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Surrealist painting in Yogyakarta

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SURREALIST PAINTING IN YOGYAKARTA

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work has not been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

Martinus Dwi Marianto

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ABSTRACT

Surrealist painting flourished in Yogyakarta around the middle of the 1980s to early 1990s. It became popular amongst art students in Yogyakarta, and formed a significant style of painting which generally is characterised by the use of casual juxtapositions of disparate ideas and subjects resulting in absurd, startling, and sometimes disturbing images.

In this thesis, Yogyakartan Surrealism is seen as the expression in painting of various social, cultural, and economic developments taking place rapidly and simultaneously in Yogyakarta's urban landscape. Significantly, the structure of Yogyakartan Surrealist painting has been aligned with forms of Yogyakatan language patterns, in particular the punning which was fashionable in the same period.

Yogyakartan Surrealism has affinities with Andre Breton's Surrealism. Many Yogyakartan artists were influenced visually by seeing colour reproductions of paintings by the major European Surrealists, which were printed in a number of art books coming from America and Europe. However, it is more appropriate to consider that seeing reproductions of Surrealist works triggered out surrealistic tendencies which had already been an important part of Yogyakartan life. Surrealism has been a state of mind in Yogyakarta's recent situation, as its cityscape increasingly looks like a collage with disparate, even conflicting ideas and subjects that mingle in an apparently casual ways.

Beyond this, Yogyakartan Surrealism is also a variation of a realism which has continuously re-emerged through different forms in modern Indonesian art and which has been associated with independence and nationalism. In particular, realism has emerged in specific moments in Indonesian history: the impetus of nationalism, as seen in the painting *The Capture of Prince Diponegoro* by Raden Saleh; nationalism of the 1930s and 1940s as articulated largely by S. Sudjojono; national identity of the 1950s and 1960s, which was a period of a fierce art debate; the intention to contextualise art socially, culturally, politically, and economically; and recently, 'post-nationalism' which realistically reflected Yogyakartan 'surreal' life.

With respect to the recent situation, Yogyakartan Surrealism can also be seen as a

mechanism to deal with circumstances under which people were conditioned not to express the 'real' directly or assertively in much of the daily life. With its absurd images and logic Yogyakartan Surrealism can be also seen as a forgetting mechanism, or an imaginary space in which people could escape conditions which were becoming repressive in many respects.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation discusses Yogyakartan surrealism, a tendency in painting and other visual works of art which emerged and became fashionable in the 1980s, and remains so today. This tendency has affinities with the work of several major Surrealist artists, which became known in Yogyakarta through reproductions and written information in art history books and art monographs. However, the information and visual sources on Surrealism have been appropriated by the Yogyakarta artists and are characterised by local colour and conditions.

My main concern in discussing Yogyakartan surrealism is to discuss the factors which have been significant in gaining acceptance for Surrealism, and in helping it develop into another form of surrealism. One source of surrealist tendencies is traditional Yogyakartan cultural life. In the *wayang* (shadow puppet) tradition, for example, there are absurdities in the stories and the wayang shapes themselves. Linguistic absurdities are also common in *wayang*, such as the ways of explaining mysticism, in jokes and word plays.

The historical background to Yogyakarta's socio-political setting has been conducive to the emergence of Yogyakartan surrealism. From before Indonesian Independence until late 1965 in Yogyakarta there were various approaches to art — both technically and ideologically speaking — such as realism, social realism, socialist realism, impressionism, expressionism and abstractionism. However, this changed with the political upheaval of late 1965. At this time there was a flowering of abstract art, which was claimed as the representative of the winning regime. Since abstract art appeared to be apolitical it was held up in contrast to the politically-motivated social realism and socialist realism characteristic of the groups which had lost political power.

The ascendancy of abstract art, however, was challenged in the mid-1970s by groups of younger artists from Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta. These groups challenged the significance of art stripped of its social and political contexts. This challenge was opposed through government campaigns to make intellectuals and students leave socio-political matters to the authorised experts and appointed figures. News media and official forums were used to convince the common

people not to take part in political activity. The 'Normalisation of Academic Life' policy was implemented in colleges, academies and universities with the aim of limiting student involvement in political activities.

At the Indonesia Art Institute of Yogyakarta the policy was interpreted to mean there could be no mixing of art and politics. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the expression 'leave socio-political matters to the experts' was an effective 'weapon' against students seen to be literally or obliquely dealing with socio-political matters in their work.

Yogyakarta's current socio-cultural and physical environment is also a significant part of Yogyakartan surrealism. The rapidity with which modernisation has occurred, the social changes that have accompanied it and the rationales and strategies developed to anticipate these changes have created many strange juxtapositions between the traditional and the modern in Yogyakartan daily life. Many seemingly unrelated symbols exist casually together, and most importantly, these strange juxtapositions have become part of the accepted reality. For example, giant advertising hoardings at the Gondomanan intersection, a strategic spot in Yogyakarta, project their messages directly at a Chinese Confucianist temple across the street. Behind the posters is a Batak restaurant with a banner advertising its dishes and their origins. The casual juxtaposition of a poster featuring heroic images of marching fully-armed soldiers with cigarette and shampoo advertisements suggests that unrelated symbols and ideas can exist together.

These notions form the basis of my argument that Yogyakartan surrealism is a reflection of socio-cultural conditions, where traditional forms mix and sit next to modern elements and tendencies whose arrival, development and spread is overwhelmingly rapid. The lack of a sufficiently accommodating structure within which to place these developments is symbolised by the city of Yogyakarta itself, which can be seen as a collage where traditional life and modernist tendencies exist at the same time.[1]

The Yogyakarta School of Art

This dissertation discusses questions of art and artists, especially surrealism, and particularly in relation to the *Fakultas Seni Rupa, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta* (FSR ISI Yogyakarta, or the School of Visual Art of the Indonesia Art Institute, Yogyakarta). This school, formerly known as the *Akademi Seni Rupa*

Indonesia (ASRI, or the Academy of Visual Art of Indonesia) is a significant part of Indonesian, and particularly Yogyakartan, art because it was the first art school founded by the new Republic of Indonesia, right after Indonesia gained full sovereignty from the Dutch colonial government.[2]

Art teachers, artists and would-be artists from Yogyakarta and other parts of Indonesia came to *ASRI*, where they became involved not only in artistic activities but also in the political and cultural organisations and associations which had developed largely as a result of Indonesia's new-found independence from the Dutch. Thus discussions of nationalism, the search for national identity and confirmation of the nation's political and socio-cultural orientation, and the realisation that suddenly Indonesians had socio-political freedom and were in charge of their destiny, were the dominant issues of the time. As a result artists in Yogyakarta were polarised into competing political interest groups, from those directly or indirectly associated with the Indonesian Communist Party to those of non- and anti-communist convictions. The debate between these conflicting ideologies at *ASRI* meant that political discourses coloured the way students and teachers pursued their art, so that there developed the dichotomy of realistic or figurative representation on the one hand, and abstract representation on the other.

The debate ended abruptly with the Indonesian upheaval of 1965, after which the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and its associated bodies was crushed, dissolved and banned. As a direct result the artistic orientation, representation and ideology that had been accommodated and encouraged in Indonesia's art world by the Communist Party collapsed. *ASRI* lost teachers and students who had been directly or indirectly associated with the dominant cultural body — which was under the umbrella of the Indonesian Communist Party — as well as undergoing a radical change in the way people saw art. Forms of abstract art, which had been suppressed by the Indonesian Communist Party, became dominant and fashionable. Art which appeared to be apolitical was regarded as the most suitable for the times, and came to influence many artists' attitudes.

In the 1970s *ASRI*, which was then named STSRI ASRI (*Sekolah Tinggi Seni Rupa 'ASRI'* or the College of Visual Art 'ASRI') suffered another blow. Its own students and former students accused the school of being unreceptive to new art trends and of merely practising art orthodoxy. In reply the school authorities accused these critical students of being influenced by politically subversive forces. All of this created another debate and circumstances which disadvantaged particular

students and teachers. Nonetheless, *ASRI* students and young former ASRI students managed to hold a radical exhibition called "Kepribadian Apa?" ("What Identity?") at the Senisono Art Gallery, Yogyakarta, 1977, reflecting the political situation and contextualising their works in terms of social problems they described as being excesses of national development. Not long after this exhibition, in response to it and various similarly-motivated actions in several Indonesian cities, the Government's Normalisation of Academic Life policy was promulgated throughout Indonesia. Once again at ASRI, along with and encouraged by the policy, there was an effort to discourage art tendencies which contextualised art with politics and social matters.

In the early 1980s surrealist art emerged and became fashionable among students of the Painting Department at ASRI and spread to many young artists in Yogyakarta. By the mid-1980s several ASRI students and former students of STSRI ASRI and SSRI Yogyakarta (*Sekolah Seni Rupa Indonesia*, or High School of Fine Art) were known as surrealist artists.

The tendency towards surrealism interests me. Somehow it is undeniable that seeing and scanning reproductions of the main works of Surrealism in art and art history books was significant to many art students and teachers in Yogyakarta, especially at the Visual Art Faculty of ISI Yogyakarta. What I mean by the words 'seeing' and 'scanning' is that the majority of students and even teachers, including myself, did not read and understand well the contents of the books, which generally were written in foreign languages, mostly English. We usually just read the captions and observed the pictorial reproductions. This was very different to the situation from the 1950s up to 1965, when many foreign commentaries on the arts, mostly from the Communist and Socialist countries, were translated into Bahasa Indonesia, and discussed and printed in the Communist newspaper *Harian Rakjat* (The People's Daily).

In addition to the lack of access to foreign languages, the attitude of many teachers and students that studio work was more valuable than theoretical work was responsible for not encouraging people to read more. An 'A' for a studio work was more highly respected than an 'A' for a theoretical work. It seemed students were unintentionally being trained to be particularly preoccupied with formalism and with universalism and internationalism, particularly since the books from which we 'read' and observed the pictures were printed largely in the USA of the 1950s and 1960s, and generally celebrated Abstract Expressionism. At the time we

were more familiar with American Abstract Expressionist, Abstract, Surrealist, Post-impressionist, Expressionist works, etc, printed in general art books, than with Indonesian artists — except perhaps Affandi and Basuki Abdullah — since literature on Indonesian art was not yet comprehensively and professionally written, if available at all. As a matter of fact the main source of modern art knowledge in Indonesian was a translation of *The Meaning of Art*[3] by Soedarso Soepadmo.

The emergence and fashionability of surrealism in Yogyakarta, after abstract art in the 1970s, is worth scrutinising. Whilst it is obvious that surrealism at ISI Yogyakarta has affinities with Surrealism, I see that certain cultural and social contexts in Yogyakarta provided fertile ground for Yogyakartan surrealism to grow into a form of its own.

In approaching Yogyakartan surrealism I use the framework of surrealism defined by James Clifford. Clifford says that surrealism, or more properly the existence of surrealisms, is not limited to the Surrealism propagated by Andre Breton and his circle of contemporaries beginning in Europe in the 1920s.[4] In local customs or truth, Clifford asserts, there is always an exotic alternative, a possible juxtaposition or incongruity. Below (psychologically) and beyond (geographically) ordinary reality there exists another reality in which surrealism embeds.[5] This suggests that there are as many surrealisms as there are social contexts. And what I mean by surrealism here is a juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated ideas on the same space at the same time, so that the overall scene or appearance looks strange, absurd or incongruous. By this Yogyakartan surrealism should be seen as one of so many surrealisms.

This point stimulated me to think about elements of what might be called surrealism in Indonesian — or at least Javanese and Balinese — traditions. The battle field of the Baratayuda, for example — the climax of the Mahabharata story — is surreally described as being being flooded with blood up to one's knee, full of 'pebbles' of teeth and 'bushes' of hair.[6] But in order to appreciate why this juxtaposition should come as such a revelation, it is necessary for me to explain the background of art writing in Indonesia, which has made it difficult for Indonesians to know their own modern art histories and to appreciate the relationship between these histories and what is generally consigned to the realm of traditional culture.

Writing on Modern Indonesian Art

Until recently there were hardly any books or articles available that comprehensively and analytically wrote about art and contemporary art in Indonesia by Indonesians in Bahasa Indonesia. Orality still underlies art training and art teaching practices; art writing practices and written criticism are not yet fully and critically developed. I would say that in Indonesia, in this respect in Yogyakarta, people are not culturally and socially trained to articulate problems or to express appreciations verbally and normally. Culturally traditional Yogyakartans are expected to restrain themselves, hold their temperaments back and to refine *rasa* (sense of feeling). In daily life people are not used to praising and accepting praise spontaneously and explicitly. For example, if someone is asked about a new car s/he has recently bought, s/he will most likely reply in such a way that emphasises the car is cheap and does no more than serve its purpose. And in discussing something critically one tends to speak obliquely and figuratively, unless one is very much backed into a corner and required to respond directly.

Political conditions since the mid-1970s have not been conducive to critical and analytical art discourse. When I was a student at STSRI 'ASRI' from the late 1970s until 1982, for example, taking Indonesian and Western art histories as compulsory subjects, we briefly learned about Socialist Realism and Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera as a part of the whole Western history subject, but we did not formally discuss the Indonesian social realism and socialist realism that had been predominant in Yogyakarta, even in Jakarta until the middle of 1965. There were some subjects that were missing and hidden from art discussions. And significantly, there were hardly any students who were aware of and subconsequently concerned with the hidden history. We mostly only knew that in 1965 there was a coup attempt by the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party) and its adherents, formal institutions and individuals, against the legal government of the Indonesian Republic. Among its institutional adherents was LEKRA (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* or the Institute of People's Culture) which had notorious connotations and was mentioned one-sidedly. Why and how it became fashionable was not known or talked about fairly, therefore people were not interested in that.

The most comprehensive book out of the few available is one published in 1991 entitled *Perjalanan Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Streams of Indonesian Art) by the Committee of the Festival of Indonesia. This book is a collection of essays by leading Indonesian writers designed to complement a catalogue of the Exhibition of

Indonesian Culture, including Indonesian modern art, in the USA. There are very few art historians and art writers nowadays who work professionally writing books on art. Most write review articles or features for art sections in newspapers and/or magazines (mostly general magazines), and it is worth noting there are not many critical and analytical writings. This is in contrast to what was produced from the late 1930s up to the 1970s, when such famous articles as Sudjojono's critique of colonial *Mooi Indie* art (see below) was written in the 1930s,[7] Trisno Sumardjo's article 'Bandung is a servant of the Western laboratory'[8] appeared in the 1950s, and Koesnadi and Soedarmadji debated the Indonesian Art Movement in 1974.[9]

In the world of theatre performance and poems Yogyakarta was coloured with the critically populist voices generated by the charismatic playwright and poet W.S. Rendra (b. 1935). Rendra and his group, through theatre performances and poetry readings, created popular images to convey critical interpretations and comments about corruption, power abuses and the economic domination by foreign capital of people's life and government policies.[10]

In the 1980s art criticism was parallel to the news media of the time, which was very much controlled by the government. We knew about what was commonly called *budaya telepon* ('telephone culture') under which members of the national and regional security authority would telephone newspaper editors and advise them not to print news or articles regarded as being politically and/or socially sensitive. Anything offensive to the notion of SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras dan Aliran* — tribe, religion, ethnicity and political orientation) as well as other matters considered detrimental to the government's performance was banned. Newspapers or magazines violating these unwritten standards would have their publication permits cancelled.[11]

Under these conditions creative writing was difficult to do and difficult to publish: understandably, newspapers would not take such a risk. A good example of this was a ban on Rendra's poems and other articles, and most significantly, the banning of his theatre group from performing in Yogyakarta.[12] However, this could not stop people from being critical. Javanese *wayang* (shadow puppet) characters such as Wisanggeni and Antasena[13] always speak bluntly, honestly and openly, saying what they think and feel. These particular characters disregard social status and the obligation to conform to the hierarchical demands of Javanese, instead speaking casually, using the lowest level of language to anybody,

regardless of whether s/he is a god or goddess, a king or whoever. Jester characters such as Petruk, Gareng and Bagong sometimes give advice, insights or comments to their masters through jokes, puns and, quite often, through an artificially silly language. Another jester character, Togog, always reminds and warns his 'bad-guy' masters not to do wrong. So it is common for people to convey comments or messages through ways, gestures and languages found in *wayang*.

A good example of this is an observation by Budi Susanto on events during the campaign period prior to the Indonesian general election of 1992, in which the three political parties were taking part. He documented how people reacted to a government announcement warning people not to use motorbikes for campaigning (it is a common practice to ride motorbikes *en masse* around the city and towns during a campaign.)[14] The announcement was made using a loudspeaker on a car throughout the city, just before midnight when people were asleep or going to sleep.[15] Two days later the two opposing parties did more than what was asked by totally withdrawing from the campaign. They removed all posters from the streets and declared 'condolences for the death of democracy' instead, by putting up white shroud cloth in Yogyakarta's main streets. A big group of young people carried a wooden frame along Yogyakarta's main street, Jalan Malioboro, putting out flags of white shroud cloths and burning *kemenyan* (a type of incense traditionally used as an offering to spirits during Javanese religious rituals), whose strong smoke is associated with death. In many places in Yogyakarta young people put up many frames in each of which there was an effigy of a corpse made of paper, as well as burning *kemenyan* to symbolically spread the smoke of 'death'.[16] Thus symbolic forms are used to express dissent.

Art Critics

An art critic in Bahasa Indonesia is *kritikus seni*. What is usually understood by the term is someone who has knowledge on art theory and expertise in forming and articulating judgments of the merits and faults of artistic works. Such a critic is more particularly someone who writes in the media and talks in art forums. Now, however, people seldom use the phrase *kritikus seni,* preferring instead *penggamat seni* ('art observer'). This new term has arisen because more recently most art critics have abandoned critical and analytical writing, concentrating instead on reviews in the news media or exhibition catalogs, which for strategic reason have to cater to the media's readers. Besides, as people become more critical and

newspaper literacy increases, art critics are no longer seen as as god(desse)s who can pass judgement as easily as they did in the past, for example at ASRI from the 1950s to the 1970s. At that time a colonial attitude was in the air; it was quite common to see art teachers ask for students' works to be placed on the floor to be reviewed. By this then the teacher could point at or move around students' works being criticised by his foot—pointing with one's foot at something or someone in Javanese culture is a way of demonstrating great superiority, and is usually regarded as quite an insult or "put down". This attitude actually went against the grain of Javanese philosophy, and was based on the view that a teacher knew everything and a student was like a blank sheet of paper. Also, in selecting works of art for an exhibition the teacher usually only pointed out which was which, or merely said 'yes' or 'no' of those works worth exhibiting.

A number of art writers and observers have appeared on the recent landscape of Indonesian art. The most senior in terms of age and pioneering are Koesnadi, Sudarmaji and Soedarso Soepadmo; the younger ones are Jim Supangkat, Agus Dermawan T, FX Harsono and Bambang Budjono.

Koesnadi, who is also an artist, was in charge of taking a selection of Indonesian paintings to the Second Bienniale in Sao Paulo, Brazil.[17] He taught aesthetics at ASRI from its inception in 1950. Kusnadi has written about Indonesian art for newspapers and in books. The most recent of his major works is in the aforementioned *Streams Of Indonesian Art*, which also contains historical writings by Soedarso Soepadmo, Sudarmadji, Agus Dermawan T, Hildawati Siddharta, Wiyoso Yudoseputro, Yusuf Affendi and Kaboel Suadi.

Sudarmadji is known for his critical and sharp writings on art. He used to teach art criticism at *ASRI* and wrote one of the few Indonesian histories of Indonesian art, *From Saleh To Aming*. Sudarmaji and Kusnadi were caught up in a debate in the *Kedaulatan Rakyat* newspaper on the New Art Movement of the 1970s. Sudarmaji was rather sympathetic to the younger group of artists who experimented with unconventional media, whereas Kusnadi stood for a conservative point of view about the movement. Sudarmaji was moved from his teaching position to Jakarta, where he became the director of *Balai Seni Rupa Fatahillah* Jakarta.

F.X. Harsono, born in Blitar 1949, is an active artist and art observer. He says that observing art is like looking at himself, and that the connection between artists and society is unbreakable. Harsono attended STSRI 'ASRI' from 1969 to 1974

when he was expelled from the school with four other students, including Hardi, Ris Purwono and Bonyong Muniardhi, because of their involvement in the Black December movement (discussed in Chapter 5). In seeing art as well as creating art Harsono has been interested in eliminating rigidity in defining fine art practices such as painting, sculpture and printmaking. Since the 1980s Harsono has had extensive contact with non-government organisations on human rights and environmental issues.[18]

Until the recent publication of Astri Wright's *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain. Preoccupatins in Indonesian Art*,[19] the major publication on Indonesian art was Claire Holt's *Art In Indonesia: Continuity And Change*. This book, published in 1967, is a great contribution to Indonesian art literature. It traces Indonesian art from its prehistory, through to aspects of Indonesian art influenced by Indian religions and Islam, which Holt sees as key features in Indonesia's living traditions. For this, especially for the great detail with which she traces the history of Yogyakartan art, I am indebted to Holt. For example, she portrays the situation at ASRI in 1956, when only two of the sixteen regular and thirty-five visiting teachers had completed formal academic training.[20] Holt also comprehensively follows the debate between the Communist-affiliated group and the non- and anti-Communist groups, in terms of the figures involved and the debate itself. This is very important and significant, since there has still been no comprehensive analysis of the debate by Indonesians. The political situation in Indonesia has not been conducive to such an enterprise; the regime that wiped out the Left has never allowed it to speak in its own defence, and many key figures from the losing groups have died with their actual stands at the time unrevealed. Above all, for my writing about Yogyakartan surrealist art, Holt has provided a comprehensive, significant and helpful record of Indonesian modern art, and particularly of the Yogyakartan art historical setting.

The Exhibition of Indonesian Modern Art in Holland

In writing about Yogyakartan surrealist art, it is important to discuss the Exhibition of Indonesian Modern art in Holland in 1993, from which Yogyakartan surrealist paintings were excluded. The problems and controversies surrounding this exhibition display how Indonesian artists and art writers still have to live with the legacies of colonialism, and how these legacies place surrealist art outside the historical lines of development which others wish to impose on Indonesian art.

These surrealist paintings had in fact been included in the Exhibition of Indonesian Modern Art in the USA, held in 1991 as part of the Festival of Indonesia to introduce Indonesian arts — including sculpture, ethnic arts and the court arts — to the USA. This American exhibition had received the first major international attention to modern Indonesian art since Holt's book, and brought together the works of the critics just mentioned with a number of significant international critics.

The exclusion of Indonesian surrealist paintings by the time the exhibition reached Holland, however, shows that Yogyakartan surrealism has been misjudged. It was seen as being merely a copy of Surrealism, ideologically dated and technically not worth exhibiting. Despite developments in international appreciation of modernism in Indonesia, it seems that surrealism represented a blind spot, a point at which full acceptance of Indonesian modernism on its own terms was not possible within the paradigms of art history as others saw it.

The exhibition, organised by the Gate Foundation,[21] was officially opened by the Dutch Welfare, Health and Culture Minister, Ms Hedy d'Ancona, on April 20, 1993, and lasted until May 28. In the catalogue d'Ancona mentions that the exhibition marks the end of a cycle as it were and provides an opportunity to establish a connection between the traditional expressions of art and culture — which could be admired in the Nieuwe Kerk, the Kunsthal and the National Museum of Ethnology of Leiden — and the contemporary practice of art in Indonesia.[22]

The exhibition's form was significant: without being too nationalist, I and many of my fellow Indonesians who were concerned with the exhibition felt that there was a kind of residual morally colonial perspective in its organisation. The Indonesian modern works of art were installed in the Oude Kerk, an old church which — as is usually with many Dutch churches — has also been used as a graveyard. However, d'Ancona does not mentions the Oude Kerk, where the Indonesian modern art was installed. Nor did Gate Foundation director Els van der Plas mention the venue when she wrote 'About Modern Art in Indonesia'. Instead, she simply argued in her first paragraph that 'It was time that an overview of Indonesian modern art was presented in the Netherlands not only because of the quality of the art, but also because of the historical and political ties between the Netherlands and Indonesia if nothing else.'[23] From historical and journalistic points of view, the venue's omission in international writings is significant. The

fact that the Oude Kerk is located in Amsterdam's 'red light area', with its abundance of 'sex aquariums' and high population of prostitutes, many of them immigrants, [24] and had to be reached through narrow streets, makes the case more complex.

For Indonesians graveyards are generally not where one finds art. They are places to be wary of, places of potential pollution, and those who entered the exhibition space did so with much trepidation. The venue seemed ominous. The selection of the Oude Kerk and the exclusion of Indonesian surrealism can be seen in the context of the Netherlands' colonial history in Indonesia. Certainly what is now called Oude Kerk was once a 'nieuwe kerk': indeed, it was the place where, from the early 17th century, farewell parties were held for Dutch colonists travelling to the East Indies. By this the exhibition can be seen to have completed an abstract but historically relevant circle. The circle began with the Dutch colonists' departure to Indonesia from the port where the Oude Kerk is located, their project being to build the colonial infrastructure from which modern Indonesian art came into existence. The exhibition brought to Holland the kind of art thought to be an accidental result of colonialism and installed it in fact in the graveyard of the very church once used for going-to-Indonesia farewell parties. Semiotically the exhibition can be seen as an attempted burial of the sin of Dutch past colonialism over Indonesia. To see this conection more clearly it is important to look at some thoughts influencing the exhibition's curation.

The exhibition[25] showed 110 paintings and prints by 22 Indonesian artists, four of them (Affandi, S. Sudjojono, Hendra Gunawan and Achmad Sadali) were no longer living. Twelve of the represented artists travelled from Indonesia for the opening ceremony, which was held in Dutch and attended by around 250 people,[26] but were not introduced to the audience at all. This circumstance actually completed d'Ancona's phrase in the catalogue (written in English and Dutch),[27] which reads "It is the first time that such a comprehensive and many-sided review of contemporary art from Indonesia will be presented in Europe through a Dutch initiative."[28] Commenting on the overall performance, Dede Eri Supria and Nyoman Gunarsa argued that the exhibition's organising committee had been irresponsible in neglecting artists who had come from afar to attend the opening ceremony.[29]

Helena Spanjaard, one of the Dutch curators, argued that oil painting in Indonesia owed its existence to the Dutch colonial community, specifically to the arrival of

Dutch painters accompanying military and scientific expeditions to document the 'exotic Orient'.[30] Spanjaard also wrote that diverse art movements, from decorative abstraction to postmodernism, were borrowed from western art concepts.[31] The Dutch curators rejected surrealist paintings — notably works by Ivan Sagito and Agus Kamal — arguing that they were out of date, no longer modern, and could disadvantage the whole event.[32] The exhibition of Indonesian surrealist painting in Holland, according to Helena Spanjaard, would make the public laugh.[33] In fact, the Indonesian curators had tried to explain the situation and to have some surrealist paintings included. Jim Supangkat had warned that the Dutch Exhibition was missing a chance to represent a particularly strong movement in the development of Indonesian painting[34], a movement most notable in Yogyakarta, where surrealist painting had been a phenomenon since the 1980s. But the Dutch curators were firm in their conviction and insisted on the surrealist paintings' exclusion. The exhibition was an incomplete presentation of Indonesian art, like a map depicting art 'provinces' which blocked out one significant province.

The Dutch curators had mistakenly — and one-sidedly — seen surrealism to be tailing Andre Breton's Surrealism. They did not see or want to see that in this case there was a cultural appropriation. Surreal verbal and visual depictions, in which seemingly unrelated objects or ideas are casually, strangely and absurdly juxtaposed, is not unusual in the Javanese and Balinese shadow puppet tradition.

The Indonesian Modern Art exhibition stood in stark contrast to the exhibition of Indonesian classical art the previous year, in Amsterdam's pleasant and strategically-located Nieuwe Kerk.[35] The exhibition of modern art was an Orientalist display, showing Indonesian modern art (or, more properly, Indonesian contemporary art) as being derivative and 'it should not be that way'. In fact the exclusion of Yogyakartan surrealist paintings was actually good for Yogyakartan surrealism; had it been included, it would have been buried in the Oude Kerk graveyard.

Benedict Anderson and the Analysis of Language

I had not reflected upon the complexity and the nature of language in Yogyakarta, where people speak Javanese as the native language and Bahasa Indonesia as the national language, until my supervisors Sue Rowley and Adrian Vickers drew my attention to it and to the way it created the potential for Yogyakarta surrealism to come into being. They had been asking about such connections, since language

had been important for the Parisian Surrealists. I was like a fish that never realised it lived in water; I had not realised how linguistically complex Javanese was. To say the word *you*, for instance, one can say *panjenengan*, *sampeyan*, *kowe*, *kono* (Javanese), *kamu*, *anda*, *situ* (Bahasa Indonesia) or *nyote* (street reverse language). Officially Javanese has three hierarchically-ordered vocabulary levels, the use of which is determined by the social status of both the speaker and the addressee. In thinking about this I could see more clearly what the Dutch curators had failed to understand, a point to which the underdeveloped state of writing about art in Indonesia would not have led me.

My discussion of Yogyakartan surrealism will take into account the nature of linguistic practice in Yogyakarta. I see a significant parallel between language practices — especially the riddling and punning commonly practiced in Yogyakarta — and surrealist kinds of painting, where seemingly unrelated ideas are juxtaposed. Yogyakartans are accustomed to playing around within the multi-layered Javanese language, with Bahasa Indonesia and with words from other languages — either regional or from overseas. They do not necessarily intend by this to create explicit or implicit meanings, but often simply play with words to 'break the ice' in socialising. In many cases the words' original meanings are lost, to be replaced by absurdities and humorous connotations which stand in contrast to official 'sloganistic' statements and writings. In some ways the substance of speech can be less important than its form.

To deepen my understanding of this I turned to Benedict Anderson's writings, in particular his book *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, which uses language practice in Indonesia as a tool for analysing patterns of political culture. Anderson sees that the Javanese modalities inherent to the dualism of *ngoko-kromo* (low and high levels of language) have structurally penetrated Bahasa Indonesia. In Jakarta, Anderson argues, Bahasa Indonesia has become official, ideological, patronising and authoritarian,[36] in some ways mimicking the formal status requirements of Javanese *krama*. Bahasa Indonesia's developed status is being challenged by Jakartan-dialect Bahasa Indonesia, which, like *ngoko*, is malicious, democratic, humourous, expressive and intimate.[37] Important here is the notion that reality is always interpreted through a linguistic dualism, which in Anderson's case is focused on politics.

For my topic I borrow a case from Anderson: the importance of the 'decoding' of Koranic texts and of Javanese-language riddles and paradoxes in Javanese

traditional life.[38] The Javanese are used to dealing with the religious pun or conundrum in order to bridge two levels of cognition.[39] "The riddling pun is of great importance to the Javanese Islamic tradition, since it represents a sort of 'capsulated' intuition. Neither historical nor linguistic analysis has any real purchase on this intuition, because it is built into the miraculous quality of the pun itself," Anderson argues.[40] To illustrate the practice Anderson uses the classic example of the magical weapon of King Yudhisthira, the King of Pandawa in the Mahabharata. This weapon is not an arrow, spear or sword, but a piece of esoteric writing, the Kalimasada. The Kalimasada of the *wayang* tradition is derived from the pre-Islamic or Hindu tradition, and is often turned into *Kalimah Sahadat*, which carries an Islamic connotation by referring to the five elements of the Koranic confession of faith.[41] This can be read as a process of 'Javanisation' of non-Javanese or foreign influences.

From the 1970s to the early 1990s people punned on more general as well as specifically religious themes. Meaning was not as important as the fact that people felt able to speak with less restriction; more importantly, in punning they went beyond and broke through linguistic conventions to create something funny, strange and absurd from existing language. People were able to jump across linguistic levels and over to other languages (Bahasa Indonesia and foreign languages), disregarding the cultural and traditional concepts that went with those languages.

Anderson analyses languages practices in Indonesia to interpret nationalism and modernism. By studying language, he is able to discover patterns of Indonesian politics, which in some structural ways have been Javanised and still rest on traditional concepts of the world.[42] Similarly, through analysing language practices in Yogyakarta, I will also partly examine the traditional tendencies which are conducive and fertile to surrealism. In short, I will use Anderson's framework to examine Surrealism and surrealisms which in Yogyakarta have undergone Javanisation or appropriation too.

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[1] Marianto, M. Dwi. 'The Experimental Artist Heri Dono from Yogyakarta and his "Visual Art" Religion.' *Art Monthly* 64 (October 1993), pp.21-24.

[2] ASRI was founded on Sunday, 15 January 1950 when Yogyakarta was still the capital of Indonesia. See Soedarso Sp, 'Sedjarah Berdirinya ASRI', in *ASRI 20 Tahun*, Yogyakarta: ASRI, p.3.

[3] Herbert Read, *The Meaning of Art,* New York: Práeger, 1972

[4] Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.120-21.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] See M. Dwi Marianto, 'Yogyakartan Surrealism', *ArtLink* Vol. 13 No3&4, (Nov-March 1993/94), p.56.

[7] Holt, Claire.*Art in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1967, p.197.

[8] Sumardjo, T., 'Bandung mengabdi laboratorium Barat,' (Bandung is a servant of the Western laboratory) *Mingguan Siasat*, 5 Desember 1954, p.26.

[9] Supangkat, Jim (ed), *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 1979, pp.22-39.

[10] Robison, Richard, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital*. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, p.164.

[11] Ricklefs, M.C., *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*. London: MacMillan Press, 1993. p307.

[12] Rendra, W.S., *The Struggle Of The Naga Tribe*. Trans Max Lane. St Lucia: University of Queensland, 1979. p.xv.

[13] Wisanggeni is a son of Arjuna (the third of the Pandawa brothers) and goddess Dresanala; Antasena is a son of Werkudoro (the second Pandawa) and Goddess Urangayu

[14] Budi Susanto, S.J., *Peristiwa Yogya 1992*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993, pp.9-10.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid*, pp.10, 29.

[17] Holt *op cit* p325.

[18] Personal communication on 11 January 1994.

[19] Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1994.

[20] Holt *op cit*. p.218.

[21] The Gate Foundation is a Dutch foundation of art and information exchanges.

[22] D'Ancona, Hedy. 'Foreword', *Indonesian Modern Art, the Catalogue*. Amsterdam: Gate Foundation, 1993. p.7.

[23] Van der Plas, Els. 'About Modern Art in Indonesia.' *Kunst & Museum* 6 (1993), p.32.

[24] Personal communication with an Indonesian who had been living for some years in Amsterdam, and used to show around his fellow Indonesian visiting there.

[25] This was presented by three Dutch curators: Helena Spanjaard, Els van der Plas, Mella Jaarsma and three Indonesian curators: Soedarso Sp, Agus Dermawan T. and Koesnadi.

[26] H. Sujiwo Tejo, 'Pakaian Adat di Samping Karya Modern' (Traditional Dress next to Modern Art), *Kompas*, Sunday, 13 June 1993.

[27] Many artists whose works were exhibited did not have access to the languages used for the catalogue. It was as though they were excluded from the information and writings about their own works.

[28] D'Ancona *op cit*, p.7.

[29] Dede Eri Supria (b. 1956) is one of the artists whose works were included in the Oude Kerk exhibition. He was also actively involved in the First Triennial of Asia-Pacific Contemporary Art in Brisbane in 1993. In an interview with me on 17 December 1993 Dede compared the attitudes of the curators of both exhibitions. In the Brisbane Triennial Dede saw that exhibiting artists were given chances to represent themselves, but in the Oude Kerk exhibition the reverse was the situation: even those artists present at the opening were not introduced to the audience. See also Sujiwo Tejo *op cit.* Also an interview with the painter Nyoman Gunarso in July 1993.

[30] Spanjaard, Helena. 'Modern Indonesian Painting: The Relation With The West.' In: *Indonesian Modern Art, The Catalogue*, p20.

[31] *Ibid* p19.

[32] Soedarso Sp, 'Surrealisme Indonesia: Bentuk Dan Motivasi Kelahirannya' (Indonesian Surrealism: the Form and Motivation of its Birth), a paper delivered at the Indonesian Institute of Art, Yogyakarta, 4 November 1993.

[33] See Sujiwo Tejo, *op cit.* See also Soni Farid Maulana, 'Umar Batalkan Pameran di Erasmus Huis' (Umar cancells His Exhibition at Erasmus Huis), *Pikiran Rakyat* , 23 March 1993.

[34] Supangkat, Jim. 'Pameran Dengan Tema Besar' (An exhibition with a big theme), *Tempo* 20 March 1993.

[35] Sujiwo Tejo *op cit.*

[36] Anderson, Benedict. *Language and Power.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990. p.143.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid.* p.127.

[39] *Ibid.* p.127.

[40] *Ibid*, p.128.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid*, p.151.

CHAPTER 2

COLONIAL ART AND THE ROOTS OF REALISM IN YOGYAKARTAN PAINTING

Introduction

Surrealism in Yogyakartan painting in the 1980s emerged as a response to shifts in art practice and visual language away from realism — shifts which must be understood in terms of the historical background of Indonesian politics and national culture, particularly the deep-rooted nature of realism in the formation of modern Indonesian art.

This chapter examines the development of Indonesian painting in its political and cultural contexts from the Dutch colonial period, through the Japanese occupation, to independence. It focuses on the development of artists and organisations in the context of the resistance to and struggles against colonial rule. Painting is seen here as a means of articulating the experience of colonialism and nationalism. Art debates in the post-revolutionary era are seen in the light of the conscious attempt by intellectuals and artists to forge a national culture. In this debate, realism appeared to lay the groundwork for the depiction of the experience of life in colonial and post-revolutionary Indonesian culture.

Colonial Painting and Resistance to Dutch Colonialism

On 17th August every year Indonesian people celebrate Indonesian independence from Dutch colonialism. On this occasion people traditionally build temporary archways in kampongs (hamlets). The archways are decorated and/or illustrated with Indonesian fighters or soldiers carrying sharpened bamboos or guns or grenades fighting against the Dutch. The word *'merdeka!'* which means 'free!' always appears on the decorations. Nationally, regionally and locally, people celebrate independence by holding sporting and other contests, or traditional fun games. All of this commemorates liberation from the Dutch, who in the early 17th century had arrived in the Southeast Asian islands now called Indonesia.

Initially the Dutch traded spices, then annexed the regions one by one, asserting military, economic, political and cultural control in order to monopolise trade, and to exploit the islands' natural resources and native people, whom Dutch people

called 'inlanders' or 'natives'.

However, not many Indonesians have written about their own experiences under Dutch colonialism. Such first-hand accounts would document the kinds of abuses enacted by the Dutch and lay the foundations for a colonial history of Indonesia. Mostly these accounts are preserved in oral traditions. Of those people — now very old — who experienced colonial rule, only a few have the educational, literary and verbal skills to articulate the remembered experience. Many Indonesians know their history only by learning from oral sources and reading without comprehension the written sources. Written histories tend to emphasise military history, since they were written mainly to glorify the struggle for independence. People mostly know only that the Dutch colonised Indonesia for more 350 years. For hundreds of years, Indonesians from many parts of the islands saw and experienced social and racial inequality and injustice, abuses of power, monopolisation of trade, exploitation of people and natural sources by colonialists, and incitement to hatred and cruelty of one group of people against other.

People in Indonesia learned to live within systems of social inequality formed by the combination of feudalism and colonialism. During the Dutch colonial government many local lords and princes became accomplices of the Dutch, so that they were privileged in having access to education. At the same time, ordinary people were left uneducated, traditional and yet culturally conditioned to be obedient. The patterns of privilege and exploitation for which the groundwork was laid by Dutch colonial rule are still in evidence today. This is one reason for the necessity of studying Indonesian history under the Dutch rule. It is therefore significant that for many people, this history can be learnt only indirectly.[1]

In Java the most exploitative and culturally destructive form of colonialism began in 1830 after the Dutch won the Java War. The Javanese were led by the Javanese aristocrat Diponegoro. The war, which lasted from 1825-1830, cost the lives of 8000 European soldiers and 7000 Indonesian soldiers recruited by the Dutch, and 200,000 Javanese people. In Yogyakarta, the home country of Diponegoro, the population was reduced by about half.[2] After the Java War the Dutch were able to implement the *cultuurstelsel* policy without hindrance. This was a cultivation system which compelled the Javanese to grow crops for export, financing not only the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia, but most importantly recovering much of the money Holland had spent reconquering Belgium after it separated from the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century.[3]

The architect of the *cultuurstelsel* was Johannes van der Bosch, who came to Java in 1830 as the new Governor-General. He imposed on Javanese farmers a land tax, calculated at as much as 40 per cent of the village's main crop, which was rice. But because the farmers, of course, could not pay in cash, they were compelled to pay with crops such as coffee, sugar and indigo, as determined by the government.[4] This policy worked well for the Dutch and the colonial regime prospered — as did other groups such as Javanese aristocrats and Chinese and Arabic entrepreneurs who collaborated with the Dutch.[5] The revenue from forced crop export was not only enough to repay the cost of the failed attempt to defeat Belgium, but also enough for the Netherlands and the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia to prosper. In 1860-66 the revenue produced from the *cultuurstelsel* reached 34 *per cent* of Dutch state revenue.[6] However, Javanese farmers who were forced to pay tax in the form of crops were left impoverished.

The impact of Dutch colonial rule was registered not only in the political and economic domains, but also in culture and art. The Dutch brought with them their visual art skills for documenting and mapping the nature, peoples and conditions of what is now called Indonesia. This skill was intended to serve Dutch colonial interests. Foreign and local artists in Indonesia developed representational practices which reflected and served the interests of groups who were privileged under Dutch colonialism. The common practices of painting at the time depicted the lands and peoples of the islands as romantic and exotic.

In terms of Western painting influences in Indonesia, Claire Holt suggests that the influence may have come from the cheap paintings brought by agents of the Dutch east India Company as presents, if not bribes, for local rulers whom the Dutch could use as their 'tools' in trading and controlling the inlanders.[7] Holt cites a description of a group of objects in the cargo of a Dutch ship that landed in Batavia in 1637. The description reads:

> Some poor paintings of ships, mounted horsemen, naked individuals, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon and similar patriots of the Old Testament, all of no value, to be used as presents for the great ones who have earnestly requested these things.[8]

The notable figures to whom such paintings were given were the Sultan of Martapura in Borneo, a king of Bali, the Sultan of Palembang and the Susuhunan of Surakarta.[9]

Plate 1

Raden Saleh

The Capture of the Javanese Leader **(*The Capture of Diponegoro*) 1857**

112 x 178 cm; oil.

A talented aristocrat, Raden Saleh Bustaman (1814-1880), became interested in Western painting techniques. He was the descendent of a regent who had ruled Semarang and Pekalongan, the northern coastal regions of central Java, under the Dutch East India Company or *VOC* (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*). He studied painting under A.A.J. Payen, a Belgian-born artist living in Batavia (Jakarta). Subsequently Saleh was sent by the Dutch Governor General, Baron van der Capellen, to study painting in the Netherlands. There he studied painting under the portrait painter C. Kruseman, and the landscape painter A Schelfhout.[10] Raden Saleh lived in Europe for over 20 years. He did not have any followers in Indonesia.

The impetus for an Indonesian art had not yet gained momentum. However, one of Saleh's paintings presents the seed of nationalism. *The Capture of The Javanese Leader* (*The Capture of Diponegoro*) (1857) (Plate 1) was painted after Saleh returned from Europe to Java.[11] It depicts *Pangeran* (Prince) Diponegoro beseiged by soldiers and being led by Lieutenant-General Hendrik Merkus de Kock, the highest-ranking Dutch army commander in Indonesia during the Java War, to a horse-drawn cart. This depicts the events leading to Diponegoro's exile in Makassar, Sulawesi.[12]

Dutch experts believe that Saleh's painting was made after he viewed the painting of Dutch artist Nicolaas Pieneman (1809-60) which depicts the same historical scene.[13] Peter Carey, however, argues there is a significant difference between the two paintings. Pieneman's painting looks formal and rigid, whilst Saleh's is spirited with gloomy feeling and drama.[14] In the latter the Dutch soldiers are depicted as hard and sharp, whilst in contrast Diponegoro's followers are presented with downhearted faces.[15] Furthermore, Carey suggests that Saleh empathised with Diponegoro, whom he represented as standing up straight with his head up. Diponegoro is represented not as a morally defeated person, but as one who retains dignity although he has been siezed by enemy soldiers. Carey concludes that Saleh strongly admired and deeply respected Diponegoro, although he had never met the prince personally.[16] Some weight is given to this conclusion by the fact that Saleh married a daughter of one of Diponegoro's war commanders a decade after he finished the painting.

This painting sheds light on Javanese tradition, which preserves the story that Diponegoro was not fairly captured in military defeat in the battlefield, but was

betrayed by the Dutch, who invited him to meet in negotiation. The offer turned out to be a trap. This account of the betrayal was recorded by General H M de Cock, the chief army commander of the Dutch East Indies, who himself devised the trap.[17] In his empathy for Diponegoro, Saleh imaged his people being defeated in their own land by a foreign authority, giving a visual expression of early nationalism. The painting anticipates the emergence of Indonesian nationalism some fifty years later.

It was at the turn of the twentieth century that Indonesian nationalists began to emerge, through organised groups, into the political sphere. It was these organisations that laid the foundations for the profound impact of nationalism on the development of Indonesian art. The first notable organisation was Budi Utomo, founded in 1908 by Dr Wahidin Soedirohoesodo (1857-1917). This organisation was formally for people of Javanese, Sundanese and Maduranese aristocratic backgrounds, although in practice the dominant group was Javanese. From this organisation arose the radical voice of Dr Sutjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, who helped the organisation become a political party. He insisted that the organisation was not only for aristocratic business, but also for uplifting the social conditions of the masses, not only in Java and Madura but throughout Indonesia.[18]

A more political party, called the Indische Partij (Indies Party), with a clear vision of Indonesian independence, emerged in 1911. The party was founded by the radical Indo-European E.F.E. Douwes Dekker or Setiabudhi, and was joined by two prominent Javanese figures, Sutjipto Mangunkusumo and Suwardi Surjaningrat (1889-1959, known as Ki Hadjar Dewantara from 1928).[19] The latter was an aristocrat from Kraton Paku Alaman (the Paku Alam Court), the lesser court in Yogyakarta. Nevertheless, this party did not last long. The government refused to recognise its existence, and in order to muzzle the party, the government exiled to the Netherlands these three radical leaders in 1913.[20] The influential role of Suwardi Surjaningrat in cultural, educational and artistic change is discussed later in this chapter.

Another potentially radical party to emerge in the politically fertile times of the first three decades of the 20th century in Indonesia was the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union) or SI. Originally named Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Commercial Union), this party was founded by Tirtoadisurjo in 1909. Two factions formed within Sarekat Islam — one allied with communism, and the other more purely concerned with religious culture. Several SI leaders, including Haji Misbach,

Semaun and Darsono brought together Islam and Communism to embody their political means and ideals.

In 1920 the first communist party in Asia, Perserikatan Kommunist, was founded, changing its name in 1924 to Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI). This party was to have a major impact on Indonesian debates on art in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1920s the Party instigated several workers' strikes, such as the strike by railway and tram workers' union led by Semaun. As a result the government introduced tight surveillance of party activities and members.[21] Because of the development of their radical anti-colonialist actions, some of its leaders were imprisoned by the Dutch colonial government. In addition others were not allowed to speak in public, and still others were exiled.

More significantly, PKI had been in continuous conflict with Islamic groups, which were more readily tolerated by the Dutch. This could be seen in the incident of early 1925 when many people were encouraged by the goverment to attack PKI meetings and the communist-aligned faction of SI, and intimidate their members.[22] The PKI had started a rebellion against the Dutch government in Java and Sumatra in December 1925. A year later the government crushed the party. About 13,000 PKI members were arrested, and some were shot. Some 4,500 of those arrested were imprisoned, 1,308 of them in the notorious prison camp at Boven Digul, Irian Jaya. From this time the Dutch implemented a harsh policy, intolerant of any radical anti-colonial movements. This policy was to remain in effect until the Japanese arrived in 1942 to defeat the Dutch and expel them from Indonesia.[23]

The emergence of radical educational, cultural and artistic politics cannot be divorced from the anti-colonial struggle and the evolution of organisations which sought independence from Dutch colonial rule. One aspect of this struggle particularly significant to the development of Yogyakartan art was the educational philosophy of Suwardi Surjaningrat or Ki Hadjar Dewantara. His ideas about education and the school he founded played a formative role in forging Indonesian cultural independence.

Taman Siswa

Long before the foundation of his *Taman Siswa* school Ki Hadjar Dewantara published a polemical letter entitled 'If I were a Dutchman'. In the letter he imagined himself to be a Dutchman critically observing colonialism and

empathising with the colonialised indigenous people. The letter obliquely but cleverly challenged Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. Consequently Dewantara was accused by the government of attempting to disrupt 'public order and peace', and was exiled to Holland for six years.[24]

Exile turned out to be conceptually fruitful for Dewantara. In his six years away he learned about modern educational systems. Dewantara was inspired by the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, who asserted that people should be proud to develop their own culture.[25] All of their tenets seemed liberating for Surjaningrat. But it was likely that Tagore's teaching was the most influential for him. In the year when Dewantara landed in Holland — 1913 — Tagore received the Nobel prize. For an Asian nationalist this must have had a major impact.[26] And when Tagore died in 1941 Dewantara published an obituary in the journal *Pusara* in which he wrote how much Tagore's philosophy inspired him and the foundation of his Taman Siswa educational movement.[27] Dewantara saw that the Dutch colonial schools and the Dutch-created school system benefited only the elite and the privileged, and in the final analysis served only the Dutch colonial government.

The educational philosophies he learned in the Netherlands were combined with his own Javanese spirit. In July 1922, three years after his return from exile, he founded a school in Yogyakarta, called *Taman Siswa* (Pupils' Garden). Taman Siswa offered to Indonesian people an alternative system of education, based on a combination of European modern educational practices and Javanese traditional arts.

