

IWAN TIRTA (1960-2000) -  
THE COMMODIFICATION OF BATIK:  
BROKERING PAST AS PRESENT & THE RE-IMAGINATION OF  
“INDONESIAN PERSONALITY”

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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OCTOBER 2012

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## Acknowledgments

Success in completing this dissertation happened because of my partner, Jim's, unfailing support. I am indebted to him for his patient acceptance of my petulant idiosyncrasies. Dr. Barbara Heinemann guided me through this uncharted intellectual exercise. She provided comical relief when I faced my self-inflicted verbal nun-sense. Dr. Heidi Boehlke's advice steered me towards focusing on Javanese culture. She shared important literature, pointing out the relevance of my Indo experience to this research.

My achievement was possible because of Dr. Joanne Eicher's continued tacit and unrelenting support. Dr. Eicher recognized the merits of my critical thinking, which persistently approached such endeavors by thinking outside of the box. My classwork for Dr. Marilyn DeLong reinforced my intellectual inclinations to unravel the Gordian's Knot of ambiguity. Her syllabus reinforced my delight in penetrating textuality for its text. Such was the case when tackling aesthetics, which presented its own set of difficulties. Dr. Barbara Martinson's classwork expanded my understanding of the cultural basis of aesthetics. Dr. David Shupe coached me since my early graduate student days. He was my academic confessor and educated me about influential intellectual traditions. Dr. DonnaMae Gustafson helped me with strengthening the internal logic of my document. Dr. M.C. Ricklefs was generous to glance through my raw written material, clarifying historical details. Dr. Suzanne Manness editorial skills prepared this document to meet stringent APA formatting guidelines. Charleen Klarquist's deft negotiating skills salvaged unforeseen hurdles throughout my graduate school career. Finally, I am indebted to my sister, Astrid Higgins, for her unwavering support at critical stages throughout my life. To all, thank you, for this privilege in fulfilling a much needed and long desired experience for this Aesthetic Gesture!

## Dedication

He is fascinated by character; but his natural bent is to reveal it in a mythopoeic or symbolic or metaphorical, and not realistic, manner ('it is...improbabilities of character that matter').

Martin Seymour Smith,  
Mayor of Casterbridge: Introduction  
Thomas Hardy (1978)

To Jimmie

### Abstract

During the decades of 1960 to 2000, the name, Iwan Tirta (1935-2010), was synonymous with batik. Batik gained wide international audience because of increase of scholarship on batik and a proliferation of how-to manuals on batik. Batiking and surface patterning became associated with populations emerging on the islands of the Malay Archipelago. Batik technical skills reached an unprecedented level on the island of Java resulting with superbly decorated cloths. Under official status of an Indonesian state in 1945, batik cultural position and its trajectory changed under President Sukarno (1945-1968). This study focuses on Iwan Tirta's as de facto cultural arbiter under political aegis of President Suharto (1968-1998). *Orde Baru* (New Order) (Boehlke, 1992, 2008) politics under Suharto secured batik's emblematic position in representing Indonesia and its cultural heritage. Batik has become a visible descriptor for Indonesian cultural sense and sensibilities. This research seeks to determine Iwan Tirta's relationship with batik. It seeks how he understands it conceptually and how he interprets his understanding into his commodities. An extensive body of written text spanning nearly four decades discloses Iwan Tirta's views about batik. The text serves as a source for his claims made about batik, but evaluated against his sartorial constructions.

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## Preface

When I returned to Java in 1996 to interview Indonesian (see Figure 1) batik designer, Iwan Tirta, I became immediately aware of my Westernized habits. Until I had set foot on Indonesian soil, my association with Indonesia consisted of remnants in forms of memory. Thus, my liminal experience of Indonesia collided with reality. Jakarta possessed all the signs of modernity of high-rise corporate buildings, malls, and palatial hotels with grand staircases. These settings were not places that I regularly accessed during my visit. Rather, I quickly realized that the veneer of modernity camouflaged Indonesian life less exalted and quite a bit more basic.



*Figure 1.* General Map of Indonesia.

[http://www.mitrathuafafoundation.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=](http://www.mitrathuafafoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=)

Nonetheless, my recognition of my own Westernization did not alter my experience of Indonesia that remained with me since I was a young child. The Indonesia that I have come to embody represents an Indonesian experience that abruptly ended with my family's departure from Sumatra for the Netherlands in 1958. Thus, the Indonesia I knew did not resemble the Indonesia I returned to in 1996. However, my Indonesia was a culture under the influence of colonial visions. This vision spanned 300 years, motivated by an assumption that the islands, enriched by their

tropical settings, would yield for perpetuity profitable commodities for Dutch administrators. Dutch colonial vision came to an abrupt end in 1958.

My parents, as well both patrilineal and matrilineal grandparents, came from various islands of Indonesia. My father recently shared with me that his nephew sent him a pamphlet tracing the Kühr genealogy. The information traces arrival of the first Kühr on the island of Java during the eighteen century. He was a German mercenary, specializing in production of weaponry. My father's bloodlines were Dutch and German, whereas my mother's were of Italian and Portuguese stock. The Dutch did not consider us fully or pure Dutch. Conversely, the new state of Indonesia equally considered us as not Indonesian. We are members of a social and cultural category referred to as, *Indo*. Both Dutch and Indonesians viewed Indos as a mixed-breed. Therefore, we did not receive full considerations by either nation during our transition as to acquiring status of being simply Dutch or Indonesian.

The year 1958 marked the final transfer of power to Indonesian nationalists. The final transfer of power occurred 13 years after Sukarno transformed a motley set of islands into a sovereign state. It was incumbent for all Indos to choose either an Indonesian or Dutch passport. However, there were no official assurances from the new Indonesian government that Indos, who chose to remain in Indonesia, would receive protection from expanding, random violence occurring throughout the islands. Members of the family on both sides had already left Java for the Netherlands. My parents decided to follow them.

At that time my brother and I were ill, which contributed to my parent's decision to leave Indonesia. We were ill for an extended period that could have produced fatal results, had it not been for our sudden departure. My parents sought the medical advice from Western doctors. Neither my brother nor I had diagnosable medical issues, which created more confusion for them. Our potentially fatal conditions coincided with series of departures of house cleaners hired by my mother. My mother asked one of the servants what made them leave so shortly after becoming

part of the household. According to my parents, the house cleaners stated that whenever they cleaned the master bedroom, they heard sounds of fingernails scratching the bedroom closet doors. My parents finally relented and consulted a local *dhukun*. A *dhukun* is a shaman "...who is a morally ambiguous mediator between nature and supernature" (Mulder, 1998, p. 166). The *dhukun* informed my parents that the main house of the palm oil plantation rested on a grave. The occupant of the grave wanted my family to abandon the building, because we were trespassers.

The warmth and sheer natural of beauty of Indonesia gave way to cold and grey cement of Amsterdam. Surrounded by other Indos stimulated a flood of memories whenever they gathered over meals. During many and regular family gatherings in the Netherlands, mention of batik punctuated my family's recollection of their lost Javanese Indonesia. My family members spoke about batik in terms as old-fashioned dress worn by servants. Their discussion about batik was void of serious analysis. Since my mother and aunts were uneducated, they were incapable of viewing batiked cloth as a cultural object. In reliving their liminal experiences, they associated batik as fundamentally an article of clothing, –the *sarong* (*sarung*-Bahasa Melayu). Mingled with laughter such discussions revived culinary flavors realized through their memories.

In 1996, Heidi Boehlke and I became acquainted because of our shared Indonesian experience. We were graduate students in the department of Design, Housing, and Apparel at the University of Minnesota. Boehlke brought to my attention of Indonesian batik designer Iwan Tirta (1935-2010). She showed me an enlarged photograph of an Indonesian fashion model swaddled in silk gazar, a gown made out of stiff, loosely woven silk and patterned with enlarged flowers (see Figure 2). This haute couture form projected expressive kinetic energy. It was my introduction to Iwan Tirta's admirable aesthetics in his sartorial example that struck my interest to analyze visual properties. Their transformative visual effects and the psychological impressions such effects left on the observer intrigued me. The term, *sartorial*, throughout this dissertation

takes place of using terms, *clothing* or *dress*. Sartorial accurately describes Iwan Tirta's haute couture constructions that required knowledge about tailoring techniques. The term, sartorial, fundamentally underscores a basic reference to clothing, whether it is observed draping a human torso or not for this research project.



*Figure 2. Silk Gazar Gown*  
Tirta, *Batik: A Play of Light and Shades*, 1996

Since I spent many years in acquiring technical skills of ballet, the fashion plate reminded me of an iconic photograph of Martha Graham (1894-1991, see Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Martha Graham "Letter to the World" (1940)*  
<http://about.picsearch.com/?s=martha+gra>

The photograph embodied a correspondence to Iwan Tirta's silk gazar haute couture sartorial form. Both images possess a concentrated kinetic intensity.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

Batik's legacy extended well past the sixteenth century. According to Iwan Tirta, Indonesia's celebrated designer of batik, the *Galuh Lontar* (1550), a dried palm leaf scroll, is the oldest and first reference of batik (Tirta, 1996, p. 39). My focus on Indonesian designer, Iwan Tirta changed my naive understanding about batik. My introduction to Iwan Tirta also altered my understanding of the word batik, which I automatically associated with images of brown and cream colored sarongs worn by my mother's help. Therefore, my exposure to Iwan Tirta and his designs pushed the horizon line of my own understanding about batik. His work in haute couture illustrated how Iwan Tirta extended meaning of batik through its commodifications. The variety of commodities represented Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial responses to economic and political changes of Indonesia. Although haute couture or objects designed for home interiors are Iwan Tirta's signature commodities, this research does not solely focus on analyzing their aesthetic properties. Sartorial constructions in forms of photographic images play supporting roles. Images accompanying the ensuing texts serve as counterpoints to written texts. Therefore, the images, as counterpoints color textual meaning. Images and their use to correlate specific written text contribute to satisfying a reader's curiosity by clarifying his or her reading of existing information. Nonetheless, a single pictorial representation of one of Iwan Tirta's haute couture objects will also function as enculturated materiality subjected to visual analysis. The results of the visual analysis provide point of references to compare to Iwan Tirta's extant written data. The purpose for this task is to detect correlations, *correspondences*, as well diversions that might exist in such comparisons. For this research, the image, *ABC-1993*, depicts a virtual haute couture structure intended to clarify textual contents disclosed by Iwan Tirta and the claims he made about batik.

With emergence of Indonesia's sovereignty in 1945, batik's cultural position fundamentally changed. Batik was no longer an exotic souvenir for Westerners who found their way to the islands. Batik acquired its own gravitas reinforced by a biography largely written by nineteenth-century European outsiders. Indonesia's first President Sukarno (1945-1967) was instrumental in changing the direction of a colonized landscape, which consisted of kingdoms midst urban centers such as Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, et cetera. The political change of a colonized archipelago into a sovereign nation state inevitably modified batik's biographical profile. Batik's biographical trajectory underwent further revisions, only to evolve into forms of commodifications that were to represent national identity. Indonesian national identity with its roots in political ideology of Sukarno appeared to displace cultural identity forged out of conflation of time, place and practice.

The nation state of Indonesia spurred new iconographies representing new meanings associated with batik. Construction of its iconic status took into consideration Sukarno's fertile imagination and subsequent political and social commentators, such as Iwan Tirta. This research seeks to understand the relationship of Iwan Tirta's with the term, *batik*. The word, batik, denotes a dyeing procedure as well suggests a distinct aesthetic produced by a surface pattern. The state of Indonesia would ultimately appropriate materiality associated with the term, batik, asserting it to be uniquely Indonesian. Both Indonesian cultural and political histories are essential to this discussion, pinpointing that this research's question is fundamentally a historical matter. My experience of understanding Iwan Tirta's cultural importance and the significance of his sartorial commodities are *diachronically* conditioned. Through acts of reading, textual narratives reify into virtual materiality. Pursuant of my interest for Iwan Tirta, my understanding of the subject on batik required to weigh batik's existing historical position against Indonesia's recorded political and social histories. My face-to-face interviews in conjunction with Iwan Tirta's magazine, newspaper, and journal interviews compounded by his scholarly writings affirm that

texts, in their own right, embody their respective historicity. Each type of text is a remnant, encapsulating Iwan Tirta's thinking about batik. The said forms of texts betray an evolution in how he conceptualizes the idea of batik. Therefore, this research preoccupies with establishing some sense out of competing historical, cultural and political information.

The word batik, henceforth, no longer represented a simple article of clothing. Rather, I became more conscious of its multidimensional social functions, such as ritual objects celebrating auspicious transitions in the life or conveying social status. Through daily use of batik, the artifact was central to daily lives of members of *kraton* (royal court) and *desa* (rural village) social lives. Throughout Java, large concentrations of populations congregated in cities like Jakarta, Bandung, or Surabaya. However, much of Java consisted of rural villages. Beyond coastal town boundaries, one enters social settings akin to village life that were evident during my 1996 visit of Java. The role batiked cloth played as dress and objects for communal celebrations underscores its purpose intended to reinforce collective identity. Its social role becomes more apparent since the royal court and rural village structure occupied limited real estate with limited populations under royal court protection. To commit to one's community was indispensable for survival of the community, a social body tied to land and greatly affected by changes in nature's whims. The social concept of, *gotong royong* (mutual aid) is a central cultural theme, which eventually became part of Indonesia's Constitution 1945. In the only biography written about Sukarno (Adams, 1965), this cultural tenet featured prominently in Sukarno's recollections.

### **Research Question**

My central research question focuses on, what is Iwan Tirta's relationship with Batik? This inquiry breaks down his relationship into correlates of, what is its form? In addition, what role do such forms play to establish understanding of and creating meaning for Batik? The remainder of this discussion explains the intellectual traditions that motivated my research topic.

It also outlined the logic to how I formulated my research question. Consequently, each of these three questions yielded other sets of questions pinpointing dimensions that were not readily apparent in them.

My interest in Iwan Tirta and batik stems from my fascination with objects for their ability to affect change in human personal and social lives. At the center of my interest is the notion of identity. My personal understanding about identity premises on the presumption that identity is an existential locus for the experience of *Self*. As such, identity also becomes a means for cultural continuity. I also presumed that identity as being a stable reference, an orientation, built upon with the support of available social institutional practices such as education, furthered by implicit and explicit social influences. In my preface, which discussed the Research Question, I suggested that construction of identity results out of social intercourse and use of symbols as proposed by Blumer's (1900-1987) theory of Symbolic Interactionism (1969). Another dimension to the construction of identity is the role symbols play with meanings established by others. The determinative factor is social differentials experienced by persons positioned by their economic, cultural, or political status to shape meaning of consumable symbols as described by Foster (1991). This research directs attention to batik as an enculturated form with meaning contributed by Sukarno (1901-1970), Suharto (1921-2008), K.R.T. Hardjonagoro (a.k.a Go Tik Swan, 1931-2008) and Iwan Tirta (1935-2010). However, this research centers on Iwan Tirta's contributions to batik's biography.

Iwan Tirta's prominence during the decades of the 1960s through the 1990s, as official and yet, unofficial spokesperson for Indonesian batik reinforced my research interest. His sartorial constructions, pictorially accessed, consistently project a concentrated, dramatic intensity. This particular aesthetic description instantiates in Iwan Tirta's formal, women's eveningwear considered as haute couture forms. To understand how Iwan Tirta achieves this aesthetic condition requires that I analyze aesthetic properties of one of his haute couture

constructions. Further, against a body of written text, evaluation of his sartorial aesthetic properties results with nuanced information to contribute to making sense of existing data. Therefore, these two sources of information are responsible for a coherent response to my research question. Iwan Tirta's sartorial structure embodies distant and recent historical influences as described by his recollected information communicated through their interpretative written forms. Use of pictorial example, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), embodies such contents disclosed through a series of readings of documented written texts.

Iwan Tirta's associations with Indonesia's first family, the Suhartos, and with Central Javanese royal court centers were other incentives to pursue this research. These documented incidents are historical descriptions. Anecdotal descriptions of Iwan Tirta's public interactions equally weighed in on the production of meaning about batik. My initial inclination was to pursue analyzing aesthetic properties associated with different sartorial constructions as represented in each fashion event of *Sekaring Jagad* (1991), *Adi Luhung, Iwan Tirta* (1993) and *Iwan Tirta 96* (1996). However, such an approach would have inadequately addressed the research question. I realized a need to expose myself to a broad range of literature for this research. Data consist of literature on Indonesian culture, political history, philosophy, and extant anecdotal information related to Iwan Tirta or batik. Ironically, this endeavor also required acquiring knowledge about the subject of batik. My scholarly understanding about batik was limited in breadth and scope. This research represents a multidisciplinary approach, because it refers to theoretical and descriptive information from different academic disciplines.

Iwan Tirta's associations with Indonesia's first family, the Suhartos, contributed to Iwan Tirta's high profile position in Javanese culture. The personnel of his boutique located in the district of Menteng included Indonesian President Sukarno's niece (Living colours, 1983) in her role of modeling his sartorial constructions. Social and cultural pedigree as exhibited with "GRA Roosati, the eldest daughter of Mangkunegaran VIII, who for years managed the Iwan Tirta

boutique in Jakarta” (Wijaya, 2008) represented an important status marker. Such pedigree extended to his batik commodities by association, because of her participation in the running of PT. Ramacraft operations. Individuals who were from elite Javanese social circles as well those directly associated with Central Javanese royal court granted Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial enterprise its cultural authority. Their official involvement also extended cultural authenticity associated with commodities coming out of his atelier. Their involvement were equally entrées into elite Jakartan circles who were P.T. Ramacraft's targeted consumers. Their consumption in donning an Iwan Tirta original functioned as de facto living billboards. Iwan Tirta was unequivocal about his haute couture forms, as being not only statements of disposable income, but considered his sartorial constructions as tangible testaments of Indonesian cultural identity. However, Javanese authenticity tempered such cultural identity. His social constellation secured Iwan Tirta's cultural prominence and his place in history with regards to batik. Documented descriptions about Iwan Tirta's social network provided its own set of significant data. Such information aided to constructing an analytical assessment for Iwan Tirta and Indonesian batik.

There are many designers, craftswomen and men, as well batik centers involved in the production of batik fabrics throughout the archipelago. Yet, scholarly and conventional discourse on Indonesian batik consistently sought Iwan Tirta to weigh in on the topic of batik. Narratives intended for parochial and international readerships encapsulated his thoughts. Iwan Tirta and his atelier, PT. Ramacraft, achieved unprecedented status begging the question, what social factors, both past and present, allowed commodities from PT. Ramacraft's to become exemplary of Indonesian cultural identity? Framing this inquiry within historical terms prompts the question of whether or not Iwan Tirta's prominence was a cultural anomaly. If P.T. Ramacraft's florescence was not an anomaly, how do Iwan Tirta's commodifications of batik fit within Indonesia's cultural history? What makes Iwan Tirta's batik commodities more representative of Indonesian cultural identity in comparison to cloth dyed at other centers or by

other artists? What distinguishes Iwan Tirta's batik cloth from cloth produced under previous Javanese social life? Consequently, do previous social, historical, and political conditions factor into assessing Iwan Tirta's discourse of batik? Corollaries to the stated questions include

- ❖ What is Iwan Tirta's frame of reference when he spoke about batik?
- ❖ How did Iwan Tirta resolve spatial and time incongruities contrasting batik of past with batik of present?
- ❖ What cultural and institutional forces bridge the past with the present embodied in batik?
- ❖ How does Iwan Tirta's sense for haute couture incorporate batik for its dyeing process and its surface patterning associated with Indonesia?
- ❖ What cultural attributes and personal inclinations do Iwan Tirta's batik surface patterns embody?
- ❖ What features about Indonesia's modernity evident in Iwan Tirta's sartorial constructions?

