing and later publishing.
399 For further information on the people who frequented these venues in association with Noto Soeroto see Karels (2008: 102-116).
name founded in The Hague in 1899. However, he did not believe that Indonesian art should blindly embrace all the aspects of Modern European art, rather that European artists could guide their Indonesian counterparts to a renaissance of “national artistic consciousness.” Noto Soeroto promoted a Javanese aesthetic that expressed the budi as cultivated in the courts of central Java and embodied the modern sensibilities of Dutch art in its fascination with movement, the organic nature of line and the exotic. It was these almost self–orientalising aspects of a Javanese aesthetic that he wanted to impress upon a European audience as a significant differentiated Other, an Eastern other, aligned with Tagore’s vision of greater Eastern civilisation.

Noto Soeroto’s editorial work for Oedaya was significant in initiating artistic discourse around a national form of art. Because it was published in both Dutch and Malay his work was accessible to two audiences and was critical in establishing a dialogue between Europe and Indonesia. In this regard it was similar to the earlier journal Nederlandsch Indië Oud en Nieuw, to which Noto Soeroto contributed articles on art and which was a central conduit for the expression of ideas to a broader Dutch speaking readership.

In Issue no 21 of Oedaya, published in February 1925, we find a bilingual double page spread in which, quite pertinently, two “modern” Indonesian painters, Mas Pirngadie and Raden Mas Jodjana are introduced. Noto Soeroto identifies Pirngadie as a modern painter whose style is specifically non-Javanese (as discussed in chapter 3). In contrast, Noto Soeroto congratulates Raden Mas Jodjana on his ability to create new forms that embrace modern concerns without forgetting Javanese tradition. Noto Soeroto admired Jodjana’s work because, according to him, he developed new modes of representing traditional court practice and described Jodjana as a talented drawer and painter who created masterful book design,

Raden Mas Jodjana is already well known as a talented drawer and painter. Whilst in Holland he made numerous performances of Javanese dance. Many people admired his talent, more so because he developed new steps/sequences without forgetting adat from

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404 Malay was the lingua franca of the archipelago until its standardisation into the national language of Bahasa Indonesia in 1945. Oedaya (Sunrise) was published through Noto Soeroto’s own publishing house Adi Pustaka in The Hague beginning in early 1923.
As we can see from these brief remarks, as early as the mid 1920’s, Noto Soeroto’s criticism advanced an argument for the cultivation of a certain type of modern artistic expression that, through particular stylistic and developmental characteristics was able to illuminate itself as being of Javanese identity. The writer Nico Oosterbeek believed that an artist like Jodjana could be an example of such a style and wrote that with such talent as demonstrated by his wonderful wood-cuts Jodjana was capable of securing a new foundation for a purely modern Javanese art. Both Noto Soeroto and Oosterbeek clearly considered Jodjana not only an accomplished dancer but an artist of considerable talent capable of inspiring a new generation of Indonesian modern artists whilst also capable of rectifying the Western malaise through Eastern art. Cohen confirms this opinion and asserts that Jodjana’s time in Paris gave him the chance to study and work outside traditional constraints through a dialogue with some of the most “innovative and renowned French artists and Orientalists.” Furthermore Cohen asserts that Jodjana’s presence among them “allayed a central worry of modernism—namely that progress resulted in the decline of diversity and the wearing down of exoticism.”

Here we find the crucial ambiguity of the Dutch-Colonised relationship. On the one hand the reflexive action of self-othering brought about as a consequence of exile, either physically or intellectually, by travel or by the colonial interruption to normal life, acts as a catalyst for the creation of new artistic languages that embodies expressions of altered states of selfhood. At the time many believed that the self-doubt now evident amongst some Dutch men in Holland could be eased by a rediscovery of the Oriental. The imagination of an irrational and esoteric exotic east served both the ethicist who sought to reform it and also the mystics who sought solace from the material capitalist world in the Javanese thought world. Jodjana’s performance of the “exotic” as an essential otherness, as discussed later in this chapter, opened up an ambiguous dialogue

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406 Such demands upon artists to create a specifically indigenous modern art might be regarded as an early precursor to Sudjojono’s and Sukarno’s calls for an “Indonesian-ness” but in a specifically Javanese form.
407 Oosterbeek (1925: 4).
408 Oosterbeek (1925: 5).
between his capacity to assert new creations of selfhood in exile and their reception by a European audience.

Soewardi Soerjaningrat was another Javanese aristocrat and intellectual living in exile in Holland. His case, however, was much more political as will be discussed later. Nonetheless he was a friend of his cousin Noto Soeroto and their distant relative Raden Mas Jodjana and like them was impressed by the potential of “Eastern” philosophies as advocated by Tagore and the “West’s” reception of these ideas in organisations such as the Theosophical society, as key to resolving the conflicts of modern life. Soewardi, inspired by Tagore, found new confidence in his own cultural heritage. He recognised a long history of teaching and philosophical discourse within Javanese culture that could be used to rectify some of the failings of modernity and to harmonise the imbalance perpetrated by the rational ethos that drove the colonial project.

Many young Javanese intellectuals saw the answer to Java's dilemma as two-fold. Looking to Tagore’s writing for inspiration they sought a transition from the chaos of the modern-colonial world through a restoration of indigenous culture. According to Tsuchiya their intention was not to ignite the potential of organisations like Sarekat Islam, Sarekat Rakjat and the Communist Party (PKI) to unionise power of the workers and liberate individuals from colonial and feudal rule, but rather to draw them under the unifying sign of a shared culture to restore Javanese power and social order. The relationship between wisdom and leadership held a high place in traditional Javanese schemes of governance. Through restraint and regal conduct, good decision-making and refined behaviour, a ruler could restore harmony and order from a period of chaos.

To achieve such an outcome “wisdom” was required. Wisdom in the terms understood by Noto Soeroto, Soewardi and Jodjana was equivalent to the ability to convey leadership through beauty, to negotiate with grace, and to lead without recourse to policy, in other words to act intuitively and with dignity. Such leaders would need to embody the complementary roles of the self-disciplined Javanese ascetic (samadi) and the determined leader (pandita). The samadi was at once distant from politics and society yet inherently concerned with the functioning of society and

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412 In 1913 Soewardi arrived in Holland. In the same year Tagore was recognised internationally as the winner of the Nobel Prize and Montessori and Rudolf Steiner founded the society of Anthroposophy.
413 For a discussion on Javanese concepts of governance see Scherer (1975).
414 Tsuchiya (1987: 6-7)
demonstrated the kind of self-sacrifice required for political success. Equally they would need to embody the skill and knowledge of the religious teachers and guide their flock through reformation, to act as both the voice of the people, yet also their guide, in sum a *pandita*. The *pandita* was an exemplary leader who possessed the strength and determination required by the nationalist spirit.\textsuperscript{416} In the following parts of this chapter I discuss the ways that Jodjana and Soewardi used portraiture to embody Javanese notions of “wisdom” in order to fashion themselves in the roles of the *pandita* and *samadi*.\textsuperscript{417}

**Raden Mas Jodjana’s training in Europe**

Jodjana was the son of K.R.T Suradiningrat, a high-ranking official, and grew up in the milieu of the Mangkunegara courts. He acquired a foundation in *wayang* puppetry and Javanese painting under the tutelage of *Budi Utomo* and the special attention of Mangkunegoro VII.\textsuperscript{418} He had been intrigued by his own brother’s passion for dance but like his brother went into the civil service after graduation. Jodjana graduated from the *Opleiding School voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren* (School of Native Civil Servants) in 1910 and then worked as a clerk under his older brother, the head (*camat*) of Srandakan subdistrict in Bantul, Yogyakarta.\textsuperscript{419} He then went to study law in Batavia at the *Opleidingsschool voor Inlandsche Rechtskundigen* (School for the Training of Native Jurists). At the age of 21, after only a few months in Batavia, he left the Indies to study business at the *Nederlandsche Handels-Hoogeschool* (The Netherlands School of Commerce) in Rotterdam.\textsuperscript{420}

Jodjana arrived in Holland in 1914, only a year after Soewardi had begun his exile. It was not long before the two men began working together at the *Indische Vereeniging*. In 1916 Raden Mas Jodjana took the position of secretary and the organisation launched the first of its Arts Evenings in which Jodjana performed. In time Jodjana became internationally famous as a dancer, but alongside his dance practice Jodjana was an active participant in the art circles of The Hague and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[417] For a discussion on the complementary roles of the *pandita* and the *samadi* see Tsuchiya (1987).
\item[418] Cohen (2011: 122).
\end{footnotes}
Paris. In 1918 he joined the *Haagsche Kunstkring* (Hague Art Circle), an association of artists, writers, musicians, stage designers and architects founded by the Dutch painter Theophile de Bock.\footnote{Cohen (2011: 117).}

By the 1920s Jodjana was exhibiting his work in group shows and was later to perform at the Pulchri Studio in The Hague. He had also developed lasting friendships with European artists, including Isaac Israels, Jan Altorf and Chris Lebeau.\footnote{An exhibition on the theme of the friendship between Jodjana and Israels, *Isaac Israels en Raden Mas Jodjana: een Indische vriendschap*, was held at the Mesdag Museum, The Hague, 10 June–26 September 2005. Retrieved from http://www.codart.nl/exhibitions/details/929/ on 10/1/2015.} Israels gave Jodjana materials and training in painting, introduced him to the work of Van Gogh and encouraged him to “paint colours found in nature.”\footnote{Cohen (2011: 120-21).} Israels had made a number of paintings of Bernard's touring *wayang wong* troupe when it played at the national Exhibition of Women’s Labour in 1898 and other student performances in 1915 and 1916, including the standing Jodjana.

![Figure 31 Isaac Israels, Javanese Dancer, The Hague, 1916, 135 x 82 cm Museum Boijmans van Beuningen](image)

The two men worked very collaboratively and when Israels later visited Java in 1921-22, Jodjana provided him with an introductory letter to the royal courts.\footnote{Cohen (2011: 120-21).} During this visit Israels painted a portrait of Mangkunegoro VII.\footnote{Jan Altorf instructed Jodjana in the basics of wood-carving and sculpture and made a bronze bust of Jodjana, which was published in *Oedaya* alongside busts of...}
Jan Toorop and Noto Soeroto. But perhaps it was Chris Lebeau who had the greatest impact on Jodjana’s art practice, as discussed later in this chapter.

In Europe Jodjana extended his skills in the arts by means of exchange with artists working in Holland and France. At the time, there was active dialogue between colonial artists living in Holland and France and Jodjana was engaged with the l’Association François des Amis de l’Orient and was also employed at the atelier of the decorative artist Jean Dunand (1877-1942). General interest in the technical applications of Eastern art, batik among others, but including arabesque, metal work and lacquer not only bolstered a craft movement but might be seen as part of later developments in Orientalism which expressed anxieties to do with fears of homogeneity and alienation experienced by Europeans living in industrialised cities. Such a climate of cultural anxiety offered opportunities for artists like Jodjana to partake in a re-orientation of European aesthetics towards a genuine appreciation of Non-European technical expertise and decorative aesthetics. In 1920 Jodjana moved to Paris at the invitation of the Swiss-born art deco interior decorator and artist Jean Dunand. Dunand had established a reputation for producing distinct lacquer work. He had studied Japanese lacquer work (urushi) under the Japanese craftsman Seizo Sugawara, who had stayed on after coming to Paris in 1900 to prepare Japan’s pavilion for the colonial exhibition. Dunand employed up to 60 people in his atelier to fulfil the orders for furniture, screens, decoration, vases, metalwork and jewellery. Jodjana was offered a full-time contract but only wanted to work as a day labourer so he was free to perform at night, and was paid the generous wage of 2.50 Francs per hour.

Of the many pieces made, one distinct item of lacquerware depicts a bare-chested dancer with an elaborate headdress. Cohen is of the view that this piece was probably made with the assistance of Jodjana. According to Cohen, the dancer looking down with hands in nyempurit position reveals a profound knowledge of Javanese dance combined with a modern sensibility.

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426 The three bronze busts made by Altorf of Jan Toorop, Jodjana and Noto Soeroto were published with an accompanying text about their relationship in Oosterbeek (1926).
428 Many of them were Vietnamese, he also sourced the lacquer from toxicodendron trees in Indochina.
At the time Jodjana was working with Dunand, the workshop had garnered an international reputation for exquisite workmanship and cutting-edge design that incorporated and furthered the principles of cubism among other trends. Working in the studio of Dunand also meant that Jodjana had the opportunity to meet and mix with a society of visiting artists and friends of Dunand. In this environment, Jodjana finetuned his artistic skills in painting, carving and finishing and saw a model “for how to integrate Asian artistic practices with modernism.”

**Jodjana and Chris Lebeau**

Joris Johannes Christian (Chris) Lebeau (1878-1945) studied at the *Amsterdam Quellinusschool* (1892-1895) and the *Rijksschool voor Kunstnijverheid* (State School of Applied Arts, 1895-1899) and was a younger contemporary of Jan Toorop. Both were integrally involved in the development of *Nieuwe Kunst* as the Dutch tangent of *Art Nouveau*. The movement, commonly understood to have been concentrated for 14 years between the 1892 and 1906, was a precursor to the *De Stijl* and Art Deco in the Netherlands. Lebeau, like many others of the time, worked in a number of media: textiles, glass, ceramics as well as printing, poster, stamp design and batik. Lebeau taught at the Harlem School of Art and was involved in experimenting with wax for making batik in

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432 D. Scott (1994).
European conditions.\textsuperscript{433} It was his patient aptitude for teaching and his commitment to new and authentic techniques for batik production that positioned him as a prominent teacher of the second generation of Dutch batik artists.\textsuperscript{434} He produced striking and complex designs in batik and was successful in assimilating traditional patterns and colours of the East Indies into his own work.\textsuperscript{435} Lebeau was closely associated with the Arts and Crafts workshop in The Hague. Its proprietor, John Uiterwijk, also ran a workshop in Apeldoorn, where up to 30 women produced batik for his shop. In 1900, Lebeau began working for the Apeldoorn studio, where he produced the design for the cover of the Louis Couperus novel about a Dutch resident’s encounters with Javanese magic, entitled \textit{De Stille Kracht} (The Hidden Force).\textsuperscript{436}

\textbf{Figure 33} Chris Lebeau cover design for \textit{De Stille Kracht} (The Hidden Force)

Book design was one of the principle media of expression for the \textit{Nieuwkunst} movement and, according to Purvis, the lush and organic designs of Javanese batik greatly inspired artists such as Chris Lebeau and Jan Toorop. Their adaption of these flat patterns soon evolved into a distinctive Dutch national style.\textsuperscript{437} Aside from batik, woodblock gained significant popularity with

\textsuperscript{433} Van Hout (2001: 17).
\textsuperscript{434} Carlano (1995).
\textsuperscript{435} Purvis (2002: 131).
\textsuperscript{436} Purvis (2002: 134).
\textsuperscript{437} Purvis (2002).
Nieuwkunst book design and it is in this medium that we find the greatest comparison and continuity between Jodjana and Lebeau.

Lebeau had begun toying with woodblock printing in early 1914, when during a voyage to Java he made number of portraits of fellow passengers.\textsuperscript{438} From May to October that year Lebeau travelled with Eduard Verkade and a small group colleagues to Indonesia.\textsuperscript{439} Verkade was keen for Lebeau to see the “exotic colours” of Java and would not have been disappointed that they all had the chance to observe some elaborate ceremonies in the courts of Jogjakarta. In Batavia Lebeau produced a number of woodcut portraits, including one of Mr. A.C. Wiesing who was later to write about Lebeau’s portrait of Soewardi. Some of these were exhibited at Department of Topography building in Batavia.\textsuperscript{440} Initially his woodblock prints followed the format and style of his earlier portraits in that they were printed using lithography, such as the portrait of Jan Toorop made in Feb 1914.

\begin{figure}[!h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{portrait_of_jan_toorop.png}
\caption{Chris Lebeau, Portrait of Jan Toorop, 1914, lithograph}
\end{figure}

It is likely that Lebeau met Jodjana, Noto Soeroto and Soewardi around the same time of this portrait. In late 1918 or early 1919 Lebeau began a new series of portraits executed using the technique of woodblock printing and produced a large number of portraits of celebrities, actors, political figures and intellectuals, including striking portraits of Raden Mas Jodjana, Soerjopoetro, Soewardi and his wife Soetartinah (both made in May 1919).\textsuperscript{441}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{438} de Bois (1987: 44).
\bibitem{439} After graduation Lebeau worked under contract for three years in theatre design for Eduard Verkade (de Bois 1987: 44).
\bibitem{440} de Bois (1987: 226).
\bibitem{441} de Bois (1987: 227).
\end{thebibliography}
Lebeau’s new series exhibited much finer line work and a more stylised and graphic visuality that see some of his earlier explorations in the decorative forms of nature remodelled to the human face. Whilst we currently have no dates for the wood cut prints made by Jodjana, except to say that they were made before January 1925 when they were published in *Oedaya*, I contend that they were most likely made sometime in 1919 when, working alongside Lebeau, Jodjana began his initial forays into the medium. By that time he had been a member of The Hague Art Circle for a year and had spent some time training in painting with Isaac Israels but is through his work with Lebeau that we see the confluence of ideas around an aesthetic inspired by nature and the woodblock technique.

Whilst Lebeau encouraged Jodjana to make *kunst* (art) and not *kunstboter* (lit. art butter), meaning that Jodjana should resist imitating other styles and work more intuitively from nature, there is clear evidence of Lebeau’s own formal experimentations in the work of Jodjana.\textsuperscript{442} In 1920 Jodjana illustrated the cover of the 1st edition of Noto Soeroto’s book, *Lotus en Morgendauw* (Lotus and Morning Dew).

\textsuperscript{442} Sumardjo (1952).
Figure 36 Jodjana, *Lotus en Morgendauw* (Lotus and Morning Dew). Image: *Oedaya* No 26, June 1925

We can see this work as inspired by the decorative possibilities of organic and geometric patterning produced by the delineation between foreground and background and articulated by bold line that characterised the developments of *Nieuwe Kunst*. If we look at Jodjana’s early portraits, we can see how Jodjana adopted forms of nature, as did Lebeau, to the modelling of the face. By comparing his woodblock of the flower, Cyclamen to his head study and to a detail from his self-portrait, we see the use of continuous line that flows in its emulation of nature to create organic patterning.

Figure 37 Cyclamen. Image: *Oedaya* No 26, June 1925  
Figure 38 Maskerstudie. Image: *Oedaya* No 26, June 1925
The reliance on line rather than tone to define spaces and forms accentuates the flattening of the picture, and emphasises the decorate nature of the print. Unlike the German expressionists who were working around the same time in the medium of woodblock, Lebeau and Jodjana did not use tonal variation to produce the appearance of three dimensional form or the expression of emotion. Instead they concentrated on rendering the demeanour of the sitter through the clear depiction of their facial features, most importantly their eyes and their gaze. In some cases the background marked by line is used to further dramatize the fore-grounded sitter. In the case of Soerjopoetro’s portrait the background is made up of a mottled black surface that almost has the appearance affected by batik on cloth. The darkened background combines with the flat blackness of his clothing to throw Soerjopoetro’s face into heightened relief. The face contrived from few yet deliberately placed lines amply portrays the pensive character of the man caught in a moment of deep contemplation. His delicate features, his noble posture and his passion for performing beauty through music as a mode of cultural and political agency are all suggestive of a Javanese aristocratic leader.
On the international stage Soerjopoetro was an influential musician who was among the pioneers of new ideas in the history of 20th century music. He experimented with the formal possibilities of music by conducting research of melody formation, modes of playing, construction of instruments and notation that made him well known in Holland’s cultural circles.\textsuperscript{443} Aside from this portrait made by Jodjana, Soerjopoetro was the subject of a number of portraits made whilst he lived in Holland including the pencil drawing by Paul Koster. So whilst he was able to use Western notation to represent Javanese culture to an international audience, it was not just a formal proposition.\textsuperscript{444} Like the other members of his family he was driven by a desire to achieve a political position through culture and like them he too was recognised as one of the pioneers of cultural nationalism abroad.

\textsuperscript{443} Notosudirdjo (2014).
\textsuperscript{444} Notosudirdjo (2014: 134).
Jodjana’s self-portraits performing the self

Like other people, Jodjana perceived himself in terms of the categories and values held by the individuals and groups with whom he interacted including other artists, family members and religious and political groups contemporaneous to his own life. In other words his subjectivity was culturally and historically conditioned. In looking at his portraits we can make associations between his sense of self and the other events of his life and the circumstance of his existence that may have informed the way he negotiated that sense of self.

Living in the Netherlands as a privileged Javanese aristocrat among a milieu of liberally minded artists and writers, Jodjana would have experienced both a sense of belonging and non-belonging. Like his contemporary Noto Soeroto, Jodjana would have experienced the anxieties of exile, or the disjuncture of being within and without. As with Céphas (discussed in chapter 2), Jodjana asserts a sense of pride in his distinct position through portraits that demonstrate his own self-reflexive negotiation with discourses of the exotic and Javanese cultural nationalism. Jodjana understood the constraints of these cultural discourses and played with the construct of the exotic through performance and portraiture as a means to assert his own subjectivity. In fact the act of presenting himself publically through his self-portraits is closely related to his more theatrical performances in which he also projects ideas about himself. It could be argued that Jodjana used the self-portrait as a theatrical model for self-examination and negotiation between the “subjective and objective gaze” or in other words the private and public self. In the context of his theatrical training with Dullen’s theatre company, Jodjana come into contact with the ideas of French existentialism and Jungian analytical psychology that among many things explores the relationship between subconscious selves, psyche and performance of those selves in our everyday existence.

We might assume then that Jodjana was well aware of ideas about the potential to exert change in one’s life, to assert agency and to develop and document one’s own character in a narrative sense, as outlined in chapter 1.

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446 Similar ideas of performing cultural identity and public engagement are discussed in Cate (2012).
447 For a discussion on the similarities between self-portraiture and performance see Bond (2006: 39).
448 Gaston (2010: 64).
450 Daniel Dennet quoted in Freeland (2010: 159).
As might be expected in any theatrical dance, Jodjana would attempt to embody the particular character of his performance through “intense acts of concentration.” However in the Javanese context, this was something that was believed to be only achievable when attempted by members of the nobility. Not only did a dancer for the wayang wong need to possess the correct physical and mental prowess to convincingly portray their characters, it was considered inappropriate for someone to play certain roles when they lacked the required level of dignity or morality in their personal lives. For this reason many of the actors were played by members of the nobility because it was believed they possessed and displayed the appropriate characteristics. If we look at Jodjana’s self-portrait as Narayana we can make the following associations between himself as a Javanese aristocrat, his performance of the exotic and the embodiment of Narayana (Krishna).