The founding of Taman Siswa was a very radical act for its time. In addition, Dewantara rejected any government subsidy for his school, fully aware that if he allowed the government subsidies he would have had to follow government curricula and controls.[28] Taman Siswa was intended to be a critical response to the colonial educational system. In reality, the colonial education system had created inequality in education and subjugated the ordinary people, giving conscessions only to certain groups of people who had access to education and further opportunities.[29] Yet, thought Dewantara, for all that the elite and privileged had access to education, their education was designed only for producing certificated labourers, programmed for the benefit of the colonial administration. In response to this, Dewantara insisted that the Taman Siswa school was formed for emancipating native people, and was specifically designed to benefit the lower classes of people,

those displaced by the colonial administrative and political system.[30]

In realising his emancipatory educational convictions Dewantara dared to commit a significant anti-government act by refusing a regulation implemented by the government. The regulation, drafted in 1932, was the 'Wild School Ordinance'. This draft was intended to enable the government to control the curriculum of unsubsidised schools such as Chinese schools, Islamic schools, and the Taman Siswa. Such control was desired because the government regarded the Taman Siswa as potentially dangerous in spreading anti-government sentiments. The government considered that the Taman Siswa generated anti-social feelings. This unease was not groundless. By 1932 the Taman Siswa had established 166 schools with 11,000 pupils.[31] Not only was the Taman Siswa critical of the colonial government, but it remained consistently people-oriented, combining the latest Western liberatory educational systems and the egalitarian and democratic ethos Dewantara had learned in the Netherlands with Javanese traditional educational systems.[32]

In response to the 'Wild School Ordinance' draft, and with the solid support of the people, Dewantara threatened that the Taman Siswa would engage in long-term resistance if the government enacted the proposed regulation.[33] More critically, Dewantara also suggested that Indonesians should be completely free from the influence of the colonial Dutch, who had isolated them from the cultures of their neighbouring countries in Asia. Dewantara even asserted that Indonesia should be free from the Dutch not only in cultural fields, but also in the areas of economics and politics.[34] Needless to say, this attitude attracted the support of nationalists who then joined or supported the Taman Siswa.[35]

Convinced of the importance of art in education, Dewantara was to play a leading role in the arts. He saw art, especially painting, as an outlet for the people's socio-political aspirations and his pupils' inner impulses.[36] He organised Javanese sung poetry reading activities, something he himself was quite good at. The painter Rusli said that a number of artists often got together in the Taman Siswa in Jakarta. Rusli, who taught at Taman Siswa Yogyakarta from 1938-1943, noted that the Taman Siswa in Yogyakarta held dance practice in the classical forms *bedoyo*, *serimpi* and *wayang wong*.[37] Another teacher, who had also studied at the Taman Siswa, was S. Sudjojono. Sudjojono's conviction that art was for the people ran parallel with Dewantara's belief in education for the people. Sudjojono was to become one of the founding fathers of Indonesian modern art.

Dewantara's emancipatory principles can be clearly seen in Sudjojono's assertions about painting. Sudjojono argued that painting should be done in realistic manner, addressing social issues familiar to the people. Both the media and the message of the painting should be clearly and easily understood. Popular communication and the social context of art were the main issues that concerned him. Sudjojono developed his attitudes to art in the context of harsh times. From 1927 until 1942, after the crushing of the 1926 PKI rebellion, the Dutch colonial government implemented its most politically and militarily repressive approaches yet towards Indonesian nationalist movements.[38] In spite of the repression, nationalist movements continued to be active through the 1930s. The movements found a channel in the visual arts, inspiring some artists to shape an Indonesian identity. On 28th October 1928 the Youth Congress was held in Jakarta, attended by young intellectuals from various ethnic and religious groups, representing the *Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge). The pledge confirmed three ideals for Indonesians: One motherland — Indonesia; one nation — Indonesia; one language — Bahasa Indonesia.

PERSAGI

One significant artists' movement of the time was PERSAGI (*Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia*, or the Union of Indonesian Draftsmen). The union was founded in 1935 in Jakarta by a group of draftsmen, and was led by Agus Djaja, L Setijoso and Sudjojono.[39] The choice of the word 'draftsmen' instead of 'painters' is worth noting. Although their members actually practised painting, they called themselves draftsmen. Politically they dissociated their work from the romantic *'Mooi Indië'* style of painting typical at the time. Like Sudjojono, the others were opposed to painting which served and celebrated the way of life of the privileged classes, such as the Dutch and Europeans who came to Indonesia and benefitted from Dutch colonialism. *'Mooi Indië'* (meaning 'the beautiful Indies') works depicted naturalistic landscapes and idyllic scenes of the people in Indonesia. The paintings served as nostalgic souvenirs for Europeans on their return home. Sudjojono argued that such depictions were vastly different from the reality in which the socio-cultural and political gap between the ruling minorities and the majority of people was vast (see below). Sudjojono accused this practice of serving the system conditioned by colonialism.

Needless to say the PERSAGI group rejected *'Mooi Indië'* and criticised many

Plate 2

S. Sudjojono

Before the Open Mosquito Net **1939**

90 x 58 cm; oil.

artists — foreign, expatriate and native — who painted in this style. Local *'Mooi Indië'* artists included R. Abdullah Suriosubroto (1878-1941) and his son Basuki Abdullah (b. 1915), Mas Pirngadie (b.c. 1875, d.c. 1936) and Wakidi (1889-?), while foreign and expatriate artists included Dezentje, Jan Frank, Theo Maier (1909-1982), Roland Strasser (1895-1974), Charles Sayers and Carel Dake Jr (1886-1946).[40] PERSAGI artists also challenged the technically inflexible ways of painting favoured and taught by *'Mooi Indië'* artists, especially in relation to colour. Suromo, a PERSAGI member, recalls that systematic attempts were made by this school to impose formal technique. To make sky and clouds, for example, one had to use a certain blue.[41]

Sudjojono, the most eloquent of PERSAGI's members,[42] expressed PERSAGI's critical view of exoticism and romaticism which served the elite, Dutch pensioners and tourism.[43] Sudjojono's criticisms also implicitly challenged the authority of the Dutch colonial government. In the late 1930s he wrote:

> The paintings we see nowadays are mostly landscape: rice fields being plowed, paddy fields inundated by clear and calm water, or a hut in the middle of ripening rice field with inevitable coconut plams or bamboo stools nearby, or bamboo groves with blue shimmering mountains in the background. Similarly there are paintings of women who must have red shawls fluttering in the wind, or, shaded by an umbrella ... Everything is very beautiful, romantic, and paradisical. Everything is very pleasing, calm, and peaceful. Such paintings carry only one meaning: the beautiful Indies ... for ... foreigners and tourists ...[44]

PERSAGI artists asserted that the *'Mooi Indië'* style was foreign and not for Indonesians, whose real life was far from the romantised reality depicted in the paintings. PERSAGI was aiming to develop a style representative of Indonesia for Indonesian painters.[45] It is clear that PERSAGI was filled with the ideology of flourishing Indonesian nationalism.Sudjojono envisaged that, "the new artists would then no longer paint only the peaceful hut, blue mountains, romantic and picturesque and sweetish subjects, but also sugar factories and the emaciated peasant, the motorcars of the rich and the pants of the poor youth; the sandals, trousers, and jackets of the man on the street."[46] A good example of Sudjojono's alternative to *'Mooi Indië'* can be seen in his painting *Di Balik Kelambu Terbuka (Before the Open Mosquito Net*, 1939) (Plate 2). Instead of representing beauty, romance, paradise and pleasure, Sudjojono painted a thin flat-breasted woman. The woman wears *kebaya* (a Javanese traditional blouse) and lower long cloth. She

looks neither sexy nor erotic. Her left arm props her body onto the chair base, her right arm is placed loosely on the chair arm. Her dark eyes, lips and passionate pale face convey a sad, dispirited, questioning feeling. Metaphorically the woman can be interpreted as the Indonesian lands, figuratively called Ibu Pertiwi (Motherland). It may even be that the Dutch occupation is symbolised by the chair, through both the colonial style of the chair and a possible pun on the word 'to sit', which means 'to occupy' or 'colonise' in Indonesian/Malay.

PERSAGI's first exhibition was held in 1938 in the Kolff bookshop in Jakarta. This was unusual, for at the time painting exhibitions were held in the Kunstkring building. The director of the Kunstkring building refused permission for PERSAGI artists to exhibit their paintings there. Believing that Indonesians should only be *petani* (traditional rice farmers), the directors rejected the request to exhibit without even seeing the works of PERSAGI artists.[47]

Another significant PERSAGI platform was racial emancipation and, more importantly, independence from Dutch colonialism. This pro-independence stance was probably inspired by petitions for Indonesian independence submitted after the second half of the 1930s. One of the most significant of these petitions was the petition for autonomy raised by the Javanese aristocrat Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo. This petition is worth noting because Kartohadikoesoemo was a member of the Volksraad, which was in favour of cooperation with the Dutch. Being an *amtenaar* (government official) in the colonial period was like being a king amongst the Indonesian people. Yet Kartohadikoesoemo submitted the petition in 1936 because he could not stand seeing institutionalised inequality, injustice and interference by the colonial government in native people's affairs.[48]

A similar petition was submitted in 1937 by the nationalist group *Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia*, (Indonesian People's Movement), led by such radical figures as Muhammad Yamin and Amir Syarifuddin. Nevertheless, nationalist-motivated petitions did not go beyond urging the formation of a full parliament of Indonesia.[49] The colonial system must have been so politically repressive that people did not even dare to ask for independence. In response the government continued to implement sternly uncompromising actions against pro-independence movements, especially after the crushing of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1926. The government sought to suppress any pro-independence avenues, including rejecting the petitions. Those who took radical action faced a difficult choice: jail or exile.[50]

Under Japanese Occupation

There is a saying in Bahasa Indonesia: *'Keluar mulut macan masuk mulut buaya'* (out of a tiger's mouth, into a crocodile's mouth). This describes the situation for Indonesians in 1942. By accident Indonesians were politically liberated from the Dutch by the Japanese who came to Indonesia. Japan claimed that its arrival would deliver freedom to all Asian people, and particularly freedom to Indonesians from the West. The Japanese named themselves 'big brothers' to Indonesians in order to outsmart the Dutch and to draw the sympathy of Indonesian people for their military action against the Dutch. Bitterly opposed to Dutch hegemony, Indonesian nationalists welcomed Japan's seemingly promising campaigns. Many young people and students even joined the Japanese occupational government's programs.

After the defeat of the Dutch, Indonesians fell under a harsh Japanese military government. Traditionally, people say that this was the period when many people were starving, and in general were poor in many ways: when Javanese people started eating snails; when very bad malnutrition became common; when people had to use rice sacks to dress themselves in spite of lice in the sacks; when people had to give up the metal of the fences round their houses to the Japanese soldiers for recycling as weapons; and when people saw military cruelties everywhere. In Yogyakarta, especially in the area called Gunungketur, the conditions often forced people to theft. These people started speaking 'reverse language' to conceal the meanings of their actions. The significance of this strategy of linguistic concealment for the evolution of surrealist painting in the 1980s will be the subject of a later chapter in this thesis.

On 8th December 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. The invasion of Indonesia was begun in January 1942, with the Dutch readily surrendering to the Japanese on 8 March 1942. This marked the end of Dutch colonial government in Indonesia. It also meant that the Dutch hegemony over the lands and the peoples which had lasted 350 years was ended. In addition, Japan successfully spread anti-Dutch and anti-Western propaganda, and stimulated interest from young Indonesians in joining their operations. Responding to the anti-Dutch sentiments, some would-be leading figures sided with Japan. These prominent figures and many others were unaware of Japanese colonial politics, and miscalculated in trusting the Japanese. Indonesians once again fell under another kind of colonialisation — but this time it was even more severe. The majority of Indonesians were militarily and culturally controlled in a very repressive manner.[51]

Military cruelties in many forms, including inhumane forced labour, property expropriations, forced plantations, torture, rape and forced prostitution became daily realities, along with starvation, plagues, economic chaos and malnutrition.[52] Many people who experienced the Japanese occupation, including my grandmothers, uncles and aunts, said that the Japanese took everything.

From 1942 the Japanese set about disbanding existing organisations and associations, including PERSAGI. Artists' activities were permitted only to develop within the art section of the Japanese-created cultural umbrella organisation PUTERA (*Pusat Tenaga Rakyat*, or Centre of People's Power).[53] PUTERA emerged officially in 1943. It was headed by some influential leaders including Sukarno (later to become Indonesia's first president), Hatta (later to become the Indonesian first vice president), Ki Hadjar Dewantara, and Kjai Hadji Mansoer (an Islamic leader). All of these people have had lasting political, intellectual and cultural significance for Indonesia.[54]

PUTERA's art section was led by former PERSAGI members led by Sudjojono, along with Agus Djaja, Otto Djaja, Suromo and Kartono Yudokusumo. Ironically, with Sudjojono as the head of PUTERA's art section, PERSAGI's tenets and aspirations continued to thrive.[55] Amongst its members were Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Henk Ngantung, Mochtar Apin, Kartono Yudhokusumo and Suromo. Eventually Sudjojono, Affandi and Hendra Gunawan came to be regarded as the founding fathers of Indonesian modern art. Ngantung became the governor of Jakarta in 1965. Apin and Yudhokusumo became prominent artists in Bandung, and Suromo later taught at ASRI. Under PUTERA's activities political, cultural and art figures shared a sense of Indonesian nationalism. Presumably in such a situation, especially after seeing the cruelties of the Japanese military, they must have shared various concerns and convictins on politics, culture, welfare and art. Therefore it can also be assumed that art must have intertwined with politics, especially with nationalism. Kusnadi has written that people were filled with nationalism, which was raging under the Japanese occupation.[56]

Needless to say, the organisation was closely watched by the Japanese military occupation government to ensure that its activities were not in conflict with its general and particular framework. A good example of this was a test by PUTERA artist Affandi. In 1943 an art competition was initiated by the much-feared Ken Pe Tai (the Japanese Intelligence Agency) intended to glorify the heroic life of young Indonesian workers recruited to work for the Japanese. Affandi daringly showed

his social concern, based on his nationalism and humanism, by submitting a painting which depicted a skinny, sick figure who looked pitiful and emaciated. This figure referred to the life of the young workers recruited by the Japanese, thousands of whom were sent overseas to Singapore, Siam and Burma. These recruited people were, as it turned out, forced workers or what were commonly called *romusha* (or 'economic soldiers'). They were forced to work in terribly subhuman conditions.[57] Needless to say, this painting was rejected by the Ken Pe Tai.[58]

From the activities initially propagated by Japan in the Japanese interest, the artists managed to generate a sense of art community. They also learned how to unite their art activities and hold art exhibitions. Technically, although constrained within the Japanese propaganda scheme, Indonesian artists had many chances to develop their talents. And no less importantly, they managed to create an audience for their art.[59]

The Dutch Recolonialisation Attempt

On 15th August Japan surrendered to the Allies. Despite the confusion of the time, this was the opportunity for Indonesian people to achieve their independence. On 17th August 1945 the Republic of Indonesia was declared by Sukarno and Hatta, who then were elected as the president and vice-president. Indonesians suddenly were free. After centuries of political and cultural subjugation, Indonesians were in a position to decide their own destiny and to enjoy their freedom. A curtain which had blocked them from seeing the future through their own eyes disappeared. It was unavoidable that political groups with various interests would emerge.

In the meantime the Dutch were still fully politically and militarily committed to recapturing Indonesia, which they had occupied for more than three centuries. After the defeat of the Japanese, they saw a good chance to reclaim the colony. With the assistance of the Allies, especially the British, the Dutch returned to Indonesia,[60] refusing to acknowledge the Republic proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta.

Under the power of the British military umbrella, the Dutch were rapidly regaining control over the eastern parts of Indonesia. These areas were economically more significant for the Dutch, and also were much less populated, as well as less antagonistic towards them (except in South Sulawesi). They would have regained power if they had left Java alone, for the hostilities against the Dutch amongst the people were increasingly tense. Indonesian nationalism, which developed during

the Japanese occupation, found its momentum. That was why fights between the Republicans on the one hand and the Dutch people and their sympathisers on the other hand frequently occurred.

In another development, there was a severe clash between the Republicans and the British in Surabaya on 10 November 1945, about 450 kms east of Yogyakarta. Surabayan people and local militias attacked the British troops, who were accused of helping the Dutch regain Indonesia. British Brigadier-General A.W.S. Mallaby was killed. In response to this death, the British committed blindly devastating bombardments over the densely-populated city of Surabaya. Thousands of people, mostly civilians, were killed and thousands more had to flee the city.[61]

However the sacrifices of lives and the destruction of the city itself marked a politically significant moment. The tragedy inspired more and more people to take part in the revolution. The sense of Indonesian nationalism was becoming stronger, and inspired more people to join the struggle to defend independence. A symbol of the revolution was provisionally formed, and straight away gained its momentum and popular support. The solid support from the people for the revolution surprised foreign observers at the time. The struggle particularly opened the eyes of the British and Dutch, and shattered their perception that they were confronting only groups of people or gangs of Japanese collaborators. They realised that the Republic had the support of the majority of the people.[62] As a result the national independence struggle soon attracted sympathy from other nations such as Australia, India, the Soviet Union and especially the United States of America.[63]

In Yogyakarta the revolution was led by the king of Yogyakarta, the Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, who had become king in 1939, shortly after returning from studying at Leiden University, Holland. In his early reign Hamengkubuwono IX reformed the court's function to be more popularly and socially committed. He formed a *laskar rakyat* (people's militia) loyal to him, and commanded it himself.[64] Hamengkubuwono IX firmly took side with the Republic in the revolution. According to tradition, it was well known, that he allowed his court to be used as a hiding place for the republican fighters. His progressive democratic vision compelled him to encourage and support anti-colonial action.

Because of this solid support for the Republic from the Yogyakartan community, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia was moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta. Republican strength was gradually shrinking as the Dutch rapidly regained power.

The Republic administration in Jakarta and Bandung became uncontrollable, for the Dutch had managed to seize back control of the cities. In those cities there were many groups of people still sympathetic to the Dutch. These included former Dutch administrative officers, people of some ethnic groups who worked for the Dutch army, Chinese and Arabs who were able to profit from trading under the Dutch administration and aristocrats who had enjoyed exclusive concessions from the Dutch for politically-strategic reasons. There was no doubt that these particular groups of people were more interested in the return of the Dutch government, under which they could regain the lifestyle and situation they had enjoyed, than the emergence of the new Republic's administration, whose future was yet unclear.

Thus, in early 1946, the Republic of Indonesia's capital was moved to Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta then became the centre for the administration and the military of the Republic of Indonesia. From that time many people with different professions moved to Yogyakarta to staff the administration, as did the republican fighters and ordinary people and students who took refuge there while the Dutch military elsewhere was successfully overcoming republican fighters and sympathisers.

Among those fleeing for refuge and joining the independence fighting were young artists from other towns and cities of Java and Sumatra. Amongst them were those who had been involved in PUTERA, including Sudjojono, Hendra Gunawan, Affandi and Suromo. These people were familiar with the anti-Dutch actions and propaganda launched during their involvement with PUTERA. Nationalism and pro-independence actions became the main concerns for the people and the artists. In other words, the Revolution became the major preoccupation of the artists at the time.

In response to the revolutionary situation some artists formed *sanggar* (artist groups). In 1946 Sudjojono, with Suromo, founded an artist group called *Seniman Indonesia Muda* ('Young Indonesian Artists') or SIM in Surakarta. SIM had branches in Yogyakarta and Madiun. In Surakarta SIM published a magazine called *Seniman*, edited by radical painter and writer Trisno Sumarjo. The magazine only lasted six months. Its target was art training for young artists and youngsters. However, the main preoccupation was to make anti-Dutch revolutionary posters and spreadsheets, and distribute them widely, even to areas occupied by the Dutch.[65] SIM in Surakarta was so shaken when Surakarta was attacked by the Dutch that it ceased to be active there, shifting its activities to Yogyakarta. The people who continued SIM's activities in Yogyakarta were Haryadi Sumodidjojo

(b.1916), Kartono Yudhokusumo (b.1924-57), Basuki Resobowo (b.1916), Selamat Sudibio (b.1912), Trubus Sudarsono (1926-65), Suparto (b.1929), Suromo and Zaini (b.1924). But this group was no longer able to be active by 1949. The military pressure from the Dutch sent Republican fighters underground in fighting for the Revolution.

Two other artists groups were then formed. The first was *Pusat Tenaga Pelukis Indonesia* (Centre of Strength of Indonesian Painters), led by Djajengasmoro, a drawing teacher who later co-founded the first art school ever established by the Republic of Indonesia. The other group was the *Sanggar Pelukis Rakyat* (People's Painters group). Founded by Hendra Gunawan and Affandi, Pelukis Rakyat was the most active and durable group until the 1950s. Both founders were both from West Java. Because Yogyakarta was the capital of the Republic of Indonesia, artists from other parts of Indonesia were drawn there. Pelukis Rakyat had its home in Sentul Yogyakarta.

Sanggar Pelukis Rakyat was very significant. As artists, Hendra and Affandi were quite prominent. Affandi had been well known amongst art communities since the Japanese occupation and Hendra Gunawan was well known as a charismatic figure. Astri Wright describes Hendra as 'an infatuated artist'.[66] After the revolution almost all would-be prominent Yogyakartan artists were touched by Hendra's charismatic character, his dedication to art and his committment to the lives of ordinary people. Abbas Alibasyah, Fadjar Sidik, Bagong Kussudiardjo, Sutopo, Nasjah Djamin, Soedarso and Wardoyo were amongst those who formally and informally joined the group.[67] According to the painters Fadjar Sidik and Wardoyo, Hendra's character and attitude in encouraging young artists to make art was so strong that almost everybody joined the group or at least visited the house where the group was stationed. Hendra was always coordinating activities to accommodate young artists and provide them not only with art training, but also with food and art materials. He often painted together with young artists in the markets, in the street and so on. This particular dedication was attractive to young people. The group was open to everybody until 1957, when Hendra moved to Jakarta and then Bandung. Then, as a non-party candidate nominated by the PKI, he was elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly.

Understandably the people, including artists, were preoccupied with the Revolution. Unfortunately many paintings produced during the Revolutionary period of 1945 to 1949 were destroyed in the general upheaval. Besides, most

artists were not so concerned with the materials and the techniques they used — most of them just applied whatever they could find and work with in making art. However, Claire Holt managed to see a few Revolution-period paintings. She noted that the colours and appearances of those few were generally dark and stormy, unintentionally reflecting the bombardments frequently seen at the time. Holt wrote that the themes were primarily the scenes of revolutionary struggles.[68]

One example of the paintings produced during the period is Sudjojono's painting *The Hour of the Guerilla* (1949). The painting depicts a central figure of a fighter carrying a rifle. He does not wear shoes and has no military insignia. From this, one infers that he is not military personnel but an ordinary civilian fighter. The background is the ruins of roofless brick-walled buildings which seem burnt. The scene most probably depicts the situation after the launching of 'police action' by the Dutch. By such actions the Dutch swept major cities in Sumatra and Java, with the exception of Yogyakarta, from the Republican guerrilla fighters in the attempt to isolate the Republican force and to prevent them from securing food and other supplies.[69]

The Republican force was cornered by those actions. People saw that the Dutch were advancing further and further to gain control over many areas. They had to retreat. Many people ran and took refugee in the outskirts of the city, in remote areas or in mountains. However before they ran away many people carried out *aksi bumi hangus* (scorched earth policy).

The Yogyakartan Art World After the Revolution

While the Dutch were attempting to dissolve the Republic of Indonesia and to recolonise Indonesia, military and political pressure against the Dutch was effective. Republican military pressure, anti-Dutch resentment and rebellions by civilians and rural-based people were increasing significantly. In addition the United Nations and the United States of America applied political pressure on the Dutch. This United States' pressure was strengthened by the American Congress, which threatened to suspend US economic aid to the Netherlands if the Dutch did not cease their attempt to retake Indonesia. Eventually a cease-fire between the Dutch and the Republicans was announced on 1st August 1949, to take effect on 11th August.[70]

Within days of Indonesia gaining its full sovereignty from its former colonialiser,

the newly-born Republic had its first art school. 'First' here means that ASRI was founded by the Republic and for its own educational interest. The school was founded on 15 January 1950, and named *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia* (ASRI) or the Academy of Visual Art of Indonesia.[71] Its first director was RJ Katamsi. Its mascot was the figure of Dewi Saraswati, the *shakti* or wife of the Hindu god Brahma, symbolising science, culture and the arts. The choice of Dewi Saraswati as its mascot was significant, reflecting ASRI's orientation to the search for an Asian identity. In addition ASRI was also intended to achieve an orientation in harmony with the struggle of the Indonesian people. Such nationalist orientations most likely arose because progressive nationalist artists such as Hendra Gunawan and Djajengasmara were actively involved in conceiving the art school.

However, with the exception of its first director, who was trained as a drawing teacher, most of ASRI's early teachers were not academically qualified as art teachers. The first generation of ASRI teachers were mostly practising artists who were active in the eras of pre-independence and/or of the revolution. They included Hendra Gunawan, Suromo, Trubus Sudarsono, Kusnadi, Affandi, Abdul Salam and others. In spite of the lack of formal academic background, these artists were adequate enough to teach students art. The painter A.Y. Kuncana (born Yap Kim Koen in 1934) commented in an interview that he learned much from Hendra Gunawan and Trubus Sudarsono at ASRI, as well as from Sudjojono. This is significant because these teachers were LEKRA activists but A.Y. Kuncana was one of those who signed the anti-LEKRA Cultural Manifesto in Bali with Kirdjo Muljo and Gde Mangku.[72]

The Emergence of LEKRA

Eight months after the RI became a fully sovereign nation, LEKRA (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, or the Institute of People's Culture) was formed in Surakarta, about 60 kilometres east of Yogyakarta. Through its art and cultural activities LEKRA articulated the search for a national identity. In so doing LEKRA clearly identified Indonesia's ideological and cultural enemies as neo-colonialism, imperialism and Dutch colonialism, which continued to rule Irian Jaya. As noted by Keith Foulcher, LEKRA's platform was basically to pursue the development of an Indonesian people's culture free from colonialism and imperialism.[73] This movement, Foulcher argues, had origins in Ki Hadjar Dewantara's views from the 1930s. Dewantara asserted then that it was the time for Indonesians to find cultural alternatives to break completely from the cultural legacy conditioned by Dutch

colonialism. Indonesians, he believed, should look at the cultures of neighbouring Asian countries in the search for Indonesian identity.[74]

The fever of independence and winning the revolution were still in the air. It was understandable that LEKRA was so attractive to many artists. Prominent artists such as Sudjojono, Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Suromo, Abdul Salam, Basuki Resobowo and Trubus were involved. For these people LEKRA was an organisation in which they could institutionalise their long-held socio-political aspirations through art. Sudjojono, Affandi and Hendra Gunawan were prominent figures with individually distinctive styles and concepts. Since the PERSAGI era Sudjojono had emphasised realistic depictions of the people through a visual language easily understood by ordinary people. Since the Japanese occupation, Affandi had been preoccupied with the plights and sufferings of the people. Hendra Gunawan had been always attracted to the life of ordinary people, and obsessively depicted their activities, such as delousing women, and traditional market vendors.

Subsequently LEKRA was adopted by the *PKI*, which began to use art to convey its ideology. The party sought to use popular artists to reach a wide audience as a strategy to win the national election of 1955. Nyoto particularly saw the significance and the importance of artists in conveying ideology. In the next chapter, it will be argued that LEKRA was in some way trapped in a communist ideology, and became merely an extension of the PKI in the field of art and culture. This was to create a debate between LEKRA, which developed Socialist Realism as its platform, and the opposing group which adopted an anti-LEKRA platform and orientations.

Conclusion

Along the rough and somewhat discontinuous path from Raden Saleh in the 19th century, to Sudjojono and Hendra Gunawan in the middle of the 20th century, a particular kind of realism was produced. Saleh's realism was an embodiment of his nationalist sympathy with the captured Diponegoro, who led the Java War, and of his empathy with the life of the people in Java under colonialism. Sudjojono's realism in painting came from using the 'language' understood by ordinary people. It was a realism influenced by the age of nationalism, coloured by Dewantara's thought, which emphasised egalitarianism in contrast to the colonial educational system's elitism, whilst Hendra Gunawan's nationalism involved depicting the

lives of ordinary people who had simply undergone the revolution in order to escape colonialism. Therefore it was Nationalism and the Revolution that produced these types of realism.

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[1] An excellent summary of Indonesian history is Ricklefs, M.C. *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300.* London: MacMillan Press, 1993.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* p.119.

[4] *Ibid.* pp.119-20.

[5] *Ibid.* pp.122-23.

[6] *Ibid.* p.123.

[7] Holt, Claire, *Art In Indonesia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p.191.

[8] Kalff, S, 'Inheemsche Schilderkunst of Java,' in *Oedaya*, II (1925), p202, Cited in Holt, *op cit* p.191

[9] Holt, *Op cit.* p.191.

[10] *Ibid* pp.327-28.

[11] Carey, Peter, *Asal Usul Perang Jawa* (the origin of the Java War). Jakarta: Pustaka Azet, 1985. p.145.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid*

[14] *Ibid* p.146.

[15] *Ibid..*

[16] *Ibid.* p.151.

[17] *Ibid.* p.156.

[18] Ricklefs. *Op cit.* pp.164-65.

[19] *Ibid.* p.171.

[20] *Ibid.* pp.171-72.

[21] *Ibid.* p.176.

[22] *Ibid.* p.179.

[23] *Ibid.* p.179.

[24] Tsuchiya, Kenji, *Democracy And Leadership: The Rise Of The Taman Siswa Movement In Indonesia.* Trans. Peter Hawkes. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1988, p.21.

[25] *Ibid* pp.40-42. On Montessori see "Foreward by Anna Freud" in Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, p.5. Tagore (1861) was the founder of the Santiniketan School. His educational goal was to cultivate and develop children's personal abilities and creativities in the arts of life — poetry,

song, drama, movement in dance and design. But most significantly, he wanted to change the formal educational system which only frustrated and suffered children, as as it had done him as a student. On Tagore, see R. Tagore and L.K. Elmhirst, *Rabindranath Tagore. Pioneer In Education*. London: John Murray, 1961.

[26] Tsuchiya *op cit* p. 41.

[27] Ki Hadjar Dewantara, "Hubungan Kita dengan Rabindranath Tagore", *Pusara* 11, No. 8 (1941), cited *ibid.* pp. 41-42.

[28] Ricklefs *op cit* p168.

[29] Tsuchiya *op cit* p103.

[30] See also Tsuchiya, *op cit*, pp56-57.

[31] Ricklefs *op cit* p.168.

[32] Tsuchiya *op cit* p.161.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34]Foulcher, Keith. *Social Commitment in Literature And The Arts*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1986, p.17.

[35] Tsuchiya *op cit.*pp179-181.

[36] Holt *op cit.* p195.

[37] Interview with Rusli, May 1994.

[38] Ricklefs *op cit.*pp.179-81.

[39] Interview with Persagi member Suromo, August 1993. Suromo was invited by Sudjojono himself in 1936 to join the group. See also the exhibition catalogue of Suromo's, Djoko Pekik's, Sutopo's, A.Y. Kuncana's and Wardoyo's paintings in Edwin's Gallery, 22 -31 July 1994.

[40] Kusnadi, 'Seni Rupa Modern.' In: *Perjalanan Seni Rupa Indonesia* (Streams of Indonesian Art) Jakarta: The Committee of the Festival of Indonesia, 1991, p.61. Also my interview with Suromo in August 1993.

[41] Interview with Suromo.

[42] Sudarmaji. 'PERSAGI.' In: *Perjalanan*, p.73.

[43] Holt *op cit.* pp195-96.

[44] Cited *ibid.* p196.

[45] De Loos-Haaxman, J. *Verlaat Rapport Indie*. Mouton & Co. Uitgevers. S-Gravenhage, cited by Sudarmaji, 'PERSAGI,' in *Streams of Indonesian Art.* Jakarta: Committee of Festival of Indonesia, 1991. p75.

[46] Cited in Holt, *op cit*, p.196.

[47] Sudarmaji, 'PERSAGI.' p.77.

[48] Sudarmaji, *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming*. Yogyakarta: STSRI 'Asri', 1974, pp.18-

21.

[49] Ricklefs *op cit* p.181.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.* p184.

[52] See also Ricklefs *op cit* p.190.

[53] Sudarmaji 'PERSAGI, pp.71 & 78.

[54] Holt *op cit* p.199.

[55] Sudarmaji 'PERSAGI.' p.78.

[56] Sudarmaji. *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming*. p.30.

[57] Personal communication with Petrus Martono (my own father) who was recruited as a worker for the Japanese Navy, in much better conditions than the 'economic soldiers' (*romusha*). Martono was lucky. The ship he worked for was wrecked near Singapore, where he was able to see Romushas from Java working in dreadful conditions.

[58] Sudarmaji, *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming*, p.30.

[59] Holt *op cit* p.198.

[60] Ricklefs *op cit* p.202.

[61] *Ibid* p.217.

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] *Ibid* pp.213 & 225.

[64] *Ibid* p.220.

[65] See M. Dwi Marianto, 'Suromo, Wardoyo, Sutopo, Djoko Pekik, A.Y. Kuncana Dalam Sajian Langka,' in the exhibition catalogue. Jakarta: Edwin's Gallery, 1994, pp.3-12.

[66] Wright, Astri, *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain.* Malaysia: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.166.

[67] See also Liem Tjoe Ing, *Lukisan-Lukisan Koleksi Adam Malik.* Jakarta: PT Intermasa, 1979, pp.197-231.

[68] Holt *Op cit* pp.201-203.

[69] Ricklefs *Op cit* p.225.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] At the time Yogyakarta was still the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. See Soedarso, 'Sejarah Berdirinya ASRI.' p3.

[72] Personal communication with A.Y. Kuncana, May 1994.

[73] "Manifesto LEKRA", p.209.

[74] *Ibid*, p.17. See Holt *op. cit* p.195.

CHAPTER 3

THE INDONESIAN ART DEBATE

This chapter examines the debate between LEKRA and anti-LEKRA artists. The debate hinged on an accusation that LEKRA — Indonesia's dominant post-independence art and cultural institution — went too far in dictating art styles. LEKRA advocated an approach based on PKI aesthetics, with a particular focus on Socialist Realism. This was challenged by a group of artists and intellectuals called the *Manifest Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto) group, which envisioned that art should be free from serving any political ideology, even Communism. In direct contrast to Socialist Realism, the Cultural Manifesto group preferred kinds of art which syntagmatically and pragmatically seemed free of any ideological limitation.

My analysis of the debate will discuss LEKRA's history; the natures of Socialist Realism and Abstract Expressionist art forms, which were adopted by the respective conflicting groups to encapsulate or symbolise their ideological preferences; and the development of specific — and antagonistic — tendencies in the Bandung and Yogyakartan schools of art of the 1950s and 1960s. I will also discuss art issues and affairs directly and indirectly influenced by the Cold War, which in the 1950s and 1960s polarised Indonesian artists to be stereotypically Communist-oriented or anti-Communist artists.

The debates climaxed in the revolutionary physical clash between the Communist group and the anti-Communist group, in which the PKI and its associated groups, including LEKRA, became the loser. What followed was the abrupt disappearance of LEKRA, its aesthetic teaching, and even its adherents. Its place on the Indonesian art 'map' was completely erased. As a result of this Abstract art, which had been politically and intellectually suppressed by LEKRA, emerged as the single player in the Indonesian art world, and were adopted as the symbol of victory over Communism in the opening era of the winning regime.

The Emergence of LEKRA

Eight months after the Republic of Indonesia became a fully sovereign nation, LEKRA (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* or the Institute of People's Culture) was formed in Surakarta, about 60 kms east of Yogyakarta. Initially LEKRA mainly

articulated the search for national identity through its art and cultural activities. At the time Indonesian people were not yet framed or boxed in political ideologies or parties.[1] In so doing, however, LEKRA clearly identified Indonesia's ideological and cultural enemies as neo-colonialism, imperialism and Dutch colonialism (at the time Holland still ruled West Papua, now called Irian Jaya). Therefore its goal, as noted by Keith Foulcher, was to pursue an Indonesian people's culture free from colonialism and imperialism.[2]

In the early 1950s the fever of independence and revolutionary victory were very much in the air. Understandably, LEKRA was attractive to many prominent artists, including S. Sudjojono, Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Suromo, Abdul Salam, Trubus Sudarsono and Basuki Resobowo. As the revolution's first art and cultural organisation, LEKRA could institutionalise their long-held socio-political aspirations through art. As it turned out, LEKRA became too close to the power of the central government in Jakarta, especially after LEKRA's 'godfather', the PKI, openly supported Sukarno's Guided Democracy at the end of the 1950s. In terms of art, LEKRA, which initially had seemed ideologically neutral and nationalist, shifted its ideologic orientation. Along with Indonesian political development and under the PKI's growing influence, LEKRA's artistic approaches and aesthetic tones changed, becoming more and more Marxist and Leninist.

As a result of the alignment with Marxism, there was an increasing use of symbols which pragmatically glorified peasants, labours, fishermen and the 'exploited', until LEKRA's idioms were predominantly coloured with Marxist and Leninist tones. This shift in LEKRA art was clearly shaped by Njoto, a prominent PKI politburo member, who borrowed his understanding of Socialist Realism from the Russian proletarian writer Maxim Gorky. Gorky saw Socialist Realism as 'purpose art' as opposed to pure art. Gorky also insisted that besides being socialist in theme, the culture was also to be 'realistic': it had to educate the masses and therefore be easily understandable.[3] This line of thought was similar to that taken by prominent LEKRA member Sudjojono. And since LEKRA took Socialist Realism so seriously, it was critical of other kinds of art. This was spelled out by Njoto, who said "*Dan kesenian kerakyatan tidak lain adalah kesenian realis*" ("And people-minded art is none other than realist art").[4] The slogan "He who is not with us, he is against us", commonly stated in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, was in some way applicable to Indonesia at this time.[5] LEKRA tended not to allow its artists to be critical of Communism.

With Sukarno's and Peking/Beijing's support, as well as moral support from prominent figures, businessmen, trade union and foreign residents who bought LEKRA artists' works, LEKRA came to be politically dominant, so it can be understood that certain themes in cultural activities were promoted with respect to its supporters. Because of this attention, however, many LEKRA artists became pretentious and saw themselves as having the most appropriate form for expressing social and cultural life, as part of the Indonesian revolution's completion.[6] LEKRA artists became so ideologically fanatical they were unable to see that people were in fact experimenting with other kinds of art. In Yogyakarta people were also making Abstract art, having seen books published in the West, particularly Holland, USA, and United Kingdom.[7] This situation led to an accumulation of conflicts between LEKRA and non-LEKRA groups.

Syncretic LEKRA And Conflicts

By 1955 the PKI's Njoto had publicly stated the importance of artists in conveying ideology. Njoto thought that artists had access to 'grassroots' people and were regarded as a strategic communicatively link.[8] Since LEKRA saw the importance of folk artists as well as contemporary artists, traditional theatre players, popular artists and dancers were recruited. However, although Indonesian Communism was ideologically Marxist and Leninist, in practice this was not strictly the case. Rather, it was syncretically practised: Ruth McVey argues that another politburo member, Sudisman, saw himself and four others, who together formed the PKI's inner core, as a "five-in-one" Pandawa, the good knight character from the *Mahabharata* .[9]

Njoto's vision proved right: LEKRA won the 1955 general election. Prior to this, LEKRA supported artists whose works and visions were seen as being appropriate to PKI's cultural ideology, and able to bolster that ideology. Concessions, materials and moral support were provided to hold art exhibitions locally and nationally. LEKRA sent artists to international art networks, albeit via the eastern Bloc. As its watchwords it still used the terms of nationalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. This, needless to say, attracted many artists because Indonesia had only undergone Revolution and was still strongly anti-imperialist, as well as being in a transitional state politically, socially and economically.

As mentioned above, LEKRA was not Communist in the beginning. In Yogyakarta the movement towards this position was apparently coloured by the charismatic

personalities of Sudjojono, Hendra Gunawan and Affandi, all of whom liked bringing up themes about the lives of ordinary people.[10] Therefore it can be argued that the artists who joined LEKRA's activities were not actually Communist to begin with; rather it was their nationalism, freshly inherited from the Revolution, which led them to join LEKRA as the country's first national cultural body. They found support and a place to express their sense of nationalism and hope for a better life in Indonesia. Further, their limited experience of Indonesian Independence made them interested in experimenting with various ways and styles in their search for a national identity. One of these happened to deal with politics and ways of life. Another element that should be considered in these artists' attraction to LEKRA's nationalism was that many LEKRA activists were those who had been actively involved in the revolutionary and political activities of pre-independence Indonesia. Despite LEKRA's politicisation, the work of prominent members such as Sudjojono, Affandi, Trubus and Hendra Gunawan did not not immediately become consistently Socialist Realist. These people continued to paint as they had done before LEKRA, and continued to work in Social Realism or simply Realism, as can be seen in their works in the series of books of Sukarno's Paintings and Statues Collection.[11]

By the 1960s LEKRA's tone was identical with Socialist Realism. Its significance was backed up by PKI. In the meantime, the Army and other anti-Communist groups began to see LEKRA as posing as great a threat as the PKI, which also seemed radical in many ways. In the arts LEKRA's ideology and programs became overtly aligned with Sukarno's revolutionary rhetoric. As its political muscle strengthened, LEKRA became more ideologically immoderate, especially against art which seemed to be lacking in social commitment. LEKRA criticised and even often condemned the so-called liberal, humanist and universalist arts, in particular abstract painting. In the field of literature two prominent writers, Pramoedya Ananta Toer — a LEKRA activist — and the poet Sitor Situmorang — the chairman of LKN — both sympathetic to Sukarno, became very politically aggressive. They were attacking writers, intellectuals, artists, and poets who opposed Sukarno's political moves. In Jakarta, Hans Baque Jassin, an eminent scholar of literature Indonesian and Yale University graduate, who was a senior lecturer at the University of Indonesia, was attacked by Pramoedya Ananta Toer for his 1963 cultural manifesto which opposed Sukarno's Guided Democracy.[12] As a consequence Jassin was discharged from his teaching position at the University of Indonesia. Only later, after the PKI was completely crushed, was Jassin rehabilitated and allowed to teach at the same university. Jassin became the chief

exponent of the cultural expunging of LEKRA, particularly in his two-volume collection of *Angkatan* 66 (the 1966 Generation).[13] This demonstrated how influential LEKRA was at the time and how close it was to Sukarno.

Needless to say, the anti-Communist groups saw LEKRA's move as a process of 'Communisation' of the Indonesian art world. In response to this Socialist Realism was counteracted with various oppositional forms of art. Abstract Art and Abstract Expressionism were syntagmatically the most antagonistic towards Socialist Realism, which typically was narrative and sloganic. Also, the seemingly apolitical nature of these oppositional forms was symbolically in contrast to the ideology of Socialist Realism.

Social Realism

Social Realism was promulgated by Sudjojono when he challenged what he mocked as the 'Mooi Indie' painting school. He suggested that Indonesian artists be sensitive to their social and socially-influenced reality.[14] In his statement, as discussed in the previous chapter, Sudjojono had developed the idea of social realism, by which he insisted artists should critically observe the socio-economic gap and the contrast between the elite/ privileged and the common people. His class-difference framework in analysing society was clear, and in his painting Sudjojono chose this perspective to depict the life of ordinary people, as can be seen in his work *My Neighbour* (1950).[15]

As an artist who was educated and then taught at Taman Siswa, and once stayed with his family in one of the classrooms in the Taman Siswa complex, Sudjojono was influenced by Dewantara.[16] Sudjojono's orientation towards the people in his painting was in parallel with Dewantara's nationalist people-orientation in education.

Social Realism was commonly associated with Courbet's art, which was born out of Realism, a historical movement of art and literature in France, coherently formulated in the 1840s and reaching dominance in 1870-1880. Its ideology was to depict the real world based on meticulous observation of contemporary life.[17] The period in which Realism developed was the time when labours began to be raised and hailed, particularly after the 1848 French revolution. The dignity of labour was romantically glorified. The lives of the poor and the humble gained importance in art and literature. The winning regime chose the working class to play a prominent

role by showing them in state festivals. At the linguistic level, the word 'citizen' became the more revolutionary- sounding 'labourer'. Idealist and romantic allegories were replaced by a more humane, earthy representation. To realise this, the unrefined and humble nature of actual workers, men or/and women were depicted as real and having an important role.[18] A good example of this is Courbet's painting *The Stone Breaker* (1849), submitted to the Salon of 1850. Its subjects — crude and unrefined workers — were in contrast to the prettified subjects of other paintings in the same exhibition.[19] Courbet, nevertheless, was influenced by the socialist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, to whom Courbet was personally close. Art, suggested Proudhon, who approached art with a social theory, was 'an idealistic representation of nature and of ourselves, having as its goal the material and moral improvement of our species'.[20]

The relationship between Sudjojono and Dewantara was in some ways rather similar to that between Gustave Courbet and Proudhon. Sudjojono's emaciated peasants can be compared with the poor, humble workers of Courbet. So too, Courbet's critical attitude towards academic conventions and elite privileges can be compared with Sudjojono's attitude towards the romanticism of *'Mooi Indië'*. Courbet's desire to raise social issues relating to labour can be compared to Sudjojono's statement that 'My people ... do not understand the reality of the sky, their reality is the reality of rice.'[21] As has also been mentioned earlier, Sudjojono not only focussed on the lives of ordinary people, but also used that language, in respect to technique and style, which was most easily understood by the people: the realist technique. Therefore what Sudjojono suggested can be called Social Realism.

Social Realism was in fact the first school of art developed in Yogyakarta in the 1950s. Put simply, Social Realism was accessible. It did not need complicated explanations to be understood by its viewers, and it was able to document the social reality of the time. This was actually reflective of art training in the time when most art teachers and painters were only practically trained in realism. Different discourses of Modern Art had not yet been touched. People were still preoccupied with post-revolutionary activities, and with the socio-political changes and alternatives for Indonesian society in developing independence.

It was the *sanggar* Pelukis Rakyat who fully developed Social Realism under the leadership of Hendra Gunawan and Affandi. They discussed their artworks together, did paintings together in many spots in Yogyakarta, and, most

importantly, founded an art community so strong and influential that many artists and students joined the *sanggar*. Further, *Pelukis Rakyat*'s artists not only painted, but also made realistic sculptures as Hendra had done.

The sense of social concern is very obvious in Hendra's scuptures. Some of his sculptures decorate the front yard of the Regional House of Representatives building in Yogyakarta. At the centre of the yard at the front of the building is a huge statue by Hendra of General Sudirman, the chief commander of the Republican army, fighting against Dutch soldiers during the revolution. The general, well known to have died from tuberculoses he carried through the guerrilla war, is depicted realistically. Unlike almost any other national monument in Indonesia, Sudirman is depicted as a skinny and physically ill figure. Nevertheless, this image of Sudirman symbolically represented the whole society's suffering under the anti-colonialism revolution. Other Hendra sculptures in the same place depict common individuals in ordinary gestures, with nothing heroic and propagandistic about them.

Therefore the Social Realism commonly practised in Yogyakarta has to be differentiated from Socialist Realism, which was adopted by the PKI and implemented through LEKRA in the late 1950s as a framework to depict society as a means of conveying PKI ideology, as discussed below.

Socialist Realism

The term Socialist Realism first appeared on 25 May 1932 in the pages of the *Literaturnaia Gazeta* ; its principles were put forward as the foundation of Soviet Union art during a secret meeting between Stalin and Soviet writers at Gorky's flat on 26 October 1932.[22] Stalin, who himself proposed the term, asserted that 'if the artist is going to depict our life correctly, he cannot fail to observe and point out what is leading it toward socialism. So this will be socialist art. It will be socialist realism.'[23]

'Socialist' in the soviet context meant in accordance with the Communist Party. And Socialist Realism was interpreted as art that is based on a direct relationship between the artist and the process of building a new society; it was seen also as art coloured by the experience of the working class in its struggle to achieve socialism.[24] Its basic principles, as determined by the party, were: *narodnost* ('people-ness'), which was the relationship between art and the masses; *klassovost*

Plate 3
Ici Tarmizi
Fish Auction
130 x 195 cm
oil on canvas.

('class-ness'), which was the class characteristics of art; and *partiinost* ('party-ness'), which was artists' identification with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[25]

Socialist Realism was adopted and appropriated by LEKRA from the late 1950s onwards. Together with the vision of Njoto, as discussed above, Socialist Realism became LEKRA's formal style and method of representing PKI ideology and of articulating its goals within the scheme of Communism. Its artists often literally depicted class-difference scenes through a Marxist framework, such as scenes depicting labourers and employer, poor farmers and landlord, little fishermen and rich broker, and so on. The works typically glorified as black and white either the poor, the exploitated, or the landless people. One good example of this genre was the painting *Fish Auction* (Plate 3) by West Sumatra-born LEKRA artist Ici Tarmizi. Sudarmaji says of this painting:

> The influence of Social Realism ... The painting depicts a fat broker with big mouth and thick lip, smiling typically like a rich broker. He wears a sarong and unbuttoned shirt with his big money wallet attached to his belt. A group of poor fishermen is surrounding him a manner of asking the broker to buy their fish. The eyes of the fishermen are depicted as open widely and poignantly, representing an oppressed group of people who are bearing a hatred towards the oppressor.[26]

There is something that needs clearing up in this description, however. Sudarmaji, as seen at the beginning of the paragraph, does not differentiate Socialist Realism from the Social Realism typical in Yogyakarta. Even many of those associated with LEKRA did not paint strictly according to Socialist Realist lines until the 1960s, including Yogyakarta's LEKRA bigshot Hendra Gunawan. In fact until the 1960s there were not many artists willing to paint in the purely Socialist Realist style as prescribed by the PKI. One reason for this was that many of those involved in LEKRA's activities were more interested in the material support and access to art exhibitions than merely in LEKRA's ideology.[27] A good example of this was Hendra's painting *Sekaten (The Fair of Sekaten)* (1955) (Plate 4)[28], which shows his populist concern. *Sekaten* is an annual festival in Yogyakarta. The painting has three peasant figures in the foreground, who seem to be part of the celebration. They are holding traditional *Sekaten* articles such as reddish violet coloured eggs, paper umbrellas, and papercrafts. The grassed square looks freshly green, the sky is blue and two banyan trees are in the background. The women's dresses are brightly coloured, in the manner of people from the outskirts of Yogyakarta when

Plate 4
Hendra Gunawan
***Sekaten (The Fair)* 1955**
100 x 150 cm; oil.

they came to the *Sekaten*, wearing their best clothing for the celebration. This colourful-looking painting caught the spirit of ordinary people's activities, where people come to gain spiritual blessing from the palace but at the same time to be entertained by various spectacles and displays.