In responding to questions raised, this research turns to theoretical propositions of Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006). Their respective propositions frame the merits of the evidence to contributing a coherent, impending response to the research question and its correlates. Since Iwan Tirta's cultural importance is historically conditioned, descriptions of recent or immediate social and political experiences are under consideration. In particular, regimes of Sukarno (1945-1967) and Suharto (1968-1998) provide indispensable contexts to clarify Iwan Tirta's narratives. Sukarno's metaphors of *Batik Indonesia* and *Indonesian Personality* are ideas integral to explaining the significance of Iwan Tirta public discussions about batik intended for parochial and international readerships. Sukarno's ideological prototypes are politicized cultural leitmotifs. They are symbolic entities anchored to a cultural past, but are conflated into a presumptive national identity representing Indonesian culture.

With Indonesia's Constitution 1945's *Pancasila*, five *silas* (principles) enshrined the genetic coding for national identity. In a speech given in June of 1945, Sukarno defined the five

silas consisting of nationalism, internationalism, consensus, social well-being, and belief in one supreme God. Beilenson (1990) clarified:

...internationalism, to concern and respect for all peoples; consensus, to the Javanese idea of musfakat, in which political decisions are made only after reaching unanimous agreement; social well-being, to social justice and democracy; and the belief in one supreme God, to the right of Indonesia's citizens to worship the god of their choice. (pp. 56-57).

Sukarno's metaphors were not convenient happenstances; they were residual ideological aggregates that emerged out of his political activism and personal experiences under Dutch colonial governance. This research takes the position that Sukarno's prototypical, ideological metaphors exerted influence on Iwan Tirta two and a half decades later, after making the claim of Indonesia's sovereignty. Hence, this research focuses on determining both explicit and implicit contents between Iwan Tirta and his relationship with batik for its terminology and forms of materiality that are consequent of it.

### **The Merits of This Research**

My academic exposure to symbolic properties within the scope of Symbolic Interactionism as proposed by Blumer (1900-1987) prompted my natural inclinations to tackle the subject of human experience of meaning. My research equally relies on Eicher's, Regents Professor Emerita, University of Minnesota extensive work in non-verbal communication and its application to Culture. Both sources provided a framework for my research on batik. However, my interest for its biographical contents targets those determined by Indonesian designer/artist, Iwan Tirta (1935-2010).

This research argues that Iwan Tirta's narrations on batik illustrate social processes as described by Foster (1991) and Anderson (1996). Both theoreticians refer to a peculiar ideational form described as *imagined property*. This research proposes that the concept of imagined property applies to Iwan Tirta's commodification of batik and its characterization in his public

narratives about the subject. Iwan Tirta's cultural position is not a hermetic condition, but one observed within a larger social and political environment that emerged from Indonesia's Declaration of Independence in 1945.

The primary source of data consists of Iwan Tirta's interviews and his discussions about the subject of Indonesian batik. His interviews revealed his ideas about batik, representing residual markers indicating his thinking about the subject of batik. When assessed in their entirety, his interviews trace not only dimensions of his thinking about batik, but also describe an ambivalent evolution about batik and its meaning. Yet at the same time, batik in its objectified form of haute couture constructions, contrarily do not change significantly. His sartorial constructions became observable, tangible entities that did not disclose changes in Iwan Tirta's thinking experienced over time. Although, his body of work may not indicate significant shifts in his thinking about batik, Iwan Tirta's ideas did change how observers experience it. His ideas shaped how others understood his sartorial creations, even though outward appearances appear to be minimal. In contrast, his narrations about batik are mental forms, essentially representing symbolic properties directed to haute couture entities.

This suggests that ontological property or *objectness* coincides with Rose Gillian's (2007) percept of subjectivities; DeLong's (1987, 1998) apparel-body-construct (ABC) and with Sukarno's or Suharto's representations of political ideologies in their respective metaphoric forms. Further, the eminent position of mental forms locates how imagined properties come to represent the intended target. Mental forms reconfigure into objectified forms simply considered as an object. Thought forms can remain in their mental conditions or direct outwards towards into interpretative structures of written matter, oral texts, pictorial compositions, auditory structures, or manufactured objects. These forms share the common characteristic of human intention at play during their respective formations.

British scholar Rose (2007) is a senior professor of Cultural Geography at Milton

Keynes, UK, Open University. Rose (2007) specializes in visual culture. She quotes Stuart Hall who argues that culture is not a “set of things-novels and paintings or TV programmes or comics” (Rose, 2007, p. 1). Although Rose (2007) focuses on imagery, her emphasis is on social subjectivities, which I interpret to be descriptions of social intention or personal mental actions.

Rose suggests images are legitimate expressions of social conditions defined by their subjectivities and relations towards a pre-existing social environment. Her characterizations suggest that independent existential conditions and subsequent interpretations of such conditions transform materiality into meaningful enculturated forms. The categories of subjectivities and relations have practical applications in Blumer's (1900-1987) theory of symbolic interactionism (1969), since human interaction involves object forms with symbolic status. However, objects of exchange can be virtual, visible, auditory or tangible. All point to the fact that object forms are structures representing human experience. Objects represent human somatic responses that configure into coherent cognitive forms experienced during social interactions (public) as well with one's sense of *Self* (private). Social relations offer human experiences with a sense for meaning through recognition of symbolic properties that are the basis of social exchange of symbolic forms. Responses to symbolic forms consist of degrees of acknowledgment or rejection.

Further, human response exhibiting an exchange of symbolic contents constitutes acts of consumption, a point made by Foster (1991). Sharing implicit or explicit meanings associated with symbolic forms grant objectified forms their cultural properties. Thus, culture indexes social activities, demonstrating the proposition that ideational form are object forms in their own right. Social values exert their influence by motivating production of objectified forms (Foster, 1991, Boehlke, 2008). These enculturated forms have a tentative shelf life as demonstrated by Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006). Artifacts are prone to receiving imagined contents, challenging their durability of meaning that is associated with their objectified status. Virtual objects in forms

of thoughts or as physical objects, such as dress, represent two distinct enculturated material conditions with tentative contents. Eicher and Roach-Higgins (1995) defined the term dress as:

We have also, through time, developed a definition of dress that is unambiguous, free of personal or social valuing or bias, usable in descriptions across national and cultural boundaries, and inclusive of all phenomena that can accurately be designated as dress. According to this definition, dress of an individual is an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to body (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). Dress, so defined, includes a long list of possible direct modifications of the body such as coiffed hair, colored skin, pierced ears, and scented breath, as well as an equally long list of garments, jewelry, accessories, and other categories of items to the body as supplements. (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, 1995, p. 7).

Sukarno's notion of an *Indonesian Personality* as a virtual, mental structure concluded with objectified forms described as *Marhaenism* and Batik Indonesia. Objectification of Indonesian personality in its representation of national identity found form in batik, which relied on a resist method and use of a handheld tool, the *canting* (*tjanting*). Thus, this research concern itself with contents associated with Indonesian batik endowed by Iwan Tirta. He described batik as "...an Indonesian way of life (*Hong Kong Standard*, 1977/1996)" as well "...a Javanese a way of life" (*Jakarta Post*, 1987/1996). Iwan Tirta's shift in determining its cultural location between Indonesia and Java reflected his ambivalence. Such ambivalence reappears in other areas of his life. In contrast, Sukarno's proposition of Indonesian Personality and its objectification characterizes Indonesian batik in general. His objectifications began batik's biography that others in the future would rewrite and redefine. Sukarno's directive to K.R.T. Hardjonagoro put into effect batik's cultural position outside of its traditional spheres of ritual use or as dress.

As stated, objects are susceptible to alteration by changes made to their meaning. Reconstitution of object forms because of imagined attributions characterize their function as containers (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) for endowed meaning. Foster's (1991) and Anderson's (1996) propositions places into question the idea of cultural identity understood as an organic

structure to describe social bodies as being constitutive of time, space, and social practice.

Foster's (1991) argues expansion of cultural influence because of a proliferation of objects and their consumptions. Such objects exist as thought images with contents determined by a segment of a population with extraordinary privileges. Their privileges extend to those who profit from their circumstances secured because of economic, social, or political differentials of power.

Anderson (2006) described the historical roots of national identity. He implicated institutional actions to be instrumental in accomplishing desired effects. Desired effects represent intentions of those with extraordinary economic, social, or political power. These members considered to members of the topmost echelon (Foster, 1991) are gatekeepers, who determine values for a general population. Personal choice or exercise of it, because of social and economic privileges, not only contributed to determining social values, but also represented forms of consumption. With both instances, such action follows with integrating choice into one's personal sphere of experience. Consumption of values extends their capacities to influence in redefining experience. Thereby, values impress upon the individual a need to adapt and to adjust accordingly to standards established by others privileged to shaping them. Experiential contents reify into forms framed in personal terms. Such contents create making sense about the immediate world with a degree of coherence. One's personal frame of reference contextualizes experience and its contents come to represent morsels filled with meaning. The concept of imagined properties is central to this research. Shared values help identify experience of meaning facilitating in making sense about experiences reified into an individual's sense of *Self*.

Symbolic Interactionism described *Self* as a social construction. Symbolic Interactionism counters the belief that *Self* is a stable reference beginning at birth and subsequently built upon by life experiences through a series of modifications. Therefore, one's sense of *Self* changes by responding to and adapting to exchanges of symbolic properties experienced during social interactions. Symbolic forms as object forms facilitate in mapping human experience of

immediate social world and the natural environment. Object forms are integral elements in public and personal interactions. Symbolic properties contribute to stabilizing dynamic human interaction unique to and appearing to be independent of human sense of Self. As a result, object forms contribute in making the insensible sensible.

Deployment of imagined properties mediate social subjectivities (Rose, 2007), but I am proposing that as reconfigured forms, imagined properties mediate Self and its experience of phenomena. Imagined properties are responses to experience of phenomena. Imagined properties also reduce the appearance of phenomena being independent of one's experience of Self. However, object forms and their symbolic contents also mediate how one's Self is experienced by directing attention inwards through reflexive actions, -reflexivity. In instances, whether attention points outwardly or inwardly, imagery and feeling are involved. Imagery experienced publically communicates cultural values to the general population. Images can also prompt people to question accepted attitudes or values. Their sensed contents appear readily to stimulate individuals to seek alternative meaning. Thus, responding to an image and committing to its meaningful contents readjusts human orientation towards the world. Images directly reinforce collective values both publicly and personally. Exposure to images also sets up mental virtual imprints entwined to feeling to correspond to them.

Interaction with immediate social or natural environments, results with mental preverbal (van Manen, 1997) entities. Contents of preverbal structures are emotive forms. This suggests that preverbal data are unedited emotive responses that consist of a conflation of image with feeling. Van Manen (1997) describes this in his catchall concept of *lived-experience*. Language edits first forms of consciousness that exist as pre-verbal mental structures. Description of pre-verbal structures and its articulation into linguistic forms appear as stream-of-conscious text. Such textual forms are elementary perceptible forms that describe consciousness. Language transforms original preverbal structures into reconfigured representations with prospects of

making sense. Self-directed assessment towards one experience of Self either confirms or disconfirms personal experiences within public and private spheres. These interactive actions results with Self to adapt to new information experienced internally as well externally. Images are therefore capable in setting up a tentative stable experience of understanding, determined by public or private life experiences. Social life allows one's sense of Self to confirm or to question experiences.

This research views mental, oral, written, aural, pictorial, or tangible object forms as texts and therefore, their evidentiary contents are discernible. They are object forms that are not incidental objects. These textual forms are residual representations of human lived-experience (van Manen, 1997) that pinpoint human experience as a phenomenological condition. Van Manen (1997) described lived-experience consisted of elementary forms of human existentials of time, space, corporeality, and community. Van Manen's (1997) existentials represent ontological properties that describe dimensions of human conditions of *Being*. Human existentials establish experiences of meaning, reflecting personal as well cultural properties.

Van Manen's (1997) research methods produce data that are preverbal (1997) descriptions. Pre-verbal (1997) entities are unfiltered forms left by experiences of the natural and social worlds. Such experiences endure human reflexive actions. Through exercise of reflexive actions, pre-verbal entities can remain in their original forms or compelled into expressive forms as described. Their expressive forms consist of memory (private); described orally (private or public); completed into written, pictorial, or auditory forms (private or public); or reconstituted into manufactured objects (private or public). Preverbal conditions are contents documented into first written forms. However, for this research the written text relied on for research data are not pre-verbal entities. The term, virgin, denotes a conflation of feeling/image structures that underwent minimal interpretation and thereby, retain experience of pristine pre-verbal conditions.

Nonetheless, descriptions into higher levels of abstraction do not necessarily restrict or

limit a person to a literal reading. Rather, disclosure occurs with reading between the lines affected by external and internal influences. I interact with the text by exercising van Manen's (1997) research method for contents that describe his proposed four existentials. Some material forms cited in this research are virtual objects, as demonstrated by Sukarno's idea of Indonesian Personality. Correspondingly, Iwan Tirta's thought forms represented by written textual descriptions are equally virtual object forms, supplemented by a corporeal haute couture construction that exists in a pictorial format.

Their significance, that is their meaning, inheres in object forms. By evaluating object forms systematically, their meaning becomes clear to create meaningful sense about them. Objects forms possess social, cultural, and historical properties. Time shapes enculturated material forms. Parochial conditions associated with place in conjunction with time shapes object forms. Object forms anchor to their distinctive historical position. Object forms point to social life, because they are essentially containers for shared values (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Values reveal attitudes or cultural orientations yielding personal and public meaning. Reading of objects forms, discloses information. From it, drawn inferences transform into reconstituted, interpretative object forms. The object of focus is Iwan Tirta and his relationship with the word batik. His relationship with the term batik consists of ideational forms and their subsequent commodifications. Documented interviews and literature penned in his hand allows for access to understanding Iwan Tirta's relationship with the word batik. These forms of data provide clues to draw a reasoned and interpretive assessment responding to the research question and its corollaries

This research placed me in a position as a reader for a variety of objects forms. My active involvement with reading of object forms consists of unique phenomenal conditions. Nonetheless, the evidentiary objects possess pre-existing attributes because of their circulation in social life (Appadurai, 1986). Therefore, active reading brings together two different worlds. The

reader/object position consists of a hermeneutic orientation. The relationship to describe my interactions with an object is a closed system referred to as a hermeneutic circle. Understanding comes about through the interdependence established between object form and the reader. The interactive relationship constitutes acts of reading of something. Each reading of data represents independent and distinct set of circumstances. Each instance of reading of an object form produces different interpretative results, because each reading represents unique conditions. The distinct set of conditions inflects tentative inferences to produce descriptions affected by such conditions. Structuring inferences into a coherent form yields interpretative, textual contents, subsequently reconstituted into mental, oral, written, aural, pictorial or tangible object forms.

Even though pictorial imagery functions as supporting data in this research, the subject of imagery merits a discussion. Sartorial forms projected photographically are fundamentally virtual entities. Flat pictorial definers are basic aesthetic features describing properties of a two-dimensional surface area, which also describe surfaces associated with a sartorial structure. DeLong's (1987, 1998) concept of *apparel-body-construct* (ABC) is a means of evaluating Iwan Tirta's sartorial design. The concept of apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is one element to a systematic analysis applied to a clad human body. Although an apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is fundamentally an ideational object, it remains to be a potent form to induce visceral responses from the reader. An image of a sartorial structure, two-dimensionally described, indicates the effects of time and place as with other object forms. Therefore, an apparel-body-construct (1987, 1998) is reflective of time and place. For this research, the image described as ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) presumes to embody Indonesian enculturated properties. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) suggests an apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) appearing as a performative act. It embodies all human existentials as defined by van Manen (1995). Iwan Tirta purports, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) to be expressive of Javanese cultural legacy.

Images can persuade and they can stimulate emotive responses out of a reader. Their use as data is integral to disciplines of Archaeology, Visual Anthropology, and Art History. Reading of images is not a recent research instrument used to decipher enculturated properties of object forms. Neither is reading of images a unique measure to analyze pictorial object forms. For instance, Art History refers to pictorial structures in order to determine historical importance, aesthetic features or social representations. Paintings, sculptures, architecture, the minor arts of tapestry, silver, or decorated manuscripts are examples of object forms encompassed by the discipline of Art History. Objects as material forms embody meaning and its experience occurs through their reading. Objects inscribed with meaning follows that they are forms of social production. Pictorial evidence for this project describes a commodity considered as haute couture, produced at Iwan Tirta's atelier, PT. Ramacraft. The name of his atelier is a derivative of his mother's name, Ramah Saleh-Tirtaamidjaja. His theatrical presentations of his haute sartorial designs were seasonal previews in 1991, 1992, and 1995.

Iwan Tirta's sartorial configuration captured as a photographic image consists of a physical planar surface area consisting of shapes, colors and lines. Nonetheless, modulations of the surface patterns recreate mental imagery with forms appearing to possess three dimensions. Therefore, the surface attributes suggest presence of space, which in turn reasserts experience of a sartorial construction described rounded in form. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) consists of a sartorial object constructed with batiked cloth. Batik is textile produced by unique dyeing procedures identified with the island of Java as *batik tulis*. As mentioned, Iwan Tirta deems his sartorial constructions to embody cultural authenticity, because they are construction as batik tulis.

Batik's cultural meaning evolved over time signified by surface patterns traced back 2,000 years ago ("Living colours," 1983); to have arrived in Indonesia 1,000 years ago (Andelman, 1976); or associated with Indonesia 700 years ago ("Living colours," 1983). Iwan

Tirta qualifies his assertions about Indonesian batik's antiquity by stating, "Egyptians, Persians, Indians, and the Chinese and Japanese wore batik in past" ("Living colours," 1983). With each citation, Iwan Tirta does not provide supporting references; yet the citations appear in his commentaries as factual statements.

Batik's history points to its cultural and spiritual legacy. Batik tulis, which indicates hand waxing method or patterns produced by such a method, is uniquely Javanese. The historical milieu that Iwan Tirta occupied marked a change to batik's biography. Batik became state property officially representing the nation-state of Indonesia. Batik insinuates its cultural pedigree secured by suggestions of its continuity with Indonesia's historical legacy. Claiming an object to be batik automatically extended cultural pedigree to new batiked forms. This illustrates acquisition of cultural pedigree by association. An object claiming to be descendant of batik-tulis received preexisting acclaim based on an association to this type of production. Recent historical and social conditions also contribute to the biography of an object form. Iwan Tirta's sartorial object forms, therefore, acquire another layer of meaning by claiming that his objects are representative of batik tulis. The general topic of batik is another dimension to weigh in the evaluation of Iwan Tirta's haute objects for their embodied meaning.

