



Costumes and Textile Art Indonesia as a Practice of Recognition Dutch Colonialism Era, Historical and Present

Julita Oesanty Oetojo^(✉)

Product Design Department, Universitas Bina Nusantara, West Jakarta, Indonesia
julita_oetojo@yahoo.com

Abstract. Clothes not only function as a cover for the body, but also understood as a metaphor for power and authority. This paper examines the discourse about the role of the artwork of the Indonesian traditional textile art and costume shown as embodied dependencies during the Dutch colonialism in 17th–19th century and how it changed today's society in Indonesia. This paper focus on the art history for the material culture and evidence of dependencies in the costumes and textile art Indonesia during the Dutch colonialism and are able in the wider form to correct the widespread in the academic evaluation between written and non-written traditions. The research method applied through empirical research in literature review, using theoretical framework from the art history literature, conceptually and methodologically existing slavery and labor history research. Dutch dominant for a long time and the influence of the population, the clothing in Indonesia is more than just marking differences and similarities in indigenous communities. These clothes give the media to express certain attitudes towards the influences from foreign cultural and political influences. Comprehensive analysis of the interaction of culture given the costumes, textile, attitudes, behavior, gender, norms of appropriateness norms to understand Indonesia's ever-changing social views.

Keywords: Costumes · Textile Art · Indonesia · Dutch · History

1 Introduction

Costumes and textiles art have always important social, cultural, and economic impacts on people and communities. Textiles are often part of the identity in the community and costume is used to express belonging and exclusivity. They are an ideal medium for representing identity shifts. Costumes and textiles art from Indonesia are generally an area of great interest to society, especially the relation to the changing cultural and its significances Indonesia's identity. Indonesian traditional costumes and textiles art carry their own cultural, social, and emotional instruments with designs, colors, and motifs. Each of them having their own significance and different communities, own distinctive techniques, and styles. The use of traditional textile craft and craftsmanship in the interpretation of ancient societies. The link between clothing and identity is a

long-established theme in dress studies, though one that has been given new impetus by the rise of postmodernism with its emphasis on identity [1].

Traditional costume represents the regions and produces along with their cultures and handicrafts. Consequently, traditional clothing is a handcraft that connects people. The term "costume" typically refers to culture, identity, social fields, and structural problems in a small society. Through clothing also, the process of recognition and hegemony takes place. Since the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia (17th-19th century), the Dutch intentionally politicized clothing, distinguishing between white people, native citizens, and slaves.

Each tribe obliged to wear their traditional costumes and live at certain areas during the Dutch colonialism. With complicated rules, they were not permitted to live outside the area determined by the Dutch authorities. Dutch clothing became something forbidden to wear by natives. Noble clothing is certainly not permitted worn by native citizens or slaves. This appearance recognition, with what people distinguish themselves from others and in turn identified as a particular group, is supported by a colonial mentality. This is a record of the history of colonial mentality which emphasizes cleanliness and neatness which they consider not owned by natives. They consider themselves as civilization mentors from the western world. Western is the main thing and native is just chaos and they call it as the source of contamination.

This research examines the discourse about the role of the artwork of the Indonesian traditional textile and costume shown as embodied dependencies. The aims of this research focus on the art history for the material culture and evidence of dependencies in the costumes and textile art Indonesia during the Dutch colonialism and able in the wider form perspective to correct the widespread in the academic evaluation between written and non-written traditions. The intention is not to look at all the relations that occur between existing beings and that are given an institutional form. Rather, it is simply to mark out a few major schemas of action that structure the lives of collectives, to look at how compatible or incompatible they may be with the modes of identification picked out earlier [2].

The researcher learned the express social distinction between Indonesian and the colonial to find the principle of the new social history. Clothes not only function as a cover for the body, but also cannot be understood merely as a metaphor for power and authority. Especially at the time of the European colonialism where things depend on the artists on the occupation and how the invaders influenced the traditions of Indonesia which had been very long in Indonesian's history.