Hendra also had a sharp eye for humour derived from the ordinary and the trivial, which was not merely Marxist economic determinism but also humourously humanist. In his painting entitled *Arjuna Menyusui* (Breastfeeding Arjuna) Hendra shows the Javanese *wayang* figure of Arjuna, one of the main male characters of the Mahabharata story. He is characteristically charming and gentle like a woman. However, he is also a powerful figure, married with several beautiful wives. In the performance of *wayang wong,* the Mahabharata and Ramayana stage drama, especially in Surakarta, Central Java, the character of Arjuna is played by a woman in order to portray his woman-like gentleness[29] This ambiguity was taken by Hendra as a central point. In the painting Hendra humorously depicts a woman fully dressed as Arjuna, breastfeeding her own baby behind the stage.[30]

The influence of Socialist Realism had arrived in Indonesia in conjunction with the publication and the spread of Marxist and Leninist ideas, which had been known in various forms in Indonesia since the 1920s, when even Indonesian conservative nationalists studied Marxism as a tool to better understand colonialism.[31] In addition, later arts and cultures from some communist countries had been known in Indonesia in the second half of the 1950s, especially through the publication of the daily *Harian Rakjat* which had been in circulation since 1952. The newspaper was supported by another periodical, *Zaman Baru* (New Age), which was published regularly from 1956-57.[32] No less importantly, as Foulcher adds, the media was strengthened with articles by such influential figures such as Darta, Boejoeng Saleh and Pramoedya Ananta Teoer. All of this, Foulcher argues, significantly influenced the development of LEKRA's ideology of art and culture, both at its early stage and in later development.[33] Through translations of literature from socialist countries, mostly published in the weekly 'Cultural Affairs' section of *Harian Rakjat.*[34] Socialist Realism was known before 1957 to LEKRA members. As the PKI's media, *Harian Rakjat* also advertised books imported from the Eastern bloc. One of them, '*Isilah Perpustakaan saudara dengan buku-buku Koleksi Hasil Karya* V.I. Lenin' (Fill your own libraries with books from the collection of V.I. Lenin) advertised Communist, Marxist and Socialist books. Even before the PKI grew closer to China in the early 1960s, Mao Tse Tung's Communism and cultural tenets, as well as Maxim Gorky's short stories, had appeared in the *Harian*

Rakyat.[35] Thereby works by artists, composers and writers from Eastern bloc countries had also become familiar to LEKRA. Additionally, LEKRA had developed a network with Eastern bloc countries. LEKRA's First National Congress, in January 1959, was attended by delegates from India, North Korea, USSR, East Germany and the People's Republic of China.[36] LEKRA also managed to send a number of its members, including *Pelukis Rakjat*-associated artists, on cultural missions to the USSR, the East European countries, and the People's Republic of China.[37]

Abstract Art and Abstract Expressionism

On the other side of the global art world people were particularly preoccupied with Abstract Art and Abstract Expressionism. From the late 1950s to 1965 in Indonesia these kinds of art were regarded by the Left as enemies of the people's art, and were simply seen as being associated mostly with the leader of the West, the United States of America. In the Indonesian context, Abstract and Abstract Expressionism were regarded as a symbol embodying humanism, individualism or internationalism. This idealism was adopted by the group associated with the *Manifesto Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto), one of whose inspirers was H.B. Jassin, whose unhappy clash with LEKRA is discussed above.

The most celebrated artist of Abstract Expressionism was Jackson Pollock, with his dripped paint technique. As an international art movement Abstract Expressionism emerged in the 1940s. Technically it was based on automatism, a technique which was applied by Parisian Surrealists to bring out impulses coming from the subconscious. The most important thing about Abstract Expressionism was that it was not overtly political, and fitted into the dominant American view which simply saw two dichotomous possibilities: the 'end of ideology' or Communism.

Abstract Expressionism was promoted internationally through US government-sponsored cultural projects by the United States Information Agency (USIA). This worked in tandem with the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) from the 1940s to the 1960s,[38] and was supported by the Asia Foundation, which promoted anti-communist activities in Asia.

Within the context of the Cold War, a free image symbolised by the drippings of paint with no representative objects — that is, Abstract Expressionism — was seen

as a perfect example of free society, in contrast to Socialist Realism, which was considered in the West as being regimented, traditional, didactic, narrow and, most significantly, Communist-influenced.[39] Abstract Expressionism was the opposite: new, fresh, creative, original and avant-garde.[40] Abstract Expressionism was used not only as the symbol of American cultural power, alongside its military and economical might, but also was used to compete with Communist bloc-inspired Socialist Realism. In other words, it was used as the means to combat allegedly Communist art in the world of international art.

Therefore Abstract Expressionism can be read as a means or weapon to stop the allegedly Communist cultural infiltrations which had spread internationally through Socialist Realism. Abstract Expressionist works of art were exhibited frequently in the United States, and sent to biennial and international exhibitions in leading cities such as Sao Paulo, Belgrade, Tokyo, London, Paris and Venice.[41] Visually giving the impression of being liberated from moral and rigidly aesthetic values, and celebrating the image of American 'free society', Abstract Expressionism was the perfect propaganda weapon for the three institutions mentioned above as the grounds to educate, inspire and influence international intellectual and cultural communities within and outside the USA not to be drawn toward Communism.[42] Significantly, MOMA was the only private institution to buy a pavilion to represent the USA in the Venice Biennial from 1954-1962. Some Indonesian artists had taken part in such international notable events. Sholihin, Kusnadi and Affandi were included in the 1953 Sao Paulo Biennial. The latter then attended the 1954 International Biennial shows in Venice representing Indonesia, for which he received an award.

In the meantime, the seeds of abstract art had slowly been growing in Yogyakarta in the late 1950s, led by Gregorius Sidharta, Handrio, Abas Alibasyah and Bagong Kussudiardjo. Sidharta's paintings created in 1958-1960 were mostly cubist, as were some of Handriyo's paintings. However, the Yogyakartan tradition in abstract painting was at the time not as strong as its Bandung counterpart, coming from such artists as Achmad Sadali (b.1924), Mochtar Apin (b.1923), Popo Iskandar Dinata, Srihadi Sudarsono (b.1932), But Muchtar (b.1930), Subhakto and Angkama Setjadipradja.[43]

Bandung artists, especially those educated at the School of Arts, as part of the Bandung Institute of Technology, had had a much more organised and structured art education. The curriculum was designed to suit the needs of art teachers as well

as meeting the needs of individual creativity by the drawing teacher Simon Admiraal, along with the skilled Dutch-born formalist painter Ries Muelder, who taught at the school until the fifties.[44] ITB's art school curriculum was similar to teacher training in Holland.[45] Unsurpisingly, the students received relatively better education, both in theory and in the practical foundations of art, as the school had been organised by the Dutch for training drawing teachers, than those at ASRI, Yogyakarta, whose founding fathers were mostly non-academic and/or revolutionary fighter painters, many of whom started their art professions from nothing. When the Bandung school was taken over by Indonesia it maintained several Dutch teachers, whereas ASRI had no overseas teachers until 1982 when Dutch-born artist Diana van den Berg arrived to give a three-month workshop on meta-realist painting with Renaissance techniques.[46]

In addition to the international anti-communist scheme, in 1963, when Asia was seen to be politically crucial to the Cold War, the John D. Rockefeller III Fund cultural exchange scheme was specifically directed there.[47] Its new president that year, MOMA's director of international activities, also happened to be a CIA agent.[48] In Indonesia sponsorships from the United States Information Services, the Asia Foundation and the State Department had been allocated for Indonesian artists from Bandung and Yogyakarta to study or exhibit their art in, or visit, the US.

Sujoko (b.1928), a Bandung art scholar who studied in the USA in 1957-59, said of this scheme that US anti-communist actions were strategically applied. One of the questions for screening the candidates were "Where were you in 1948?".[49] This was the year of the clash between Communists and the army in Madiun. Or US agencies such as the Asia Foundation contacted recruitable artists or scholars whose art or orientations were regarded as being at variance with Communist or Socialist Realist tendencies.[50] According to Sujoko, who received his master's degree from the University of Chicago, ITB people were easier to contact, especially the people in the Faculty of Art and Designs, since from the early 1950s some of its people had seen America and appreciated the lifestyles different to that propagandised by the PKI. Amongst these people the Asia Foundation was able to distribute a periodical, *Dissent*. American newspapers and weekly news magazines such as the *New York Times*, *Herald Tribune*, *Newsweek* and *Time* were easy to get in Bandung.

Sujoko, who was anti-communist himself, said that by the end of the 1950s ITB

and USA agencies had formed the Kentucky Contract, by which ITB could send its lecturers to America. The painter Srihadi Sudarsono, who later was the first artist to bring Abstract Expressionism back to Indonesia, was included in the program. Srihadi studied at the Ohio State University in 1960-62, where he shared a big studio for some time with artist-in-residence Roy Lichtenstein and other students.[51]

Other artists who received sponsorship from US institutions to study, visit or exhibit art during the crucial Cold War years were Trisno Sumardjo, Achmad Sadali, But Muchtar, Sudjoko and Kusnadi. Trisno, one of SIM's former members in Surakarta, and the editor of SIM's monthly magazine *Seni* in 1946, travelled to the USA and Western Europe in 1952 and visited the USA on a cultural exchange mission in 1961.[52] Achmad Sadali received a Rockefeller Foundation grant for one year's study in the USA, But Muchtar received a USIA fellowship for two years' study, and Kusnadi received sponsorship to to survey art education and museum facilities in the USA.[53] This scheme can be compared to the Indonesian-American military training relationship: Ricklefs argues that during 1958-65 there were around 4000 Army officers sent to the USA for military training.[54] All of this was significant, because regardless of the quality and intensity of their works, these artists later became leading Abstract or Abstract Expressionist painters, except for Kusnadi, who has pursued an art writing and curatorial career.

In Yogyakarta the same sort of policy was quite successful. Even Affandi, who was a PKI-sponsored member of the Constituent Assembly in 1956-59, but who had shown expressionist tendencies, was twice successfully recruited as the recipient of sponsorships from respected American institutions. In 1958 Affandi was sponsored by the USIS and the Asia Foundation to exhibit his art in a number of major American cities. And in 1961-62 the United States Department sponsored Affandi to study techniques of mural painting in the USA.[55] This particular sponsoring of Affandi by the American institutions had quite an impact amongst Yogyakartan artists, at a time when the debate between Western and Eastern bloc was sharpening. The painter Fadjar Sidik said this made some people declare: "Even Affandi is American!".[56]

However before Affandi actually went to the USA, a prominent Yogyakartan artist, former ASRI teacher, Sapto Hudoyo (Affandi's former son-in-law) had travelled to America to study on a Fulbright Scholarship arranged through USIS in 1956. Later, Sapto took part in signing the anti-LEKRA manifesto. In 1957, Bagong Kussudiardja, a dancer and painter, received a Rockefeller Foundation grant to

study in the Martha Graham Dance School for a year in New York, where he met Ignatius Djumadi, who would become the ASRI's second director, after R.J. Katamsi.[57] In 1963 Soedarso Soepadmo, an Indonesian art historian teaching at ASRI, studied at Northern Illinois University under the same scheme.[58] On his return Soedarso became a prominant art historian, teaching at ASRI, the University of Gadjah Mada and the Yogyakarta Institute of Teacher Training. Bagong continued his profession as a choreographer and painter, although after his return from the USA he was rather excluded from LEKRA, due to accusations that he demonstrated a tendency towards individualism in his choreography. The criticism of being overly Westernised became more critical when Bagong started pursuing Abstractism in his painting.

Supporting Art for Politics

To bolster the PKI's vision as well as to attract sympathy, the PKI nominated Hendra Gunawan, Affandi, Sudjojono, Basuki Resobowo and the writer Sitor Situmorang as non-party candidates to represent artists in the Constituent Assembly in 1955.[59] This pattern of relations between the arts and the party showed similarities to tendencies in Marxist-Leninist teachings on aesthetics. LEKRA was also structurally obliged to provide materials and organisational support for artists to create and exhibit their works. This support was important as in the post-revolutionary period the economy was lean and materials hard to come by. In addition, *Harian Rakjat* regularly provided space for LEKRA artists' works. So that it could be said that support for LEKRA artists was relatively comprehensive.

In later developments, however, after the PKI gained political strength in Jakarta in 1955, LEKRA artists became politically more articulate. The PKI had grown rapidly since 1954: Ricklefs notes that membership increased from 165,206 in March 1954 to one million in late 1955. The PKI also managed to recruit a huge number of peasants who formed the BTI (*Barisan Tani Indonesia* or Indonesian Peasants' Front), and organised *Pemuda Rakyat* (the People's Youth), whose members reached more than 600,000 by the end of 1955. Conditions in the 1953-55 parliament, under Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo (himself a PNI member), were conducive to PKI's growth. In the PNI itself there were two factions, a left and a right wing. Ali himself was considered to be of the left. He was one of several Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands in the 1920s, all of whom were ideologically socialist and accepted much of the Marxist interpretation of imperialism.[60]

As a matter of fact, in the 1955 election the PKI won the 4th-largest vote, with particular support in Java. No less significantly, in 1955 its powerful *Harian Rakyat* was, in terms of circulation, the country's biggest daily newspaper. In 1956 the newspaper often printed and promulgated left wing and especially LEKRA art, but also attacked the art of LEKRA's perceived enemies. In that year the circulation reached 55,000, from 15,000 just five years before.[61] This figure shows how much and how significant the pressure was when an individual or group of artists were attacked.

In addition, Soekarno seemed to be sympathetic with LEKRA artists, although he was not Communist himself. He collected many LEKRA artists' works, but did not take any works from the Bandung school of painters for his collection, whereas his art collection included foreign artists' works. In the meantime the Art Division of the Cultural Office in Jakarta, which had promoted the arts and usually collected national artists' works, did not purchase any works of the Bandung school of artists for its own collection either.[62] This created a dichotomy between 'Bandung' and 'Yogyakarta', with the former accusing the latter of being Communist, and the latter branding the former as being un-Indonesian and Westernised.[63]

Although Soekarno himself was an art lover and painter, his action of collecting was politically significant and should be read as a strategic move in itself. Soekarno had seen the PKI's potential in the late 1950s to counterbalance the military, which at that time had become politically dominant. Soekarno was also taken by the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist language used by the PKI in its media and in mass rallies, all of which fitted Sukarno's own radical image and interests.[64] For example, in an article for LEKRA's First National Congress in 1959 Bakri Siregar clearly articulated the organisation's stances: opposition to liberal-individualism, cosmopolitanism, pragmatism, existentialism and 'art for art's sake'.[65]

At the time any attack on abstract art, formalism, universalism and 'un-Indonesian art' signified support for Soekarno, because Soekarno was campaigning against America. The United States was involved with two linked separatist movements — the *PRRI* (*Pemerintah Revolusi Republik Indonesia*, or Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic) in West Sumatera, and *Permesta* (*Piagam Perjuangan Semesta* or Universal Struggle Charter) in North Sulawesi — against Sukarno's government in 1957-58. The CIA was supplying rightist rebels with arms in an attempt to discourage Indonesia from its apparently leftward course, and was also

trying to discredit and possibly even assassinate Soekarno. The PKI then branded the USA Indonesia's most dangerous enemy, which pleased Sukarno.[66] In response to those regional revolts, Sukarno instituted his controversial 'Guided Democracy' ideology, which was promulgated on Independence Day, 17 August 1959, and in early 1960 was named *Manipol USDEK* (*Manifesto Politik, Undang-Undang Dasar, Sosialisme ala Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Kepribadian Indonesia* or Political Manifesto, the 1945 Constitution, Socialisme a la Indonesia, Guided Democracy, Indonesian Identity).[67] By this Sukarno proclaimed a return to the 1945 Constitution, as strongly suggested by the Army. The PNI, PKI, Murba (*Musyawarah Bersama* or Proletarian Party) and other small parties supported the manifesto, while other parties such as Masyumi, PSI and the Indonesian Catholic Party disapproved of it. Although the *Nahdatul Ulama* (Rise of Religious Scholars) appeared not to be in favour, it later approved the manifesto.[68] In 1960 the PSI and Masyumi, which had supported the regional revolts, were banned.

In a way Sukarno's proposal was an attempt to reassert power. At the time Indonesian political and economic conditions were deteriorating. The regional revolts and ongoing power struggles amongst political parties always influenced Indonesian political life. In addition, the international political developments such as the emergence of Malaysia, which supported *PRRI*, and the political rivalries between the USA, PRC and USSR, also had significant political implications for the Indonesian government. They were increasingly sharpening the complex rivalries between the Army, PKI, political and Islamic groups.[69] It is worth noting that in implementing the 'Political Manifesto' Sukarno was endeavoring to simplify political parties, to make them controllable. In so doing he strategically shifted people's political preoccupations towards regional separatisms and political instabilities, so that he could heighten a sense of popular nationalism. A series of political events was crucial to this strategy: the anti-imperialist challenge of gaining West Irian from Dutch; and simultaneously the fight against the formation of Malaysia.

By his charismatic personality and masterful oratorial skill, especially in his imaginative use of language from the fictional *wayang* world, Sukarno managed to draw people together, and mobilised mass rallies in support of nationalism.[70] Sukarno focussed people's attention to issues of national unity and integrity, and was able to maintain the revolutionary spirit in order to eliminate internal socio-political and economic problems.[71] The PKI provided a natural base for Sukarno's activities.

After simplifying the parties, however, the Army and its commander, General A.H. Nasution, were becoming more dominant on one hand, while on the other hand, PKI became the only party which could rally a mass base. This was because Sukarno, who was afraid of an Army-led coup, was strategically embracing the PKI as his backer. In return, under the serious threat of the Army's power, the PKI supported Sukarno to maintain its existence and progress.

Politics is the Commander

The antagonism between opposing group of artists and writers became intensified after the PKI promulgated the slogan *Politik adalah Panglima* (Politics is the Commander). This led to the formation of the Political Manifesto. At ASRI in particular the rivalry between the communist-associated group and the anti-communist groups were intense. During this time artists' groups once again became significant. With Sukarno's political system, especially under the NASAKOM (*Nasionalisme, Agama, Komunisme* or Nationalist, Religious, and Communist) system, artists were made be associated with certain groups according to what s/he believed; any artist not associated with a particular group was simply branded *plin-plan* (having no standpoint).

In the early 1960s the pressure of LEKRA upon apolitical art was institutionalised in the term *Politik adalah Panglima.* This slogan was promulgated at the National Conference on Literature and Revolutionary Art held by LEKRA in August 1964.[72] The slogan was followed by guidelines designed to guide artists in creating art, claiming their goal to be: "To unify, to expand and to improve, the quality of ideology and the quality of artistry, the revolutionary tradition and the contemporariness of revolution, individual creativity and the wisdom of the masses, and revolutionary realism and romanticism."[73]

The majority of staff members and students at ASRI in the 1950s and 60s were PNI supporters and sympathisers. It was important to note that the PNI, like the PKI, supported Guided Democracy, which bore a structural resemblance to the 'democracy and leadership' of Dewantara, to whom Sukarno had been close. Yet in the early 1960s the LKN's followers, under the leadership of Abbas Alibasyah, clashed ideologically with LEKRA's followers, particularly against the *Sanggar Bumi Tarung* (*Bumi Tarung* artists' group), known for its radicalism, and which promoted Socialist Realism, such as in Arifin's 'Crush "Malaysia", Crush US

Imperialist Films' (1964), and Suhardjo Pudjonadi's 'The Peasant Demands and Struggle' (1964).[74]

The *Sanggar Bumi Tarung* was founded in 1961 by a group of then current and former ASRI students, including the painter Djoko Pekik, who is quite well known in Indonesia.[75] The *sanggar* was located at a house just across the street from the ASRI campus, and was led by a North Sumatran sculpture student, Amrus Natalsja. The group had members from various parts of Indonesia, both Java and the outer islands, such as Isa Hassanda (Sumba), Misbach Thamrin (South Kalimantan) and Ngajarbana Sembiring (an ASRI teacher from North Sumatera).[76] According to Djoko, socially- and politically-committed discussions were often held in the *sanggar*. Pekik compares the meetings with those held by many NGO (non-government organisation) members these days. The topics were mainly about the lives of labourers and peasants, as seen from a Marxist economic determinist point of view. The depictions in their works were stereotypically presented with a Marxist perspective of class consciousness. This platform was actually symbolised in the sanggar's name Bumi Tarung, which takes its name from *bumi* (earth), *buruh* (labourers) and *tani* (peasants). These paintings favourably compared symbolically proletarian figures, such as landless peasants, poor fishermen and labourers, to the rich, such as landlords, capitalists and so on. The common atmosphere amongst the *sanggar*'s largely young membership was usually enthusiastic, if not radical.

One work was a woodcut print entitled 'Bojolali', made in 1965 by Kusmuljo, one of the first generation of Bumi Tarung members.[77] The print presents some farmers in the foreground, three corpses lying on the ground in the middle ground, and three working farmers in the background. The farmers, male and female, in the foreground, are depicted as angry, their eyes opened wide. They appear to be about to attack something or someone: one of them in the front holds up his hand with a sickle, signifying that he is challenging others. It can be read that these are the ones responsible for the corpses lying on the ground. The killed can be read as symbolising certain groups of people whom the PKI described as the 'Seven Village Devils'. They were: 1) landlords; 2) userers; 3) people who bought *padi* at very low prices before it was harvested (*tukang tebas*); 4) middlemen (*tengkulak*); 5) rural bandits; 6) evil traders; and 7) bureaucratic capitalists.[78] The angry-looking farmers' bodies are depicted as strong and well-muscled unlike those of people who have been physically oppressed. Rather, these strong-looking figures can be read as representative of the BTI (*Barisan Tani Indonesia*, or Indonesian Peasants'

Front), a socio-political body of peasants under the Indonesian Communist Party.

This group could more appropriately be seen as launching political issues through the medium of painting, rather than painting with social themes.[79] Actually their radical attitude was not winning more sympathisers. Their works, which mainly looked like propaganda posters, were not aesthetically convincing. Indeed, they created resentment from other groups of artists or simply from progressive artists who had begun to be interested in other art styles and movements. At the politically ideological level the clashes between *Bumi Tarung* and other groups of artists were unavoidable.[80] In Yogyakarta those opposed to LEKRA, and especially *Bumi Tarung*, were *LKN*, *LESBUMI*, *Sanggar Latu Kuning* and a sanggar associated with the Indonesian Christian Party.[81]

In other fields of art similar actions against what was called Westernisation took place. In the Indonesian film world LEKRA attempted to boycott the importation of American films by the American Motion Picture Association, which was accused of having monopolised the Indonesian film market.[82] In addition, this purging of Western influence extended to the Indonesian music world. Rock-and-roll music was publicly branded as un-Indonesian and banned, accused of being charged with American popular culture.[83] (Significantly, however, such incidents also happened elsewhere. The *Harian Rakjat* published a story on the day of LEKRA's first national congress in 1959 telling of a petition from hundreds of Arabic people in Kenya, including two government members, asking that the Kenyan government ban rock-and-roll from local radios. The petition said that rock-and-roll music impaired people's mind and behavior, and that it corrupted Kenyan culture.[84] Presumably PKI and LEKRA members followed with interest other anti-American/anti-Western news published in *Harian Rakyat.*)

This closed-minded tendency occured because LEKRA artists began to orient themselves too closely to the government's Guided Democracy policies, by promoting certain themes in cultural activities. By this LEKRA's artists were conditioned to see themselves as having the most appropriate form to express the social and cultural life, which was part of the completion of the Indonesian revolution.[85] This led them to use the state ideology as a base from which to launch attacks on individuals or organisations opposing their view.

Manifesto Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto)

In the field of literature, as mentioned earlier, there emerged a group of writers, artists, poets and intellectuals later named after the *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto) they published. The manifesto, initially compiled by the writer Wiratmo Sukito, was promulgated on 17th August 1963 after being examined and approved by Gunawan Mohamad and Bokor Hutasuhut. The Manifesto principally stated that culture was a struggle to perfect the human being, and they did not put any priority of one sector of culture over another, since for them every sector of culture struggled for its own goal according to its nature.[86] The *Manifes Kebudayaan* was duplicated and forwarded to prominent Indonesian cultural figures as a challenge to LEKRA's insistence on one kind of art school, Socialist Realism. The *Manifes Kebudayaan* countered LEKRA's intolerance of styles of art other than PKI-advocated art, an intolerance which came to be a suppression of freedom for artists and intellectuals.[87]

In Yogyakarta several visual artists signed the *Manifest Kebudayaan*, including Budiyani, Sapto Hudoyo, Gregorius Sidharta (all ASRI teachers), the geometrist painter Handriyo and the expressionist Rusli. However the three ASRI teachers were not only attacked by LEKRA, but were also administratively penalised by ASRI, and scorned.[88] Sapto left ASRI and became a fulltime artist. Sidharta, who was excluded from the Yogyakartan art world, moved to Bandung where he was assisted by the painter But Muchtar in finding work as a teacher at the ITB.[89] Budiyani left ASRI but was rehabilitated and back teaching at ASRI after 1966. Handriyo and Rusli were also harrassed as a consequence of their involvement Rusli had to hide with pro-*PSI* people in Jakarta, and Handriyo, who remained living in Yogyakarta, was frequently harassed by *Pemuda Rakjat* (PKI's People's Youth organisation). Luckily Handriyo, who was also a musician, had played in the army's symphony orchestra, and managed to get in contact with prominent army figure General Achmad Yani and ask for protection.[90] At the time *Manifest Kebudayaan* was seen as simply an oppositional group to Sukarno and the government's program.

The *Manifest Kebudayaan* was then shortened by its critics into a derogatory term *Mani-kebu* (*mani-kebo*), which literally means 'buffalo semen'. Prominent LEKRA figure Bakri Siregar accused the group of supporting 'universal humanism', a concept which LEKRA had rejected as weakening revolutionary spirit (and therefore supporting the enemies of revolution).[91] Boejoeng Saleh considered the *Mani-kebu* group to be obsessed with formalism, concerned only

with the perfection of form, seeing this as a stage in decadent bourgeois culture which aimed to deprive art of its social function; they were universalist, which was seen to bear a dangerous potential for alienating art from society; and they had an 'art for art's sake' tendency which made art sterile of social construction.[92]

LEKRA writer Virga Belan voiced an even stronger reaction to the manifesto: Belan thought not only the concept, but also its supporters, had to be destroyed and all trace of them removed from Indonesia.[93] The Cultural Manifesto's supporters also announced they did not want to commit themselves to the new concept of *NASAKOM*, and further attacks against them included the one by PKI leader D.N. Aidit, who saw the manifesto as a political danger.[94] Less than a year after its promulgation on 8 May 1964, the Cultural Manifesto was banned by Soekarno, convinced by the PKI that both the Manifesto and its adherents were political risks.[95] Obviously, LEKRA had great influence oin Sukarno's decisions. However, the manifesto's adherents continued their anti-Communist activities from underground. On 8 May 1965 they illegally published a brochure commemorating the banning. This signified that the struggle for freedom from political hegemony was still going on.[96]

In and After 1965

The year 1965 witnessed perhaps the most radical turn yet in Indonesian history, with the drastic events of the night of 30th September-1st October. Several army generals were abducted and killed by certain groups of the armed forces, led by Liutenant-Colonel Untung. This event, which had been preceded by various severe political rivalries and dangerously divisive intrigues amongst the communist groups, non-communist groups, Sukarno, his palace guard, the army and the air force, triggered savage ongoing ideological and physical annihilations against the Communists and other members of the Left.

As far as I remember, in October 1965 there was much confusion. Many of my neighbours were spreading rumours about the killing of several army generals and the discovery of their bodies on 3rd October 1965 in an old dry well named *lubang buaya* (crocodile hole). On 5th October 1965 I was amongst a large crowd of people lining Jalan Pramuka, Jakarta, awaiting the big army escort of the murdered general's bodies as it moved through the city for their public funeral. The situation seemed very emotional and, more importantly, heroic, especially with the armed vehicles and red-beret and green-beret regiments. Some of my relatives stayed in

our house for several days, afraid of mobs. For some time afterwards some neighbours in the kampong were missing. I also remember how the house of Pak RT (the neighbourhood leader) was stormed, and its furniture, books and letters brought out and burned in the front yard of the house. This man was accused of being a Communist and his wife of being a GERWANI (PKI women's organisation) member. By this time people had heard that a planned PKI coup had been foiled, and that the government and the people, backed by the Army, were crushing the Communists. There were rumours of lists of those whom the PKI would have killed after its coup, although no-one seemed to have actually seen such a list. People truly believed this situation. No-one questioned whether it was real or just a fabrication, a means of psycho-war by the Army since the *modus operandi* of the story was the same everywhere, including that told by the senior painter Srihadi Soedarsono. Srihadi said that in his house in ITB's housing complex in Bandung, the Army discovered tools and lists suspected to belong to *Pemuda Rakjat* (People's Youth Organisation) members.[97] This story was similar to what people talked about in our Kampung, and also in Yogyakarta, where people also never actually saw the lists of people to be killed.

As far as I remember, people simply had such a bad, horrible and evil image of the PKI and its nature. The myth of killing Communists, or being killed by them, was everywhere. It seemed an easy thing to say; an individual's life began to sound very cheap, as though killing a communist was like killing a rat. It became a must. The army was guarding kampongs in Jakarta. In our kampong, Rawasari, in Central Jakarta, a number of army personnel were stationed in one of our neighbour's houses, which happened to be quite big and had spare rooms. People were fascinated by the soldiers, and sometimes romanticised the army's heroism, particularly the Red Beret troops (RPKAD or Army Para Command Regiment), who had become legendary for their feats of exterminating the PKI and its adherents.

As it turned out, following the alleged coup attempt, savage anti-communist actions took place throughout the country, costing the lives not only of many PKI members and sympathisers, but also of PNI members considered to be 'left PNI', of Chinese people and of ordinary people who were arbitrarily thought of as 'Communist'.[98] Hundreds of thousands of people were were killed. Witnesses from East Java, where the NU had helped the army eradicate the PKI as well as the 'left PNI', said the Brantas River was full of dead bodies. In Bali at least one hundred thousand people were killed. Many scholars believe the death toll reached

Plate 5

S. Sudjojono

***There the 66 Force Emerged* 1966**

100 x 85 cm; oil.

at least half a million.[99] About 400,000 more were arrested and imprisoned for several years without trial. Thousands of people suspected of being directly or indirectly associated with the PKI were fired from their jobs with no pensions.

At ASRI some LEKRA-associated lecturers were discharged: Suromo, Abdul Salam, Ngajarbana Sembiring and Trubus Sudarsono (who was mysteriously killed). Even R.J. Katamsi, ASRI's first director, was accused of being a communist sympathiser although he was not at all.[100] During the upheaval blind accusations frequently occured. The consequences were serious not just for those connected with PKI's affairs, but also for members of their families, who were branded politically 'unclean' and lost opportunities to work in the public sector, in governmental institutions and in the military.

The results were drastic for LEKRA and *Sanggar Bumi Tarung*, which was soon disbanded. Its members were either imprisoned for several years without trial or killed. Almost all its artworks were destroyed. The artistic styles and tendencies associated with LEKRA were turned away, outmoded or simply misrepresented. In short, after the revolution LEKRA ceased to exist. Its place was to be taken by a genre which had been intellectually suppressed while LEKRA remained in power.

The 1966 Force

The end of the debate and the beginning of the new era was well documented in Sudjojono's painting *Maka Lahirlah Angkatan '66 (There the 66 Force Emerged)* 1966 (Plate 5). The 66 Force was the group of university students and intellectuals which, through strong Army support, managed to press the government to disband and outlaw the PKI, and eventually to topple the Soekarno government. This painting's function as a 'full stop' for LEKRA's 'journey' was irony-laden, since Sudjojono was not only a former LEKRA member but also one of its founders. The painting reflected the ambiguity of the situation and of Sudjojono himself.

Sudjojono could be considered fortunate to have taken a young woman, former *Gerwani* member Rose Pandanwangi,[101] as his second wife in late 1958. This marriage cost him his membership of the PKI, which disallowed polygamy. Sudjojono was recalled from the Constituent Assembly in which he sat as a LEKRA representative.[102] Because of this expulsion he escaped, at the very least, the imprisonment suffered by Hendra Gunawan and other LEKRA artists. Therefore it is important to take a look at this particular painting.

The painting depicts a new generation that was wiping out the PKI and its affiliated organisations. More importantly, it later came into the possession of Adam Malik, a former journalist and leader of MURBA (the proletarian party which was rather Left itself but opposed to the PKI), Indonesia's former foreign minister and later vice-president. Malik was part of the triumvirate (with President Suharto and Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX of Yogyakarta), which inaugurated the New Order and destroyed the PKI. Malik was a Sumatran intellectual who presented the liberal force of the New Order.

The painting depicts a demonstration by the -'66 Force taking place around Jakarta's *Hotel Indonesia*, the best hotel in Soekarno's era and built with his support. The painting has as its background the *Hotel Indonesia* itself, the West Irian Liberation monument (a statue commissioned by Soekarno) and other buildings surrounding the hotel.[103] In the centre is a young man carrying a brush and paint tin. He wears a hat marked with the word *Ampera* (*Amanat Penderitaan Rakyat* or Mandate of People's Suffering) which touches the painting's upper line. The legs extend beyond the painting's bottom line so that the feet (that is, the foundation) are not visible. His red jacket is painted with the words *VIVA KAPPI* (Viva United Front of Indonesian Youths and Students), a front which was mobilised and supported by the Army to demonstrate against the PKI. His belt is an army battle belt. A banner, with sentences such as "Viva the Army", "Banglio Indecent"[104], "Hang Bandrio", "Bandrio is a Peking Dog" and "Dissolve PKI", represents events in Jakarta in 1966. The painting shows the anti-Communist movement and actions by people, students and youth which were supported by the Army beginning in October 1965.

The footless youth at the painting's centre can be read as saying that Sudjojono might have been unsure of what the demonstration stood for, why it happened, who and what was behind the action. However, the youth's innocent-looking face represents the nature of the action, which was not purely student- or youth-motivated. People in Jakarta commonly knew — indeed were proud of the fact — that it was the red-bereted paratroopers of *RPKAD* (the Army Paratroop Regiment) who were behind the anti-Communist actions.

It is significant that Sudjojono did not select for his painting the campus of the University of Indonesia, known to be the base of the -'66 Force (many of the 1966 Force were staff or students there). Instead, Sudjojono used the city-scape of Jalan

Thamrin, where Soekarno-initiated monuments and buildings are located. The Free-Irian monument and the *Hotel Indonesia* are depicted as small and insignificant to represent the collapse of Sukarno's political power. The painting's important point is that it documents the birth of the -'66 Force, which functioned like a ladder by which the New Order could ascend to replace Soekarno's regime, the Old Order. Inasmuch as they both required revolution, this new regime's birth was like the birth of the Republic of Indonesia. The important difference was that the first revolution was a fight between colonised and colonist, with their different ethnic and historical backgrounds. The latter was the defeat of Communism by anti-Communist group and the armed forces. They have many similarities in terms of background but significant political and ideological differences. In some ways this latter revolution was like the Baratayuda war in the *wayang* between the Pandawas and their Astina cousins. The Pandawas win the war; all the main figures of the Astina were killed, along with their subjects.

As the result of the revolution, LEKRA abruptly disappeared from the Indonesian art and cultural world. All artistic styles and aesthetic approaches, as well as artists directly and indirectly associated with LEKRA, were also gone. The 'map' of Indonesian art was left hollow through the disappearance of LEKRA, which brought with it Socialist Realism, and even simply Realism and Social Realism, which were stereotyped as art styles relatively closer to the Communist group than to the anti-Communist group. The gap was soon occupied by Abstract or Abstract Expressionist Art, which was projected as having the orientation chosen by the New Order. This kind of art was adopted as the symbol of victory over Communism.

Conclusion

The art styles and tendencies which rapidly developed after the left wing's eradication were the product of the political and ideological debates, power contests and conflicts of interest between the Communist and anti-Communist groups which characterised Indonesian state politics in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time it was LEKRA which managed to accumulate enough political power to dictate certain art styles and aesthetics within the Indonesian art world at the same time as it refused to tolerate Abstract or Abstract Expressionist art. This could be because LEKRA was too far ensnared in PKI's ideology, or because LEKRA let itself be used as a means of channeling PKI teachings. When Abstract or Abstract Expressionist kinds of art were branded as 'Americanised' or 'Westernised', and

then suppressed by LEKRA, the action was in fact part of the international conflicts related to the Cold War.

As turned out, after October 1965 the politics of Yogyakarta's art scene were reversed along with Indonesian state politics, since LEKRA was completely and physically crushed. Seemingly apolitical art then instantly, and in fact easily, took over from LEKRA's politicised art. In these conditions Abstract or Abstract Expressionist art was able to grow as the single player in the Indonesian art world, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[1] Personal communication with Fadjar Sidik, August 1992.

[2] Foulcher, Keith, *Social Commitment in Literature and The Arts.* Melbourne: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1987, p.209.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Cited in Foulcher, *op cit*, p.23.

[5] Golomstock, Igor. *Totalitarian Art*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990. p.90.

[6] In the LEKRA Manifesto of 1955, LEKRA saw the people as the sole creators of culture, and that the building of a new Indonesian culture could only be carried out by the people: "LEKRA is of the opinion that standing firmly on the side of the people and serving the people is the only way for artists, scholars and other cultural workers to produce results which are tried, tested and durable." See *Manifesto LEKRA Tahun* 1955 (the LEKRA Manifesto of 1955), translated by Keith Foulcher *op cit*, p.218.

[7] Fadjar Sidik, pers. comm. August 1992.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] These five were Sudisman, D.N. Aidit, Nyoto, Lukman and Sakirman. See Ruth McVey, 'The *Wayang* Controversy In Indonesian Communism,' in Mark Hobart and Robert H Taylor (Eds), *Context Meaning And Power In Southeast Asia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1992, p.21.

[10] Fadjar Sidik, August 1992.

[11] Lee Man-Fong, *Lukisan2 Dan Patung2 Koleksi Presiden Sukarno* (Paintings and Statues From Sukarno's Collection). Tokyo: Toppan Printing, 1964.

[12] Ricklefs, M.C., *A History Of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1300.* London: Macmillan Press, 1981, p.275.

[13] By now it was Pramoedya Ananta Toer who felt the political consequences; he was imprisoned for more than 12 years on Pulau Buru without trial.

[14] Holt, Claire, *Art In Indonesia* . Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1967, p.197.

[15] *Ibid* p.198.

[16] By 1948 several artists such as Sudjojono, Abdul Salam, Suromo, Surono, Ramli and their families were accomodated in the classrooms in the Taman Siswa complex where Dewantara also lived. The painter Srihadi also stayed there. The *pendapa* (front verandahs) in the complex were often used for people to practice dancing and Javanese traditional music, and to paint. As Srihadi witnessed, Dewantara often talked to and discussed art with the artists staying there, including Sudjojono. This was described by Srihadi Sudarsono in his house in Bandung, 6 September 1994.

[17] Nochlin, Linda, *Realism*. Middlesex: Penguin, 1978, p.13.

[18] *Ibid* p.112.

[19] Canaday, John, *Mainstreams of Modern Art*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981, p.6.

[20]Lindsay, Jack, *Gustave Courbet: His Life and Art*. Somerset: Adams and Dart, 1973, p.206.

[21] Cited in Sudarmaji, *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming*. STSRI 'Asri' Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, 1974, p.33.

[22] Golomstock, Igor, *op cit* pp.84-85.

[23] James, Vaughan, *Soviet Socialist Realism*, London: MacMillan, 1973, p.86.

[24] *Ibid* p.88.

[25] *Ibid* p.1

[26] Sudarmaji *op.cit* p43.

[27] See Holt, *op. cit* p.218. Edhi Sunarso said that at the time, especially at ASRI, artists commissioned art projects from whatever organisation and whoever had projects. In fact LEKRA was the only organisation which had a clear mechanism for art. Sukarno happened to be the president who loved art and accordingly often commissioned artists.

[28] Plate 165, in Holt, *op. cit* p.220.

[29] See also Astri Wright, *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain*, Oxford, Singapore, 1994, p.124

[30] This was discussed by Butet Kertarajasa, drawing on the unpublished thesis of Bambang Hidayatun, '*Thema Kerakyatan Pada Karya Pelukis Hendra Gunawan*' (The Populist Theme in the Work of Hendra Gunawan), (Yogyakarta: STSRI 'ASRI', 1982) in Butet Kertarejasa, '*Fadjar Tentang Hendra*',*SANI,* STSRI 'Asri' Yogyakarta, no. XVI, September, pp. 6-7.

[31] See Ricklefs *op cit* pp.172-74.

[32] Foulcher *op. cit* p.27.

[33] *Ibid* p.37.

[34] Specifically, Foulcher notes that an essay by a Czech writer was one of the translations that appeared in LEKRA's media, as well as a translation which appeared in *Harian Rakjat*, 8 May 1954, by Pramoedya Ananta Toer from a Chinese source. See Foulcher, *op. cit* pp. 37-38.

[35] *Harian Rakjat*, 24 January and 26 February 1959.

[36] *Harian Rakjat*, 24 January 1959.

[37] Holt, *op. cit.* p.218. This was also told by A.Y. Kuncana (Yap Kim Koen), an ASRI former student, who in 1960 was offered a travel fellowship to China by the painter Trubus Sudarsono, an ASRI teacher and also a LEKRA activist. Kuncana refused the offer because he was an anti-Communist Indonesian Chinese. Kuslan Budiman eventually was sent to China, and has not been seen ever since.

[38] Cockcroft, Eva, 'Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War,' in *Pollock And After: The Critical Debate,* Francis Frascina (ed). New York: Harper & Row, 1985, pp.129-30.

[39] *Ibid* p.129.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] See *ibid* p.128.

[42] *Ibid* pp.128-129.

[43] See Yuliman, Sanento, *Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru.* Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1976 p.25; Holt, *op cit*, p.235.

[44] Spanjaard, Helena, 'The Laboratory Of The West'. In: Joseph Fischer, *Modern Indonesian Art*, The KIAS Exhibition, Jakarta Committee, 1990, p.56., Sudarmaji, *Dari Saleh....*, p.47, and Holt, *op cit*, p.234.

[45] Spanjaard, *op cit.*

[46] Due to technical reasons this workshop was however held for some lecturers only. They included Herry Wibowo, Sudarisman, Wardoyo Sugianto, A.N. Suyanto and Aming Prayitno. This program was followed by inviting Herry, Wardoyo and Sudarisman to continue study of this kind of painting technique in Holland under the teachership of Van den Berg.

[47] Cockcroft *op cit* pp.130-131.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] Personal communication with Dr. Sujoko, 6 September 1994 at the ITB campus.

[50] Wiratno Sukito, a writer associated with the *Manifes Kebudayaan* group, played a significant role in this scheme

[51] Srihadi said that being in the USA when Abstract Expressionism was popular

changed his way of looking at art. Since then time he broke with the Cubist style he had learned from Ries Mulder. Personal Communication, 6 September 1994.

[52] Trisno Sumardjo's (1917-69) art activities are noteworthy. In 1946 he was involved in SIM's activities in Surakarta. In 1954 Trisno made a criticised the work of the young generation of painters from Bandung school exhibited in the *Balai Budaya* (House of Culture) in Jakarta, in an article entitled 'Bandung is the Slave of the Western Laboratory'. In the article he asserted that these students were victims of foreign teachers, their works were bloodless, artificial and breathing a European 'laboratory' air. In 1963, Trisno took part in signing the Cultural Manifesto, a manifesto which challenged art conditions dictated towards politicised art advocated by LEKRA, which only supported Sukarno's Political Manifesto. The article above was originally published in *Mingguan Siasat* (Strategy Weekly) 391, 5 December 1954, and brought to my attention by Helene Spanjaard, who described it as notorious. Joseph Fischer, *op.cit.*, p.55. On the Cultural Manifesto, see Sudarmaji *op. cit* p.54. It was likely that his stay in the USA changed his perspective on art.

[53] Holt *op cit* pp.325-30.

[54] Ricklefs *op cit.* p276.

[55] Holt *op cit* p.322.

[56] Interview with Fadjar Sidik, July 1992.

[57] Bagong was sponsored to receive the scholarship by Claire Holt, a Cornell University researcher. Prior to leaving for the States Bagong was hailed by LEKRA for innovation in dance, but then was accused of being Americanised. This was most likely because of his dance entitled 'A Bird in the Cage' which was his reflection on political and cultural constraints conditioned by LEKRA. However, in 1989 when the curators for the KIAS exhibitions were reviewing whose works of art were to be included in the exhibition, Bagong, who was also one of Hendra's pupils, critically questioned the would-be inclusion of the works by former Left artists, including Djoko Pekik, Lian Sahar, Affandi, Hendra Gunawan etc. The meeting in Yogyakarta was held in the campus of ISI Yogyakarta in Sewon. Present at the time were But Muchtar, Soedarso Sp, Bagong, Djoko Pekik, Lian Sahar, Joseph Fischer, Astri Wright, Sumartono, M. Dwi Marianto, Fadjar Sidik etc. Bagong threatened that he would withdraw from the exhibition if works of the Left artists were included. But eventually he changed his mind and all were included in the exhibition.

[58] See the calender for commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the United State - Indonesian Fulbright Exchange Program, 1992.

[59] All but Sudjojono held the position from 1956-59. Sudjojono luckily left Parliament in 1958 and was then expelled from the Indonesian Communist Party, for the Party did not approved of his second marriage with a young woman, Rose Pandanwangi. See Holt *op cit* pp.321, 324, 327, 329.

[60] Ricklefs *op cit* pp. 184, 246, 247.

[61] *Ibid* p.248.

[62] Holt*op cit* p.239.

[63] *Ibid* p.235.

[64] See Legge, J.D. *Sukarno: A Political Biography*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1972, pp. 307-319.

[65] Bakri Siregar, '*Tjatatan untuk Kongres Nasional KE I Lekra*' (A note for the LEKRA National Congress I), *Harian Rakjat*, 24 January 1959.

[66] See Ricklefs *op cit* pp. 255-263.

[67] This long phrase is like a *suluk* (long rhyme) usually spoken by a *dhalang* to bring the audience to a mystical appreciation of *wayang*.

[68] Ricklefs *op.cit* p.243.

[69] *Ibid* pp.259-266.

[70] Susanto, Budi, Dwijo Atmoko, Sindhunata (eds). *Politik Penguasa dan Siasat Pemoeda* (Authority Politics and the Youth Strategy), Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1994, p.14.

[71] *Ibid* p.256.

[72] Said, Salim. *Shadows On The Silver Screen*. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1991, p.59.

[73] *Ibid* p.59.

[74] The photos of these two woodblock prints were taken by H Chambert-Loir, and are printed in Foulcher *op cit* pp.100-101.

[75] He was imprisoned after 1965 for several years in Yogyakarta. Pelik was never given the opportunity ofa solo exhibition until after the attention given to him by the American curators of the Festival of Indonesia exhibition (KIAS). See also Astri Wright, *Djoko Pekik: A Painter of Expressive Empathy*, Jakarta Post, 24 Feb 89.

[76] Personal communication with Djoko Pekik, August 1993

[77] This woodcut print is included in Keith Foulcher *op cit* p.102.

[78] On the 'Seven Village Devil' see 'Rural Violence In Klaten And Banyuwangi' (translated by Antony Cominos from 'Laporan Tentang Studi Mengenai Keresahan Pedesaan Pada Tahun 1960-An, Yayasan Pancasila Sakti, Jakarta, 1982'). In: Robert Cribb (ed), *The Indonesian Killings 1965-1966*. Clayton:

Monash University, 1990, pp. 121-157.

[79] Sudarmaji *op cit* p.43.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] Abbas Alibasyah, Fadjar Sidik, Bagong Kussudiardjo were those who were active in the LKN-associated group, the writer M Diponegoro led the LESBUMI group and Latu Kuning was led by Aming Prayitno. This latter sanggar was run in its house in Gamelan Tengah, Yogyakarta. It was incorporated with the Catholic theatre group *Starka*, led by Jaso Winarto.

[82]Krishna Sen noted that from the late 1950s until AMPAI was banned in 1964, American films imported by AMPAI dominated the Indonesian film industry, occupying up to 70 per cent of screening time. LEKRA activists also saw that American movies were indirectly used to prepare psychologically for America's political and military advantages. In Krishna Sen, 'Hidden from History: Aspects of Indonesian Cinema 1955-1965'. *RIMA,* vol.19, no. 2 (Summer 1985) pp. 4,5,7 and 20. See also Said, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62.

[83] See Ricklefs *op. cit.* pp247-48 and Sen *op cit* p11.

[84] *'Kenya Menolak Rock-n-Roll'*, in *Harian Rakyat*, 24 January 1959.

[85] See *Manifesto LEKRA Tahun 1955* (the LEKRA Manifesto 1955) translated by Keith Foulcher in Appendix in Foulcher *op cit* p.218.

[86] 'MANIFES-KEBUDAYAAN' (Cultural Manifesto) in Foulcher, Keith, 'A Survey Of Events Surrounding "Manikebu"', *Bijdragen* 125,4 (1969), p.453.

[87] *Ibid* p.432.

[88] In that year the director of ASRI was Ignatius Jumadi. Budiyani was later rehabilitated, and Sapto Hudoyo became a full artist. Beside his involvement in signing the Cultural Manifest, Sidharta's move to Bandung in 1964 was also caused by an internal conflict with ASRI's director, who was backed by Yogyakarta LKN leader Abbas Alibasyah. The dispute was over Sidharta's unfinished study in the Netherlands, under the scholarship of Sticusa, which was not accredited. The Cultural Manifesto was introduced to Sidharta via the painter Nashar. Interview with some senior staff members of FSRD, ISI Yogyakarta, who experienced the 1960s at ASRI

[89] Since Sidharta was regarded as being involved with the prohibited institution he was asked by the ITB rector to issue a free-from-illegal organisation. Luckily he could obtained a recomendation letter from *Kostrad* (the Army Strategic Command).

[90] In an interview with me in August 1993 Handriyo said that at the time he was often intercepted and terrorised by the *Pemuda Rakjat*, which almost made him

mentally sick. Achmad Yani was one of several generals killed by a group of younger generation of the army associated with the PKI.

[91] This was originally articulated by Bakri Siregar in a report of *LESTRA/Lekra*, Surabaya, 3 Nov. 1963 cited by Keith Foulcher in 'Events...', p.441.

[92] Boejoeng Saleh, '*Kearah Seni Berisi : Sekitar Soal Tendens*' (Towards meaningful Art: Concerning the Problem of Tendency) cited in *ibid* pp.430-31.

[93] In *Sekali lagi tentang Humanisme* \(Once again on the subject of Universal Humanism), *Berita Indonesia,* 10 February 1964, cited in*ibid* pp.443-444.

[94] *Ibid* p.442

[95] *Ibid.* p.444.

[96] *Ibid.* p.448.

[97] Personnal communication with Srihadi in his house in Bandung, September 1994.

[98] Vickers, Adrian. *Bali A Paradise Created.* Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1989, p.170.

[99] Ricklefs *op cit* p.288.

[100] Personal communication with the batik designer Ardiyanto, who knew Katamsi personally.

[101] *Gerwani* (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or Indonesian Women's Front), an organisation under the PKI.

[102] Holt, *op cit*, p.329.

[103] The *Hotel Indonesia* and monument were build on the initiative of President Sukarno. Interview on 8 July 1993 with Edhi Sunarso, the sculptor commissioned by Sukarno.