![Narayana (self-portrait), c 1920, woodblock print, ink on paper, 35 x 27.5 cm. Image: Author](image)

Whilst Jodjana was no longer representing a character but transforming himself into something else, metaphorically wearing the mask of Narayana, to transform him into the legendary and mischievous deity Krishna, he was also partaking in a performance of Javanese nobility that demonstrated his direct link to the mythical, pre-Islamic Hindu past of Java. It might be argued then that Jodjana who “maintained his distinct Javanese identity, playing the role of Eastern prince to the hilt,” leveraged some of the exoticism surrounding his practice to perform a subjectivity, or narrate a self that was immersed in Javanese modes of aesthetic comportment while also

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engaged with Western modes of expression.\textsuperscript{454} The conjunction of these two aesthetic modes is further elucidated by the formal qualities of the work. The portrait in profile, marked by deliberate yet fluid lines clearly conforms to the depictions of the wayang puppets and yet is a wonderful expression of the Dutch styles that emerged out of \textit{Nieuwe Kunst} batik and woodblock book illustration.

We know that Mangkunegoro VII told Jodjana that wayang dancers should, like wayang puppets, only be seen in profile.\textsuperscript{455} So to further emphasise a comparison between his self–portrait as a wayang dancer and the wayang puppet, Jodjana has cut out around the profile of his face to raise it from the background and make it more pronounced as if it is a puppet against the screen. And here we might see a comparison with Toorop’s earlier work as described by Purvis, “His use of the silhouette, his linear style, and the forms, expressions, and hairstyles of his female figures are clearly derived from Javanese shadow puppets.”\textsuperscript{456}

The clear delineation of planes and form achieved in these early wood-cuts was also used to great effect in his later works in pencil and paint. His later painting Buddha might also be perceived as another theatrical self-portrait.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{boeddha-self-portrait}
\caption{\textit{Boeddha (self portrait)}, 1935, 68.2 x 50.6cm, oil on canvas, Tropen Museum Collection 6155-1}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{454} Mathur (2011: 524) describes the activities of the Indian artist, Amrita Sher-Gill in Paris in a similar way.
\textsuperscript{455} Cohen (2011: 122).
\textsuperscript{456} Purvis (2002: 131).
The features of the Buddha do not follow a regional or dynastic style. For instance, he is not shown with the *urna*, the dot at the centre of the forehead that symbolises the Buddha’s third eye, nor does he wear Buddha’s robes as seen in the sculptures of Borobudur. Instead the physiognomy of this figure conveys the well-developed physic of a dancer and the facial features seem to be more clearly aligned with Jodjana’s own. The accentuated eyebrows, slender nose, high cheek bones, poised lips and sculpted chin are not what we would expect to see in the forms of an idealised Buddha. These are the facial features of a man, slightly stylised but still very much a likeness of Jodjana.

This is a self-portrait of Jodjana as a Buddha. His eyes humbly gaze downward in the manner of a dancer performing modes of Javanese modesty while his right hand forms the gesture (*mudra*) of *akash* or *shuni mudra* in which the middle finger joins with the thumb. This gesture symbolises courage and discipline to do one’s duty and is also known as the “seal or lock gesture” meaning to seal one’s internal focus on discernment and patience. This is a self-portrait of Jodjana meditating and invoking the gestures of Mahayana Buddhism to attain enlightenment. Yet it is likely that Jodjana came to learn about Buddhist iconography through theosophical circles, most probably whilst he was living in Europe. Like his earlier self-portraits Jodjana continues to play between a narration of his own subjectivity and the performance of an assumed cultural self. Given that it was painted in 1935, once Jodjana had relocated to the countryside of southern France, perhaps Jodjana saw in the Buddha’s example the opportunity to learn through self imposed exile. I am not suggesting that the magnitude of Jodjana’s activities are comparable to those of the historical Buddha or that his teaching had the same global impact, but rather that in the tradition of the Javanese *samadi*, Jodjana imagined himself as a Buddha-like ascetic who through self-imposed exile could offer new teachings.

In this way, he may have imagined that he could convey leadership through beauty, negotiate with grace, and lead without recourse to policy, in other words to exhibit the tropes of Javanese wisdom. At the same time his emulation of Buddha encourages his audiences to reconsider the value of a pre-modern and pre-Islamic golden age of Javanese civilisation. I conclude then that these self-portraits of Jodjana as Narayana and Buddha illustrate both his self-reflective awareness of the presentation of otherness to a Dutch public audience and simultaneously demonstrate his commitment to the metaphysical and cultural traditions of Java.
A portrait of Soewardi

Raden Mas Soewardi Soerjaningrat was schooled in the Dutch school system and at age 19 went on to study medicine in Jakarta in 1908. Only two years later he dropped out of medical school (STOVIA) to pursue a more public career in journalism and politics. In 1908 STOVIA students formed Budi Utomo and spent much of their leisure time chatting and reading in the library of Douwes Dekker (1879-1952), who lived not far from the school.\footnote{Raben & Bosma (2008: 318). Douwes Dekker was the great nephew of the author Edward Douwes Dekker (Multatuli).} In 1912 Douwes Dekker began publishing \emph{De Express} and on 25 December 1912 he founded the \emph{Indische Partij} (Indies Party) in Bandung. Tjipto Mangoenkesoemo and Soewardi Soerjaningrat both left Budi Utomo to join Dekker and take up roles as editors of the newspaper.\footnote{Soewardi was also on the operations committee of the Bandung branch of \emph{Sarekat Islam} (Raben & Bosma 2008: 326).}
The following year, 1913, marked the 100\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Holland’s liberation from Napoleon’s French empire. To celebrate their independence, the Dutch in Indonesia organised a series of festivities and parades and requested that their colonial subjects make a financial donation. As mentioned in the Introduction, Soewardi did not fail to see the irony in this gesture and penned a satirical pamphlet, of which 5000 were distributed. \emph{Als Ik eens Nederlander} (\textit{If I were for once a Dutchman}) caused great indignation among the Dutch for two main reasons. As I have argued previously, Dutch was the language in which modern ideas, scientific concepts and political aspirations were expressed by Javanese intellectuals. However the Dutch language was also used to demonstrate difference and hierarchy. Before the introduction of the Ethical Policy Javanese learnt to read and write in Dutch but were not permitted to communicate in spoken Dutch and instead were required to address Dutch people in low Malay. Clearly frustrated by the restrictions placed upon him, Soewardi as a sign of resistance continued to use low Malay to address Dutch people.\footnote{Kruass (2016)} When the first pamphlets were released in the Dutch language, the thought of a Javanese
man inhabiting the Dutch language and imagining himself to be Dutch threatened Dutch sensibilities regarding their position of superiority.\footnote{By way of comparison, in discussing the French colonies and the use of language Benjamin (2002: 46) asserts, ‘In the cultural correlate of associations policy, French language was the “gift” that gave access to European modes of knowledge, to be maintained beside the Arabic that provided social cohesion.’} This was the first point of contention.

However, the translation of the text into Malay caused even greater concern. The Dutch considered the translation dangerous not only because it gave the Indonesian masses access to subversive material, but due to the status of Malay as a lingua franca.\footnote{Siegel (1997: 29).} Malay was a language free from ethnic association and one that could circumnavigate the power relations established by the High Javanese of the central courts. It also expressed Soewardi’s anti-authoritarian position and his insistence on speaking Malay to Dutch people. Furthermore the lingua franca, which is in some ways was foreign to both Javanese and Dutch, allowed Soewardi to assert an individuality that transgressed cultural boundaries. Siegel describes this subjectivity in terms of the first person or “I”. The “I” can travel, can cross from one side to the other, can emulate and can embody the other.\footnote{Siegel (1997: 31).} Following Siegel’s logic, Soewardi, a Javanese aristocrat could use Malay to embody Dutch knowledge in a way that made him equal to the Dutch and at the same time, by speaking a language common to the people, he could represent the masses (rakyat).

It was this prospect of a new Indonesian national consciousness realised through the conduit of a lingua franca that most troubled the Dutch readership. For this perceived threat to Dutch control, Governor General Idenburg invoked article 47 and the three men, Soewardi, Tjipto and Dekker were banished from Java.\footnote{Originally they were to be sent to separate islands in the archipelago, Dekker to Kupang on Timor, Tjipto to Banda island and Soewardi to Bangka island, but Idenburg relented and offered them the option of leaving the Indies if they responded within 30 days. The three decided to travel to Holland and all set sail on 6 September 1913.} When the three arrived in Holland they joined the Indische Vereeniging and their inclusion gave additional inspiration to the students living in Holland. Whilst in Holland, Soewardi published many articles in the De Indier and Hindia Poetra (which he also edited between 1916-1917).

Soewardi saw his role as not just a newsmen reporting on events for an Indonesian readership but possibly more importantly he saw himself as enlightening and educating the Dutch by propagating the culture of Indonesia and presenting himself as an exemplar of that culture.\footnote{Tsuchiya (1987: 31-35).} He saw himself...
As a *pandita*, as mentioned he danced and worked alongside Noto Soeroto and Jodjana to establish a conduit for ideas about Javanese cultural nationalism. He also mixed in many of the same circles, so naturally he also became a friend of the artist Chris Lebeau. According to de Bois, the two men initially met when Lebeau had travelled to Java. This seems unlikely given that Lebeau was not in Java until the middle of 1914, while Soewardi had departed for Holland months earlier on 6 September 1913. Nonetheless in 1919, the year of Soewardi’s return to Indonesia, he went to Lebeau to have his portrait made.

![Figure 43](image)

**Figure 43** Lebeau, *Soewardi*, 1919, woodblock print, ink on paper, 48 x 36 cm. KITLV 52V11

At this time Jodjana had already developed a strong friendship with Lebeau and the two men worked closely together on a series of woodblock portraits.

Whilst this thesis is concerned with portraits made by Javanese rather than of them, I have included this portrait due to the special circumstances of its production. The portrait of Soewardi by Lebeau conforms to the triangular relationship between artist, sitter and audience as defined by Spiro and discussed in chapter 1. Thus it presents a collaborative project in which Soewardi had some control over the production of the portrait to affect a certain response from his audience. When Soewardi went to Lebeau he already intended to return to Java but didn’t have the money to do so. The idea

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467 Brilliant (1991: 11) further articulates the complexities of the relationship between artist, sitter and viewer who are all three enmeshed in their contemporaneous value systems.
was that the portrait would be published in a local newspaper, the *Amsterdamer*, with advertised
copies for sale, the proceeds of which would go towards buying Soewardi’s return ticket. This portrait then served a very particular function and marks the conclusion of Soewardi’s exile with a very satirical gesture that reignites the issues around his initial banishment. For here again we have the public assertion of Javanese subjectivity in the face of colonial policy. This is Soewardi once again asserting himself as “I”, challenging his Dutch audience by saying, “If I were Dutchman I would give money to this man.” Soewardi is once again imagining himself to be a Dutchman, to be in their place, he knows what their response might be, he knows what they might think about this portrait and he challenges them to acknowledge his knowing. When Soewardi published the pamphlet *Als Ik eens Nedelander* he criticised the Dutch for proposing that Indonesians fund their independence celebration. With this portrait, published for distribution, Soewardi, absolutely aware of the ironic turn that he was orchestrating, was now asking Dutch people to fund his return to Java to continue his nationalist ambitions. As such, Soewardi’s portrait exists in the interface between art and political life. His body, inscribed with cross-cultural value systems, became the site for a discussion of the role of Javanese culture in the advancement of a nationalist agenda.

Soewardi’s exile to Holland was read by many in Java as an austere pilgrimage (*samadi*) and thereby he became “associated with the image of the Javanese ascetic.” The portrait of Soewardi, shirtless from the chest up, consolidates the image of Soewardi as a noble Javanese ascetic. His refined features are elegantly delineated upon a head held high and proud on an upright and slender neck. The subtle strength of this man conveys a complex rendering of Holland’s fascination with Indonesia as a country of intrigue and anxiety, reminding us of the hidden force described in Couperus’ book of the same title, *De Stille Kracht (The Hidden Force)*. A review published in the *Amsterdamer* to coincide with the publication of the portrait confirms the ambiguities of the colonial relationship to the Indonesian elite. The reviewer, Wiessing, states that at once this attractive and alluring man poses the possibility of friendship and yet at the same time, behind his tenderness lies the threat of opposition and retaliation,

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468 Conversation between Lebeau and his friend C.L. Schortemeijer, related in de Bois (1987: 228).
469 Siegel (1997: 34).
470 Tsuchiya (1987: 42-44)
Lebeau has not intended to record the softness, calmness and dignity of Soewardi, which definitely defines him ... but he has carved him with hard steel, just as one met the protagonist ... then people would see his fanatic vigour and strength.\footnote{Cited in de Bois (1987: 228), date unknown [translation by Sophie Rietveld].}

Soewardi, like Jodjana and Céphas before him, is performing a cultural cliché in order to critique it. Furthermore he is challenging the sovereignty of Dutch systems of knowledge production by asserting himself as a new cultural leader housed in the dual paradigms of Dutch modernism and Javanese tradition.\footnote{Tsuchiya (1987: 40).}

This portrait is undoubtedly informed by an understanding of Soewardi’s role as a political activist and exemplar of Javanese culture. In one instance we see an exotic exemplar of Javanese classical antiquity embodied by the semi-naked dancer, in another the embodiment of impassioned strength in the struggle for independence. Soewardi is projected as both a member of the Javanese aristocracy constituted by privileged education and refined cultural customs, and as a liberally-minded progressive political activist in exile. In other words in this portrait, Soewardi can be understood to embody the complementary qualities of both the pandita and the samadi. When he returned to Java from Holland, Soewardi changed his name to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, derived in part from the word Kiyayi (kyai), a Javanese term used to denote respect for a man who had discovered the secrets of humanity and religion.\footnote{Tsuchiya (1987: 63).} Furthermore, alongside other leaders of the Taman Siswa school movement, Soewardi established the model of the pandito-sinatrio (pandita-samadi), a teacher prepared to take up arms to protect the nation, as embodied by his portrait, as the ideal model of governance.\footnote{Tsuchiya (1987:139)}

Concluding remarks

This thesis argues that alongside Soewardi, Jodjana promoted a Javanese nationalist agenda through performance and idealised notions of Javanese nobility and wisdom through his art. At the same time, their kinsmen of the Paku Alam house in Surakarta and members of Budi Utomo
were promoting Javanese nationalism at home.\textsuperscript{475} In this manner the image and imagination of a Javanese nation was being performed at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{476}

Clark delineates two types of artistic careers as constitutive of the Asian Modern coherent across the Southeast Asian region. The first is the artist who works in his/her home country and receives training and or recognition through external markers. The second is the artist who travels abroad and is immersed completely in the international art discourses of the day.\textsuperscript{477} Jodjana is of course identified as belonging to this second type and whilst he remained relatively unknown in Javanese artistic and intellectual circles up until the mid1950s, his contribution to the development of modern art in Indonesia must be recognised through the conduit of Soewardi and the \textit{Taman Siswa} schools.\textsuperscript{478}

Jodjana’s paintings and woodblocks do not exhibit the explicitly political traits of social realist works that are usually associated with Indonesian nationalist painters like Sudjojono and cohort, yet they are undeniably political. Their politics are expressed through an unusually well-conceived performance of Javaneseness as an embodiment of cultural nationalism. The political narrative enmeshed within the cultural form demonstrates the desire for Javanese culture to be viewed on equal terms with European culture.\textsuperscript{479}

In this regard Javanese artists like Jodjana were mapping out what has been described in the Introduction as an alternative modernity. Expressed by an altered and reflexive understanding of himself, Jodjana performed his new found subjectivity on an international stage. Jodjana’s self-portrait operates in what we might understand to be the “global entanglements of Modernism”.\textsuperscript{480} That is, as an assertion of colonial subjectivity, executed in Europe with Western art techniques

\textsuperscript{475} Others like Tjipo were vehemently opposed to such a return to Javanese hierarchal modes of social organisation and instead championed the Enlightenment theories of positivist education and self-development as propagated by the philosophical grounding of the Ethical policy.
\textsuperscript{476} Bonneff \& Labrousse (1997: 231).
\textsuperscript{477} J. Clark (2012: 18).
\textsuperscript{478} Cohen (2011: 106). Many of the next generation of Modern painters were educated and taught at the \textit{Tama Siswa} schools.
\textsuperscript{479} Notosudirdjo (2014: 134-135).
\textsuperscript{480} Mathur (2011: 516)
that constitute alternative fields of social and creative production that challenge and “uproot the authority of existing national frames.”

These works are not antagonistic or alien to existing artistic traditions but instead operate on Soewardi’s concept of convergence. They are not reliant on heavy or obvious claims to revolutionary subject matter but instead reveal Javanese social models of leadership and describe the ambiguity of individual relationships to the larger community. Such ambiguity challenges the tendency in Indonesian art history to reduce complex political relationships to binary polarities and describe a singular path to modernity. When such binaries are collapsed, the position of early *priyayi* can be reconfigured into a new heterogeneous history of modern Indonesian art. Distinct from the modern artists of the 1930s and 1940s who relied upon specifically Indonesian imagery as a source of nationalist expression, Noto Soeroto, Jodjana and Soewardi sought formal solutions to the national problem rather than indexical motifs of ethnicity or imagery of the revolution.

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481 I feel that Jodjana’s self-portrait operates in a very similar way to that described by Mathur (2011) in her analysis of Amrita Sher-Gill’s self-portraits made in Paris.
Chapter Five: Portraits of women: domesticity, sexuality and motherhood in Java (1935-1950)

In 19th century Europe, masculinity was aligned with culture and seen to embody the attributes of reason, knowledge and intellect. Femininity, on the other hand, was associated with nature and the characteristics of irrationality, emotion and desire. These same formulations of masculinity and femininity were, in the discourses of colonialism, overlaid across certain cultural paradigms, so that masculinity was aligned with the perceived progressive cultural thinking of the West and femininity with a perceived sexualised allure of Asia.\footnote{482}{MacKenzie (1995) and Foster (2004: 4).}

Indeed the gendering of country became an important issue for colonialists and nationalists alike.\footnote{483}{Gouda (1993).} In colonial Java, both Javanese and European men’s masculinity was expressed in relational terms to the subjugation of the “native” feminine which followed a discourse that conflated Europe with male prowess and Asia with female beauty and childish weakness.\footnote{484}{Sears (1996: 33).} While Dutch authors frequently employed the analogy of the Dutch father guarding and directing his native children, itinerant European artists made images of local women that fuelled the colonial imagination of an ideal and exoticised femininity.\footnote{485}{Gouda (1993: 5).}

This practice was taken up to a degree and in conjunction with Kassian Céphas and Pirngadie but it wasn’t until the mid 1930s, with the emergence of an ideological shift in painting spurred on by Sudjojono and his contemporaries that we start to see images of women by Indonesian artists. Nonetheless their portraits were also concerned with representing certain ideals related to domestic life, motherhood and nation.

For the generation of modern Indonesian painters who grew up in the context of an emerging educated and middle class, portraits of women were inscribed with masculine modes of expressing
anxieties regarding modernity and colonialism. As a result the development of modernist painting was bound to sexualised definitions and representations of the indigenous woman that served as a site for the assertion of male subjectivities. Thus, this thesis supports Arbuckle’s assertion that the modern project pursued by Sudjojono and his cohort was a deeply sexualised activity and can likened to the male fantasy of sexual conquest.\footnote{Arbuckle (2011: 101).} However we might also ask whether their acts of sexual fantasy expressed in paint should be perceived exclusively as asserting dominance, or might they also be imagined as desperate acts to re-stabilise a fragile male self.\footnote{Foster (2004: 8).}

**Masculinity and modernism**

In Deshpande's description of “colonial aesthetic experience” or how Indian nationalists expressed and stated their newly formed selves in negotiation with the colonial apparatus he calls upon Chatterjee’s idea of the female as a marker between the material and spiritual worlds.\footnote{Deshpande (1987).} According to Chatterjee, the “defeated society” recovers a sense of self in terms of its colonial occupier by making clear distinctions between the material and spiritual worlds. The material world is established as being of the “outside”. It is associated with all things Western and is represented by the economy, science and technology. The spiritual on the other hand, is established as being on the “inside”. The woman is located in the inner world as a bastion of tradition and a marker between the two worlds.\footnote{Chatterjee (1993: 6).} Some modern Indian artists, in particular those of the Bengal school of art keen to establish a non-western Indian modern art, turned their attention to reinvigorating traditional folk art. They undertook a metaphoric journey to retrieve the self by abandoning the material world of the city and focusing their attention on the village, or the motherland.\footnote{Nandy (2001).} The sexualised images of Santal village-women for example were tied to a “myth of their innocent ‘vitality’” as a riposte against the severing of masculinity enacted by the colonial occupation.\footnote{Mitter (2007: 29).}
Sudjojono experienced his own very personal sense of defeat when in the mid 1930s his application to join the Dutch art society, Batavia Kunstkring, was rejected.

One afternoon I went to the house of a Dutch painter here in Jakarta. I intended to become a member of their painters’ group. As an executive member he promised to send the letters for membership. I waited a long time for the letters and any other news from that painter, but he didn’t send anything. I felt hurt beyond a joke. As an Indonesian, there was no way I could become a member. Not long after that I established PERSAGI. As if the humiliation wasn’t enough. At that moment, PERSAGI requested the use of the kunstkring building to install an exhibition of paintings by PERSAGI, they refused.492

In order to overcome his sense of rejection as a member of the “defeated society” Sudjojono undertook a metaphorical journey and he encouraged many others to follow him. To retrieve a sense of self he immediately established Persagi as a counter–colonial art society that provided a platform for him and his contemporaries to present their paintings. In time Sudjojono and the Persagi artists came to valorise the artist as hero and the hyper-masculine aspects of the modern painter as a way to elevate their own sense of masculinity in confrontation with the colonial. However their position of hyper-masculinity “inevitably required them to “other” and negate the feminine.”493

As a consequence of this reassertion of the male self, the Indonesian woman suffered exclusion from public life and experienced increased objectification as a trophy of desire and subjugation. From that time women were depicted as occupying two distinct spheres that correlated with the gendering of private (spiritual) and public (commercial) spaces, as was the case in Indian art. However, whilst Sudjojono championed the rakyat he did not attempt to promote folk art or village life as the spiritual home of modern Indonesia as was the case in India. Sudjojono’s answer was neither to adapt traditional or ethnic forms but to concentrate his attention on new subject matter. The mother became a new focus. Located within the inner (spiritual) world of the home she was clearly tied to ideas about belonging, spirituality and the nation that required protection. On the other hand portraits of women as sexual commodities located in the material (outer) world were seen to challenge established notions of masculinity.