Theoretical models from different intellectual disciplines are used to assess Iwan Tirta's haute, enculturated object form. He defines his haute sartorial objects with ideas and values representing as either Indonesian or Javanese. However, his sartorial object forms suggest that they are composite forms. They are sartorial constructions embodying perspectives that are not indigenous to Indonesian or Javanese social life. Iwan Tirta's claim that his batiked commodities are of Indonesian decent, unequivocally asserts continuity with Indonesian cultural heritage.

Different ideas or theoretical models representing different intellectual disciplines, at first glance, appear to be irrelevant to this research. However, conceptual models from disparate intellectual disciplines promote nuanced understanding about the existing evidence. Therefore,

disclosure of subtleties through reading of data provides other unforeseen dimensions about the data. Disclosure of evocative qualities associated with the evidence strengthens understanding of object forms under consideration. Approaching written and oral text as metaphor allows for evocative qualities of text come to light. Iwan Tirta's commoditized sartorial constructions memorialize his lived-experience (van Manen, 1997) as counterparts to his oral and written texts.

His sartorial configurations are material object forms that clarify Iwan Tirta's extensive commentaries about batik. The aesthetic properties of his sartorial constructions are important, because they are counterpoints to how he characterized his commodities. Both implicit and explicit claims of cultural authenticity are critical to Iwan Tirta's commodification of batiked cloth. His claims of cultural authenticity are significant elements to secure public consumption of Iwan Tirta's batiked forms. As tangible commodities, they are subject to exchange of currency, which represents the first phase of consumption of his commodities.

The experience of meaning associated with Iwan Tirta's sartorial forms and their emblematic cultural importance comes from two sets of lived-experiences. Iwan Tirta is one source of distinct set of lived-experiences contrasted to my set of lived-experiences as reader of his commodities. Although my own set of experiences frames my evaluation of the data, my hermeneutic position keeps at bay my personal prejudices in their reading. The primary form of data consists of a photographic image of a sartorial design, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), representing the category of women's formal eveningwear. The sartorial forms within this category are totems of Indonesian cultural values as well emblems of Javanese cultural sense and sensibilities. Iwan Tirta's sartorial forms reveal a national reflexive ethnification in forms of meta introspective reflexivity. Such privilege shaped a cultural aesthetic to represent the general Indonesian population. Elements of Indonesia's recorded history integrate into national reflexive activities, in their incorporation into central imagery to market Batik Indonesia. Batik and its commodification secure imagined continuity with a national sensibility borrowing from

Indonesia's cultural past. Through such conflation, Iwan Tirta blurs the particulars of past and contemporary social conditions, which is the milieu under which his batik cloth and its sartorial counterparts are constructed. Javanese sense and sensibilities are eminent cultural attributes linked to batik.

Iwan Tirta's sartorial forms merit critical evaluation, because his analysis of his own commodities is a stark contrast to his narrations about batik. His batik sartorial configurations in haute forms offer consumers the elusive endorsement of cultural authenticity. However, Iwan Tirta increasingly described his sartorial constructions as having cultural pedigree linked to Javanese royal court culture. Java's pre-urban social organizations consisted of principalities of a centralized royal court (kraton) overseeing rural villages (desa). Each royal setting was unique, defined by distinctive rituals and aesthetics. The royal court and rural village is an organic structure, complete and unique in the social life it inscribes. Since, phenomenological experiences are distinct and unique to time and space, it is safe to assert that conditions experienced within an unconsolidated group of islands are equally unique when compared to its ultimate transformation into a nation state. Thereby, distinctions of pre-Indonesia from post-Indonesia are viable references in arguing my case. Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945 is the singular action marking distinctions of a geographical location considered as the Malay Archipelago from its current day status as the sovereign state of Indonesia. It also marked a shift in consciousness exercised by socio-political elite members of society and fully realized in the person of Sukarno. This research asserts that reference of pre-Indonesia from post-Indonesia indicates distinct phenomenological conditions that do not share a unified and seamless cultural consciousness.

Phenomenological differences in each of the social settings are important, because they alter batik's meaning. Iwan Tirta complicates the matter by explicitly assigning his sartorial constructions as representations of Art, without clarifying his claim. He does not preface his

claim of batik as Art by offering a snapshot, which details how he came to make such a claim. Neither does he elaborate on how the idea of Art is relevant to production of batiked commodities at his atelier, P.T. Ramacraft. Therefore, various types of text produced throughout his career and their textual analysis provide opportunities to respond to Iwan Tirta's claims.

Iwan Tirta understood batik's cultural importance. He recognized how cultural practices contributed to patterning of cloth surfaces. Iwan Tirta also understood how pre-modern Javanese social groups' esteemed batiked cloth to ease the demands placed by daily life or in meeting ritual needs. Evidence suggests that Iwan Tirta's batiked commodities are innovative application of surface patterning, forms, and use of colors. The descriptor, innovative, appeared often in his narratives, but it took on special meaning with the Art/artist dyad. Yet, Iwan Tirta also asserts that batiked cloth is a statement of tradition, –reflective of traditional values. He characterizes his commodities as representing tradition and Art in the same instance. He does not describe how these concepts applied to the production of cloth at his factories. Neither did he detail how he exercised these concepts in the transformation of batiked cloth into haute object forms.

Evidence also suggests that Iwan Tirta refashioned batiked commodities to target a customer base outside Indonesia's parochial boundaries. The influence of non-indigenous aesthetic tastes redefines his sartorial constructions. They are object forms representing external, non-Javanese standards of taste. International aesthetic sensibilities defined his sartorial silhouettes. Mass media of magazines, television, newspapers and computers not only contributed to introduction of non-indigenous ideas into Indonesia, making it readily accessible to a wider local public (Boehlke, 2008). Technology hastened creolization of batik.

Inclusion of foreign ideas is not a unique element in discussing Iwan Tirta and his contributions. Influence of foreign ideas was in evidence with Indonesia's first President, Sukarno (1945-1967). He promoted a new nation state reliant on Western principles modified by traditional values borne out of a royal court and rural village social configuration. Sukarno's

desire for the state of Indonesia to play an active role internationally was the impetus for his ideology. Further, presence of foreign influences existed since the first millennium with introduction of Indic culture to local life. Unique to modern day foreign ideas that have migrated into Indonesia's sensibilities was Sukarno's idea of national identity and its displacement of cultural identity. His want to remake Indonesian cultural identity into national identity shifted emphasis away from uniqueness based on ethnic factors. Rather public and political policy determined such uniqueness, in characterizing a national population. Displacement of cultural identity by national identity produced a need to appropriate symbolic forms. Cultural practice, in its appropriation for its symbolic prospects appeared with Sukarno's commitment to revive Indonesia's stagnant batik industry following World War II. Sukarno reinterpreted batik's cultural position by elevating the artifact to represent national identity. Batik's cultural legacy would represent all populations for a nation state in the making. Adaptation of competing points of views characterizes Indonesia's capacity referred to as cultural syncretism. Likewise, Iwan Tirta's revision of batik's biography, equally illustrated an exercise of syncretic adaption.

Iwan Tirta's attaches approval of "the Golden age" or qualifies with characterizations of "classical," and "traditional," to describe batik in discussions about the subject. He does not elaborate on their denotative or connotative meanings. Iwan Tirta's characterizations of batik inclined readings about batik for local consumers to edify them about their illustrious heritage. Further, an Iwan Tirta's batiked commodity described Indonesian modernity as having Javanese cultural kinship. The sense of privilege created by Iwan Tirta's commodities came from their perceptible technical excellence of surface properties. It also came from cultural characterizations associated to his batiked commodities. The claim that they are expressions of cultural continuity, one traced to Central Javanese court palace culture, secured their retail value, which ironically most Indonesians cannot afford. His batiked commodities possess cachet endowed by his international and local notoriety. The following personal anecdote taken from a diary illus-

trates the elusive experience of cachet in action:

The experience took me for surprise, because even in 1969, the importance of this perceived property associated with an object was not a staple reference on Dutch television, or a much sought after acquisition by those who were members of my social network. Cachet is a quality I associate with my American experience because of the plethora of fashion magazines that were not part of my consciousness prior to immigrating to the United States. At the age of 18, I worked at Schiphol airport as a kitchen helper at one of the airport's restaurants. Two of the guests were of Indonesian extract of a young woman and an older, portly man. The young and beautiful woman was dressed in a sheer and gossamer-like dress of calf length. The color of the dress was pale sky-blue with floral patterns. She wore a long scarf, identical in material with trains draping below her shoulder blade and to her midriff in the front. She spoke to a man who appeared to be in his 50's. I was fascinated by her impeccable presence, noticing that she was acutely conscious of how her scarf draped on her body. She arranged the draping of her scarf a number of times, placing it with an intentional precision on her upper torso. Upon closer inspection, I overheard the subject of communism discussed between them. As I removed myself from their presence, I noticed the designer's name in large letters near the edge of a scarf worn by Dewi Sukarno, President's Sukarno's controversial third wife of Japanese extract. (D. -R. Kühr, personal communication, 1969).

### Who is Iwan Tirta?

Iwan Tirta's full name was Iwan Tirtaamidjaja, born in 1935 in the central Javanese town of Blera (see Figure 4), located on the north coast east of Semarang.



Figure 4. Blera, Java, Indonesia.

<http://www.i-google-map.com/asia-map/indonesia-map/central-java-province-map/blora-map/>

His father was a county judge from Purwakarta in West Java and his mother came from Bukittinggi located in the Minangkabau region on the island of Sumatra. The Minangkabau is a

matrilineal social organization originating in highlands of the island of West Sumatra. Iwan Tirta (see Figure 5) rarely provided anecdotal information about his parents in his interviews and literature to give more insight about them. The exception was his 1996 publication.



*Figure 5. Iwan Tirta Making Introductory Remarks Acara Dokumentasi Sekaring Jagad, 1991. (Event documentation of Sekaring Jagad) From Iwan Tirta's personal video collection*

He dedicated the book to his mother, Ramah Saleh-Tirtaamidjaja. A significant portion of anecdotal information in the book described his early life. More so, he recounts his intellectual development and its influence on his aesthetic inclinations. Exposure to Javanese culture was paramount in the Tirtaamidjaja household. His father was pivotal in determining education for his children and for Iwan Tirta's mother as well. According to Iwan Tirta, knowledge about Javanese ethos and its comparison with Western social etiquettes played prominently in his carefully planned curricular activities and education. With an understated pride, he described his educational regimen to include learning about indigenous crafts. His exposure to local Javanese arts was an occasion to learn about Javanese ethos. This was evident when, at the direction of his father, Iwan Tirta gained skills in Javanese dance and music. His educational regimen of Javanese arts and crafts served to "...improve our bearing and posture" (Tirta, 1996, p. 156). Enculturation of Iwan Tirta corresponds to his account, suggesting that his father felt obliged to

educate his mother of the intricacies in being properly attired á la Javanese. His recounting about this event underscores the eminent role of Javanese cultural identity. It also portrays laying over one culture on another, where his mother's Minangkabau ethnicity (see Figure 6) conceded to Javanese cultural identity.

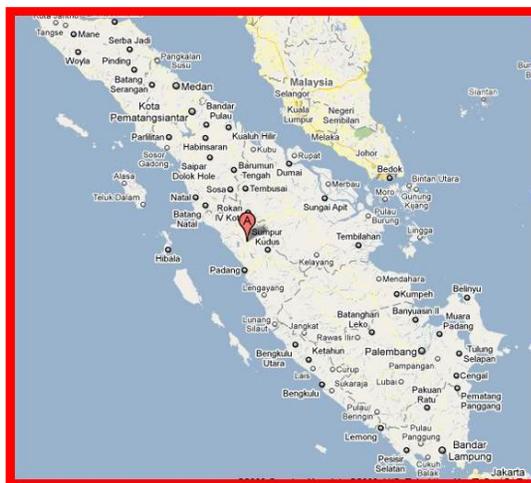


Figure 6. Bukittinggi, Iwan Tirta Mother's, Rama Saleh-Tirtaamidjaja, Birthplace.  
<http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=bukittinggi+west+Sumatra>

Javanization of Iwan Tirta and his mother certainly portray socialization, which placed Javanese ethos as the standard of measure. Not only was socialization of Javanese ethos intellectually endured, such socialization involved technical training for both Iwan Tirta and his mother affecting training of their respective bodily experience. Iwan Tirta father's concern that his wife acquired skill in properly wearing batiked *kain* showed his abiding commitment to exhibit cultural authenticity. A *kain* is a single panel of cloth, approximately 36 inches in length and 40 inches in width. Within a larger social framework, cultural authenticity is a theme that would preoccupy the subject of batik but also transfer into Indonesian politics. Sukarno retrofits the theme of cultural authenticity for the new nation state, intended to describe universal qualities that would characterize the new Indonesian as embodiments of national identity. Sukarno's populist orientation refrains from blatant exhibition of Javanese cultural chauvinism.

Iwan Tirta inherited his mother's batik collection to serve him well during his student years. His mother's inventory became items sold in order to provide Iwan Tirta with funding when needed when he was a student in London. His mother's batik collection was also a source for two important lessons. His success in selling panels of batiked cloth resulted with noting public demand for these decorative cloths. Demand for batiked cloth by foreigners stirred his entrepreneurial interests. His mother's inventory also exposed him to different styles of surface patterns and taking note of aesthetic variations. The importance of his exposure to batiked cloth during his student years became later apparent in Iwan Tirta's life. His recognition of batik's cultural importance represented a transition that had not arrived.

Iwan Tirta's father judicial stature, as a county judge, afforded his family to travel to Europe for their summer holidays. Their sojourns exposed them to experience Western cultural practices. Trips to Europe socialized Iwan Tirta and his siblings to Western values and attitudes that became a foil for their Javanese cultural personae. Iwan Tirta describes weekly rituals of European meals (1996, p. 157) as excursions to educate the family of Western cultural practices. These recurring domestic rituals were integral in his early experiences exposing him to Western culture. His father's remark: "His mottos-'less is more' and 'only the best will do'-were stringently applied to all of us when it came to dressing up" (Tirta, 1996, p. 158) illustrates an influence of nonindigenous values on the Tirtaamidjajas. His father's remarks revealed a self-conscious refinement exercised because of their social status. Access to non-indigenous food fare was heuristic opportunities to contrast their Javanese identity. These weekly culinary forays allowed him and his siblings to learn and to perfect table etiquette in European traditions. In contrast, the following facts highlight sober realities of Indonesian life during the 1960s. In 1967, Indonesia's per capita income was approximately \$50 per annum and the poverty rate was 60% of the population (Barber, 1997).

Iwan Tirta's experience of privilege appeared most notably in his faultless curriculum

vitae. After finishing high school in Jakarta, he matriculated at the University of Indonesia School of Law in 1950 (Tirta, 1996, p. 161). He continued to study law at the London School of Oriental and African Studies and the London School of Economics on a scholarship funded by British Council in 1959 (Tirta, 1996, p. 161). During his matriculation in London, the British Council asked Iwan Tirta to give a presentation on Indonesian culture. Their request proved to be pivotal for Iwan Tirta own career. His task resulted in his epiphanic return to his own cultural roots, which only highlighted that Iwan Tirta to be an outsider to his own culture. He chose the topic of batik to present to members of the British Council's scientific organization. His research on the subject of batik resulted with his self-understanding about his Javanese identity. Until then his realization of his cultural identity was dormant.

The term, batik, is polysemic. It might stand for the unique Javanese dyeing procedure or refer to a style of surface patterns associated with Indonesia. Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (1972) offers three definitions for the Malay word "batik: 1.an Indonesian method of hand-printing textiles by coating with wax the parts not to be dyed; 2. a design so executed; and 3. a fabric printed by batik" (p. 73). These are provisional meanings. The term batik appears to be of Dutch origin: Batik, 1880, Du. from Malay *mbatik*, writing, drawing, batik (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Its Malay form of *batek* with Javanese origin relates linguistically to Proto-Austronesian *becik*, meaning tattoo. The word's origin refers to a prototypical process of piercing waxed cloth prior to its soaking, which mimicked procedures experienced with tattooing. The word batik and its meaning become more subtle when understood in discussions involving dyeing techniques or when considering its cultural and social histories. Other determining factors are Indic cultural influences or changes in Indonesia's political landscape, specifically those decades spanning the 1940s to 1990s. In simplifying this discussion within the scope of this research, the word batik signifies a general topic. Batiked cloth means cloth that underwent a process of dyeing considered as batik tulis. Batiked is an adjective such as batiked cloth. Batiking is a verb and

batikers are frontline workers involved in completing various procedures of dyeing.

Iwan Tirta returned to Java with his father's passing in 1961. He lectured at the University of Indonesia and received a modest salary. He disclosed that his earnings as a university lecturer were inadequate to supplement his mother's income. Sales of batiked panels of cloth, kain, combined with boarding students in their spacious home produced income meeting Iwan Tirta and his mother's needs. Current day Deutsche Bank was the Tirtaamidjaja's former home. Iwan Tirta (1996) recounted his epiphany, which informed him of his future tied to production of batik and its commodification:

One of our student boarders was the brilliant Benedict Anderson. He strongly encouraged me to get more involved in batik and to photograph the pieces lest they be sold with no documentation of their existence. I bought a camera and together we began making photographs of the batiks, which we draped over the clothesline in the back garden to allow for good light exposure. After collecting the slides, Ben then pushed me to research and to write a supporting text. With my mother still living, there were many people close at hand to answer questions. My first book on batik was published with support from Cornell University. Yazir Marzuki helped make more professional-looking slides. (p. 162).

Iwan Tirta left Indonesia for the United States to continue with his studies in law, at Yale, in 1964. He had an opportunity to research Javanese sacred dance, *Bedaya Ketawang*, under the sponsorship of Cornell University. His research in Solo (Surakarta; informal Sâlâ) brought him into contact with members of the Javanese royal court and leading Javanese experts on batik. Once completing his law degree at Yale in 1966, he continued his interest in batik and aided his mother with selling her batik inventory. His mother downsized their home to the existing home-cum-boutique on Jalan Panarukan 25, in the upscale Menteng district of Jakarta. With her passing in 1971, Iwan Tirta committed himself to scholarly pursuits on the subject of batik and its commodifications of haute couture forms as well objects for interior settings.

Iwan Tirta (1996) affirms that batik is a procedure of dyeing cloth not only unique to

but originated in Java. The dying procedure involved a prescribed series of waxings and dyeings of cloth. Surface patterned effects of batik cloth were uniquely distinctive, because local ingredients, ecological conditions as well the type of cloth used all factored into producing distinctive results of batik. Differences in local ecology such as flora and even sunshine affected coloring of the patterns (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996). Distinctive attributes identified batik centers that produced it. However, another critical component of Javanese batik is the invention of the canting, a handheld copper well. Iwan Tirta referred to the canting as a "...mother of invention" (Tirta, 1996, p. 54), representing an instrument necessary to complete tasks of surface patterning considered as batik tulis. The canting expanded the visual vocabulary of surface patterning bringing subtle surface properties that would have been impossible without it. The surface characteristics are unique, resulting with patterns associated with Indonesian batik. The canting retraces boundaries of shapes, which originate in a batik maker's memory. Physical hand actions when applying molten wax with a handheld copper-well, canting, are more akin to writing than it is to drawing. Use of stencils also achieved desired surface patterns on cloth. A series of waxings and dyeings fixed the final decorative motif.