[104] It should be (Su)Bandrio, the name of the Indonesian foreign minister at the time, but was corrupted to 'Banglio' in imitation of Chinese pronunciation.

CHAPTER 4

ABSTRACTION, STUDENT PROTEST, AND THE QUEST FOR ARTISTIC IDENTITY

Yogyakartan abstract art gained momentum as the symbolic antidote to Communism after its competitor, Socialist Realism, was wiped out. Abstract art and multi-media experimentation flourished between 1966 and the 1970s, partly as a response from a society fed up with political turmoil after the trauma of 1965.

In a way abstract art and the freedom to experiment with various media were seen as a victory over politically-dictated art, in this case Socialist Realism: art-for-art's-sake involved removing the socio-political. Abstract art dominated the Yogyakartan scene until the 1970s, when it was challenged by younger artists and art students experimenting with new and radical ideas. They dismissed the art they saw as being socially and politically 'sterile' — if not ignorant — and aesthetically orthodox.

The challenge was significant, for it coincided with national political developments. Various forms of student protest and demonstration were common enough in the 1970s to seriously challenge the New Order. Debate emerged at ASRI between established and younger artists; the latter being more experimental and interested in articulating their socio-political awareness and criticisms of the school's art educational system. For the purpose of this thesis these developments also show the persistence of forms of realism in Yogyakartan art. This chapter discusses art developments in Yogyakarta in the 1970s, placing them in their context as reflections of Indonesian socio-political conditions of the same period.

A Sudden Sensation Of Freedom

Gunawan Mohamad was a signatory to the *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto), the group of artists, writers and intellectuals from the generation of 1945 and their younger successors, which challenged LEKRA's hegemony. Gunawan describes Indonesian literature after the 1965 upheaval in terms which can be applied to Yogyakarta's art world in the same period: 'About 1967 or 1968 there was in Indonesia a sudden sensation of freedom ... Writers came as

individuals, bowing to no common artistic credo, clearly aware (and many of them were new writers) of a rediscovery of creative elan.'[0]

However, this shift cannot be separated from the global setting of the Cold War, where masked conflict between USA-centred and USSR-centred political interests was evident in many activities, including those in the fields of art and culture. In Indonesia's case the USA-oriented force, representing liberalism, humanism and internationalism, won a full victory over the USSR-oriented force, representing socialism and communism. Harry Aveling comments on one aspect of this, saying that the Sukarno era of Guided Democracy and a poetry based on 'the people', heroism, social dignity, and inevitability of history, was over.[1] Even A. Teeuw, a Dutch literary critic generally associated with the anti-LEKRA group, recognised that after 1965 left-wing artistic elements, along with their adherents, disappeared from the Indonesian scene.

This drastic condition was echoed by the fact that by 1966 ASRI had been 'cleansed' of left-wing elements. Abstract and non social-realist painters who had been politically discouraged, such as Fajar Sidik, Abas Alibasyah, Widayat, Bagong Kussudiardjo, Handriyo, Rusli and Amri Yahya,[2] ascended to the Yogyakartan art stage. Fajar, Abas and Widayat, along with Wardoyo and Mudjitha, assumed teaching positions at ASRI. Moreover, the academy's leadership was entrusted to Abas Alibasyah, who replaced ASRI's second director I. Djumadi not long after 1966.

Abas Alibasyah, known for his charisma and political tact, had studied at ASRI in 1950-54 under Hendra Gunawan.[3] The effect of this on his early paintings is clear: Sudarmaji explains that Abas's work in the 1950s had affinities with the realism of the *Pelukis Rakyat*.[4] Abas' painting 'Kampung' (Kampung) in Adam Malik's collection depicts shanty huts reminiscent of the bird market in Yogyakarta. The dresses, hats, birdcage poles, bamboo curtains and stubble roofs represent the peasant's life.[5]

Abas's other LKN companion, Fajar Sidik, became head of the Painting Department. He taught art criticism, basic design and painting. His study of English literature for a while at the University of Gadjah Mada gave him access to Western art literature. He also studied painting conservation in New Zealand in 1969. This, along with his articulate nature, made Fajar Sidik an influential teacher at ASRI. Significantly, Fajar also learned painting in the *Sanggar Pelukis Rakyat*

style under Hendra Gunawan and Soedarso from 1953 until 1957.[6] He was impressed by Hendra's personality and commitment in the Yogyakartan art world, describing Hendra as charismatic, sociable, practical, helpful, charitable and fully involved with his pupils' art activities. But it was Hendra's anti-colonialism, bringing him close to the Left, which influenced Fajar most.[7] Hendra's tendency to depict peasant life, such as a peasant women boiling rice or looking for head lice, or traditional vendors, inspired Fajar's way of looking at themes for his painting. Thus it is understandable that his early paintings were either realist or impressionist, depicting themes of daily activities and nature.

However, Fadjar Sidik shifted his style to Abstract art after living and painting in Bali. He saw industrial and technological developments in Bali in the early 1960s as having interfered too much with Bali's natural life. For him technological and industrial artefacts such as aeroplanes, cars, hard-edged modern buildings and sunglasses had begun spoiling Bali. Sidik felt that these modernist artefacts could not mix with Bali's natural environment, and he concluded that they could not be combined in a painting. This recognition marks his turning away from realism and impressionism, forms which aimed to catch a physical environment and a daily reality.[8] Sidik began simplifying and abstracting forms and elements in an attempt to produce his own visual language, which he called 'dynamics of space'.

Although Fajar Sidik shifted from realist and impressionist styles to abstraction, he still had the social sensitivity Hendra used to encourage in his pupils. Sidik's social sensitivity made him critical of the contrast between modern technology and natural scenery in Bali. Hendra always encouraged his pupils to find their own styles and selves in their works[9] — something realised in the way Sidik invented his own visual language.

It is worth noting that of the ASRI painting teachers of the late 1960s and 1970s, only Wardoyo consistently used a realist technique. He was one of the founders of Sanggar Bambre an artists' group which stayed away from politics in the 1960's. Wardoyo's paintings were mostly figurative, depicting either single human figures or groups. Furthermore, Wardoyo often depicted peasants and their activities, such as in a painting depicting two buskers, male and female. The man is playing a Javanese traditional *sitar* and the woman — who is singing a Javanese song — wears thick make-up and a brightly coloured dress, with a shiny fake gold tooth. Wardoyo's consistent practice of realist painting, albeit with 'hillbilly' or populist themes, was more likely a product of his specialisation in teaching human figure

drawing and painting than of any political motivation.[10] Wardoyo was known among his colleagues as a person who would compromise and who was not interested in talking about politics at all.

Widayat likewise was not interested in politics, despite the fact that he had learned painting from Hendra and Sudarso.[11] He was a former ASRI student who taught at ASRI from 1954 until the late 1980s and was a prolific painter. He was more interested in exploring artistic means and media to bring forth his aesthetic experience. The themes ranged from decorative natural landscapes and daily life to Indonesian regional cultural artefacts. Until his retirement in the 1980s Widayat's enthusiasm and dedication to art had inspired many ASRI students. He was well known as a teacher who was open-minded to students' comments during weekly art critiques. Nevertheless, most of his comments were limited to the artistic aspects of his speciality. In other words, his comments emphasised formal features of the works, but did not contextualise them in relation to any social or cultural issues.[12]

Another LKN painter who became noticeable in the Yogyakarta art scene at the time was Bagong Kussudiardjo. Initially he was an experimental dancer and choreographer who became interested in painting. His visual artworks ranged from motifs of dancers to shadow puppets, biblical stories and abstract images. He also taught dance appreciation classes at STSRI 'ASRI' part-time from 1969 until the 1980s.[13] As with Widayat and the other non-LEKRA artists, Bagong tended not to mix painting with social concern. Instead, Bagong seemed to be more concerned with formal experimentation with colours, lines, textures, shapes and other visual elements. Many of his paintings in some way reflected Bagong's other activities such as teaching dance, choreography or commissioning dances for national events and filming. Bagong's paintings are formally dynamic, colourful, and in some cases extravagant, much like the dresses and costumes of Javanese court dance.

Another phenomenon of Yogyakarta's art scene in the 1970s was the adoption of the *batik* technique to painting. *Batik* hitherto had been slighted by the art world as a 'minor' or traditional art medium. In the 1970s it was adopted as a major art form by such artists as Abas Alibasyah, Bagong Kussudiardjo, Amri Yahya and Mudjitha, as well as by a host of lesser-known artists. Among them, it was Amri Yahya who fully devoted himself to *batik*. Amri applied wax drippings and big brushstroke techniques for the motifs of his colourful abstract and Arabic calligraphic paintings.

By the time ASRI had been upgraded to become STSRI 'ASRI' in 1968, a younger generation of painters had joined the Department of Painting. They included Suwaji (teaching since 1968), Soebroto (teaching since 1969), Nyoman Gunarsa (teaching since 1968) and Aming Prayitno (teaching since 1970). These people were former ASRI students who had joined the *sanggar*s opposing LEKRA hegemony.

Soebroto's painting typifies this group's interest. It was a transition from realistically or impressionistly figurative painting to abstract. There was a sense of spontaneity in his painting: Subroto was not too concerned with the complexity and likeness of his subjects. Instead, he intended to express his passion as spontaneously as possible. For this Subroto chose media and materials which did not slow down the flowing process of image casting. He used fluid paints applied from plastic bottles, through which the paints could flow down by themselves, or squashed the bottles to cast figurative images. His usual themes were mother and child, executed on paper or canvas.

What was radically different in the post-LEKRA period was represented by the Abstract paintings of Aming Prayitno. His painting can be read as a milestone marking the end of LEKRA's influence in Yogyakartan art. There was no narrative sense in his paintings. There was no figure to be literally interpreted as someone or something. Rather, it was the quality of textures that mainly preoccupied his painting. The textures could be associated with rocks, bark, wood or any other textured object, and indicated a tendency to return to nature. Icons and visual traits of the previous decades were replaced with basic visual elements. This period was characterised by material experimentations. As art historian and printmaker Sun Ardi notes, at the beginning of the 1970s many young artists began exploring unconventional materials and techniques, even going beyond the conventional terminology of painting by using three-dimensional objects as painting elements. Ready-made objects, such as plastics, metals and photo-copied materials, commonly were used during this period.[14]

Student Protest

Student protests characterised Indonesian politics in the early 1970s, climaxing with the riots known as the MALARI affair (from *Malapetaka Januari*, orthe January disaster) in the capital, Jakarta.[15] It is worth noting that student groups had played a significant role in 1966 in the founding of the New Order by challenging

the Old Order's government under Sukarno in support for Suharto. The 1966 groups such as KAMI (the Indonesian Student Front) and KAPPI (the Indonesian Youths and Pupils Front) were mobilised, supervised and backed by the Army to hold anti-communist and anti-government demonstrations.[16] Despite this, in the early 1970s some former leaders of the 1966 generation, notably the scholar and writer Arief Budiman, launched criticism and anti-corruption protests.[17]

Events leading to the MALARI affair, however, did not feature these activists quite so much as former party leaders, intellectuals, leaders of weaker elements in the indigenous business community and intellectuals close to dissatisfied elements in the military.[18] The MALARI affair took the form of protest against Japanese economic domination, but extended to attacks on shops, offices and cars in the streets and the burning down of a huge shopping centre. The riot took place both in the Chinese quarter and in Jakarta's business centre.[19] They were an outburst of accumulated protests voiced by university and high school students, intellectuals, academics, artists and writers. These people had critical views on social inequalities, the government's economic dependence on foreign investment, corruption and the excessive powers of high officials and government bodies. It also included criticism on the socio-economic gap between 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' (Chinese-descended) Indonesians.[20] Prior to MALARI, in November 1973, at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, a number of intellectuals and student activists such as Mochtar Lubis, Yap Thiam Hien, Adnan Buyung Nasution, Yuwono Sudarsono, Dorodjatun Kuntjorojakti, Marsilam Simanjuntak, Remy Leimena, Hariman Siregar, Yozar Anwar and Louis Wangge signed a petition which they called the '*Ikrar Warganegara Indonesia*' (the Acknowledgement of Indonesian Citizens). This urged the government to review the orientation of cultural and economic development, which had been profitable to the elite and foreign investors but not to the common people or small entrepreneurs.[21]

In Yogyakarta, not long before this petition, student representatives from the University of Gadjah Mada, the University of Atmajaya, STSRI 'ASRI', the National Institute of Islam and the Islamic University of Indonesia signed and sent a petition to the President. This petition urged the reactivation of the power of Indonesia's constitutional bodies, and urged that the power of the KOPKAMTIB (the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) which was founded right after the crushing of the PKI, be ended.[22] No less significantly, in voicing socio-political and economic issues they tried to draw support from ordinary people, such as labourers, *becak* (pedicab) drivers and farmers, to

improve social justice.[23] Some radicals, including Hariman Siregar, the student activist most associated with the MALARI affair, used three socio-political issues to voice the possibility of a change of President, the cabinet and even of the Indonesian constitution.[24]

In Yogyakarta's art world, critical views also were voiced by Yogyakartan poet and playwright W.S. Rendra through his theatre performances and poems. Rendra (b.1935) along with some other artists and student activists, managed to create popular images to convey an interpretation of the regime as bloated, corrupt and extravagant, and of foreign capital as an exploitative 'economic animal'.[25] Rendra, who toured the USSR in 1957, was absent for the bloody 1965 climax to the communist — non-communist debate, since he went to the USA in 1964 to attend a seminar at Harvard University and then studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Art in New York City until 1967. Since returning from the USA Rendra had written poems and experimented with radical but humourous theatre performances. David Hill describes Rendra as one of the poets who spoke in the early era of the New Order on social and political issues.[26] Through his work Rendra expressed his general views on trends in Indonesian society in the -'70s.[27] Rendra, along with other intellectuals, attended a meeting of student representatives from several universities and institutes in Bandung prior to the MALARI affair.[28] In his plays he particularly alluded to the issues of dependency on foreign economies, and the nature of oppression and exploitation in Indonesia.[29]

Rendra's theatre workshop was just one kilometer away from the campus of STSRI 'ASRI'. Its theatre activities included ASRI students, and its members often hung out with ASRI students in the Seni Sono Art Gallery and venues in the main street, Jalan Malioboro. Here they held exhibitions and theatre performances. At these venues, and at the *warung kopi Pak Wongso* (the coffee stall *Pak Wongso*) at Wirobrajan and the *warung Mbok Kerto* at Gampingan, ASRI students, sculptors, painters, writers, poets, musicians, and theatre players had been talking informally about art and Yogyakartan contemporary issues since the late 1950s.[30] Two of those taking part in these discussions were Umbu Landu Paranggi and Putu Wijaya. Umbu was a poet studying at the University of Gadjah Mada, and Putu was a former ASRI student who joined the workshop and became a poet and writer himself. No less important was the group's contact with Westerners. Foreigners joined Rendra's theatre group, mingling with its members and with ASRI students. By this means contemporary socio-political and cultural discourses and information, including art trends in the West, were shared by students of ASRI. All

of these contacts made significant contributions to young Yogyakartan artists' works.

At the same time as university students in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung were questioning New Order political legitimacy in the 1970s, on a smaller scale critical students at ASRI, informed by social and political issues, were challenging Yogyakarta's art establishment. They were particularly questioning their teachers' attitudes, which they thought were not responsive to recent tendencies in art. Sun Ardi wrote that young artists in the 1970s were restless, since they were challenged by circumstances to be more individual and able to bring forth novelty in their work.[31] No less importantly, Sun Ardi adds that contacts with information and various products from the West had increased.[32] The young artists began to criticise commonly established art values in Yogyakarta as mere orthodoxy and dogma, no longer related to their interests in experimenting with unconventional media, techniques and ideas.

The nature of the anti-art-establishment attitude of these young artists was illustrated by the debate around the 1974 *Pameran Besar Seni Lukis Indonesia* (the 1974 Grand Exhibition of Indonesian Painting) held in Jakarta. The exhibition jury chose the works of A.D. Pirous (b.1933), Irsam, Aming Prayitno (b.1943), Widayat (b.1923), and Abas Alibasyah (b.1928) as the best paintings.[33] A.D. Pirous was a lecturer in the Art Department at ITB, the *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (the Institute of Technology, Bandung), Irsam was an official in the *Direktorat Jendral Kesenian* (the General Directorate of Art), and the other three were lecturers at STSRI 'ASRI' Yogyakarta.

When the result was known, young artists from Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta were convinced that those who held authority in the art world at the time made no room for the kind of experimental art then fashionable among young artists and art students. They charged the authorities with only being keen on what they labelled 'decorative' and 'consumerist' art.[34] In addition they were incensed by a statement believed to have been made by one of the people in authority, that in order to find truly Indonesian artworks it was necessary to reject experimental art, which was easily seen as having foreign influences.[35] As a reaction the young artists ordered a flower tribute with a message attached to it: *'Ikut berduka cita atas kematian seni lukis Indonesia'* (Condolences on the death of Indonesian painting).[36] This tribute was sent to the exhibition committee at the same time as the selected painters were receiving their awards. The young artists distributed what became known as the

Desember Hitam (Black December) statement. It appealed to art authorities to guarantee the freedom of diversity in art in Indonesia.[37]

The 'Black December' case did not cease there, but was prolonged on the campus of STSRI 'ASRI' in Yogyakarta. The fact that three of the award recipients were ASRI lecturers — one in fact was even the Head of STSRI 'ASRI' — made the case worse. ASRI students such as Bonyong Munni Ardhi, Ris Purwana, Hardi and Harsono, who had co-signed the statement, were disciplined for an unlimited period on the basis of vaguely-defined political charges. Lecturers who defended the students — art critic Sudarmaji and poet and writer Darmanto Yatman — also were 'discharged'.[38] The treatment of Yogyakarta's 'Black December' students stood in contrast to that in Jakarta and Bandung, where students at ITB and LPKJ, the *Lembaga Pendidikan Kesenian Jakarta* (the Jakarta Institute of Art) who had signed the statement received no punishment. Indeed, they were even welcomed back to their campuses.[39]

The ASRI sanction against students and staff compelled some concerned students to hold a protest exhibition,[40] showing works critical of the authoritarian attitudes imposed upon students at ASRI. By this means the students were appealing to senior staff to be more open towards new art developments, and demonstrating their resistance to dictatorial methods.[41] The exhibition, entitled *Pameran 'Nusantara-Nusantara'* (the Archipelagos Exhibition), was held at the Karta Pustaka Yogyakarta[42] by Samikun, I Gusti Bagus Wijaya, Wardoyo, Nisan Kristianto, Sudarisman, Suatmaji, Agustinus Sumargo and Agus Dermawan T.

Instead of appreciating the students' appeal, the Head of STSRI 'ASRI', Abas Alibasyah, once again gave a show of power by threatening to expel them.[43] The students were thus frightened into writing a letter of apology for their exhibition and asking for a pardon from the Head. Unfortunately, they put all the blame upon one of the group. Agus Dermawan T, the most articulate amongst them, was then expelled from the school. Agus Dermawan later became a prominent art critic.[44]

Criticisms of art orthodoxy by young artists in Yogyakarta were linked to questions raised by Gregorius Sidharta, who had moved to ITB Bandung in 1964 but was in conflict with Abas while still a teacher at ASRI. In the early 1970s Sidharta began questioning the established kind of art and art atmosphere which separated artists from their social environment. He also challenged the heavy emphasis on approaching art with Western thinking and methods, and specifically challenged

attitudes which emphasised a 'universal' in art: 'for those who feel thay have been able to place themselves in an environment which all is progressive and modern which come from afar out there [referring to the West] ... this they consider universal!'[45] In other words Sidharta challenged the philosophy of 'art for art's sake' which rapidly developed under the blessing of the New Order Government and without contenders after the crushing of the Left, in contrast to the socialist-realist art developed towards the end of the Old Order Government.[46] Sidharta by no means wished to reorientate art in the direction of the art propagated by LEKRA; rather, he asserted that an artist could not be separated from his/her social environment: '... And is there any kind of art which is independent from its ties to its environment?'[47]

What Identity?

In one respect the sense of being aware of one's social environment was indirectly shown by Yogyakartan young artists after the 'Black December' scandal. The 'Black December' students, along with others from ASRI, built a network with other young artists from outside Yogyakarta to share in their contemporanity and to enrich their outlook and knowledge. The direct result of this was an exhibition entitled *Pameran Seni Rupa Baru* 1975 (the 1975 New Art Exhibition) at the *Taman Ismail Marzuki* (TIM) Jakarta in August 1975. The exhibiting group comprised young artists from Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta: Anyool Subroto, Bachtiar Zainoel, Jim Supangkat, Pandu Sudewo, Muryoto Hartoyo, Nanik Mirna, Siti Adyati, Harsono, Bonyong Munni Ardhi, and Hardi. These last five artists were from STSRI 'ASRI' Yogyakarta, Nanik Mirna and Siti Adyati being women artists, and the three others were 'Black December' students. They exhibited a type of art new to Indonesia, but which had roots in European 1920s Dadaism and American 1960s Pop art. It comprised installations of ready-made objects, collages, pop-looking drawings and conceptual drawings ridiculing classical Indonesian artefacts, all with the aim of being confronting and shocking. Harsono's work, for example, showed a window-like image in whose centre there was a machine gun and writing which read '*Paling Top '75'* (The Top in '75).[48] Another good example was Jim Supangkat's installation, which juxtaposed a reproduction of the Indonesian classical Siwaite statue, Ken Dedes, with opened women's jean drawn in pop style. In Javanese legends Ken Dedes is an object of kings' sexual needs. Here she appears topless, wearing jeans unzipped to display pubic hair.[49]

Regardless of the manner of selecting themes and presenting works, these young artists reflected a 1970s urban Indonesian modernism, where pop culture combined with the militarism of the New Order Government's security approach. Along with their radical exhibition, this group named themselves *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* (GSRB — the 'New Art Movement') and presented a five-point statement about the art they were pursuing:

> Five Assertions of the New Art Movement of Indonesia:
>
> 1. In creating art, we reject the conventional notion of 'visual art' known until recently which was limited to: painting, sculpture and printmaking.
> 2. We reject a 'specialising' attitude in visual art which has led only to the creation of 'elitist language' merely based on 'avant-gardism'. This should be replaced by egalitarianism and an attitude concerned more with actual social matters than with personal sentiments.
> 3. We highly value diversity and novelty in art, and reject any kind of art dictation.
> 4. We hope for the development of Indonesianness in Indonesian art, and in Indonesian art and literature by Indonesian writers, historians and critics. We reject the notion which classifies Indonesian art history as a part of world art history.
> 5. We hope to have a lively visual art which is convincing, natural, useful and alive in society.[50]

The statement obviously has a strong ring of 'nationalism',[51] although its rejection of any usage of a Western art framework in looking at Indonesian art was to some extent discontinuous with the way the artists executed and presented their works.[52] Their works had much in common with European Dadaism, where conventional notions of art were rejected,[53] and Pop Art in the USA, in which banalities were raised to the status of 'high art'. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that this desire to set Indonesian art free of Western thought coincided with one of the MALARI catchcries: anti foreign economic domination, especially that of Japan, in Indonesia.[54] The movement, which voiced 'unconventionality' and 'newness', inspired its Yogyakartan participants and attracted others to prepare an even more radical exhibition, the *Kepribadian Apa?* (What Identity?) Exhibition of 1977.

After the 'Black December' scandal and the injection of GSRB's ideas into the art world, interest in experimental, conceptual and happening art grew among the circle of Bonyong Munni Ardhi and ASRI students. Bonyong said that these new

kinds of art were not taught yet at ASRI[55] whilst quite a number of young artists had already experimented with them. They jokingly named their art activities *'kepribadian apa?'* (What Identity?),[56] and planned to exhibit their works at the Seni Sono Art Gallery. This exhibition was intended to mock kinds of painting at ASRI which they cynically considered to be merely beautiful, sweet and formalist. To them one of the despised examples was the work of Fadjar Sidik,[57] at that time the Head of the Painting Department. Many of those preparing works for the exhibition were students in the Department: Ronald Manulang, Didiet Riyanto, Ivan Haryanto, Djoko Sulistyo Kahar, Harris Purnama, Slamet Riyadi, Redha Sorana, Bambang Darto, Tulus Warsito, Budi Sulistyo and Gendut Riyanto. The rest of the group comprised Jack Body (a Westerner), Sapto Raharjo (a musician), Dede Eri Supriya and Bonyong Munni Ardhi.[58]

The *Kepribadian Apa?* group had applied long beforehand to the police for permission to exhibit, as people are supposed to do when holding any public activity in Indonesia. In order to secure this permission they assured the police that in principle they loved Indonesia and Indonesian art, and would show this in their work. In the proposal they wrote that they would be 'painting' two-dimensional objects.[59] But they actually planned to do more than that. Their main goal was to exhibit experimental art, regardless of whether it comprised two- or three-dimensional works. However the police were cautious about giving permission, with the theme 'What Identity?' in particular causing suspicion. Moreover, up to this point the police had banned Rendra's theatre group from performing poetry readings and theatre performances, due to their strong political implications. To judge whether the proposal should receive permission, the police repeatedly visited each of the group members' studios. The police monitored their works and the places they hung around. Gradually the police became suspicious of the development of their works, not only because the art's visual vocabulary was beyond the police's understanding, but also because the works began to imply politically sensitive matters. Bambang Darto's painting, for example, borrowing the idea of Marcel Duchamp's moustached Mona Lisa, mockingly depicted the Mona Lisa with the Indonesian First Lady's face. No less potentially political was Harris Purnama's painting, which depicted skinny and unhealthy-looking babies. One was being fed with milk from a bottle. In order to make a statement he explicitly showed the brand of the dried milk — *Susu Bendera*, a popular brand at the time.

By the day the exhibition was supposed to open, the police had not yet given

permission. The artists, on the other hand, had already sent invitations to many people, including journalists, and the works had been set up. The police asked Bonyong not to show a particular installation, depicting a sculpture of a beggar sitting before a long plaited-bamboo fence. On the fence there was a plaque announcing in detail that a huge project, named the 'ASEAN Tower', was to be built there by the contractor C.V. Suhartono.[60] Another work by Bonyong was an installation whose elements depicted disgusting things. He bought a fresh cow's head, and cut it into pieces. Then he put the eyes, the snout, the ears and the other parts in shelves in order to show something that was gross and pungent. According to Bonyong this was a statement about his group's works in contrast with the pretty and sweet things produced at ASRI. Bonyong intended to mock works which were harmoniously artistic, or 'touristic', like the works at ASRI which received the 1976 annual Wendy Sorensen awards.[61] In a similar statement, Redha Sorana displayed a urinal (after Duchamp). This was his rejection of 'cute, beautiful and harmonious looking' art.[62]

Two days after the planned opening (1st September 1977), permission still had not been obtained. However, a 'happening' had been planned for that day, involving all those interested in discussing Yogyakarta's art scene. When people had entered the gallery, the organisers planned to cut off the venue's electricity, so that in the dark, people raising and answering questions would remain invisible and anonymous. The organisers were aware this could lead to wild scenes, but as they still had not obtained permission from the police, they could do nothing. However, since there were already many people inside the exhibition room on the evening of the second day, the lights were put out. In the dark some frustrated artists went wild, shouting and swearing, including swearing about the police. Luckily there was an ASRI lecturer, Budiyani, whom they still respected, who asked that they stop the evening's activities. Eventually police intervened and dispersed the group as well as the exhibition. Each group member was interrogated by the police.[63]

Not long after this, two ASRI students who also took part in the *Kepribadian Apa?* group made another rather anarchic action as a mocking gesture against the educational system and curriculum at their campus. These young artists, Redha Sorana and Slamet Riyadi, viewed the school as an arena where students were only contesting for a degree, but not for the quality in the knowledge of and in creating art. On 7 November 1977 the school would hold a final examination for would-be graduating students (final year students). Very early that morning, Rheda Sorana and Slamet Riyadi installed their ridiculing statement. It included:

1. Putting a banner which read *SELAMAT BERLOMBA MERAIH 'GELAR'* ('have a nice contest for a degree') on the facade of the main building.
2. Wrapping the statue of ASRI's founding director, R.J. Katamsi, the banyan trees, and the outer courtyard with newspaper.
3. Putting a black umbrella on the letter S of the sign *ASRI* above the building's main door.
3. Setting up a row of wooden slippers on newspaper heading toward the main door of the building.
4. Hanging a birdcage on the flagpole.[64]

This activity was clearly a continuation of the attitude which had motivated the GSRB group, the 'Black December' statement and the *Seni Kepribadian Apa?* exhibition. The fact that from 1974 to 1977 ASRI and ITB students had visited each other and shared critical views about academic life and political matters created a mutual perspective on art. Although it was not formally stated from their works, we can infer that abstract art was losing ground to those particular groups who contextualised their works to what was happening in daily life. Above all, these radical art activities cannot be separated from the turbulence at university campuses in several big Javanese cities. All of this caused suspicion between students and lecturers.

At ASRI critical students accused their lecturers and the school system of being orthodox, even decadent, and said the establishment could not catch the rapidly accelerating ideas of the young. These tendencies were borrowed from art movements in Europe and the USA which were really radical and even anarchic, such as Dada, Pop Art, Happenings and Conceptual Art. These tendencies were then reinforced by the social and political conditions in which the establishment of the New Order Government was challenged, as on a smaller scale young Yogyakartan artists challenged the Yogyakartan art establishment. All of these were just part of the precedents to the depoliticisation policy which would be implemented several months after the 'What Identity?' exhibition, as discussed in the next chapter.

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[0] Originally in Goenawan Mohamad, '*Njanji Sunji Jang Kedua*' (The Second Quiet Song), *Horison,* February 1969, p.42, see the introductory comments in Harry Aveling, *Contemporary Indonesian Poetry*, (St. Lucia: University of Queensland

Press, 1975), p.xvii.

Twenty five years later, in 1994, he is a leading figure in the campaign for Indonesian press freedom since the banning of *Tempo* magazine, of which he was chief editor, and two other magazines, *Editor* and *Detik*, on 21 June 1994. Another tabloid, *Simponi*, was banned in September 1994.

[1] Aveling, Harry *op cit* p.xvii.

[2] Widayat was former head of *PIM* (*Pelukis Indonesia Muda* or Young Indonesian Artists), founded in 1952.

[3] They both came from West Java and of course had a cultural affiliation.

[4] Sudarmaji, *Dari Saleh sampai Aming* (From Saleh To Aming), STSRI 'ASRI' Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, 1974, p.73.

[5] Liem Tjoe Ing, *Lukisan-Lukisan Koleksi Adam Malik*. Jakarta: Intermasa, 1979, p.104.

[6] Catalogue of the Painting Exhibition of *Dimensi*, 25 January 1991, p.33.

[7] Interview with Fadjar Sidik on 7 July 1993. Fadjar said that Hendra was offered a STICUSA (Stichting Culturile Samenwerking) scholarship by the Dutch but refused. He threw away the letter of offer from STICUSA.

[8] Fadjar Sidik, '*Teknologi, Seni Rupa dan Apresiasi Masyarakat*' (Technology, Fine Arts and People's Appreciation), a seminar paper, (Yogyakarta: the Research and Cultural Study Centre of the University of Gadjah Mada, 1981), p.7, cited in Sun Ardi, 'Seni Lukis Yogyakarta 1945-1980', MA thesis Gadjah Mada Universiy, 1988, p.58.

[9] Butet Kertarejasa, 'Fajar Tentang Hendra', *SANI* No.xvi, September 1983, pp.6-7.

[10] Wardoyo began teaching human drawing and portrait painting in 1963. See *Asri 20 Tahun*, p.46.

[11] Sun Ardi wrote that Widayat was the first graduate to have learned painting from the *sanggar* tradition.

[12] See also Sudarmaji *op cit* pp.77-78.

[13] I attended his class in 1978, which was held at his dance *sanggar* in Singosaren near the STSRI 'ASRI' campus.

[14] Sun Ardi, 'Seni Lukis Yogyakarta 1945-1980', p.102.

[15] MALARI was the biggest social unrest after the 1965 upheaval, claiming 11 lives and 177 serious and 120 minor injuries, and leaving 775 people detained, and 807 cars, 187 motorcycles and 144 buildings (shopping centres, offices and factories such as Coca-Cola) burned or badly damaged. See Wiwoho and Banjar Chaeruddin, *Memori Jendral Yoga*. Jakarta: Bina Rena Pariwara, 1990, p.219.

[16] Crouch, Harold. *The Army And Politics In Indoonesia.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978, p.166.

[17] Corruption at PERTAMINA (*Perusahaan Pertambangan Minyak dan Gas Bumi Negara*, the State Oil and Natural Gas Company) in the building of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Disney-like entertainment centre) were under criticism at the time. See Richard Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise Of Capital.* North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987, p.160-161.

[18] *Ibid* p.161.

[19] Most of which belonged to Indonesian-Chinese business people. On the second day, 16th January 1974, the *Proyek Senen* shopping centre was ransacked by people from the surrounding slum areas, stealing goods from the shops and burning the shopping centre. On this second day the troops took stern action against the rioters, in contrast to the subdued military response to the first day of MALARI. Worth noticing here is that prominent military figures, such as General Ali Murtopo (President's personal assistant, along with Sujono Humardani) allowed the riots to happen, in order to discredit and bring down KOPKAMTIB commander General Sumitro, who was close to university students and whose clique were seen as a rival to the ruling groups. See Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia.* Blackburn: Fontana Books, 1981, pp.134-139.

[20] McDonald *op cit* pp.136-39. McDonald writes that the lawyer Adnan Buyung Nasution pressed for the abolition of such 'extra-constitutional' bodies as the *Aspri* and *Kopkamtib*, and more seriously, asked for the annulment of the *Supersemar* declaration, by which Suharto took power from Sukarno, and the Army's Dual Function doctrine, which justified it. The New Order Government was beginning to be questioned and challenged.

[21] Wiwoho and Chaeruddin *op cit* p231.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] See the speech of Hariman Siregar, and also a memorandum prepared by the students to welcome IGGI President JP Pronk, who visited Jakarta in 1973, in *ibid* p.234-35.

[24] *Ibid* Pp.246-47.

[25] Robison *op cit* p.164.

[26] Hill, David T., *Who's Left? Indonesian Literature in the Early 1980s.* Clayton: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985, p.2.

[27] See Rendra, *Kisah Perjuangan Suku Naga* (The Story of the Struggle of the Naga Tribe), trans Max Lane. St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1979.

[28] Wiwoho and Chaeruddin *op cit*, p.233.

[29] See Max Lane, 'Translator's Introduction' in Rendra, *The Struggle Of The Naga Tribe,* p.xvii.

[30] Suryadi, Linus, *Di Balik Sejumlah Nama.* Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989, p.64.

[31]Ardi *op cit* p.102.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Agus Dermawan T. 'Yang Sempat Saya Catat, Sebelum dan Sesudah Pagelaran Seni Rupa Baru 1977'(What I've had a Chance to Note, Before and After the Showing of the New Art in 1977), in Jim Supangant (ed), *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* Jakarta: Gramedia, 1979, p.2.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Interview with Bonyong, 26 July 1992

[39] Agus Dermawan T. *op cit* p.2.

[40] *Ibid.*p3.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Karta Pustaka Yogyakarta is the Dutch-Indonesian friendship institute for cultural and educational development, financed by the Dutch Government. This institute has an exhibition hall where ASRI students often hold exhibitions.

[43] Agus Dermawan T. *op cit.*

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Sidharta, G. 'Satu Renungan di Sekitar Identitas dan Perkosaan' (A Contemplation on Identity and Rape), in Jim Supangkat, (ed) *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru.* Jakarta: Gramedia, 1979. pp9-10.

[46] See Astri Wright, Soul, Spirit And Mountain: Preoccupations Of Contemporary Indonesian Painters. PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1991, p328.

[47] Sidharta *op cit.* p10.

[48] See Supangkat *op cit* p.114.

[49] *Ibid* p.115.

[50] *Ibid* p.xix.

[51] In a fierce polemic with Kusnadi, who criticised the NAM, Sudarmaji raised a question: 'Since when did Indonesian modern art stop swallowing Western art?' See Sudarmaji, 'Kusnadi nan buruak sangko', in Jim Supangkat *op cit* p.36.

[52] Brita Miklouho-Maklai, partly quoting Jennie Dudley, writes that apart from the stimulus of events occurring within Indonesia, the artists involved were almost

certainly influenced by art in the USA and Europe, albeit in diluted form through magazines and books. Dada and Surrealism, forerunners of Pop Art, and art of the 1960s in which the boundaries between painting, sculpture, printmaking, advertising, and drawing were blurred and erased, resulted in new artform. See Brita Miklouho-Maklai, *Exposing Society's Wounds. Some Aspects of Contemporary Indonesian Art since 1966*, Adelaide: Flinders University Asian Studies, p.25.

[53] Schneede, Uwe M. *Surrealism*. Trans Maria Pelikan. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1973, p.11.

[54] Robison. *Op cit.* p165.

[55] Personal communication with Bonyong Munni Ardhi, one ASRI's discharged Black December students, a member of the NAM and one of *Kepribadian APA?* Exhibition activists, 26th July 1992.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Jack Body was a musician from New Zealand, working as a guest teacher at the Indonesia Music Academy of Yogyakarta; Dede Eri Supriya used to be a student of SSRI (High School of Art) in Yogyakarta; Sapto Raharjo was a self-taught musician; Bonyong used to be a student of ASRI who was expelled from the School because of his involvement with the Black December action.

[59] *Ibid.* Also see Agus Dermawan T. *op cit* pp.3-4.

[60] Interview with Bonyong, 26 July 1992.

[61] The Wendy Sorensen award was made each year to fine art works of ASRI students, selected by a jury comprised visiting artists or art critics.

[62] Interview with Bonyong.

[63] *Ibid.* See also Agus Dermawan T., *op cit* p.3, and Brita Miklouho-Maklai *op cit* p.70.

[64] In the afternoon, I remember, the campus look very messy with used newspaper all over the place. Supomo, a young sculpture teacher who had made the statue of RJ Katamsi, was very angry at the time. Pictures can be seen in Jim Supangkat *op cit* p.40.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEPOLITICISATION POLICY AND APOLITICAL ART

This chapter is concerned with the government's depoliticisation policy, which was implemented in early 1978 in academic institutions throughout the country, and which had a significant impact on art discourse in Yogyakarta. Specifically, this policy reconfirmed the apparent need to separate art from politics. I argue that the policy and the resulting atmosphere of suppression were key factors in the development of Yogyakarta Surrealism as a new form of realism in conditions where direct expression was not possible.

The policy of depoliticisation was embodied in the *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus* and *Badan Kesejahteraan Kampus* (NKK/BKK or the Normalisation of Academic Life/ the Student Coordinating Body), implemented in April 1978 by the Department of Education and Culture. The policy was intended to return university students to their essential personalities as 'analytical people'; to guide them to be able to fully carry out their missions as rational students with healthy and steady personalities. In order to achieve this the Department saw it as necessary to redefine and reorder the student body so that it worked towards student welfare, student interests and the development of students' ideas and reasoning. It became imperative, in the Department's words, to 'normalise' campus life.[0]

The policy, however, was controversial. It ignited critical reactions from university students and intellectuals, who saw the policy as a strategy for placing a curfew on students' external activities. Hermeneutically, the policy can be read as a method of diverting students' involvement from practical politics, such as protests and demonstrations, which mainly characterised university students' activities and university campus life in the 1970s.[1]

At ASRI the policy affected the way people conceived of art. It made the process of issuing an exhibition permit impractically drawn-out and in terms of art discourse, the whole system generally strengthened the assumption that good art had to be separated from socio-political matters. Specifically, it created an asumption that art had to 'return' to having a purely aesthetic function.

This chapter also continues the discussion of Yogyakarta's art background, including an analysis of the Yogyakartan artistic context and its broader social

context in the 1970s and 1980s. The artistic context comprises information on practices of art in Yogyakarta, such as how the Indonesia Art Institute of Yogyakarta (ISI Yogyakarta) works, how studios and artistic networks in Yogyakarta operate, what the 'fame' system means in Yogyakartan and who decides who else is important.

Normalisation of Academic Campus Life/
The Student Coordinating Body

In August 1993 four student mass organisations in Jakarta proposed the government review its Normalisation of Academic Campus Life/ Student Coordinating Body policy, which had been in force since April 1978. These organisations — HMI, PMKRI, GMKI and GMNI[2] — argued that the policy disconnected students from social commitment, which in turn was very restrictive and unconducive to political 'cadreisation' for students.[3]

The NKK/ BKK concept was launched by the Minister of Education and Culture on the recommendation of the KOPKAMTIB (Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, or Command for Restoration of Security and Order). This was in response to the political turmoil of student demonstrations and protests in Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya and Yogyakarta, initiated by students of the major State universities such as the University of Indonesia, the Bandung Institute of Technology, and the University of Gadjah Mada. Those demonstrations had various aims, from protesting corruption, inadequate government action toward the famine problem, a fair trial for the case of Sawito[4], and even the withdrawal of the president from candicacy for re-election.[5] The students demanded the 'pure' implementation of the 1945 Constitution, and their daring call for President Suharto's withdrawal from the presidential candidacy remains one of the unwritten 'national taboos', even at the time this dissertation is being written, in 1995 — although the head of state has been in power since 1966.

KOPKAMTIB was taking seriously student political movements, which it regarded as having offended social norms and laws, and as threatening security and order.[6] Therefore KOPKAMTIB thought it necessary to freeze *Dewan Mahasiswa* (Student Council) activities, an end it achieved with its decree dated 21st January 1978.[7] As a result, after being accepted by the Department of Education and Culture, higher education institutions such as universities, institutes and colleges were required to dismiss their existing elected student councils and replace them with student-faculty

bodies and student senates, which were technically controllable. Further, by redefining the function of the student body the government was in position to dictate its policy.[8] It can be inferred that this move was designed to drive students' attention away from practical politics activities, including demonstrations and protests, in the 1970s.

Needless to say, the policy was controversial. Many students from the University of Indonesia and the Bandung Institute of Technology reacted strongly against it. Various student groups demonstrated and travelled to the House of Representatives to argue that the policy would only create socially insensitive and unresponsive students.[9] In Yogyakarta several groups of university and institute students also demonstrated against the policy, leading to the 1978 military occupation of the University of Gadjah Mada campus. Nevertheless, there were student representatives from some universities and institutes in East Java and Jakarta who agreed with NKK.[10] As it turned out, the protests were quelled and NKK/BKK was forcefully enacted. The policy's implementation was accompanied by the formation of Menwa (*Resimen Mahasiswa* or student regiment), each regiment under the direct control of a regional military commander and paid special attention to by its university or institute Rector. This was said to help stabilise and normalise academic life.

Beginning in the first semester of the 1979 academic year, ASRI's curriculum was in agreement with the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, Daoed Joesoef, which compelled ASRI to carry out certain programs, such as:

1. Upgrading teachers' and students' academic skills.
2. Perfecting the academic organisation and personnel who carry out academic duties.
3. Developing academic facilities and fully taking advantage of them.[11]

No less significant was the fact that the school had to enact the credit system curriculum, which regulated the timespan of study to nine semesters. This was begun in August 1979, and it drastically changed the way the students saw the school. Before this new curriculum was in effect many students took their study time easily, their orientation not being towards gaining an academic degree but towards becoming professional artists and designers.[12] As a matter of fact, the percentage of graduates at the time was quite low. In 1982 there were only 30 students out of 788, or 3.8 percent, who finished their studies — although this figure was better than the 1981 graduate percentage, which was only 2.45.[13] Prior

to the implementation of the credit system students tended to stay at school longer, since they were not so academically confined, and could engage in other art-related activities so long as they did not feel great pressure to finish their studies as soon as possible.

An analysis of ASRI's experience with NKK/ BKK and Menwa shows that the new system became unconducive to academic criticism. The kind of student debate commonly seen when ASRI still had a student council disappeared once the council was replaced by a student senate.

At ASRI, as at all other schools, BKK was implemented in 1979 based on the regulation from the Department of Education and Culture.[14] Each lecturer was named as consultant to a number of students, with the aim of helping them finish their studies according to their academic programs. The role of this *dosen wali* (guardian teacher) was focused on the development of students' personalities. The guardian teacher was also supposed to know each student individually, monitoring their problems and difficulties. By knowing the students personally s/he could assist in solving their problems.

The guardian teachers worked in tandem with the *Asisten Ketua Bidang Kemahasiswaan* (Vice President Student Affairs), with the student Coordinating Body, and with the Student Senate. In theory this system was positive, since it aimed to generate co-operation among students and teachers within the respective bodies. However, it proved to be a long and complicated bureaucracy. In a way it can be read as a means of controlling students at every level, from the individual to the organisational. Further, it signified a perception of students as academically and individually immature subjects, needing constant guidance, nurturing and direction. And to be active in non-academic activities outside the school was, in a way, implicitly considered to be a 'problem', since the students' main aim was supposed to be finishing school as soon as possible and becoming professional artists — not politicians.

Rather than developing students' prospects as future art professionals by deepening and sharpening their critical and creative skills, the programs offered at ASRI within the new regulations aimed to divert students' political and social consciousness by the following means:

1. Increasing the frequences of sport activities, and adding more sport activities within and outside the school.
2. Building a basketball court, which was in the process in 1982.
3. Supporting students' art exhibitions within and outside the campus.
4. Generating students' interests in other fields of art beside visual art, such music and dance.
5. Reorganising the structure of Koperasi (the Student Cooperation), and generating its activities.
6. Increasing the number of the members of the student regiment, and also boosting its activities.
7. Refreshing the organisation of the Student Senate.

Noticeable by its absence from this program was the student press. Under the new regime the art magazine SANI was at odds with the school system — and consequently there was no adequate budget for it, even though this medium of communication is relatively important not just at ASRI but at any institution as a way to express opinions and aspiration. For ASRI students SANI is a forum for publishing sketches and poems as well as articles on the arts. SANI used to appear quite regularly, featuring articles and sketches by teachers, students and guest contributers. With the new regulations SANI did not die immediately, but fell into a kind of torpor described by the Indonesian expression *hidup segan, mati pun tak mau* (unwilling to live, but not wanting to die). Furthermore, there were no programs encouraging students to invite guest lecturers or art critics from other institutions, or public artistic or cultural figures, to ASRI.[15]

This kind of bureaucracy was negatively powerful and frustrating enough to clog students' initiatives. Even so, the bureaucracy became even more restrictive when ASRI was amalgamated, along with *Akademi Musik Indonesia* (Indonesia Music Academy) and *Akademi Seni Tari* Indonesia (Indonesia Dance Academy), into *Institut Seni Indonesia* (the Indonesian Art Institute) Yogyakarta, in 1984. At the time ASRI became one of ISI Yogyakarta's two faculties which were the Fine Art and Designs Faculty, and the Performance Faculty. And in 1994 ISI Yogyakarta would gain another faculty, the Multi Media Faculty. This all meant that in practice ASRI was no longer an independent and academically autonomous art school, since any policies or plans had to be operated through and in compliance with the centralised administration of ISI Yogyakarta, which at the time of writing still occupies three separate campuses.

The effects of this bureaucratisation were enormous. In order to hold any sort of activity, for example, students now were required to submit a proposal to the head of their faculty, who would assess its merit and check that it conformed to NKK guidelines. If it passed this test, the proposal would be signed and forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor for student activities and affairs, to be reviewed once more. After all, this was simply to filter out any suspected political implications from student activities. In short, students were conditioned to be afraid of imagined enemies and harmful ideologies. The same procedure had to be followed if students wished to hold a seminar or discussion involving guest speakers. The proposal was required to clearly state the topic, the speaker and the activity's goal. By and large this bureaucratic procedure continually lessened students' interest in holding activities.

On a larger scale, the operation of this paranoid filtering policy outside the university has steadily worsened. In 1995, an exhibition outside the school requires at least seven signatures, ranging from the local neighbourhood leader to the city police office. People often describe this as having to jump seven hurdles (literally 'to pass...tables' in Indonesian) — and even worse, for a theatrical performace there may be nine hurdles to jump. This practice has been unpublicly but rigorously operated by central and regional government authorities, who can cancel any activity or meeting they regard as being dangerous or socially disturbing without having to stipulate on what criteria the banning takes place. People have no clear idea what is permitted and what is not. Regulations became like Jazz music — changed, added to and interpreted differently from province to province. A good recent example of this was the banning of a theatrical performance by the Community of Pak Kanjeng in Yogyakarta in 1994, even though the same performance was allowed to go ahead in Surakarta, a city just 60 km away.

Student Regiment

'Indeed, there were many student army cadets who overacted...' replied the Minister of Education and Culture, Wardiman Djojonegoro, to a question at a meeting by members of the House of Representatives (DPR) on the topic.[16] At that meeting, representatives from PPP and PDI (United Islamic Party and Indonesian Democratic Party) alleged that Menwa (*Resimen Mahasiswa*, or Student Regiment) cadets were pretending to be full military personnel, abusing the authority given them, even acting 'more military than the military'. Frequently these students were seen to be acting against democracy and committing acts of violence on campus,[17] such as the mob of cadets which rushed the school orientation committee at the

University of Tudjuh Belas, Surabaya; and several physical attacks on regular students at the University of Diponegoro and Catholic University Soegijopranoto, Semarang.[18] Ironically, these cadets were members of the same Student Regiment founded in 1979 to stabilise and guard campuses.

ASRI's Menwa was formed, as in all universities, institutes and academies, to accompany and ensure the successful implementation of NKK and BKK. Menwa at ASRI was part of and co-ordinated as part of the Yogyakartan Student Regiment. ASRI's student cadets were given military training at Dodik Gombong, Central Java, and later sent for skill upgrading sessions with student regiments from other universities in the Kowilhan II (Defence Territorial Command II) region. This student regiment was under the direct supervision of its Rector or Vice-Chancellor and backed by the local military command, with the task of 'neutralising' and 'stabilising' the campus from being 'abused' as a 'political arena'. In order for this to occur smoothly, all university rectors were required to collaborate with the government in fully implementing the campus 'normalisation' policy according to the NKK/BKK concept. They reported on progress to the General Directorate of Higher Education.

The Menwa post at ISI Yogyakarta's Faculty of Art and Design campus was built in the early 1980s next to the new main east gate, replacing the complex's north gate. This prominent placement signified the cadets' position as guards of the scholl. Their physical appearance stood in contrast to that of ordinary ASRI students: Menwa members wore military uniform of green or cream-coloured dress, army bags and belts, black boots and violet berets. On special occasions they carried knives, and the commander a pistol. Other ASRI students dressed as one might expect for an art school: casual clothing, and, frequently, long hair. Cadets took the part of flag hoisters and pledge readers at school assemblies. In the early 1990s, however, the main gate was moved back to the original north-facing site, the east gate walled up, and Menwa no longer was regularly involved in school assemblies. Although the move was not specifically intended as abandoning the Menwa post, its action can be read as having symbolically made Menwa's existence invalid. Its post is there for nothing.