492 Sudjojono (1942). Author’s translation.
493 Arbuckle (2011: 3).
Sudjojono’s partition of the material and spiritual worlds was not just a device for curbing the encroachment of colonial masculinity but it was part of a class struggle that connected the role of art with Javanese societal change.\textsuperscript{494} In order to achieve a new Indonesian modern art Sudjojono based his formal experiments on a two-pronged ideological position. On one level it sought to displace the dominant aesthetic of the earlier generation housed within the privilege of the elite and on another level it sought to announce a new national form adequate to express Indonesian subjectivity.\textsuperscript{495} This counter-colonial and counter-establishment position demanded, as part of its own constitution, a departure from usual Javanese halus behavioural norms and aesthetics. In the words of Gouda it, “mandated a suspension, whether or not it was temporary of traditional social habits such as gentleness and courtesy.”\textsuperscript{496} Modern artists, motivated by the dual desires to compete in terms of masculinity and create a new Indonesian, rather than traditionally Javanese art, moved to adopting an aesthetic based on more unrefined (kasar) modes of behaviour. Part of this hyper-masculine stance was a rejection of the kind of paintings made by Basuki Abdullah that were deemed to present landscapes and women in an overly romantic way that didn’t account for the true realities of life in modern day Indonesia.\textsuperscript{497}

Instead the portraits of women by Sudjojono and friends embraced kasar as a form of class/ideological struggle. In this regard Sudjojono’s advocacy of kasar as a rejection of elite Javanese society can be likened to the forays of modern European artist into the primitive as a way to identify with the abject and to disassociate themselves from bourgeois society. By the 1930s Indonesian artists were no longer reclaiming a sense of self through myths of indigeneity and reified culture, but through the myths of masculinity found in European modernism.

In Europe, modernists such as Cezanne, Gauguin and Picasso teased out their masculinity through a series of paintings that explored contemporaneous ideas about the relationship between sexuality and “primitive” states of being. Freud’s psychoanalysis, for example, placed the base instincts in the domain of the primitive. Other social alterities are also found here such as women, especially prostitutes.\textsuperscript{498} For Foster, eroticised paintings of “base” women are not pure representations but a

\textsuperscript{494} See chapter 13 in Soedjojono (1946).
\textsuperscript{495} Supangkat (1995: 209).
\textsuperscript{496} Gouda (1999: 171).
\textsuperscript{497} See chapter 3 on Basoeki Abdullah in Soedjojono (1946).
\textsuperscript{498} Foster (2004: 8).
desire to indulge in the untamed. The primitive subject is both an object of desire and a subjectivity that is appealing to modern artists as a possible alternative subjectivity for themselves. Artistic adventures into the primitive can thereby be seen to host a combination of desires to indulge in sexual fantasy and to establish oneself as differentiated or disassociated from bourgeois society.

The prostitute and the market vendor became a site of self-primitivising, linking artists’ desire to engage in base sexuality with the creation of new male subjectivities. In 20th century Java depictions of market vendors and prostitutes illustrate the modern artists’ desire to embrace the sexually provocative and assumingly kasar politics of commercial exchange. Depictions of the market are then tied to the sexual politics of male-female relationships, sites of sexual conquest and a newly formulated ideological position regarding the function of art in society. The image of the destitute woman prostitute or the faithful wife/mother in 20th century Java became a demonstration of the male painters’ capacity to assert their masculinity and lay claims to both the material and spiritual domains of Indonesian womanhood. But how did this form of modern expression appear different to modernisms in the rest of the world and what were the societal conditions that made it different?

**Visions of Domesticity**

In 19th century Java, women and especially young girls experiencing the changes of puberty were expected, as Kartini lamented, to remain within the confines of the home,

> You see, the adat [customary law] of our country strongly forbids young girls to go outside their home....in my twelfth [thirteenth year] I was ordered to stay home- I had to enter the ‘box’. I was locked up in the house, totally isolated from the outside world.

Furthermore, traditional customs demanded that women “should be meek, passive, obedient…, sexually shy and modest, self-sacrificing and nurturing, and that they find their main vocation in

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499 Foster (2004: 5).
500 Foster (2004: 8).
501 This conception of Sudjojono and his colleagues’ practices is not dissimilar to Arbuckle’s (2011: 167-171) suggestion that Emiria Sunassa’s paintings evoke the primitive and marginal as a way of disrupting the colonial and national discourse.
wifehood and motherhood.”\textsuperscript{503} If the traditional understanding of woman demanded self-sacrifice and nurturing, in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century a new rhetoric emerged that reinforced women’s domain as being in the home but now with additional expectations. Informed by paternalistic colonial attitudes that assumed local mothers inadequate, the new organisation of the home and the welfare of the children were framed in the rhetoric of hygiene, education and home-science.\textsuperscript{504} Colonial concern for the welfare of children and the inadequacies of indigenous mothers especially in cases where the fathers were Dutch resulted in the removal of children to nurseries where “pure” Dutch could be learnt and where children were deemed safe from the promiscuity of village life.\textsuperscript{505}

Disrupting the colonial impression of sexualised negligent indigenous mothers, Indonesian artists and writers, while sometimes speaking of an intellectual debt to their European “fathers”, expressed a loving affection for their mothers which they idealised as embodiments of Javanese tradition and continuity. The prose and poetry of Noto Soeroto for example is charged with the autobiographical complexities of a man torn between two countries, the Netherlands and Indonesia. His poetry describes in unequivocal terms his stern father as a symbol of pedagogy and his tender mother as a symbol of Indonesia, a nurturing and spiritual home,

\begin{quote}
If I think of my country, the image of my mother keeps coming to mind. In many families the father forces respect and love, based on intellectual appreciation, but the mother is the patient, the passive, the sacrificial.\textsuperscript{506}
\end{quote}

Noto Soeroto’s love for his mother[land] and his acknowledgement of her own generous and enriching love was taken up widely amongst the artist community. It seems clear that a mother’s love rather than a father’s pedagogy weighed more heavily on the hearts and minds of young Indonesian painters of the period.\textsuperscript{507} Javanese artists’ aspirations to present their mothers rather than their fathers as emblematic of country and the pursuit of independence was a response to colonial threats to male authority and a impulse to embody the mother as a source of love and a vessel of belonging.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{503} Wieringa (1996: 5-6).
\textsuperscript{504} Hatley & Blackburn (2000: 49).
\textsuperscript{505} Stoler (1996: 80-84).
\textsuperscript{506} Noto Soeroto (1925a: 29). Translation made with the assistance of Sophie Rietveld.
\textsuperscript{507} Sukarno also expressed the dichotomy of the loving mother and stern father in relation to his own parents, ‘Oh, Mama had a heart so big! Father, however, was a strict schoolmaster. Even after hours he was relentless in teaching me to read and write’ (C. Adams: 1970: 23).
\end{flushleft}
By comparison, fathers were not the objects of love and almost never featured in periodicals of the period or as subjects of artistic representation.\footnote{508}{Yet whilst modern painters rarely, if ever, painted their own fathers, they frequently painted themselves as fathers. This was due in part to Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s theories regarding the Javanese family model as a counter colonial institution and also as a means of expressing themselves as masculine and creative figures in the establishment of a new nation, as discussed in the next chapter.}

Portraits of mothers embodied a combination of an artist’s love and respect for his mother born of Javanese social codes with more recent ideas about a women’s role as a homemaker.\footnote{509}{They embodied a devotion to the mother as a symbol of continuity and security that framed the ageing housebound mother as a specifically Javanese institution, common and valuable to all Javanese on a personal and communal level. In this regard women became synonymous with the home and allegoric with nation as a bastion to be protected against Western penetration.\footnote{510}{Sudjojono’s portrait of his aging mother painted in 1935 is a very good example.}} They

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure44.jpg}
\caption{Sudjojono, \textit{Ibuku}, 1935, pastel on paper, 60 x 39cm.}
\end{figure}

\footnote{508}{See for example the remarks made by Djami (Darmo Laksni) in Kongres Perempuan Indonesia (2007: 101). Hatley & Blackburn (2000: 52) attribute this to the high divorce rate and the proficiency of Indonesian women in managing domestic and financial matters without the need of a man.}

\footnote{509}{Cusack (2003: 2).}

\footnote{510}{Hagen (1997: 114).}
Not coincidently, 1935, the year this work was made, was a very significant one for Sudjojono. In that year he was introduced to the Japanese painter Chioyi Yazaki, he travelled to Singapore, and he saw first hand the works of European modernists at the inaugural exhibition sponsored by the Dutch paint manufacturer and collector, Pierre Alexander Regnault.511

Sudjojono met Yazaki through his friend and fellow artist Rameli and the three men worked together painting the temples at Borobudur.512 Just prior to his arrival in Java, Yazaki had taught art in Singapore.513 In the same year Sudjojono travelled to Singapore and took up a position working in the studio of a Sri Lankan portrait painter, Mr. J. Pieres. Some say he planned to carry on his travels to Paris. This is the obvious destination given Yazaki’s association with the city. Yazaki himself had lived and studied in Paris for ten years where he was greatly influenced by contemporary trends in painting styles developing in Europe, including expressionism and impressionism. Years later Sudjojono also reflected on the city’s centrality to van Gogh’s development as a painter interested in the art of Japan, “In this city [Paris] he [van Gogh] received influence from Cezanne, Monet, Jongkind, Seurat and Japanese painting, that he would establish as motifs in his later paintings.”514 Salim Sariochmin had also recently returned to Java from Paris and there is no doubt that the idea of the city as the centre of modern art was very attractive to Sudjojono. Nonetheless in his own writings Sudjojono claims he intended to travel to Siam (Thailand). We don’t know why he wanted to continue his travels in Asia but we do know that instead of resuming his trip he returned to Java that same year. Whilst it has been speculated that Sudjojono returned to Java for political reasons, his own letters suggest that the return journey had a religious purpose,

At about 7 in the evening he [Pieres] went to meet a Maha Guru that just arrived from Ceylon. After an hour after that Pieres came back and called to me to quickly to follow him to the place where he had just met the Maha Guru. "Swami Nerada [a Japanese monk] needs someone that is going to Java" he said hastily as we made our way." Ha, that is what

511 As mentioned in Chapter 1, Pierre Alexander Regnault presented five annual exhibitions of European modernism beginning in 1935 at the Museum van den Bataviasche Kunstkring.
512 Sudjojono (1942).
513 The Straits Times (13 August 1933) has an illustration of a students work and The Straits Times (14 August 1933) has a more detailed report.
has called me and persuaded me to return to Java…. The next day I departed from Kota Shonanto [Japanese name for Singapore] and took the Buddhist goods with me to Java.\(^\text{515}\)

This short experience overseas has been well documented in relation to Sudjojono’s development as a portrait painter, but less has been made of the psychological impact that such a journey would have had on him.\(^\text{516}\) There is no doubt that this journey marked a seminal moment in Sudjojono’s “spiritual” and artistic life as substantiated by his comments about the Maha Guru he met in Singapore,

Before he excused himself he gave me a keepsake/a remembrance, his portrait coloured like a picture of Buddha… Often when I read the letter, coloured purple, sent by Swami Narada from Japan, I remember those strange events that took place in Shonanto and think; "We will be joined for the remainder of our lives even in difficulty. What was it that called me to Shonanto from Java? Whatever is the purpose of this life, no one can tell us. The old from the North, the young from the South, met in the middle, just for a moment, talked and then separated, returned bringing good things."\(^\text{517}\)

For the first time in his life Sudjojono had experienced what it was to leave his country of birth. At this time he was still a very young man, just over 20 years old. The city of Singapore offered Sudjojono a very different experience of life to that which he was accustomed to in Java and there is no doubt that his feelings of homesickness would have also been fuelled by memories of his mother. Whilst he had already spent a considerable part of his youth studying in Batavia and Bandung at a distance from his mother, one could argue that whilst overseas his mother became a symbol for his homeland. The portrait of his mother acts as a site of memory and an expression of belonging that unites his mother with his country of birth. The portrayal of his mother’s frailty is most empathetic and also suggests a reconsideration of his own existence that confirms his written remarks about the existential nature of life.

The portrait and the way it is painted explain something about the way Sudjojono understood himself. In order to render this newfound sensibility Sudjojono used the tools and skills most recently acquired from Yazaki. It is well know that Yazaki gifted Sudjojono a box of pastels but less known that he was also responsible for teaching him how to apply black and white tones to give the work greater definition and strength, “From a great painter such as him I learnt the colours

\(^\text{515}\) Sudjojono (1942).
\(^\text{516}\) Sidharta (2006: 30) discusses the physical but not psychological journey.
\(^\text{517}\) Sudjojono (1942).
black and white that have not been used by painters here.” Whilst the inclusion of black and white had obvious formal implications for Sudjojono’s painting one should not underestimate the psychological implications this had on Sudjojono’s formulation of a new aesthetic to adequately express his new sense of self. Sudjojono’s earlier mentor Mas Pirngadie did not like the muddy complexion of Sudjojono’s paintings and in 1928 had specifically instructed him not to use black and white, “The cloud shadows are those colours mixed with blue. And for the reflections in the water of the rice fields, use those colours with a bit more ochre and blue. The colour ochre is the key. Avoid using black and white.”

Yazaki’s conflicting advice was welcomed by Sudjojono and served to legitimise his feelings of resentment towards the earlier generation of Indonesian painters who had come to success through their relationships with Dutch men. Sudjojono’s portrait of his mother marks the beginning of a practice that invoked the modernist rejection of linear perspective and naturalist rendition in favour of an expressive accentuation of colour to depict scenes of intimate exchange within interior spaces. It also marks an interest in portraits of women that was unprecedented in the history of Indonesian painting. This must have been brought to the fore of Sudjojono’s mind through his acquaintance with modernism’s fundamental expression of masculine anxiety introduced to him by Yazaki and the Regnault exhibitions. We see it Di Depan Kelambu Terboeka, which will be discussed later, and in his portrait of his first wife, Mia Bustam, painted in 1944.

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518 Sudjojono (1942).
519 Quoted in Yuliman (1994) from PhD thesis of Imam Buchori Zainuddin (no date: 105-6).
520 J. Clark (2014).
Sudjojono’s portrait *Ibu Menjahit* (Mother Sewing) was originally titled *Istriku* (My Wife) and is in fact a portrait of his first wife Mia Bustam painted whilst she was pregnant with their first child. This portrait presents his wife within the familiar interior of the family home, relaxed and at ease. The wife sewing is contextualised as a symbol of domestic creativity. Even whilst Mia Bustam was pregnant, the act of sewing becomes the greater symbol of her role as mother, her creativity unlike the painters is restricted to menial chores. In a sense her pregnancy is proof of sexuality sacrificed in the name of motherhood. The later change of title to *Mother Sewing* is further evidence of this tendency to liken the woman in the interior space to the idea of motherhood.

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521 1944 is the date recorded in the inventory of the Galeri Nasional Jakarta and confirmed in Mia Bustam’s memoirs (Bustam 2006: 376). Sidharta (2006: 149) gives the date 1953. This date was brought to my attention by J. Clark (2014).

522 Both of these contingencies operate within Pollock’s (1999: 25) assessment regarding patriarchal narratives that link mothers to the practices of everyday life and fathers to heroic deeds.
The later portrait by Sudarso of his wife sewing and Affandi’s portrait of his mother demonstrate many similarities. Like Sudjojono’s portraits of his mother and wife, we find Sudarso’s wife relaxed and composed. Her arms rest on her abdomen in the act of sewing in close resemblance to Sudjojono’s earlier work, again accentuating the relationship between the creative power of motherhood and domestic chores. Affandi’s mother too is captured in the task of mending clothes but here we have a much older, weary mother. In Affandi’s later portrait *Mother’s Room* of 1949, his mother has retired completely from life and is resigned to the even more secluded space of her room. Nonetheless, in all of the above examples, the space in which we find these women consistently links the painter’s imagination of womanhood to the family home.\footnote{Spate (1997: 114).} The matted, woven walls, the hanging oil lantern and the cane furniture all render a particular kind of place that is full of nostalgic signifiers of childhood, family love and the mother.
Remarking on Affandi’s 1949 portrait of his mother, Wright notes that this is the first time women are shown as mortal human beings. Whilst the humanity of these portraits cannot be denied, the fragility and vulnerability of the mother, the threat of her death and demise also sends a symbolic reminder of her need for tenderness and protection on a more metaphorical and metaphysical level. Sudjojono and Affandi’s portraits of their mothers can be considered to picture the mother as post-creative woman, elderly and maternal as a distant yet familiar icon of motherhood or the “Great Mother”. Both tend to orientate towards the darker aspects of the mother-child relationship and seem to indulge in either sympathetic and/or apologetic expressions of sorrow and guilt. There is an overt absence of joy or sign of a celebratory chord. The significance of this, I believe, lies in the painter’s own feelings of inadequacy and anxieties regarding the changes they are experiencing as part of modern life. As much as the painted mother is the object of love and a symbol of belonging she is also a biographical expression of the painters’ own insecurities regarding their capacity to assert one’s masculinity on an individual and national level.

**Woman and commercial exchange**

In modern European societies of the late 19th century the workplace was understood as defining the conditions for motive-driven action, whilst the domestic environment was the location for value-giving action, occupied by the man and woman respectively. The situation in Java was quite different. Whilst private and public spaces were gendered, the division and centres of labour operated differently. Javanese women had long been visible in the open paddy fields and their contribution to the economy was well acknowledged. The work place instead was never a location of motive-driven action, rather it was a place of servitude. Workers were subject to the Javanese aristocracy in the first instance and then to the colonial bureaucracy. Even where farmers owned their own tools and land they still paid heavy taxes to both parties. In Java, the workingman was not regarded as a noble man and the market place, the domain of women, was

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525 Neumann (1955).
527 For example, Tjipto Mangoenkoesomo highlighted the importance of women’s activities in economic and rural areas (Gouda 1993: 14).
528 Sukarno identified this difference in assessing the plight of the Indonesian peasant as compared to the European counterpart and concluded that the Marxist term proletariat was not applicable in Java.
regarded with some degree of suspicion. In fact any kind of commercial exchange attracted a degree of stigma associated with behaviour deemed to demonstrate greed and desire, sexual or otherwise. In the Javanese tradition wealth should follow power, to chase money without power was a *kasar* indulgence equated with political ambition and sexual indulgence. The equation of market vendors with *kasar* behaviour was part of a class distinction that engendered inner and outer spaces according to the roles of women within the family economy. For many *priyayi*, the female market vendor represented the epitome of *kasar* transactions as the embodiment of coarse mercantile, political and sexual indulgence in one location.

In the late 19th century, amidst the period of heightened colonial interference in court life, this perceived level of control exercised by the market vendor caused frustration and resentment among an emasculated Javanese nobility. Court literature of this time reveals that market vendors were often the sexual target of the gentry. For example, the story of *Suluk Lonthang* describes the sexual exploits of a visiting Sufi cleric, Lebe Lonthang as he takes advantage of local market vendors.

Whilst this may seem contradictory to the Javanese idea of abstinence as a method for accumulating and maintaining power, demonstrations of heightened sexual activity could paradoxically provide proof of virility. Such texts can be read in the light of an esoteric Javanese gentry reclaiming itself in the form of a sexual punishment upon native women who carry out their activities in the marginal and mercantile material world. Such acts of sexualized hyper-masculinity acted upon working woman are complicated by modern painters in their own hyper-masculine stance against both the Javanese elite and the colonial state.

From the 1930s artists influenced by Sudjojono perceived the previous generation of painters as suffering from a kind of cultural emasculation, demonstrated by their cooperative relationships with Dutch men. Their art is likewise seen to illustrate their failure to assert their independence. Instead, Sudjojono and his cohort align their sense of selfhood self to the heroic, aggressive and staunchly anti-colonial. As already discussed, masculinity was retrieved in some instances by

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529 As Brenner (1991) demonstrates, this perception continued well into the 1980s.
532 See Florida (1996).
533 Anderson (1990: 32-33).
enclosing women in the protected sanctuary of the home, in other instances it was retrieved through an engagement with the *kasar* values of “street women”.

*Di Depan Kelamboe Terboeka* or Before the Open Mosquito net (1939) is probably Sudjojono’s most celebrated work. Historically this painting has been glossed over as an empathetic attempt to address the social reality of women’s lives in modern society. Both Holt and Wright describe the painting as homage to the ordinary woman that evokes empathy with the female subject, something unprecedented in Indonesian art history. Yet both fail to acknowledge Sudjojono’s engagement with the sitter as the site of his own emotional stirrings and self-affirmation. When the painting was exhibited alongside others by the *Vrije Indonessische Jongeren* (Free Young Indonesians) in 1948, one reviewer, Henk de Vos, complimented the composition of Sudjojono’s painting and without moral condescension subtly alluded to the painful complexities of Sudjojono’s life. Others have read the painting more allegorically as representing the, “the suffering feminised nation and victim of colonial subjugation.”

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534 There is some discrepancy about the title of this work. Holt and Bustam use *Di Depan Kelambu Terbuka* (Before the Open Kelambu), while Sidharta uses *Di Balik Kelamboe Terboeka*.


536 de Vos (1948: 50). The review was published in *Orientatie*, a Batavia (Jakarta) based Dutch-language journal published between 1947 and 1949 and printed in Bandung.

However all of the above commentaries ignore the disruption of the socially endorsed marital arrangement generated by the presentation of a prostitute rather than a housebound wife. *Di Depan Kelambu Terboeka* depicts a seated prostitute engaged in a dialogue with her client, who on this occasion is Sudjojono but potentially any other viewer. This painting of a prostitute has to date been largely camouflaged by its public reception eager to locate wholesome images of Indonesian nationhood pitted against the hardships of famine, war and colonialism. The subject matter adds another layer to the popular image of Sudjojono as the first realist and socially conscious painter. On seeing the painting for the first time Sudjojono’s first wife Mia Bustam said that there was a moment of awkwardness, after which Sudjojono offered to elucidate on his earlier life. By way of explaining the painting Sudjojono described a life full of wanderings and visits to “immoral

538 Even Sidharta (2006: 40) refuses to state outright the reality of this situation for fear of disturbing Sudjojono’s legacy.
places”. Sudjojono explained that the woman in the painting was a prostitute named Adhesi, whom he had met in the red-light district of Senen, Batavia. She had been involuntarily married off to a haji and had run away to Jakarta where she ended up working as a prostitute. At one point she had moved in with Sudjojono but he was unable to provide for her financially and so she returned to Senen.\footnote{Bustam (2006: 48).}

In an autobiographical way, this painting behaves as memoir to Sudjojono’s early life experiences, which were in his own words, dirty and impoverished.\footnote{For further details see Bustam (2006: 9-10).} This is his personal history inscribed within the narrative of Indonesian modernity. However to suggest that this painting is a mere metaphor for the nation denies the subjectivity of the woman and negates the complexity of Sudjojono's attempt to establish a sense of masculinity within the prevailing social structures, both colonial and Javanese, that define class and gender.