### **Organization of Dissertation**

Chapter 1 introduced the underpinnings of this research effort. This research borrows conceptual models from phenomenology as proposed by van Manen (1997). The Research Question directs attention to batik as forms of enculturated material forms illustrated by the image considered as ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). The image suggests a sartorial construction in form of an apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998). Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial interests motivated his pursuit to commodify batik cloth. His self-understanding and representation as a designer/Artist defines Iwan Tirta's interest in batik. Commodification of batik cloth into haute couture object forms illustrated a logic pointing back to Iwan Tirta's designer/Artist persona.

They are objects with functional purposes but they publicly state status of privilege experienced by local and international populations.

Chapter 2 addresses supporting literature for this research. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical foundations applied to this research. It intends to discuss key conceptual themes implicit to the research question. Chapter 3 covers the topic of Method introducing the reader the qualitative research methods used for this research. Certain ideas, appearing not to be directly relevant to discussing Iwan Tirta's sartorial construction, require consideration. This involves explaining how phenomenology and hermeneutics apply to this research project. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 concentrate on three specific words that are integral to the general discussion of batik. These terms recur in Iwan Tirta's textual legacy. Pinpointing informational contents associated with words of, *Indonesia*, *Java*, and *batik* was indispensable to constructing a response to the research question. This task avoided gratuitous acceptance of their meanings based on assumptions or personal interpretations that had been unexposed because of a lack of further inquiry. These words prominently feature in Iwan Tirta's narrations, because the general nature of this research focuses on an object form considered as Indonesian batik cum Batik-Indonesia. I resisted constructing a response based on possible skewed assumptions associated with each word. Each word exists within a historical context clarifying the merits of Iwan Tirta's usage of the words in describing batik. Thereby, information acquired from deconstructing the words, Indonesia, Java and batik produced a sober assessment about his characterizations of batik. These characterizations reveal properties understood as being associated to Iwan Tirta's commodifications of batiked cloth. Chapter 7 analyzes ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) a photographic image of an Iwan Tirta haute couture construction. Chapter 8 details the conclusion formulated from analyzing written and visual evidence.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

The scope of literature extends into intellectual disciplines of history, political analysis, aesthetics, and religion within the context of Indonesian culture. Separately, I delved into literature that addressed philosophical systems of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and Symbolic Interactionism. The literature for this research represents two distinct types of information. They were included with two different purposes in mind. The first set familiarized me about Javanese culture within the context of the nation state of Indonesia. However, I have acknowledged Javanese cultural continuity to the former Malay Archipelago by its discontinuity. The marker distinguishing two independent cultural experiences is the 1945 Declaration of Independence by Indonesia's first President, Sukarno (1945-1968) and Vice-President, Hatta (1945-1956). Their declaration separates and distinguishes pre-Indonesia from post-Indonesia. Making such distinctions buttresses my argument that this historical marker established unique phenomenological conditions.

The second set of literature cast my approach to my research. The information affected the following key areas. Foremost the literature characterized the type of information sought after for this research produced because of analyzing evidentiary text. My reading of texts valued disclosure of textual *evocative contents*. As a result, ranking of various types of evidentiary text indicated their *existential proximity* to the person of Iwan Tirta. The literature also established philosophical systems to which my protocol of reading of text and production of text adhered. Thus, production of text, as acts of writing, is a *synchronic* incidence. Finally, the second set of literature defined those categories to subsume my analysis and its outcomes that van Manen established in promoting his concept of lived-experience. The categories are *Lived-Time*, *Lived-Space*, *Lived-Community*, and *Lived-Corporeality*.

Chapter 2 analyzes literature to support primary source materials consisting of a set of interviews. The interviews, themselves, are different types of written texts. It consists of face-to-face interviews and a set of reprints provided by Iwan Tirta's office, P.T. Ramacraft, when I arrived in Jakarta in 1996. *P.T. Ramacraft Collated Handbook* (1996) represents the collated and unsolicited collection of information. Its contents appear as a listing of individual newspaper and journal interviews in this dissertation's bibliography. Further, in formulating an adequate response to my research question from information collected required extensive familiarization with Indonesian culture, history, politics, and the central topic of, batik.

Iwan Tirta's discussion of batik within a public forum targeted a wide local and international readership. His discussions about batik and its commodification pivot on his entrepreneurial commitments. I am suggesting that Iwan Tirta's portrayal of batik exemplifies Foster's (1991) and Anderson's (2006) shared and central concept of imagined properties. Both authors theorize about the emergence of culture, which relies on symbols. Such symbols involve pre-existing cultural artifacts that are sources for subsequent new, interpretative forms. Symbols remind people of accepted social values that in Indonesia carry the weight state authority. This point argues for the appropriation of batik as state property. Socially privileged members of society co-opt cultural artifacts and reconfigure them into object forms endowed with new meaning. Although the object form may appear to be identical from its former self, it is in fact different because of changes to meaning that is associated to it. For Indonesia, batik had a central role in the body politic. Consequently, Foster's (1991) and Anderson's (2006) ideas are relevant to this research on Iwan Tirta. Their literature provides a guide for understanding how he framed his discussion of batik that has accumulated over four decades.

Iwan Tirta's production of batik and its commodification are forms to represent Indonesia's modernity. Consequently his commodification of batik are historical entities, they are repositories of diachronic positions that possess cultural and historical characteristics.

Consequently, this research's progression involves review of literature of historical information relevant to the overall discussion. A direct source is Sir Thomas Raffles' (1781-1826), *History of Java* (1830). In contrast, an indirect source is Legêne and Waaldijk's (in van Hout, 2001, pp. 34-65) analysis of source documents written by J.P. Rouffaer (1860-1928).

Boehlke (1992, 2008) introduced me to Iwan Tirta's work in the area of haute couture. Her 1992 dissertation proposal and her 2008 dissertation involved Iwan Tirta as the topic. Boehlke's literature is relevant to this research because she recognized the influence of modern day politics on batik's evolution in Indonesia. Her unpublished and published research information supplements my own research material. Therefore, her research establishes a reference for this endeavor. This Literature Review concludes with discussing literature penned by K.R.T. Hardjonagoro (1931-2008). He was instrumental in educating Iwan Tirta on technical matters of batik. More importantly, he educated Iwan Tirta on Javanese culture.

The scope and variety of literature amassed for this research illustrates an interdisciplinary approach taken. Categories of literature under review are Theoretical Foundations, Historical Writings, A Review of Boehlke's 1992 Dissertation proposal and 2008 Dissertation, and writings of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. Although the scope of literature suggests different intellectual disciplines, each category offers information to contribute to making sense out of analyzing data and its disclosures. Thereby, such information adds to a forceful and coherent response to the research question.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Anderson (2006) and Foster (1991)**

Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006) focused on the construction of nationalism that involved objects in forms of rituals, images, physical artifacts or ideational entities. Such forms embody symbolic properties constructed out of imagined properties. The term, Indonesia, in accompanying Sukarno's idea of national identity is one such form. The word, Indonesia,

embodies imagined properties that come from two dominant sources during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Indonesia's nationalist movements were the first source to give the word, Indonesia, its meaning. The idea of a unified national identity emerged in the late nineteenth century with nationalist organizations such as the Budi Utomo (1908) [Boedi Oetomo - Prime Philosophy]. This organization spawned a number of nationalist movements, each with an independent agenda, yet all sought to establish a national identity divested of its colonial conditions. With the proliferation of nationalist organization, their respective agendas became increasingly more political and aggressive in implementing their stated goals. Nonetheless, these national organizations shared a common goal of attaining independence from Dutch colonial governance.

Often these organizations were not of single mind, particularly those aspirations of members of Islamic faith. To date, a desire to establish an Islamic state remains to be a problem. The official national policy crafted by Sukarno supported pluralism based on recognizing religions of Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. A second and significant source to promote national identity was Sukarno's prolific, unyielding but charismatic personality. He was a superb political tactician with impressive powers to persuade mass populations. Sukarno's fertile imagination created numerous governmental departments. He also established a bewildering number of acronyms for various governmental organizations and programs promoted under his governance.

Anderson (2006) argued that historical origins for nationalism rested with print capitalism. The emergence of print capitalism reinforced national desires to expand markets beyond existing European boundaries. The essential motive for national expansion was to establish reliable trade for commodities, particularly spices and foodstuffs not found on European soil. However, trade forays would eventually change from simply establishing trade with foreign populations into implementation of policies to monopolize and control geographical sources. The

impetus to exploring uncharted areas of the globe was a result of the emergence of national identity contained within national and sovereign borders. National sovereignty experienced by thirteenth through twentieth-century European nations represented shared and powerful sense of common identity. Correspondingly, quest for profit was also a powerful incentive to secure continuity of existing national identities.

Anderson's exegesis begins with describing the transformative effect of movable print (1450, Gutenberg Bible) in bringing structural changes to European societies. Movable print contributed to establishing a vernacular facilitating with forging a common identity. A vernacular also extended into print which "...gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation" (Anderson, 2006, p. 44) but it "...created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars"(Anderson, 2006, p. 45).

Sukarno understood the importance of a vernacular by institutionalizing Bahasa Indonesia, as a common language that would be accessible to all members of Indonesian society. Unlike Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese is highly inflected and intricate, placing emphasis on social status in determining linguistic forms. A vernacular was a pre-requisite to building national identity. Prior to the invention of movable print, information was property of those of royalty or religious institutions and its clergy. Print was an important component to what Anderson (2006) referred to as emerging mercantile capitalism. A direct outcome was European expansion and its introduction into far Eastern markets.

Printed matter consisted of documented findings of unexplored or unknown territories. Descriptions of seafaring expeditions included observations of previously unknown social lives experienced during these adventures. European interest for the Malay Archipelago centered on much prized spices introduced into European cuisine. Thus, print capitalism and production of information were potent social developments. For instance, documentation about seafaring

adventures and about foreign social lives or about products and services from new trade agreements produced literature that contributed to ideas for a common cultural identity. Conversely, it was not a great leap to observe dissimilar cultures as *other*, separate, and different or to view locations to be exotic as with the Malay Archipelago. Production of information mapped unexplored or unknown geographical destinations into efficient, knowable schemes. Print capitalism represented functional information motivated by utilitarian intentions to acquire goods yielding profit. In describing exotic territories, written texts also motivated expansion of national aspirations to incorporate foreign destinations under political and social policies of a dominant culture. A quintessential example was emergence of the world's first corporation, the *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (VOC; 1602). This economic venture illustrates the idea of how a dominant culture, as outsiders, redefine newly conquered bounded spaces.

Advancement of Dutch national aspirations relied on superiority of armed power as well skills reliant on administrative records such as contractual agreements. Once established, the Dutch as a foreign culture replicated itself through its institutions, implementing short-term goals in order to chart long-term stated economic and political policies. Dutch entry on the island of Java is an example of transplantation of an independent culture on foreign soil. Anderson (2006) spoke about institutional practices of mapping, census, museums, and transport in their contribution to forging sovereign boundaries, as demonstrated with the rise of nationalism in South-East Asia.

Institutions and their practices generated reasoned arguments justifying official policies to which outsider and insider groups abided. Implementing *Cultuurstelsel* (1830) and Ethical (1901) policies increased Dutch economic and political encroachment of Javanese territories. Political and social policies secured advantage for Dutch position over Java's local, indigenous political institutions, which consisted of a centralized royal court (kraton). Nonetheless, with the Ethical policy, a collective sense of self-reproachment emerged, which sought to remedy Dutch

exploitation of indigenous populations. Despite such collective misgivings, Dutch and Javanese political relationship remained to benefit Dutch interests well into the twentieth-century.

European intrusions into uncharted territories conversely exposed local cultures to new ideas and practices that eventually integrated into local social life. Java's geography, natural resources and social life provided topical interests for outsiders to document and analyze. Early twentieth-century ethnographic studies on batik are examples of emerging foreign interests and curiosities for local geographical and social settings. However, these early documentation became the foundation for the general discourse on batik, which reinforced advantage of European interests over local populations.

The Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam archives documents written when the former Malay Archipelago was under Dutch colonization. Van Hout's (2001) collection of monographs superbly traces how documents that specifically addressed the subject of batik evolved over time. Such notes consisted of private notes, which describe a shift in how European outsiders experienced batik initially for its business prospects towards batik's artistic merits. These phases ultimately led to batik's involvement in the construction of national identity as cultural identity. Construction of social or cultural identity involved reflexive actions, which looked towards the past to appropriate symbols and establish a sense of meaning. Consequently, the interpretation of historical past recycles into cultural emblems to suggest commonly held shared values. Foster's (1991) cultural elites privileged to exercise cultural reflexivity results in reifying imagined properties to represent a national population.

Social, economic, and political elites as proposed by Foster (1991) were primary sources to exercise the construction of national identity. The privilege to determine the DNA of cultural reflexive properties describes a social self-consciousness consisting of introspective actions as experienced by Sukarno (Adams, 1965). As observed with Sukarno, the privilege of such introspection demonstrates what Foster (1991) proposed as objectification of imagined properties to

represent social or cultural identity. Sukarno's conceptualization of national identity illustrated how sovereign borders bolster homogeneous cultural identity. Anderson (2006) described the role institutions played to establish social stability by changing the rules and social practices formerly held by existing populations. These rules appeared as political, social, and economic policies. Homogenization of social identity also reified both personal and collective orientation to experience attitudes of us against them, as exhibited with Java's colonization.

The most pronounced non-Javanese example is the Great Migration (1620-1640) of early American colonists coming from Britain. The migration into the North American continent from England illustrates the power of imagery and metaphor rooted in Protestantism. Two recurring images are conquest of a wilderness, replaced by 'The City on the Hill.' These two cultural motifs have lingered to influence current day American 2012 political discourse. These imagined properties have become central identity markers in America's biography. Reduction of complicated historical realities and of competing cultural views particularly becomes a wellspring when one culture presumes to be of superior position to a subordinate culture.

Dutch colonial governance of Java reflected a type of cultural chauvinism that developed out of political, social, and economic position buttressed by administrative tools such as contractual agreements. Once agreements were made, superior armaments secured agreements made between Dutch and indigenous populations. Terms of the contractual agreements trickled down affecting all facets of indigenous population social life. This reflected in Sukarno's (Adams, 1965) bitter responses to Dutch cultural domination. On one hand, domination of Dutch governance of Java exemplified an adversarial relationship, pitting a relational concept consisting of us against them. This configuration of a dominant/subordinate social relationship facilitates in constructing an imagined homogeneous other. Such views were in evidence in oral and written texts, a point of fact corroborated by Legêne and Waaldijk (in van Hout, 2001):

They [Dutch] were living between the various cultural realms of Javanese, Chinese,

Arab, and Indo-European worlds. Javanese society was imagined an essentially homogenous, even though today we can see that many objects to illustrate this image originated from dynamic processes of interaction between the various cultures present. (p. 40).

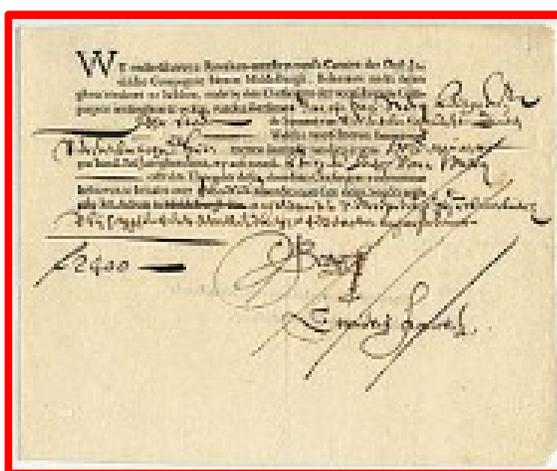
Ricklefs (personal communication, January 25, 2012) noted that orientations of social identities described as outsiders versus insiders is more nuanced than the simplistic description encapsulated in a dyad expressive of a collision of two social forces. His caution is accurate, but his position also reinforces the idea that textual descriptions and their reliability occurs when observed phenomenologically. However, Sukarno's biographical accounts, anecdotal information from Indos, and scholarly texts on Christian conquest of uncharted territories, support the idea that co-existence and adversarial interactions are not mutually exclusive social conditions. This social condition is a prominent leitmotiv to understanding batik. The history of Dutch and local populations sharing Java's real estate for nearly 300 years is a witness to such a proposition. Sukarno's retelling of his experiences under Dutch rule and his descriptions of them insinuate his unstated contempt for the Dutch. Dutch cultural and economic exploitation of Java and its populations are the roots for Sukarno's antagonism. Description of cultural tension recurred throughout his biographical text, suggesting that Sukarno's existential positions influenced his political thinking. The adversarial dynamics resulted in other historical manifestations.

Ricklefs (1993) wrote that in 1602 the bicameral *Staten Generaal* (States General) granted the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC, see Figure 7) its charter.



Figure 7. Dutch East Indies (VOC) Trade Routes (1602-1799).  
[http://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch2en/conc2en/map\\_VOC\\_Trade](http://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch2en/conc2en/map_VOC_Trade)

The government sanctioned an organization committed to being a business enterprise acting on behalf of the state described in the following terms “...by the States-General which gave it quasi-sovereign powers to enlist personnel on an oath of allegiance, wage war, build fortresses and conclude treaties throughout Asia” (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 27). The adjective “quasi-sovereign,” underscores the VOC as being a proxy for the Dutch government. Launching of the VOC represented seventeenth-century venture capitalism, which targeted an archipelago. This venture would result in a future Dutch East Indies achieving full status as a colony in 1830. VOC’s issuance of stock shares illustrates the capacity of an institution (see Figure 8) to generate investment capital.



*Figure 8. VOC Stock Share.*  
Retrieved from Google.com Images

The provisos of the charter’s contract are statements defined in terms of military might, presumptive of an unstated political hegemony based on economic expansion. These overt characterizations were guiding principles aimed at first for Dutch economic monopoly followed by eventual political control of the East Indies. The VOC Charter is an example of state authority exerting its influence through its institutions. Anderson (2006) on the other hand asserted institutions of museum, census, or practice of language also extended a parent state's influence. They contributed to setting up imagined communities. Introduction of social and political

institutions into Java contributed to reshaping local cultures. Both Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006) suggested that imposition of foreign social practices through policy benefited a privileged, dominant minority. In the case of the Malay Archipelago, the minority was the Dutch state. Settlement of the VOC in Java was a preliminary phase towards colonization of the archipelago.

Foster's model of Global Ecumene (1991) explains in theoretical terms social forces involved with production of imagined communities. Foster asserts, "...making national cultures" (1991, p. 235) result out of "...contests informed by a diversity of historically specific actions and intention" (p. 235). There are two theoretical views to explain making of culture. Radical diffusionists (Foster, 1991, p. 251) are proponents of center-periphery relationships. Diffusion of commodities remakes culture. This premise resonates with Western capitalism which profits from a center-periphery model. In contrast, ecumenists view that presence of different cultures creates "...new diversities" (Foster, 1991, p. 251). They represent production of culture considered hybrid forms. In contrast, the ecumenist model explains syncretic adaptation exercised by indigenous population, which are responses to foreign "...dispositions and understandings" (Foster, 1991, p. 235). Thus, the ecumenical model describes social adaptation of contrasting or opposing principles, values, or practices.