Leaving the Matters to Their Respective Experts

The impact of the NKK policy was to indirectly strengthen the majority of lecturers' support for apolitical art. Not only were they formalists in both practice

and teaching, but it was also easier to talk about formal aspects of art. In order to embody this condition, the phrase 'leaving the social, political and economic matters to competent experts' became the terminating answer to questions which went beyond artistic and aesthetic provinces. Art criticism and approach became rigidly formalist — a situation radically different to pre-1966 art criticism. And this, by and large, influenced people's perceptions of art, and the way they created art. Terms connected with ideology and anti-ideology had preoccupied every thought of the pre-1965 generation of artists, but in the 1970s and 1980s most teachers and students at ISI Yogyakarta talked more about formal artistic matters, and at an artificial level. For example, people talked about *warna yang matang* (a colour which is ripe, connoting earthy or muddy colours), *garis yang ekspresif* (expressive lines), *kesan atau esensi bentuk* (an impression or an essence of form), *goresan yang artistik* (artistic strokes) and *komposisi yang dinamik* (dynamic compositions).[19] The painter Nyoman Gunarsa, well known as ASRI's most stimulating teacher, always stressed *garis yang ekspresif dan spontan* (expressive and spontaneous lines) in teaching as he painted, and the painter Widayat was only interested in formalist aspects of art.

Actually, a number of critical students, such as Harris Purnama, Gendut Riyanto, Didit Riyanto, Mulyono, Hari Budiono, Ronald Manulang and Redha Sorana, were not satisfied with formalism. These students had shown tendencies to articulate social issues critically. However, their socially-committed art was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The formalist approach was too strong to challenge, particularly as it suited so well the scheme of NKK/BKK policy.

Principally, NKK/BKK confined ASRI students into an artistic 'box', from which one was mainly supposed to produce 'good' works in terms of artistic harmony and physical beauty. Alternative formats were not nurtured: students were encouraged to 'speak' with very nice and polite 'language' in their works, as though speaking with a polite and high level of language. All of this was actually favoured by art collectors, who were mostly rich conservative businessmen, inclined to maintain the status quo. Of course, they were hardly interested in critical artworks, particularly those which addressed the economic and social gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

This is despite the fact that the tendency to pursue physical beauty in art is deceptive. In Javanese traditional culture people understand that beauty and good appearance do not guarantee quality: indeed, the wise and powerful wayang

character Semar is depicted as being ugly and fat. Therefore by this policy the students' drives to express themselves 'fully' through art were 'domesticated'. They were framed into a supposedly 'beautiful' art mode only, made blind of matters outside the artistic world and moulded to be disinterested in, if not afraid of, going beyond aesthetic boundaries. No less importantly, they were not nurtured to articulate or reflect their own or society's life critically, even naturally, through works of art. Instead they were conditioned to accept social and cultural taboos.

With regard to this created 'formalism', in the annual grand exhibition held to celebrate the school anniversary day, 15th January, awards such as the Wendy Sorensen and Pratisara Affandi prizes consistently were won by Abstract paintings until the early 1980s, when Abstract art was made outmoded by Surrealism. Likewise in other award exhibitions, the prizes never went to socially committed works of art. This latter kind of art has always been associated with the group which has become the 'imagined Left', consistently misrepresented in the news media as latent or subversive.

Another factor conducive to this 'paranoid' attitude was the memories many painting teachers and art people in Yogyakarta had of the 1965 coup's consequences. This caused them in some respects to become hesitant about discussing it, for the problems and traumas caused by the event remain unresolved. But at the same time the authorities talk about it over and over again, maintaining in the public consciousness a created image of the Left. For example, the film *Pemberontakan G-30-S/PKI* (The Rebellion of G-30-S/PKI) is shown on State television on 30th September every year, even though so many people have seen it so many times, and are thoroughly tired of watching it over and over again.[20] In addition, the authorites' response to public disturbance invariably is to create an imaginary communist or communist-related group which it can name as the *dhalang* (the scenario maker; literally, the master who manipulates wayang puppets) responsible for the incident.

It was quite understandable that people, including students, would feel that they had no basis for, or that it was useless to discuss or embody socio-political concerns in their art, since there was no mechanism for these matters. In a way people are continually made to be paranoid of 'communism', even though communism in the former Soviet Union had been collapsed for some years. A good example of this was that three months after the banning of two Indonesian weekly news magazines (*Tempo* and *Editor*) and one weekly news tabloid (*Detik*), the

Information Minister, Harmoko, was warning the Indonesian press of communism's potential danger. He said: 'It is the duty of all of us, the press society, to be awake to communist ways of agitation and propaganda which still endanger the nation. Communist followers have no such words that mean giving up their doctrines.'[21]

The Economic Boom

In the meantime, the Indonesian economy of the late 1970s was improving — and by the 1980s it was booming. Since the late 1960s foreign investment had been encouraged in Indonesia, and a large-scale advertising industry grew up to support it. This industry expanded rapidly, utilising modern promotion methods available through television, radio and posters, and conceptual and visual approaches largely taken from advertising trends popular and successful in industrial countries.[22] This was a system radically different to traditional Indonesian 'street vendor' methods of selling and advertising. In Yogyakarta, for example, it is still common for someone to carry a couple of bamboo ladders around the kampong for sale, or for food peddlers — noodle and meatball soup sellers, for example — to hit their glass soupbowl with a spoon to attract prospective buyers.

Audiovisual advertising methods began to be developed, such as posters, billboards and banners, radio jingles and television ads. Advertising strategists also started using cultural and traditional jokes and expressions, as well as regional accents — Madurese, Javanese, Jakartan and so on — to advertise products. As a result many strategically-designed phrases, message texts, and jingles appeared and were widely absorbed. These messages often demonstrated great creative flair, since their producers had to make sure their products were well conveyed and received. Indeed, messages and texts used in commercial advertising often were far more creative than the conventional slogans of central and local governments.

This situation was very different to that which existed up until 1966, when anti-capitalist sentiments were in the air and people were preoccupied with ideological differences, as commonly expressed in artworks and slogans from Left groups. At the time there was no need to spread advertisements so extensively, since it was only in the capitalist system that people needed large-scale advertising.[23]

Significantly, people began to be preoccupied with advertisements they had learned from the mass media, particularly radio and television, which often used jokes,

certain funny phrases and images to convey commercial messages. Students were not immune from this mass culture preoccupation: they also were taken by images and messages originally created for commercial goals. People began to play with common phrases, messages, and jingles, twisting their meanings as easily as they traditionally had played with words in punning. These word games came to be used in commenting on campus affairs and social situations generally, making good use of linguistic absurdities.

Conclusion

Art discourse at ASRI, and in Yogyakarta in general, did not develop separately from the political situation. The road was bumpy and twisted, particularly with regard to the problem of socially-committed art. People, including ASRI students, were forced indirectly to be socially insensitive through the many manoeuvrings of the depoliticisation policy, which was implemented throughout most of the country. In the art world specifically, the discourse turned to blind formalism, which indirectly allowed people to look only at Abstract art and Abstract Expressionism, and to produce 'beautiful' art. In a way the 'school' of *'Mooi Indië'* was revived and reappeared in the format of Abstract and semi-Abstract work.

Art students were conditioned to live with no freedom of expression and people in society generally were warned about the latent dangers of the political, the Left and communism. But at the same time society was bombarded by vigorous slogans of economic development, and was tantalised by the sophisticated advertisements which quickly made their way into Indonesian society, as is discussed in the next chapter.

People compensated for their restricted situations with unstructured modes of expression and communication, expressing themselves through the unconventional languages of punning and vernacular speech. In the world of Yogyakartan painting this is analogous to surrealist painting, in which the logic of realism and the visual narrative re-emerged, and Abstract Art's formalist structures were disregarded or deconstructed. In this manner artists dealt with the absurd, the incongruous and the subconscious in order to liberate the self — as also is discussed in the next chapter.

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[0] *NKK Reaksi dan Tanggapan* (NKK Reactions and Responses), Jakarta: Centre For Strategic and International Studies, 1980, pp.3-4.

[1] Southwood, Julie & Patrick Flanagan. *Indonesia: Law, Propaganda and Terro.*

London: Zed Press, 1983, pp.178 & 188.

[2] HMI: Islamic Student Organisation; PMKRI: Indonesian Catholic Student Organisation; GMKI: Indonesian Christian Student Organisation; GMNI: Indonesian National Student Organisation.

[3] 'Kebijakan NKK/BKK Perlu Ditinjau Kembali' (NKK / BKK Policy should be reviewed), *Kompas,* 21 August. 1993, p.8.

[4] Sawito was a peasant who made public revelations about the president's business interests, and was accused of being linked to a coup attempt. See Southwood and Flanagan *op cit* p.188.

[5] *Ibid* p.189.

[6] *NKK Reaksi dan Tanggapan*, p.1.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Tapol* Bulletin no. 52, July 1982, p.16.

[9] See *Kompas* 18 May 1979, and *Pelita* 29 May 1979.

[10] These representatives were of Brawijaya University, Surabaya Institute of Technology, Airlangga University, IKIP Malang, IKIP Surabaya, UPN Surabaya, Universitas Merdeka Malang, Universitas Surabaya. Indonesian Christian University (UKI) also supported NKK. See *Berita Buana* 20 December 1979, *Suara Karya* 20 December 1979, *Sinar Harapan* 2 December 1979.

[11] Kadir, Abdul. *Laporan Kerja Tahun Akademis 1979* (The 1979 Academic Annual Report). Yogyakarta: STSRI 'ASRI', 1980, p.3.

[12] In the late 1970s the student population was not as large as it is in the 1990s. But there have always been a number of students who drink alcohol or take drugs at school. In the 1990s students' drinking habits at school have become very demonstrative. There is now always a group hanging around in the parking area at the front of the school. They collect money to buy alcoholic and share the drink. Violent and destructive actions by students have also become quite common at ASRI in the past three years, including smashing glass windows, painting offensive graffiti and demonstrating against disliked teachers and other staff. There has thus been a decline in student discipline from the 1970s to the 1990s.

[13] Kadir *op cit* p.3.

[14] *Ibid* p.44.

[15] Until the end of 1980s it was difficult to invite controversial figures — Romo Mangunwijaya or Emha Ainun Najib, for example — or simply guest lecturers considered to be critical of social and cultural life.

[16] 'Mendikbud Mengakui Banyak Anggauta Menwa "Overacting,"' *Kompas* 4 October 1994, p.16. See also *Bernas* and *Kedaulatan Rakyat* of the same days.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] In Yogyakarta until 1978 the foremost artists, including those teaching at ISI Yogyakarta, were those who directly and indirectly experienced the debate between the communists and the non-communists.

[20] This year, 1994, at the same time as the film was shown, the private television station RCTI showed the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy II.* Most people watched this entertaining film instead of the violent *Pemberontakan G-30-S/PKI.*

[21] 'Besides having to be Professional, the Press must be alert to Communism,' *Kompas*, 20 September 1994. p20.

[22] Williams, Raymond. 'Advertising: The Magic System,' in Simon During (ed). *The Cultural Studies Reader.* London: Routledge, 1993, pp.332-333.

[23] Television advertising began with the medium's arrival in Indonesia in the 1960s, and it was banned on 1st April 1981. See 'Di Balik Iklan Gemerlapan' (Behind Gleaming Advertising), *MATRA* magazine September 1987, p56. Television advertising reappeared in 1989, with the arrival of the commercial RCTI (Rajawali Citra Television Indonesia), belonging to one of President Suharto's children.

CHAPTER 6

ABSURDISM AND THE SURREAL EXPERIENCE

Modern Yogyakartan life, with its many conflicting features, is reflected in Yogyakartan surrealist painting, where disparate ideas or images are juxtaposed to create absurdities and incongruities. In surrealist painting, images appear in a dreamlike state — illogical and irrational — with many elements placed non-linearly to give the impression of no boundary betweeen past and present. This is like many Yogyakartan socio-cultural settings, where representations of various layers of culture operate at the same time and the same level, for Yogyakarta has increasingly become modern at the same time as it has remained traditional. Downtown Yogyakarta, for example, is like a collage where poverty and wealth intermingle, traditional lifestyles are juxtaposed with modern life and state enterprises stand casually next to capitalism. All these elements make the Yogyakartan landscape full of contradictions — and such contradictions have thrived in an atmosphere of absurdities and bred surrealism.

However, just as Yogyakartan Surrealist Painting cannot be seen simply as the result of previous art movements and/or discourses, this chapter does not aim to be a linear continuation of the past four chapters. Rather, I approach Yogyakartan surrealist painting with a discussion of several aspects of Yogyakartan life.

Firstly I look at Yogyakarta city itself, one of the Republic of Indonesia's two 'special provinces' and a courtly city with its own sultan. Secondly, I turn to the nature of language in Yogyakarta, with its several hierarchic levels of vocabulary and the 'jumps' users are forced to make between language layers. Specifically, I discuss Yogyakartan punning and reverse language, which highlights the absurdities and incongruities of the language itself, and structurally is similar to Yogyakartan surrealist painting. Thirdly, I discuss the incongruities and incoherences of urban Yogyakarta, which also have parallels to Yogyakartan surrealist painting. This will include discussions of practices which, despite seeming 'irrational' or 'illogical' by an objectively modern sense, constitute the 'everyday' in Yogyakartan life.

Yogyakarta's Historical Background

Yogyakarta once was part of the kingdom of Mataram, which ruled almost all of Java, including Madura, except for West Java. Between 1602 and 1755 Mataram's area gradually fell under the control of the Dutch East India Company, the *VOC* (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*), which in 1799 came under the control of the Netherlands East Indies Government.[0] The kingdom's shrinking area was divided by the Dutch-sponsored Gianti treaty on 13 February 1755 into two smaller parts. The areas of Mataram, Kedu and Bagelen were allocated to Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, and Surakarta, Pajang and Matesih went to Sunan Paku Buwono III. These two regions became more generally known as Yogyakarta and Surakarta.[1] Not only was part of each of these areas taken away from them, but also the division between the *Kasultanan* (sultanate) of Yogyakarta and the *Kasunanan* (kingdom) of Surakarta was emphasised as part of Dutch divide-and-rule policy.[2] As Heather Sutherland points out, the administration of Dutch Java was always an actively interventionist political force, both as an instrument supporting the colonial regime and as a diversity of interest groups, each determinedly defending its elite position.[3] The border between these two kingdoms was geographically and culturally sharpened after the end of the Java War, in 1830.[4] Hence Yogyakarta and Surakarta have long histories of rivalry, and each has developed distinctive cultural styles. The royal graveyard complexes of Surakarta and Yogyakarta at Imogiri, for example, were built in distinctively different styles, each with its own guards and costumes — even though they are only separated by a stepped pathway. In the world of courtly classical dancing, Felicia Hughes-Freeland identifies significant differences between Yogyakartan and Surakartan styles, as in the *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances. Originally Yogyakarta took its dance forms and ideas from Surakarta, but these later came to be radically restructured, not only in style but also in their technical terminologies.[5] In short, from the time of Gianti until the present day the area of Yogyakarta can be seen to specifically belong to the Hamengku Buwono dynasty.[6]

The Java War was a cataclysmic event in Dutch colonialism — it was the last major anti-colonial war in Java and led to the deaths of at least 200,000 people. Afterwards the Dutch colonial government watched Yogyakarta closely, to prevent any possibility of rebellion. The tension between the Dutch administration and the Yogyakartan dynasty probably had its roots in the conflict resulting from Sunan Paku Buwono II's handing over of Mataram to the Dutch, which was strongly resisted by Mangkubumi, the Mataram prince who would become Sultan Hamengku Buwono I (of Yogyakarta). The Sultan's successor, Hamengku

Buwono II, also was in conflict with the Dutch authorities, for which he was made to resign and be replaced by the crown prince (*Putera Mahkota*). These episodes were precedents to later Dutch restrictions upon Yogyakarta, especially after 1830 when the Dutch government interfered with the Yogyakartan *Kasultanan*'s laws relating to marriage, criminals and other elements.

In the early twentieth century Yogyakarta produced three Indonesian nationalists whose activities would be nationally significant. The first was Mas Ngabehi Wahidin Sudirohusodo, who founded Indonesia's first national organisation, Budi Utomo, in 1908; the second was Mas Ketib Amin Haji Ahmad Dahlan, who founded the Islamic social organisation Muhammadiyah in 1912; and the third was Ki Hajar Dewantara, who founded the *Taman Siswa* school in 1922.[7] These organisations presented social and educational alternatives to the Dutch system — which was only benefitting the Dutch and local royalty — and also signalled a sense of nationalism and radicalism. As a result of this many people from other islands came to Java to study. Some were the first generation of Balinese teachers, including the radical Nengah Metra, who intended to overturn the feudalist educational system and its exclusion of peasants.[8]

In 1939 Yogyakarta had a king, Hamengku Buwono (HB) IX, educated at Leiden University, Holland,[9] who was trying hard to lessen the Dutch colonial government's control of the Yogyakartan bureaucracy. This was part of an effort to shake off colonisation by applying modern (Western) and traditional (Javanese) approaches to bureaucratic reform. The effort lasted until Japan's occupation in 1942. Apart from his nationalist motives, this modernising Sultan also wanted to challenge the stereotype that kings were usually on the colonists' side.[10] Probably Hamengku Buwana IX intended to reform the sultanate from its state of *Pangreh Praja*, the idle and 'toy' kings and aristocrats who were Dutch agents and exploiters of their fellow people.[11] In contrast to the *Pangreh Praja* stereotype, P.J. Suwarno says HB IX was concerned with the life of the common people.[12] And no less importantly, in anticipating the return of the Dutch, and joining the national revolution, HB IX was firmly taking side with the central government of the Republic of Indonesia, and he adjusted the Yogyakartan bureaucracy to make it compatible with the national goal of the newly-founded Republic.[13]

Yogyakarta became the Republic's capital in January 1946 after Batavia/Jakarta (the actual capital) and other major cities such as Bandung and Semarang were reoccupied by the Dutch, forcing RI supporters to flee to Yogyakarta. In the same

year the University of Gadjah Mada was founded, replacing two universities in Bandung and Jakarta, where the Republic had lost control.[14] HB IX offered a portion of the Yogyakartan Kraton as the place for this new university.[15] Yogyakarta came to be named a 'special province' of the Republic of Indonesia due to having its own sultanate and for its stance during the Republic's founding.

The Nature of Language In Yogyakarta

The Yogyakartan Kraton traditionally is seen as the cultural centre in Yogyakarta, maintaining court culture and costumes, as well as the multi-layered Javanese language. The choice of which vocabulary layer to use in Javanese is dependant upon to whom and how the language is spoken. People can show politeness through their choice of vocabulary, as well as with the manners that accompany the utterance. It is also possible to show impoliteness through the choice of wrong vocabulary. In reality, Yogyanese traditionally play with language, using punning and word-reversing techniques to twist and disregard or disorder language conventions. These two practices can be helpful in seeing Yogyakartan surrealist painting more clearly.

Yogyakarta has its own traditional form of Javanese language, considered — alongside Surakartan Javanese — to be the classical form of the language, and perhaps equivalent to the English Middle Counties dialect. In fact, each of these two Javanese dialects claims itself to be finer and more authentic than the other. Although the two cities are only 60 km apart, the rivalry is reflected in other areas too: wedding dresses in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, for example, are significantly different.[16]

The three levels of Javanese speech are known as *ngoko, madyo* and *kromo*. *Ngoko* is the lowest level, commonly used amongst peers, people of equal social status, close friends and siblings. It is also used by elder to younger and superior to junior. It is in *ngoko*'s nature to be expressive, non-polite, natural and informal: it is the speech used when dreaming, when crying, when angry or excited, and in personal or intimate moments, such as when having sex. *Ngoko* has a significantly bigger vocabularly than the other levels of Javanese. Using this level of speech people can be assertive and revealing, for in speaking *ngoko* there is little pressure as to whether vocabulary, structure and manner are formally perfect or not.

Madyo literally means middle. This level of speech is considered semi-polite and

semi-formal. It is also less familiar than *ngoko*. *Madyo* words are used to address another person with whom one is not yet familiar, or to address someone whose social status is not yet known. *Madyo* is also used to speak with someone familiar or close but to whom the speaker wants to show respect: speaking with one's elders, for example, or with older relatives, or with someone of rather higher social status.[17] This level of speech often inhibits expression in the speaker.

Kromo is the refined level of Javanese, and is considered polite and formal. *Kromo* is used in court, religious and traditional ceremonies, and by the inferior to the socially superior: a humble court keeper or servant to his/her master, for example. In daily life it might be spoken by someone to his/her would-be parent-in-law. It is also spoken to someone to whom the speaker owes deference. Moreover, there is another even higher kromo (*kromo hinggil*), with which someone speaks to a highly respected person. *Kromo hinggil* is spoken by the Keraton servants, keepers and subordinates to the king and royal families. It is also used for prayer, for example in Churches in Central Java and East Java.

Each level formally has three sub-levels, categorised by Soepomo Poedjosoemarto as follows:

A. Kromo:	*1. Mudo-kromo*
	2. Kramantoro
	3. Wredo-kromo
B. Madyo:	*4. Madyo-kromo*
	5. Madyantoro
	6. Madyo-ngoko
C. Ngoko:	*7. Boso-antyo*
	8. Antyo-boso
	9. Ngoko-lugu.[18]

Although Javanese has various geographically-based dialects, the Surakartan and Yogyakartan forms are considered 'standard'. It is in these two cities — especially within the *Kraton* (palace) walls — that the intricacy of the nine speech levels is still practised.

Linguistic complexity is compounded by observance of customs such as not asking direct and investigative questions, and using titles: for example, the words *bapak* or *ibu* (literally, 'father' and 'mother') are used when addressing a mature-aged person; *mas* and *mbak* ('elder brother' and 'younger sister') are also common.

There is also etiquette regarding gestures such as averting one's eyes, sitting, how to hold one's hands, laughing, and accentuating language.[19] The more polite and respectful the language, the more monotonous, soft, tender and slow the utterance needed.

This complexity is well illustrated in the traditional *wayang* (shadow puppet) play where a *dhalang* (puppeteer) speaks different levels of language, with many styles and ways, depending on which character he is operating. Heroes, especially knights, on the one hand, are generally represented as using perfect, gentle language and gestures, as with the character of Arjuna, one of the main Pandawa knights. Arjuna is depicted as a knight of great prowess, yet physically he is petite and gentle. In Surakartan *wayang* dancing *(wayang wong)* the character of Arjuna is always played by a female dancer in order to emphasise his gentleness and softness.[20] On the other hand, villains typically are depicted as disgusting, cruel, and greedy ogres. This is the case with Rahwana, the king of Alengka in the Ramayana story, and Sarpakenaka, Rahwana's sister, who always follows her burning sexual passions.[21] Harjuna Sasrabahu is another example of a character who follows his greedy passions: indeed, the story has it that he lost everything in life for precisely this reason.[22] The 'bad guys' in *wayang* are usually typified by the use of coarse language and manners, symbolising an inability to restrain passions and desires.

This *wayang* typology is often applied to everyday life. A glutton, for example, might be called *Buto Terong* (the greedy ogre). Someone who is considered to be tricky or slippery would be Sengkuni, the deceitful minister of the Kurawa kingdom. A patriot who defends the State, come what may, might be typified as Karna, and a critic of a tyrannical State as Wibisono. Although many people — especially the young — are gradually forgetting Yogyakartan classical language conventions, it is still common to see life through wayang typology. Many people now speak like *punokawan*, the clown characters who twist ideas and overturn language conventions (although not religious ones). Language use in Yogyakarta is very important as a signifier of how people perceive the world, and especially how they live their lives in the face of changing social hierarchies.

Indonesian, not Javanese, is the legal language, and is used extensively at school, in offices, in the media and in formal documents.[23] The number of non-Javanese speakers in Yogyakarta is growing — particularly students who come from other provinces and islands throughout Indonesia, bringing with them their various

linguistic backgrounds. Since the 1920s schools and universities in Yogyakarta have attracted students from throughout the archipelago, with many of them remaining in Yogyakarta after graduation. The number of people who have Indonesian as their mother tongue is increasing. Fewer young people speak what is regarded as proper *kromo* — it is becoming a passive language, mocked for its over-politeness.[24] Native Yogyakartans, non-Yogyakartan Javanese students and non-Javanese students all speak Bahasa Indonesia and quite easily intermingle. Most younger Yogyakartans, however, still speak Javanese, either *Ngoko* or *Madyo*.

Many non-Javanese speakers learn Javanese in Yogyakarta. But most of them only manage to learn *Ngoko*. Many non-Javanese-speakers people find Javanese, especially Yogyakartan and Surakartan Javanese, very difficult to learn. Traditional Javanese people often are offended by someone with whom he/she is unfamiliar using improper vocabulary or etiquette. There is a further hindrance, too: Javanese contains syllables that non-Javanese speakers can find quite difficult to distinguish, such as *da*, *dha*, *ta*, and *tha*. The syllables *da* and *dha* are pronounced and written the same in Indonesian — as simply *da* — as are *ta* and *tha*, which are *ta*. As a result, Indonesian often is unable to render significant differences in Javanese: for example, the distinction between *gendheng* (crazy) and *gendeng* (roof tile) cannot be made. Indonesian can only cope with *gendeng*.

Someone from Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara Timur or Sulawesi, used to speaking with more bluntness and assertiveness than a Javanese, often will have problems with the slowness, tenderness and politeness required by *kromo*, and with the conventions of changing speech levels to reflect the addressee's social status. Poedjosoedarmo gives an extreme example. He says that Javanese women who go to Jakarta working as house helpers can usually speak Bahasa Indonesia — which has only one speech level — quite well after a year, but that Jakartans in Yogyakarta will have enormous problems speaking Javanese. Non-Javanese Indonesians often have difficulty speaking even broken Javanese after spending several years in Yogyakarta.[25]

My own sense of this as a Yogyakartan raised in Jakarta — but of Javanese parents speaking Javanese — is that Yogyakartans traditionally see and think language in a sophisticated, if not schizophrenic, manner. There is a sense of a built-in social system in the language which automatically compels speakers to choose speech levels in combination with certain ways of thinking, speaking and acting. Of course

speakers of any language observe the same kind of distinction, but in Yogyakarta linguistic and gestural styles have been graded intricately and subtly, so that Yogyakartans are quite used to jumping up and down within the levels of language. It is also worth noting that the language is like an axe which can be used for different purposes: its intricacy means that it can be used, through proper manners and attitude, to moral ends, or it can be manipulated to satirise and make jokes as well.

Although linguistic conservatism prevailed in Yogyakarta in the second half of the 1970s and into the 1980s, another linguistic mode was also fashionable. This was Yogyakartan reverse language. Many people — from youngsters to adults — spoke reverse language and punned. The reverse language is constructed of Javanese characters as follows:

ha na ca ra ka (1)
da ta sa wa la (2)
pa dha ja ya nya (3)
ma ga ba tha nga (4)

These characters are constructed by a certain formulation. The line ha-na-ca-ra-ka (line 1) is interchangeable with pa-dha-ja-ya-nya (3), and da-ta-sa-wa-la (2) with ma-ga-ba-tha-nga (4). Therefore a syllable from line 1, the syllable *ha* for example, will be pronounced *pa,* taken from the line 3. The syllable *ja* from line 3 will be pronounced *ca* (line 1). The syllable *ma* from line 4 will be pronounced *da* from line 2. So that if someone is to say *kowe* (you) in reverse language s/he utters *nyote*, the word *kepala* (head) becomes *nye-ha-nga* and the name megawati will be *detathagi.* A sentence, for example *aku ora ngerti* (I don't understand), becomes *panyu poya lesgi.* This reverse language sounds very strange and is difficult for non-Javanese who do not know Javanese characters. Henri Chambert-Loir suggests it is the most complex youth or slang linguistic construction in Indonesia.[26]

This reverse language — or what in the local language is called *basa walikan* — has been associated with street gangs and criminals, known as *gali.* In the second half of the 1970s and the turn of the 1980s there were many notorious Mafia-like groups and crimes.

However, the language was not new to Yogyakarta. The 1970s reverse language was a reappearance of the reverse language spoken by thieves and robbers in

Yogyakarta in the early 1940s. It was a secretive language — particularly during the Japanese occupation — when bitter and widespread poverty made people turn to stealing food and other things to survive. Its function is similar to that of Bahasa Prokem in Jakarta, originally used by criminals, or the secretive language used by Medan marijuana sellers to conceal their business.[27]

Despite, or perhaps because of, the media attention given to *gali*-crime waves in the 1970s, young people began to find *basa walikan* fashionable. In 1976 I arrived in Yogyakarta from Jakarta, living in Bludiran of the east side of the *Pagelaran Keraton*. Around 1978 youngsters in the areas of Musikanan, Bludiran, Panembahan and Ngasem around the Yogyakartan Keraton spoke *basa walikan.* The language was very difficult to learn even though I understand Javanese quite well. I remember that some friends of mine — students from East Java and Jakarta — and I were fascinated by watching children speaking the language. To us it sounded funny and complex.

Basa walikan functioned as a password for acceptance among young people. People seemed not to care whether or not the language was associated with *galis*. It was like a mode. As a matter of fact, this language went on even after the 1983 extermination of *galis* by a mysterious special squads, when the bodies of alleged criminals were discovered gunned down in the streets in Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Semarang, Surakarta, Medan and Ujung Pandang. More than 100 people in Yogyakarta alone were killed.[28] This operation was called by the name 'Petrus' — an abbreviation of *penembakan misterius* (mysterious shooting).

In the 1980s *basa walikan* initially was spoken only by Yogyakartans. Many Yogyakartan students at ASRI spoke the language, using it as a kind of social password. At ASRI they were often the students who used drugs — marijuana and alcohol — and many seemed to come from middle class families.[29] So the language was quite fashionable and at the same time secretive, but soon came to be spoken by many students — especially those who spoke Javanese — and then it also came to be understood by non-Javanese speaking students.[30] *Basa walikan* sounds casual, and has no connotation of politeness, enabling its speakers to feel a sense of equality with each other, and to generate a sense of modernity.

Another linguistic phenomenon in Yogyakarta dating from the late 1970s was punning, where a word or phrase was distorted and turned around. This tendency can be traced to the Javanese traditional practice of contemplating a word or phrase,

looking for a new meaning beyond its conventional meaning. This can be negative- or positive-sounding. For instance the word *wanita* (female) is split into *wani* and *ta*. *Wani* means to dare, while *ta* is seen as derivative from *ditata* which means to be put into order.[31] Thus the meaning of *wanita* is changed into a sexist one. As they put it, Javanese are used to *otak-atik gatik, otak-atuk gatuk* (tinkering with words to playfully and sometimes randomly find new meanings, so they can be put to different purposes).[32] This practice is derived from *kerata basa*: a practice which often occurs in *wayang* performances, where the *dhalang* plays with rhyming folk etymologies.[33] These occur, for example, in *suluk* (long vocal lines sung by the *dhalang* during the course of a performance). For a *dhalang*, *kerata basa* is an important device, a way of drawing on his knowledge of mystical wisdom and showing off his *wayang* expertise. In so doing he does not explain or reveal the story or relate an act of the play, but brings the wayang events into the spectators' hearts and minds. By the *dhalang*'s words and rhythm the spectators are brought into a condition in which they are no longer just spectators but become part of the scene itself. The rhythm of the *dhalang*'s words is not like that of daily conversation; he uses mystic breathing to make this rhythm, as when a charismatic orator mesmerises everybody with a great speech.[34] So through *kerata basa* the *dhalang* asserts meaning, by arbitrarily imposing associations on and among words and giving them new and deeper meanings.[35]

The main device for achieving this is breaking down a word into syllables, then reassembling other words containing those syllables in a phrase that illustrates or is otherwise connected to the original word's meaning. For example, the word *dongeng* ('story', 'legend') is separated into *do* and *ngeng*, and glossed *dipaido, kenging* ('You may disbelieve it if you like').[36]

The Mahabharata story of Begawan ('Priest') Durna and his son Bambang Aswatama is a romantic and humorous example of *kerata basa* . As a young man Begawan Durna — then known as Bambang Kumbayana — wanted to travel from the kingdom of Atas Angin to Java, but was prevented by the existence of a large lake. In desperation, Bambang Kumbayana swore to the gods that whoever helped him across the lake he would marry (if female) or consider as his own brother (if male). His help turned out to be a goddess cursed to take the form of a horse.

As they rode, Durna's sexual desire was aroused, causing him to move backward until eventually he was in a position to have sexual intercourse with the horse. The horse became pregnant with his future son Bambang Aswatama, who was

handsome but had horse's hooves. The name of Durna is associated with this story, even though it is not in the original Indian version, where the figure Druna — to which the name Durna is partly related — is regarded as a respected *guru*. The name Durna comes from two Javanese words: *mundur* ('moving backwards') and *kena* ('getting to the target'). The final syllables of each word are combined to create the new name of Durna (or *mundur-mundur kena*) for Bambang Kumbayana.

The practice of Yogyakartan punning, then, can have the effect of distorting or deconstructing a word or phrase to make it sound funny, bizarre or strange, or even often insulting and satirical. People would often distort a word or a phrase by inserting a syllable into it, or replacing a syllable with one of similar sound but different meaning, or accenting a particular syllable to change a word's sound (and therefore meaning) or by replacing words in a phrase with other words. Such punning was fashionable through the 1980s, but in 1992 two students at the University of Gadjah Mada were arrested for the practice. In a ceremony one of them, the announcer, came across the words *ayat Qursi*, supposedly from the verse Qursi of the Quran. The word *Qursi* sounds exactly like the Indonesian *kursi*, 'chair' — a pun which the announcer accidently made. A group of IAIN (National Institute of Islam) students protested and proceeded to sue on the base of an insult to Islam. The announcer was prosecuted on the charge of *SARA* (insulting an ethnic, religious, tribal or political group), and jailed for two years. Strangely, the same fate befell the ceremony's co-ordinator, who happened to be a Catholic.[37]

People also frequently punned on the names of prominent figures. Gusti Pangeran Haryo Mangku Widodo (Lord Mangku Widodo), for example, could become *Gusti Pangeran Haryo Mangku Wanitowudo*: 'Lord Holding A Naked Lady on His Lap.' 'Blue jeans' often became*bulu jin*, or 'genie's fur'. In another case Bu Jinah Sugiarto (Madam Jinah Sugiarto) became Blue Jean Sugiarto. The names of national heroes were also punned on: for example, Pangeran Aman Banjol was changed into Pangeran Aman Benjol, where 'benjol' means 'a bump on one's head'.

Punning also came to be fashionable in advertising. For example, people made up Japanese-sounding Javanese words for naming cafes, restaurants and stalls, such as Restaurant Isakuiki, Restaurant Takashimura, Bar Karoaku etc. Restaurant Isakuiki derives from the Javanese phrase *bisaku iki*' meaning 'this is what I can'. Takashimura comes from the Javanese phrase *tak kasih murah*, which means 'I

charge you less'. Bar Karoaku comes from the English 'bar' and the Japanese 'karaoke', which in Javanese becomes *karoaku*: 'with me'.

There also emerged new words to replace commonly used words. For example, the Javanese word *mas*, used for addressing an older male, was very often replaced by *dab*, using the *hanacaraka* formula. Many people also used reverse language for swearing: the word *pabu*, for instance, comes from *asu* ('dog'). Obscene and violent words regularly appeared in reverse language in young people's conversations: *lojon, lajel, pigin, sacelat, gapi, ledhup, ngodwe* and so on.[38] Often these reverse language words were repunned and juxtaposed with other words so that the made-up combinations sounded very strange, and became untraceably complex for anyone not from the speaking community. A good example of this can be seen in the spreadsheet *Kamus Plesetan* (Dictionary of Puns) published in conjunction with the slippage theatre performance sponsored by the Yogyakarta newspaper *Bernas*. This dictionary includes words and names borrowed from Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese and English, for example: *air love you, adoh Hitler, Hitler Koma* etc.

Reverse language and punning stand in contrast to Javanese conventions and governmental campaigns for the proper use of Bahasa Indonesia. In *wayang* performances the *dhalang* plays with meanings of words or phrases to draw the audience's attention to the mystical realities of the performance, so that the difference between the real and the unreal is blurred by rhyming. In contemporary punning people let themselves play on the space of absurdities and nonsense. Yogyakartan punning can be seen as a linguistic escape from limitation. Metaphorically, punning is like a 'playground' in which one can play, release inhibited feelings or channel what people nowadays call '*setres*' — from the English word 'stress', which is also often punned into '*sutris*', from a particular Javanese name, Sutrisno.[39]

Most likely this punning began to spread from casual conversations in small street-side tea and coffee stalls. It is common for people from all walks of life to gather at the stalls, particularly at night, and particularly university students, many of whom depend on their parents' financial support and are broke by the third week of the month. In this social setting many issues are discussed, or people just talk nonsense, teasing each other by punning and other means, as a particularly Yogyakartan form of socialising.

ASRI students used to live in kampongs around the campus. Many of them came out at night to have tea, coffee, or food in nearby stalls which were also frequented by theatre people from the areas of Ketanggungan, Patangpuluhan and Ngasem. Ngasem has its own drama school, which is still active, and WS Rendra used to have his theatre workshop in Ketanggungan, with many of its members living in the surrounding areas. Therefore through these activities people interacted and learned from each other indirectly and directly.

The political nature of Yogyakartan punning can be seen in the Bondan Nusantara-led *Ketoprak Plesetan* ('theatre of slippage'), which produced the piece *Sampek Ingtay*. This story was inspired by the Chinese classical romance story, but instead of being a classical romance drama, *Sampek Ingtay* was played as a comedy. The plot and the players were deliberate twists on the classical forms, all aspects being deliberately slipped. For example the main characters, usually a beautiful girl and handsome boy, were played by actors who were not at all good-looking. The whole story was modified to be funny. And what was significant in the 'theatre of slippage' was that much of the dialogue in the play used puns, many of which alluded to a number of politically sensitive topics and 'hot' conditions either in Yogyakartan or in Indonesia in general.[40] For example, people often pun the name of the Indonesian Minister of Information, Harmoko, suppressor of the Indonesian press, into *Hari-harinya omong kosong* (his dailies telling lies).

Ashadi Siregar[41], a writer and teacher at the University of the Gadjah Mada, describes the theatre of slippage and its punning and reverse language as a social outlet from the pressures of political conditions, social life and economics.[42] In addition, Siregar sees this linguistic slippage as stemming from an environment of barren social institutions.[43] The linguistic subculture emerged at the same time as many messages relating to 'development': heroic slogans presented through government campaigns as well as commercial posters promoting modern goods, housing, electronic and communication devices, and cigarettes. These messages and slogans usually are presented through electronic and printed mass media, and through billboards placed permanently and semi-permanently in strategic spots throughout Yogyakarta.

The use of reverse language and punning spread easily amongst ASRI students — it seems ISI Yogyakarta was fertile ground for the growth of this kind of language. Students pun in any situation, for example during art critiques. Punning has become another form of artistic expression for them. People often punned on or

'Javanised' art terms. The words *ngabstraks*, *nyurialis*, *ngekspresionis* were invented to satirise works derived from abstract, surrealist or expressionist forms. New terms also were taken from the names of prominent artists. For example, *nge-klee* referred to work appearing to be derivative of Paul Klee's; a painting technically similar to the work of Indonesian painter Affandi was termed *ngaffandi.*

This linguistic phenomenon signified a tendency amongst Yogyakartan youth, artists, and the socially marginalised to challenge the values and realms of standard Javanese or Indonesian. The mental pressures accompanying these two languages are enormous and varied: Javanese is not easily spoken, it requires the choice of proper speech and *kromo* is being forgotten; whilst Bahasa Indonesia does not allow the range of expression possible with *ngoko* (the latter has a far greater vocabulary and depth of meaning than the former). Besides, people associate Bahasa Indonesia with the rigid and dry language they learnt at school. For many people it is the formal language used by officials and functionaries on television and in the media, sloganised and artificial, as found in school textbooks.[44] Punning functions in this dilemma not only as a 'playground', as mentioned above, but also as a 'trash bin', where people throw away the 'inhibitions' of speaking in the standard languages.

Thus punning resembled Yogyakartan surrealist painting, in which people turned around visual art's rigid conventions, at the same time reflecting the many different ideas and cultural layers existing in Yogyakarta. All of this was caused by too-rapid changes and 'developments'. Each change and development, which of course has its own rationalisation, has created particular consequences for Yogyakarta, and constituted specific elements of Yogyakartan street scenes.

Yogyakarta's Surreal Streets

In the past few decades Yogyakarta has undergone various changes, generally commensurate with those experienced by Indonesia since Independence. Up until 1966 there was frequent political turmoil, and in the New Order era Indonesia has witnessed a process of rapid economic and industrial development, often financed by inflows of foreign aid.

However these developments were not always well managed, often leading to notorious scandals and instances of corruption. The most notable case in the early 1970s was that of the national oil company Pertamina (*Perusahaan Pertambangan*

Minyak dan Gas Bumi Negara, or State Oil and Natural Gas Mining Enterprise), which at the time was headed by Ibnu Sutowo, a military colleague of President Suharto. Although Sutowo was found to have badly mismanaged the oil company, and despite local and foreign pressure, the President did not dismiss him.[45] However, through the 1970s economic recovery in Indonesia served to encourage foreign investment. The military, which has dominated the government for many years, guaranteed political 'stability' for development. Labour has remained the region's cheapest and has resulted in rapid industrialisation, focusing on cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Medan, Semarang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta — although Yogyakarta has tended more to become a centre of tourism and education than of industry. Many of the modern artifacts and equipment of modernity, such as modern communications and automobiles, have accompanied this development. These modern artifacts arrived in Yogyakarta far more quickly than attitudes to space and time were able to change: people still live at a traditional pace, so that in Yogyakartan daily life there are many conflicting ideas and scenes.

The icons of Yogyakartan traditional culture are gradually becoming less frequently seen and less significant. Linguistically, this has been symbolised by the decreasing number of young people who speak *kromo*. The realities of the street have changed rapidly and rather drastically, with the number of automobiles going beyond a natural sense. Jalan Malioboro, Yogyakarta's main road along which there are shops and street vendors, is always full of cars and motorbikes, especially on Saturday evenings. This has virtually ended the tradition of riding bicycles on Jalan Malioboro.

As Indonesia's second tourist destination after Bali, Yogyakarta has many hotels and losmens, and there are always new ones targeting overseas and domestic tourists. The number of travel agents and batik painting stalls is also growing. People now can easily find communication stalls providing long-distance phone and facsimile services at many places in Yogyakarta. The telephone is no longer considered a luxury item, although to have one costs Rp. 550,000 (approximately $A354) or one month's salary for a five-year experienced state university teacher. Mobile phone holders are growing in number too, although the official cost of a listing is at least $A4,250.

Supermarkets and shopping malls are now also present in Yogyakarta, shaping not only the city scene but also people's attitudes to consumption. Many people prefer to go to new one-stop shopping centres than to traditional markets, even though

Plate 6 Yogyakartan regional government poster: "Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman".

Above: photograph taken by the author in front of the main Post Office in Yogyakarta, 1994.

Below: photograph taken by the author shows the contrast between advertised lifestyle and the actual lives of the majority of people. 1994.

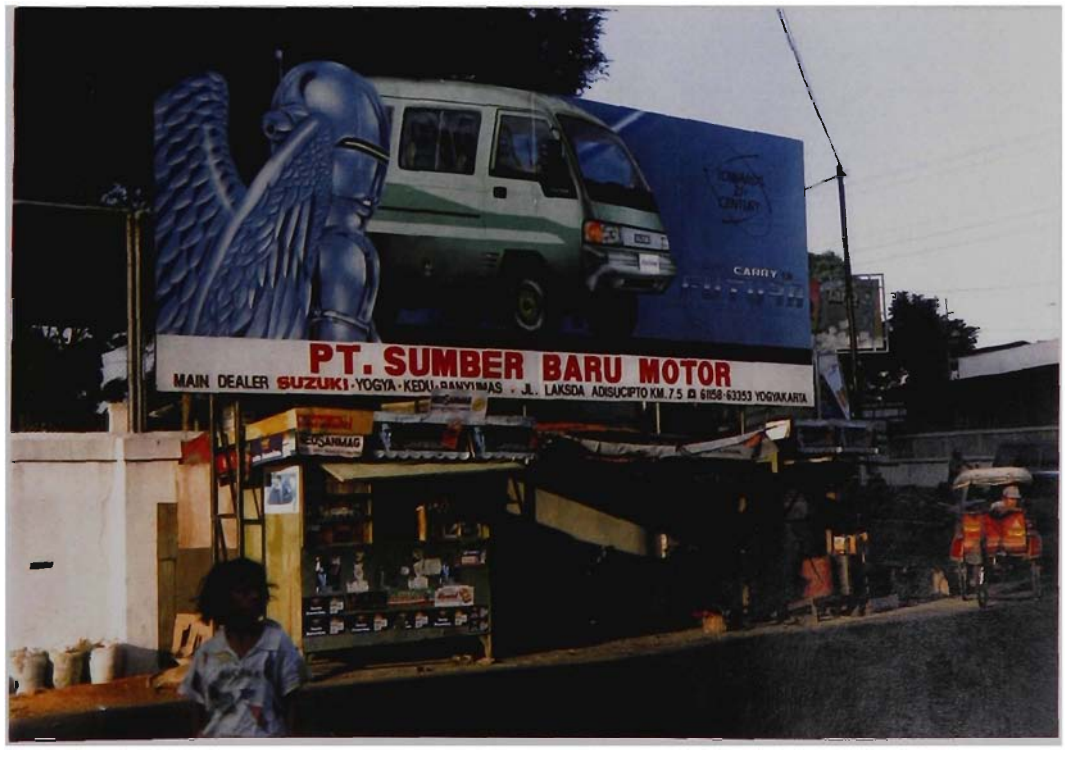

Plate 7

Paradoxical posters in Yogyakarta: one of thousands of commercial posters and billboards in Yogyakarta, photographed by the author, 1994.

prices at the one-stop shops are higher. Nonetheless, ordinary people like the idea of convenience, practicality and the atmosphere in the new shopping centres which are fashionable, clean, air-conditioned and modern. International, trendy restaurants and *karaoke* bars belonging to Indonesian and joint overseas-domestic owners are thriving. People are familiar with MacDonalds, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken and California Fried Chicken restaurants. These restaurants are well designed with nice interiors, good promotions, high standard of cleanliness and nice decorations. They are coming to be seen as places for middle-class family leisure.[46]

There are many motorbike and car dealers, as well as second hand car and motorbike shops, in downtown Yogyakarta. These are responsible for the overcrowding of Yogyakarta's streets. However, people seem to fatalistically accept the environmental realities of worsening traffic conditions. In addition, people honk their horns incessantly as though to say 'get out of the way, I am passing through!'. Yogyakarta's main streets are the scenes of power contests in which strength is measured by the size of one's vehicle. Speeding buses with their ear-deafening horns have become daily reality. Intra- and inter-city bus drivers drive recklessly in relatively busy streets, and often stop carelessly to take on and let down passengers.

The number of photo studios, with modern equipment for instant printing, is growing rapidly. The number of photocopy stalls is also increasing quickly, especially around Yogyakarta's many academy and university campuses. Computer rental businesses are also very common.

However, this modernisation has not been accompanied by an anticipation of its excess and waste. Modernisation in Yogyakarta is like something arbitrarily placed, rather than naturally growing. In some ways it looks modern, but its core is still traditional. All of this makes the modern and the traditional stand next to each other quite casually, a world of paradoxes created from their contrasting natures, as the following examples will illustrate.

There is a slogan prominently displayed practically everywhere in Yogyakarta, on billboards, plaques and private property, which reads *Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman.* (Plate 6) The second word, *berhati*, is actually an Indonesian word meaning 'to have a heart'. But in this slogan it is an abbreviation from *bersih*, *sehat* and *indah* ('clean, healthy and beautiful'). Therefore the whole slogan means Yogyakarta is

clean, healthy, beautiful and pleasant. This slogan-making device is part of a national campaign to create good environments. Klaten, a small town next to Yogyakarta, has the slogan *Klaten Bersinar*, derived from *bersih, indah, asri* (clean, beautiful and charming), although *bersinar* also means 'to shine' in Indonesian. Jakarta's slogan is *Jakarta Teguh Beriman.* The phrase *Teguh Beriman* actually means devout, but for this slogan the phrase derives from *teguhkan usaha kebersihan, keindahan dan kemanusiawian* (securing the effort towards a clean, beautiful and humane environment). But in practice these nice-sounding slogans are easily disrupted, and do not necessarily reflect reality. Their messages are challenged by the many commercial and non-commercial posters placed in strategic city spots, by street vendors and stalls, and by the carbon dioxide pollution from cars and motorbikes. (Plate 7)

Within the city of Yogyakarta there are many commercial and non-commercial posters placed both temporarily and permanently. The permanent ones are those on metal structures and which stay in place for several months, usually illuminated by thousand-watt spotlights at night. Huge posters advertise Bentoel, Gudang Garam, Djarum and Sampoerna (all domestic *kretek* cigarettes), Marlboro and other Western cigarettes, various medicines, computer products, real estate, MacDonalds and Pizza Hut, supermarkets, banks and regional government programs.

The cigarette advertising posters throughout the city are worth noting. They often use 'macho man' and 'pretty girl' images, as with the Djarum advertisement, in which these two characters sit in an open-top jeep, each smoking a cigarette. The Bentoel cigarette also presents a macho-looking man smoking the product, his facial textures accentuated to stress his masculinity. Gudang Garam advertising often presents its smokers amid the colossal grandeur of natural settings. These images circulate vigorously through television, magazines and outdoor advertisments, as though they were hypnotising people. They subliminally place the notion into people's subconsciousnesses that smoking is natural and masculine.

It is important to note that many people react strongly to food and other products considered to be religiously unclean. For example, in the late 1980s the news media ran stories that a particular product had been found to contain religiously unclean animal fat. Suddenly people were talking about it and many people demanded the product be withdrawn. Finally the Minister for Religion made a statement on the issue to calm the public. But ironically, people do not take the health problems caused by smoking seriously — nor do they seem to be fazed by cigarette

advertising's aggressive nature.

The attitude in placing such posters is in some ways similar to the lateral attitude of language use by which people twist and play with words. Many poster placements are not well planned, in terms of environmental considerations. In many cases the posters badly disturb the city's visual aesthetics, taking little concern for architectural features. A good example of this can be seen in the area surrounding the major intersection near the Palace's North Square. Significant buildings such as the Main Post Office, the old bank buildings, the statues of revolutionary struggle, the old theatre building and the Yogyakarta state palace are juxtaposed with huge posters, at the Post Office west corner, promoting government programs, major national events or traditional and religious events in the Kraton square. The posters usually take the form of a realistically depicted scenes, with writing. The whole is usually depicted in a heroic, grandiose or optimistic manner with bright and opaque colours.