Besides Sudjojono’s portrait of Adhesi, a number of others follow a similar theme. Otto Djaja’s \textit{Pertemuan} (Rendezvous) painted in 1947 and Mohammed Hadi’s \textit{Djajang (Prostitute)} painted before 1947, for example, all frame the prostitute within the myths of European modernism that sought to re-establish male subjectivities in the face of modern anxieties regarding societal change. A formal analysis of these works demonstrates links to Cezanne's paintings, \textit{L’Eternel Feminin} (1875-1880) and \textit{The Pasha} (c1870) in particular, also Manet’s painting of \textit{Nana} (1877) and Emile Zola’s novels about Nana the prostitute which exemplified the decline of the French republic.\footnote{Whilst Zola didn’t publish the novel Nana until 1880, 3 years after Manet’s painting, the character Nana appeared in his earlier work, \textit{L’Assommoir} published in 1877 (the same year as Manet’s painting).}

Sudjojono identified van Gogh’s relationship with Zola and the Parisian painters as marking the beginning of van Gogh’s interest in realism, “such began Vincent van Gogh’s acquaintance with Zola, with realism and with the city of Paris.”\footnote{Sudjojono (1946: 36). My translation.}

Why would Sudjojono do this if not to draw a connection to his own passion in depicting the lives of ordinary citizens, including prostitutes and his beginnings as a realist painter? Sudjojono’s description of van Gogh’s life and meeting with Zola illustrate his understanding of the connection between literature and art and also his awareness of Zola’s writings.\footnote{Sudjojono (1946: 34-36). It is possible that Sudjojono came across Zola’s work in the library of the Batavia Kunstkring where Mia Bustam (2006: 7) says she also read many of classics of English, Dutch, German, Russian and French literature.} He goes to great lengths to describe Zola and van Gogh in
conversation over an evening meal and heavily quotes their discussion on the topic of painting the bodies of the courtesans who occupy the streets and clubs of Paris,

If you paint a woman’s goodness in the same way I describe the goodness of a woman like those I see daily. I would even describe my Heldin (heroes) in the same way, that she suffered from scabies, ‘forgot’ herself that night at the Bois de Boulogne or frequently uttered God-verdom! I describe her not as a woman that we idealise, then embellish my description, but I describe her as a woman of everyday life, don’t I? Surely I must portray her stomach, for example, not like the stomach of an angel, but with the stomach of an ordinary woman with intestines.544

It appears Sudjojono took this advice for himself and adopted Zola’s approach to detailing the corporeality of the urban women with all the realist intentions of faithfully presenting the modern milieu incumbent with a new sexual politics. More than a commentary about public moral decay, or the struggle for existence under colonial occupation, Sudjojono’s painting is an attempt to investigate modern male-female sexual relations tied to issues of gender and class. As Pollock asserts, the spaces of sexual exchange are the marginal spaces of modern interfaces where “the masculine and feminine intersect and structure sexuality within a classed order."545

Di Depan Kelambu Terboeka depicts a woman we know to be prostitute seated in front of a bed. A mosquito net hangs from the bedposts and is separated in a way that frames the subject but leaves hidden the coveted sphere of the bed. On the one hand Sudjojono describes an objective scene in which a prostitute readies herself to receive a client, and on the other he orchestrates a psychological rendering of this women’s relationship to her viewer-ship inclusive of himself. This painting is an exploration of the physiologically charged space that arises between two subjectivities as they negotiate sexual commune.546 There is no doubt, as Arbuckle has suggested, that the open mosquito net is analogous to an open sexual invitation.547 But it also acts as pictorial device to divide the picture plane that, in turn, creates a temporal and spatial division to separate

546 According to Takenaka (2006: 189) Sudjojono considered the relations between men and women to be governed by their capacity to negotiate the trappings of sinfulness.
547 Arbuckle (2011: 100).
the pre- and post-coital spaces of male and female sexuality. The net establishes a division between private and public space that separates the spheres of male and female subjectivity. Seated in the public space of the foreground, Adhesi controls the transaction. Much like the market vendor, she is available but on her own terms. The net as a pictorial device has the effect of flattening the pictorial place and suppressing the perspective depth which unhinges the female form from gravitational pull and heightens the dramatic intensity of the viewers’ direct relationship with Adhesi. In both subject matter and technique Sudjojono’s painting resonates with Cezanne’s *L’Eternel Feminin* (c.1880).

![Figure 49 Cezanne, L’Eternel Feminin, c 1880, oil on canvas](image)

In Cezanne’s painting the subject is propped up on centre stage, surrounded by a crowd of male onlookers, she is unveiled for all to see, the parted veil frames her corporeality with an inverted V that seems vaguely analogous to the opening of one’s legs. Sudjojono’s use of an earthy blood red to darken the void beneath the curtain makes the correlation more explicit and instead of picturing a crowd he has brought the male viewer into such immediacy with the subject as to make him the substitute for the onlookers in Cezanne’s painting. However, unlike Cezanne’s eternal woman,
who has no eyes, Sudjojono’s subject makes eye contact with the viewer, which is direct, unabashed and assertive.

Unlike Sudjojono’s direct encounter, Djaja’s depiction of the meeting of male sexual desire and female availability offers the same voyeuristic component found in Bonnard’s *Man and Woman* (1900) which marries the female nude, seated, with her standing male counterpart within the confines of an intimate Parisian apartment.\(^\text{548}\)

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\(^{548}\) The male figure is a self-portrait, the woman *Marthe de Meligny* (Maria Boursin) was the artist's companion and model whom he married in 1925.
Djaja further adds the necessary props to create the mise en scène of the conventional erotic nude. The chair, dressing table complete with mirror, bed and drapery furnish the sexually charged boudoir, reminiscent of Delacroix’s *Le Lever* (1850), Cezanne's *Interior with Nude* (1885-90) and, to an even greater degree, Manet’s *Nana* (1880), the *femme fatale* of Zola’s series of novels.
In Sudjojono’s *Di Depan Kelamboe Terboeka*, Otto Djaya’s *Pertemuan* and Mohammed Hadi’s *Djalang (Prostitute)* we find a bed, covered by a laced curtain which frames a seated woman, as is the case in many of Cezanne’s paintings of women.\(^{549}\) A closer comparison of Sudjojono’s paintings with Djaja’s reveals a similar wrought iron structure to the bed, and if we look at the detail in the lace of Djaja’s painting the circular filigree replicates Sudjojono’s. Mohammed Hadi’s painting, whilst seemingly set in the street, also features a very similar wrought iron bed with a drawn laced curtain or mosquito net.

\(^{549}\) The draped bed canopy a reoccurring motif in Cezanne’s oeuvre of interior nudes. See Harvey (1998: 315).
Figure 55 Mohammed Hadi, Dalang (Prostitue) August 1947, watercolour and gouache, 22x 18cm. Image: Claire Holt
Indonesian Art Collection S0249, Cornell University Library

Are they painting the same bed or at least a similar bed in the same brothel, “a bed that would be utterly unique, a throne or alter where all Paris would come to worship her in naked, equally unique, beauty”?\textsuperscript{550} The latter description of Nana’s bed by Zola just as adequately describes the embodiment of the prostitute found in the three painting by Sudjojono, Otto Djaja and Mohammed Hadi. In their three paintings we see an equal fascination with the prostitute, almost a worship of her as the subject of their own alterity. It is through the painting of the prostitute and the politically charged spaces of sexual union complete with the motifs of lace curtains, wooden chairs and wrought iron beds that Indonesian painters were able to announce their participation in the projects of Modernism and recreate themselves as hyper-masculine modern painters in confrontation to the sensibilities of the Javanese elite and their complicity with bourgeois colonial society.\textsuperscript{551}

\textsuperscript{550} Quoted from Zola in Harvey (1998: 315).
\textsuperscript{551} The lace curtains, wooden chairs and wrought iron beds that were present in the European modernist depictions
In Otto Djaja’s painting of the market place, we find the flaneur amidst the overtly public and eroticised space of mercantile and sexual exchange. The flaneur is a key figure of modern literature that describes modernity in terms of the experiences of men. He signals the public space of the city as the domain of the man to walk and pass comment on all that he sees, in the words of Walter Benjamin, he goes “botanising on the asphalt.”

His gaze, surveying both the people and wares for sale, is both "covetous and erotic." An erect and mobile man spies the object of his desire in the buxom market woman who sits poised awaiting her client. Is this a self-portrait or a portrait of the object of his mans’ eye? Or like Sudjojono’s painting is it a concession to the inseparable links between the construction of male and female identities within the social gendered spaces of the private and public worlds?

The market vendor, like the prostitute, both of which held nefarious positions in Javanese society were painted by Sudjojono and cohort to disturb the psychological spaces of Javanese society as a

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Figure 56 Otto Djaja, *Pasar*, c 1947, oil on canvas

means to interrogate gender in its relation to class distinctions. Men's tendency to avoid the marketplace, which scholars have often attributed to their deep concern with prestige and spiritual potency, can also be understood in terms of this alternative model of gender and self-control. As a prime site for the accumulation of money and the acquisition of commodities, the marketplace seems to incite desire and at the same time advertise potential for its satisfaction. This leads to a partial breakdown of the boundaries that conventionally order and circumscribe social relations in Java. In the terms of the Javanese elite a breakdown in these boundaries comes at a cost. This cost is both financial (here read *kasar*) and spiritual (here read the loss of power and dignity, *keseketan*). When Sudjojono and cohort ventured into the marginal spaces of base sexuality such as the marketplace and the brothel, they are irreverent to the cost. Instead they see it as a space to recreate themselves as hyper-masculine modern painters who embrace the base world as an expression of their rejection of both the elite and the colonial worlds.

**Concluding remarks**

In this chapter I have demonstrated how 19\textsuperscript{th} century European ideas about the gendering of country and the demarcation of private and public spaces for men and women collided with Javanese concepts of *kodrat* and *keseketan* to trigger modern painters’ anxieties regarding their own sense of masculinity. In order to reaffirm or in Nandy’s terms to retrieve a sense of their masculine selves, they turned to painting women as objects of cultural difference. The mother located in the home served as a symbol of belonging and country to be protected from the modern western colonial world. Conversely the prostitute became a subject for self-othering and a means for differentiating themselves from polite Javanese sensibilities than announced a new ideological position. That this ideological manoeuvring resulted or rather was couched in a more overtly emotional and unrestrained style of painting demonstrates that the recreation of male subjectivity in Java was directly linked to the promulgation of different styles and aesthetic functions.

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\textsuperscript{554} Brenner (1995: 36).
Chapter Six: The Charismatic and Heroic Portrait (1940-1950)

The Renaissance in Europe saw a dramatic flourishing and interest in the concepts of self-consciousness and the unique self or individual. This interest stimulated the representation of such ideas in portrait painting. The rise of self-portraiture in Europe coincided with the concept of the self as developed by the advent and popularity of the autobiography. Art historians have used this long-standing relationship between self-portraiture and biography to draw certain conclusions about self-portraits based on clues provided by artist biographies. In Indonesia, the history of modern art has been largely recounted within the biographical details of artists’ lives. The details of Indonesian artist biographies that have attracted the most attention and have been most frequently cited as a source of inspiration are those events that demonstrate a commitment to Indonesia’s fight for independence. Here we find that the writing of Indonesian art history falls into the same traps as the writing of Indonesian history in its emphasis on identifying protagonists and events in terms of resistance, rebellion and nationalism. I argue that artists are too quickly drawn into a binary categorisation dividing those who served the revolution and those who cooperated with the Dutch. Likewise their paintings are interpreted and presented in accordance within this simplistic binary division. Relations between the colonised and the coloniser were in fact much less clear. Compromise and resistance, collaboration and defiance, were not clear binaries but were instead fraught with ambiguity. Furthermore, it is frequently the case that the biographical details of artists’ lives, told retrospectively, do not match the narrative content of the works of art produced by them at the time, nor do they correlate with public perception, either contemporary or historical.

557 For a discussion on the relationship between the paintings and biographies of Sudjojono see Cox (2013) and Sabapathy (2014).
558 Arbuckle (2011).
561 On the perils of attaching too much significance to the biography of the painter see Krauss (1988: 23-40).
Rather than assume that self-portraits directly illustrate the conditions and biographical reality of the painter’s life, this chapter will focus on 20th century Indonesian artists who used self-portraiture as a way of constituting themselves through performative and reflective moments of painting. In particular, I look at the way that Indonesian male painters found new modes of expressing a hypermasculine self in terms of both the Javanese elite and colonial worlds of early 20th century Java.

After 1870, Dutch control of the archipelago increased as territorial gains were made in order to serve the expansion of Dutch investment and increase export demands. The consequences of imperial capital exaggerated cultural difference and gave rise to a number of different colonial reforms made in order to pacify growing unrest and fulfil the moral obligations of the colonial cultural mission. The new liberal Dutch coalition government under Abraham Kuijper (1901-1905) saw education in Indonesia as important for a number of economic and strategic reasons. The Ethical Policy of 1901 was supported by various factions of the Dutch administration which, to varying degrees, sought to educate or more generally improve the Indonesian population. To avoid further dissatisfaction amongst Indonesians wishing to educate their children and to enable students to contribute and engage in a new “Cultural Synthesis”, fees were relaxed and positions became available for Indonesian as in Dutch schools. Nevertheless, from 1900 until 1928 only 279 Indonesians graduated from such schools and most of those were of the priyayi class. New graduates also faced limited opportunities due to discriminatory laws that permitted different rates of pay for Dutch or Eurasian employees as compared to Indonesians. However, whilst the educated elite formed a small proportion of the population, their newly acquired education combined with a sense of discontent led them to instigate political activity, not as representatives of local principalities but as national ideologues.

As new communities were established around urban industrial centres, the next generation of graduates born in the second decade of the 20th century no longer consisted mostly of priyayi, but of educated members of kampung communities. A new educated elite emerged from these

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563 Legge (1972: 27).
564 Legge (1972: 27).
communities with close ties to the working classes and the political motivation to act on their behalf. Yet traditional patterns of order and behaviour had been upset by the impact of modern industrial capital and many urban youth experienced a sense of anxiety regarding their position in Javanese society, “the crisis in which they were caught up was in some respects psychological, a crisis of individual and collective identity...” The modern artists who were part of this new educated urban youth also experienced a sense of cultural dislocation and alienation and sought to retrieve a sense of self through projects of self-making. As Foster has remarked of modern artists in Europe, these men “[were] drawn to fictions of new beginnings as a way to reclaim, or at least to re-imagine, a degree of autonomy...”

Attempts by Javanese artists to reclaim the self were coloured by their acceptance of, or resistance to, myths regarding the value and origins of Javanese culture. At the end of the 19th century Javanese artists faced the challenges of articulating new realisations of self-hoods which frequently found expression in a doubling or complicating of one’s identity between their European and Javanese selves. Kassian Céphas and Raden Mas Jodjana, as discussed in previous chapters, are early examples of men whose senses of self were embedded in ideas about an essential Javanese and a revision of the myths of adiluhung. Their self-portraits expressed the ambiguity of their position as they negotiated recognition as interlocutors between constructions of a Javanese past and expressions of a new future. Whilst politically conservative, “They were part of the general awakening to modern forms of organisation and a new way of conceiving place and person that marks the social and cultural roots of nationalism.”

The schizophrenia of the modern Javanese self, as outlined in chapter 1, describes a split between an ideal of high culture housed within the rhetoric of the reified courts, and the low culture found in the factory, the street or the market place. By the 1930s the latter self began to take hold in the consciousness of the modern painter and the myth of adiluhung, or reified polite Javanese culture, was superseded by the myth of modernism. Sudjojono’s disapproval of Abdullah’s view that only particular subjects were worthy of artistic merit and his proliferation of glamorous images of

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567 Legge (1972: 43).
570 Beekman, quoted in Campbell (2000: 23), asserts that there is always the need for myth amongst those of a “vanishing culture.”
the wealthy elite are examples of Sudjojono’s rejection of elite values embodied by the kraton. For Sudjojono there was no difference in painting an old pair of old shoes or a prince, the smelly banks of the Ciliwung River or the sublime scenery of Mount Bromo. Yet while Sudjojono may have adopted positivist political principles, rejecting the conservative ideals and embraced objects and scenes of everyday life as a way of undermining hierarchies of value, he still held onto romantic ideas about the charisma of the artist. He wrote that “what gives value to the painting is not convention, but the soul of the painter.” We see here Sudjojono’s subscription to romantic assumptions about the exceptional sensibility of the artist to conjure emphatic and inspiring visions of humanity. For Sudjojono, an artist’s task was not to reproduce the world in an objective, scientific way. Instead, painting was the pursuit of giving expression to the inner soul, what he later referred to as the Jiwa Ketok (visible soul). According to his logic, it was the role of the visionary artist to change and reflect on a new society. It was not enough for art to be expressive, to convey taste or emotion. Instead he believed that artists had a responsibility to advance certain ideologies in order to change society. Sudjojono and the artists that worked with him sought to establish their practice between self-expression and ideology or between the self and society. The self-portrait was then a way to visualise the artist as a visionary mediator and representative of the people.

Self-portraits by this generation of modern painters demonstrate a deliberate attempt to establish themselves as the avant-garde through an expression of hyper-masculinity that describes the painters in terms of heroic resistance and creative change. Whilst Céphas and Jodjana envisioned themselves as representatives of Javanese tradition and values that conformed to halus modes of behaviour, the next generation fashioned themselves as creative agents in the form of modern artists, fathers and political activists. After 1928 the earlier appearance of nationalism, couched as it was in the form of cultural nationalism enacted by Dutch speaking aristocrats educated in Dutch universities, was being challenged by the new breed of young radicals.

572 Soedjojono (1946: 17).
573 Soedjojono (1946: 17).
575 Soedjojono (1946: 11).
Among them was the painter Sudjojono. Yet, whilst he advocated a new pathway for Indonesian modern art that served the political interests of the independence movement he reiterated many of the paradigms of European modern art encountered through the apparatus of the colonial state. For instance, he identified with many of the ideas central to the Modernist myth including ideas pertaining to originality and the genius of the unmitigated individual artist. In appropriating these aspects as his own he encouraged their application by modern Indonesian artists as a way to project an authenticated Indonesian modern self. According to Arbuckle, “national painters simultaneously adopted European ideals about the artist and his ‘artistic genius’; whilst localising them through nationalist constructions of the otodidak (self-taught) painter and his ilham (inspiration).”

In 19th century France the self-portrait did much to establish the identity of the artist as creative genius. Courbet, who painted many self-portraits, fashioned himself accompanied by creative instruments like the violin to express the artist as creative source. Indonesian artists likewise depicted themselves working in the studio where the act of painting served as an allegory for creativity, rejuvenation and revolution. In these cases the artist appears as the vision of intuitive masculine expression, cigarette in mouth and the instruments of creativity in hand. The brush, palette and easel feature prominently as the tools/weapons of the self-professed accomplished painter cum heroic visionary. Self-portraits of the artist with family members likewise facilitate the image of the painter as creative source, where the act of painting is aligned with the act of procreation. The artist paints himself as the paternal and cultural leader of the family, and on a metaphorical level the nation. The painting Kawan Kawan Revolusi (1947) for example, is made up of a number of individual portraits that are grouped together to confirm male bonds established during the revolution and also to cement men’s position as the heroes and fathers of modern Indonesia.

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579 Arbuckle (2011: 64).
582 Pollock (1999: 25) has argued that the patriarchal narrative of modern art mystified culture as the realm of the father and the hero.
The myths of modernism in Indonesia

In Europe, self-portraits of artists in their studios free from “religious, classical or planetary overtones” did not emerge until the 16th century. The theme proper of the artist working in his studio, learning and applying the techniques of past artists, developed a century later in France. The inclusion of texts, cast models and historical prints were intended to construct a portrait of the artist as learned and to affirm the artist as professional within his place of work. Emancipated from religious or royal patronage the artist assumed the role of a freelance expert.

Since the Renaissance, the tradition of self-portraiture has provided modern artists with a plethora of compositional arrangements and modes of seeing as the basis of their own experiments with recreating themselves. We cannot imagine then that any artist working with self-portraiture come to the task naively, but rather with some degree of scepticism regarding the potential to reproduce themselves. Whilst early uses of the mirror, as found in Jan van Eyck's painting The Arnolfini Marriage (1434), were used as a form of documentation, West argues that it was in fact the creation of the flat mirror surface, combined with an increased interest in narratives about the self, that prompted artists to indulge in mimetic self-portraiture. By the late 19th century the ideal of an objective interpretation of the world came into question and so the nature of art’s mirroring function changed, giving it a more active and subjective role. Rather than offering a tool for confident mimetic representations of the physical self, the mirror became the site of introspection, self-analysis and reinvention. The self-portrait can then be seen as a fragmentary and temporal recreation that is informed by contemporaneous understanding of class and gender. When portraiture is understood not only to reveal but also construct a narrative of the self, then we can make some observations about the way Indonesian modern painters used self-portraiture to self-fashion an image of themselves.

A number of political and societal changes across late 19th century Europe altered perceptions of men’s and women’s roles in society that in turn changed understandings of femininity and masculinity. The emergence of woman’s organisations and the burgeoning feminist movement,

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584 West (2004: 164).
for example, brought men’s position in society into contrast. In France, the heavy defeats of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871 gave rise to literary and artistic themes that expressed a growing concern around the perceived effeminate nature of the French bourgeois man who was deemed to be overly intellectual, weak and lazy. As a result the male ego underwent a crisis from which artists emerged with new modes of visualising the male self “in terms of masculinity and difference; a transgressor of social, physical, psychological and sexual norms.” It has been said that Euro-American modern art history, more generally, has been overly occupied with the triumph of the male painter to establish a new aesthetic at the expense of women painters and in many cases as a by-product of the objectification of women’s bodies. Arbuckle has argued that many of the tropes of European modernism also resonate with the hyper-masculine expression of male subjectivities in Indonesian art history.

The paintings of Modern European artists like van Gogh, Picasso, Cezanne and Gauguin spoke to the complexity of the modern psyche through a new approach to painting. They had established their careers as a deliberate departure from the academic realism of the salons. From 1935 onwards, for five years, some of these painters were exhibited in Java as part of the Regnault annual exhibition. The viewing of their work by young Javanese painters opened up new ways for painters to think about cultural transition in Java.