Foster's (1991) theory consists of three propositions: A) Re-Presenting the Nation: Imagination, Invention, Memory, B) Technologies of Power: Classification, Knowledge, Regulation C) Objectifying the Nation: Commodification, Diffusion, and Consumption. His hierarchical model theoretical describes different phases involved in the production of culture. Foster's (1991) theoretical categories represent dimensions relevant to this research's interpretative explanation. The first proposition consists of recovering ideas, historical details, or anecdotal information. This category points to Iwan Tirta, in how he framed his discussions about batik and their reliance on regained information. His claims about Indonesian batik are unquestioned and accepted as factual statements on their face. Under these circumstances, his interviewees do not

pursue further their inquiry, by pressing for clarification from Iwan Tirta during his interviews. Iwan Tirta consistently asserted that Central Javanese royal court culture exerted greatest influence on Indonesian batik. He endowed his commodified batiked forms with a historical legacy characterized in terms of Central Javanese royal court culture. Batik's association with Central Javanese royal court certified its authenticity, expressive of Javanese high culture.

Iwan Tirta created batik's biographical profile using recollected information. The biographical details consisted of historical descriptions from the Malay Archipelago's past. Such descriptions serve to clarify and enhance understanding of batik as a cultural object. By invoking historical information into his discussions about batik, Iwan Tirta endowed his commodities a patina suggestive of cultural continuity. By grafting historical details associated from a different social life to his commodities, Iwan Tirta's batiked commodities acquire cultural pedigree. They are objects possessed with having seamless links to Javanese recorded and anecdotal history. Thereby, he established both cultural importance and significance for his batiked commodities. Iwan Tirta's haute couture forms are objects that index a shared sameness with batiked cloths exemplary of Javanese high culture.

Recorded information about batik preceding Iwan Tirta revolved around two different perspectives. As suggested by Legêne and Waaldijk (in van Hout, 2001), modern discussions about batik came out competing interests shaped primarily by batik's economic viability. Concern for profit propelled initial interest in batik for its prospects leading to the expansion of market shares. However, the concept of cultural authenticity emerged into academic discussions about batik, referring to decorated cloth made by hand in forms of batik tulis. Raffles' published work introduced the subject of batik into European society. Proliferation of text focused on batik did not appear until the turn of the twentieth century. It is not clear if interim texts on batik, between Raffles' (1830) publication and early twentieth-century academic narrations, consisted primarily of prosaic documentations of batik inventory or as letters reflecting thoughtful

commentaries about it. Legêne and Waaldijk trace the evolution of batik, as a topic for its profitability, with a trajectory leading towards batik's assessment for its cultural authenticity. The transitions of various evaluations about batik, which began with its economic considerations concluded with batik as being a form of Art. Implicit to such characterization is the idea of artistic genius.

Iwan Tirta asserted batik and batik cloth to be indicative of indigenous Javanese culture. Usage of batik cloth became a visible demarcation representing Javanese as insiders and Europeans as outsiders. Yet, batik and its commodification became a visible statement of high culture. However, the polarity of insiders versus outsiders had historical roots representing competing, imagined characterizations of two distinct cultures. Nonetheless, Dutch encroachment of Java with its infusion of foreign ideas paved Java's future. Indonesian homegrown nationalist movements ironically reinterpreted foreign influences, by adapting what they had learned from the West into their political aspirations for an independent Indonesia. Presence of the Dutch in Java consisted of an independent social life. It paralleled Javanese social life defined increasingly by European outsiders to be traditional. Other than urban settings or coastal towns, the descriptor, traditional, essentially referred to a social organization consisting of a royal court (*kraton*) with its oversight of rural villages (*desa*) in Java's hinterlands. The two independent but competing Dutch and Javanese social lives served to promote a cultural motif of old versus new.

Sukarno's regime characterized as *Orde Lama* (Old Order) and Suharto as Orde Baru (New Order) reintroduces a motif describing cultural polarity. The shared existence of Dutch with local Javanese populations generated other polarities consisting of a dyad describing decline versus progress. This underscored the defects of an agrarian economy versus an industrialized one. This dyad of oppositional contrast reflected two very different and distinct ethoses. It ultimately described the embodied positions about batik and its commodification as noticed in

comparison of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to Iwan Tirta's perspectives on batik. Although four years in age separate these men, they represent two very different experiences of Indonesia, corroborated by my interview of Charles Nijo. An explanation for this assertion will be the focus of Chapter 6.

Iwan Tirta's extensive interviews with a variety of periodicals and journals provided him a forum. The forum received Iwan Tirta's narratives about batik's cultural roots and histories, whereby his narrations reinforced in the public mind his interpretations of them. He reframed modern day batik by invoking its historical and cultural continuity. Iwan Tirta's commodifications of batiked cloth acquire pristine cultural pedigree by association, a patina secured because of his authoritative voice. In the instance, the authority of his voice resulted from status of his family, his immediate social and professional network, and his impeccable curriculum vitae. These are dominant strains sanctioning his authoritative voice. Iwan Tirta exemplifies what Foster (1991) considers as "...nationalist elites, intellectuals, and politicians" (p. 239). Such characterizations are relevant to Indonesian nineteenth- and twentieth-century socio-political life.

Foster's (1991) second proposition addresses the state and its involvement as "...a repertoire of agents, activities, and institutions that state acceptable forms and images of social life (45:3; 1)" (p. 244). The state is therefore, a significant contributor in remapping social practices. It performs imagined qualities that represent syncretic adaptations through "...project of documentation and classification produced theories, experiences, and practices that were both imported from and exported to the colonial metropole" (Foster, 1991, p. 246). Batik's introduction as Art is an example of Foster's theoretical consideration.

Raffles (1830) and Rouffaer- Juynboll (1900) demonstrated Foster's (1991) importation of foreign cultural practices into Javanese social life. Raffles' texts in comparison to Rouffaer's represent two different existential positions. Nevertheless, both views are those of outsiders. Raffles (1830) text consists of a scientific cataloging about batik. Rouffaer's (1900), on the other hand, projects a phenomenological approach in documenting his observations. More so, they

betray his active presence in Rouffaer's position when describing the phenomenon of batik on hand. My claim is tentative, requiring further research. It will involve a comprehensive reading of Rouffaer's entire body of literature. Nonetheless, Legène and Waaldijk (2000) analysis resulted with recognition of differences in tone and texture to distinguish Raffles (1830) from Rouffaer's initial textual descriptions about batik.

Foster's third proposition speaks to objectified forms of national identity. He describes how such symbolic forms communicate their imagined properties through acts of consumption. Diffusion of object forms results in a transfer of symbolic properties through their consumption. Consumption of materiality and exercise of it indicated cultural solidarity, particularly with the public display of consumption. However, members of social, political, and economic elite's control entry of object forms in their transition to becoming cultural emblems. This select group decides how symbolic forms extend into the public sphere. Their privileges consist of taking part in affecting imagined symbols of state. Objectification of imagined properties re-presented into commodities fundamentally consists of thought object forms. This is evident with Sukarno's appropriation of batik in order to affirm cultural homogeneity or sameness. Foster (1991) cited Breckenridge and Appadurai:

The state is increasingly dominated by elites who are transnational cultural producers and consumers, forming a global class with few real cultural allegiances to the nation-state, but who nevertheless need new ideologies of state and nation to control and shape the population who live within their territories. But as these populations themselves are exposed, through media and travel, to the cultural regimes of other nation-states, such ideologies of nationalism increasingly take on a global flavor (22:3). [p. 248].

Foster's theoretical proposition is important to this research. The evidence of its importance becomes apparent, because Iwan Tirta's autobiographical profile in his 1996 book, *Batik: A Play of Light and Shades* demonstrates Foster's point of view. Iwan Tirta's autobiographical profile unequivocally affirms his privileged status, which details his social passport.

His social position allowed him access to Jakarta's upper social strata. Iwan Tirta's social standing exists within a larger social network that included Indonesia's second President, Suharto, the First Lady, as well alliances with the royal court of Karaton Surakarta Hadiningrat. Foreign dignitaries such as Mrs. Francis, Canadian Chargé d'affaires held a 1964 exhibit of batik cloth at her home. Such social networks consolidated Iwan Tirta's emerging role as cultural arbiter of Javanese sense and sensibilities. High profile visits by Hollywood celebrities and his exposure through print media of *Vogue* or *National Geographic* cemented his authoritative voice on batik and Javanese culture. His networks, which reached the uppermost echelons of Indonesian and Western societies, added mystique to his person and endowed cachet to his batik commodities.

Iwan Tirta's accounts, in forms of interviews and literature written by him, refer superficially back to his own body of work. His interviews are conversational in tone, detailing historical or technical facts about batik. Such information already exists in the public domain and is readily available. Iwan Tirta's interviews were opportune forums that educated the general reader about batik's enculturated properties. Interviews formatted in a series of snippets described batik-dyeing procedure. They communicated historical, social, or symbolic importance of batik. The interview format allowed him to inject anecdotal information, reinforcing his authoritative credibility, particularly when he cited local and foreign high status individuals in his discussions. Their introduction into his narration about batik was critical and indispensable, because it reinforced Iwan Tirta's descriptions about batik and its cultural preciousness. Listing his academic credentials and his former professions reinforced the potency of his descriptions about batik. His professional vitae occupied an inordinate amount of space of his interviews, usually cited in the first two paragraphs. Subtitles such as Hong Kong's 1977 article, "...From professor of law to designer" (San, 1977) demonstrated the role interviews had in cementing his authoritative voice on batik and Javanese culture.

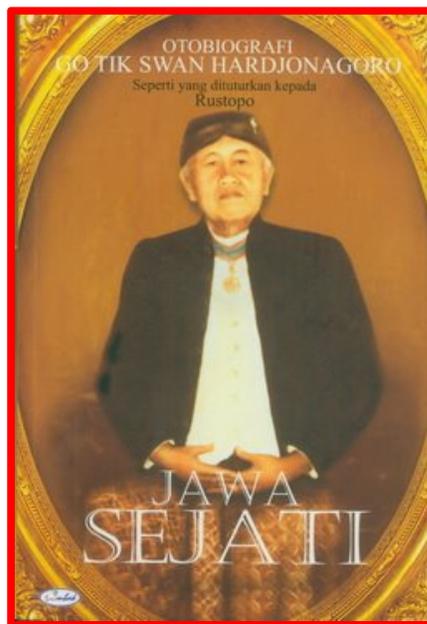
His discussions about batik appear to be a patchwork of information. However, the

interviewer was equally responsible for a superficial discussion on the subject. Iwan Tirta's tangential comments provided readers with editorialized commentaries. His interviews, nonetheless, effectively gave him high profile exposure to local and international readers. Iwan Tirta's interviews, however, are also testaments of institutional support, whereby he was a chief beneficiary of Suharto's largesse. In such capacities, Iwan Tirta's interviews illustrated Anderson's (2006) point about the complicity of the state to advance, in this case, national identity. Iwan Tirta's narratives in forms of journals and periodicals appear to be discursive vehicles to advertise a grand marketing scheme disguised by intentions of educating local populations of their imagined cultural legacy.

The following anecdote, which occurred before my first scheduled interview of Iwan Tirta, lends credence to the above characterization. When I first introduced myself to his support staff at his boutique, his assistant gave me a loose bound book. The book consisted of biographical data; an introduction to his book, *Batik a Play of Light and Shadow* (1996), by Gareth Steen; a list of his fashion shows; his awards; general information on batik, *ikat*, and silver; and 63 copies of interviews spanning 1964-1996. The black bound book represented Iwan Tirta's world attesting his dedication to batik. The collection of information in its entirety stated his authoritative position on matters concerning batik. The black loose-bound book underscored the breadth of his knowledge about Javanese culture. His interviews educated the public about cultural properties of Javanese batik. These public formats reinforced Iwan Tirta's persistent assertions about batik, because his interviewers did not question his claims. Lack of any type of critical rebuttal resulted in his commentaries about batik to be factual. Therefore, Iwan Tirta's authorial voice remained intact by fiat.

Iwan Tirta's career aligned with President Suharto's (1968-1998) regime. His ascendancy into arbiter of Javanese culture involved his teacher and mentor, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro (see Figure 9). Iwan Tirta does not mention K.R.T. Hardjonagoro at great length in

his books or interviews with the exception of his 1996 publication. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's absence in Iwan Tirta's literature is a surprise, because of his teacher's scholarly acclaim. A flippant comment made during my 1996 interview paraphrased, "Well, I offered him to go into business with me" clarified why Iwan Tirta rarely mentions his teacher and mentor to any great length. It explains why he did not provide critical analysis of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's body of work in his interviews. Iwan Tirta's relationship with Indonesia's first family, the Suhartos, mirrored K.R.T. Hardjonagoro relationship to President Sukarno. The descriptions of Orde Lama (Old Order) to Orde Baru (New Order) describing governance of Presidents Sukarno and Suharto reflect those differences separating K.R.T. Hardjonagoro from Iwan Tirta. Once again, polarity comes into play to signify its importance as a cultural motif in Javanese mysticism.



*Figure 9.* K.R.T. Hardjonagoro (Go Tik Swan), 1931-2008.

<http://www.google.com/imgres?hl=en&biw=1061&bih=796&tbm=isch&tbnid=>

Iwan Tirta's social network was vital to the diffusion of his batik commodities and their intellectual properties. His network typified the types of consumers Iwan Tirta targeted for his batik commodities. It consisted of persons with unfettered access to disposable funds. A roster

of an international Who's Who included "Queen Juliana of the Netherlands; Queen Elizabeth II, the King and Queen of Belgium, the King and Queen of Spain, Madam Jihan Sadat, Madame Imelda Marcos, Princess Lilian of Sweden and the wives of various Prime Ministers of nations" ("Other people cater food-I cater Culture," 1981, n.p.). Consumption by such luminaries furthered his brand name into a global market. Iwan Tirta's haute sartorial objects underscored Foster's (1991) position. "In other words, the cultural forms in which both national elites and non-elites represent and imagine themselves – objects, images, and acts – are part of a global flow of commodities accelerated by new media technologies of reproduction and diffusion (55a)<sup>10</sup>" (Foster, 1991, p. 248).

Discussion of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro is important. Not only does he represent a polar contrast to Iwan Tirta, but he embodies characteristics about Java that Iwan Tirta relies on to describe batik and its commodified forms. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's collaborative chapter with Kertiwa, *Pusaka and the Palaces of Java* (In *Art of Indonesia-Pusaka*, 1992, pp. 159-164) appears on the onset to offer a historical analysis of Indonesian cultural artifacts. The authors focus on clarifying Javanese concept of objects and their capacity to hold magical powers. This idea is intrinsic to Javanese worldview and pervasive in Javanese social life. Since their collaborative discussion highlights conceptual structuring of Javanese day-to-day life, an evaluation of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Kertiwa's text appears under Theoretical Foundations.

The artifacts pictured in the book are a small portion of Indonesia's National Museum collection in Jakarta. The word, *pusaka*, signifies an inherited object with supernatural powers to "...protect, heal, and avenge" (1992, p. 15). The term appears in other geographical areas of the Malay Archipelago, but such objects lack magical properties. The emphasis placed on an object's magical properties is distinctive to Javanese culture. To avoid confusion from its general use, the Javanese refer to such special objects as *pusoko*. Unlike objects inherited in the West, *pusoko* is an object actively involved with the human social world, hence batiked cloth's capacity to affect

magic.

Pusoko is not an object of significance based on its monetary and thereby, to deemphasize its value based on its retail commodity status. The physical presence of pusoko actively participates in human social life by linking the human world with the unseen. In the cited chapter written by K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, his collaborative essay does not directly speak to the subject of batik. The chapter does address cultural values integral to batiking and its surface patterning. Pusoko consists of different kinds of objects, from kitchen utensils to weapons. The criteria designating an object as pusoko are its function. Therefore, pusoko is valued for "...quality of workmanship, aesthetic value, history, and religious significance" (p. 159). Although objects might own the above characteristics, the attributes do not guarantee an object's change of status into pusoko. Within a pusoko hierarchy, objects most venerated and the most potent are those directly associated with the royal courts. Kartiwa and Hardjonagoro (1992) explained:

In the rich ceremonial and spiritual life of the *kraton*, a pusoko is much more than merely an object; in fact, it has many human qualities. Pusoko have names, feel desires and have wishes, and they can communicate through signs with humans. They may possess great power: to foretell events auspicious and inauspicious, or to protect the people and help them to avoid danger and disaster. To ensure that pusoko continue to act in this benevolent way, the people must in turn perform certain services for them, such as the periodic provision of offerings, fumigations with incense and ritual bathings. In the courts of Central Java, pusoko are cared for and presented with offerings by the *Abdi Dalem* (courtiers, literally 'people of the inner place' or 'people of the center'). [pp. 159-160].

Discussion about pusoko described characteristics of ritual-space and ritual-time. Ritual conditions are unique, independent experiences contrasted to the everyday world. Mulder (1993) describes such experiences consisting as a boundary between nature and supernature. Experience of such liminal conditions consists of an ambiguous landscape disclosed in forms of human consciousness. However, such forms of consciousness are absent of chronological progression, because ontological position between the natural world with supernature is existentially

structured. The ontological condition thrives on terminology that consists of feeling and its conflation with imagery. The melding of nature with supernature reconstitutes into structures defined by feeling conflated with imagery. It is similar, if not identical to van Manen's (1997) conceptual structure of a person's pre-verbal existential conditions, which have not entered historical time or into their diachronic conditions. Retrieval of pre-verbal structures of consciousness requires the individual to employ their interpretative task to bringing such structures of feeling and imagery into comprehensible forms.

### **Overview of Historical Writings**

Raffles' *History of Java* (1830, see Figure 10) introduced for the first time Javanese batik to European society. He discussed the subject of batik under Chapter IV titled, *Manufactures-Handicrafts*. Raffles' two-volume book was a forerunner to growing Western interest in documenting social life of the Dutch East Indies.



*Figure 10. Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826).*

<http://www.google.com/imgre>

Much of the unofficial literature written about the Dutch-East Indies addressed economic interests after Raffles' 1830 publication. The development of batik as a topic of interest resulted from contesting non-indigenous interests. Interest consisted of observing local culture and subsequently documenting such observations. Batik equally received Western scholarly scrutiny.