The researcher had done field research in regional areas in Java and Nusa Tenggara islands studying costumes and textile arts such as in Betawi, Banten, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, Lasem, Rembang, Waingapu, Sumba, Bali, Lombok and Kupang and did previous studies on Indonesian traditional textiles. Interesting to explore whether there is a form of resistance to the creativity of the artists at that time and having to fulfill the needs of the invaders. Or it is more as an expression of the artist on what is going on in that era in a form of propaganda against the acceptance of colonialism.

Through artefacts in costumes and textile arts, researcher wish to find the gap differences between unwritten traditions written by Indonesians and compare them with sources written by Europeans to find new, non-textual and textual sources that focused on

the comparison inequality in art history in Indonesia during that period. This paper will be able to give a great new contribution and fill the gap from the previous research done in Indonesia in term costume and textile art focusing on the traditional costumes. Costumes and textiles as cultural representation repealing deeply held ethos and belief, which found through visual correlations between cultures, and then to seek historical periods in which common experiences might have touched the cultures involved. Through artefacts in costumes and textile arts, researcher want to find the gap differences between unwritten traditions written by Indonesians and compare them with sources written by Europeans to find new, non-textual and textual sources that focused on the comparison inequality in art history in Indonesia during that period.

This research aims to answer some questions related to the goal of the project in order to find what the current written and non-written history about the changing identity of Indonesian traditional costumes and textile arts in the European colonial era are. What are the material evidences can be collected in the art historical approach?

Using art historical analysis and approaches, how do these change features on the objects and symbols as well as the material traditions? What artistic, political and social situation influences? What social difference between local and colonial and between higher and lower social class?

2 Literature Review

In the earlier research done by Kees van Dijk, he presented a broad historical overview, starting from the first contact between local residents and Europeans in the seventeenth century. The scope consists of a grouping from the category of sarongs (local clothing in Indonesia using fabric in wrap technique), robes (Islamic influence), and pants (Western influence). Ignoring the Chinese influence, which is relevant but more difficult to find, the interaction between these three categories is a complex and dynamic process of selective borrowing, coevolution, and rearrangement of meaning [3].

Not everyone has so many style choices. For many ordinary people in the Indies, before 1900 this scope limited by special rules issued first, in the early days of the Dutch presence, by the VOC and later by the colonial government. This rule is related to what clothes are permitted and what should not be worn by a certain group of people. Western clothing is taboo for many people. If there are exceptions, this applies to people who are close to the Netherlands. In areas under Dutch control, only members of the local nobility and indigenous Protestant members were allowed to imitate aspects of western lifestyle, including clothing [3].

Jean Gelman Taylor applies a gender perspective in exploring how the colonial state has encouraged differences in appearance in costumes worn between men and women. He pointed out the process of forming a colonial state accompanied by a social history of changes to dress rules, which were found in the public appearance of Indonesian authorities at that time [3]. Jean Gelman Taylor views photographs as a medium used by colonial elites to represent themselves. He showed the growing differences between private and public areas, which accompanied the rise of the colonial state. Family photos are not entirely confined to the private area. Although it was primarily aimed at families in the Netherlands to show the success of their relatives in the Indies (emphasizing

pleasure and luxury), the photo also propagated a public image of the expression of the confidence of the colony's ruling class.

Portraiture represents a person that understood as a likeness or an effigy of a person, a symbol of that person's social status or an identification of a particular type of person. Many different philosophical and technical approaches have been applied to creating portraits. In some cases, physical likeness, facial features and physique have been carefully recreated to form a life-like impression of the sitter. In others the character or intellect of that person is conveyed using externalized attributes including physique, deportment, books, weapons, clothing etc. [4].

In the photos often shown that the family with their maid or slaves and the costumes worn are using Indonesian traditional Batik in Java with specific area of the original textile art. Every piece of the costume detail seen using the different motifs to show the power and authority. Dutch colonial photography was rarely analyzed in a "textual" framework. Because of its nature rooted in the nostalgia for "Indische" culture that is actively reproduced in the colonial golden age. However, how "real" are these photos, what exactly they represent, what genre of genres are available, how are they photographed or framed, what is embodied dependency behind it, what remains, what must remain invisible and why? These questions are rarely touched. The clothing forms the social identity of the people described, places them in historical times, and connects users with certain community communities. The costumes impress on how colonial society views gender differences. Costumes create a statement about the wearer's moral, religious, and political views [3] (Figs. 1 and 2).