Gauguin’s rejection of Western arts’ classicism invoked in the novelist Charles-Louis Phillippe’s rejection of gentleness and call to barbarianism provides a European precedent for the rejection by Indonesian artists of the refined elegance of the Javanese courts. Equally, Courbet’s thesis on realism that advocated the retrieval of political value in art through a rejection of conservative

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590 Pollock (1999).
591 Arbuckle (2011: 81)
592 Six years prior, in 1929, artworks by Kadinsky, Nolde, Pechstein and Moholy Nagy had been displayed as part of the exhibition, Deutsche Kunst de Gegenwart which travelled to 9 Javanese towns over 6 months and was visited by thousands of Indonesian schoolchildren. It is possible that Sudjojono and his colleagues, who would have been aged around 15 at this time saw this exhibition. Personal communication with Krauss (2016)
593 According to Loos-Haaxman (1972: 93) every Indonesian painter who came to the exhibition was significantly influenced by the works they saw. It should be considered that Sudjojono and cohort also had access to similar works via publications.
values and the clear expression of the realities of the human condition could be seen as an inspiration to Sudjojono.\textsuperscript{595} The unveiling of the ordinary and its elevation to worthy subject in art undermined the existing hierarchies of academy painting that emphasised technique and painterly illusion as exemplified by the paintings of Raden Saleh.\textsuperscript{596} In the words of Sudjojono,

\begin{quote}
The ugly things will be painted as ugly…bottles… shoes… chairs… sewers… The paintings made by the new group of painters are brightly coloured, not dark like the painting of Raden Saleh, the line of the young painters is more expressive than the line of Raden Saleh…This is the painting of our times…\textsuperscript{597}
\end{quote}

Javanese men experienced a sense of displaced masculinity due to both the dominance of the colonial world-view and changes to the order of Javanese society. Dutch colonisation, as was the case in British India, disturbed traditional hierarchies and “relations between categories of sexed identity.”\textsuperscript{598} The public sphere then became a hotly contested domain for the expression of hyper-masculinity where both coloniser and colonised masculinities were at stake.\textsuperscript{599} In order to stabilise the ambivalence of the situation and to reclaim a position of order for the colonised position, new cultural practices emerged that “promoted strict satisfactory boundaries between self and other…”\textsuperscript{600}

One device that artists could use to reaffirm themselves in relation to the Other was the mirror. The self-portrait, produced with the assistance of a mirror afforded painters a physical and psychological space to difference the self and other. It also gave them a tool to recreate themselves, to paint themselves, not just in a metonymic way, but in a self-narrating way. The modern artist did not simply paint himself but more importantly he indicated to society that he was worthy of being painted. In a way, the act of recreating oneself in paint was a metaphor for agency and a signal that change is visible and possible. In traditional Java only the higher classes were perceived as value giving, or significant and worthy subjects of art. As such art remained in the domain of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{595} Supangkat (1995: 209).
\textsuperscript{596} Yuliman (1968: 130).
\textsuperscript{597} Soedjojono (1946a: 49). Author’s translation. Sudjojono’s remark that Saleh’s paintings were “dark” was of course a derogatory comment intended to dismiss his paintings as belonging to an older generation and resonates with ideas about the new dawn of the 20th century and the darkness of the previous century, so should not be regarded as an attempt to accurately describe the colour of Saleh’s paintings.
\textsuperscript{598} Cash (2011: 26).
\textsuperscript{599} Cote (2005: 161) confirms that the colonial novel of the early 20th century expressed anxiety at the vulnerability of sexual orthodoxy and masculinity in relationship to race relations.
\textsuperscript{600} Cash (2011: 26).
\end{flushleft}
those at the top of the hierarchical order. Modern painters inverted the relationship by elevating the ordinary and common to the realm of art.601

Led by Sudjojono, the new generation of painters rejected the professional relationships that existed between earlier Javanese artists from elite backgrounds and Dutch artists and thereby announced themselves as the new avant-garde. No longer content to represent themselves in terms of colonial status or to perform some kind of homage to the sanctity of a Javanese golden age, the new painters preferred to locate themselves irreverently, amidst the urban dwellings of Java’s modern world. Their position of hyper masculinity was two-fold, in that it combined artistic endeavour with political aspiration. It stood as a rejection of high Javanese culture and the conservative politics of the aristocracy. The rejection of high culture also included a rejection of the kind of academic painting that the privileged were making in favour of a more expressive mode of painting that demonstrated an affinity with the rakyat and the working classes. As such, the political and aesthetic attitudes of modern Indonesian painters can be likened to avant-garde trajectories of modern painters in Europe in their rejection of the salon painters, their empathy with the working classes and their hyper-masculine response to the challenges of modern life.

The image of a romantic artist-visionary combined with hyper-masculine hero was popularised by Indonesian modern painters who developed the model of the self-taught painter as a figure for Indonesian artists no longer reliant on Western education.602 There were no fine art academies, not just because of the war, but because artists were decidedly anti-academic.603 Romantic thinking had long perceived emotive visual expression as a source of dignity and worthiness and sign of the artist's altruist humanitarian concerns.604 By the 20th century this creativity was linked to a state of heightened masculinity that was compared to the heroism of men in combat.605 In this regard, Soedibio’s portrait of Sudjojono, printed in Pantja Sila on 17 August 1949, can be considered the portrait of a champion of the rakyat, a war-torn battler. The caption, reading “Sudjojono is the son

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603 According to Yuliman (1994: 43) this attitude had its roots in the conflict between Sudjojono and the painters who had graduated from European academies.
of a coolie” informs us that whilst coming from an impoverished background, an artist can invoke change, inspired by his vision and expressed through his art.

![Figure 57 Soedbio, Sudjojono, 11 August 1948, published in Pantja Sila, No. 1, 17 August 1949](image)

Indonesian painters affected an image of themselves as inspired, creative agents of change in the guise of hyper-masculine European modern painters. For example, in European modernism the inclusion of vice, and its combination with a decadent lifestyle was a way for artists to express their masculine bohemian self. Cigarettes feature prominently in the work of European modernists, like the self-portraits of Max Beckmann and Kirchner who expressed new masculine bodies in the face of war and societal change. The artist staged with cigarette or glass in hand can be seen as the performance of a conjunction between creative painter and bohemian. In Indonesia too, artists frequently depicted themselves smoking.

Whilst smoking is a common past-time in Java and it is hardly considered a vice the number of portraits that depict men smoking can be nothing but a deliberate attempt to present a particular

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image. Vickers comments that in Indonesia smoking a unique brand of Indonesian cigarettes emboldened the smoker with a cosmopolitan air. In some part, Dutch photographers and journalists assisted in the construction of this image.

Another series of photographs by Charles Breyer shows members of the Gelanggang V group at their easels, sketching portraits of one another, critiquing each other’s work and flicking through contemporary magazines. This series seems explicit in its desire to portray these young Indonesian artists as familiar and comfortable with the genres and tropes of Modern European art.

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The psychological self-portrait

Although Wright asserts that Affandi was among the first Indonesian painters to become interested in the human condition and to probe the psychological depths of the modern existential secular self, we can see similar themes in the early portraits of Sudjojono and Harijadi.\(^{609}\) There was a great consistency in Sudjojono’s recreation of himself. His face was never depicted in profile or three quarter view, instead Sudjojono’s self-image always stared back at him directly. In an archival photograph from the 1930s we see a doubly confronting image as both Sudjojono and his self-portrait stare back at the viewer. The photograph of Sudjojono standing alongside his self-portrait is demonstrative of two things.\(^{610}\) Firstly, Sudjojono’s awareness of his capacity to project a certain image to the public, as the photograph is of course staged. Secondly, the self-portrait itself demonstrates his engagement with themes of self-construction that align him to the modernist painters of Europe in their aspiration to evoke an untamed alter ego.\(^{611}\)

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\(^{610}\) This photograph was first published in *Pertoenjoekan Loekisan di Djawa*, Djawa Baroe, 1943, see Arbuckle (2011: 121).

\(^{611}\) Eva Billeler in West (2004: 182) argues that any portrait past or present weather deliberate or not is part and parcel to a dialogue with the ego.
This early self-portrait marked the beginnings of Sudjojono’s tendency to generate his own narrative of personal challenge that contests the reductive rhetoric of cultural and nationalist rationales. We see a young man engaging in a discourse of self-representation, not as a nationalist or even an Indonesian but as a painter. In this photo there is an uncanny sense that he is pointing to his painted self in a gesture of affirmation: “Yes, this is me!” Made in the mid-1930s at the very beginning of his artistic career, in this painting Sudjojono is quite clearly fashioning himself as modern artist.

The compositional scheme of the painting, not unlike Di Depan Kelambu Terboeka, is psychologically charged. The pictorial space of the portrait is clearly divided into a foreground where the likeness of Sudjojono is immediate to the viewer. Brought to the very fore of the painting, the seriousness of his expression, his pensive stare and pipe in mouth, the painted self-portrait establishes the very public image of Sudjojono as the serious modern painter. The background instead provides space for Sudjojono to play with his public perception in more performative and symbolic way that may suggests an attempt on his behalf to illuminate psychological and emotional aspects of his persona. A flying bird and a galloping horse with rider offer themselves as symbols for interpretation. The horse, with flared nostrils snorting a thick cloud of body fluid seems might be interpreted as a nod to the primitive gestures of Gauguin and a symbol
of masculine strength. Instead it might be compared to one of Marc Chagall’s symbolist works, many of which Sudjojono probably would have seen at the Regnault exhibitions. One might also compare the flying horse with Sudjojono’s self-portrait in the form of a *buraq* that adorns the cover of Sudjojono’s seminal text, *Seniloekis Kesenian dan Seniman*. Other possible interpretations might include an allusion to the mythical and trance like Kuda Kepang performance as described by Holt.

![Figure 63 Gauguin, Self-portrait with Yellow Christ, 1890, oil on canvas](image)

Gauguin was another artist who was exhibited as part of the Regnault exhibitions and was a great inspiration to the young modern painters. *Self-portrait with Yellow Christ*, we see the same psychologically charged division of pictorial space. In the immediate foreground Gauguin’s head is framed by a cross made in the form of Christ’s crucified body. A further self-portrait is found within the painting, that is a kind of portrait of the alter-ego or inner psyche of the painter. The

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612 Holt (1967: 29) notes that aside from Van Gogh, Gauguin was the European modernist most frequently cited by Indonesian artists as a source of inspiration.

613 In particular one might compare Chagall’s self-portrait from the second exhibition or the portrait of his wife, *Bella in het groen* (1934) shown in the fourth exhibition and currently in the Stedelijk Museum collection. In this painting Bella is positioned in the immediate foreground while the background is inhabited by a flying dreamlike figure and flowers.

614 Buraq is the mythical winged horse that carried the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and back.

615 Interpretation offered by McGowan (2016). See (Holt 1967:105)

division on the pictorial plane that introduces a physiognomic likeness in the foreground with and psychological reflection in the background appears to have gained traction among some Indonesian painters, including Sudarso. A self-portrait painted by Sudarso just over ten years later resonates with Gauguin’s self-portrait. In this portrait, it seems Sudarso’s time is divided between attending to the earthly world, exemplified by children in the landscape, and the intellectual pursuit of painting symbolised by the hanging painting.

![Figure 64 Sudarso, *Self-portrait*, 1947, oil on canvas](image)

**Creative genius: Self-portraiture and procreation**

Tied to the idea of self-reproduction enabled by the mirror, is the idea of self-creation tied to the painter’s genius. The creativity of the artist is expressed most directly in examples where the artist paints himself with brush and/or palette in hand amidst the creative act of painting, or brings a person to life through portraiture, which can be likened to act of divine creation.617 Discussing Sudibio’s 1949 self-portrait, Holt described a “frail body and weary face” painted “against a desolate background is melancholia clad in white.”618 Yet one might argue instead that this is an optimistic vision of the future to be read in terms of renewal and regeneration. In the self-portrait

618 Holt (1967: 257).
the artist is seated with a calm expression as he gazes directly at an imagined viewer. Of course in the *prima facie* he was looking at himself in the mirror as he painted. This portrait presents the reflection of the mirror doubling back on itself. It is a self-portrait of a painter, painting a self-portrait. In his right hand Sudibio holds a paint brush and is applying the finishing touches to his foot. The whole recreation of the painter as painter acts as a beautiful metaphor for the potential of creativity. Sudibio is presenting painting as a creative act and the artist as the supreme exemplar of agency. The artist is presenting himself as an example for the possibilities of self-narration, to recreate oneself on a personal, and on a metaphorical level for the whole country. Furthermore, this painting is indicative of the gendering of painting and politics during the period that positioned the male artist as progenitor, as a father figure to the new nation.

Sudjojono has received much acclaim within Indonesia and abroad as a pioneer of a socially conscious art with a nationalist agenda. Furthermore he has been touted as the “Father of Indonesian modern Art.”619 Whilst this claim may seem benign or typical of the grandiose claims of the masters of modernism it belies an unusual situation in the case of Indonesian portraits. As discussed in the last chapter, portraits of mothers held a special place in the psyche of the young Indonesian male painter, occupied with establishing the mother as a symbol of Javanese spiritual life to be protected from western colonial interference. Equally, in the gendering of nation, the mother symbolised the natural glories of Indonesia whilst Holland was identified as the stern yet pedagogic father and a more general symbol of European culture. Perhaps it is no wonder then that not a single portrait of a Javanese artist’s father exists.620

By the mid-1940s the attitudes of male artists about family life and the significance of the father figure were clearly changing. Whilst the mother remained an object of affection and a symbol of tradition, Soewardi’s (aka Ki Hadjar Dewantara) ideas promoted the father as the creative and authoritative voice of the family. For young painters, many whom were just beginning their own families, this was an opportunity to assume a different role in the family and Javanese society. Their self-portraits with family members conflated the role of procreative parent with that of the insightful and creative artist. To cement their sense of selves as potent masculine painters cum

619 See Sumardjo (1949) and Augusta (1986).
620 Hatley and Blackburn (2000: 52) observe that in discussions of home-life the father is never or very rarely mentioned and believe this is to do with high divorce rates and the absentee parenting of Javanese fathers in this period.
revolutionaries they were in effect painting themselves as the logical successors of the Dutch as the new fathers of Indonesia.

The reoccurring use of the family as a metaphor for public structure and cultural modelling in 20th century Indonesia was a response to the alienating and dislocating consequences of a modern urban centralised society. In Java the dissolution of traditional power relations, the relocation from rural to urban environments and the changing roles of men and women was just as confusing as it was liberating. In this dramatic transition the family model provided security for the community and served as a counter institution to the paternalistic colonial regime. As a counter-colonial institution, Taman Siswa prided itself on the familiar relationships of father, mother and children, and the communal bonds between neighbours and friends. Taman Siswa’s embodiment of the people’s movement through self-education and the creation of the sacred family engendered an anti-colonial position. In 1936, Ki Hadjar Dewantara called upon members to refer to each other as Saudara Seperguruan (brothers united in learning) not only to reiterate sentiments of the family but also to incorporate Marxist theories of social transformation into traditional structures.

In his book Demokrasi and Leiderschap, Dewantara explained the structure of Taman Siswa in terms of the etymology of the Indonesian word for family (keluarga). In this explanation, the word keluarga was broken down into two words. The first, kawula was defined as meaning servant, or to perform ones’ duty towards ones’ master. The second, warga means member, or one with the responsibility to make decisions. In regard to the paternalistic role of its founder, McVey remarks “In the Taman Siswa's official philosophy, the association was seen as a spiritual family, of which Ki Hadjar Dewantara was the father and the system’s founding principles the mother.” In other words, all members of the family were charged with the responsibility to contribute and work towards the common good but ultimately the head, the father would have the final say. A painting by Raden Mas Sukirno titled, Keluarga and which depicts a family riding on the back of the father resonates with this idea of leadership.

621 McVey (1967: 137).
623 McVey (1967: 140).
By the late 1940s, Dewantara’s organisational model based on the family structure was familiar to a whole generation of educated middle class Indonesians. In the 1950s it was keenly exploited by Sukarno in his policy of Guided Democracy. Sukarno, as the charismatic and learned Bapak Kario (father Kario) or sometimes Bung Kario (older brother Kario), guided a forum of democratic discussion based on Javanese notions of decision making in which he was the ultimate arbitrator.

Dewantara’s family model was also pervasive in the works of Harijadi and Affandi where we see a number of group portraits with their family members. The frequent depiction of family members demonstrates the great value that they placed on their friends and family as well as the high value that they placed on family life. Whilst Sudjojono and Sudarso did not really begin to paint portraits of their children until after 1950, Affandi had begun to do so as early as the mid-1930s, when he was a member of the Bandung Lima group. At that time, rather than employ models, the artist turned to friends and family as models for his paintings. Yet the portraits offer much more than formal studies, as Lee asserts “Aside from their importance as documents of his progressing

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artistry, the self-portraits project the young artist's self-awareness of his newly assumed roles as artist and family man.\textsuperscript{627}

These were not commissioned family portraits. Instead they were documentary portraits of family events or outings, painted accounts of family life. However the inclusion of the artist within many of these portraits complicates their function and the painter-subject relationship.\textsuperscript{628} In some ways the presence of the artist is a simple and direct confirmation of his assumed centrality as the patriarch of the family. It also works to confirm the artist as the painter of the portrait. This is significant because it heightens his authority and conflates his creativity as an artist with his potential to cultivate a family, the artist is asserted as progenitor of both painting and family.\textsuperscript{629} This kind of allegory, linking male artists with procreation, serves as an interesting counter-point to the painted allegories linking women to domesticity and base sexuality, as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the artist’s position as the creative axis of the family is enhanced

\begin{figure}[h]
  \centering
  \includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Figure66.png}
  \caption{Affandi, \textit{Kartika}, 1942, oil on canvas, 93 x 53.5 cm}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{627} Lee (2000: 12).
\textsuperscript{628} Woodall (1997: 7).
\textsuperscript{629} Bond (2006: 32).
by the family members who are grouped around him or who ride upon him. These portraits are a clear visualisation of Dewantara’s ideal family as a model for counter colonial culture.

Dewantara’s concepts of the family and *Saudara Seperguruan* as counter-colonial institutions were also played out in the open studios (*sanggar*) that dominated the Javanese art scene after the Japanese occupation. Sudjojono was the father figure of the *sanggar*, *Seniman Indonesia Muda* (SIM). One painting in particular, produced collaboratively by its members, exemplifies the links between the father figure, procreation and the creative and revolutionary practice of artists. Even the title of the painting, *Kawan Kawan Revolusi* (Comrades of the Revolution), also known as *Teman-teman Seperjuangan* (Friends United by Struggle), reiterates Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s sentiments of the counter–colonial family embodied in the term *Saudara Seperguruan*.630

**The heroic self: *Kawan Kawan Repoloesi***

The idea of representing the national struggle in art gained currency during the period of Japanese occupation.631 After the capitulation of the Japanese in 1945, young Indonesian artists, experienced with the operational model of *Keminin Bunka Shidoso*632 began to organise themselves in collectives that, from the very beginning were associated with and supported by the political leadership. In 1949 the Netherlands finally acknowledged Indonesia’s declaration of Independence, made on 17 August 1945 by President Sukarno, after four years in which large parts of the population were engaged in bloody conflict with the former Dutch colonisers. The period was also one of vigorous activity for Javanese artists who produced posters and propaganda for the revolutionary forces and sometimes fought alongside fellow nationalists.

During this period, no less than ten artist organisations had close relationships with the political leadership. The fledgling government was keen to create a new national mythology and

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630 Sidharta (2006: 56) offers the alternative title of *Teman–teman seperjuangan* yet oddly he sources this information from Sudjojono (1946), published a year before the painting was made.
632 *Keminin Bunka Shidoso* was the central cultural office set up by the Japanese to train and utilise Indonesian talent in cultural production, much of which was used as Japanese propaganda.
championed artistic visions of the struggle for independence. Sukarno forged personal friendships with artists and steered them towards a nationalist agenda. Artists organised themselves into cooperatives that were structured according to the dictums of Dewantara, who was himself a member of the leadership, and which echoed the political ambitions of Sukarno. Apart from providing a place where artists were able to share materials they discussed contemporary art practice and politics in a way that embodied the *Taman Siswa* educational experience and the model of governance advocated by Sukarno, the leader of the Republic.  

The heads of *sanggar* like Sudjojono operated on a national plane in that they were motivated by national goals and endorsed by the state leadership. In fact when Sudjojono established his own *sanggar*, Ki Hadjar Dewantara who was by then the Republic’s Minister for Education, and Sanusi Pane, Sudjojono’s primary school art teacher and the Head of the Central Cultural Office, were sometimes invited to participate and lead discussions on art and politics. The Ministry of Information, the Secretariat for the Minister of Youth Affairs and the Headquarters of the People's Security Force (*Tentara Keamanan*) all supported the artistic activities of these organisations. They even provided funding and the necessary facilities for creating art. The government also purchased the works produced with the idea of establishing a Museum for the Documentation of the Independence Struggle of the Republic of Indonesia. So when the fledgling government moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta in 1946 many artists moved with it, establishing the city as the modern epicentre for politics and culture.

*Pusat Tenaga Pelukis Indonesia* was the first organisation established in Yogyakarta. It was set up by Djajeng Asmoro in 1945 and made posters to support the war effort. In 1946 Affandi established an organisation of artists under the name *Seniman Masyarakat* (People’s Artists). Not long after, under the influence of Sudjojono, the name was changed to *Seniman Indonesia Muda* (Young Indonesian Artists), where the word “young” took on the politically-active connotations

\[ \text{633 Antariksa (2010: 59).} \]
\[ \text{634 Holt (1967: 196).} \]
\[ \text{635 Sudarmaji (1974: 17).} \]
\[ \text{636 Yuliman (1994: 41).} \]
\[ \text{637 Yuliman (1994: 41).} \]
of earlier *pemuda* (youth) organisations.\textsuperscript{638} Even so, Mia Bustam still regarded SIM as operating like a large family and to some degree it did.\textsuperscript{639}

The distribution of government funding and other monies within the *sanggar* was a contentious issue. Sudjojono distributed funding and organised the hierarchy of SIM according to four categories, A, B, C and D based on the seniority and merit of artists, while Hendra Gunawan argued for the distribution of funds based on necessity and family demands. Hendra disagreed with Sudjojono and argued that members should be remunerated according to their marital status and number of dependents irrespective of their merit as artists. In 1947, unhappy, Hendra left and formed *Pelukis Rakyat* (People’s Painters, PR) with his followers including Affandi, Sumardjo, Setjojoso, Trubus and Kusnadi.\textsuperscript{640} Besides their structural and financial differences, the philosophical positions of SIM and PR regarding the relationship between art and the wider community were not all that different. According to Fadjar Sidik, the main differences between the two groups were that PR members worked outdoors in the markets and villages, were not restricted by style or technique and each artist developed their own *kreatif* style to depict the *rakyat* going about their daily business. By contrast, SIM members spent a lot of time working in the studio with models, developing a style of *naturalism/realisme* to produce still life and portrait paintings.\textsuperscript{641} Significantly, it was after this split that Sudjojono, other members of SIM and their friends painted Indonesia’s most highly mythologised group portrait, *Kawan Kawan Revolusi*.\textsuperscript{642}

\textsuperscript{638} The group included Sudjojono, Affandi, Hendra, Sudarso, Sudiardjo, Trubus, Setijoso, Dullah, Kartomo Yudhokusomo, B. Resbowo, Rusli, Harijadi, Suromo, Surono, Abdul Salam, Zaini, Sasongko, Kusnadi and D. Yoes.

\textsuperscript{639} Bustam (2006: 110).

\textsuperscript{640} Subroto (1984). Rumour has it that Harijadi, a senior member of SIM, also separated from the group due to money issues. He either left or was expelled because he refused to share earnings from a commission (Holt 1967: 218).