Batik's position as a nominal social object was determined by its practical ends defined by Javanese social life. It changed into a cultural artifact culled for its meaning to understand its representation of Javanese high culture. In its evaluation, early European scholars sought after its undisclosed meaning, assumed to offer insight about Java's social life. However, commercial interests originally drove discussions about batik. Changes in how outsiders evaluated batik reflected historical changes of Java in its gradual transition into a full colonial state in 1830. Such changes in how European outsiders valued batik was also indicative of an imposition of Dutch cultural values on indigenous social life. The manner in how and the why batik was valued equally disclosed the degree of Dutch direct political control of Java, which ultimately led to Java's transition into complete colonial status. Legêne and Waaldijk explained,

From the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, however, Dutch-Javanese relationships gradually shifted from limited trade colonialism to direct territorial control and straightforward Dutch economic intervention into daily life of the Javanese population. From then on, their clothes did matter as well. From the very moment, that batik came into focus-from Raffles' description in *The History of Java* (1817)-this craft was regarded as a cultural key to entering Javanese society with European products. England's industrial revolution, with its booming cotton cloth production for India, would serve as a shining example for the Netherlands' export-oriented colonial approach. (in van Hout, 2001, p. 35).

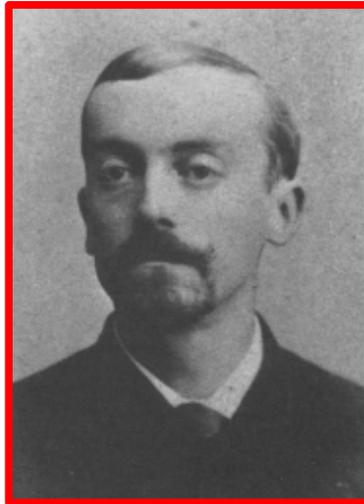
Raffles' categories described the divisions of labor (1830, p. 183). Skills involved with producing textiles are broken down as *ténun* (weaver), *bátik* (cotton printer), and *médal* (dyer). The three functions are independent tasks involved in modifying textile surfaces. Raffles (1830) documentation on the subject totals three pages, in two-volumes totaling five hundred and ninety-seven pages, excluding the appendices. He did not describe visual properties of batiked cloth he might have encountered as governor general of Java. Neither are aesthetic properties of batiked cloth described by him. Raffles (1830) approaches the subject with clinical detachment. He describes the handicraft in accordance to various functions involved with dyeing procedures. For

instance, Raffles (1830, p. 188) characterizes batik cloth as dependent on three types of base cloths colored in white, red, or black.

Raffles (1830) formatted his descriptions in Western scientific tradition. His information consists of assertions with presumed factuality focused on measurable properties inherited by batik objects. Descriptions of measurable properties do not reveal Raffles' (1830) emotional position in describing batik materiality. His description of a canting illustrates Raffles' measured, clinical inclinations, "...holding about an ounce and having a small tube about two inches, through which the liquid wax runs out in a small stream" (Raffles, 1830, p. 188). Raffles (1830) approached his subject by framing topics about Java in a manner influenced by scientific method consisting of procedures of inspection, evaluation, and categorization. His description of the canting consists of precise, hermetic accuracy disallowing a reader to speculate. Raffles' (1830) formatted his information more as a list of facts. His descriptions of batik are deductive, consisting of categories with denotative descriptions. His textual form possesses a syntactical linearity of a series of factual statements. Raffles text sets up a relationship in which the reader and text hold independent and distinct ontological positions. His text does not allure readers into committing themselves into an empathetic participation with the text. Raffles' (1830) documentation of batik appeared as a small portion of a larger context consisting of general information about Java's geography and social life.

Another influential text, which entertained the subject of batik appeared eighty-three years later. Ethnologists, G.P. Rouffaer (1860-1928, see Figure 11) and H.H. Juynboll (1863-1945) authored *De batik-kunst in Nederlandsch-Indie en haar geschiedenis* (The batik art in Netherlands-Indie and her history, 1900 and 1914). The portion of interest consists of text cited by Legéne and Waaldijk's, *Reverse images-patterns of absence: Batik and the representation of colonialism in the Netherlands*, in van Hout's *Batik drawn in wax* (2001). The comparison between Raffles (1830) publication and Rouffaer-Juynboll's (1900) writings show a shift in

evaluating batik for its economic or social importance.



*Figure 11.* G.P. Rouffaer (1860-1928).  
Retrieved <http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek>

Legène and Waaldijk's (2001) analysis of these early ethnographic studies underscores an evocative structuring of language to describe batik in phenomenal terms. In contrast to Raffles (1830) publication, the text cited by Legène and Waaldijk's (2001) refers to language that entices a reader to respond to Rouffaer's evocative descriptions about batik. His text lacks Raffles' (1830) linearity, but makes up for its absence with phrases, which requires the reader to extend beyond Western logic. His text asks the reader to enter it through their personal ability to feel. Rouffaer's scribbled notes require the reader to empathize with the text. The psychological distance between the reader and text lessens in degrees by adjusting to a reader's empathetic capacities. Most importantly, Rouffaer's commentary suggested his existential commitment in describing phenomena. Use of emotive words to describe his ontological position signals Rouffaer's existential position, only to lead to a fuller understanding about batik. The importance of this distinction was that the shift towards describing batik in phenomenal terms escalated batik change in status as Art. Legène and Waaldijk offered the following analysis:

*Batik-kunst* illustrates the ambiguous nature of the colonial ethnographic interest in batik. On the one hand, the authors excessively praise the authentic qualities of traditional batik as strong and important. On the other hand, they describe batik as a traditional craft that is in danger of disappearing and must be rescued.<sup>[89]</sup> Rouffaer was totally fascinated by the process of drawing lines of wax with the *canting*. He describes in almost sensual detail the way the ‘nimble’ hands of Javanese women move when they apply wax to the prepared cotton, and he compares them favourably with European women doing needlework. The latter is described as depressing fidgeting.<sup>[90]</sup> Rouffaer explains how the text by Kartini and her sisters solves the ‘mystery’ of the purpose of blowing through the opening of the *canting*. He is almost lyrical when he revels in the added and gendered value of Kartini’s observations for his scientific study. ‘What woman is going to *write* about the work she executes, however excellently, with her hands? Moreover, what *Javanese woman* would do that? And men, who enjoy public writing so much-what do they care about female handicraft?’ (Italics in original)<sup>[91]</sup>. (in van Hout, 2001, p. 54).

Rouffaer’s text is “lyrical” in tone. Legêne and Waaldijk (2001) continued by citing Rouffaer’s response in observing a Javanese waxer, which he described as “...sensual detail, ...the “nimble hands,” and “...solves the mystery.” Rouffaer’s language to describe batik evokes a visceral fullness, a quality absent in Raffles’ (1830) discussion about batik. Rouffaer’s evocative language borders on being poetic. Their words are not simply to inform. His use of words and phrasings are capable to reify their emotive contents in the reader. Re-experiencing emotive contents, as reflected in his texts, becomes part of batik’s materiality through their reading. Thus, Rouffaer’s observations appear as diachronic activity but ultimately represent synchronic conditions communicating the essential qualities of his experience.

Acknowledging the human active contribution in describing batik and its materiality is significant. Rouffaer’s descriptions created an understanding about batik focused on a waxer's interaction with the cloth. I suggest that the resulting construction of meaning about batik does not occur about an object independent of the human participant. His documentation of batik recorded his personal responses, which framed the waxer’s interactions with her cloth as existential descriptions. The emotive contents heighten the communicative conditions of the text. It allows for clarity to understanding of batik’s enculturated properties couched existentially.

Rouffaer's commentary on observable kinetic attributes of batik reveals the waxer's commitment to her cloth. A reader's understanding of batik through Rouffaer's text emerges by being engaged in the textual descriptions about a singular human physical interaction with cloth. Further, a reader's response to reading about batik's materiality inflects those active and current responses experienced in reading about batik's materiality. Thus, such responses conflate with information from previous considerations or readings. Rouffaer's ability to sense the degree of a waxer's presence in her interaction with cloth did not simply attest to her competence. He described her ability to merge with her *métier*, whereby distinctions between the batik and her cloth are the same. Nonetheless, through reading about batik, batik becomes an object endowed with imagined properties. Raffles' (1830) and Rouffaer's (1900) writings were seminal, contributing to social research focused on Java and its social life.

My evaluation of these historical texts is pertinent to answering the research question because it showed a fundamental change in approach of Indonesian cultural practices and its artifacts produced by European outsiders. Their literature suggests the following conditions:

- ❖ The approach to documenting social phenomena was a European importation. Cultural self-consciousness, reflexivity, directed to describe social life and artifacts is fundamentally at odds with indigenous life in Javanese day-to-day orientation.
- ❖ The narrative about batik is one defined out of a European perspective. Therefore, a Euro-centered perspective shaped the intellectual trajectory to studying batik
- ❖ Early ethnographic studies about batik contributed to determine the underlying logic in how Iwan Tirta narrated the subject of batik. He inherited and built on a Euro-centered narrative. A case in point was his presumption of batik as Art.

The explanation to follow argues the importance of those observations listed above. Early ethnographic commentaries intended to study and record Javanese social life were not for local reading. Production of literature did not represent opportunities for local populations to

learn about their own culture. Most Javanese were illiterate and distracted from being educated, because of labor-intensive demands made of on them in responding to their agrarian life. In contrast, Western communities benefited from scientific studies about local life and the islands geography. Studied observations of Raffles (1830) and Rouffaer/Juynboll (1900) about batik represent institutional practices introduced into Java. They illustrated how information as forms of knowledge contributed to construction of what Anderson (2006) considered as imagined communities.

Raffles (1830) and Rouffaer's descriptions about batik are made on behalf of their respective parent cultures. Their description integrated into an overarching general discourse on batik. The emergent public discourse represented new interpretations about batik. European studies of batik, prompted in part by a desire to preserve culture, produced text that was essentially beyond the reach of local readership. Javanese population consisted of rural agrarian poor lacking competence in the Dutch language. Literacy was a privilege restricted to the original aristocratic hereditary class, the *priyayi*. This class representing the indigenous population became civil servants for the colonial administration. Access to education was possible for mixed European indigenous culture, Indos. Most of Java's population was illiterate well into the twentieth century. The 1920 census documents literacy of Javanese men at 6.83% and 0.26% for Javanese women (Cribb & Kahin, 2004). However, the caveat is that these are conservative figures and therefore, illiteracy was much higher than reported.

### **A Review of Boehlke's Literature**

Boehlke's (1992, 2008) texts are forerunners for this research project. In 1996, Boehlke reoriented my academic direction. She pointed out that my personal Indonesian experience was a rich resource to rely on. Boehlke's research interest of Javanese culture redirected my theoretical inclinations to profit from applying my interests in cultural experiences that have simmered for

many years.

Boehlke submitted a research proposal to University of Minnesota Graduate Faculty in 1992. She proposed a research proposal concentrating on Iwan Tirta's life history. Her proposed research adopts the concept of boundary artist (Boehlke, *Iwan Tirta: A Life History Of An Indonesian Boundary Artist*, 1992, p. 1). Boehlke's proposed research sought to investigate Iwan Tirta's identity as artist, adapting his batiked commodities to accord with traditional batik (1992, p. 2). Boehlke (1992) stated,

As producer and vendor/mediator of modern handcrafted batiks, he adapts to changing tastes in his clientele. He is cognizant of trends and is a trendsetter; he decides what to present. His links to traditional batik are in the motif (Javanese florals or geometrics) or in the mode of production (*tulis*). Like any other designer, Tirta can draw inspiration from any motif; yet the product is still distinctly Indonesian because of it being a *tulis* batik. An examination of his life course through his life history will yield insights into his roles as a boundary artist. (p. 2).

In assigning Iwan Tirta as a boundary artist, Iwan Tirta's commodification of batik embodies perceived and arbitrary monetary value, since they are articles of Art. Much of Iwan Tirta's batiked commodifications consisted of haute couture object forms with statuses of Art. Concepts of artist, fashion, or haute couture are not indigenous to Javanese cultural lexicon. Literature suggests a Western presence on the island introduced the idea of *Art*. It is a cultural category used to describe batiked commodities. This description is more relevant to populations indicative of an emergent middle-class (Boehlke, 2008). An emerging middle-class distinguished Indonesia social conditions under Suharto's presidency from 1968 to 1998. However, the sociological category of middle-class (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012) has its own nuanced meaning. Specific-socio cultural conditions surrounding the term give social categories its meaning. In determining relevant descriptions are beyond the reach of this research.

Suharto's government aimed at codifying Javanese cultural identity. Compulsory display of batiked dress and its re-presentations of Javanese past are examples of state appropriation of a

cultural artifact. The state recast a cultural artifact, as in the case of Indonesia, whereby batik cloth and its wear affirmed national identity trumping cultural identity. Therefore, the required wear of batik at work or at official functions was governmental proscriptions for Indonesia's general populace. Batik commodities produced by P.T. Ramacraft, in contrast, were for a segment of Indonesian society, unencumbered by the limitations imposed by parochial social, economic, or spatial boundaries. Iwan Tirta's commodities bridged national experience with international experience. Batik's historical legacy is supposedly an extension to the glorious royal court life and representative of its ethos. Feudal governance typified most of Java's history, consisting of a centralized system of power. Rural villages were a stark contrast to their royal protectors. Iwan Tirta's sartorial commodifications were out of place for a general populace reliant on an agrarian economy. To suggest that contemporary Indonesian batik is exemplary of cultural dispositions of Javanese former traditional social structure is factually a stretch in one's imagination.

Iwan Tirta's claim that modern day batik is an authentic representations of Indonesian "...way of life" (San, 1977) remained unclear. His assertion begged whether Iwan Tirta's commodified sartorial constructions were indexical of "...a way of life" of a jet-set urban class or of members from traditional Javanese social environments. Javanese social experience, in contradistinction to Indonesian experience, presents phenomenological conditions that are distinct. Each offers unique existential conditions and therefore, it is impossible for the twain to meet. Batik commodities as icons of Art were fundamentally irrelevant to a population with meager incomes and scrapping to survive. Iwan Tirta's biographical data (Tirta, 1996) and President Sukarno's autobiography (Adams, 1965) attested to pervasive poverty experienced in Indonesia during the decade of the 1960s and 1970s. However, there occurred a reversal in national economic fortunes for many Javanese during Suharto's governance beginning in 1968.

Intrinsic to the word fashion is the idea of obsolescence. The experience of fashion

points to the elusive quality considered as style. Sartorial inventory is under the spell of unpredictable market forces. Within a Western frame of reference, style, particularly with haute couture forms coming out of successful fashion houses, presumes a concept of artistic genius to describe the designer. The genius of the designer adds value to the product. Such value resolves in a monetary value attached to the product, usually in a range that is beyond the financial reach of most Javanese. These characterizations become increasingly acute when global marketing factors into the value of a commodity. Nonetheless, these features are questionable for batik object forms produced by parochial settings prior to Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945. Sacrilization of culture through *singularization* of objects (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1986, p. 74) and its forms came out of Dutch conceptualization of culture through institutions as the *Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, (Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, 1778). The institutionalization of culture and its object forms expanded under Raffles, which led to the official opening of Gedung Gajah (Elephant Building, 1886) also known as Gedung Arca (The house of Statues).

Boehlke asserts that an outside market (1992, p. 1) influenced Indonesian sartorial objects considered as fashion. In this case, the outside market is indexical of a globalized market economy. Fashion, particularly those of haute couture, represents objects capable of enticing a general Javanese population's imagination. Nevertheless, fashion in forms of haute couture had a limited clientele such as Java's new priyayi, illustrating the replacement of a hereditary aristocracy with privileged economic elite. Iwan Tirta's commodifications of batik, assigned to the category of haute couture, reassign them into sacralized objects (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1986, pp.73-77).

Boehlke's 2008 dissertation shifts from her original focus of evaluating Iwan Tirta as a boundary artist. She reframes her research into a discussion of three methods of textile production of batik, *ikat*, and *pelangi* (*plangi*). *Pelangi* is a technique of tying and dyeing cloth. *Ikat* ties warp, weft or both fibers into a design before dyeing the cloth. These cloth surface

modifications represent distinct types of dyeing procedures in decorating (2008, p. 4) cloth surfaces. These dyeing processes also classify cloth and its modifications into traditional Indonesian textiles (2008, p. 4). Boehlke proposed that Indonesia's social and political circumstances were sympathetic to start-up entrepreneurial adventures during the decades of 1970's and onwards. However, the revision of batik's biography began under the political aegis of President Sukarno. Iwan Tirta's sartorial constructions are luxury goods; nevertheless, they objectify national identity cum culture. Iwan Tirta claimed that his haute couture forms reinforce people's experience of national identity as recorded by his following remark:

At the same time, batik has helped create an Indonesian identity: "Many Indonesians feel they must wear something which makes them recognizable. That's why we have scarves so that a woman who doesn't want to let go of her Western dress can just wear a scarf or an accessory. She doesn't need to be swathed in batik from head to toe. (Kuffel, 1993).

Haute couture became an efficient and portable social mechanism for Indonesia's cultural diffusion. Haute couture in their abbreviated representations of national culture was one result of Suharto's New Order policies. His policies were critical to setting up batik's re-presentation of Indonesian culture for both domestic and international public settings.

I agree with Boehlke's position that sartorial commodities are cultural constructions capable of objectifying national and cultural identity. Iwan Tirta's forms of haute couture in their commodifications however, are expressive of social intentions that do not coincide with preindustrial production of batiked cloth prepossessed with humble ends to dress the human torso. Batik increasingly became synonymous of Indonesian national identity during the decades of 1960s and 1970s. Civic functions and state events required dress of batiked cloth. Under Suharto, the state deftly marketed batik on behalf of itself. Official state representatives escorted foreign dignitaries and celebrities to Iwan Tirta's boutique on Jalan Panarukan 25. State sanctioning of batik, also supremely took expression in shirts worn by heads of state for the ASEAN

Conference (1994) in Jakarta. The new forms of batik wear bear no resemblance from those produced in traditional methods during their preindustrial settings. They were deparicularized (Foster, 1991, p. 249) from Javanese original social settings. Foster (1991) stated:

...the cultural forms in which both national elites and non-elites represent and imagine themselves- objects, images, and acts-are part of a global flow of commodities accelerated by new media technologies of reproduction and diffusion (55a.)<sup>10</sup> As commodities, these forms are made available for consumption on a massive scale. And through consumption, as several anthropologists have stressed recently, consumers create (and/or acquiesce in) personal and social identities... including national-cultural identities. (p. 248).

### **A Review of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro Literature**

I am reviewing K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's literature because of his social, cultural, and intellectual proximity to Iwan Tirta. His literature reveals subtle but significant difference in how he understands batik. He also differs with Iwan Tirta on batik's role within contemporary Indonesian social life. I stated previously that the cultural motif of polarity is an influential cultural archetype. The condition of contrast equally distinguishes K.R.T. Hardjonagoro from Iwan Tirta. This dyad repeats itself as in the discussion of early European ethnographers of Raffles (1830) and Rouffaer/Juyboll (1900) approach to writing about batik; or how President Sukarno's (1945-1968) and President Suharto's (1968-1998) secured batik's cultural status. The dyad of contrast is a prominent metaphor applied to my response of my research question. The metaphor involves differences in existential conditions describing Java's social life prior to its formal transition into becoming a member of a sovereign nation in 1945. Ontological conditions describing the manner and quality of human experience of time and space are simply different. It is my view that production of artifacts to describe processes involved in enculturation of materiality is capable of representing such ontological conditions. Thus, implicit and explicit meanings reflected in Javanese batik cloth prior to and after Indonesian sovereign statuses

reveal distinct, separate, and unrelated ontological positions.