Ever since the Dutch began to document Indonesia's craft traditions in the early 20th century there has been a growing fusion of Western-derived academic outlooks and Indonesian traditionalism. This has been partly spurred by the growth of art academies that modelled on the European art educational approach but inspired Indonesians to such an extent that they became internalized and developed their own momentum [5].

Since clothing is inescapably a demonstration of identity, wearing clothes or for that matter not doing so, is inevitably a political act, in the widest possible sense of that word. There are circumstances in which that politics is more blatant, or more contentious, than in others. Generally, men and women say things, through their clothes as well as in other ways, that are acceptable to the mass of their fellows around them, and to the powers



Fig. 1. Dutch family photo during the colonialism era in Java. Source: <https://tempodoeloe.com>



Fig. 2. Dutch women in Indonesian Costume Kebaya. Source: <https://historia.id>

that be, and it is in the interest of those who hold power to make that daily practice an unexceptional and unthinking routine [6]. Clothing has long been an important medium for negotiating differences across cultural divides [7].

One of the highlights from Indonesian traditional textile and costume art is Dutch Batik (Batik Belanda) in Java. Dutch batik is a type of batik that was developed between 1840–1940. Initially this batik was only made for Dutch and Indo-Dutch people. Dutch batik is called also as Batik Kompeni. Kompeni mean Dutch trade alliance in the archipelago in the 17th century until the beginning of the 19th century (VOC). The users were initially limited to their own circle and then spread to Chinese and Javanese aristocrats. Dutch batik produced by pioneers such as Franquemont and Oosterom and it only featured using typical red and indigo blue, both light blue and dark blue. There are still many patterns that feature ornament similar to hill and lakes, and have fairy-tale themes, such as “Little Red Riding Hood”, “Snow White” or “Hansel & Gretel”. Along with the influence at that time that motives clearly displayed their identity, were replaced by motives that were truly European or Dutch, such as flower arrangements, large bouquet, or stork in the middle clump of aquatic plants, with bird decorations as a complement. The batik that known as its flower-patterned called Buketan batik. It is an assimilation between two cultures, namely the Netherlands and Indonesia. The color shifts gradually to more than two colors, especially when they start using synthetic dyes.

Towards the peak of its development, more or less in the years 1890–1910, Dutch batik appeared with a new face initiated by Franquemont. Many changes occurred in structuring the pattern, including not all parts of the head using border decoration. The border ornament which at first was dominant was replaced by flower strands or lace trim which functioned as the boundary between the head and the body of the sarong. Dutch batik also changed all the rules commonly applied to the pattern of the head and body of the sarong. In addition, the head is not always placed on the edge of the holster but is moved to the center of the holster (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Dutch Batik “Little Red Riding Hood”. Source: <http://www.northcoastjavanesebatik.com>

3 Methodology

Research method through formalism, non-formal, semiotics, iconography, photographic reproduction of artworks. This research will focus on the context of time during the European colonialism in Indonesia especially Dutch colonialism. Researcher analyzed works in the form of costumes and textiles through analysis of forms, such as techniques, lines, shapes, colors, textures, and compositions. This done to look at how artist or weaver creates his artwork. Beside that researcher learned to create changes from the iconography of the costume and textile art associate with the religious symbols, images, ritual, power, authority, and asymmetrical dependency that presented in those eras.

Research will go through the understanding of living, traditional costumes, and textiles art for better research of the art historical, cultural-historical values, the costumes and textiles produced in the past, and to understand the powerful, influence of craft on societies with their changing identity and new strong concept of embodied dependencies. Until this stage several literature reviews still being researched and studied.

The first method will apply to the descriptive method, observational method, case studies. From the observational and survey method, the researcher will start focusing the field observation in some areas in Java as part of the preliminary field and survey research.

Second, research is applying the empirical research method through literature review, using the theoretical framework from the art history literature, conceptually and methodologically broader than existing slavery and labor history research.