\textsuperscript{641} From a 1984 interview with Fajar Sidik, quoted in Subroto (1984: 22).

\textsuperscript{642} Holt (1969: 213). It should be noted that Bustam claims that all 20 portraits were painted by Sudjojono. See Bustam (2006:112)
Here we find the faces of military men and other significant revolutionaries alongside self-portraits of artists. Only a few of the figures have been identified: Trisno Sumardjo (front row, second from right); Kartono Yudhokusomo wearing a hat and glasses (front row, left) and Basuki Resobowo on his right (front row, second from left); Sudarso (second row, second from left); Sudibio, turned to the right in profile (top row, third from right) and Yudhokusomo senior (top row, second from left). In addition to the faces identified by Holt and Spanjaard, one might assume that, based on his 1955 self-portrait, the figure top row fourth from right might belong to the painter Sunarto.

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643 Both Holt (1969: 213) and Spanjaard (2003: 92, fn 14) offer a similar list of names.
The figure third from right in the second row is most probably one of the delegates from the *Komisi Teknis untuk Perhentian Tembakan* (Technical Committee for Ceasefire) documented in *Minbar* on 22 November 1947. A portrait of Sudjojono’s newly-born son (Doyo or Gawe) operates to further enhance the link between Sudjojono as a father of the revolution, the father of modern art and the father of a new generation of Indonesia’s youth.

Painted only two years after the declaration of Independence this group portrait was already well entrenched in the project of establishing a genealogy of the revolution that ties Indonesian art to Indonesian nationalism. Supangkat argues that Sudjojono's art reflected the ideas of political freedom, individuality and independence that had their origins in the French revolution. It could be argued that more than any other painting Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) in which Liberty is depicted as both a woman of the people and allegory of classical Greek ideas about democracy and freedom is the ultimate visual characterisation of the French Revolution of

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Liberty’s central position in the foreground of the painting works to establish her as a leader among followers, or an ideal to be followed, and is a pictorial device to create a triangular composition that resonates with classical forms. Instead, in Kawan Kawan Revolusi all semblance of pictorial hierarchy has been flattened out into a seemingly random arrangement of individual portraits that speak of equality but also of disorder. Yet whilst Kawan Kawan Revolusi does not follow the pictorial conventions or iconography of Liberty Leading the People, it does operate similarly as a romantic vision of a heroic triumph over injustice. To fully understand the flattened and abstract arrangement of portraits, it is necessary to consider the role of photographic reproduction in the making of 20th century portraits.

Whilst early 20th century painted and photographic group portraits in Indonesia were conceived as a composition of figures within the studio or landscape, some later group portraits were made as an assemblage of individual portraits. In some cases these individual portraits may have been copied from the printed press or in other cases they were reproduced from artists’ drawings. It was also the case that group portraits were painted by the artists who were themselves included in the portrait. Wright asserts that many Indonesian artists who did not paint self-portraits would nonetheless participate in group portraits. Examples of such group portraits show each artist painting and, in turn, being painted by another. According to Wright such group portraits are often large, at times including so many people that the individual disappears completely in the mass. Kawan Kawan Revolusi was either painted as described by Wright, from photographs or perhaps a combination. We know that Kawan Kawan Revolusi was painted by several different artists but we don’t know to what degree artists painted their own portraits, or to what degree they were copied from photographs or sketches.

In late 1947 when Srihadi was employed as a wartawan-pelukis (sketch-reporter) he made a series of sketches of politicians and artists including Sukarno and at least four SIM members, Sudjojono, Soerono, Yudhokusomo and Abdul Salam. He would later work in the same vein and scale on another series of individual portraits depicting members of the Komisi Tiga Negara (Three Nations

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647 Wright (1994: 247) cites Amrus Natalsya's group portraits, My Friends and Three Artists with Ciputra as examples.
Commission, KTN) when representatives from Indonesia, Holland and the United States met in early 1948 in Kaliurang to discuss a peaceful resolution to the conflict.\textsuperscript{649}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure70}
\caption{Srihadi, \textit{Sudjojono}, 7 December 1947, black conte crayon, 29 x 21 cm}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure71}
\caption{Srihadi, \textit{Soerono}, 17 December 1947, 29 x 21 cm}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure72}
\caption{Srihadi, \textit{Kartono Yudhokusomo}, 1947, black conte crayon 29 x 21 cm}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure73}
\caption{Srihadi, \textit{Abdul Salim}, 16 December 1947, black conte crayon, 29 x 21 cm}
\end{figure}

On 22 November 1947 four pages of \textit{Minbar} were dedicated to a story and series of images about the Indonesian delegation to the ceasefire talks. The first double-page spread consists of a body of text in the centre of the composition with a series of images arranged around it. An unbroken line of six individual portraits of the Indonesian delegation forms a strong baseline to the entire composition. The second double-page is made up of a series of images of the Dutch and American delegates.

\textsuperscript{649} Galeri Lontar (1999).
delegations interspersed with text. Aside from putting a face to the names, these images provided an opportunity for the men to project their charisma as political beings.

The representation of important meetings between Dutch and Indonesian officials was obviously an important news item and both photographers and artists were employed to capture the events. However, in both of the above examples, the photographer and artist are found to pay more attention to capturing the likeness of the individual delegates than to recreation of the atmosphere of the meetings. In the above examples, the photograph and the drawn portrait operate within the same visual economies, with the same purpose and intent. This was a kind of objective reporting made in the service of a contemporary readership or viewer. It would have appeared logical to combine them into a larger group portrait, yet to take individual photographic and/or drawn portraits and turn them into a cohesive group portrait was always going to be an ambitious project.

*Kawan Kawan Revolusi*, made contemporaneously with the sketches and photographs published in *Mimbar* is visually comparable with both, but operates in a different way. A different set of staged photographs of *pemuda* (youth) operates in a similar way to the painting and was made not far away in a photographer’s studio in Malang.\(^{650}\)

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\(^{650}\) Frederick (1997).
These are staged photographs that do not attempt to record history but instead offer a stage to perform history. Not unlike those photographs, *Kawan Kawan Repoloesi* was made in a self-reflexive and rhetorical way to draw itself into history. The painting, commissioned by Sukarno, and painted by Sudjojono and friends was a clear attempt to situate the subjects within a historical trajectory. The subjects of the painting are historical figures but they are also mythical in the sense that they belong to one time but are now also drawn into the timeless myths of Indonesia’s origins. They exhibit a timelessness that is not altered by the subjective gaze of the viewer. This timelessness, achieved through the composition is both a strength and weakness. There are no dominant figures arranged either triangulally or centrifugally. The lateral emphasis also has the effect of collapsing the space between the figures and any semblance of depth. Because the space between the figures is neither binding nor departmentalised the figures appear to float unattached to each other and the world. This portrait, made by piecing together individual photographs, creates a sense of incoherence among the subjects causing a degree of disjuncture between the social union of the subjects and the successful union of the individual portraits.
The exclamation “the will of the times carries us to one house, one place, one sky, one revolution” is emblazoned in black paint at the top of the painting. In its formulation, the slogan seems to reverberate the aspirations of the youth pledge of 1928 that called for one race, one language, one nation, and thereby to place itself within the history of Indonesia’s political struggle. Yet the protagonists painted below all appear to have a different vision for where the future lies, as Antariksa claims, “The truth is, the political attitudes among their members remained diverse because they had never imposed any particular political attitude towards them.” The seemingly disparate vision of each artist might also be explained in terms of Sudjojono’s own feelings regarding the collective. He argued that because painting is the visualisation of the soul, painters must be of all forms of collectivity so that they can truthfully express everything that stirs their souls.

The “visionary” artists set alongside the soldiers, together as the new fathers of Indonesia, symbolise heroic resistance and creative change. The positioning of artists alongside military figures rendered them equal in the public imagination and demonstrates how artists manufactured a certain “look” that spoke of their hyper-masculinity as advocates of change and the new father figures of the rakyat. Whilst clothing was scarce during the revolution the military uniform characterised a certain sense of brotherhood and romanticism in which youth felt liberated from their old roles. The conjunction of artists and uniformed men in this painting then alluded to a new social structure that operated outside of village politics. However the lack of clear geometry in the painting suggests that rather than adhere to any kind of military hierarchy, each portrait was given equal importance irrespective of how it was made, who it was made by and who it depicted. Yet whilst this painting clearly demonstrates a deliberate attempt to establish the artist as critical in the expression of an Indonesian hyper-masculinity, there remains a degree of conflict between the vision of the individual artist and the reality of communal action. As Holt has remarked, “While nationalist fervour impels the artist to seek a style symbolic of the collective national spirit,

654 Frederick (1997).  
656 Frederick (1997: 225).
individualism as conceived in a modern democracy sends him in quest of highly personal expression.”

Only months after the completion of the painting Sudjojono’s enthusiasm for the collective organisation of artists had waned. In a letter to writer and literary critic Muhammed Balfas dated 15 July 1948, Sudjojono expressed frustration with his pupils’ diligence and, citing their reluctance towards hard work, argued that it was better to have one good student than a thousand “avonturiers” (wannabes). Soon after he withdrew from organised activities to concentrate on his own work, which he argued had suffered almost to the point of non-existence.

*Sudjojono* did however present itself as a model for a later group portrait in its attempt to reconcile individual subjectivity with collective identity. By 1949 many of the collectives were experiencing trouble with individual members dissatisfied by the limitations of the group or seeking alternative means of expression and political alignment. Pusat Tenaga Pelukis Indonesia, Yogyakarta’s original *sanggar*, demonstrated particular cohesiveness and was able to enlist government support to create a unified body for teaching art. On 29 December 1949 the Dutch transferred sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic and, just two weeks later, on 15 January 1950, the *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Indonesian Academy of Fine Arts, ASRI) was established in Yogyakarta. A group portrait of ASRI teachers and students, painted circa 1955, is likely based on the model provided by *Kawan Kawan Repoloesi*, suggesting the continued separation of individual and collective volition. When we examine this portrait we find a vision of collective organisation frustrated by individual demands for career satisfaction and daily survival.

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658 Sudjojono (1948). Author’s translation.
659 Sudjojono (1948). Author’s translation.
660 For a discussion of the personal and political alignments of these groups see Antariksa (2010).
661 There were of course many group portraits in circulation but the relationship between the individual painters and significance of *Kawan Kawan Repolusi* would suggest that it was a significant inspiration to the next generation.
Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the self-portraits made in the 20-year period from 1930 to 1950 are demonstrative of the modern male painter’s desire to assert a hyper-masculinity tied to the image of the artist as a heroic visionary. The creative male self is expressed in terms of his capacity to procreate in both a literal and metaphorical sense. The male painter competently reproduces his own image in the guise of modern painter, father figure and soldier as an assertion of his status as procreator. At the same time these portraits are deeply revealing of the difficult challenges presented by the negotiation between the assertion of individuality and union with the larger community. The promotion of the artist as visionary and the importance given to artistic collaboration with the larger community elevated the status of the artist to an integral aspect of a proper functioning community. In this period, art like politics, sought to build an affinity with the rakyat and simultaneously engender the image of the family, the primary model of communal relationships, as a symbol of strength, unity and solidarity. In reality, this endeavour was not always harmonious. As with the politics of the time competition between factions and grave financial challenges undermined cohesive organisation.

662 Suromo (1949: 13).
After the proclamation of Independence on 17 August 1945, Sukarno imagined himself as the spearhead of an Indonesian cultural renaissance. He developed a discourse concerned with maintaining meaningful continuity to pre-Independence and pre-colonial Javanese culture as a strategy to legitimise himself. He quite deliberately positioned himself as the cultural inheritor of pre-Dutch Javanese culture as a means to establish himself as the rightful and charismatic heir of Java. As the new leader Sukarno saw himself as the immediate inheritor of all that was favourable in Dutch (European) art, literature and culture, whilst simultaneously the custodian of Indonesia’s rich heritage. To do this he adopted, in the manner that a Javanese king might absorb external powers, the signs of power previously attributed to the Dutch. In order to provide some form of material embodiment of this sense of himself, Sukarno set about amassing a collection of art built from gifts from foreign dignitaries, purchases and commissions.

In terms of artistic discourse the collection was not particularly progressive. In fact Sukarno’s taste in paintings displayed a conservative academic realism that reflected a broader tendency of post-colonial leaders to adopt the aesthetic preferences of their predecessors. As a result, portraits made under Sukarno’s patronage departed from the staunchly aggressive and highly emotive portraits of the modern painters and signalled a desire to re-establish links with the old centres of power located in the courts of central Java. Sukarno engaged with the myth of the golden age of pre-colonial Java, not manifest in archaeology, as was the case with Cêphas, or dance with Jodjana, but rather with Javanese ideas of kingship.

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663 Pemberton (1994: 9) has argued that this was the case for Suharto.
665 A total of 206 works were published in two volumes as a gift to Sukarno from the Chinese Government. They feature a preface by Sukarno and are in four languages. See Dullah (1956) and Susanto (2014).
For Javanese rulers, whose royal power was legitimised with reference to cosmological concepts, an alliance with the spirits of the supernatural world was vital to maintaining control over the land they governed. According to Anderson, “the Javanese tradition of political thought typically emphasizes the signs of power’s concentration, not the demonstration of its exercise or use.”

The self-sacrificing sage is the ideal model rather than the self-aggrandising or self-indulgent megalomaniac. Following this logic, sexual abstinence rather than a demonstration of sexual prowess is a more attractive method for accumulating and maintaining power. However, Anderson also asserts, in what may appear contradictory terms that “the sexual fertility of the ruler is one essential sign of the Power that he holds, for his seed is the microcosmic expression of the Power is has concentrated.” Furthermore the act of procreation is linked to creativity, fertility and ultimately the capacity of the ruler to create prosperity, “the fertility of the ruler was seen as … invoking and guaranteeing the fertility of the land, the prosperity of the society, and the expansionist vitality of the empire.”

Folklore common to Southeast Asia tells of the advantageous and empowering benefits of a king’s sexual relations with female goddesses. Through sexual intercourse with a goddess a king brings the divine force of the heavens into contact with himself and earth and, in doing so, increases his ability to bring power and harmony to the city. For Javanese rulers Nyai Roro Kidul, the powerful goddess of the South (Indian) Ocean, was their most important sexual ally.

To this end Sukarno sought to present himself as a highly-sexualised being, “[his] entire life, even down to his love affairs, seemed to be conducted on the public stage...” in full knowledge that his behaviour would perceived in terms of notions of sexual charisma and kingship that held currency in Java. He was especially interested in ideas and images that reconfirmed the myths of Java’s central courts that linked beliefs about kingly legitimacy and charisma to sexual union with the Nyai Roro Kidul.

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668 Anderson (1990: 24).
671 Heine-Geldern (1942: 26).
673 McIntyre (1996: 2).
674 Laksono (1986: 33-44).
In the decade after the ratification of Independence Sukarno, with the aid of Raden Basuki Abdullah (1915-1993), carefully manufactured a series of paintings of women to reflect an image of himself as a virile and prosperous leader. The portraits Basuki made under Sukarno’s patronage began to unite Hindu and Javanese mythology with highly sexualised depictions of Indonesian women and the goddess Nyai Roro Kidul. Sukarno commissioned Basuki to make portraits of his wives and lovers in the guise of the goddess, designed to legitimise his leadership and establish him as the rightful heir to the spiritual and physical domains of Java. Furthermore portraits of Sukarno’s wives, who originated from different regions and nations, connected Sukarno to the various geographies of Indonesia and located him in an international context. Likewise the body of the sexualised village woman became a site of male patriotic possession, particularly with regard to the consolidation of peripheral territories around Java, especially Bali.

This chapter discusses the way that Sukarno and Basuki worked together to create portraits of women as an allegory for sexual conquest, territorial gain and the nation. Consequently Sukarno’s collection of pictorial beauties might be regarded as possessions of power, consistent with Javanese ideas of charisma and concepts of kinship that worked to legitimise Sukarno.

**Sukarno the Aristo-democratic artist-statesman**

At the time of his appointment as President and Commander-in-Chief, Sukarno’s position towards the past was ambivalent. Whilst he denounced the revival of Javanese traditions as a means to revolve a cultural identity crisis, he continued to manipulate pre-modern Javanese protocol. In seeking appropriate models of governance Sukarno tended to look to systems that were already in place. He related that being “seriously stuck…[the nationalists] went to the *kraton* and with few revisions we nationalists, who’d fought all our lives against feudalism, borrowed high Javanese protocol as our guide.” In borrowing from Javanese protocol Sukarno projected himself as the ultimate moral exemplar and aesthete who could guide the country in a refined and noble manner.

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676 Labrousse (1993).
677 Wright (1994: 33).
in accordance with Javanese concepts of governance. To some degree it was a reiteration of Noto Soeroto’s ideas of cultural nationalism as briefly discussed in Chapter 4. Like Noto Soeroto, Sukarno saw in the combination of the “Man of the People” and the aristocrat or “Most Excellent One” the promise of a new form of governance that Noto Soeroto had called the “Aristo-democratic.”

Sukarno’s interest in painting and culture has often been regarded as secondary to his political activities and more indicative of Javanese culture than Sukarno’s own personality. To the contrary, McIntyre argues that Sukarno’s artistic sensibilities informed his political vision and even political policy. Sukarno himself was quick to attribute his charismatic and successful leadership to deep seated and divinely inspired artistic sensibilities, as he none too modestly admitted to Cindy Adams in the 1960s,

> It has been said of me, “The President of the Republic of Indonesia has too much of the character of a man of the arts”. But I thank the Almighty that I was born with sentiment and artistry. How else could I have become The Great Leader of the Revolution. How else could I have led my nation back to freedom and its own birthright after three and a half centuries of Dutch domination?

It is no secret that Sukarno fancied himself as an artist. Whilst his interest in art was evident at the Dutch Higher Middle Class School in Surabaya where he learnt perspective composition, it is likely that he had already dabbled in art at home. Sukarno assures us that his talents as a watercolourist were already well developed and apparent to any onlooker by the time he reached second year high school. In 1928 Sukarno was living in Bandung and serving as the chair of the Indonesian National Party and running the Bandung Study Club. Yet he continued to paint and produced two watercolours in this period, *Full Moon in Priangan* and *Village Scene* that serve as testimony to his dual passions, politics and painting.

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681 C. Adams (1970: 1).
682 McIntyre (1993: 162).
McIntyre argues that Sukarno’s aesthetic disposition can be contextualised as empathetic to the Realist mission in the sense that he, like the Realists, strove for natural likeness in representing the world. However, while the Realist strove to reproduce both the sensory and social realities of the world, Sukarno was not always comfortable with paintings that depicted the realities of people’s material conditions. This was especially the case when such paintings may have compromised or tarnished the image of Indonesia as a modern nation characterised by economic and social progress. It would be safer to say that Sukarno enjoyed artworks that did not confuse or deflate his vision of Indonesia as a beautiful homeland and the source of a prosperous future.

Sukarno preferred paintings that emulated or indeed enhanced the beauty of Indonesia through natural realism, but he was not totally adverse to paintings that employed expressionistic technique as long as they did not distract from the underlying intent of the picture. In this sense, painting for Sukarno was primarily about narrative. Painting as text, painting used to convey sentiment, political or otherwise, was paramount for Sukarno and this was achieved at the expense of any artistic discourse of form. Moreover experimentation in form, especially that which deviated from the naturalist representation of beauty was deemed insufficiently useful and was aligned with the expression of unsavoury emotion and the representation of things undignified, in other words things described by the term kasar. In this regard I agree with McIntyre when he asserts, “The limits to Sukarno’s realism were… related to his tendency to shy away from the ugly, allowing it no part in his idea of aesthetic experience.” A sentiment which Sukarno himself declared openly, “I do not want the beauty of our country destroyed by abstract painters.” In fact not a single artwork produced by students from the Bandung School of Art, known for its teaching of abstraction, found a place in Sukarno’s collection.

McIntyre concludes that Sukarno’s admiration and patronage of idealised and glamorous depictions of landscapes and women were not inspired by any political agenda but were rather the object of a personal fascination with smooth surfaces and beautiful women. Moreover McIntyre asserts that Sukarno’s aesthetic choices were very much his own and should not be explained in cultural terms. At odds with McIntyre, I argue that these preferences, whilst personalised by Sukarno, were political and were informed to a considerable degree by the prevailing aesthetic

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modes of public performance, personal relations and cultural practices governed by the Indonesian term *halus* and the embodiment of elite Javanese values. To Sukarno there was nothing noble about painting the dirt, or the mud or the shit in which people lived, nor could he understand why any painter would choose to paint such things. In fact McIntyre’s remarks regarding Sukarno’s preferences for “smooth surfaces” resonate with Geertz’s understanding of the Javanese Self and the desire to reconcile the private and public aspects of life with minimal unrest and the utmost grace. Rather, Sukarno believed that it was the imperative of artists to elevate the Indonesian citizen to higher moral ground, to celebrate independence and build an image of the new nation upon legacies of the past. To this end Sukarno engaged Basuki Abdullah to paint hyper-realist depictions of Indonesian beauties that ignored the gritty realities of everyday life in favour of allegories of empire, kingship and nation.

**Sukarno and Basuki Abdullah**

Raden Basuki Abdullah was Sukarno’s preferred portrait painter and integral to his political agenda. He was the son of the illustrator and painter Raden Abdullah Surio Subroto who had trained and worked in the Netherlands. Growing up in a family of six children, three of whom became artists, Basuki learnt the basic skills of an artist from his father. In 1934, at the age of 19, he moved to the Netherlands and commenced study at the *Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten* in The Hague. The director of the academy at the time, Dr. Ir Platinga, was pleased with his work while the director of the Royal Dutch Airlines (*Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij*), Dr. Plesman, commissioned his own portrait from Basuki. However the five-year course proved too long and Basuki terminated his studies two years early, missing the courses on anatomy and life drawing. Even so, the female figure in the guise of portrait was one of his most prolific subjects.

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688 For instance, Sukarno could not understand how Affandi could bring himself to paint a horse shitting (McIntyre 1993: 172).
691 Tashadi (1976: 17).
It was now the political elite rather than the aristocracy who championed the arts, however Sukarno’s aesthetic preferences for expressions of power, beauty and Javanese identity had not fallen too far from the tree. According to Wright, Basuki could be seen as a “direct descendent of traditional art-makers, working in the royal courts…whose role was to legitimise and celebrate the power-holders…” In fact, Basuki’s relationship to the earlier generation of painters, including his father Abdullah Surio Subroto, the photographer Kassian Céphas and the cultural nationalist Dr. Wahidin does link him to the central courts of Java. The fact that he was born of aristocratic privilege as signalled by the honorific title of Raden attached to his name was one aspect of Sudjojono’s criticism of Basuki.