However, this proposition is tentative and to be followed by further research. My proposition therefore, tentatively concludes that contemporary batik commodities embody existential positions with little resemblance to their predecessors. The pronounced attribute of contemporary batik is that it represents national identity. My interview of Iwan Tirta's long-time family friend, Charles Nijo, on the island of Bali reinforced two important sentiments. It reinforced my suspicion that time and space are in themselves enculturated forms of materiality. My interview also reinforced how time and place irrevocably endow meaning to enculturated objects. I understood these two propositions, because of Charles Nijo's comment about the emerging middle class under Dutch colonization. Nijo describes the development of the middle-class:

Just completely, unnatural you know... Well as I say, I, I actually did not connect with the new generation. Iwan was probably more... They should know what, uh, the new kind of elite, but a... based on money. Although there are plenty of people who have also studied abroad, it is not for studying abroad that you have a... You can study as much as you like but can still be an asshole, you know. It is something that probably our lives are different, and quite gentle. (Kühr, 1996).

A second source came from Iwan Tirta in commenting about education. He stated

The younger generation, meanwhile, is not ready to take over their mastery of the art. "It is because we are still bound by the tradition of transfer which does not consider documentation important. There was not much documentation being done," he said. "Fortunately, though, more and more books on batik have become available even though most of them were written by foreigners." (Madjiah, 1992).

The above comments address two different topics and appear to be non-sequiturs to this general discussion. Yet, these independent comments shared a common underpinning. They index distinctions in experiencing time and space. In some of his interviews, Iwan Tirta refers back to social experiences that occurred within traditional Javanese social structure to describe batik in general. Such descriptions however extend to his commodities by default. Iwan Tirta

persisted with the idea that experiences that came to define batik of past has continued without any disruption. Therefore, his batik commodities are heir apparent to a former legacy. Some of Iwan Tirta's interview responses are wistful complaints. They divert attention from understanding the concept of time and space as enculturated conditions. The following review of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's literature demonstrates the ontological differences that distinguish him from Iwan Tirta.

Why K.R.T. Hardjonagoro appended “A Personal View” to the title of his essay, *The place of batik in the history and philosophy of Javanese textiles; A personal view* (Hardjonagoro, 1980), remains a mystery to me. He was Indonesia's arbiter of Javanese culture under Sukarno as well a scholar of Central Javanese court palace culture. The attached phrase inflects his intentions suggested by the main title to his essay. His text mirrors in tone and style of those associated with Javanologists Rouffaer, cited by Legêne and Waaldijk (in van Hout, 2001). K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's text embodies an intentionality structured phenomenologically. This appeared in his comment, “We turn to discuss batik's spiritual and philosophic background, its 'life-environment,' and to consider batik-makers and some implications of the designs they choose” (Hardjonagoro, 1980, p. 229). His statement framed orientations towards batik that were representative of social conditions obliquely described by Nijo (1996) and Iwan Tirta (1992). The proposition also settled how K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's view-of and experience-of batik parts from Iwan Tirta's perspective.

His “personal view” provided rich details about batik not expressed in any other written material on the subject. His existential position towards batik supports this research's position that modern day batik does not embody historical continuity, because social lives responsible for production of batik were different social experiences. In addition, corresponding cultural meaning are not identical. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's existential orientation anchored batik to social life of Java's past prior to Indonesian sovereignty in 1945. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro terse comment

also explains batik and its characterization in Iwan Tirta's title of a pamphlet, *Batik: the Magic Cloth*. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's expands his discussion on batik by tracing its evolution involving the decline of central Javanese Hindu-Buddhist kingdom (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Majapahit kingdoms). The rise in power of the Islamic state of Demak emerged at this time. He asserted that this cultural shift in power and governance resulted in a cultural reorientation:

At that moment the footing of both major alien religions was uncertain, hesitant, and provisional; and in that interim the Javanese discovered the delight and joy of "homecoming," of reversion to their own honored beliefs and the original faith of their ancestors, in a search for true authenticity. (Hardjonagoro, 1980, p. 230).

The "homecoming" Hardjonagoro spoke about transcended fifteenth-century institutionalized Hindu-Buddhist beliefs system. The homecoming embodied the archetype of Batara Guru (Hiang Jagad Giri Noto) a primordial dyad of the linga/yoni and personified as Father Akoso and Mother Pertiwi. As Hardjonagoro pointed out, Batara Guru was progenitor of Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu, and even Buddha (1980, p. 231). The dyad of the linga/yoni as a study in contrast characterizes Javanese existential position. The linga/yoni dyad is a primordial cultural motif, an understanding extended to production of batiked cloth and experience of its consumption. Duality appeared in court aesthetic concept of *halus/kasar* (refined-vulgar) polarity. This cultural motif applied to all aspects of social life. Within Western worldview, such belief configurations occupy the category of myth. However, a strong mystical strain in Javanese day-to-day life blurs such distinctions. Polarities of real versus unreal or fact versus fiction are indistinguishable. This was possible, because orientation towards unfolding of life existed in terms of feeling or as Sukarno (Adams, 1965) described as emotion in describing the general Indonesian, Marhaen population.

Responding emotively as characterized by Sukarno (Adams, 1965), rests on powers of intuition and imagery, as a primary mean to negotiate day-to-day life. It is one approach in

creating meaning to lived experiences. Critical analysis or scientific interpretation about lived experiences is introspective activity not typical of Javanese social life. This approach to explaining lived experiences did not take effect until the twentieth century, because it depended on having access to education. European outsiders initiated such interpretative introspection, a form of cultural reflexivity, arranging Javanese social life into a system of categories. Javanese existential experiences negotiate through terms of feeling, constituted in experiential vocabulary of premonitions, magic, ritual, or meditative accomplishments. Instead of logic and linearity, feeling coupled with imagery appeared to be a dominant vocabulary, as referred to by Sukarno (Adams, 1965). Such ontological positions describe experience in degrees of intensity. This suggests kinship with aesthetic experiences. However, they were experiences unlike semblances of the different modes of Art (Langer, 1953). The cultural motif configured as a dyadic motif with mythic origins had practical applications in visual re-presentations of batik surface patterns as described by Iwan Tirta (1996):

Others credit the legendary Sultan Agung of Mataram (1613-1645) who, they say, created the design. According to popular belief, Sultan Agung was meditating on the shores of Java's south coast. Watching enormous waves breaking the rocks, causing their destruction, he was inspired to name a batik design after this phenomenon. (p. 74).

The dyadic configuration is a cultural prism, which influenced visual patterning of cloth surfaces. Since batik patterns reflected belief systems reliant on mysticism, polar references were central iconic sources for batik cloth's magical properties.

Chapter 2 introduced a literature review that attended to theoretical foundations of Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006). Literature of both theoretical propositions shared concepts of imagined properties and consumption. Activities of consumption are responsible for furthering symbolic forms to influence social life by endowing objects with meaning. Objects in their acquisition of meaning through processes of consumptions illustrate their enculturation. This

review did not fully represent the extent or scope of the literature amassed in constructing a reasoned response to my research question. The depth of analysis of literature established a frame of reference in order to pinpoint Iwan Tirta's cultural and intellectual contributions to Indonesian batik. This chapter focused on key literary sources to explain intellectual motifs that have emerged from this research. Analysis of the literature supplements two different types of interviews engaged by Iwan Tirta on the subject of batik. I also reviewed important historical writings as well recent scholarly text written by Boehlke (1992, 2008).

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction

Chapter 3 outlines methods applied to analyzing extant data collected for this research. Consequently, an explanation of sources for the data initiates this discussion. The general categories of data consist of written and visual forms of texts. Since this research is an interpretative approach, the processes of how I read my data and how I extrapolated information from my data required clarification. I was alert to types of data expressive of van Manen's (1997) lived-existentials of space, time, community and corporeality. I sought nuanced disclosures evocatively communicated.

A companion to the philosophy of phenomenology is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics indicates my orientation through my active reading of both written and visual forms of texts. In clarifying how I read written and visual texts also argues for my general approach undertaken in this research and justification for it. Hence, this became evident with my inclusion of anecdotes, to accentuate the phenomenological nature of this research. Anecdotes communicated subtleties that describe my interactions with Iwan Tirta. They also documented both related and unrelated experiences occurring during my two weeks in Indonesia. Information, as such, provided a context for those interviews undertaken during my fieldwork. Inclusion of anecdotal information contributed to a construction of meaning in responding to my research question.

### Data

**Written text:** The evidence for this research consists largely of written forms of texts. Within this category, the different types of texts referred to for research data illustrate a multidisciplinary approach to my thesis. This research relies on theoretical models taken from

different intellectual disciplines. In this research, the concern for the subject of batik refers to it in the abstract, as a concept as well as to its discreet incarnations consisting of commodities. The texts represent Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary sources. Their ranking does not indicate their relative importance, rather ranking of the texts point to their proximity to Iwan Tirta. They represent language's capacity to disclose his sentiments altered minimally because they escaped his intellectual reflexive actions.

**Primary Sources of Written Text:** In 1996, I traveled to Jakarta for two weeks to gather information about Iwan Tirta. The data I intended to collect were originally for my Master's degree at the University of Minnesota's department of Master of Liberal Studies. Prior to my departure, there was preliminary communication between Iwan Tirta and me using fax technology. I requested an interview with Iwan Tirta, which consisted of questions focused on his biographical information, aesthetics, and specifically the subject of batik. I offered Iwan Tirta a proposed schedule, which he subsequently altered after my arrival in Jakarta. He asked if I would consider traveling with him and a friend to the island of Bali for the second week. My first week in Jakarta also included unanticipated diversions that Iwan Tirta did not inform me about, prior to my departure for Indonesia. Impromptu diversions consisted of the following events: attendance to a performance of classical Javanese dance at the Hilton International hotel; visiting one of Iwan Tirta's factories on the outskirts of Jakarta; traveling to the famed temple of Borobudur; visiting K.R.T. Hardjonagoro at his home in Solo and visiting the palace of the Susuhunan of Surakarta. My anecdotes document these unscheduled events. The following anecdotes describe a set of experiences that provide spatial and psychological descriptions. These set of experiences are not incidental events. They give added meaning to data gathered for this research, thereby linking the

data to specific enculturated spatial contexts. My own lived experiences filtered my evaluation of the data collected for this research. They represent van Manen's existentials (1997) as previously described. Thus, the anecdotal data is inextricably bound to its original spatial positions defined by their discreet psychological textures.

Iwan Tirta's generosity extended to include me in impromptu excursions announced the day prior to our departures. When he notified me about these excursions, Iwan Tirta did not explain to me about their importance or relevance to my stated goals to interview him. Iwan Tirta simply instructed me to show up at his Jalan Panarukan address at a certain time. My first unanticipated excursion involved visiting his production factory in the outskirts of Jakarta. He introduced me to female batikers and to an elderly man, who stamped (cap) a surface pattern on the fabric. I followed him into an enclosed room where Iwan Tirta spoke about how he rediscovered the technique of applying gold leaf, *prada*, on the cloth surface. Iwan Tirta was not shy in showing his burn marks due to experimentation with batik that involved silk and flammable liquids. Iwan Tirta gave me a stamp, cap, and a canting as mementos of my visit to his production center.

We traveled to the famed Hindu-Buddhist complex, Borobudur, after visiting his factory. He provided a brief explanation about the temple complex. Iwan Tirta remained at the bottom of the temple complex, but suggested that his guest and I go to a specific Buddha. Iwan Tirta informed us that we would receive much luck, if we succeeded in reaching and touching the hand of Buddha. Iwan Tirta then treated his guest and me with fresh coconut juice.

Next, we traveled in his fully equipped grey Mercedes to the city of Surakarta, Solo, stopping at a house, consisting of understated and simple architectural design. An elderly female greeted us and escorted us into a room filled with artifacts and paintings. Iwan Tirta introduced us to elderly man of mixed Chinese descent. I sat next to Iwan Tirta, who was to my right on the long side of a rectangular table. The host sat at the head of the table to Iwan Tirta's right. At the time of the visit, I was not clear who this man was, because there was no previous discussion about the visit. Iwan Tirta and our host spoke at length about *kris*es (Indonesian dagger that are part of a male's attire). I deferred to Iwan Tirta, listened, and remained quiet. I have come to realize in hindsight that our host was none other than K.R.T Hardjonagoro in person. I regret that I did not have advance knowledge about visiting him, which would have prepared me to ask him questions about batik.

Our trip concluded with visiting one of the royal houses. A tannish-grey colored British Land Rover parked at the main entrance the royal court. I remembered that I

found it odd in seeing the car parked at the main entrance of this ancient building. Near the entrance, I noticed two elderly women each clad in a sarong. They squatted and moved over the floor by scooting over marble floors with their heads bent forwards as they shuffled in their position cleaning steps. I wanted to take their arms and raise them into a vertical position. I did not understand why they were in squatted positions, interpreting their demeanors as being extreme forms of meekness. The younger brother of the prince met us, escorting us into the inner sanctum of the palace. In order to reach our destination, we walked through the main and public pavilion, *pendopo*, of the *Kraton*. I did not respond favorably to all of the filigree work on the sides of square columns supporting an open space with grand chandeliers. It reminded me of the excess of Baroque art.

An elderly man dressed in traditional batik wear then met us to escort us past the personal quarters of members of royal family. Near the edge of inner sanctum, there was a raised high-back chair. Iwan Tirta sat opposite to the raised dais, as I stood next to his left and his guest standing to his right. We waited approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. Like other excursions, prior to our visit of the royal palace, *kraton*, there was no preliminary discussion. Neither did Iwan Tirta explain to me about our host. After much time spent in silence, a very handsome and relatively tall man in his thirties came out of one of the private quarters. Our host exhibited a pristine masculinity accentuated by classical chiseled facial features. He walked towards Iwan Tirta, who stood up and bent his head slightly forwards. He shook our hands, while Iwan Tirta introduced us to this royal personage. His Highness turned to seat himself on chair resting on a dais. His position gave him a downward perspective of us, standing at the opposite side of the open space. His Highness was dapper, attired in a green khaki uniform style outfit, consisting of a short sleeve shirt. His attire reminded me of uniforms I have come to associate with Indonesia's President Sukarno. After observing us, his Highness' acknowledgements broke the silence.

Circumstances communicated to me through both body language and spatial configuration that I was not to interrupt with questions. Iwan Tirta primarily spoke. I was surprised and puzzled that even though Iwan Tirta is in familiar terms with members of the royal household, the conversations between them was cordial and subdued. I considered their dialogue as exchanges of pleasantries. I was surprised because of Iwan Tirta's stature in Javanese society. Their verbal interaction was restrained, guarded, and lacked warmth despite their familiarity. Our interactions were formal. Approximately eight feet separated us from our royal host. I was overwhelmed with experiencing an impenetrable chasm facing me, which made me uneasy. After our cordial salutations for our departure, the seated royal host stepped down and disappeared into one of the side rooms. A less senior member of royal family escorted us into an enclosed room at the far

end of open courtyard, which housed all of the royal coaches and antique cars.

To date I do not know who the royal personage was. Iwan Tirta at no time informed me or educated me of our intended visits. Neither, did he explain as to why and the purpose for the unforeseen visit. My relationship with Iwan Tirta was formal, meaning that his body language, tone in voice cued me to approach him deferentially. This orientation complicated my reading of circumstances I experienced. Based on current photographic evidence of the palace's architectural features of the pendopo, I believe we visited the royal house of the Susuhunan Pakubuwono of Surakarta, Solo. My vivid memory of the pillars being square, white in color, and its ornate carved filigree work on the pillar's side panels are the basis for my conclusion. (Kühr, 1996).

The first week in Jakarta consisted of a set of three interviews held at his home and at Jakarta's International Hilton Hotel. Each interview session took approximately 3 hours, whereby I faithfully adhered to written questions I had typed out prior to my departure for Jakarta. My first week in Jakarta also included my invitation to attend a private birthday party held at his home. Those who attended the birthday party were local Javanese of high social status. Some did not hesitate to share information disclosing their economic prosperity. With hindsight, this highly educated and articulate group of individuals represented for me modern day Indonesian priyayi. The information some of the individuals shared was unsolicited and freely given. For instance, one guest informed all those present that she bought an airline company the afternoon prior to attending the birthday event that evening. Another guest was the director of Indonesia's National Museum. The following anecdote describes the event in detail.

During the first week of interviewing Iwan Tirta, he invited me to attend a private birthday party for one of his friends. His invitation included enticements of authentic Indonesian *reistafel* cooked by his sister. I arrived approximately between 6:30-7:00 PM. His guests included a young woman of mixed descent in her late twenties, who informed all in present company that she bought an airline company that afternoon. There was the director of the Indonesia's National Museum.

However, the most memorable was a husband and wife with their two children, a boy, and a girl, of mixed, Chinese descent. The mother dominated the conversation and the

exchange of information provided a graphic image of their social position. The mother declared that they recently bought a two million dollar home in London. Their reason for the purchase was that she wanted to be close to her son who attended a private school in London. She also informed us that her daughter attended the most expensive private girls' school in Switzerland. Between the two children, the boy was most expressive and unguarded with his thoughts. He stated that when his mother came to his school for parent-teacher conference, all his school chums turned their heads as his mother walked by. They were reacting positively to his mother's attire. He stated that in one visit she was impeccably dressed in a Claude Montana leather outfit.

His father was a contractor. Iwan Tirta informed me that he was responsible for many of the skyscrapers that have become part of Jakarta's landscape. The father had just flown in from Bali where he was negotiating a multi-million dollar real-estate development. Iwan Tirta informed me that the boy's father was negotiating with him for acquisition of his extensive private art collection. It would have consisted of an exchange in which Iwan Tirta could choose any condominium that had a retail value of two plus million dollars in any building built by the boy's father. (Kühr, 1996).

I spent the second week on the island of Bali in the town of Ubud. Iwan Tirta notified me of the opportunity to interview a long-time family friend, Charles Nijo. Charles Nijo studied economics at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. He worked for Chase Manhattan Bank Indonesia (1975) and for the Association of Southeast Nations. I had a three-hour interview with him at his home focused on his relationship with Iwan Tirta. I was particularly interested in his personal views on Iwan Tirta's contributions to batik and Indonesian culture.

### **Secondary Sources of Written Text**

Secondary sources of written text consisted of all interviews Iwan Tirta granted to newspapers, magazines, and journals. Prior to my first interview of Iwan Tirta at his home and when I was introduced to his administrative assistance, the office of P.T. Ramacraft handed me a black loose bound book, to be referred to as *P.T. Ramacraft Collated Handbook* (1996). As previously noted, the bounded material consisted of biographical information, introductory

material written by Gareth Steen, a list of fashion shows and exhibits, a list of his awards, information on batik, ikat and the Foundation of Moeljodihardjo,; and a list of 63 newspaper interviews. Interviews spanned the years 1964 to 1996. The book also included copies of my email correspondence with Iwan Tirta prior to my departure for Indonesia.

