

*Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia.* Edited by Henk S. Nordholt. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997. 371 pp.

This book, which originated from a workshop held at the KITLV in Leiden in 1993, looks at clothing and other aspects of appearance in Indonesian society. Following one of Chris Bayly's lecture on the appearance of British colonialism in India as represented in paintings and pictures, it was realized that the large collections of colonial photographs held in Holland had been underused in research. Many of the essays in the book thus made use of prints held in the photographic archives to ask questions about state and society in Indonesia in the modern era.

Kees van Dijk's thoroughly researched historical overview looks at the interaction between local, Islamic, and Western styles of dressing as Indonesians asserted their allegiance to religion, to nationalist ideals, or to modernity. His piece concentrates almost exclusively on male dress, but the balance is redressed somewhat by Jean Gelman Taylor. Her paper explores how differences in appearance between men and women have been further widened by colonial state formation. She examines critically the photographs available with a clear awareness of the contexts of their production and their limitations as evidence.

Elsbeth Locher-Scholten considers the effect of Western-born women in broadening the divide between the Javanese and their colonial rulers, in particular by importing Western food and notions of fashion. She concludes that food and fashion both reflected and were instruments of the changes that took place in colonial society in the last four decades of Dutch rule. Dutch-born women resident in the Indies reinforced colonial identity through their clothing and food preferences, but in so doing they hastened the demise of the empire.

William Frederick takes as his subject the dress of a particular group: the young men known as *pemuda* who fought in the struggle for independence. He uses the evidence of archive photographs to challenge the romantic image of the long-haired freedom fighters which pervades representations of the Indonesian revolution. Although many of the surviving photographs may have been sanitized or staged, it seems that a great number were neatly dressed and clean-cut. He argues that it is

possible that the image of the wild, long-haired, rebellious youth has its roots in Dutch anti-republican propaganda.

James Danandjaja's contribution gives a personal recollection of the way various types of costumes have been used in Indonesia in an overly symbolic way. Covering the period between the last decade of Dutch rule and the present day, it provides a useful insight into the use of costume as a means of expression amongst the Indonesian middle classes as seen through Indonesian eyes.

Some of the contributions deal with neither dress nor costume, but consider other visible aspects of Indonesia. Klaus Schreiner's essay focuses on Indonesia's pantheon of official heroes. Although it is illustrated with photographs of reliefs of heroes and of heroes themselves, there is no analysis of their visual representation. Instead, starting with the notion that the Indonesian landscape is "dressed" with monuments to national heroes, he goes on to consider the process by which heroes are made, and the ritual activities which help to shape the political and historical consciousness of Indonesian people.

Rudolf Mrazek draws for his data not on photographs but on a range of written sources such as catalogues of dolls, guides to etiquette, novels, and Tilema's six-volume work *Kromoblenda*. Amidst a welter of information, he details examples of how the Dutch ruling classes tried to differentiate themselves from the local people, sometimes in visible ways but other times in terms of notions such as hygiene. His wide-ranging essay goes on to trace the evolution and demise of the Indonesian "dandy".

Jacques Leclerc's contribution considers the representation of the events of 1 October 1965 as depicted at the base of the Monumen Pancasila Sakti, showing how it embodies the myth that has been constructed around those events. In particular, he explores the way women's sensuality became associated with communist atrocities in what he suggests is the origin myth of the New Order. The piece, unfortunately incomplete on his death, was compiled from his notes by Christine Leclerc.

Another contribution which deals with architectural features of the Indonesian landscape is provided by Teruo Sekimoto. He describes the

communal projects that changed the appearance of a Javanese village under the New Order, with a particular focus on the construction and decoration of village entrance gates to commemorate Independence Day. This and the wearing of uniforms are examined as part of the Indonesian state's attempt to create a disciplined national community.

Finally, Lizzy van Leeuwen evokes the atmosphere in which the new rich of Jakarta live. This is achieved through a description of scenes from the life of the womenfolk of one wealthy family as they attend weddings, organize interior décor, go out for drinks or dinner or on a family outing to an amusement park.

Despite the intention of the workshop organizers to promote the use of Dutch archives of colonial photographs, many of the contributions in the book make little use of them. Where photographs appear, they are usually as accompaniment to the data. And the type of questions asked and the approach taken to analysing photographic evidence varies widely. While many of the authors adopt a deeply critical stance towards the interpretation of meanings expressed in costume, for example, few are similarly critical of photographic texts themselves. Henk Maier's discussion of advertisements from 1940 of Philips light bulbs is an exception. Here, the pictorial text is considered in terms of the construction of its message for a particular audience at a particular time, and the semiotic meanings it may evoke.

The book as a whole covers a wide range of aspects of appearance, and as is usual in collections of papers from a workshop, the quality of the contributions varies from adequate to excellent. The strengths of this collection lie in those studies that have made detailed use of archive material, both photographic and written. Henk Schulte Nordholt, in his excellent and scholarly introduction, acknowledges that there is much more work to be done in the analysis of what he calls "our socio-cultural skin". This book may well provide ideas and inspiration for future studies.

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