Another review pictorial documentation and photographs and comparison from the previous findings also analyzed through iconography and semantic approach. The study centered mainly on Java Island. Formalism method included in research when it starts to select the costumes and textile art and analyze the line, composition, color, and meaning interpretation. Art historical approaches did through traditional approaches and new interpretation based on the social context of the arts, social history, cultural and ethnic history. Lastly the use of cultural science methods. Three principal aims in the transcultural flow and social change: First is the theory of re-use as an important heuristic tool in analyzing and interpreting cultural and political changes and the transnational flow of ideas, concepts and objects. Second, it contributes to the transdisciplinary debate between traditionally clearly delineated disciplines here the humanities, and social sciences in

particular. Third, provides a regional focus on South Asia, which forms an exceptionally fertile area for re-use studies and for the bridging of disciplinary boundaries [8].

4 Analysis

The Fig. 4 showed the timeline of the key facts and development from the time before the 1900 until approaching the globalization and modern based on the analysis of the researcher. Before 1900 in Indonesia there are style of dress was restricted by the colonial government. At the beginning of the 1900 styles of the traditional clothing of Indonesian strictly need to follow the Dutch colonial. Start at the turning on the beginning of 1900, the traditional Indonesian clothing worn with more freedom than before but still very follow the colonialism movement. Starting from the middle of the 19 centuries, the Dutch maintain the style and European manners spread beyond the borders of powerful elites in Indonesia.

Approaching the globalization and modern era, people interpret it as a recent development, tend to ignore the fact that there have been many periods in Asian history. To understand the influence of intercultural influences as an exclusive western phenomenon means that the ignorance of the historical in the archipelago.

The Table 1 shows the comparison done based on the literature review between research by Kees Van Dijk and Jean Gelman Taylor. The analysis divided by factors: Cultural Identity, Emancipation, Moral Standard, Consumption, Modernity, Religious, Appropriateness, Interaction with Natives, Interaction with West or Europe, Interaction with Islamic Religion. From the cultural identity, Kees Van Dijk mentioned that clothing function as a statement to differentiation of the certain group. Jean Gelman Taylor



Fig. 4. Timeline key fact and development of use of clothing in Indonesia

Table 1. Factors influenced the changes in costumes and textile art in Java during Dutch colonialism

Kees van Dijk	Factors	Jean Gelman Taylor
Clothing functions as a statement as a means to show that we come from certain groups that share a certain set of ideals	Cultural Identity	Costumes and behavior are a rich source for the history of colonial society. The human body is colonized as well as its land and resources.
Clothing can reflect differences in status and political or religious views	Emancipation	The appearance of the human body through clothing, makeup, and behavior in each period implies a very strong statement about class, status, and gender
Clothing is an expression of the way of life	Moral Standard	The analysis of gender and power made by each individual beautiful photograph combines the colonial past full of luxury, elegance, adaptation, and relationship between superiors and subordinates who intertwine with each other
Anxiety about the elimination of traditional ways of life	Consumption	Costume modification is a sign of change that can be seen in the fields of religion, government, and the availability of trade goods.
Danger due to frequent and strong contact with foreign cultures	Modernity	The history of the change of costume can then regarded as a quick writing for the social history of colonialism. Costumes do not only involve dress styles and structures as well as statements about classes of power and gender, but also involve materials used to make clothes and workers who produce these materials

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Kees van Dijk	Factors	Jean Gelman Taylor
Introducing, strengthening or modifying religious ideas and symbols that are associated with how to behave correctly for a Muslim	Religious	The interaction between Javanese costume and Dutch costume. Costumes make a statement about the wearer's moral, religious, and political views
Clothing is of the part of the process by which national unity is forged	Appropriateness	Costumes related to place and time in both meanings: present and historical period
The colonial period there were elite groups and slaves	Interaction with Natives	Overall, changes in costume in Java are not too related to climate, but with statements about wealth, beliefs, social roles, and expectation of the individuals
Restrictions through special rules	Interaction with West or Europes	Clothing forms the social identity of the people described, places them in historical times, and connects users with certain communities. The costumes give an impression of how colonial society views gender differences.
Express a certain attitude towards the influence of foreign cultural and political influences	Interaction with the Islamic Religion	Costume changes in Java are not limited to interactions with the influence of Western, but also Chinese and Islamic influences.

mentioned that costumes and behavior are source for history of colonial society, the human body is colonized as well as its land and resources.