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693 Wright (1993: 192).
694 For a discussion on the relationship between these men see Cox (2012).
In many ways Basuki had the correct lineage and was perfectly placed to consolidate Sukarno’s image as the legitimate political leader of the new republic, charismatic spiritual figurehead and to link him to the pre-colonial golden period of Javanese history. In order to present Sukarno as the logical international figurehead of Indonesia after the dissolution of Dutch control Basuki cleverly maintained continuity with the power of the colonial rulers by adopting pictorial devices and attributinal signifiers borrowed from the portraits of the Governor Generals.

![Figure 77 Basuki Abdullah, Sukarno, mid 1950, oil on canvas, 110 x 75 cm](image1)

![Figure 78 Jan Frank Niemansteverfriet, Portrait of Governor General Dirk Fock, 1925, oil on canvas, 1950 x 96.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam A3817](image2)

The rolled-up constitution in Sukarno’s left hand behaves as a sign of entitlement much like the military staff that almost inevitably appeared in the early portraits of the Governor Generals. Likewise the starch-pressed white suit that had once been worn with pride by Dutch men in Indonesia as a symbol of colonial unity and masculinity was also employed to demonstrate Sukarno’s own masculine confidence. Sukarno declared, “I prefer uniforms because… an Indonesian leader must be a commanding figure. He must exude power. When I became

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695 On the gendering of clothing in Indonesia see J.G. Taylor (1997) and Frederick (1997).
Commander in Chief, I knew they wanted a hero figure. I gave that to them… I am clad mentally in a mantle of confidence. This I transmit to my people.”

However, rather than use obvious gestures such as Javanese clothing or attributional signifiers, Basuki used portraits of women, often those personally close to Sukarno, to establish a link between the new leader, beautiful women, the land and sea of Indonesia and the royal courts of Java. In the first decade of Independence Basuki exploited the Hindu-Javanese homology between earth and female as well as role models from the Indian epics to produce new images of Indonesian women as allegories for the modern nation. While Sukarno was excited about Basuki’s coupling of beautiful woman and the Indonesian landscape, and encouraged him to paint the two together, it had long been a part of Basuki’s oeuvre as is apparent from the painting *Bunda Maria* (Mother Maria, 1935).

![Figure 79 Basuki, Bunda Maria, 1935, collection of Museum Het Valkhof, formerly in the collection of Provincie der Jezuïeten, Nijmegen](image)

Basuki painted this picture of the Maria dressed in a *kebaya* (popular Javanese-style blouse) and sarong whilst in the Netherlands, where it has been suggested that he was studying with the

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Jesuits. In this painting we see the vertical arrangement as noted by McIntyre, and the obvious association with the idealised woman and the landscape. Here Maria floats above, or perhaps descends upon the earthly world of Java, a world that we have come to know through Basuki’s often ill-reputed landscape paintings. Replete with palm trees, rice fields and mountains this painting appears to conform to what Sudjojono described as the “trinity” (trimurti) of Mooi Indie paintings, yet it offers something entirely different to the idealised, passive and controlled landscape. In addition to the vertical arrangement we also see a very obvious gesture towards male sexuality evoked in the vertical and erupting volcanoes. Whilst seemingly inappropriate in the context of Maria, the flames and smoke that exude from the volcanoes and make contact with her might, in relation to a different deity, be interpreted as symbolising a form of divine union.

Under Sukarno, the same pictorial devices were employed by Basuki in The Fisherman Legend (1956) and Portrait of Fatmawati (1945) to make a connection between the Indonesian woman, the fertile land and Sukarno’s legitimacy as a ruler.

Basuki was well adept and complicit in achieving the kind of idealised creations that Sukarno so desired. Dermawan concedes that “Basoeki was talented at beautifying the world he observed. He could remove wrinkles from the cheeks of a model. He could remove mud… he could add sparkle to the eyes of a film star that he was painting.” No doubt Basuki’s ability to create illusion and enhance natural beauty appealed to Sukarno who, according to his wife Hartini, also relished the opportunity to enhance the physical attributes of women in his own forays into painting. Furthermore, the allegorical portraits of Sukarno’s wives had the doubling effect of placing Indonesian women within a mythology about the glories of a pre-colonial past and demonstrating the divine magnitude of Sukarno’s sexual prowess.

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701 This interpretation comes from Vickers (2012: 167), based on his analysis of a painting by Rai Tengkeng.
703 Hartini, quoted in McIntyre (1993: 176).
Sukarno’s Balinese beauties as an allegory for empire

Sukarno’s collection of allegorical beauties finds a historical precursor in a 15th century Italian tradition that became a feature of 17-18th century court cultures across Europe. Here, the likeness of an individual woman was subjugated to an ideal for which she was said to stand.\(^{704}\) Paintings in Sukarno’s collection also have similarities with 19th century European “beauty” portraits. These portraits were more than just a likeness of a prospective bride, they were a way of making a moral comment about her through her conformation to an ideal. Concentration on her physical characteristics emphasised the quality of the portrait as one attaining to an ideal of beauty recognised within a hierarchy of signs that could be used to identify her virtue.\(^{705}\)

In European art history, allegory in painting has sometimes been quite obvious, such as in cases where women are depicted as Roman goddesses or the Virgin Mary and less obvious when they act as an allegory for something entirely abstract, like beauty itself. Painters could persuade, or at least affirm, public sentiment regarding the moral probity of certain sitters by including particular signifiers within the portrait. For instance, the viewers of 19th century British portraits would understand that the inclusion of jewellery, costume and other affectations of wealth were meant to demonstrate the sexual vulgarity of the sitter.\(^{706}\) Kingdoms and courts were exemplified by the behaviour of their womenfolk, immortalised in portraits that persuaded the viewer to adopt a prejudiced position to the subject as an index of the broader community. Historically, monarchs could be constituted by the positive portrayal of their beauties.

In Indonesia, with only a few exceptions, the female portrait as an allegory for creation, landscape or nation, had not really been painted by Indonesian artists until Sukarno began to amass a collection of paintings to reflect his aspirations of power. There is no doubt, as I articulated in Chapter 5, that portraits by artists of their mothers did go a long way to constituting ideas of motherland and arousing nationalist sentiment. But where those paintings seem more the logical result of family dynamics and colonial politics, Sukarno’s commissions were a deliberate attempt

\(^{704}\) West (2004: 152).
\(^{705}\) Perry (2006: 8).
to contrive allegory through the painting of portraits in a way that consolidated his own position as head of state and country[side].

In addition to the policies of territorial expansion and cultural colonialism exercised by the centralised Javanese administration over its smaller island neighbours, Sukarno played a pivotal role in encouraging the artists under his patronage to imagine those islands as a feminine other to be dominated by Javanese masculinity. In this regard Sukarno’s correlation between land and woman is comparable with Orientalist versions of the East and arguably even European landscapes of Indonesia. Sukarno’s imagination of Balinese women, as a symbol of an exotic and authentic pre-modern feminine to the central masculinity of Javanese civilization, is unmistakably visible in depictions of semi-naked Balinese women by Javanese artists under his patronage. Although the direction of Balinese art had shifted towards embracing the modernity exemplified by the Bandung art school, Sukarno mythologised Bali as an exotic tropical paradise. Following his lead, Javanese artists like Affandi, Sudjojono and Srihardi Soedarsono spent long periods on the island. Whilst Pollock has argued that the nude serves as a “territory across which men artists claim their modernity”, in Indonesia the Balinese nude provided a way for Javanese artists to claim their centrality. According to Anderson many Javanese are still challenged by the idea that the nation of Indonesia is comprised of many islands of equal status irrespective of their size or distance from the centre, seen to be Java. Similarly Arbuckle has argued that Emiria Sunassa was omitted from the canon of modern art because she threatened notions of Javanese centrality and masculinity.

In the mid 1950s Sukarno commissioned the architect R.M. Soedarsono to design a palace on the hill above the Tirta Empul temple in Tampaksiring, Bali. There is a natural spring in the central courtyard of the temple which is believed to have curative properties. Legend has it that the God Indra created the spring by piercing the ground in search of holy water. The sexual metaphor was contextualised in relationship to Sukarno’s legitimacy as a ruler of all Indonesia, further qualified by his mixed heritage, his father being from Java and his mother from Bali. See Labrousse (1993). See ‘A Tale of Three Women’ in Pollock (1999) for a discussion on the trope of the ‘dark lady’ and the links to certain geographies and ethnicities. Protschky (2011) argues for such an interpretation of European landscape paintings of Indonesia. Sukarno also made a point of collecting the work of the Dutchman Rudolf Bonnet who resided in Bali (Zweers 2014). Couteau (1999: 33). Pollock, quoted in Benjamin (2006: 87). Anderson (1990: 42). Arbuckle (2011: 72, 88, 242).
not lost on Sukarno who, from his palace, could eye the bodies of Balinese girls bathing in the temple pools below.

The allegorical motif that aligns women with water and thereby the source of life is well established in European art history. Whilst nudes painted on water vessels in classical Greece may have been the origin of the association between the female nude and the source of life, by the 19th century the personification of creation via the nude placed in an aqueous landscape was a common motif in painting.\textsuperscript{715} In relating the female body to water and the source of life, some painters continued to reference classical themes like Venus born of the sea and Diana bathing in the forest. Other images such as the female nude as bather in a landscape also emerged as a significant subject in the academic tradition.\textsuperscript{716} In the most literal pictorial representations of woman as the source of creativity, they were situated in close proximity to fonts of water stemming from the earth or cascading waterfalls as exemplified in the numerous paintings by Courbet entitled \textit{The Source}. 

\textsuperscript{715} Bond (1997: 22).
\textsuperscript{716} Faunce (1997: 102).
It is not too far a leap from Courbet’s paintings of bathing women, washing in the steam of a pure mountain font to Balinese girls bathing in the pools of a spring brought forth by Indra’s penetration of the Earth. Basuki was able to further localise this motif to the Javanese homology between woman and landscape by introducing scenes familiar to Javanese audiences through Hindu mythology. His painting *Djaka Tarub* (also known as *The Fisherman Legend*) is a Javanese version of Krishna stealing the cloths of the gopis, a well known theme in Indian story telling and art.
Whilst the myth accounts for seven maidens, strangely the painting depicts only six. They are found frolicking in the cascading waterfall as the stealthy fisherman watches on and steals their clothes. The six heavenly bodies seem to float free of gravitational force and are detached from reality, their bodies float upwards against the tide of falling water and carry the viewers eye upwards through the painting. McIntyre interprets this as demonstrative of Sukarno’s desire to emulate supernatural transcendence in a painting.\footnote{717 McIntyre (1993: 178).} There is no doubt that the painting’s construction is successful in leading the eye inwards and upwards across the surface of the canvas. However, a more cynical view might describe it as a cheap technique to generate movement in the painting and expose the bodies of the women in the most dynamic way rather than being indicative of some greater metaphysical endeavour. The swathe fisherman is anchored to the ground in the act of stealing the women’s clothes. In fact the length of fabric running from his hands to the women’s bodies suggests that they are quite literally tied to him. Clark argues that the faces of the bathing virgins are all painted from one, which he believes could have been the face of Sukarno’s third wife Hartini.\footnote{718 J. Clark (1998: 251).} However it is more likely that the faces were inspired by Basuki’s third wife
Somwang Noi. Whilst the use of a single model for group compositions is not uncommon in European art history, it reveals a tendency towards the generalisation of beauty and makes this painting comparable with Le Mayeur’s *Bermain di Kolam* (Playing in the Pool), which is also in Sukarno’s collection. In Le Mayeur’s painting a large number of semi-naked women strike classical poses amongst a lily pond set in a Balinese garden. Each woman looks like the others and appears to have the same face, that of Le Mayeur’s Balinese wife, Ni Pollock.

In both paintings the painter’s wife appears as the visual idealisation of an ideological position that is the combination of an infatuation with one woman as the exemplar of an orientalist fascination. The multiplication of the face is so pervasive as to result in the obfuscation of the subject. In both paintings the bodies of the Balinese women appear perfectly smooth, without wrinkles in idealised poses, they are presented as passive and available. In this configuration “the female nude is conceived in terms of an ideal of perfection, as an exemplum of completely controlled form, which can by definition possess no further potential” and therefore, contrary to the association of femininity with the source of life, the woman’s body becomes a morbid vessel of male objectification. Basuki’s painting then might be seen to unite two objectives. Firstly, to associate women with water as the source of life, and secondly, and more pertinently, to align Balinese women with an exotic (i.e. non-Javanese) form of femininity to be mastered. The legendary Fisherman, as both suitor and master of the Balinese women caught in his net, provided Sukarno with the perfect allegory for the charismatic Javanese ruler who possessed centripetal, almost magnetic control over the outlying Islands.

**Heroes and heroines from the wayang**

When looking at portraits in Sukarno’s collection two distinct categories emerge that relate to the public perceptions of men and women’s roles in society as understood through traditional modes of knowledge, such as the wayang. Whilst I have discussed the normalising effects of colonial scholarship on the political potency of the wayang in chapter 3, these paintings draw on wayang

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stories to effectively reinvigorate a sense of self in spite of the colonial. They do however also tend towards presenting ideal modes of masculinity and femininity. Although certain ambiguities of sexual behaviour and stereotypes for men and women do exist in Javanese society, as both Anderson and Brenner have noted, Sukarno was clearly intent on presenting a hyper-sexual and hyper-masculine model of male selfhood.

Sukarno was a great admirer of the wayang. He was extremely well versed in its moral narratives that brought epic heroes and villains to life and articulated the proper codes of conduct for men and women. Sukarno remarked that from an early age his father, an avid devotee of the _Mahabharata_, introduced him to the epics. In many Javanese families, children were given the names of wayang heroes, who represented ideal types, in accordance with their characteristics or the aspirations and expectations of their parents. Sukarno was originally named Kusnasosro but before he reached puberty his father changed his name, allegedly in anticipation of greatness, to _Karna_, one of the great heroes of the _Mahabharata_. Later Sukarno chose another epic hero upon which to model himself, when he used the _nom de plume_ Bima in writing for the Indonesian language periodical _Utusan Hindia_ (Messenger of the Indies). Another hero of the _Mahabharata_, Bima is celebrated as a great and brave warrior. Sukarno’s knowledge and identification with the wayang heroes served him greatly in political life. His use of wayang tales to explain political, social and moral imperatives was appealing and well received by popular audiences, who not only recognised the characters and events that Sukarno spoke of, but were also well acquainted with the significance of their moral associations.

The desire to celebrate the triumph of Independence and immortalise those who played pivotal roles in the national struggle must be overwhelming for any leader of a new nation. Sukarno was no exception in his commitment to championing the heroic deeds of the anti-colonial revolutionaries and having their images realised in painting and sculpture. However the question

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722 For a discussion on the ways that ancient texts have been reinterpreted in modern contexts to negotiate the colonial see Nandy (1983: 27).
724 C. Adams (1970: 26).
remains as to what extent these representations presented the potential of a liberated future and to what extent they mythologised the legacies and traditions of the pre-colonial past?

Sukarno and the nationalists were united in their shared desire to expel the colonialists, something not necessarily synonymous with conventional societal change. This meant that the revolution was essentially a bourgeois revolution that merely substituted Dutch administrators with Indonesian men as heads of power. A new patriarchy emerged which had its roots in both Dutch and Javanese forms of governance and kingship. Sukarno differentiated Indonesia’s revolution from the socialist context by arguing that the “little people” although extremely poor were in fact sometimes land owners who did not sell their labour to others and therefore could not be defined in terms of the proletariat. So while Sukarno encouraged the retelling of popular mythology, he was not interested in art that reproduced popular forms. Instead, Sukarno felt that as an Aristodemocratic leader he could lift up the *wong kecil* (little people) so that they too could see art. It was not until later, during the period of Guided Democracy (1959-1965) that illustrations and propaganda posters in a Social Realist vein were developed by Sukarno and the Department of Information.

In contradiction to the aesthetics of social realism which might champion the plight and hardships of the everyday working man and woman, many paintings in Sukarno’s collection glorify the heroism of battle and echo the warring heroes of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The revolution brought new heroes who could be cast in the roles of the popular wayang figures. Whilst the male heroes embodied the characteristics of their courageous and victorious wayang models, the modern day heroines were moulded to conform to the types of femininity and domesticity as described in the epics, “Javanese women…are supposed to be like *Sembadra*, the shy and obedient wife of the wayang hero *Arjuna*.” Whilst the women of the revolution became good wives and mothers as discussed in chapter 5, the men became an embodiment of warrior husband as discussed in chapter 6.

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727 Lane (2008: 19-20).
729 *Little people* is a literal translation from the Javanese *wong kecil* which was a populist term used by nationalists from the 1910s to identify the disenfranchised.
730 Hamid (2014).
731 Wieringa (1996: 5-6).
As a result, women were not always granted respect for their role in the revolution or the status in post-revolutionary society that they may have deserved. In arguing that the Indonesian revolution was primarily concerned with outing the colonial forces and not necessarily with engendering social reform or social equality, Wieringa remarks that the politically active women who were central to the revolution were expected to give up their political roles once revolution had been realised. In fact many women experienced ongoing subjugation within their traditional roles.

Whilst women in broader society were denied their political subjectivity, imagery depicting the sacrifice and suffering of women was recast as a necessary condition of the revolution and again found inspiration in the wayang epics. As such the image of the Indonesian woman became a site for national contestation, to be rescued from foreign possession, ultimately and paradoxically not for liberation but for objectification by the victors.

In 1955, when Sukarno took Hartini as a second wife, he demonstrated that his commitment to women’s issues was largely superficial. Around the same time Basuki produced a number of highly-sexualised images of women presented allegorically as deities, including Sita the chaste heroine of the Ramayana. Basuki himself was very familiar with the wayang stories and had performed the wayang wong in several European cities. Basuki recontextualised the allegorical demonstrations of male power and female sacrifice familiar to the public to remind people of the ideal roles of men and women and to express Sukarno’s desire to emulate those heroic male roles. Wright asserts that his depiction of mythological scenes, in particular Basuki’s painting of The battle between Rahwana and Djataju in the abduction of Sita (mid 1950s), where “a muscular Rahwana [who] lifts up a pale, passive, half naked Sita” offered a convenient metaphor that provided the legitimisation of sexual desire and consequential conquest of Indonesian women.

Whereas in India nationalists saw the emancipation of women as a precondition for modernity, this type of mythological model aligns women’s roles in the revolution with traditional roles of sacrifice. Furthermore, it offers a mythological inspiration to the type of modern construction

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732 Wieringa (1996: 5-6).
733 For further context see J.G. Taylor (1997: 44).
734 Hartini was actually Sukarno’s fourth wife, but this marriage was the first instance in which he took a second wife while still married to his current one.
737 See Vishwanathan (2010)
that defines the man as saviour to a sexually indebted female victim.\textsuperscript{738} There is no doubt that the sexualised depictions of Indonesian women painted by Basuki contributed to the construction of a normalised heterosexual version of society that offered opportunities for the exploitation of women.\textsuperscript{739} That Sukarno found some kind of personal pleasure in this kind of moral narrative is clearly seen in this photograph of him admiring Basuki’s painting.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{sukarno_admiring_basuki.png}
\caption{Unknown photographer, Sukarno admiring Basuki’s painting. \textit{The battle between Rahwana and Djataju in the abduction of Sita.}}
\end{figure}

However we must then consider that in constructing this type of sexual hierarchy Sukarno was at an advantage to present himself as the sexually charismatic Javanese leader.

\textsuperscript{738} Conversely in India the genderification of the nationalist movement placed men as dependent upon female spirituality and willing to sacrifice themselves in battle by making a pledge to ‘Mother’ India, who was the embodiment of ones’ feminine protector (Vishwanathan 2010: 6).

\textsuperscript{739} Wright (1993: 124-135).
Goddesses and conceptions of kingship

Although Sukarno was well aware of the many women directly involved in the nationalist movement as spokespeople and fighters, he chose instead to memorialise in paint those women who reflected his role as the new leader of the new Republic. It is demonstrative of the weight of his personal affectations that he did not choose, for instance, to have paintings made of Kartini, the foremost feminist in Java, the Pemuda leaders who spoke at the 1928 conference to forward the nationalist agenda nor any of the Acehnese warriors who fought heroically against the Dutch. Instead he preferred to hang paintings of his many wives. Sukarno, it seemed, was content to perpetuate the mythology of the Indonesian beauty as a site of national worship. Rather than activist, the Indonesian woman was to be promoted and contested as a private possession, perhaps in domestic settings but of divine origins. Whilst the proliferation of nymphs from Javanese-Hindu mythology were presented as subjects of sublime temptation whilst acting as potential sites for conquest, impregnation and chauvinist nationalistic role playing, the harnessing of female sexual power through intercourse does have historical precursors.

The court literature of central Java has a long tradition of incorporating the Nyai Roro Kidul, Goddess of the Southern Sea into treatises on mysticism and princely power. Earlier rulers of Java held ritual dances and festivities annually to celebrate and confirm their links to the Goddess, whose attendance was said to be registered by the appearance of a shimmering light. More than anything else, it was believed that the Serimpi dance could induce her attendance. Furthermore architectural monuments were constructed as places where the ruler could go for uninterrupted periods of mediation and union with the Goddess. For example, the most prominent feature of the Surakarta palace complex is a tall octagonal tower known as Songgobuwono (Support of the Universe) that is believed to be the location for meetings between the sultan and the Goddess. In Yogyakarta’s royal house, the first ruler, Sultan Hamengku Buwono I went so far as construct a water-garden known as Taman Sari (Fragrant Garden). According to legend an underground tunnel

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740 For paintings of Acehnese heroines see Clavé-Çelik (2008).
741 The writing of Ratu Kidul into books of supernatural power in Javanese courts characterised the union of Islamic and Javanese mysticism that later came to be identified with Abangan in opposition to the more strictly Islamic practises of the Santri in the mid-19th century. The first son of Mangkubumi, Hamengkubuwana II (r.1792-1810, 1811, 1826-28), wrote the Queen of the Southern Sea into the context of Islamic and princely piety within the courts with his work Surya Raja which was regarded as a book with supernatural properties. The epic poem Wedhatama, written by Mangkunagara IV, probably around 1870 was a book of advice for his sons that also spoke of the Goddess of Southern Sea. See Ricklefs (2007: 6, 42).
linked its pools to the Indian Ocean in the south to facilitate access between the Sultan and the Goddess. Sukarno, with the aid of Basuki, established a link between himself and the Goddess through painting.