The posters' general colours and appearance and the posters themselves do not harmonise with the area's specific architectural features — it is quite likely that the scene would be far better without their colours and general outlook. Budi Susanto, in fact, argues that the making and placing of huge posters, monuments and small public parks with slogans such as *Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman* is a strategy of cultural politics to make citizens remember that what is called development is actually 'there'.[47]

Posters with rather conflicting ideas often are placed next to or near each other. Across from the Buddhist temple in the area of Gondomanan, Yogyakarta, there were four different posters at the same time . One was promoting Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman, next to it was a poster advertising Bentoel cigarettes, another promoted *TABANAS* (national savings) and next to that was a poster promoting a new supermarket. The juxtaposition of the temple with these messages looked quite absurd and incongruous.

There are also big posters whose glamour images contradict the environment in which the posters are placed. For example, there was a big poster advertising a fancy car. But under the poster were huts of traditional stalls, one selling coffee and food for pedicab drivers and the like, and the other stall fixing pushbike and motorbike tires (*tambal ban* or patching tires). The whole scene was full of paradoxes.

The social and economic gaps are clearly visible. In the world of telecommunications, parabolic antennas can be used as an indicator. Despite their high cost, the number of these antennas is growing. A fair one costs more than a state university senior lecturer's salary, whilst a good one which can receive American, European and Australian television, with a rotating tuning device, costs more than $A1200, or about 6 times my normal monthly wage as an art teacher. Yet many people have bought the antennas.

With the parabolic antennas people have more access to world news and features. Ordinary people with no parabolic antenna can tune to two public television stations and two commercial television stations, which are of course restricted. For example, until the end of 1993 people were still be able to watch aerobic or fitness programs on television. These were both Indonesian and overseas programs, such as the American Basic Training program. Many people liked and watched the programs at home for they looked healthy and promising. However, the programs were cancelled with no notice. This may have been because they were considered to be too sensual, since although the athletes' bodies were fully covered, their body shapes were still exposed, which served to attract many people, both men and women. The point is that although the programs now are unavailable on national television, those with parabolic antennas are still able to tune them in from neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Australia. Often, in fact, the programs available from these countries are even more sensual than the original aerobic programs. As an illustration, a friend of mine who lives with his brother in the housing complex of Kowilhan (*Komando Wilayah Pertahanan* or Regional Defence Command) in Baciro, Yogyakarta, tells of often watching television programs from France, both news and features, which he describes as very fantastic and usually rather surreal.

This is the sort of development that has been noted by prolific Yogyakartan writer and poet Linus Suryadi. In his book *Nafas Budaya Yogya* (Yogyakarta's Cultural Lifeblood — literally its 'Breath') Suryadi writes that in the early 1970s many big *asam* (tamarind) trees along Yogyakarta's main streets were cut down by the Yogyakarta city council office. Suryadi argues that this was because of a misconception about modernisation and being modern. Despite the shade and pleasant environment they provided, the big trees and their leaves falling down the ground were seen as disturbances for the city's appearance of modern cleanliness.[48] Suryadi writes about many poorly planned and executed projects and developments

in Yogyakarta, many of which actually endanger various socio-cultural aspects as well as the city's natural environment. Another good example is the rushed renovations of some traditional markets in Yogyakarta, in which the people's cultural tendencies and the environmental and practical aspects of a traditional market were not properly adopted. As a result many traditional markets became inconvenient and environmentally unhealthy.[49] Unfortunately these problems were not clearly and publicly articulated and exposed, so that such development continued, as did the absurdities and bad conduct.

At the same time the majority of Yogyakarta's people still live in traditional ways. Many have much to learn about Western linear concepts of time and space, as well as Western-style work and business practices required to run modern and sophisticated facilities and systems. In the world of art, artists can have a wider perspective through knowledge of western concepts. Physically and economically Yogyakarta is modernising, but the Yogyakartan traditional way of life still counts. The concepts of 'slowly but surely' (*alon-alon waton kelakon*) and 'life is like stopping to drink' (*urip ki koyo wong mampir ngombe*), with their fatalist-sounding overtones, still apply against modernisation's strong current. At many street intersections people do not take traffic lights seriously, so that a couple of pedicabs or motorbikes, even cars, still run slowly against the red light. Needless to say, this indiscipline often creates traffic chaos and confusion. A good example of this can be seen in the intersection at Taman Sari, Yogyakarta.

The cyclists and pedicab riders who violate traffic laws are often blamed for the indiscipline on the roads. But people rarely look at the problems the other way around. There are no special lanes for cyclists, pedicabs or pedestrians. Policy focuses on modernity and progress, so that street facilities are mostly built in an *ad hoc* manner to accommodate the increasing number of cars, buses and trucks. Eko Budihardjo writes that in many Indonesian cities — particularly Jakarta — the development of roads and road infrastructure is designed to serve private car owners' interests more than to develop effective and efficient public transportation systems. Government policy is still oriented towards developing new streets, including flyover highways, which creates negative impacts and inefficiencies and often have confusing and damaged street signs.[50] Furthermore, as Budihardjo illustrates, the name for street signs, which in Bahasa Indonesia is *rambu-rambu*, often is reversed or punned into *buram-buram*, which means blur. This is because many street signs are damaged or poorly placed.[51]

Commonly cyclists, pedicab drivers and horse-pulled cart drivers are often blamed for causing traffic jams or congestions. But ironically, people rarely ask questions such as 'why does the government never talk about the quota of cars and motorbikes?' and 'who profits from car and motorbike production?'. People also have quickly forgotten that pedicabs and horse-pulled carts were around long before big buses, trucks and other modern vehicles. Traffic law violations by bike riders, pedicab drivers and others are actually significant. In a way this is their unconscious method of resistance to the loss of their natural environments. It can be read as their reaction against physical development, which is implemented with little concern for the general environment. The people can do nothing in direct response to this development, and neither can they articulate the problem. All they can do is violate the law.

Contrasting with the modern aspects of Yogyakartan life, there are still many ways of living which look absurd if judged by commonly objective and modern standards. In front of two major hotels in Jalan Malioboro pedicab drivers sleep on their machines at night, while just a few metres away 'privileged' people sleep in comfort in the hotel. Across the street from the 'Ramai' superstore a street vendor sells *gado-gado* (traditional food with vegetables). And around the MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants with their modern, clean, organised rooms and facilities are *gudeg* (traditional Yogyakartan food) sellers whose customers sit on mats. There are the ladder sellers who still carry one or two ladders to peddle around the kampongs. Or the one who makes a living by renting a diet body scales, carrying the scales through the kampongs around the Kraton Yogyakarta, charging Rp 50 to anyone who wants to weigh themselves. Often, those who rent the scales are not really interested in checking their weight, but they were humourously tickled by the way he advertises his business. The man calls out *cik-yar cik-yar, mancik bayar* as he walks along. *Mancik bayar* means 'paying after step on the balance', and *cik-yar* is the shortened form of this. Along with the scales he also carries equipment to patch a leaking cooking pan. To announce this he utters *bal-ci-cor, bal-ci-cor, tambal panci bocor! Tambal panci bocor* means patching a leaking pan, and *bal-ci-cor* is the shortened form.

The contrast in Yogyakartan life in some way is like the contrast between the low level of language (*ngoko*) and the high level (*kromo*). Just as people see linguistic norms as being natural, they often see the social contrast in Yogyakartan life as natural. Many aspects of what is supposed to be development are carried out in such improvised ways, with no comprehensive planning, that people refer to it as

'jazzy'. Therefore from these kinds of development emerge many conflicting ideas, aspects and interests. A good example of this is the controversy over the development of the Malioboro Mall right in the heart of Jalan Malioboro. On one hand the Sultan of Yogyakarta opposed the development which was regarded as being in violation both of city planning requirements and the courts own blueprint by sending a letter to the Supreme Court. On the other hand, further criticism was made difficult by the fact that the Yogyakartan governor was Sri Paduka Paku Alam XII (the ruler from the lesser *kraton* — from the same family as Ki Hajar Dewantoro). People believed he also had a vested interest in the shopping mall.

This example is one of the problems caused by disability of the people to assert their opinions or thoughts in a precise context of time and space: people are used to saying many things circularly and sometimes absurdly, as though they were making a surrealistic painting.

Conclusion

At least since the beginning of the dynasty of the Yogyakartan Sultanate there have been anti-colonial rebellions against what were called the authorities — Dutch and Japanese. Even so, in the era of the New Order of the Republic Indonesia there have also been rebellions against authority, as outlined in the previous chapter. The rebellious attitudes in Yogyakarta are mirrored in the ways people use language, where by punning and reverse language they have turned around traditional conventions and disregarded logic. Language is the medium by and in which people verbalise their perception about their words.

At the same time language use in Yogyakarta, which in a way is like *lotek* (*gado-gado* or Indonesian food in which vegetables, rice cakes, crackers and others are mixed in peanut sauce), reflects Yogyakartan reality, where many different layers of culture are juxtaposed. Each of the layers has its own distinctive character, pace and rationalisation, all of which create conflicting ideas and absurd appearances. Yet they intermingle and create the Yogyakartan reality. As I have begun to suggest, and will expand on in the next chapter, in the world of art this condition is conducive to Yogyakartan surrealism.

[0] Suwarno, PJ., *Hamengku Buwono IX Dan Sistem Birokrasi Pemerintahan Yogyakarta 1942-1974* (Hamengku Buwono IX And the Bureaucratic System of the Yogyakartan Government 1942-1974). Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1994, p.51.

[1] *Ibid* p.52.

[2] Ricklefs, M.C., *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1300.* London: Macmillan, 1993, pp.96-97.

[3] Sutherland, Heather, *The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite.* Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979, p.2.

[4] Suwarno *loc cit.*

[5] Hughes-Freeland, Felicia, The Search For Sense: Dance In Yogyakarta. PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of London, 1986, p.22.

[6] Suwarno *loc cit.*

[7] *Ibid* p.66.

[8] Vickers, Adrian, *Bali. A Paradise Created.* Ringwood: Penguin, 1989, pp.150-51.

[9] Hamengku Buwono IX, whose young name was Dorojatun, went to Holland to study until he was asked to return to Yogyakarta to replace his very ill father in 1939.

[10] *Ibid* p.84.

[11] On *Pangreh Praja* see Sutherland *op cit* p.1.

[12] *Ibid* pp.86-87.

[13] *Ibid* pp.190-91.

[14] Ricklefs *op cit* pp220-221.

[15] *Ibid* p.220.

[16] In an interview in March 1994, Waryati Wahono, a senior Yogyakartan traditional wedding dresser, said that Yogyakartan and Surakartan wedding dressers traditionally made jokes about the other, and in Yogyakartan comedy the jesters often wear Surakartan formal dress and headgear. Surakartans comedic figures use Yogyakartan dress in order to indirectly ridicule Yogyakartan custom.

[17] See also Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo, 'Javanese Speech Levels', *Indonesia* No. 6 (October 1968) p.52.

[18] *Ibid* p.59.

[19] *Ibid* p.53.

[20] In the story Arjuna has several wives, each from a different segment of his quest.

[21] See Sri Mulyono, *Human Character in the Wayang.* Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1981, p.116.

[22] *Ibid* pp.49-50.

[23] To borrow Anderson's words, Bahasa Indonesia was the language of resistance during the revolution in 1946-49, and the language of hope for the future. It generally carries a sense of equality, with only one level of speech. See Benedict Anderson, *Language and Power*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990, p.138.

[24] See also Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo *op cit* p.79. In the Yogyakartan television comedy *Bangun Desa* ('Village Development'), one of the main characters is Raden Ngarso, popularly called Den Ngarso. This character is very popular and many people like watching his acting and character, although he is snobbish, pretentious, rather stupid and sometimes funny. His name is significant, for the title 'Raden Ngarso' is usually used to address a high-ranking aristocrat.

[25] See Soepomo Poedjosoedarmo *op cit* p.80.

[26] Henri Chambert-Loir, 'Those Who Speak Prokem,' *Indonesia*, No.37 (April 1984), p.109.

[27] *Ibid* pp.113-114.

[28] The first person killed in the operation was Wahyo, a notoriously cold-blooded *gali* of the area of Panembahan adjacent to the Yogyakartan Kraton. He was killed in the brothel area of Sanggrahan in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta by a group of seemingly trained gunmen. A large number of *galis* turned up at the funeral ceremony. According to rumours these people were photographed secretly by the special squads. Not long after the operation began in earnest in Yogyakarta, and then spread to other major cities.

[29] The way they dressed and the vehicles they used signified that their parents must have been from the middle class. At the time off-road motorcycles were fashionable, as was growing marijuana, even though possessing or selling marijuana carried a jail sentence of more than three years.

[30] When I attended ASRI in 1977, people were familiar with the word *teler*, *lodse*. *Teler* came from Jakartan *prokem* (street language) which means 'fly' or 'stone' from smoking marijuana or taking drugs (or tranquilizers). *Lodse* came from *basa walikan*, from the word *ngombe*, to drink. Many interior design, painting, and illustration and printmaking students took marijuana and other drugs.

[31] See Linus Suryadi, *Regol Megal Megol*. Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 1993, pp.155-156.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] See also Keeler, Ward, *Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987 p.250.

[34] Mangunwijaya, Y.B. *Ragawidya*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1987.

[35] *Ibid* p.250.

[36] Keeler *op cit.*, p.251.

[37] The coordinator was the brother of Amrih Widodo, who taught Javanese at Cornell University and used to assist Benedict Anderson. See also Rustam Mandayun, 'Terpeleset di Ketoprak' (slipped in Ketoprak), *Tempo*, 20 September 1991.

[38] *Lojon* from *ngocok* (masturbation), *lajel* from *ngaceng* (erection), *pigin* from *itil* (clitoris), *sacelat* from *bajingan* (scoundrel), *gapi* from *tahi* (feces), *ledhup* from *ngemud* (sucking), *ngodwe* from *lonte* (hooker).

[39] In recent years people have used the English word 'stress'. This word means different things related to psychological unease. In a music concert of *Dangdut* by Rhoma Irama in Yogyakarta in 1994, the most popular and demanded song in the concert was the song 'Stress'. My thanks to Margot Cohen, a Jakarta-based journalist with the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, for pointing this out to me, October 1994.

[40] Mandayun *op cit* p.84.

[41] One of Siregar's children is named Ganyang Suharto. *Ganyang* means crush, Suharto happens to be the name of Indonesia's second president.

[42] Ashadi Siregar, 'Plesetan, Punk, Gundul,' *Kompas* 14 February 1992.

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] See also Virginia Matheson Hooker, "New Order Language in Context". In: Virginia Matheson Hooker (ed), *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993, p

[45] Vatikiotis, Michael, *Indonesian Politics Under Suharto.* London: Routledge, 1993, pp.72-73.

[46] Chinese food is becoming less popular than European and American fast foods. Lasagna, pizza, cheeseburgers, spaghetti, Kentucky Fried Chicken, french fries, Coca-Cola and Sprite have become popular and fashionable foods for middle-class people in Indonesia.

[47] Susanto, Budi, *Peristiwa Yogya 1992.* Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993, p.35.

[48] Linus Suryadi, *Nafas Budaya Yogya* (Yogyakarta's Cultural Lifeblood). Yogyakarta: Bentang, 1994, p.31.

[49] *Ibid* pp.178-79. Suryadi gives the example of the extreme heat generated by the zinc and asbestos rooves used in the new market.

[50] Eko Budihardjo, 'Paradoks Lalu Lintas' (Traffic Paradox), *Kompas* 6 July 1994, p.4.

[51] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 7

SURREALISM AND YOGYAKARTAN SURREALISM

This chapter discusses what Surrealism is, how it came to Yogyakarta, how it was understood by students and younger generation artists, which of its aspects had a strong impact on Yogyakartan art and how it was appropriated and developed to become Yogyakartan surrealism.

The idea of Surrealism was like something whose meaning was twisted or appropriated. In learning about Surrealism, most ASRI students, including myself, had scant knowledge of it. We learned brief details of Surrealism from books, and from literature used in Modern Art history classes. We did not learn as much as might be expected from an academic institution. "Our school in the 1970s was indeed a portrait of an academic institution that 'smelt' like a *sanggar* (artists group)," said a former Asri student of the class of 1977.[0] This was because we did not have good access to the languages used in the books and other sources. It is fair to say that we only learned about Surrealism's visual and formal aspects through reproductions of major Surrealist works in art books.

At the time people tended to not value theoretical courses as highly as studio or practical ones. Even today the appreciation of theoretical achievements is quite low. The attitude inherited from the *sanggar* tradition placed higher importance on practical and studio skills. Indeed, the study of art theory was generally considered to be economically unpromising, and only a few people engaged in it.

Literature used for the Modern Art course mostly comprised general art history books such as *Mainstreams Of Modern Art* by John Canaday (1959), *Art Through The Ages* by Helen Gardner (1959) and *History of Art* by H.W. Janson (1962). Most of these works were old, and produced in the USA when Abstract Expressionism was at its height. It is worth noting that although there were discussions of other art movements beside Surrealism, it was Surrealism that was taken seriously, and which then became fashionable.

Images with incongruous ideas from the reproductions of Surrealist artists such as Salvador Dali, Giorgio de Chirico, Marc Chagall, Rene Magritte and Paul Delvaux triggered Yogyakartan artists' surrealist dispositions. The paintings themselves were seen as models of what was typically expected from artists by ASRI teachers

and by the Yogyakartan art community. Artists were expected to be able to paint in a realistic technique and yet present creative ideas. This is like the expectation that Javanese speakers will observe the language levels. The realistic technique was the one being overlooked when abstract painting became the 'prima donna' in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s.[1] Therefore through surrealism, Yogyakartan realism made its reappearance after being indirectly but ideologically repressed by the dominance of abstract art and abstract expressionist art. Besides, surrealism articulates well the conditions in Yogyakarta which are full of absurdities and incongruities, as the traditional, the classical and the modern intermingle on the same level of life at the same time.

How People Saw Theoretical Courses

When I was still studying at ASRI in the second half of the 1970s and the early 1980s few students were interested in theoretical courses — in this case, art history courses. The attitude towards learning at school was well articulated in the Javanese phrase *sing penting prakteke karo karyane apik* ('what's necessary is to be skillful in practical works and to be able to make good artworks'). Successful artists had become role models for art students: the expressionist Affandi, whose style was distinctive, and whose reputation was often spoken of, and whose house was frequently visited; the successful Widayat, who prolifically sketched and painted wherever he went, and whose paintings were selling well; the sculptor Eddie Sunarso, who often received big commissions for making state monuments from state high-level functionaries or military figures; the painter Nyoman Gunarsa, who often went abroad to exhibit his works; the portrait painter Wardoyo; and other younger-generation successful artists inside and outside Indonesia, as described in art books and other printed sources.

In the 1970s and the 1980s writing and reading skills amongst art students had never been pursued seriously. People were still romanticising artists as the ones who lived disorganised and eccentric lives but created excellent works. Many art students were imagining such artists' lives. In the 1970s many ASRI students were long-haired, and dressed in a fashion that set them apart from students at other schools and universities. Some sold drugs and marijuana. Quite a number of students, mostly from middle-class families, in the late 1970s took tranquilizer pills, smoked *ganja* (marijuana) and drank rice wine or spirits such as Johnnie Walker and Vodka. As though such actions were seen as normal, some of them had drugs or drink at school, particularly at night, since all-night work binges,

particularly several weeks before semester ended, were common. Therefore many students came in and went out at night.[2]

Teachers and students in Yogyakarta still depended upon the writings of prominent art critics such as Kusnadi, Sudarmaji, Dan Suwaryono, Sanento Yuliman, D.A. Peransi and the younger Jim Supangkat, Agus Darmawan T, F.X. Harsono, Wienardi, Gendut Riyanto, Hardi and Bambang Bujono. It was not until the 1980s that some students, such as Butet Kertarejasa, Hendro Wiyanto, Suwarno, Yuno Baswir, Hari Wahyu, Dadang Kristanto, Totok Basuki, Heri Dono, Subandriyo and Eddie Hara, became interested in writing art criticism and discussions of art.

The lack of interest in becoming professional art writers most likely was because people had not seen art criticism and writing as being particularly important. The romanticised fantasies of becoming successful artists was still artists' and students' main preoccupation. There were fewer opportunities to publish in the mass media, which were less extensive than they are now in Indonesia, and the existing media then were less interested in visual art than they are now. A career as an art writer was not seen to hold the same emotional and financial reward as that of a successful artist. Rumours circulated about the price of works by a prominent artist, and people chatted about their exhibitions, but an art critic's career was never talked about. From the 1970s until the end of the 1980s there were few private art galleries. However, in the 1980s these galleries began to need art writers or commentators or critics to write articles for exhibition catalogues. And they usually paid art writers quite well. People like Kusnadi, Agus Darmawan, Sudarmadji, Jim Supangkat and Siti Adiyati were often asked to write exhibition catalogues. In addition, printing technology was getting better all the time. As a result colourful catalogues were produced increasingly often. Art writing began to be a profession. The method for selling artworks also changed. Art galleries had become mediators between artists and buyers, for which the galleries usually took a 30 percent commission.

The shift was significant. Yogyakartan artists used to go to Jakarta individually to sell their works to private collectors or in *Pasar Seni* Ancol (the Ancol art market).[3] Artists would contact prospective buyers personally, in the traditional manner of selling antiques and heirlooms, such as *keris*, *burung perkutut* (turtledoves), gemstones, old artefacts and so on.

Looking back at my own experience of learning to write about art, I can say we were not encouraged to express our personal thoughts. In Hari Budiono's words, 'We were conditioned to look and produce good-looking art with primary technicalities.'[4] This was like Javanese culture, where people were expected not to be assertive and individually opinionated but to know and practise good manners. Therefore we were not taught to express and articulate our individual feelings; rather, we were expected to repress or not to express emotions. Writings based on one's intuition or own opinion were not acknowledged, or were considered to be invalid. Everything should be referred to bibliographies or statements of prominent figures or experts — not many of whom were available, particularly art scholars and historians. That way we were conditioned not to see ourselves as worthy of saying something, but were required to quote or cite other authors' or experts' opinions and theories. Radically speaking, we were indirectly made to accept what was written in art books and articles. We were not educated to be critical of the books we 'read'. Ironically, most books or articles we quoted were imported books written in foreign languages such as English, German and Dutch. The contextual material in these books was written for readers from their respective cultures.

This was why students were more familiar with works of art by foreign artists featured in general art history books — artists such as Paul Klee, Juan Miro, Picasso, Gustave Courbet, Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Vincent van Gogh, Salvador Dali, Mondrian and Andy Warhol — than with the conceptual contents. Books on works by Indonesian artists, written by Indonesians, were hardly available. Those that existed were poorly printed with no full-colour reproductions of the actual works. Looking back at this situation, it could be said that the foreign artists' works were the familiar and the Indonesian artists' works became the foreign, since we had seldom seen them.

It is worth noting that until the end of the 1980s ASRI had only one art historian with a qualification as an art history teacher. He was Soedarso Soepadmo, who had taught art history from 1965 until the middle of the 1970s, when he was moved to Jakarta's *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* (Beautiful Indonesia Mini Garden),[5] and then was the cultural attaché in Holland for several years until the early 1980s.

While Soedarso was away Indonesian art history and Western art history classes were tackled by some of his former students: Nyoman Gunarsa, Subroto, Surisman Marah, Sunarno and Wardoyo. As they were not trained art history teachers they were able to give less than Soedarso had. However, Soedarso's

translation of two books from English into Indonesian proved very helpful. They were *Mainstreams of Modern Art* and *The Meaning of Art.* They were quite helpful, but since they had been duplicated by the stencil printing technique, they did not include the original illustrations. Thus, students had to check the pictures from the original books after reading the translations. I myself found these translations to be helpful since, not reading English at the time, I could not otherwise have learned further. The translations gave us access to modern art discourse.

It is important to note that the lack of interest in theories meant that the art history courses were not a major concern for the students. Unavailability of illustrative slides of artworks discussed in the books was another reason why art history courses were not as helpful or interesting as they should have been. As a result many students did not take the courses seriously. In a way it was like the way many people wear helmets now when riding motor bikes. These helmets have no safety value, are often fake or have no straps. They are not for safety reasons, but just to avoid fines from the police (who often keep these fines themselves). Students' motivation for studying art history was often not a desire for knowledge but simply wanting to fulfill semester requirements.

The Unconducive Atmosphere For Theories

Art history courses at ASRI remain far from ideal: they have never been the main priority and preoccupation for most of the students. Since 1984, when ASRI was amalgamated into ISI Yogyakarta, the Western art history lectures have usually been held in room D-04, in ASRI's second new building. The building was built in the late 1970s and began to be used in the early 1980s. Room D-04 has been the common room ever since, especially for lectures which call for the presentation of slides and tranparencies. However, the ceiling is too low, so that when full, the room overheats. In addition, since it was first used, many hinges and locks on the room's glassed windows have been broken, so that they cannot conveniently be opened. As a result of this people can hardly let fresh air into the room. Clearly, it is of poor construction.

Besides, the class is usually attended by many students. There are usually around 100 of them from three majors of study: sculpture, painting and printmaking. The course is always presented in a 'lecture' style, with the teacher's private slides projected and explained. There are no tutorial classes to reinforce the topics

covered. The material is not dealt with in the depth one would expect from an academic institution. In fact, one student describes the class as never being inspiring. Students attend simply to meet attendance requirements.[6]

The physical condition of buildings in the school complex are significant to look at as signs. The main building, the old one, remains sturdy and intact, whilst recently-built ones have deteriorated badly. The classrooms in the old building were well and properly designed, as is its twin building, the *SMA I Teladan* (Model High School No.1), located next to the ASRI building. The windows can be easily opened and their construction suits Indonesia's warm and humid tropical climate, where breeze is needed. The ceiling is also quite high, to let the air flow and circulates. This particular construction, with many windows and high ceilings to allow air into the rooms, is like many colonial buildings found in many parts of Indonesia. Actually many buildings and houses built during the Dutch colonial era and in the early years after Independence were well designed and suited their environments, including banks, the main Post Office, train stations, and houses in the areas of Kotabaru, Baciro and Bulaksumur, in Yogyakarta.

The classrooms at ASRI's new building, however, were poorly designed and constructed. They are not as spacious as those in the old building. These are signs pointing to the mental attitude of the people behind the plans, as well as to the budget and the execution of the building project. Corruption in budgeting and in building public infrastructure and buildings has been rife. Poor design and shoddy construction, as well as incomplete plans for many state and public buildings and projects financed and executed by the government, has been typical in Yogyakarta, if not in other provinces. People often hear of school buildings collapsing, particularly with the building of *SD Inpres* (public school built under the 'President's Instruction' scheme). As noted in the previous chapter, Yogyakartan writer and poet Linus Suryadi's analysis of Yogyakartan building and town planning deals with these inadequacies, and demonstrates the paradoxes of development as they apply to ASRI and Yogyakarta generally.

The following anecdote illustrates the actual experience of learning modern art history in the 1980s at ASRI. One evening I arrived at the house of one of Yogyakarta's leading surrealist painters. I planned to interview him, without forewarning, about his experience of taking theoretical courses at school. Significantly, the artist could not answer straight away when I asked about the main points of his educational experiences from taking art theory classes. He

remembered quite well many things pertaining to studio class experiences, but had to think extensively to answer questions such as who taught art history courses and what the courses covered. Without any intention of appearing ungrateful and negative towards respective teachers or of the school, the artist had almost forgotten who taught Western art history and what they taught, although he clearly remembered individual teachers' methods in the Painting Department.[7] A similar situation occurred when I interviewed an ISI Yogyakarta staff member who had graduated from the same department. He was not sure and had even forgotten who taught him Western art history, but could well articulate his experiences of practical or studio classes. Similar answers were given when I asked other former ASRI students from the 1970s and early 1980s.

This illustration suggests that these people were either not interested in art history subjects, or the subjects were not impressive enough to attract their attentions. They represent the majority of students, who did not learn enough art theory because they either did not have access to the language used in the art history books, and who were preoccupied with studio subjects. From my experience in the Printmaking Department there was only one student, Teresa Waryanti,[8] who read art books more than the teachers did. This was because she was also taking an English program at another school, now known as *Universitas Sanata Dharma* (Sanata Dharma University). Recalling the situation in the Painting Department in the 1970s, Hari Budiono said: "*Masak satu kelas nggak ada yang bisa Inggris. Tambahan lagi kalau pas kuliah Bahasa Inggris banyak anak yang minta tolong diabsenkan.*" ("What a ridiculous situation, there were no any single student who spoke English. In addition many students often asked their classmates to fill out the attendance cards.")[9] English is a required subject. Because of the language barrier the rest of the students in my class, and in the Painting Department, just managed to learn from the reproductions of the art works and the captions printed in the books. This made oral teaching methods, and the preference for artists' skills inherited from the *sanggar* traditions, go on steadily.

In this artist's period, the early 1980s, the historian Soedarso had not yet returned from Holland. The class was still held by other teachers, who did not yet use slides as teaching materials. Using slides in art lectures did not begin until 1984, on Soedarso's return to ISI Yogyakarta.[10] Before Soedarso, teachers were showing only reproductions from the books used. Producing slides was more difficult than it is now, and the price of slide film and developing was prohibitive to ordinary teachers.

My interview with would-be fulltime artist Eddie Hara, who attended ASRI in 1980, was a different story. Before coming to ASRI Hara studied English at the Teacher Training Institute in Semarang. When I asked him about the Modern Art history course taken at ASRI he could answer the questions in detail, including the name of the class, who taught it and what methods they used. Hara said that the course, which was called Western Art History, was interesting and helpful when he was studying and remains useful even now that he is a practising artist. The fact that he had access to the language in the books used for the course made a significant difference. Hara could pursue the subjects further by reading other books available in the library. As with other former ASRI students, Hara recalled being quite disappointed with how the course was conducted, feeling that slides in lectures could have been a powerful visual reinforcement. The teacher only showed pictures around from the books he took as the sources.[11] When I confirmed this with Subroto, who was teaching the class, Subroto admitted he too was disappointed with conditions, and wished he could have used slides in teaching.[12] He was quite surprised when Dadang Kristanto, the would-be leading contemporary artist, asked why he did not use slides. The next year in 1984 Subroto and Wardoyo Sugianto began to use slides to teach art history.[13]

Imagined Surrealism and Surrealism

Regardless of the limitations in teaching Western art history, students managed to learn the main points about Surrealism as the movement begun by Andre Breton and his circle in Paris in the 1920s. We learned that Breton was influenced by Freud's psychoanalytic theory, from which the method of automatism was derived. But what the theory was about, how it came to influence Surrealism, and other issues surrounding Surrealism remained foreign to us. Surrealism's use of Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism as devices of liberation from the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the middle class during the two world wars was not apparent to us. Most students seemed to learn simply the methods of creating Surrealist works, such as automatism and automatic writing to draw out ideas from the individual's subconscious, or to construct images as condensed images in dreams.

However, students became familiar with the main Surrealist works, which were reproduced in books. Works by Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Giorgio de Chirico, Juan Miro, Paul Klee, Yves Tanguy and others were

certainly too impressive to ignore. Agressively strong images of absurdity and incongruity in Surrealist works must have activated surreal tendencies or dispositions in the art students' minds.[14] These were the surreal tendencies which exist in any culture, as James Clifford points out.[15]

Parisian Surrealism

Surrealism was founded by Andre Breton and his circle in Paris in 1924. Its foundation was marked by the publication of the First Manifesto of Surrealism. Surrealism's origin, however, was the Dada art movement, which emerged in Switzerland, Germany and France at the end of World War I, and which politically rejected every moral, social, and aesthetic establishment of the time. Anarchically Dada proposed something out of its chaotic action. The aesthetic was nihilistically anti-aesthetic. The intention was to reject rationalism, empiricism and especially aesthetics coming from the cultural, social and political order, as well as the elements which had been demonstrated to have caused World War I. In its anarchic and chaotic actions Dada was an outburst of collages, parodies, jokes in art and self-defeating art, all of which were done randomly, with no sense of organisation. Dada wanted to destroy the reasonable and the logical, and replace them with the illogical. Consequently it also attacked language by applying chance, as well as pulling sentences apart to destroy their narrative meanings. Breton, Louis Aragon, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Philipe Soupault, who would come to be associated with Surrealism, were involved in the Dada movement.[16]

The word Surrealism, however, derived from the word *surrealiste*, coined in 1917 by the leading avant-garde poet and playwright Guillaume Apollinaire. The word *surrealiste* was used in his program notes for Jean Cocteau's ballet and to describe his play *The Breasts of Tiresia.*[17] Dawn Ades argues that the term was used as a mocking analogy to Nietzsche's *surhomme* (superhuman), to indicate a mode distinct from realism, naturalism or classicism, and with a strong element of shock and surprise.[18]

Although it was first used by Apollinaire, it was Breton who deliberately adopted the word surrealism for the movement he founded with his circle in 1924. It was also Breton who incorporated Freudian psychoanalytical theory into the aesthetic disposition which as a whole was named Surrealism. This movement in its stricter and safer meaning, as Maurice Nadeau writes, initially refers to literary-artistic activity that centered in Paris in the twenties and profoundly affected two

generations of poets and painters in Europe.[19] The first main artist to be adopted as a Surrealist was Giorgio de Chirico, whose painting was regarded by Apollinaire as work consciously depicting the enigma of things. This was influenced by de Chirico's readings of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.[20]

Since they were interested in Freudian psychoanalysis, the Surrealists were also experimenting with techniques to explore what were called psychological impelling forces located in the subconscious. Unsurprisingly then, the Surrealists also applied Freudian methods to deal with matters of psychoanalysis, such as free association, hypnotism, dream interpretations, dream symbolism and so on. They searched for a transcendent synthesis of dream and reality, of the conscious and the unconscious and of the rational and the irrational.[21] Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that they used these methods as a vehicle to access realities residing in the subconscious, and the marvellous, which were seen as sources of creativity, rather than as treatments to cure people's psychological problems. So it was true, as Kenneth Wach argues, that the Surrealist movement was not a style of painting, but rather a school of thought which was more interested in psychological science, especially in Freudian interpretations of the functioning of the mind, than in any 'aesthetic' movement.[22]

Furthermore, Kenneth Wach identifies several types of Surrealist painting which were predicated on Freudian theory, such as Rene Magritte's dislocated objects, Salvador Dali's depiction of dream-like images, Yves Tanguy's representation of somnolent silence, Juan Miro and Hans Arp's biomorphic images, Max Ernst's representation of childhood-inspired and alter-ego introspection, Paul Delvaux's depiction of sexuality and Man Ray and Meret Oppenheim's collisions of disparate objects.[23]

These inclinations towards Freudian psychoanalysis emerged because the "Surrealist research bureau" was practically and morally led by Andre Breton, who was interested in Freud's tenets, and then unofficially earned the title of Pope of Surrealism.[24] As a group they saw the importance of hallucination and hysteria as sources of creativity. In addition, Breton himself was also interested in 'the power of incantation' he found in Arthur Rimbaud's writing, especially the *Illuminations*, which Breton found very overwhelming and which was seen as a key source in the development of Surrealist thought.[25] Breton also knew Pierre Riverdy's poetry, which abounds in unforeseeable juxtapositions of images, evoking a mystery of ceaselessly-shifting apparitions.[26] Significant to their intention of destroying the

logical and the narrative, the Surrealists played with words — the syllables and meanings — to stretch out for new but absurd meanings and images, as in those they could explore from the reality of a dream. The Surrealist group also published the journal *La Revolution Surrealiste*, initially edited by the poets Benjamin Peret and Pierre Naville, by which their thoughts could be widely spread throughout Europe, America, Japan and Australia.[27]

The adoption of Freudian psychoanalysis by Surrealism was a significant act of rebellion. Freud's theories were highly controversial at the turn of the 20th century, conceptually questioned and attacked even during Freud's lifetime, particularly after the publication of his theory on the sexual origin of hysteria, in which he focuses on the libido whilst disregarding other dimensions of the human psychic world.[28] Central to Surrealism was Freud's iceberg analogy. Freud saw the subconscious as an iceberg's apex, the visible smaller part of it, which emerges out of the water, as the range of awareness, whilst the bigger mass invisible under the water represents the range of unconsciousness.[29] In this vast range of unconsciousness there are repressed sexual libidos, desires, ideas and passions, all of which significantly control individuals' thoughts and conscious actions. In order to bring out the causes of psychological conflict Freud asked his patients to freely associate their dreams, which Freud regarded as the great source of information and insights into true feelings and secret desires, normally censored by the super-ego. Having learnt learned psychiatry from the French psychiatrist Jean Charcot, who applied hypnosis in treating hysteria, Freud felt that the First World War had confirmed that aggressions were as rampaging as sex.[30]

Freud's free association method was applied in Surrealism by techniques such as automatic writing and automatic drawing suggested by Andre Breton, but the Surrealists used the method purely to liberate creativity, rather than as a cure for neuroses. By automatic writing they believed they could create true poetry, drawn only from the unconscious, the irrational part of human nature.[31] Similarly, in automatic drawing they drew whatever came into their minds and feelings. Therefore their work, both poetic and visual, was dream-like, with no narrative or rational logic. This was in tandem with their intention, as Breton suggested, to reconstruct the language or the verbal representative of middle-class Europe.[32] In Paul Eluard's words, the Surrealists saw the re-establishment of middle class values and morality after the war as a straitjacket whose effects had to be combated at all costs.[33]

Judging by images in Surrealist works, it can be concluded that they were hardly more fantastic or more absurd than those by predecessors such as Giorgio de Chirico, whose early work in the 1910s lead him to be considered as a proto-surrealist, Francisco de Goya, the 19th century painter who often romantically depicted dreams and monsters, or even Hieronymus Bosch, the 15th century religious painter. But it was the Surrealists who deliberately explored the marvellous and the subconscious by using certain methods and by loosely predicating the search upon a certain psychological theory — Freudianism, which was so revolutionarily radical for the time.

In relation to Yogyakartan surrealism, most art students, including myself, were not aware of the complex issues surrounding Parisian Surrealism. We knew only the main points: its predecessor, Dada; its founder, Andre Breton; where and when it was founded; what surrealist works generally looked like; that Andre Breton was interested in Freud's theory of psychoanalysis; that the Surrealists explored dreams and phantasm; that the Surrealists applied hypnotism, trances and automatism. Other issues about Surrealism remained a mystery to the people, even to those artists who now are considered to be surrealists.

However, some people intuitively connected the seemingly metaphysical outlooks of European Surrealism to *wayang* scenes, to the traditional myths, and to the mysticism esoterically practised in Yogyakarta. Therefore European Surrealism was continuously appropriated to become what is called Yogyakartan surrealism. In a way the metamorphosis from Surrealism to Yogyakartan surrealism is like that from a helmet to kinds of 'helmets' worn by people in Yogyakarta. One kind of Yogyakartan 'helmet' is indirectly used to mockingly circumvent the traffic law, the police and the entire system behind the police. In the case of Yogyakartan life Surrealism has become relevant because people are no longer able to speak through frank and clear narrative; therefore Yogyakartan surrealism emerged as a mechanism to respond to repressive conditions, not through the verbal and the narrative but through absurdities and incongruities.

Further, surrealism in Yogyakarta is a state of mind constructed by conditions in which people are losing their awareness of time and space, as the traditional, the modern and the supra-modern, the poor and the rich, the religious and the secular, the propaganda and the factual, the past and the present exist side-by-side. Surrealist scenes are in fact realistic in Yogyakarta. Yogyakartan surrealism is a revelation of the heart of Yogyakartan life. On top of that, through absurdities and

incongruities, Yogyakartan surrealists respond to situations where assertiveness, articulate individuality, and individualism do not normally have a chance of existing.

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[0] A personal communication in December 1994 with an artist who now works as a journalist for a Jakarta-based popular magazine.

[1] See the catalogue of the exhibition of work by Suromo, Wardoyo, Djoko Pekik and AY Kuncana at Edwin's Gallery, 22 - 31 July 1994.

[2] In the middle of the night some students sometimes brought prostitutes and even transvestites to the studios. This was because a number of students, many of them outer islands students, frequented the brothel area *Sanggrahan*. This activity was known as a 'study tour'.

[3] Pasar Seni Ancol was built during the period of the controversial governor Ali Sadikin, in conjunction with Taman Binaria ('pleasure park) Ancol where there is also a drive-in theatre, a big hotel, public entertainment places and food stalls. At night there are many prostitutes and transvestites for whom many people come. Nisan Kristiyanto, FX Sutopo, Hatta Hambali, Erman Sadin, Uki Sukisman, Godod Sutejo, A.B. Dwiantoro were some of the Yogyakartan artists who sold their works in Ancol.

[4] Personal communication in December 1994.

[5] This 'garden' was initiated by the Indonesian first lady, Tien Suharto, and is located in Jakarta. It consists of traditional houses from all provinces in Indonesia, and of temples representing Indonesia's five official religions.

[6] Interview, July 1994, with painting student Temmy Setiawan, who says that many students just memorise by sketching artworks to anticipate visual tests at the end of the semester. Temmy further said it was very difficult to be idealist when learning art history, since the atmosphere, the teaching methods and the overcrowded classes detracted from the situation.

[7] According to some former painting students, individual Painting Department teachers could be characterised in particular ways. Soebroto and Wardoyo Sugianto were considered articulate enough to talk about fine art theories. Widayat was regarded as a prolific artist with a sharp eye for the formal qualities of an artwork, and Widayat's spirit motivated many students. Fadjar Sidik was well known for his general knowledge of Indonesian art history, and also used to describe his experience as a Javanese artist in Bali shaping his own art vision. The portrait painter Wardoyo taught human figure and still-life drawing and painting quite well. Nyoman Gunarsa was regarded as a quite inspired painter, who managed to motivate students, and was also well-known as the teacher who

encouraged students to make expressive lines. Some students said Gunarsa often rejected painting whose lines were not expressive enough. Suwaji and Sudarisman were teachers who did not talk a lot but painted prolifically.

[8] Teresa Waryanti now teaches Bahasa Indonesia in Sydney.

[9] Personal communication with Hari Budiono, December 1994.

[10] Soedarso had a quite good photography and lighting equipment set-up for taking slides from books.

[11] Personal communication with Eddie Hara in his house, July 29, 1994.

[12] At the time Subroto taught the class with Wardoyo Sugianto.

[13] Personal communication with Subroto in Ardiyanto's house, after I interviewed Eddie Hara in the afternoon. 29 July 1994.

[14] In a way the influence of seeing Surrealist images is similar to the result of a psychological experiment conducted in New York, where seeing an aggressive picture, although it was only for 4/1000 seconds, had a significant emotional impact on a depressed person. The experiment was designed to see whether seeing an aggressive picture stimulated and would inscribe something in students' visual memories. See Hall, Calvin S. and Gardner, Lindsey, *Theories of Personality*, translated into Indonesian by Yustinus and edited by Supratiknya as *Teori-Teori Psikodinamik* (Psychodynamic Theories). Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993, pp.134-35.

[15] On surreal tendencies in various cultures, see Clifford, James, *The Predicament Of Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, p.119.

[16] Ades, Dawn, 'Surrealism as Art,' in *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*. Canberra: National Art Gallery, 1993, p.3.

[17] *Ibid.* See also Briony Fer, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, p.63.

[18] Ades *op cit* p.3

[19] Nadeau, Maurice, *The History of Surrealism*. Trans Richard Howard. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989, p.12.

[20] Ades, *op cit* p.4.

[21] Wach, Kenneth. 'The Pearl Divers of the Unconscious,' in *Surrealism: Revolution By Night,* p.170.

[22] *Ibid.* p.170.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Nadeau *op cit* p15.

[25] Rosemont, Franklin, *André Breton and the First Principles of Surrealism*. London: Pluto, 1978, p.12.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] Michael Lloyd, 'Introduction,' in *Surrealism: Revolution by Night,* p.xi.

[28] Hall & Gardner. *Op cit* p.98.

[29] *Ibid.* p60.

[30] *Ibid.* pp61&74.

[31] Lewis, Helena, *The Politics of Surrealism.* New York: Paragon House, p.18.

[32] Balakian, Anna, *Surrealism: The Road To The Absolute.* London: Unwin Books, 1970, p.140.

[33] This phrase was revealed by Ted Gott, 'Lips of Coral: Sex and Violence in Surrealism'. In: *Surrealism: Revolution By Night*, p.126.

CHAPTER 8

YOGYAKARTAN SURREALIST ARTISTS

This chapter discusses works and monographs by artists whom I consider to be Yogyakartan surrealists. They are Heri Dono, Lucia Hartini, Agus Kamal, Effendi, Ivan Sagito, Sudarisman, Temmy Setiawan, Nurkholis, Probo and Boyke. These artists, however, do not specifically proclaim themselves as surrealists: rather, the label was given them, particularly by art critics who saw connections between their work and some of the major works of Parisian Surrealism, known through reproductions in art books. I highlight these artists' individual approaches to their work, the individually distinctive charactistics of their art and their comments about their technical and conceptual tendencies.

From my interviews with the artists it appears that they do not commit themselves at all to the ideology of Breton's Surrealism, or even to Surrealism's political stances. Most of them are not aware of the politics of Surrealism, of the politics behind it, and of what Surrealism signified. Simply, there is not enough accessible material available on Surrealism, and not many artists in Yogyakarta were trained to pursue — and therefore were interested in — in-depth art theories, but concentrated instead on studio works.

Indeed, many of them are interested in the visual aspects of Surrealist works. As mentioned in the previous chapter, most Yogyakartan surrealist are quite familiar with the works of celebrated Surrealists such as Salvadore Dali, Max Ernst, Rene Magritte, and Juan Miro. Some of them simply thought that Surrealism was about the absurd and absurdities, or about the mystical and the magical, or about the supernatural and the spiritual, all of which people in Yogyakarta traditionally were familiar with.[1] Some, who had access to the literature of Modern Art and psychology, had been aware of the conscious and the subconscious mind from which they sometimes drew for their works. Therefore Surrealism, which they learned more 'visually' from a number of books and from what people talked about, did not dictate how they carried out their art; rather, the syntax of Surrealist works was triggered by surreal tendencies embedded Yogyakartan contemporary life, with which they were familiar.

Here I call them Yogyakartan surrealists because I found certain characteristics in

their works, mainly the ease with which they juxtaposed disparate ideas and objects which had affinities with Surrealism. These characteristics were similar to many scenes and aspects of life in Yogyakarta, where there were many different, even conflicting, ideas and tendencies existing at the same time on the same surface. Incongruities in Yogyakartan surrealist works could be seen structurally as the shadows or projections of incongruities in Yogyakartan life in the many respects discussed in chapter six.

Like language whose words gain significance and substance from the casual references and normalities of its users' general life, Yogyakartan surrealist works were also constituted with the specificities and the general tendencies found in Yogyakarta. Therefore, although most of the artists included here said they were not interested in practical politics or directly commenting on Yogyakartan life critically, their works nonetheless were often reflections on Yogyakartan city life.

Heri Dono, and 'Life is Cartoon'

Heri Dono was born in Jakarta on June 12, 1960, and lived there until 1980, when he entered STSRI 'ASRI' (which became ISI Yogyakarta in 1984). Heri studied in the Painting Department, which he left without formally graduating from in 1987. After that he studied leather-puppet making with Sukasman, Yogyakarta *dalang* and experimental leather-puppet maker, until 1988. This was something that was quite rare amongst Indonesian young people. From exploring the world of *wayang* Heri created his own paper puppets with his own story, which was staged at the Seni Sono gallery, Yogyakarta in 1988. In 1990-1991, he was awarded a Christoph Merian Foundation (CMS) fellowship to join the International Artist Exchange Programme Basel (IAAB) in Basel, Switzerland. Since then he has had exhibitions and workshops in Europe, Australia, America and Asia.

For Heri Dono, surrealism is a process of images or understandings which form by themselves when someone lets phenomena enter freely into his/her mind. Surrealism might include logical understandings, but it cannot be approached by logic alone.[2] Furthermore, Heri says that in Yogyakarta surrealism is an actual reality. It is part of daily life, which is full of absurdities. In the past surreal images as works of art were found in traditional glass paintings, where images and scenes were naively depicted. They were also found in *wayang beber* (another version of *wayang*, older than the leather puppets generally used now). Therefore surrealism was needed either as a way of understanding reality or as media of expression. This

Plate 8

Heri Dono

***Vegetarian* 1994**

150 x 150 cm; oil painting and collage.

Plate 9
Heri Dono
***Gamelan of Rumour* 1992**
installation.

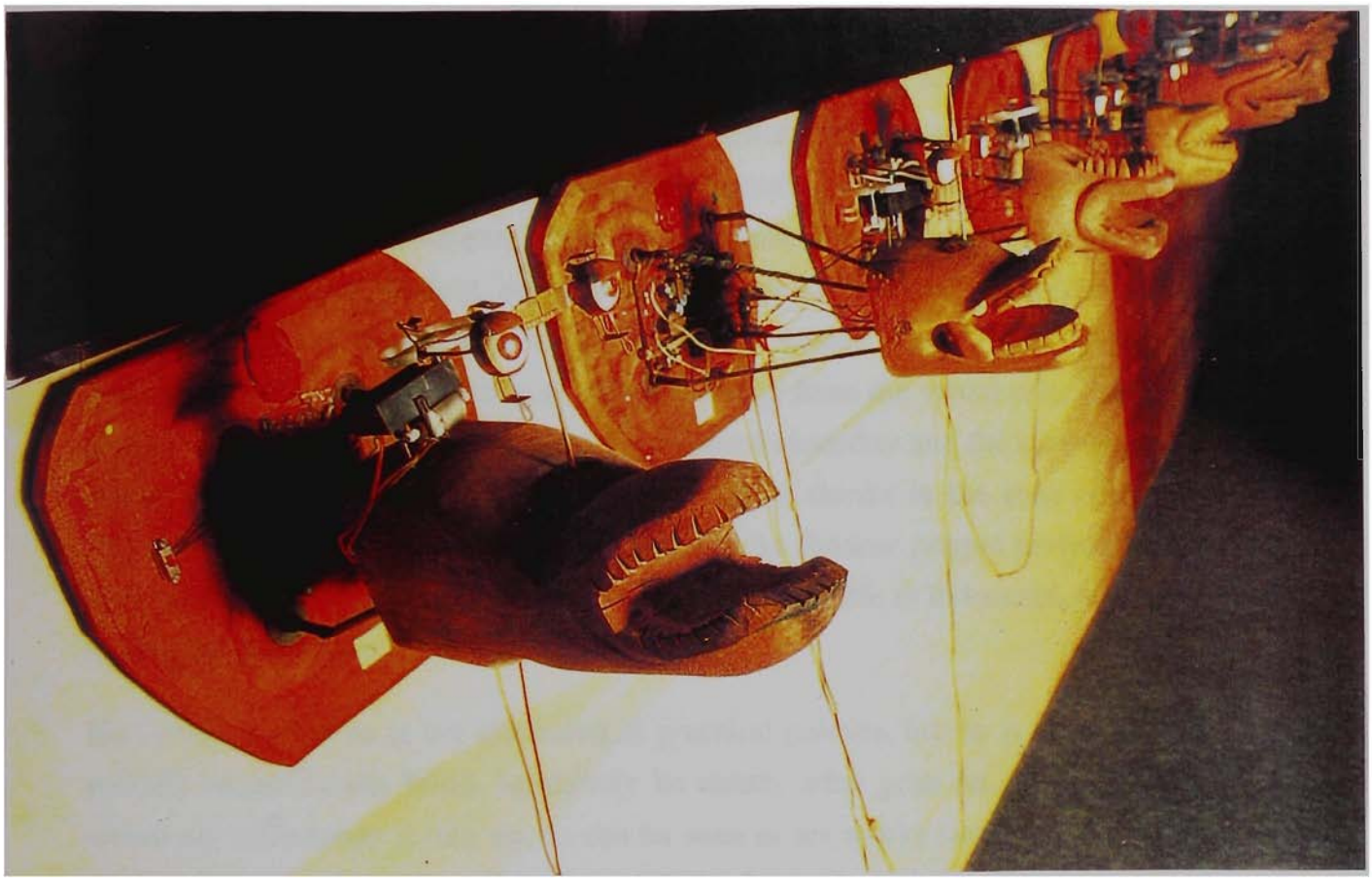

Plate 10
Heri Dono
***Watching Marginal People* 1992**
installation.

was needed as much as people needed punning, which was often used to comment on many things. For example, people in kampongs now frequently pun on the statements of disliked leaders, as a way of reacting or commenting.