Emancipation according to Kees Van Dijk as a clothing that can reflect differences in status and political or religious views. Emancipation for Jean Gelmar Taylor as the appearance of the human body through clothing, makeup, and behavior in each period implies a very strong statement about class, status, and gender.

Clothing is an expression of the way of life in the moral standard according to Kees Van Dijk, and Jean Gelmar Taylor highlighted it as the analysis of gender and power made by each individual beautiful photograph combines the colonial past full of luxury, elegance, adaptation and relationship between superiors and subordinates who intertwine with each other.

Interaction with Natives described by Kees Van Dijk as the colonial period there were elite groups and slaves. Jean Gelmar Taylor mentioned that overall, changes in costume in Java are not too related to climate, but with statement statements about wealth, beliefs, social roles and expectations of the individual's expectations.

Interaction with West or Europe according to Kees Van Dijk as a restriction through special rules. Clothing forms the social identity of the people described, places them in historical times, and connects users with certain community communities. The costumes give an impression of how colonial society views gender differences, according to Jean Gelmar Taylor.

5 Conclusion

Now the style of dress that can be chosen by the community is so diverse. At present the same citizens in Indonesia can choose regional clothing for their official ceremonies. In the past during the colonial period, the same scope of choice was available to those from the elite group. In the past, during the colonial period, the same scope of choice was available to those from the elite group.

The type of clothing chosen can reflect whether the event held is a royal event, a function within the framework of the colonial administration (in this case the choice of dress is shown to imitate the uniform of the Dutch gala uniform) or an Islamic background. Along with the rapid development of the printing industry, the debate about clothing requires a new dimension. Clothing becomes a problem for people who want to break away from existing rules. This discussion of changes in appearance is partly done through the press.

Dressing in a European style is an indication that someone supports the development of progressive ideas. This shows that a person is part of a new modern movement, not only to demand greater political freedom from the Netherlands, but also to protest the etiquette, and it's mean the etiquette of the elite of his own society.

Because of the dominance of the Dutch for a long time and the influence of the majority Muslim population, the function of clothing in Indonesia is more than just marking differences and similarities in indigenous communities. These clothes also provide the media to express certain attitudes towards the influence of foreign cultural and political influences.

Triangle relations and fluctuations between the influence of western influences, Muslims and natives in terms of how to dress Indonesian people are complex relationships. Comprehensive and extensive analysis of the interaction of culture is needed, given the furniture, architecture, attitudes, behavior, gender, norms of appropriateness norms to understand Indonesia's ever-changing social views.

People who are fascinated by globalization, interpreting it as a recent development, tend to ignore the fact that there have been many periods in Asian history. To understand the influence of intercultural influences as an exclusive western phenomenon means we must ignore the influence of historical influences on the archipelago coming from India, China and other parts of Asia, and the important role of rules of dress rules and Islamic behavior imported from the Middle East, which form vital forces in modern Indonesian society.

References

1. Twigg, J. (2009). *Identity, clothing and age. Aging and identity: A postmodern dialogue*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
2. Descola, P. (2013). *Beyond nature and culture*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Nordholt, H. S. (2005). *Outward Appearances: Trend, Identitas dan Kepentingan [Outward Appearances: Trend, Identity, and Interests]*. (Trans. M. Imam Azis). LKiS-KITLV, Yogyakarta.
4. Cox, M. J. (2015). *The Javanese self in portraiture from 1880–1955*. [Published Thesis]. Department of Art History and Theory, University of Sydney.
5. Ave, J. (2009). *Indonesian Arts and Crafts*. Jakarta: BAB Publishing.
6. Ross, R. (2008). *Clothing: A global history*. Polity.
7. Rovine, V. L. (2009). Colonialism's clothing: Africa, France, and the deployment of fashion. *Design Issues*, 25(3), pp. 44-61. <https://doi.org/10.1162/desi.2009.25.3.44>
8. Freschi, E., & Maas, P. A. (2017). Adaptive reuse: aspects of creativity in South Asian cultural history (p. 373). Harrassowitz Verlag. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26530/open_623411

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