![Figure 84 Basuki Abdullah, *Nyai Roro Kidul*, mid 1950s, oil on canvas, 159 x 120 cm. Sukarno collection.](image)

The use of the artist’s wife and/or lover as a model is not at all uncommon in the history of art and Basuki was no exception. But the pictorial analogy of Sukarno’s wives and lovers with the Goddess of the Southern Sea, identified among other things by her green attire signalled a particular Javanese mode of revitalising a dynasty through the marriage of a man and a woman of supernatural power. Sukarno used this type of imagery to promote himself as a charismatic leader, equating him with the Javanese royalty who had long consolidated their power through

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743 Wright (1994: 125) mentions the connection between the Goddess and the colour green.
union with Goddess. Whilst there are differences in the cosmetic appearances of the temptress she represents the unharnessed sexual power of mythological and earthly Indonesian women.\textsuperscript{744}

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 85** Basuki Abdullah, *Ibu Fatmawati Sukarno*, 1945, oil on canvas

A painting by Basuki of Sukarno’s wife *Ibu Fatmawati Sukarno* (1945) conceals highly sexualised and politicised motifs within what at first appears to be a benign sentimental portrait of “a simple country girl” on the beach.\textsuperscript{745} The subject’s pose and traditional dress of kebaya and sarong are standard allusions used to indicate the restrained and mild mannered demeanour of a desirable Indonesian woman. The male fantasy is further fuelled by the red tipped erupting volcano in the background. Here again we see the relationship between the volcano as an expression of masculinity and divine union as featured in Basuki’s earlier painting *Bunda Maria* (1935). Beyond the sexualised romance of a woman alone on a beach this painting presents itself as a very literal

\textsuperscript{744} Wronska-Friend (2006).

\textsuperscript{745} C. Adams (1970: 142, 143).
representation of Sukarno’s love for women and country spurred by his anti-colonial experience and inscribes the figure of the Indonesian woman within the struggle for independence. Sukarno, of course, had strong reason to make an association between the beach at Ende in Flores, his love for Fatmawati and colonial oppression.

In 1933, having already served two years in Dutch jails, Sukarno was re-arrested and in 1934 he was exiled to the island of Flores. Whilst in exile Sukarno collaborated on local theatre productions, wrote plays, studied world religions and continued to paint. In fact a watercolour remains as a testament to his painting activities.\(^{746}\) It depicts the Flores coastline with waves crashing on the beach. This painting held great political significance for Sukarno who once asked rhetorically, “Do you know what Indonesia is?...My dear friends, the roaring sea beating upon the shore at dusk is, to me, Indonesia’s soul stirring in the thunder of the ocean’s waves.”\(^{747}\) Considering this remark, we may be inclined to interpret Sukarno’s painting of the Flores beach as a means of reclaiming the landscape into which he had been exiled and the waves crashing on the shore as a metaphor for his own political and personal stirrings. From Flores, Sukarno was relocated to Bengkulu on the west coast of Sumatra where he met his third wife Fatmawati, the 15 year-old daughter of Hadji Hassan Din, the local head of Mohammadijah.\(^{748}\) Fatmawati became a cherished student of Sukarno’s and they spent much time together. Walking along the beach they talked of religion and love.\(^{749}\)

Years later, just before the declaration of Independence Sukarno asked Basuki to enlarge his watercolour in oil. The enlargement was not made as an exact copy, rather it was enhanced and the theme of landscape was expanded upon by including Sukarno’s new wife, Fatmawati.\(^{750}\) The inclusion of women and even nudes in the landscape has served many artistic purposes. As already discussed, the association of women with nature on the painted surface has served to demonstrate a philosophical position in which female virtues are aligned with earth and water as the source of life, with allegories of fecundity and fertility which find their complement in the culture and intellect of man. Basuki’s painting of Fatmawati standing on the Flores coastline incorporates more

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\(^{746}\) See McIntyre (1993: 162) for a discussion of this painting.


\(^{748}\) Penders (1974: 54).

\(^{749}\) C. Adams (1970: 140-41).

\(^{750}\) McIntyre (1993: 162).
than one of these modes of representing the female in the landscape. Although the allegorical intent of the painting is undeniable, Fatmawati’s subjectivity is not exclusively for that purpose, and in fact her pictorial presence is that of a portrait. McIntyre has argued that Sukarno, with the aid of Basuki, was content to falsify history by omitting Inggit, the wife who accompanied him to Flores.\(^{751}\)

However this thesis contends that whilst Sukarno may have acted for selfish reasons, the painting was about projecting an image of youth and regeneration that could act as both an allegory for Sukarno’s vitality and promise a new future for the nation. As Sukarno declared, “Fatmawati was no longer a child but a beautiful woman… My wife was nearly 53. I was still young, vital, in the prime of my life. I wanted children.”\(^{752}\) Furthermore, the marriage of the woman with landscape as a trope of sexual and thereby territorial conquest is layered with the relationship of Sukarno’s wife to the Goddess of the Southern Sea. That Sukarno meant for Fatmawati to be mistaken, or taken for a Goddess, is suggested by her proximity to the sea and by her green *kebaya*, and further confirmed by his revelation of her divinely seductive qualities. He likened her to a Goddess who seduces men to their deaths,

in that beautiful smile of the beautiful girl is God… Then if I love the beautiful smile of the beautiful girl and if that smile is God’s reflection and He created this beautiful girl and I but appreciate His handiwork, then why is it a sin to want to take her?\(^{753}\)

It is no coincidence that Sukarno’s account of his infatuation with Fatmawati recalls the relationship between Ken Dedes and Ken Arok, founder of the Singasari dynasty. According to tradition the princess Ken Dedes possessed supernatural powers that radiated from her genitals. Her shining genitals, like Fatmawati’s smile, were of course the work of God and their radiance was a sign that she would bear just kings. The union of Ken Arok with Ken Dedes legitimised Ken Arok as king and brought harmony and prosperity to the kingdom.\(^{754}\) To what degree it suited Sukarno to adapt the mythology of Javanese kings to his own life is uncertain. But if Sukarno really did believe Fatmawati to be a goddess, then the painting made only two years after their marriage and just a year after she gave birth to Sukarno’s first child, might have been part of his

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\(^{751}\) McIntyre (1993: 163, 169).
\(^{752}\) C. Adams (1970: 142).
\(^{753}\) C. Adams (1970: 142).
\(^{754}\) See Watson Andaya (2006).
imagining that marriage to her would bring harmony and prosperity not only to him, but to the country.\textsuperscript{755} There is no doubt however, given that it was painted in the year that Sukarno declared Independence, that the painting was commissioned as a celebration of Sukarno’s marriage, with his new wife as a symbol of Independence and prosperity for Indonesia.\textsuperscript{756} This portrait, using the beach as a backdrop to Sukarno’s new love, enlists both the woman and the landscape in an analogy of exile, union and self-determination for the country. An analogy that is both personal and national.

**Concluding remarks**

The paintings discussed in this chapter present a competing and conflicting fantasy of Indonesian womanhood that oscillated between Sukarno’s imagination, his personal life and the public domain of politics and nation building. Sukarno’s public image making was not entirely cultural, nor was it entirely tactical, but Sukarno himself was tactical in selecting the cultural aspects that best worked for him.\textsuperscript{757} As a result, a number of paintings produced under his patronage and which formerly made up part of his collection, employ an idealised Indonesian woman as the object of sexualised desire, domestic companionship and national allegory. The depiction of his wives as goddesses and the assembly of such paintings within his “heirloom” collection only served to reinforce Sukarno’s public association with the sexual power of the divine and legitimise him as the rightful leader of the country.

\textsuperscript{755} The marriage of Ken Arok to Ken Dedes would have provided Sukarno and Basuki with the model of a Javanese king marrying a goddess and bringing harmony and prosperity to the kingdom.

\textsuperscript{756} For Sukarno’s account of his initial infatuation with Fatmawati see C. Adams (1970: 140-42).

\textsuperscript{757} McIntyre (1993: 194).
Conclusion

When I first considered undertaking this thesis I felt that my most serious challenge would be in overcoming an art history that had been plotted in accordance with certain chronologies and theoretical positions that supported a nationalist narrative.

In 1996, when Lee penned her essay, *From National Identity to the Self. Themes in Modern Indonesian Art*, she reiterated the dominant chronology of modern Indonesian art established by Sudjojono in 1946 just a year after the declaration of Independence.\(^{758}\) This chronology plotted modern Indonesian art history in three distinct periods, Raden Saleh, *Mooi Indië* and then Sudjojono.\(^{759}\) In Sudjojono’s synopsis Saleh was relegated as an isolated case of early academic painting and the *Mooi Indië* painters were regarded as inferior landscape painters. According to Sudjojono’s treatise their significance in the national canon was undermined by their elite backgrounds and relationship to the colonial.\(^{760}\) This narrative established Sudjojono in an adversarial relationship to both preceding periods as a voice of a nationalist modernism. After Sudjojono many others including Kusnadi, Holt and Spanjaard adopted this chronology as their basic parameters for an analysis of modern Indonesian art.\(^{761}\) This narrative reflected a post-colonial position that intrinsically denied the positive aspects of collaborative relationships between Indonesian artists and their former Dutch colonial administrators. Equally it ignored the possibility that Indonesian artists might find their sources of inspiration outside of a very rigid understanding of what it was to be Indonesian and to express an “Indonesian-ness”.

In my introduction I outlined the challenges of writing art history in post-colonial Indonesia and proposed that rather than a study of art defined in terms of the nation of Indonesia, a study of Javanese art might be more rewarding. I argued that the paths to modernism in Indonesia had not

\(^{758}\) Lee (1996).
\(^{759}\) Sudjojono (1946).
\(^{760}\) Sudjojono (1946).
been fully articulated as having different contextual catalysts and outcomes to modernism in Europe, and I set out to rectify this shortcoming.

I have not attempted to develop a discourse around new ways of thinking about the relationship between fine art, craft and/or folk art in Indonesia but rather I sought to understand the trajectory of modernism, as an art historical –ism, usually bound to Euro-American centricity, in the geopolitical space of a colonised country in Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia.

As I began to investigate the material more closely, and especially the wealth of archives held outside of Indonesia I was warmly encouraged to find sources that might provide for an alternative chronology and narrative of Indonesian modern art. These sources led me to understand that in the early 20th century a new generation of Indonesian intellectuals, largely from privileged backgrounds were negotiating their sense of selves in relation, not just to the colonial state but also to their own history. That their understanding of Indonesian culture and history, was informed through Dutch means of education, and sometimes whilst living in Holland, complicated this set of negotiations even further. This research led me to an understanding of Indonesian art that deviated from the established linear path to modernism and resisted the reduction of complex art histories to national canons predicated on post-colonial attitudes to nationhood.

The challenge then was to incorporate this knowledge into a new narrative of art history that acknowledged the post-colonial binaries, almost obligatorily reduced to a rivalry between Mooi Indië and Persagi painters and yet present a new understanding about how this narrative might function within class structures and Javanese systems of thought. In producing a social history of Indonesian modern art I also hoped to bring to light what I began to consider, in Bakhtin’s terms, as the dialogical and ambiguous nature of the colonial relationship.

In order to achieve my aims of writing an alternative narrative that properly acknowledged the ambiguous nature of the colonial relationship and the possibilities of Indonesian modern art that neither resonated with the national narrative or aesthetic I focused my research on the of genre of portraiture.
Using genre as an approach provided me with a clear set of art historical parameters from where to make observations, comparisons and conclusions that were not inhibited by previous prejudices. It allowed for the analysis of artistic approach, medium, technical mastery, aesthetic choices and modes of representation that did not rely on theoretical presuppositions or existing narratives. It meant that I could say with clarity, what type of portraits were made in what times with relation to new technologies, political and societal shifts without the application of post-colonial sentimentality or nostalgia.

This meant that when looking at portraits of women in early 20th century, for example, I could make comparisons between Mas Abdullah’s illustration of Queen Wilhelmina (1901), Pirngadie’s drawing of the Bugis Woman, (1909) his portrait of his wife (1928), Sudjojono’s portrait of the prostitute Adhesi (1937) and Basuki’s portrait of Sukarno’s wife Ibu Fatmawati (1945) without reducing the works to established rivalries within the canon. Instead I could see them in relation to changing perceptions of women’s roles in society, the assertion of masculinity, and the issues of individual subjectivity and its proper representation. From there I could understand how ethnic and class structures informed the representation of men and women and how artists either perpetuated dominant views or responded against them. I could then begin to see the development of art in Indonesia relational to educational and employment opportunities of individuals, their social networks and their willingness to present these biographical relationships in portraits.

In this conclusion I will surmise how my study of portraiture provided a set of art historical parameters that allowed me to make observations and comparisons that were not impeded by the chronological and national boundaries that previously limited the history of modern art to certain focal periods and people. The limitations placed on my own research, i.e. portraits made by Javanese men was not made in an attempt to reinforce notions of a monolithic Javanese culture as the primary function of Indonesian culture, but instead to scrutinize the canon more closely in order to reveal inconsistencies and differences. The discussion of portraiture in this thesis, while not avoiding entirely the rivalries with the canon, brings new research to the understanding and trajectory of modernism in Indonesia as being the product of a series of dynamic relationships between evolving modes of traditional art production, colonial occupation, educational reforms, and changes to class structure that created new and specific environments in which individuals were able to develop art practices inside and outside of Indonesia. In turn this understanding opens
up new ways to think about the paths to modernism and issues around chronologies and national narratives.

**Issues of chronology and a linear path to modernism in Indonesia**

One of the most striking characteristics of the established art history is the perpetuation of a 50-year black hole between 1880 and the mid 1930’s marked by the death of Saleh and the emergence of Sudjojono. I believe this is due to Sudjojono’s own version of Indonesian modern art history compiled in 1946 and perpetuated by successive authors. In 1955 Kusnadi gives a quick account of the classical before proceeding with Raden Saleh. From there he washes over the *Mooi Indië* painters in a few lines and asserts that it is not until the 1930s that any artist of value emerged.\(^\text{762}\) Holt incorporates Kusnadi’s inclusion of the classical in part 1 of her 1967 publication. Here she deals with heritage, or the ‘prehistoric roots’ and the ‘impact of Indian Influences’. In a way this part of her study conforms to earlier Dutch concerns and the construction of a golden age without really addressing it in those terms. Part 2 deals with living traditions and with the exception of the plastic arts in Bali does not really account for changes in conception and manufacture of technical arts in Indonesia that were due to international interlocutors or commercial exchanges. Part 3 is dedicated to modern art but once again her timeline jumps from Saleh to Persagi with a brief mention of the *Mooi Indië* painters in between.\(^\text{763}\) By the 1970s Sudjojono’s chronology that established a gap in the nationalist narrative of Indonesian art between Saleh and himself was widely institutionalized.\(^\text{764}\) By 1990’s the Ministry for Education and Culture produced the textbook historical periodisation of pre-history, classic, modern and then contemporary art.\(^\text{765}\)

I felt that the challenge was to establish an alternative chronology and a narrative that could explain one phase in terms of the other rather than their separation into distinct periods. I believe that the alternative chronology introduced in this thesis provides an explanation as to why artists who lived in the 50 years between Saleh and Sudjojono had not been acknowledged or if acknowledged were relegated to insignificance.

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\(^762\) Kusnadi (1955: 9-17).
\(^763\) Holt (1967:192-193).
\(^764\) For example see Sudarmaji (1974).
The reality of the established chronology was that the division of pre-modern and modern was to some degree based on Dutch constructions of classical and modern Indonesia that pivoted around the turn of the 20th century and was marked by the Ethical Policy in 1901. The study of classical cultures and ethnographic cultures produced two fields of scholarship that went a considerable way to defining what it meant to be Indonesian in the early 20th century.

These two streams of scholarship produced two paradigms for artistic expression that in turn generated two artistic responses. On the one hand artists like Kassian Céphas and Raden Mas Jodjana responded to the construction of adiluhung and the Javanese golden age as a formal means for narrating a sense of their own subjectivities. They used their knowledge and access to Javanese culture housed with the courts of central Java to develop artist practices that reflected their cultural heritage and their entry to European circles. On the other hand, an artist like Mas Pirngadie found employment and career satisfaction in the documentation of ethnographic art. Financially secure he was able to pursue a practice of painting. That his paintings of landscapes reproduced some of the forms made familiar to him by his work in the lands office and his drawing of landschappen en volkstypen was only a natural consequence of his relationship to the colonial state.

Relegated in Indonesian art history as someone who lacked creative talent and perpetuated the Mooi Indies style Mas Pirngadie and Mas Abdullah’s relationship to changing perceptions in the development of the Indonesian state have been largely ignored. This is a very significant oversight, because once Mas Abdullah relationships to both his father, Dr. Wahidin and to Soewardi are established it is difficult not to see his early work as an illustrator in Holland as complicating the discussion of art history in Indonesia. Especially an art history that operates on the simplistic division of painters into two distinct camps, i.e. Mooi Indies and social realists or in other terms, Dutch sympathisers and Nationalists. This adversarial understanding of art history was one promoted by Sudjojono in the 1940’s and has remained an integral part of the chronology of the Nationalist narrative.

That the adversarial tenets of modernism that are associated with the avant-garde in Europe did not present themselves in Indonesian until the 1930’s is something I concede as having been established by Sudjojono and then Kusnadi and Holt and others but I argue that they were

adversarial not to traditional painting, or the salon society of 19th century Europe as in the European instance but to the kind of art produced by the Javanese elite in collaboration with the colonial state. More importantly it should be acknowledged that this account of modernism is only one interpretation and that the earlier state portraits and self–portraits made by Céphas, the caricatures and volkstypen made by Mas Abdullah and Mas Pirngadie we also an expression of the modern reflexive self. The wood blocks of Raden Mas Jodjana made in exile were also a demonstration of a modern Javanese self in negotiation with international streams of art production. As Goankar so astutely argued it is in such moments of negotiation that people ‘make’ themselves modern as opposed to being “made” modern.767

While I set out to revise the narrative of Indonesian modernism I instead found that there were in fact multiple narratives and paths to modernism that do not always operate within a sequential order. In that regard the various modernism in Indonesian art history, while functioning as an indicator of societal change do not always correlate directly with larger societal trends.768 However it is true that certain understandings of the self within the nation could not have developed without certain precursors.

The adversarial modernism promulgated by Sudjojono and cohort found its expression in an anti-colonial and anti-elite, hyper–masculine position. That this differed from the earlier generation of artist who expressed their modernity through a negotiation with ideas about Javanese culture demonstrates generational and cultural change marked by the advent of the Ethical policy in 1901. This date provides a pivotal point in a new chronology of modern artists. Those born before 1901 like Kassian Céphas, Mas Abdullah, Mas Pirngadie and Raden Mas Jodjana, Noto Soeroto and Soewardi Soerjaningrat and those born after. Those intellectuals, artists and nationalists born before 1901 were seminal in instigating the discourse of modernism and nationalism, those born after received the benefits of education and social reforms introduced by the policy and were in a position to take advantage of changing perceptions of the Javanese self and a new political climate.

Although we know that the early artists were exclusively members of the Javanese elite and thereby had advantageous relationships with the Dutch administration it is also clear that a history

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of modern Indonesian art that excludes the early painters from the discourses of modernism is inadequate.

This is not to suggest that I have articulated a continuous uninterrupted history of modern Indonesian art from Saleh to Sudjojono but rather to say that in between those two men, there is a history of art that has yet to be fully accounted for.

In any history there will always be disparities, inequalities, prejudices and alternative conclusions. For wherever the paths of some people crossed over, others went unnoticed by each other. And for every stakeholder identified by the historian others will surely go unnoticed. This is not to say that Indonesian modern art history still has many holes but rather like other histories it is not a fixed narrative and always needs constant revision.

**Issues of a dialogical self and the national narrative**

In writing this thesis I have concluded that modern Indonesian art should not be reduced to the byproduct of a nationalist narrative or agenda nor can it be understood as a binary discursive positioned within a post-independence anti-colonial rhetoric. Whilst my chronology has established that members of the elite need to be included in the history of Indonesian modern art, it remains true that they did not regard themselves as Indonesian but instead expressed a Javanese understanding of the self.

In order to collapse the dominance of the national canon, the writing of a modern art history in Indonesia must accept the possibilities of a dialogical-ambiguous relationship to the colonial and furthermore it needs to consider the possibilities of non-national stakeholders. By collapsing the national interpretation of modern art in Indonesia I have opened up the opportunity to consider the inclusion and examination of Diaspora and Creole communities, and other ethnic or gender centric interpretations of history as Bosma and Raben have done with the *Indische* society, Strassler has done with Peranakan photographers and Arbuckle with Emiria Sunassa.\(^7\) In my case I have drawn attention to Diasporic communities of Javanese intellectuals living in the Netherlands and their partnerships with Dutch scholars and theosophist that produced a framework from where

\(^7\) Bosma and Raben (2008), Strassler (2010) and Arbuckle (2011).
Indonesian writers and artists could formulate new understanding of a 20th century Javanese self. Stepping outside the national framework allowed me to address nuanced understandings of the Javanese self within the history of modern Indonesian art without reverting to the usual terms of “resistance, rebellion and nationalism”. 770

These new understandings of the Javanese self, born from the dialogical relationship to Dutch scholarship and culture were useful for some like Céphas but also troubling for others like Noto Soeroto. The altered sense of self opened up questions about the existence and relevance of an essential otherness. Noto Soeroto for instance sought to reconcile his Eastern and Western selves but spoke of a national identity based on the principles of cultural nationalism which was itself premised on the idea of Javanese supremacy. Such debates around the reconciliation or negotiation between an Eastern and Western culture continued in the 1930s within the discourse around Polemik Kebudayaan predicated on a notion of an essential otherness. When Persagi was established anxieties regarding an Eastern and Western self, or a Javanese and Dutch self peaked and were re-contextualised in terms of colonial and anti-colonial. That this trend continued in the rivalries’ of ASRI and Bandung is testament to the level of neurosis experienced by young Indonesian artists.

When Sudjojono arrived on the scene he received training by Soewardi and Pirngadie, two men who have since been seen to respectively embody the Eastern and Western aspects of the modern Javanese psyche. In some ways both men had experienced the different tangents of Dutch scholarship that sought to rectify Javanese culture and trigger economic growth, though the sublime adiluhung prior to the Ethical Policy and in ethnographic art after the policy.

In 1901 when Dutch scholarship turned its concerns from the study of classical Javanese culture housed with the myth of adiluhung to ethnographic art. Mas Pirngadie, Sudjojono’s teacher was instrumental in this task. Pirngadie’s contribution to the 5 volumes documenting the ethnographic art and decorative wares in the Dutch East Indies published in collaboration with Jasper was significant not only in providing a catalogue of Indonesian art but also a new kind of atlas that mapped the recently unified territories of the Dutch East Indies.

For Pirngadie’s student, Sudjojono who was born in 1913, it would not have been possible for him to think about the nation of Indonesia without the pre-existence of a unified archipelago realised by the military campaigns that were instituted as a by-product of the Ethical Policy. Likewise Sudjojono would not have received the education he did, without the education reforms established by the Ethical Policy. Furthermore he would not have arrived at his understanding of Javanese ideas of leadership, wisdom and community that he did through the Taman Siswa school system without the mentorship of Soewardi, himself only just returned from exile. Soewardi was also among the first Indonesian intellectuals to perceive the people of the Dutch East Indies as one nation.\textsuperscript{771}

\textsuperscript{771} Notosudirdjo (2014: 132).
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