Heri is one of only a few Indonesian artists dedicated to mixed-media art. He freely juxtaposes various images and media. His early works were mostly paintings on canvas. But since leaving ISI Yogyakarta he has extensively worked on sculptures, collages, electronic installations and performances. The development of Heri's artistic language cannot be separated from his study of *wayang* performance, his passion for cartoon animation, and no less importantly, his syncretism. Formally Heri is a traditional Moslem, but he always places flowers like a Javanese flower offering, and he burns incense in his home studio. From shadow puppet performance he learned to bring together elements from the visual arts, literature, performing arts and music. In animation he found absurdity and the kind of reality where all impossibilities become possible, as he thinks is the case of life in Yogyakarta. Like the jester characters in Javanese shadow puppet performances, Heri makes critical comments about social and cultural life in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta, where he lives.

Heri declares that he is not interested in practical politics, but he is certainly not socially or politically blind. Intuitively he senses what goes on in society, and creatively transforms it into art, as can be seen in his works such as *Vegetarian* (1994) (Plate 8), *Gamelan of Rumour* (1992) (Plate 9), and *Watching Marginal People* (1992) (Plate 10).

The painting *Vegetarian* was made in 1994. This is actually Heri's comment on environmental problems in Indonesia. The main foreground figure on the right side is depicted as a bigshot, bearing many national awards on his chest. Sarcastically Heri says the figure is a 'vegetarian', who in the media is known as a national hero performing charitable acts, but whose secret or unexposed corporate life is logging (or eating) tropical forests, such as those in Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya. The painting has felled trees and a red and a barren-looking volcano. Followers of Indonesian politics and environmental issues will easily recognise the figure as Bob Hasan (Mohammad Hasan), an Indonesian tycoon close to President Suharto, whose company is notorious for deforesting regions of Kalimantan. Or the image system in the work can be read as expressing Heri's concern with the environmental problems and hypocritical problems of the Yogyakartan regional government. Specifically, this work also alludes the development of a golf course

in an environmentally-protected area on the slopes of the volcano, Mt Merapi.[3] Merapi's eruption on November 22, 1994, which killed more than 50 people and injured many more, also had the effect of this golf course development being exposed in the news media.[4] But as in many other cases, there has been no further follow-up by the government. Nor did the media report the case further, so the issue faded out by itself, as usually happened in Indonesia. The authorities often stop certain cases being reported if they are likely to be damaging to those in power.

Gamelan of Rumour is an installation. For this work Heri installs Javanese musical (gamelan) instruments on wood blocks, each of which fitted with an electrically-operated stick. When the installation is turned on, the sticks beat the metal piece of the instrument to make a strangely monotonous sound. The work is about what he sees as the Indonesian government's tendency to implement significant policies, whether national or regional, without public consultation. For a number of reasons, political and social discussions are not held publicly and transparently. All important decisions are made by an elite, mostly in Jakarta. People do not see or know about the debates in the House of Representatives. As a result, rumours easily and periodically develop. People speculate about many things that are regarded as sensitive. It is difficult to distinguish what is gossip or rumour and what is the truth. If there is a price increase of oil, for example, the media are supposed to write euphemistically that it is 'governmental policy'. Rumours about the big-business activities of high-ranking officials and dignitaries spread widely. However, since this is a common topic of conversation people no longer take much notice of the issue at hand. The rumour becomes the reality. In this particular work, the network of rumours is symbolised by the sounds of *gamelan* being struck by unknown players.

The work *Watching Marginal People* (1992), is used by Heri to express his social concern. The work is an installation featuring ten monster heads. Each monster has an individually distinctive mouth. One has all its teeth outside the mouth, another has its teeth hung on the chin so that the teeth have lost their true function. By this Heri subverts logic. Each monster has eyes which are electronically operated, so that the eyeballs can move to right and left as though watching. This work is Heri's comment on the current marginalisation and alienation of people in Yogyakarta. With the so-called 'development' of Yogyakarta Heri sees that traditional Yogyakartan local people are being economically and culturally marginalised and alienated. Planting rice has become increasingly difficult because of the ever-rising

price of fertilizer. Recently, people have been 'criminally' bombarded with excessively glamourous advertisements. By marginal people he means the unemployed or those who work in the informal sector, including artists. Capitalists and state bureaucrats cooperate in building new hotels, shopping centres, amusement centres, plazas and television stations, but common folk generally cannot afford to use such new facilities. Capitalist vested interest is wrapped with slogans embellished with the words 'globalisation', 'science and technology' and so on. In short, Heri's ten monsters can be read as *Burisrawa*,[5] five conglomerates who have huge amounts of capital but no compassion. They see people merely as objects for exploitation.

Heri's time studying at ISI Yogyakarta is worth noting. Ever since he entered the art school, his strong curiosity about art made him uncomfortable with just learning from his teachers and friends, as well as the school environment. He frequently went to the staffroom after class. Critically he asked his teachers all sorts of questions about art — which happened to annoy one particular faculty member. This annoyed teacher then said that Heri should have to finish the study first and get the title *dokterandus* (a Dutch word equivalent to a master's degree) in order to be able to give opinions about art. However Heri persistently kept searching for the sake of his art.[6]

In the early 1980s he and some schoolmates had an informal discussion group. They used to talk about art development in Yogyakarta and art in general. Almost all students who took an active part in this group were militantly critical of the school system and the art establishment. They were Yuno Bashwir (who married an American dancer, and is a permanent resident of the USA), Edi Hara (married to an American artist), Hari Wahyu (a leading graphic designer in Yogyakarta), Totok Basuki (married to a New Zealander, living in Australia), Heri Dono and Dadang Christanto. From this group only Dadang managed to receive a degree from ISI Yogyakarta. The rest of them dropped out of the school. Nevertheless, these people could be said to be better informed and also more interested in contemporary art discourse and theories than the rest of the students, who were mostly interested in studio work. It could be said that they were too intellectually radical and contentious to listen to their teachers, who were at that time mostly uninterested in art theory, preferring to focus more on practical issues.

Dissatisfied with the answers he got from his school teachers, Heri made up his own learning schedule. He visited several older artists, including contemporary and traditional artists in several cities in Java, such as Nashar, Rusli, Amang Rachman,

Plate 11
Heri Dono
***Eating Shit* 1983**
oil.

Sudjana Kerton and the *wayang* maker Sukasman. Significantly, he learned that each of these people had developed individual strategies to survive as professional artists. This way of learning is rather rare amongst contemporary art students in general. However, it worked perfectly for Heri.

The obvious result of this was that Heri no longer restricted his art to conventional techniques commonly practised at school in the 1980s. During those years many art collectors started purchasing paintings, mostly those done on canvas. This was the time when Indonesian oil and acrylic painting took off. Nevertheless, Heri did not jump into the commercial stream which began to flow through Yogyakarta. Instead, he was interested in pursuing traditional art practices, especially *wayang* which he learned from Sukasman.

In making his figures Heri synthesises extreme deformations of the *wayang* characters and absurd stories of *wayang* with radical deformations and absurdities from cartoon animation, which has fascinated him since he was little. Heri makes *wayang* for his own stories, deforming and transforming his characters crazily, absurdly and freely. Through these absurdities he wraps or articulates his socio-political comments in humour like *wayang* jester characters, all of which are quite different from his early works of art, made in the early 1980s not long after the implementation of *NKK* and *BKK*. His early pieces were literally expressed, as is obviously visible in the Miroesque painting *Eating Shit* (1983) (Plate 11).

The painting depicts a figure lying on his back with hands tied. The legs stand up stiffly, the head lies on five tacks which stick into it. From the figure's anus comes a cobra snake. The mouth is wide open and about to swallow the faeces of another figure above. Through this painting Heri was making a statement about the situation experienced by students, whereby they were supposed to act as 'student' only; their sole duty was to study and to gain academic knowledge. It was as though students were being made to swallow shit. This painting most likely signified his own condition when he was so eagerly and radically searching for his sense of self and his own art language. At the time the situation he found himself in as a student was particularly frustrating.

Judging from his diverse works and wide range of media he uses Heri can be regarded as the most prolific and experimental artist in Yogyakarta. In relation to Surrealism Heri Dono has freely synthesised many different media and art approaches. He lets ideas freely flow into his art by juxtaposing or collaging different ideas and elements.[7]

Lucia Hartini And Automatism

Hartini was born in Temanggung, a small town in the foot of the mount Sumbing in Central Java, in 1959. She studied art at *Sekolah Menengah Seni Rupa* (*SMSR* or the High School for the Art) in Yogyakarta in 1976, when the school was still run in the afternoons at the campus of STSRI 'Asri' in Gampingan Yogyakarta. It was a three-year-long art high school program. In her first year she often quit the school since, according to Hartini, many of the teachers were frequently absent from teaching anyway. Some were so busy with their own business, such as doing commissioned work, that these undisciplined teachers frequently neglected their teaching duties. At the time the school was not so organised, although it was a formal school run by the government.[8] The way people ran the school was similar to running a *sanggar* or informal artists group.

Because the school was run in the same building as Asri, Hartini was one of few female students in her school to know quite well some students at ASRI, including Arifin, who become her husband in the 1970s. For several reasons Hartini quit the school for good in 1977. One of the reasons was a new policy requiring students to wear school uniform, as did other general high school students. The uniform was white shirt and grey skirt for girls, and grey pants and white shirt for boys. This was a compulsory instruction from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.

Thematically, Hartini did not learn what Surrealism was. She only knew it from hearsay or from her husband's student friends, who often came to their house and talked about art, or from seeing some works loosely termed surrealist. Hartini had started drawing and painting in Temanggung when she was still young. It seemed that painting was crucial as a medium of expression which could compensate for her shy and introverted nature. Painting and drawing became so important to her that she always tried to set time and space aside for them, although she was busy with household jobs. As a young woman she was encouraged by husband, who at first did not see her art potential. Nor did Arifin's artist friends, who often came to their house, recognise Hartini's potential.[9] They, recalls Hartini, usually just said: '*Oh apik*!' ('It's good!'), but they seldom talked much more about her paintings.[10] They tended to be overlooked, asserts Hartini, as merely the art of a housewife. Therefore whenever her husband's friends came to the house, talking about art in general or discussing possibilities for group exhibitions, Hartini was left behind or

Plate 12
Lucia Hartini
***Nuclear Power in a Wok* 1982**
145 x 145 cm; oil.

disregarded — she was not asked to join their discussions on art. Thinking perhaps this was normal, Hartini kept her feelings about it to herself.[11]

After Hartini had produced several paintings, one of her younger sisters, who studied at ASRI, suggested she exhibit her work somewhere in Yogyakarta. But Hartini had no idea how to go about it. She had never thought of such a thing, and she knew no-one who would be able to help her exhibit the work. Eventually a friend of her sister's named Titik — an ASRI graphic design student whose future husband, Heri Budiono (another ASRI painting student) worked at Bentara Budaya, the Yogyakarta exhibition space founded by *Kompas* newspaper — found her. Hari then encouraged her to exhibit her works and helped organise the exhibition at Bentara Budaya in 1983. This gallery space was newly opened in the same year.[12] Initially it featured a wide range of exhibition from traditional artists such as traditional glass painters, puppet makers, ceramic makers, pedicab painters, contemporary artists, and foreign artists. Bentara Budaya sponsored artists whose works were worth exhibiting and were relevant to Bentara Budaya's policy. As it turned out, a program to exhibit Hartini's work could be included in Bentara Budaya's sponsored programs. Then the preparation was organised and assisted by Bentara Budaya.

However, it was not a one-woman show. Hari Budiono and other curators had to compromise and include Hartini's husband's works. It would have seemed quite rude if the curators had only invited Hartini herself, since Arifin had actively exhibited his work with his group *Kelompok Raksasa.* Hartini also was not confident of showing her works alone. The exhibition went ahead, with several of Arifin's large-scale abstract expressionist paintings, and several of Hartini's surrealist-looking smaller works. Included was one of Hartini's master pieces, *Nuclear Power in the Wok* (1982) (Plate 12).

Hartini's works turned out to be generally more popular than her husband's, and received a lot of attention in the media. Some of her works in the exhibition were purchased by collectors. This was quite uncommon, since, in the 1980s, art collecting had yet to boom. *Nuclear Power in the Wok* was bought by Gramedia (a major publishing company). Hartini's career as an artist started at this point. But ironically, at the same time Hartini's relationship with her husband began to deteriorate. Although he had once encouraged her painting, he now became envious and actively opposed it. But it was too late — Hartini found that having an exhibition of her art was challenging and exciting, as well as emotionally liberating

and rewarding. The exhibition turned out to become a major event for her. In the meantime the purchases of her work went on, until she had to stop painting at one stage in order to work for a living. By this time her husband's jealousy was increasingly turning against her. Arifin often went out with some overseas women and left Hartini doing hard work by herself, such as making batik, sewing and silkscreening for a living. Eventually her husband left her, and now lives in Bali. Hartini only managed to return to her art in 1986 after three years of marriage-problem horrors, and after a couple of years of exploitation by her husband. Such experiences were to influence the way Hartini saw the pulling-cart horses commonly found in Yogyakarta, as being exploited just as she had been. Since 1986 Hartini has been able to fully dedicate herself to her art. She is one of only a few fully professional Indonesian woman artists to make a living for herself and her children from her works of art.

Hartini's painting *Nuclear Power in the Wok* gives examples of juxtapositions of things, of absurdities, of self-expression, and of her indirect comment on socio-cultural life as a woman living in a densely-populated kampong. The surrealistic aspects in this painting are the juxtaposition of a wok with water-like current, with an explosion coming from the wok, and with a snake-like spoon going towards the wok. This wok is at a slant, placed absurdly on hard and sharp-looking rocks in the middle of the sea. Significantly, the wok is a tool commonly used to cook in Indonesia, mostly by women in ordinary households. So that the wok with some cracks on the edge may be read as Hartini herself, who at the time could hardly be a fulltime artist. She had to do daily routine jobs for her family such as cooking, looking after her child, cleaning the house and other household jobs. The position of the wok being stuck on the rocks signified herself, since at the time she was not sure yet where to go, either as an artist or just the wife of a painter. In the early days of their marriage Hartini was also making batik painting for a living. The juxtaposition of the explosion in the wok with a rage of flame and a strong water-like current, and the spoon like a spermatozoon, signifies Hartini's fertility as an artist who later would bear many prolific works of art. Semiotically, the juxtaposition of a wok (symbolising a woman) stuck on the rocks may also be read as Hartini's comment on the social life of many women in Yogyakarta, who culturally are regarded as subordinate to men. Hartini, who grew up in the quiet, spacious and peaceful area at the foot of Mt Sumbing, found it rather difficult and uncomfortable living in a densely populated area in Yogyakarta, where it seemed everybody wanted to know everyone else's business.[13]

Plate 13
Lucia Hartini
***Spying Eyes* 1989**
150 x 140 cm.

Plate 14
Lucia Hartini
***Stuck on the Sharpness* 1992**
200 x 230 cm; oil.

Horses often appear in Hartini's work. In Yogyakarta horses mostly are used to pull carts (*dokar* or *andong* in Javanese) which can take at least four people, including the coachman. However a *dokar* in Yogyakarta is often overloaded, the horse carrying much more than it seems able to, for example when it takes vegetables, fruit or other goods to or from the market. It is not unusual for a horse to be carrying a full load uphill on a hot afternoon, surrounded by cars and motorbikes, and yet be whipped by the coachman when it slows down. This is of great concern to Hartini. She often associates the horses with people bearing mental, emotional, or physical burdens, or simply with exploited people. Hartini is making a social and cultural commen as she takes the side of the burdened, the marginalised, and the unfortunate. Apart from these particular social comments, Hartini says she finds horses' eyes visually and aesthetically interesting as they are always clear and beautiful, and therefore worth painting.

The development of Hartini's work since her early career as an artist is significant. Up to 1993 Hartini tended to merely depict human figures as objects, or as gazed-on or victimised subjects. *Spying Eyes* (1989) (Plate 13) and *Stuck on the Sharpness* (1992) (Plate 14) fit this type. In the former Hartini represents a female figure, most likely herself, deeply asleep on flying long blue cloth, like smoke, which can figuratively be read as a dream. This figure is sleeping between two cracked and hollow zigzagged long walls, which appear to come from the sky. This long and zigzagged walled passage is Hartini's comment about herself as a single mother living with two children in a kampong, where people always want to know about her business and personal life. This socially and personally interfering attitude is symbolised by three wide-open eyes, closely watching the sleeping figure. The main figure is presented as passive and terrified, indicating that Hartini herself is not yet assertive enough — she was still in a passively defensive position.

A similar outlook can be seen in the painting *Stuck on the Sharpness*, in which Hartini represents a passive, if not fatalist, metaphor for a woman. Hartini seems to be making a comment on the unspoken cultural conviction in Java, and Indonesia in general, that women are socio-culturally and physically weak.[14] Generally speaking a woman's fates depends upon her older brothers or husband. In public scenes a woman seems to not have individuality and social autonomy, as she is always associated with someone or some group. This painting depicts a big white bird with delicate feathers, stuck on sharp splinters of rock in the middle of the sea. The bird stands for an individual wanting to be free from her rocking society, to go

Plate 15
Lucia Hartini
***Srikandi* 1993**
150 x 150 cm; oil.

somewhere where she can be herself or have a say for herself. These sharp rocks are presented as strong and steady. All of this represents Hartini's wish to go somewhere to be herself. This idea is confirmed by one of Hartini's tendencies to depict places on unknown planets, or in a fantastic-looking place surrounded by thick clouds, as can be seen in her painting *Supporting Rainbow* (1993).[15]

The technique of repeating lines, her observations of nature, and her practice of working around midnight are conducive to contemplation and dynamic meditation. Technically, the time Hartini works is worth noting. She often works around midnight after finishing her motherly 'obligations' for her children. Also the quietness of the night suits her nature. Working at night has become a habit for her. Also she personally finds working at night to be much more peaceful, meditative, and creative. In Javanese traditional culture, especially in ascetic traditions, people believe that around midnight people are more mentally aware. Tradition holds that this is a good time for *tirakatan* (ascetic exercise) to gain mystical power. Initially, however, Hartini did not choose late night as her working time for mystical reasons, but because that was when her role as mother had finished for the day.

Although in the beginning it was for practical reasons, as Hartini says, working at night has often given her unexpected insights. She could see things more clearly. Around this time, as many Javanese believe, she is mentally and intuitively aware, where the boundary between the conscious mind and the subconscious mind disappears. In this point the past, the present and the future blend together, which often bring prophetic and reflective insights.

A shift from being passive to active and bold in depicting her subjects took momentum in Hartini's work *Srikandi* (1993) (Plate 15). The main subject of this painting is completely different from those in previous works. This piece reveals significant signs of the year. A female figure is depicted with a challenging gesture. Her stance recalls Srikandi, the *wayang kulit* female warrior character who can appear powerful and masculine. The subject's head is up like Srikandi's, her eyes confronting the eyes which seem to be watching her. The figure's hands are clenching, with muscular arms and fists, so that the overall appearance is one of assertiveness, expressiveness and boldness. This is so unusual and different from Hartini's previous passive and fatalist-looking figures, that she can be said from this point to have been awakened.

Two significant figures emerged in Indonesia's socio-political world the year this

painting was made. One was Marsinah, a female labour who in April 1993 led her workmates to strike for a wage increase at the watch company where they worked. Several days later Marsinah was found savagely murdered. The other was Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's first president Sukarno, and who became head of the Indonesian Democratic Party (*PDI*), an oppositional party to the ruling party *Golkar*. Megawati achieved this leadership only after passing through several political and military obstacles engineered by groups believed to be working for the ruling party or the government. Nevertheless, in doing this work Hartini did not refer to the women described above literally, but she prophetically described their real conditions through her metaphoric figure of Srikandi.

Nurkholis

Nurkholis was born in Jepara, Central Java, 17 July 1969. He attended ISI Yogyakarta in 1989 and graduated in 1994. For him surrealism is a process by which to consciously live in a metaphysical world or the world of ideas.[16] He learned Surrealism from the Modern Art class taught by Soedarso, his teacher at ISI Yogyakarta. His skill in English also enabled him to have access to a few articles on Surrealism, including "The First Manifesto" of Breton.

Nurkholis knows that Parisian Surrealism was influenced by Freud's psychoanalytic theory. However, he also thinks about Eastern 'surrealism'. By using this framework constructed by Surrealism, he is aware that many characters in shadow puppet performance are surreal. For example the figure of *Batara Guru* (the god Siwa) is absurdly depicted with four hands. This figure and other *wayang* characters are very illogical, as Nurkholis well realises.

During his studying in junior high school and high school he learned Sufism from a *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism) teacher in Jepara. From this learning he is familiar with the teaching of Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, who taught that humankind was God incarnate, and was created in his image so that people might recognize such divinity within themselves and attain a union with God.[17] Also from reading he is familiar with the teaching of Jalaluddin Rumi, the 13th-century Sufi who founded the Order of the Whirling Dervishes (Muslim religious men vowed to poverty and austerity).

From his *sufis* teacher he learnt to appreciate and observe natural phenomena, and tends to think further about the realities behind physical appearances of things. In

Plate 16
Nurkholis
***Chained* 1994**
80 x 80 cm; oil.

Plate 17
Nurkholis
***Dasamuka The Teacher of Democracy* 1994**
150 x 200 cm; oil.

Plate 18

Nurkholis

***Expecting the Birth of Solomon* 1994**

80 x 100 cm; oil.

other words, he has learned 'semiotics'. Nurkholis has also practised *dhikr* (endless repetition of God's holy names or sacred passages taken from the Koran). Visually as well as religiously he is also interested in Islamic *rajahs*, or calligraphic writings made by sufis, believed to be stylisations or simplifications from nature or the cosmic but made of Arabic characters. Therefore Nurkholis often applies the *rajah* patterns in his painting, as can be seen in his work *Terbelenggu (Chained)* (1994) (Plate 16). Part of this pattern is from a *rajah* (amulet) to confine somebody spiritually for a good end.

In his work *Dasamuka Sang Guru Demokrasi (Dasamuka the Teacher of Democracy)* (1994) (Plate 17), Nurkholis combines *wayang* characters with a modern artefact. Here Dasamuka, who in the Ramayana story is the savage and greedy king of the Alengkadirja kingdom, is holding an American flag. Other wayang characters such as Semar, Batara Guru, Kresna, and Gatutkaca, as well as other creatures, are looking at and seem to be listening to Rahwana. In the middle of the scene there is a small and innocent-looking bird, which can be interpreted as Nurkholis himself. The motif is repeated in his painting *Expecting the Birth of Solomon* (1994) (Plate 18), in which a small bird looks at sharp rocks and other creatures, seeing the fierce environment surrounding him.

In *Dasamuka Sang Guru Demokrasi* Nurkholis expresses his annoyance with his school, which he sees as having merely taught students to be 'robots', or to be order-receivers only, to reflect broader problems existing in society. In *Expecting the Birth of Solomon* Nurkholis expresses his concern with the situation he saw at the Faculty of Visual Art, ISI Yogyakarta, where most students came to the library only when they were about to write a compulsory term paper accompanying their final projects. Nurkholis confirms that there were not many students who liked reading, but instead preferred doing studio works. The problem extended to most teachers, and was reflected in their clichéd comments on students' works, even though the development of contemporary art has changed at such a rapid pace. It is as though time has frozen at ISI/ASRI. The materials taught in class were also out of date. Whilst in the outside world people were discussing postmodernism and other discourses, in the classrooms at ISI Yogyakarta the teachers still concentrate uncritically on the works of Henri Matisse, Van Gogh and other artists of the past. Nurkholis feels there was no academic dynamism at the school — only decadence — in keeping with the materialist, individualist and pseudo-rationalist quality of life in Yogyakartan 'modern' life. Therefore to compensate for what he thinks his environment lacks Nurkholis turns to Sufism or religious mysticism in order to find

deeper realities of what he experiences now.

Agus Kamal and the Stocks

Agus Kamal was born on 31 July 1956 in Pemalang, a town on the north-west cost of Central Java, where there is an orthodox stronghold of Islamic *mazhab* (school of thought) of *Syafii*. There are many traditional *madrasahs* (Islamic schools), and Islamic mystical traditions. Pemalang's local culture is a mixture of coastal Javanese, Chinese and Arabic cultures. There are some Chinese and Arabic kampongs among the native Javanese. Agus Kamal himself happens to be from a strongly religious family background. His paternal grandfather was a *kyai* (Islamic scholar) and a *penghulu* (Islamic priest) of the Randu Dongkal area at the foot of Mt Selamet, not far from Pemalang, and a respected traditional calligrapher of Islamic scripts taken from the Koran. Kamal's father was also a *penghulu*. Many members of Kamal's family went to Islamic boarding schools or worked in *Kantor Urusan Agama* (the Religious Affairs Office). Some practised Islamic mysticism, but Agus Kamal was more interested in art. In 1979 he attended STSRI ASRI in the Painting Department, and graduated in 1986. Since 1987 he has worked at the same school in the same department.

Agus is well-read in *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism) and sufism, especially the teachings of the 11th-century *sufi* Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali.[18] Apart from fulfilling his Islamic obligation of praying five times a day, Agus often contemplates verses from the Koran, and natural things which could be seen as God's creations. In so doing he practices *dhikr*, by saying *Allah hu Akbar* (God Almighty) by heart, or *Asma ul Khusna* (the 99 holy names of God) endlessly for a certain span of time. Like meditating, in repeating a prayer he follows his 'personal rhythm' in tune with his heartbeats or/and his breath. Consequently his religiously mystical framework and meditative practice influences the way he sees his art. In this respect Agus tends to raise religious themes, incorporating religious, humanist and social aspects of life which he believes to be inseparable, as he states: "... that there is nothing more true in life than to love mankind and above all to love what has created love, that is the Almighty, an All-loving God."[19]

Agus Kamal does not specifically label himself a surrealist artist. He read some articles on Surrealism while still an art student, and, after beginning teaching, gradually learned more about Parisian Surrealism from reading and art discussions. However, Agus Kamal never based his art on Breton's Surrealist ideology. The

only part of Surrealism he is really interested in is the discussions of dreams. He believes that however abstract or absurd a dream is, it is still real: "We can often have experiences from reading, watching, listening and contemplating. However, there is another experience which is difficult to comprehend, and that is the experience we get when we are dreaming, and the experience we get from fantasizing when we are awake."[20]

Agus Kamal often contemplates the subconscious, which for him is quite special and interesting. This was so because when he repeats a prayer in meditation he feels that the boundary between the conscious and the subconscious disappears. Like an iceberg with its tip emerging from the depths of the ocean, one is the visible and the other the invisible part of the same thing.[21] Therefore as far as his concern in searching for insights goes, the 'real' and the 'imagined' are both real.[22]

Agus Kamal's painting technique is quite particular. He scratches painted areas of the canvas with a palette knife to make highlights. The texture of the canvas in his painting is often visible as part of the figures. It is worth noting that Agus Kamal developed this technique by accident out of frustration. Before inventing his own painting technique Agus Kamal the target of jokes from his classmates. His tendency to realism did not fit in at ASRI at the time, since most teachers in the Painting Department and many of its students were doing abstract or semi-abstract paintings.[23] At the time there were only a few students making realistic paintings, such as Agus Kamal himself, Ifansyah, Ronald Jaling, and Bugiswanto. The fact that Agus Kamal came from a small town, Pemalang, where people speak Javanese with a distinctive dialect, called *Banyumasan*, was also significant. Many people from the Banyumas area prefer to speak Bahasa Indonesia in Yogyakarta, because Yogyakartans often will ridicule the *Banyumasan* accent. A similar situation exists in Jakarta, where people often make jokes about Banyumas and Tegal accents.

In his early years at ASRI Agus Kamal used to get negative responses when he presented his works, although he always tried his best. As already mentioned, painting criticism at Asri usually involved a student presenting his weekly work before the class teacher, the assistant teachers and other students. At first the teacher would give a general comment about the work and then another usually gave comments or responses. The student presenter was supposed to defend his/her work. The criticism was fierce and sometimes rather broad, but always a discussion of formalism. People often made jokes or punned on artistic terms, or on the presenter's argumentation. In these sessions Agus Kamal not only often

Plate 19
Agus Kamal
***Praying* 1990**
115 x 140 cm; oil.

Plate 20
Agus Kamal
***They Aren't Guilty II* 1986**
110 x 140 cm; oil on canvas.

Plate 21
Agus Kamal
***Died in the Stocks* 1988**
155 x 110 cm; oil on canvas.

received negative responses for his work, but also his *Banyumasan* accent was often laughed at by other students. As a result Agus often felt discouraged whenever his turn came to present work. He grew increasingly frustrated.

One day in desperation Agus Kamal experimentally and speculatively made a painting with thick oil paints. He disliked the result, so started scratching the painting with a knife, thinking he could reuse the canvas. Accidently he came to a creative moment whilst doing this. He saw the visual effects of the unexpected textures resulting from the scratching. With this, especially after the seventh semester, people no longer ridiculed him but eventually appreciated his invention. Scratched painted areas of highlights, rather monochromatic colours, cracked rocks and walls, cut off or rotten or dead figures depicting absurdities, desertion, dreariness, death, and horrors soon came to be his 'trademark'. In general he tended to portray pessimistic-looking scenes. However, when I asked why he liked portraying destruction, explosion and fatalism, he answered that he did not believe he was pessimistic. He argued, for example, that illustrating Doomsday does not mean he is pessimistic, since Doomsday is written in the Koran.[24] Agus Kamal's purpose in depicting such themes is motivated by his conviction that he must give religious messages indirectly through metaphors and illustrations, and that he must express his social comments from the perspective of own his religious conviction. In a number of works he channels his religious feelings through praying figures or Arabic characters for *Allah*, as can be seen in his work *Praying* (1990) (Plate 19).

Agus Kamal's work *They Aren't Guilty II* (1986)(Plate 20) can be seen as a metaphoric text which is socially and environmentally significant. The painting was created when he was about to graduate from the school. The whole scene signifies horror and absurdity. A boy is sucking his dead mother's breast. His head is too big for his skinny body. The mother's head is severed, as is her right arm. The figures are cracked, as though made of rocks or terracotta, and look old. The figure of the mother has various semiotic interpretations. It could be Agus' Alma Mater which had already run out of 'milk' (academic autonomy),[25] or run out of sources for bolstering creativity. It could be his own environment, since he lived in an area close to an endlessly busy inner-city street. In other words he may have been painting his experience of chaotic traffic situations. In a wider sense the mother can be read as the city of Yogyakarta, which has been exploitated and modified for the sake of modernisation.

A similarly horrific and absurd theme can be seen in another of Agus' works, *Died*

Plate 22
Ivan Sagito
***Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* 1988**
110 x 140 cm; oil.

Plate 23
Ivan Sagito
***Us Who Are Puppets* 1987**
110 x 127 cm; oil.

Plate 24
Ivan Sagito
***Imagination of Transitoriness Poles* 1991**
110 x 140 cm; oil.

in the Stocks (1988) (Plate 21). A rotten human body lies on the floor, both feet in stocks. Agus relates this to a childhood experience in his kampong in Pemalang, of seeing a mentally ill person put in the stocks.[26] There was no political intention at all when I asked him whether this particular painting was about any aspect of life in Yogyakarta, either politically or socially. Agus Kamal sincerely answered that in doing his art principally he wanted to do two things: to make a painting as artistic and aesthetic as possible, and to not offend *agama* (religion) or *negara* (the country).[27] However, in relation to Yogyakarta's socio-political conditions in the 1980s , the stocks can be read as socio-political stocks used by a certain group of people to curfew or to control tendencies or developments in other subordinate groups. The stocks here are readable as a restrictive mechanism. In this respect they were like the *NKK/BKK* depolitisation policy of 1978, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Ivan Sagito

Sagito was born of a Chinese Indonesian family, on 13 December 1957 in Malang, East Java. His Chinese name was Go Tjie Sien. He attended *Sekolah Seni Rupa Indonesia* (the High School of Art) in Yogyakarta in 1975, then STSRI 'ASRI' in 1979. When he was in Junior High School he and his schoolmates used to play around the Porong Psychiatric Hospital at Lawang. Many of his schoolmates were children of hospital employees. Seeing many mentally ill and schizophrenic people inside the hospital fence was a regular occurrence for Sagito. Sagito also knew that many of these people were simply abandoned by their families. His experiences of watching psychiatric patients' behaviour sometimes preoccupied him, making him wonder where the boundary between the conscious and the subconscious was, and where people lost control of their thoughts, feelings and actions.[28]

Sagito gained a general idea about Surrealism from Modern Art classes and general art discussions. He is aware of the relevant issues to Breton's Surrealism, such as exploration of the subconscious and automatism. However, Sagito is more interested in imaginative associations. He also wonders about time and which is more real: linear (Newtonian) time or the time he actually experiences. He wrote in an exhibition catalogue, 'What are called yesterday, today, and tomorrow?'[29] This leals him to ask more questions about the transitory and the eternal. Ivan is interested in presenting 'yesterday', 'now', and 'tomorrow' in the same frame as dreams, as can be seen in his work *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (1988) (Plate 22). This also expresses his desire to bring out chunks from the subconscious bit by bit and transform them into the conscious.[30]

Sagito's ongoing thoughts about the transformation from the subconscious into the conscious and vise versa is like transforming one idea or subject into another. This is Sagito's main strength. The relationship of his work to visual punning is clear in his *We Who Are Puppets* (1987) (Plate 23), where a figure sitting passively is transformed into a wooden puppet figure.

Doing art is a way of expressing himself within the context of searching and exploring.[31] From his work it seems that Sagito is an adaptable observer. It is obvious that he fuses emotionally and morally with his socio-cultural environment. Although he comes from a Chinese family background, all his subjects, both through their facial expression and gestures, look Javanese. Most of his figures are female. Sagito is also responsive to Yogyakartan folk life. Cows (which are still used to pull carts), shadow and wooden puppets, ordinary people's lives and traditional house yards are his vocabulary for bringing out hidden aspects of Yogyakartan life, which is full of absurdities. His work *Imagination of Transitoriness: Poles* (1991) (Plate 24), depicts some girls leaning against cloth drying poles. This is set against a surreal environment of Javanese traditional houses. The poles look old, rotten and hollow. Through this Sagito depicts silent aspects of Javanese life, with all of its high and folk cultures, which now appear to stand defenceless against the modern and mass cultures now inevitably penetrates to the very essence of Javanese life.

Effendi

Effendi was born in Malang, East Java, in 1957. He attended STSRI 'ASRI in 1979 in the same year as Agus Kamal and Ivan Sagito did. By the time he graduated, in 1986, the school had already become ISI Yogyakarta.

When asked whether he directly intended to comment about his social and physical environment, Effendi he straightaway said 'no!'. However this 'no' should be interpreted further, since expressing socio-political views through art is 'taboo'. In contrast a number of his works obviously signify social and environmental problems, such as his work *Plasticisation* (1991) (Plate 25), in which he depicts six figures wrapped in plastic. In the background is a deserted landscape, with the Yogyakartan Palace wall and its guarding statues the only objects. Two wrapped male figures lie in the middle ground. The woman in the foreground is fatalistically surrendering to anything, a reference to the homeless, the prostitutes, and the

Plate 25
Effendi
***Plasticisation* 1991**
110 x 150 cm; oil.

Plate 26
Effendi
Mother and Child I **1987**
100 x 135 cm; oil.

Plate 27
Effendi
***Product* 1991**
110 x 150 cm; oil.

ordinary people who live around the Yogyakartan Palace square. The guard statues and the Palace wall represent the social problems caused by urbanisation, and the plastic wrapping represents the too-abrupt modernisation ensnaring people's lives with environmental problems. In this work Effendi presents various layers of culture, such as the guard statues at the Palace as a symbol of classical Yogyakarta culture, the ordinary people as a symbol of folk and popular culture, and the plastic as a symbol of mass culture or modernity. In his words, plastic is a 'symbol of our time'.[32] This rather quiet artist asserts he is not really interested in practical politics, nor in creating art as literal social comment.[33]

Effendi's earlier works, however, are more poetic and metaphorical. He often adapted heads from female *wayang kulit* characters to be pasted or transplanted on realistically-painted human figures, as in the work *Mother and Child I* (1987) (Plate 26). In this painting he still incorporates images taken from the natural and cultural environment, such as the verdant tree-filled background, wooden fences, a mother breast-feeding her child, and a *wayang* character representing Javanese classical culture. This painting suggests that at the time Effendi saw a society still able to live from its own traditional cultures and from its given nature. There is obviously a significant shift from the well-ordered scenes in *Mother and Child* to the chaos of scenes like *Plasticisation*, in which Effendi depicts his reflection on socioecological problems caused by poorly-planned supra-structure development and industrialisation which disregards local culturs and environtments.[34]

As with most other students at ISI Yogyakarta, Effendi derived a general understanding of Surrealism from art history classes. He learned some key points, such as Breton's interest in Freudian psychoanalysis, the depiction of whatever entered a person's mind from the subconscious, and automatism. He also became familiar with the main Surrealist artists, Max Ernst being one of his favourites. But generally he was not interested in complicated art theory. He tended to let his intuition and feeling work, rather than applying rigidly rational thought to the planning and execution of his art. He lets his creative mind work freely. By this he is able to juxtapose different, even conflicting, ideas to produce absurd, incongruous or frightening works, as can be seen in his *Products* (1991) (Plate 27).

In the painting Effendi portrays a baby wrapped in a clear plastic, bag sitting on the floor amidst a group of people (most likely women) only depicted by their legs, wearing high heeled shoes. The painting's absurdity comes not only from the

Plate 28
Sudarisman
***Malioboro* 1990**
70 x 80 cm; oil.

Plate 29
Sudarisman
***Investment* 1988**
80 x 70 cm; oil.

Plate 30
Sudarisman
***The Old, The Young* 1990**
70 x 120 cm; oil.

juxtaposition of the wrapped baby with the legs, but also because of the layer of an aged stone-like substance, with tiny porous hollows, depicted unevenly on the legs. Semiotically this painting can be read as referring to urban life in Yogyakarta, where the people's cultures are losing their traditional substances, to be replaced with modern culture. At the same time young people are moving farther from the natural, since increasingly they have lived only within a modern context, like the plastic-wrapped baby.

Principally by this 'naive' and rather intuitive approach Effendi is reflecting the spirit and conditions in Yogyakarta. His stimulants are not rationally filtered perceptions, but processes of following resonances from the subconscious in which linear time and space do not apply.

Sudarisman

Sudarisman was born on 26 July 1948 in Yogyakarta. He attended STSRI 'ASRI in 1970, and graduated in 1980. In the 1970s Sudarisman worked in the Painting Department as a teaching assistant. In 1981, with five other lecturers, he took a meta-realist workshop run by Diana van den Berg, a Dutch meta-realist painter.[35] This opened up a meticulously realistic way of painting metaphysical, magical, or fantastic-looking subjects. In 1982 Van den Berg helped Sudarisman get Dutch government funding to continue studying meta-realism in Holland under Van den Berg's supervision. Sudarisman studied at the *Vrij Academie Voor Beldende Kunsten Psychopolis* in Den Haag.

The surrealism in Sudarisman's work comes from his juxtaposition of various images or figures representing different groups of people. Through this he frequently makes cynical and critical points about social and cultural situations in Yogyakarta. Rather than doing so directly, however, his comments are always figurative and metaphorical. In Javanese terms he describes this as *sanepo*, or *parikan pari keno* (a metaphor, or a playful allusion but contextual) as in *goro-goro* (a wayang scene, where jester figures make various comments in absurd and funny ways). In his *Malioboro I* (1990) (Plate 28), he cynically depicts the daily scene in Jalan Malioboro, Yogyakarta, where contrasting layers of reality mingle casually. The figures of sexy and modern-looking women, of a veiled Islamic woman, and of ordinary women are juxtaposed with the head of Sudono Salim (Liem Siouw Liong). This man is one of Southeast Asia's richest people, a Chinese-born Indonesian tycoon closely and long associated with President Suharto, believed to

Plate 31

Temmy Setiawan

***Don't Break Virginity* 1994**

100 x 200 cm; oil painting and collage.

own many national and international businesses such as factories, restaurants and department stores, some of them in Yogyakarta. Eerily, Salim's eyes are green. In Javanese culture the expression 'green eyed' means a person is overly money-conscious. To accentuate this, there is also the wise *wayang* character Semar, pointing his finger at the green-eyed Sudono Salim.

No less socially involved is his work *Investment* (1988) (Plate 29), through which he expresses his criticism of tourism. Here he uses a Balinese image — a dancer — as a case applicable to many other folk cultures in Indonesia. By the title *Investment* Sudarisman specifically claims that tourism has brought economic welfare mainly to capitalists: hotel owners, travel agents owners and big entrepreneurs. As a result traditional cultures and arts are superficially sustained. However, tourism has not improved the economic and social status of the common people. In fact, cultural performers such as dancers and musicians have not benefitted financially as much as have hotel and travel agents. Sudarisman sees similar subtle but severe exploitation in Yogyakarta to those which had already occurred in Bali. When a performance is to be staged, for example, dancers and traditional *gamelan* players from a *banjar* (village) are carried all together on a truck, as though they are not individuals but just parts of a mass. The organisers often are interested only in making as much money as possible from the performance, which is aimed at tourists, whilst the actual performers receive only a tiny bit of the profit. This uneven situation is symbolised by the figure of Dewi Sri (the goddess Sri, symbol of welfare), which is not depicted in full.[36]

The exploitative system is visualised by a snake-like belt which has been tightened to the last hole, symbolising that the dancer has had to keep his/her budget tight. The dancer's face is cracked here and there, epitomising Balinese life itself, whose sacred and cultural elements are cracking. This conveys the experience of tourism in Yogyakarta and the corrosion of Yogyakartan folk culture, as depicted in his painting *Yang Tua dan Yang Muda* (The Old and The Young) (1990) (Plate 30), in which he juxtaposes two faces from the same figure, a Yogyakartan *Kraton* senior dancer, wearing a Yogyakartan *blangkon* headcloth. His eyes are teary, from seeing the too-abrupt development of popular and mass culture outside the Kraton with which he cannot cope.

Temmy Setiawan

Temmy was born on 26 July 1971, in Surakarta. He learned to paint when young.

His father, Mahyar, was an artist who studied in the Painting Department at Asri, but now teaches at the High School of Art, Yogyakarta. Temmy attended ISI Yogyakarta in 1990.

Temmy's work reflects the spirit of the 1980s and 1990s. Phenomena he observed in the 'red light' district around *Stasiun Tugu* (Yogyakarta's main railway station), and graffiti from around Yogyakarta, are recorded in his work *Don't Break Virginity* (1994) (Plate 31). The graffiti were mostly from youth gangs such as *JXZ* (*Joxzin*), *TRB* (*Trah Butek*), QZR (*Qizruh*), and English or English-sounding bad language.[37] The widespread usage of English is a growing trend in Indonesia. The number of people learning English is growing rapidly, both at formal and non-formal schools. Many advertisements are written at least partly in English. There are also many religious slogans or mottos in English: 'Islam Saves My Life', 'Islam is The Religion Of Peace', 'God Loves Me' and the like are easily found. At the same time there are also many t-shirt designs using English, quite often bad language such as swear words or obscene sentences. For example, there is a t-shirt with a typographic design that reads 'Dine Me, Wine Me, and Do Me!'[38]

In this collage and painted work Temmy depicts a transparent woman figure — a prostitute working around *Stasiun Tugu* — barbed wire, an old train and some graffiti. This work is not framed but collaged with pieces of old teak. All these elements constitute a sign system signifying Yogyakartan urban reality, particularly with reference to the situation at ISI Yogyakarta itself, where in the 1990s a number of brutalities by students have created a bad image for the whole institution. Temmy says that alcohol was already common on campus when he attended in 1990.

Temmy was one many ASRI/ISI students who were generally far more interested in studio and practical classes than in theoretical classes. Theory was like an academic supplement, and the classes were not held in very interesting or challenging ways. Temmy makes the point that many art books found in Indonesia are merely biographies of successful artists, without critical debate. Indonesian books which comprehensively discuss art and its various social contexts are difficult to find.[39] Temmy voices such concerns as part of his interest in searching for the key problems and questions constituting social and cultural phenomena in Yogyakarta, where he now lives.

Plate 32
Probo
***Beauty in Limitation* 1992**
oil.

Plate 33
Probo
Iqro (Read This) **1991**
oil.

Probo

Probo was born in Yogyakarta on 21 August, 1959. He studied art at *Sekolah Menengah Seni Rupa* (the High School of Art) Yogyakarta from 1978 and graduated in 1981. His main teachers at the school were Suharto Pr., and Mahyar. Probo is quite skilful in still life drawing, and used to do on-the-spot painting. After graduating from the school he stopped painting to try batik painting for a living. However batik painting at the time was not appreciated as much as oil painting. He only managed to sell a one-meter-square batik for just Rp 5000 (about A$3) to a batik shop that then could sell it for three or four times as much. That was why his batik endeavour only lasted a couple of months. Probo found that the business of batik making and selling was just too exploitative.[40]

After that Probo tried portrait painting, which was better than batik. Probo managed to get enough commissions. In the meantime he also tried still-life paintings until a new supermarket owner, Siswanto, who now runs an art gallery, found him and sponsored Probo to exhibit his work in conjunction with the opening of the Mirota Campus supermarket. From this exhibition Probo gained confidence as an artist.

Probo frankly acknowledges that, in terms of his later artistic development, technically he learned from a Dutch artist named Carl Willing in *Karta Pustaka* (the Dutch Cultural Centre) in Yogyakarta. At *Karta Pustaka* Probo regularly watched a film on Willing's art world. He often studied details from reproductions of Willing's work. After seeing Willing's art, in fact, he decided that the paintings in the books of Sukarno's painting collections, which he also regularly studied, were not detailed enough by comparison. Probo adopted visual technicalities from a number of other master painters such as Henri Rousseau, James Ensor, Marc Chagall, Giorgio de Chirico, Juan Miro, Paul Klee and Rene Magritte. Whilst doing so Probo felt that surrealist-looking art attracted him more than other styles, even though at the time all he knew of surrealism was that it was a fantastic or dream-like style.[41] He innocently thought that his was the way to learn art, since many others did the same. Sometimes he also took figures from nude magazines, including *Playboy* magazines from friends, from which he copied photographs. Eventually Probo found his own strength and style in painting. Depicting stones, rocks and the ground has become his means of expression. He has developed his art by painting scenes or religious statues of Hindu temples around Yogyakarta. However it is worth noting that he collects images of Hindu religious artefacts not for a religious reason, but uses the artefacts in the same secular manner as his still-life paintings. For Probo the selection of the objects is based merely on artistic

values. A good example of this can be seen in his work *Beauty In Limitation* (1992) (Plate 32).

In the painting Probo portrays a headless statue of a Hindu goddesses at Prambanan temple — the figure of Loro Jonggrang. In the background is an old book, cut through like a window of time, through which there can be seen a deserted area with other damaged statues, and the volcano near Yogyakarta, Mt Merapi. The way the Hindu religious artefacts are presented signifies death, desertion and ruin. This sign system is different from how Probo depicts Islamic religious signs, for example in *Iqro (Read This)* (1991) (Plate 33). This painting depicts a verse from the Koran which reads 'By the Name of Allah the Creator of the Universe'. It is important that this carries a sense of glorification. The writing is on an old-looking book but appears in a grand manner, like Western art's classic depiction of the Ten Commandments. Thi is in complete contrast to Probo's bleak portrayal of Hindu artifacts. The clouds behind the book in *Beauty In Limitation* take the form of two hands, as though holding the book. It can also be read that the book comes from heaven, delivered by the clouds.

The impairedness of Hindu artefacts in Probo's painting stands for the remains of Hindu culture in Yogyakarta, especially Hindu-influenced Javanese culture, which is now gradually waning and being wiped away, to be replaced by Islamic, Christian, modern and popular cultures.

Conclusion

Of the works of art discussed above, it is Heri Dono's that most directly articulates socio-political concerns, which are materialised through various media. Sudarisman also comments on popular and cultural practices in big cities in Indonesia, although Sudarisman's articulation is very oblique, and in most cases very Javanese (the sign system he presents is highly riddled as if he 'speaks' kromo in his painting). Agus Kamal uses his art to communicate his religious convictions, and sometimes allegorically portrays horrors as religious and social warnings. Nurkholis also uses his art as an expression of his religious convictions. Subtly he applies calligraphic forms of *rajah* (amulets), to be built up or transformed into something else. Lucia Hartini's art can be seen as comments on her environment, social and cultural milieu, which are materialised through metaphors and allegories constituted by herself, or figurative flora and fauna placed in dream-like or outer-space scapes. Effendi's, Temmy Setiawan's, and Probo's works are reflective of Yogyakartan

life, where marginalisation of traditional culture takes place continually. Effendi's strong figurative articulations focus on the serious environmental problems related to modernisation.

Significantly, all these artists seem to have juxtaposed different and disparate ideas, objects and subjects in a casual manner. These juxtapositions in their paintings are like so many casual juxtapositions easily found in Yogyakartan life, where artefacts and ideas of the traditional, the modern, the contemporary and the post-modern exist on the same surface at the same time. All of this constitutes the incongruities and incoherences of Yogyakartan life. They have in common this experience of Yogykartan life, as they have a shared interest in various of the Parisian Surrealists.

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[1] Personal communication with Hari Budiono and Sudarisman in December 1994.

[2] Personal communication with Heri Dono, November 1994.

[3] This work was made in 1994 the year of Mt Merapi's most recent eruption, when more than 50 people were killed and many more wounded. After the eruption, which featured extensively in the news media, people spoke boldly of a 60ha golf course development in the environmentally protected Desa Tegalbanyep, Cangkringan, which had necessitated the removal of residents from the area. Ironically, the Yogyakartan regional government issued a permit to build the golf course. See also Sindhunata, 'Di Tepi Kali Opak' (In the bank of Opak River), *Kompas*, 5 December, 1994, pp. 1 and 18.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Burisrawa is a greedy giant monster in Javanese shadow puppet (*wayong*) stories.

[6] Astri Wright, *Soul, Spirit, and Mountain,* Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1994, p. 233.

[7] See also Martinus Dwi Marianto, 'The Experimental artist Heri Dono from Yogyakarta and his "visual art" religion,' in *Art Monthly*, No 64, (October, 1993), pp.21-24.

[8] Personal communication with Hartini, August 1992.

[9] Hartini's husband, Arifin, was one of the members of the *Raksasa* (giant) group which also included Harjiman, AB Dwiantoro, Eri Nurbaya, Joko Wahono and Murti. At the time they were all long-haired, so people often said they looked like wayang ogre characters. Most of them made relatively large-scale paintings in the abstract style still fashionable at the time.

[10] Lucia Hartini's conversation with Rina Tawangsasi (my wife), 20 November

1994.

[11] Interview with Lucia Hartini, November 25 1994. See also Martinus Dwi Marianto, 'Lucia Hartini Srikandi, Marsinah and Megawati,' in *Art and Asia Pacific*, Volume 1 Number 3 (July, 1994), pp.78-81.

[12] Bentara Budaya initially was curated by three former Astri students: Hajar Satoto, Hari Budiono and Hermanu.

[13] See Martinus Dwi Marianto, 'Lucia Hartini Srikandi, Marsinah and Megawati,' in *Art and Asia Pacific*, Volume 1 Number 3 (July, 1994), pp.78-81.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Marianto, Martinus Dwi. 'Lucia Hartini, Meditasi dengan Garis, dan Srikandi,' in *Batas Antara Dua Sisi Lucia Hartini.* A catalogue for Lucia Hartini's solo show 1-8 June 1994, Yogyakarta: Bentara Budaya, 1994, pp.7-12.

[16] Personal communication with Nurkholis in late November 1994.

[17] However al-Hallaj, who uttered the heretical statement 'I am the truth' was crucified in 922. See Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience.* London: Grange Books, 1993, p.582.

[18] Al-Ghazzali (1059-1111) was a wandering dervish who sought God for 12 years, learning in that time that human beings must rid themselves of evil thoughts, clear their minds, and commune with God through the dhikr. *Ibid* p.583.

[19] Statement in the catalogue of the Third Asian Art Show, Fukuoka, 1989, pp.309-310.

[20] *Ibid*

[21] Personal communication with Agus Kamal, 4 December 1994.

[22] *Catalogue of the Third Asian Art Show*, pp.309-310.

[23] The teachers in the department during his study who generally did abstract or abstract expressionist paintings were Widayat, Fadjar Sidik, Nyoman Gunarsa, Aming Prayitno and Suwaji. Wardoyo Sugianto did geometric painting with pipe-like objects. Those who made figurative pictures were Wardoyo (a human figure drawing teacher) and Sudarisman.

[24] Personal communication with Agus Kamal in July 1993.

[25] ASRI was amalgamated into ISI Yogyakarta in 1984. Since then many people claim ASRI has gradually lost its 'aura' and autonomy as an independent art school.

[26] The practice of putting a mentally ill person in the stocks was common in many parts of Indonesia. Now such a practice is illegal.

[27] Personal communication with Agus Kamal in July 1992.

[28] Personal communication with the artist, July 1992.

[29] *Pameran Lukisan Berlima: Agus Kamal, Boyke Aditya, Effendi, Hening Swasono, Ivan Sagito*, 25-31 July 1986 An exhibition catalogue. Yogyakarta, Alliance Francaise de Yogyakarta, 1986, pp.14-15.

[30] *Ibid.*, and personal communication with Ivan Sagito, August 1993.

[31] Sagito, Ivan. 'Percakapan di Dalam Lukisan-Lukisan' (Conversations in Paintings). Unpublished paper, Yogyakarta, 1988.

[32] Personal communication with Effendi, July 1992.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Interview with Effendi in July 1992.

[35] They were Sudarisman, Herry Wibowo, Wardoyo Sugiyanto, A.N. Suyanto, Aming Prayitno and Sajiman. Later in 1982 Van den Berg sponsored the first three to receive scholarships from the Dutch Secretary of Culture.

[36] Interview with Sudarisman, August 1993.

[37] *JZX* (from *Joko Sinting* or a mad guy) was supported by high school students, mostly from the Muhammadiyah school. In fact it was started by young people from the Kauman (Islamic Quarter near the *Keraton*) and had strongholds there. *QZR* (*Qizruh* means chaotic) and *TRB* (*Trah Butek* means bad clan) had strongholds in Jalan Kaliurang, Sleman, Yogyakarta.

[38] The t-shirt, which my wife and I spotted, was worn by a young woman, who who was unlikely to have known its meaning. Other sexually-related popular designs included 'Hot Sex Now' and 'Make Love, Not War'.

[39] Personal communication with Temmy Setiawan in September 1994.

[40] Most modern batik workshops employ cheap labour, generally women. Although the job is quite unhealthy, with the smoke from melting wax and the use of colouring chemicals, one batik labourer receives less than A$1.50 per day. There is no health insurance provided by the employer. Most batik labourers stay poor forever, and there is no batik labour union to help improve their working conditions.

[41] Personal communication with Probo, August 1992.

CONCLUSION

From Raden Saleh (1840s), Sudjojono (1930s), Hendra Gunawan (1950s) and Bonyong Munnie Ardhi (1970s) through to Yogyakartan surrealist painters of the 1980s, there has been a pattern of realism that has emerged in different forms through different contexts. This realism is marked by a tendency to reflect and articulate whatever is crucial in the social and cultural situation, as experienced by members of society. However, it was Sudjojono who for the first time advocated realism, in the second half of 1930s through the *PERSAGI* movement. He encouraged Indonesian artists to illustrate the obvious social condition of the common people realistically. In so doing Sudjojono insisted artists should use a visual vocabulary or syntax which could be clearly understood by ordinary people.

This way of seeing was actually creative, pioneering a new path in the Indonesian art world, and at the same time reflective of the spirit of Indonesian nationalism, which was increasingly focusing at the time on Indonesia's Independence. What was significant was that Sudjojono managed to express this nationalist spirit through his art, writings and other statements. At the same time Sudjojono cleared the path for the rise of realism in Indonesian art.

Practically, this realism challenged and broke the common art practice of producing picturesque illustrations by Indonesian painters and expatriate artists in Java and Sumatra. Romantic depictions of exotic aspects of the land and its people were directed at European tourists, particularly Dutch people coming to the Dutch East Indies. This was why Sudjojono cynically described the style as *Mooi Indië* ('Beautiful Indies').

Symbolically this Realism of Sudjojono challenged the social conditions and system, as well as the group of people shaping the conditions supporting the *Mooi Indië* style. Sudjojono's art stance was also directly political, since challenging *Mooi Indië* as the dominant art practice also meant a challenge to those people who backed up the style. It was a challenge to the system which provided fertile soil for *Mooi Indië* — in this respect, Dutch Colonialism.

This significantly political action through art, however, was inseparable from the anti-Colonialist stance of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the outstanding cultural figure who channelled his nationalism and anti-Colonialism through his own school, *Taman*

Siswa — the school Sudjojono attended and later taught at. Sudjojono's vision of maintaining a realistic painting vocabularly, accessible to the common people, was in line with Dewantara's nationalism, which had compelled him to create the school and its educational system as a means of accommodating the common people excluded from the Dutch colonial educational system. Therefore it can be read that Sudjojono's Realism was in line with the crystallisation of nationalism in the 1930s.

Realism re-emerged in Yogyakarta in the second half of the 1940s, in the form of nationalism through revolutionary action by groups of young artists directly acting against Dutch attempts to reclaim the power that had been annulled with the declaration of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1945. In this period art did not develop naturally. Creativity in painting was sublimated into revolutionary posters to support Republic of Indonesia's struggle for existence.

In the 1950s Realism reappeared in the form of a willingness to seek national identity. This must be seen within the context of Indonesia gaining full sovereignty from Holland in late 1949. Art at this time was seen to be able to give identity to Indonesian Independence. This spirit was initially caught by LEKRA, Indonesia's first post-revolutionary national art and culture body, founded in August 1950. LEKRA attracted the interest of a great number of artists, and cultural and intellectual figures by formulating its art orientation in terms of nationalism and anti-Colonialism. LEKRA did not place Communism at the top of its agenda until the second half of the 1950s. Likewise, it could be said many artists who joined LEKRA were not initially interested in Communism. They were attracted by nationalism and by the idea of seeking national identity through art and culture.

Leading artists such as Sudjojono, Hendra Gunawan, Affandi and Suromo were involved in LEKRA's activities. These people were not ideologically shaped by LEKRA, but had been active in art activities through the spirit of nationalism since the PERSAGI movement. Therefore it was LEKRA that found and then used these artists to embody its concepts and orientation, which was basically one of social commitment. Actually these three artists' work already fitted LEKRA since conceptually Sudjojono, as mentioned above, insisted on the importance of a realistic syntax or vocabulary which could easily be understood by the people; Hendra Gunawan tended to depict the life of the common people; and Affandi was good in articulating the suffering of the common people. In this case these artists had shaped the frame of Social Realism in the Indonesian art world.

This art setting changed when LEKRA became very much communist-oriented in the second half of the 1950s, after the PKI's political power grew. By this time LEKRA was already a powerful body, and became not just a purely art and cultural institution, but a political means of articulating PKI ideology through art and cultural activities. This was in the context of the Cold War, when the ideological conflict between the Eastern Bloc and Western Bloc was becoming wider and sharper.

Under the influence and support of the PKI, one faction of LEKRA adopted Socialist Realism, which originally had developed in the Soviet Union and spread internationally, along with the internationalisation of communism. In Yogyakarta Socialist Realism was developed by the *Bumi Tarung* group, a collection of artists and art students, mainly from ASRI. This group was associated with LEKRA. It developed a style which was syntagmatically, semantically and pragmatically Socialist-Realist, by which it transformed PKI political rhetoric into works of art. In so doing it adopted communist symbols and vocabulary, and saw reality through a Marxist dichotomic class-based framework. As it turned out these works were increasingly like propaganda posters and political slogans, and became a genre with an image which stood for Communism. Conceptually the artists associated with the group did not paint in the manner of social-realism, but in the manner of socialist-realism. In depicting reality they did not fully develop their individual artistic tastes but followed the formula dictated by the Communist Party. This tendency was different from the style developed by Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, and Sudjojono.

After September 1965, during the anti-communist sentiment of the revolution following the failed coup attempt of the so-called G-30-S/PKI, Social Realism was lumped in the same basket with Socialist Realism — largely because of the general political chaos of the time. Political and social nuances and layers, as well as orientations, were polarised. People largely thought in terms of 'black and white', 'winning or losing' and 'killing or being killed'. Physical and intellectual retribution was exacted on the loser, in this respect the communist group. The Army and the anti-communist groups were trying to cleanse institutions and other sectors of life, including the world of art in Indonesia, of communist influence, whether direct or indirect. People became extremely paranoid about communism and Leftist thought. Social Realism was regarded as being ideologically close to communism — or, indeed, as simply being communist — because some of its adherents were associated with LEKRA. The so-strong anti-communist sentiment

and the created paranoia towards communism made people disregard the historical fact that Social Realism in Indonesia began with the PERSAGI movement, and was charged by Indonesian nationalism.

Abstraction emerged as a single player in the Indonesian art world. The fact that it was suppressed by communist groups, especially LEKRA, made it significant as the symbol for anti-communism. Its syntagmatic nature, which was non-narrative and abstract in contrast to the narrative art preferred by LEKRA, fitted pragmatically with the new regime's anti-communist stance. Further, Abstract art was seen as signifying the victory over Communism that had dictated certain styles of art according to its ideology. And finally, in the following years formalist Abstract art was important because people were tired of ideological conflict and its consequences.

In the 1970s a group of younger artists and art students in Bandung, Jakarta and Yogyakarta, especially those associated with the New Art Movement (GSRP), began to see Abstract art as being too concerned with formalism. Abstract art was regarded as being unable to accommodate other, more crucial, factors, such as the social and political problems faced by the people.

NAM presented socially and culturally committed art forms. Its works articulated social and cultural problems commonly seen in society in syntax and idioms rather similar to those of American Pop Art. The whole of GSRP's presentation was quite radical, and invited controversy. No less radical was the installation and exhibition *Kepribadian Apa?* ('What Identity?) prepared in the Senisono Art Gallery, Yogyakarta, in late 1977 by Bonyong Munnie Ardhi and his PIPA group, which had affinities with GSRP. The works in this exhibition critically articulated the problems of decadence in Yogyakartan art, and various social and economic problems, such as land disputes, corruption and power abuse. They mocked and parodied national figures in their works. This exhibition, which had been viewed by journalists and other art students, eventually was banned by the police. It was, in fact, the first installed visual art exhibition banned by the New Order regime. From this exhibition it can be concluded that interest in channelling social concerns through works of art in Yogyakarta has never let up.

The concerns articulated by PIPA and GSRP were reflective of student and intellectual unrest and demonstrations in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. Not long after the PIPA exhibition's banning, the national *NKK/BKK* policy was

enacted, practically and strategically reducing the space and opportunity for students to be involved in practical politics. *NKK/BKK* created socially and politically barren graduates, through conditioning students to only pursue academic achievement. The scheme also institutionalised the notion of leaving socio-economic problems to 'competent' experts. Student had simply to study hard and be purely academic intellectuals.

This policy had a substantial impact in the world of art education. At ASRI students were asked to produce art which was purely artistic and aesthetic. The policy eased the load on art teaching practice, since teachers could limit their scope to syntagmatic visual problems of art, or to formal aspects of art. In fact, since most teachers in the Painting Department were Abstract painters the policy suited their nature. Formalism was entrenched at ASRI at the same time as socially-committed art, or realism, was given no space or opportunity to develop.

However realism reappeared in the indirect form of expression permitted by surrealism. Yogyakartan surrealism was reflective of Yogyakartan life, which was revealed in its landscape, its language and in its daily absurdities, caused by the disjunction of the modern and the traditional. In a way Realism reappeared in the form of post-nationalism. Not all national rhetoric was included in this style, but Yogyakartan surrealism 'spoke' with the language of absurdism. Yogyakartan Surrealist painting reflected the chaotic cultural transition — indeed, the cultural shock — caused by the too-rapid and unprecedented modernisation taking place in Yogyakarta. The Yogyakartan surrealist vocabulary, which is characterised by absurd juxtapositions of disparate objects or ideas, did not emerge from nothing, but was a result of Yogyakartan life itself.

Structually Yogyakartan surrealist painting is like Yogyakartan punning, where people collage or play with disparate ideas taken from different levels of Javanese and different kinds of languages used in Yogyakarta, including Javanese, Bahasa Indonesia, English and Arabic. Yogyakartan puns often sound funny, strange and sometimes mocking or ridiculing. Yogyakartan punning is culturally conditioned by the fact that Javanese culture tends to make people be non-assertive. Yogyakartan people tend not to speak directly, but traditionally conceal their interests. People are so used to the dichotomy between *pamrih* (vested interest) and *tanpa pamrih* (no vested interest) that they conceal their interests through language. Yogyakartan punning, like Yogyakartan surrealist painting, is a form of language materialised with absurdities and absurd syntax, as in the *wayang* jester characters who say

things by being silly, funny and even absurd.

Yogyakartan surrealist painting is a social and cultural construct. It is a product of people being conditioned not to say or articulate things naturally. It is a product of a situation where people are deeply concerned with crucial events but are unable to comment publicly on them. It is a spontaneous manifestation crystallised by the absurdities of daily life. Therefore Yogyakartan surrealist painting can be regarded as a mechanism for forgetting, or a way of sublimating the stress and frustration of the 'noises' of the transitional life in Yogyakarta.

This is clearly demonstrated in the worlds of the Yogyakartan surrealist painters featured in this dissertation. Their work can be interpreted as comments on social and cultural realities. There are senses of dreariness, violence, mysticism, hectic life and absurdity. Once again, these images did not spring from nothing, but came from the artists' perception of their own realities.

To conclude, I would say that Yogyakartan surrealist painting was the best language for articulating the social, cultural, and political setting in Yogyakarta in the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. Yogyakartan surrealist painting and Yogyakartan punning in the 1970s and 1980s record one period where Yogyakarta was flooded by many changes and culturally different artefacts, as well as the ideas that accompanied modernisation and globalisation. Therefore, positively, Yogyakartan surrealist painting was like a reconstruction of the traditional Yogyakartan linguistic tendency to rationalise or to weave meanings, in order to cope with the many abrupt changes in Yogyakartan life. On top of that the absurd, funny and sometimes cynical nature of Yogyakartan surrealist painting was a mechanism for laughing at the artist's self and his/her society's system of life, as with the *punokawan* — the engaging, attractive, prophetic and healing *wayang* jester characters who speak meaningfully through their absurdness and funniness. Without the *punokawan* a *wayang kulit* performance would undoubtedly be far less lively.

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(dimensions given: height x width in cm)

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Answers to my thesis examiners questions

FROM REALISM TO SURREALISM
An Art Line Where in One of Its Parts Surrealism Becomes the Real

By M. Dwi Marianto

The art of surrealist painting which was a phenomenon in Yogyakarta between the 1980's and the early 1990's, is not only interesting to examine from a visual-arts point of view. It has a tendency to juxtapose different subjects randomly in the same time-space frame, creating various images with odd, absurd, weird, associations. But, significantly these paintings can also be read as texts which illustrate the social and cultural condition in Yogyakarta, which is becoming more and more like a cultural collage in which there exist various cultural products and practices and many social and cultural changes which have occurred so quickly and so radically in a relatively short time span. The change or development that has happened so fast and radically, brings forth some complex implications, such as the face-lift that has changed the appearance of urban and rural environments which is a reflection of the societies pattern of social conduct, and / or, this physical environment influences the pattern of the society's cultural processes. Amongst these overwhelming changes there are many contradictory and paradoxical landscapes, where the traditional, agricultural, and mystical mixes with the modern, industrial and post modern. Each has its own life path, its own growth and its own societies. But sometimes the different elements are mixed together or juxtaposed, so that overall, the juxtapositioning of these elements appears like a surrealistic painting with various absurdities which never fail to surprise. To illustrate this more clearly, I will relate an experience of mine, as an illustration of the surreality which currently is a common sight in Yogyakarta.

In mid April 1997, the Indonesia-Dutch Institute Karta Pustaka, organized a chamber concert from Holland, called the Midas Ensemble. This concert was actually prepared to be held in the auditorium of the Medical Faculty in UGM, because there was an institutional cooperational contact between Karta Pustaka and the Medical Faculty of UGM for cultural activity.[1] On this particular occasion, the concert could not be held as usual in the campus, because there was a circular letter from the security authority, the Police District Office, to all higher education institutions, state or private, banning all campus activities which would involve many people and invite people from outside the institution. Alternatively, Karta Pustaka asked

[1]This cooperation is in itself interesting to examine. Why? Because Karta Pustaka has this cooperation with the Medical Faculty of UGM, not with the Indonesia Art Institute of Yogyakarta, which clearly has programs of Western and traditional music education. Maybe this is because many teachers in the Music Department of ISI Yogyakarta also work elsewhere as teachers in private music schools or as players in hotels or concerts in Jakarta, so that they are too busy to be troubled by social concerts which are only cultural co-operations.

the Indonesia - France Cultural Centre (*Lembaga Indonesia Perancis* / LIP) to let the Midas Ensemble perform there. LIP had, however, received the same circular letter, so they rejected Karta-Pustaka's proposal. Eventually, to juggle with the regulation concerning the campaigning period for the general elections, the chamber orchestra was held at the house of Memet, a musician, in the kampong Suryadiningratan, in Yogyakarta, for the regulation did not apply to a private house. The concert was performed by one clarinet player who often played other instruments too, one pianist and one classical singer.

Several interesting things occurred during the concert. The room where the concert was held was on the first floor of a house. There were no chairs, only mats on the floor, so the audience, around 25 people, sat on the floor a la traditional communal meals, or meetings in the kampongs or in the mosques. The pianist should have played a piano, but because there was no piano, an electronic keyboard programmed to sound like a piano was used. Eventhough the conditions were very basic, the Midas Ensemble managed to give an interesting concert, though maybe not as optimal as planned. A few classical songs were sung by the tall and extremely beautiful vocalist, in front of an audience accustomed to listening to Dangdut music, Javanese gamelan and Indonesian and Western pop music. The audience applauded every time a piece ended. Nearing the end of the last song in the concert, a *bakso* vendor arrived with his pole over his shoulder. *Bakso* is a popular noodle with meat-ball soup which is sold in nearly every kampongs. As his trade call, the vendor usually hits a bowl with a metal spoon. Coincidentally, a few seconds before the orchestra ended its performance, the *bakso* man also sounded his trade call, hitting his bowl with a spoon - *ting-ting-ting-ting-ting-ting-ting*. The sound of the beaten bowl, mixed with the sound of the musical instruments, seemed as if it was part of the ending of the piece. Some of the audience were seen holding back their laughter, caused by the sudden intrusion of sound. Maybe the players in the orchestra were disappointed with the sound addition, but what could be done? This happened because this kind of serious concert was held in a densely populated kampong where the traditional *bakso* vendor has his beat. This true story is a sample which illustrates the atmosphere or condition which is formed when a certain cultural activity is placed in a very different context. Often the mixing or juxtapositioning evokes unexpected things.

The numerous Yogyakarta surrealist paintings emerged in a context full of contradictions and paradoxes. The idioms and mode of discussion in Yogyakarta surrealist works, were formed by metaphors shaped by the physical environment and socio-cultural behaviour patterns which seem to mix different things randomly. The various cultural contradictions and paradoxes, and also the social-political context which gave birth to the absurdities and oddities which are reflected in the paintings of Yogyakarta's surrealists, and also what I mean by Yogyakarta surrealism, has been discussed in length in Chapter IV to Chapter VII. In this essay, I will focus on one path of development of the formal language of Yogyakarta surrealist paintings. Specifically, I will discuss why there are so many works which in their parts, represent the subjects of the painting in a naturalistic / realistic way, but as a whole, those subjects are juxtaposed so that they present surreal images. Also, in connection to the artists in Chapter VIII whose works are not purely paintings, such as collage and three dimensional works, I will explain the reasons of including their works. The same applies to the development and the visual - art context for media development, like the works of Heri Dono and Temy Setiawan.

So, I will discuss here a specific development of painting which began with Raden Saleh, up until the surrealist paintings of Heri Dono's era, which is the subject of the thesis I put forward. I also want to explain here, that I believe that the artistic and aesthetic language and the shining of certain artists in certain eras, does not happen randomly, but is influenced or shaped by happenings and discourses, which in the particular era were the focus of societies attention and / or were the dominant forces of the time.

Raden Saleh

Raden Saleh (1807-1880) was born in Terbaya, near Semarang. He was the first Indonesian painter who studied painting directly from European teachers living in Java. He was also sent to Holland to study visual arts, and he remained as a professional artist in various Western European countries for more than two decades before he returned to Indonesia. He represented the subjects of his paintings in a naturalistic way, but the landscapes or the character of his paintings were romantic and realistic, for instance, his painting entitled *Hunting A Bull* (1851) and *The Capture Of Prince Diponegoro* (1857).

Raden Saleh's opportunity to study Western painting techniques cannot be separated from the Dutch colonial interests in Indonesia. A report notes that at the beginning of the 19'th century great landscape paintings, and also a need for flora and fauna illustrations for scientific use. So, the Belgian painter A.A.J Payen and a number of draughtsman and sketchers were brought over, with the specialization of painting landscapes, and flora and fauna life. [2] Raden Saleh studied painting under A.A.J Payen. Then, because of his talent in drawing, Raden Saleh was recruited by C.G.C Reinwardt, the director of the Institute of Science and Arts. Most likely, he was being prepared to become a draughtsman to document natural objects, landscapes, cultural heritage and the life of the indigenous peoples.[3] Later, in 1829 Saleh was sent to Holland to study painting under Cornelius Schelfhout and Kruseman.[4] Saleh personally experienced the artistic atmosphere which was enlivened by the French painters who worked in the Romantic spirit, with famous names of the callibre of Eugene Delacroix and Theodore Gericault.

From these facts it can be concluded that Raden Saleh had been trained to paint still lives and landscapes with a Western naturalistic technique. His art world, was in the beginning, formed by scientific needs, then his art world was influenced by his experiences living for years in the West where he was permeated by the atmosphere of Romanticism. It should be noted that the opportunity that Raden Saleh had to be able to directly come in contact with the European society in Indonesia, and to be recruited to become part of the Dutch colonial life at that time,

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[2] *Verlaat Raport Indie,* J. De Loos Haaxman, Mouton & Co. Uitgevers, S'Gravenhage, 1868, p. 22. This was quoted by Jim Supangkat in "The Emergence of Indonesia Modernism and its Background ", in *Asian Modernism,* Tokyo : The Japan Foundation Centre, 1995, p. 207. See also Mustika, *Tokoh-Tokoh Pelukis Indonesia,* Jakarta : Dinas Kebudayaan DKI Jakata, 1993, pp. 16-17.

[3] Supangkat, ibid.

[4] Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa : Silang Budaya,* Vol. I, Jakarta : Gramedia, 1996, p. 111.

can not be separated from the factor of his feudal origins. Raden Saleh came from a famous *Bupati*'s (regent's) family, who socially and politically, were close to the Dutch colonialism. This is worth noting because under the Dutch colonialism, the common people, the majority of the indigenous society did not have access to modern education.

Raden Saleh did not have any indigenous protegee to whom he could give his painting expertise. Not only had Raden Saleh become a famous painter who had far surpassed his European teacher A.A.J. Payen, but it is significant to ask here, what context and interest could he have used as a base if he had taught his skills in painting to the common indigenous youth who nearly had no formal education at all, let alone education in modern art. An other development of Raden Saleh that merits attention is the shift of this artistic view point, from romanticism, to become realistic, in the sense that he painted still life, landscapes and his society as it appeared. In his painting *The Capture Of The Javanese Leader (Prince Diponegoro)* (1857), Saleh did not paint his subjects as they appeared, void of subjectivity. Here, Saleh included his Javanese nationalist aspirations in some of the figures depicted. It seems that morally he sided with Prince Diponegoro who was arrested by the Dutch, like I have discussed in my thesis *Surrealist Painting In Yogyakarta* (1995).[5]

After Raden Saleh's death, the painting that developed was of the landscape genre, which continued to be practiced by Payen, a number of Indo painters, and also full blood European painters.[6] As the result of the opening of access to education for the indigenous society, at the beginning of the 20'th century, a number of indigenous painters emerged, such as : Abdullah Surio Subroto (1878 - 1941)[7], the son of a doctor, Wahidin Sudiro Husodo, Wakidi (1889 - ?) who was the son of an employee of the Dutch Indies government, Mas Pirngadi (1865-1936), who originated from a feudal family from Banyumas, Mas Sorjo Soebanto and Henk Ngantung.[8]. There were also some painters of Chinese descent, who painted in the spirit of the Mooi Indie, such as : Lee Man Fong, Oei Tiang Oeng, and Biau Tik Kwie.[9]

PERSAGI and the spirit that it brought

PERSAGI is an acronym for Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia (Union of Indonesian Draughtsmen). It was formed in the late 1930's by Agus Djaya, S. Sudjojono, L. Setijoso and a number of other artists. This is one of the first visual artist's organization who employed the name Indonesia, the name which on 17 August 1945, became the Republic of Indonesia.

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[5]M. Dwi Marianto, *Surrealist Painting in Yogyakarta,* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1995, p.21

[6]See Gerard Brom, *Java in Onze Kunst,* Rotterdam : W.L & J. Brusse, 1931, p 243.

[7]Abdullah Surio Subroto, had a son Basuki Abdullah, who later became a famous Indonesian painter, skilled in depicting still life and human figures in a naturalistic way.

[8]See Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia : Continuities and Changes,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p 193. Also see Agus Burhan, *The Development of Mooi Indie Painting, till Persagi in Batavia, 1900 - 1942,* Yogyakarta: Lembaga Penelitian ISI Yogyakarta, 1997, p. 67.

[9] Burhan, op. cit., p 70.

Obviously this cannot be separated from the political, arts, and cultural movements which were already searching for a national identity, such as : the founding of Taman Siswa in 1922 by the intellectual Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which ideologically endeavored to open access to education for the common indigenous society, which socially and politically were marginalized by the Dutch colonialism, the emergence of the Indonesian National Party, founded by Sukarno in 1928, the Oath of the Youth, taken by various groups of youths from various ethnic backgrounds in the Youth Congress in Jakarta, which officially acknowledged : an Indonesia Motherland, an Indonesian State, and an Indonesian language.

It is also worth noting, that in 1933, in Jakarta, the *Poedjangga Baroe* magazine was launched. This magazine accommodated the literary movement which had started to search for an Indonesian identity to transcend ethnic primordialism. The active participation of some intellectuals who later went on to become leading politicians, such as Amir Sjarifoedin, Sjahrir, and M. Yamin, made this movement even more significant. These intellectual dynamics gave birth to the various interesting cultural polemics, from two main sides with different orientations. One side, represented by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, wanted to radically take the dynamic spirit of Western culture without reserve. The other side was represented by the writer Sanusi Pane who held the view that the future Indonesian culture should be a synthesis of Western and Eastern culture. [10]

Ideologically, *PERSAGI* attacked the practice of painting at that time, cynically called it the Mooi Indie style, which only depicted romantic atmospheres, the beauty of nature, and the exoticism of the indigenous society. *PERSAGI* questioned the orientation of Mooi Indie painting, and by doing that, *PERSAGI* symbolically questioned the political and the social structure of society, which was the supporter and at the same time the development space of Mooi Indies painting.

As I discussed in my thesis *Surrealist Painting in Yogyakarta, PERSAGI* had proclaimed an endeavor to seek an Indonesian nationalist identity. This was their meaningful and strategic contribution : the idealization of the painting of the actual reality of the majority of indigenous society, using a language understood by that same common society too.[11]

In brief, there are a few important points from the *PERSAGI* movement, which are : (1) the spirit to seek an Indonesian national identity through painting; (2) they strived for a choice of subject matter and language, which if understood, would be understood through the common indigenous peoples perspectives, who socially, politically and economically, were marginalized by the existing colonial system; (3) they started to voice a different opinion which was critical to the discourse of painting, by fighting a big system in the art world which was represented by Mooi Indie painting. This was the realism they struggled for, which whose

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[10]Achdiat K. Mihardja (editor), *Polemik Kebudayaan,* Jakarta : Balai Pustaka, 1950, pp. 18 - 19.

[11]M. Dwi Marianto, *Surrealist Painting in Indonesia,* Ph.D Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1995, pp. 27-29

seed was Indonesian nationalism, that had already emerged on the surface but still had no definite form.

The Art Scene in the 1940s

In Chapter 2 of the thesis, I discussed the social and political situation after the Japanese came to Indonesia, this also influenced the path of art in Indonesia. I also specifically discussed the development of the arts in Yogyakarta after Indonesia proclaimed its independence. In that development, a number of art circles emerged , to become the genesis of modern Indonesian art, because the outstanding artists at that time, joined the circles as an expression of support to the newly formed Republic. Their works also reflected the things which were generally the focus of attention in society.

When in 1942, Japan entered Indonesia, they wrenched the authority from the Dutch East Indies government without difficulty, and went on to govern the colonized people with a military iron grip. This occupation had a big effect on the development of art which had existed before the Japanese came. *PERSAGI* was dissolved , like all the other existing organizations. The only organisations allowed were those formed by the occupying Japanese government, including *PUTERA* (Centre of People's Power), which comprised of intellectuals, cultural figures, artists, and religious figures. They were taken in by the anti Dutch and anti Western slogans of the Japanese propaganda, while in reality behind it all was only Japan's self interest. Then the Japanese formed a military unit comprising of youths, called *PETA* (The Defenders of Motherland).

The Art Section under *PUTERA* was trained by the Japanese to produce propaganda through posters and banners. At that time the propaganda projected anticipation of going to be free of Dutch colonialism, so *that* became as if it was real. Many artists who were formerly members of *PERSAGI*, joined the art section of *PUTERA*. The artists were united for Japan's interests, for instance : to make anti Dutch propaganda posters which were really for Japan's interests, they were also organized to hold joint exhibitions. At least two factual points can be noted here : (1) that a number of artists had studied the art of propaganda through the medium of visual art; (2) and in that, an artist community was formed through the same conciousness, which was the feeling of being free from the Dutch, but to fall under the military authority of the Japanese which was very repressive and oppressive and caused grief for the majority of people.

The situation of famine and suffering from the Japanese occupation is symbolized by a very thin, ragged figure which was the subject of the painter Affandi (Marianto, 1995:31). This was one reality expressed through a painting.

Indonesia proclaimed her independence on 17 August 1945, after Japan lost the war against the Allied Forces. The artists which consisted of a number of *PERSAGI*, *PUTERA*, activists and other young artists from Yogyakarta and those who came to Yogyakarta, formed circles, the most dominant at that time of which was *Seniman Indonesia Muda / SIM* (Young Indonesian Artists) and *Pelukis Rakyat / PR* (People's Painters). The large number of artists

who moved to Yogyakarta was parallel with the influx of people entering Yogyakarta because the Dutch had tried to re-occupy Indonesia after Japan lost the war (see thesis, page 32 and after).

The focus of society's and also artist's attentions at that time was the struggle to fight the Dutch who wanted to recolonize Indonesia especially the Independence Revolution at the second half of the 1940's. Some artists even joined in the struggle, either physically or through graphic anti Dutch propaganda. (See p.33). The artists depicted the situations of battle in the Revolution to guard the independence. An excellent illustration that reflects the spirit of these times is the painting *Seko* , 1949, by S. Sudjojono, which depicts a guerrilla fighter slinging a rifle with a background of destroyed and burning buildings.[12] The reality of that time was a nationalism, spirited by a universal revolutionary fervor to fight the Dutch attempts to recolonize Indonesia.[13]

The Real in the 1950's : Competition of Various Kinds of Nationalism

The 1950's decade is a crucial time which formed the base of Indonesian painting. At the beginning of this decade, the Indonesian society and amongst it, the artists, were still euphorically enjoying the complete independence of Indonesia, achieved only in 1949. There is a big possibility that the feelings of triumph in the independence, an even feelings about the revolutionary war itself, went through a process of romantisizing. This happened not only in the visual arts. In dance, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the cultural figure and founder of Taman Siswa, and also an activist in *PUTERA*, wrote an article titled "Stagnation and Innovation in Our Arts", questioning, why is it that in Javanese dance, most of the dances that developed have been dances with themes of war or battle.[14]

In Chapter 3 of my thesis, I stated that Indonesian nationalism was interpreted differently by different sections of the society which had different political orientations. At that time, there were three large groups with different orientations : the nationalists, the religious groups, and the communists. They had a different emphasis according to their political lines and colors. In the first half of the 1950's there was fierce competitions between the political parties, just as was prophetically painted by Harijadi (1919 - 1997), titled *Gathering Clouds and Parting Roads* (1953), in which people with anxious gestures and facial expressions, walking in different directions were depicted. Every figure has a personal focus of attention, under a surreal cloud, thick, as if it were a thunder cloud about to fall on the earth.

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[12]In Claire Holt's book , *Art in Indonesia,* 1967, p. 203, this painting is noted with the title *The Hour of The Guerrilla*, but in the catallouge of *The Jakarta International Fine Arts Exhibition 1994,* Jakarta : Yayasan Seni Rupa Indonesia, 1994, p. 18, the title is *Seko (Geurilla Vanguards).*

[13]Claire Holt, *Art In Indonesia : Continuities & Changes,* Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1997, p.201.

[14]Ki Hadjar Dewantara, "Kebekuan dan Pembaharuan dalam Kesenian Kita", *Majalah Budaya,* No 8, 1993. Also see M. Dwi Marianto, " Kebekuan dan Pembaharuan dalam Kesenian Kita" *Kompas* (daily newspaper), Sunday 25 May 1997, p. 21.

The art world in Indonesia in this decade went through many kinds of conflicts. Even more since 1955, when the Indonesian Communist Party (*PKI*), the Army, and a few more groups and parties started to compete for power. However, the group to explicitly realize the importance of the art world, was the Indonesian Communist Party with their people art institution called LEKRA (the Institute of People's Culture). One of the members of the PKI politbureau called Nyoto, held the view that in order to gain political support from the people, they needed to involve various artists from various art forms, to woo the sympathy of the masses through the media of art.

As I have explained in Chapter 3, the art life in Indonesia which at that time was full of political conflict could not be separated from the international Cold War. The different conflicting ideologies started to influence works of art. The artists who affiliated towards the Left developed a social realism, like the works of Sudjojono, Hendra Gunawan [15], and in the later development, a Socialist Realism emerged, where as their enemies developed an art style that associated with freedom of thought and a will not to be boxed in a certain artistic ideological dogma, meaning the abstract or not realistic or naturalistic painting style such as the works of Bagong Kussudiardjo, Fadjar Sidik and Handriyo. This atmosphere of ideological conflict was also felt in Indonesian literature, writers were divided into two groups: one side affiliated towards LEKRA and intellectually attacked the non and anti-LEKRA side. The two groups competed fiercely until the early 1960's. The Left was represented by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Sitor Situmorang, while the side who claimed to be universalists and humanists, were represented by H.B Jassin.

The conclusion which can be drawn in terms of Indonesian painting, specifically in Yogyakarta in the 1950's decade, is that the choice of orientation and the way of depicting the subject matter was not purely artistic and aesthetical, but was formed by the idioms of political conflict influenced by the Cold War ideological conflict.

The 1960's decade : The Fall of One of The Components of Indonesian Art

These seeds of ideological conflict became ever sharper till the first half of the 1960's. The result was bitter competition that proceeded to escape the frame of political intellectualism. The artistic discourse had become so interwoven with the political discourse, one could say that it was spirited by it. At that time there was a slogan "Politics Is The Commander". It is true, at time everyone had become crazy with politics.[16] Art had become the language and

[15]Really one could say that Hendra Gunawan's painting style is not naturalist, but he always orientates himself to the life of the common people, which he depicted as his subject matter.
[16]This is not different to the 1997 campaigns, where there was frontal confrontation between Golkar and PPP (Islamic Party), there one could see the signs of brutalism, totalitarianism, starting to show. In the campaign rallies, thousands of people would go round the city on motorbikes and cars without their exhaust mufflers. If the people on the street did not follow their right index finger sign for the campaigning group, they could be beaten up, or experience

instrument of politics (Marianto, 1995: 57). The artists were also competing amongst themselves for practical political reasons. All this, eventually reached its climax in September 1965 when the dominant voice was that of weapons. The stars of that period were not the artists, but the *RPKAD* (Army Para Commando Regiment), who became very 'famous' with a 'sweet smelling name' because they were seen to have gained merit by crushing communism in Indonesia. This decade was an era of genocide, kidnapping, slander, imprisonment, and the nearly total destruction of Leftist politics and ideology in an extremely brutal manner. There also occurred a political stigmatization which is still influential now, as this thesis is written. The consequences of this total destruction, was the fall of one of the components of the art world in Indonesia, which was art developed with a naturalistic or realistic technical approach, oriented to the lives of the common people with a spirit of the people. Social Realism and Socialist Realism, suddenly disappeared. Up till now, a certain political interest still has the facts about who was right and who was wrong shrouded in mist for most Indonesians. What is certain is that the ideological conflict in art climaxed in an event that devoured a great number of artists, and made an artistic group and orientation illegal and politically unclean. The Sukarno government fell, the first President of Indonesia who was also a patron of the arts, was replaced by the regime that calls itself the New Order since 1966.

The Period of The Abstract and Formalism Which Then Was Questioned : The 1970's Period.

The fashion in visual arts at the beginning of the New Order, was art for art's sake, or art that formally had a beauty with an universal value, which was also not connected to any political ideology. In this period, art for art's sake found it's space and time. Experimentalism also became fashionable, with the use of various mediums to make works of art, for example, batik painting; scrapmetal collages using welding techniques; and other alternative media. In this period, artists found the space to play with formal elements in abstract painting, which became the primadonna. The artists who became famous at that time were Bagong Kussudiardjo, Amri Yahya, Handriyo, Mudjitha, Abas Alibasyah. (Marianto, p. 76)

There were at least two main reasons that conditioned the fashion of abstract art, with its attempting to formalism completely free from political polemics. The first, was the availabilities of publications of Modern Art through mostly American published books, with full color reproductions of the works of the masters of Modern Art, which created a big impact with it's formalism which was promoted widely and intensively, specially Abstract-Expressionism. The second, was the condition of political trauma experienced deeply by the society, people who had received direct or indirect consequences of the political conflict of the end of 1965, were everywhere. A number of artists who were directly and just allegedly affiliated to LEKRA were still in prisons. With this experience, the society learnt that politics are very dangerous. So, depoliticization in the art world occurred spontaneously.

In Chapter 4, I started to focus attention more specifically to the campus of STSRI 'ASRI' Yogyakarta which is now the Faculty of Fine Arts of ISI Yogyakarta, and which until now is

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improper consequences. This madness was coloured with brawls, murders, arson on houses, shops, churches, and Chinese temples and cars on the street.

still the most dominant art education institution in Yogyakarta. The approaches of working in art and art criticism, more or less reflected the social and political conditions at that time. Formalism and the art for art's sake also became everyday practice and influenced the works of art produced. While for naturalistic works, the yardstick to appreciate them were their formal aspects, for instance, it's resemblance, it's artistic aura. Symbolic aspects of art, and even more so those that had a social and political connotation, were pushed aside. People were reluctant to discuss these things, except the triumph of the New Order over the Old Order, which was repeatedly publicized in the media with a rigged heroism.

The formalistic and apolitical practices which were the common daily experience in Yogyakarta, eventually were questioned. A number of young progressive artists, who had started to get acquainted with the thoughts of the New Left which were crystallized in Herbert Marcuse's thoughts, began to question the art establishment. It also ought to be noted that at that time the social, political, and economical situation had begun to be studied in a critical manner by students and intellectuals in the universities. Society had started to witness the emergence of social and economical inequalities, and actions which victimized the common people in the name of national development. It was not by chance that this decade was characterized by various protests by university students and the intellectuals, and social and political upheavals in various big cities. (Marianto, p.78) It was more or less this context which influenced the formation of the idioms of a group of young artists in Yogyakarta, who tried to hold a contextual visual art exhibition titled "Seni Kepribadian Apa?" (What Identity Art?) at the end of 1977, which was not granted permission by the police and banned from opening. (Marianto, p.82)

So, if one needs to come to a conclusion, what the young progressive artists considered to be reality worthy to be reflected in works of art at the end of the 1970's decade, were the social inequalities, abuse of power, and the excesses caused by the National Development, or due to the various unexpected changes that occurred so fast.

The 1980's and Early 1990's Period : Cultural Juxtapositions

I consider cultural juxtapositions to be the most important context which gave birth to Yogyakarta surrealist painting. I focus on various kinds of cultural practices and products which are different, contradictory, from the traditional, agricultural, to the modern and high technology, to strengthen my argument that the absurdity, the oddities, the dreaminess, the appearance of random selection, the feeling of flying far to where no one knows, along with the various paradoxes reflected in the surrealist paintings in Yogyakarta, are metaphors whose elements are taken from the physical and social-cultural everyday environment, including the reality of language , where the complex Javanese language mixes with Bahasa Indonesia (the National Language), English, which is now an international language, Arabic, which brings Arab culture, which mixes also with *prokem* (a 'secret' slang/code language developed in the underworld widely used by the youth) and the language of the youth in Yogyakarta, who also have their own *prokem* for everyday socializing. All this is described in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 7, I draw an imaginary line connecting the Surrealism which developed in France with the Surrealism that developed in Yogyakarta. In this respect, I point out that every society has it's surrealism, where people play with absurdity in their own ways, where people seek the exotic, play with their dreams, play with the irrational with fantasy and imagination, or in which people play in their imagination and fantasy to escape from the stifling feeling that comes from routine or external factors which socially and psychologically disturb people.

What I am indirectly trying to say, through the metaphors of absurdities and funny cultural oddities, which seem stupid, deranged, etc. in this thesis, there is a situation in Yogyakarta where there are many everyday realities such as : things that cause stress; things that destroy peoples feelings and thoughts , seeing various inequalities and abuse of power which are unutterable / difficult to oppose,[17] things that make people realize that the line between life and death is so slim[18], things that split peoples mental universe by witnessing the contrasting differences between the reality of advertisements that employ approaches and images imported from the industrialized countries / the West, with the reality of the kampong slums.[19]

So, the surrealism reflected in the paintings in Yogyakarta, is the state of mind in which the way and the language of it's expression , are influenced by the environment and it's everyday realities. The surrealism in Yogyakarta's surrealist paintings, functions as a catharsis mechanism, or as an exhaust pipe on a motorized vehicle, to channel unused left over gases of combustion,[20]or, like the way people sometimes shout or talk whatever, without meaning, just free and loose , to let out burdens of the heart, maybe through the language of humor, or any language. What is important is that the feeling of being cooped in, can be let out. In surrealist paintings, people also play with different unconnected images that are placed together, composed in such a way so that to have qualities of being : absurd, odd, weird, scary, terrifying, funny, melancholy, dreamy, or seemingly randomly placed. These are the shouts, the jokes, the humor, the slips of logic (*plesedan,* Javanese) transformed into pictorial language.

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[17]For instance, the banning of the media, arbitrarily and unopposed by the media. The collection of land and building taxes which is felt to be a burden. The realities in the court and High Court that is practices as a theatre where the judiciary and the legislative bodies are so subservient and controlled by the executive bodies, so that many cases in which the common people have clearly won, are canceled just like that by the government, like the Kedung Ombo case, and many more cases which have been 'frozen' such as the murder of Marsinah, the factory female labor in East Java, and many more.

[18]The best illustration for this is the reality on the public roads where the inter-city buses go as they please at high speeds, amongst the other road users, from pedicabs, bicycles, and other cars. Actually the culture of monopoly on the road by the inter city and the city buses, really becomes a metaphor of the current Indonesian system of power . What happens is the law of the jungle, the strong is the victor, and also, and many people have indeed lost their shame.

[19]I explain all this in Chapter 6 and 7.

[20]I am borrowing this analogy from Marijan, the Yogyakarta Kraton's guard for the Merapi Volcano.

In order to illustrate Yogyakarta's surrealism reflected in Yogyakarta paintings, I took some artists that I thought represent Yogyakarta surrealism, which in reality is like an organism that has many facets. They were : Heri Dono, Sudarisman, Agus Kamal, Effendi, Temy Setiawan, Probo, Nurcholis, Lucia Hartini, Ivan Sagito. Actually there are many more surrealist painters who merit discussion, but the time and space restrictions force me to restrain myself in order to be able to focus and discuss the matter more widely and more in depth. But at least the works of the above mentioned artists, can be seen as a sample to reflect the surrealism in Yogyakarta paintings. The characters of their works as well as the socio-cultural contexts that they represent, have been discussed in Chapter 8.

An examiner asked why Heri Dono is included as a sample for this thesis, even though not all his works taken were paintings. This is the answer. Heri Dono is an artist who became famous in the second half of the 1980's. He is better known through his installations and performances, which have been exhibited in several countries. The aspect which I focus on from Heri Dono's work, is his way of juxtaposing ideas which in everyday life have no connection at all. He has an artistic capability to juxtapose different, even contradictory subjects, to create a different entity in a work, with several characteristics which always contain elements of surprise; through the medium of humor he can reflect the oppression, repression, and corruption , the oddities of the system, the contradictions or paradoxes in the various laws and regulations, such as, for example, is expressed in the work *Vegetarian* (1994) where he depicts an executive in a tie - the holder of the authority to manage the forest - who with his foot is playing with a big tree that has just been felled, which symbolizes that the forest under his authority has been logged selfishly, resulting in various natural disasters that are depicted in the various expressions of angry supernatural figures from traditional myths and legends.

Also his work titled *Gamelan of Rumors* (1992), which through humor became an excellent metaphor of the current situation in Indonesia which conditions the printed an electronic media to only become the mouthpiece of the government , with broadcasts that have been engineered to only be propaganda, or to create scapegoats, to divert the societies attention from the real social problems. Because the media is monopolized and people do not have a formal media to channel their opinions and aspirations frankly, a cultural mechanism has formed, that informally accommodates small talk, speculative talk, gossip about government officials or different scandals that are not solved fairly and openly. This mechanism is the mechanism of gossip channels, rumours, which on listening appears to be no different from a gamelan orchestra. He also has certain patterns with a unique style and accentuation. Incidentally, Heri Dono comes from a background of painting education in ISI Yogyakarta. But once more it should be stressed that it is not Heri Dono's media of expression that I want to underline, but rather, the way he creates collages of various kinds of ideas, to become a work of art in an organic unity.

Of course other forms of artistic expression could be used as a vehicle of expression that function as a means of catharsis. But from the observations I have discussed in the thesis, I can conclude that there are some notable observing points Yogyakarta surrealist painting that can be noted, which are :

1. Surrealist painting in Yogyakarta is a visual-arts language of expression which has gone through a long formation process. It did not appear from zero, or it doesn't come from nothing, rather, it emerges from various contexts that are ongoing with various changes and variants.

2. Surrealism in art has the function of a means of catharsis, where people can create an imaginary space to play around in freedom. With this , people can also escape the structure of the present situation, which is so formed and dictated by the laws of power with it's systems that are actually colliding. However, this does not mean that other styles and genres in visual arts cannot function as a catharsis mechanism. . But from the various realities which I have discussed, it can be concluded that the nature of the expression and manifestation of the ideas in surrealist painting in Yogyakarta, possesses a character that currently is most reflective in describing the situation and condition in Yogyakarta, called by many people the *jaman edan* (the era of madness).

3. So, what is actually real in Yogyakarta, is everything that is surreal, with all the kinds of absurdities and oddities. Ending my answer to the various questions from my examiners, I conclude that actually in the present times, surrealism is what is realistic. In this particular context, surrealist painting in Yogyakarta is the reflection of the surreal reality constituting Yogyakarta's urban scape.