### **Tertiary Sources of Written Text**

This category constitutes general literature. However, this category divides literature authored by Iwan Tirta and K.R.T. Hardjonagoro from written information covering the general topic of batik. Literature authored by Iwan Tirta and K.R.T. Hardjonagoro is critical. Those written by Iwan Tirta are extensions to his interviews. His written texts filter Iwan Tirta's statements documented by an extensive collection of interviews that involve him.

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's written material frames the discussion about batik in contexts of Javanese history, culture and philosophy. His literature provides insight of important cultural themes not fully addressed by Iwan Tirta. Yet, his writing reveals his personal orientations and perspectives about batik. Since, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro was Iwan Tirta's teacher and mentor, his written legacy complements as well contrasts Iwan Tirta's texts. General literature includes information that specifically addresses Javanese culture, mysticism, politics, and history. The variety and scope of literature provided information relied on for interpreting data. Thereby, this category consisted of literature that share a systematic continuity with primary and secondary texts as described. The general category included readings on phenomenology, which described the nature of data sought and hermeneutics, which described my stance taken towards reading of both written and visual texts.

**Visual text:**Chapter 1 provided a cursory overview, which explained the role of imagery in this

research. The following commentary discusses use of a photograph of one of Iwan Tirta's haute couture constructions referred to throughout this document as ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998, see Figure 12) throughout this dissertation. ABC-1993 (DeLong) exemplifies a sartorial construction involving exposed shoulders as a dominant aesthetic feature.



*Figure 12.* ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998): *Adi Luhung*, Iwan Tirta, 1993  
Hilton International Hotel, Jakarta - Iwan Tirta's Personal Video Collection

A full-length gown with shoulder straps was not an anomaly in Iwan Tirta's inventory. This configuration appeared in fashion shows prior to and after *Adi Luhung* (1992), which was in effect a preview for the 1993 season. The surface floral decorative scheme recurs in his haute couture constructions, as exemplified by fashion plate number 2, consisting of a gown of silk gazar. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) reifies Iwan Tirta's thinking or conceptualization about batik. The image is a pictorial representation of his concepts about batik. Fashion plate number 2 was a telling example to illustrate the central focus of this research, which seeks to determine Iwan Tirta's relationship with batik. It is suggestive of Iwan Tirta's concepts, in how they play

out in their corresponding corporeal forms. However, my focus also rests with their implicit cultural meanings and significances. Therefore, the pictorial representation refers back to Iwan Tirta's statements and claims made about batik in his interviews and vice versa. His sartorial constructions and their commodifications implicate his instincts, ideas, and conceptualization of batik. Thus, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) as a form of text signifies attributes that correspond to Iwan Tirta's ideas described by their discursive forms. Readings of both forms of texts, and in their understanding as being part of a singular, organic whole, provide the logic for analyzing the data.

Chapter 7 begins with a descriptive analysis of ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) for its aesthetic properties. The image stimulated my observations of interconnections between disclosures made by his written text in conjunction to disclosures made by visual text. Thus, the pictorial example visually states Iwan Tirta's lived-experiences (van Manen, 1997) represented by existential dimensions of space, time, community and corporeality. Existing correspondences between ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) and written texts undergo interpretation. Each existential categories become a placeholder to which disclosures are assigned.

#### **ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) Analysis**

The source of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) was a VHS recording that documented the entire fashion event. This recording was one tape out of a set of five tapes that made up Iwan Tirta's personal collection. Iwan Tirta allowed me to make copies of his personal collection while I was in Jakarta. Since a VHS recording is a cinematic recording of the event, the sartorial constructions consist of serialized set of images preserving life-like spatial characterizations under which his sartorial constructions are experienced. The cinematic effect projects a visual

experience simulating sensory attributes experienced in the natural world. A single image, nevertheless, complements written texts amassed for this research. Google's Picasa software changed a series of imagery originally formatted cinematically into a single image. The image projected a dressed female torso caught as a single performative act. It represented a single moment in time that is stable and thereby, rendered into a coherent composition. Its properties form an organic perceptible whole, cohering into a gestalt disclosed as a dressed human torso.

The single image is subjected to analysis using a portion of DeLong's (1987, 1998) system of visual analysis. Central to her system of analysis is the concept, apparel-body-construct (ABC). DeLong established a procedure to analyze a dressed human torso that is captured in a single incident of an image with time frozen. Her system entails observing a dressed torso existing within an environment, a critical element considered with analyzing a gestalt form. The dressed human torso appears as a single self-contained whole as a perceptible cognitively determined structure, involving principles of gestalt theory. However, this research does not apply DeLong's entire procedure and therefore, will not reflect a faithful application of her system of visual analysis. This research applies DeLong's nomenclature because of its denotative precision of terms to describe perceptible aesthetic appearances. Apply-ing DeLong's terminology renders a description where human subjective inclinations are minimal. Conversely, her terminology maximizes objective orientations taken to interpret ABC-1993 (DeLong 1987, 1998), as a gestalt.

DeLong's (1987, 1998) system of visual analysis corresponds to experiencing an apparel-body-construct that is captivated as a single pictorial image. It is a pictorial composition extracted from a cinematic presentation of Iwan Tirta's annual fashion previews. A cinematic

rendition presents a seriation of apparel-body-constructs (DeLong, 1987, 1998), which maximize perceptible kinetic properties produced by particulars of a dressed body. Kinetic properties simulate in the reader assumptions made about three-dimensional form, highlighting corporeal object's capacity to penetrate it surrounding. In this instance, such assumptions apply to a viewer's experience of virtual space. Thus, ABC-1993 (DeLong 1987, 1998) reifies human sense of space captured pictorially. It meets the basic requirement for DeLong's system of visual analysis.

A hermeneutic reading of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) comes into play, which is a fundamental orientation towards how I read visual and written texts. Such orientation required that I suspend automatic inclinations, *epoché*, when interpreting visual information. It was incumbent that I minimized tendencies to interpret an apparel-body-construct based on assumptions defined by my experiences in the natural world. My psychological distance between myself, as a reader, and my visual experience allowed me to interact dialectically to take hold. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) disclosures appear on its merits as a gestalt, as it exists in an independent, complete and whole condition. Analyzing ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) required that I resist the fundamental assumption that it exhibited three-dimensions; or that it represented an object deemed to be a dressed human torso or that it is a snapshot disclosing a single moment to an unfolding of a fashion show. These characterizations represent higher levels of abstraction, which abrogates my fidelity to a hermeneutic reading of an aesthetic object in the form of ABC-1993.

ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is fundamentally a delimited two-dimensional surface area consisting of color, line, shapes, and modulation of variety of aesthetic attributes. By

initiating my analysis of a gestalt purely for its two-dimensional surface properties, ultimately clarified my understanding of an apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) that had not emerged. Thus, my understanding of an apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is consequent of preliminary surface properties presented two-dimensionally. This approach also enhanced my experiences for pictorial evocativeness disclosed through my reading of ABC-1993 as pictorial text. Further, analyzing pictorial form purely for its two-dimensional properties ultimately disclosed those implicit structural elements, which this apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) depended on. My analysis points to aesthetic surface property fluctuating between two-dimensional and three-dimensional identities. The composite structure alludes to an object associated as a specific incidence at a specific moment in time during a staging of a fashion show. Iwan Tirta is responsible for the apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998) incarnations. Likewise, he was responsible for its role in its staging memorialized as a cinematic record. As such, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is a pictorial metaphor for Iwan Tirta's lived-experience pointing to the four existentials proposed by van Manen (1997).

## **Method**

**Readings of texts:** The data for this research required multiple readings. The first round of reading was simply to acquaint myself with textual information, which required that I withheld or refrained from immediately and automatically interjecting responses I might have. With the second round of reading, I noted bits of information possibly relevant to the research question. The final reading allowed me to be aware of the text in its entirety, while attending to the text in its reading. The final reading of material forms identified potential meanings held by textual contents. Textual descriptions indicated one of van Manen's (1997) four existentials of lived-

space, lived-time, lived-corporeality, and lived-community. In addition, the existentials guided a plausible interpretative response for this research question. The sense of meaning is fundamentally an interpretative description and therefore, it is ahistorical. The narrative built out of textual disclosures changes into a descriptive form experienced diachronically, represented by the words of the body of this dissertation's text.

This approach is most relevant for literature providing general information representing the various categories mentioned. However, my reading of Primary and Secondary Source Texts sought phenomenological contents in the data through a hermeneutic reading of written and visual texts. This warrants a discussion to clarify how phenomenological orientation and hermeneutical reading of data applies to this research. One of my graduate classes involved the topic of research methods. The class topic focused on van Manen's (1997) research method based on philosophical tradition of phenomenology. Van Manen's phenomenological method expanded on previous work developed out of German philosophical traditions. Van Manen's philosophical principles and their application to this research came out of philosophical principles of Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938). He introduced propositions that constitute the intellectual discipline of phenomenology. The Greek word *phaenómenon*, -that which appears, conflates with *lógos*, -study. Phenomenology focuses on building textual forms or structures representing incidences of consciousness. Thus, van Manen's (1997) idea of lived-experience corresponds to Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833-1933) principle of *Erlebnis*, summed up in the word, *experience*. Dilthey's principle is distinctive because of its focus on experience and its memorable affect. Van Manen (1997) reintroduced this principle. He represented a recent permutation of an intellectual tradition preceded by ideas of existentialist thinkers of Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Nietzsche

(1844-1900).

Kierkegaard (*The Concept of Anxiety* [1844]; *Either/Or* [1843]; *Fear and Trembling* [1843]) and Nietzsche (*The Birth of Tragedy* [1872], *Beyond Good and Evil* [1886], *On the Genealogy of Morals* [1887]) focused on human subjective conditions. Implicit of existentialism is the consideration that truth occurs in forms of human subjectivities, a concept Rose uses. Existential principles, therefore, do not stake truth as being an independent, factual and durable condition. Descriptions of natural phenomena are interpretative configurations subject to further enquiry. Facticity is therefore, an unstable position, prone to change, because disclosed and undisclosed information inflects the phenomena it seeks to describe. Van Manen's (1997) concept of lived-experience describes consciousness as a primordial structure defined by dimensions of lived-time, lived-space, lived-corporeality and lived-community. These existentials are basic human experiences that describe human sense of *being-in-the-world*. Thus, van Manen's (1997) existential dimensions represent modes of *Being*, one structured into unexpressed and intuitive preverbal conditions. Preverbal conditions are results of human interaction with their immediate physical and social environment. Voicing preverbal conditions intend to describe contents of consciousness. Preverbal structures allow access to potential meaning, which renders meaningful forms to produce experiences of understanding. However, van Manen's (1997) preverbal descriptions of experience resist human tendencies to interject higher levels of reasoning to structure human experience. The challenge of reading text is to deflect a tendency to edit descriptions of experience, representing preverbal contents seeking descriptive forms. I propose a tentative idea that preverbal entities are confections of imagery with feeling. Such descriptions represent dimensions of human lived-experiences into a variety of types of texts. Texts might consist of

oral, written, aural, pictorial, concrete, or ideational object forms. Further, social and physical environments influence these forms of texts, because a person is the source for production of textual forms. A person, as author to production of texts, is a social creature, who is affected by and responsive to physical and nonphysical phenomenal conditions.

Since descriptions of preverbal structures result in a variety of forms of texts, a companion to phenomenology was hermeneutics. Early Christian philosophers applied a hermeneutical orientation towards analyzing scriptural text. A hermeneutical reading seeks to detect revelatory contents text might offer. Hermeneutics is not a procedure for reading of text. Neither is hermeneutics a systematic procedure to vouch that its application met prescribed standards. The propositions of hermeneutics are at odds with the idea that reading of text is a singular or unilateral condition. Rather, a hermeneutical reading of text suggests that reading is an embodied activity. A reader embodies the effects of revelatory disclosures of text. Thus, reading is an active condition, whereby understanding correspondingly emerges, because of the reader's capacity to participate empathetically, in degree and scope, with textual contents disclosed through their reading. Revelatory contents reconstitute into forms of consciousness. The following comment clarifies:

This reflects back on Heidegger's definition of terms such as understanding, interpretation, and assertion. Understanding, in Heidegger's account, is neither a method of reading nor the outcome of a willed and carefully conducted procedure of critical reflection. It is not something we consciously do or fail to do, but something we are. Understanding is a mode of being, and as such, it is characteristic of human being, of Dasein. The pre-reflective way in which Dasein inhabits the world is itself of a hermeneutic nature. Our understanding of the world presupposes a kind of pragmatic know-how that is revealed through the way in which we, without theoretical considerations, orient ourselves in the world. We open the door without objectifying or conceptually determining the nature of the door-handle or the doorframe. The world is familiar to us in a basic, intuitive way.

Most originally, Heidegger argues, we do not understand the world by gathering a collection of neutral facts by which we may reach a set of universal propositions, laws, or judgments that, to a greater or lesser extent, corresponds to the world as it is. The world is tacitly intelligible to us. (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2009).

Enculturated materiality in all of its textual forms is historically conditioned. However, reading of materiality for its contents occurs as an ahistorical condition, because hermeneutic reading is an embodied action. I am suggesting that a reader's empathetic commitment experienced as acts of reading induces preverbal structures represented by melding of feeling with imagery. This is observable with readings of written text as well with reactions to oral communication. Preverbal structures can equally occur when listening to music, or when faced with mathematical uncertainty. Commitment of the reader leads to that singular epiphanic moment, a revelatory disclosure, as an '*a-ha*' moment, demonstrated by K.R.T. Hardjonagoro seeking the essential characteristics for Sukarno's Batik-Indonesia. Such epiphanic encounters induce clarity displacing previous experiences of frustration, conflict or being-in-the-dark. Interaction of the reader to text represents a self-contained whole, a hermeneutic circle. Hermeneutic reading is unique where *being-in-the-world* responds to *that-which-is-of-the-world* to produce an ahistorical, epiphanic disclosure. Nonetheless, revelatory disclosure emerges into historical conditions and thereby acquires its cultural properties. Description of textual disclosure projects cultural conditions anchored to experiences of time and space.

Van Manen (1997) asserts preverbal textual forms to originate as unfiltered, stream of consciousness utterances, which a reader transcribes into written text. His model of research for social science and the construction of an interpretative response require two participants. It involves the human source for the lived-experience and a reading of such experiences. This research does not strictly adhere to van Manen's research principles, which rely on preverbal

descriptive text. This research adapts Van Manen's framework to accord with existing conditions of this research's data. Forms of preverbal text consist of my face-to-face interviews of Iwan Tirta and family friend, Charles Nijo. This point of fact illustrated my need to rank text according to its proximity to Iwan Tirta existential position as disclosed by his verbal declarations about batik. Text of Iwan Tirta's interviews with trade journals do not consist of preverbal forms. Nevertheless, contrasting his editorial remarks in context of general text induce tensions to inflect discursive contents. The text might not be strictly preverbal utterances. They nevertheless are capable of indicating phenomenological conditions to describe Iwan Tirta's relationship to the term batik. The transcribed text of my face-face interviews consist of text showing higher abstraction. However, in the interviews, Iwan Tirta and Charles Nijo uttered their responses with little forethought. Neither Iwan Tirta nor Charles Nijo mulled over each question asked of them before responding to my questions. Their responses bordered stream-of-conscious processing of their respective internal lives. Textual expressive markers consist of persistence of non-sequiturs or sudden change in direction from the original question. Many...*mms*, long periods of silence, or changes of intonation, all provided a context to establish textual meaning. Injection of non-words such as facial expression or their physical gesticulations brought texture to their respective responses. A long hiatus exists since the interviews in 1996 and the writing of this text. The physical settings and the activities experienced during the interviews remain intact as memory. Iwan Tirta and Charles Nijo's gesticulations in voicing their thoughts remain to be memorable. When taken in their entirety, textuality produced from my face-to-face interviews projects vivid recollections. Unscripted and random references to their independent experiences are contributing reasons to endow texture to the text.

Chapter 3 described the different types of data relied upon by this research. Most of this research's evidentiary data consists of written forms of text. Ranking the written text does not consign their position to indicate their relative importance. Their ranking indexes degrees of abstraction in forms of information. This research sought evocative contents disclosed through reading of textual object forms. The type of information sought from the text implicates a phenomenological basis of this research. Text therefore, becomes a medium read hermeneutically for meaningful information disclosed on the merits of the text and its structure. I provided explanations for the disciplines of phenomenology and hermeneutics, arguing their relevance to this research. In accepting the evidentiary text to be expressive of van Manen's (1997) lived existentials, I approached reading of interviews with a degree of skepticism. Consequently, these propositions underscore language to be fluid and prone to acquire imaginative properties.

This understanding led to topics addressed by Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Literature discussing the subject of batik automatically involved words of Indonesia, Java, and batik. However, preexisting assumptions of their meanings are instrumental to understanding these words within contexts of a general discussion of batik or Iwan Tirta's narratives on the subject. Since the words Indonesia, Java, and batik are recurring descriptors in the general discussion of batik, each word required further clarification. Inquiry for their connotative dimensions resulted in establishing a frame of reference used to evaluate Iwan Tirta's commentaries on batik. These contextual prisms contributed to a construction of meaning to represent my analysis of the accumulated data. Evaluating the terms Indonesia, Java, and batik signaled their impending deconstruction. Each term was relieved of its former implicit and explicit meanings. The contexts for each word redefined it and therefore, changed my understanding of its meaning.

#### Chapter 4: “Indonesia” Facts and Factual-Fiction

Chapter 4 discusses the term Indonesia, followed by Chapters 5, which reassesses the word Java. Batik is the last word deconstructed for its meaning in Chapter 6. A discussion of each word, on the surface, might appear to be unnecessary or redundant. These specific words are unavoidable for this research on batik, since this type of textile has automatic association as an Indonesian cultural artifact. In addressing the research question, which seeks to pinpoint the relationship between Iwan Tirta and batik, the need arose in determining the explicit meanings of the terms Indonesia, Java, and batik. Such meanings are diachronic constructions, because each word evolved over time, influenced by place and setting. In contrast, my evaluation of these identical words used by Iwan Tirta establishes ahistorical or *synchronic* sets of meanings. The historical, diachronic, contents associated with words of Indonesia, Java, and batik merge with their ahistorical, synchronic, meanings. Their historically determined connotative meanings impress on their synchronic meaning and thereby, recreate syncretic forms of meanings. The words Indonesia, Java, and batik in their revised forms clarify their original narrative usage by Iwan Tirta. This description points to the polysemic conditions of these seemingly simple and straightforward words. Their nuanced inflections influenced my reading of Iwan Tirta’s usage of each term in his discussions of batik. Iwan Tirta and his usage of these terms influenced my reading of a cultural artifact known as Indonesian batik, which has an alternative name of Batik Indonesia coined by Indonesia’s first President Sukarno (1945-1968). Thus, deconstructing each term dispenses its preexisting embodied denotative stability. Their denotative stability relied on a reader’s assumptions in maintaining durability. Their deconstructions rebuild respective profiles for the terms Indonesia, Java, and batik out of extrapolated information disclosed through

readings of data.

Construction of the archipelago's early history is tenuous. Ricklefs (1993) reinforces this assessment about the archipelago's early history. Early history of the islands relied on limited artifacts described as, "The most reliable evidence for the spread of Islam within a local Indonesian society consists of Islamic inscriptions (mostly tombstones) and a few travelers' accounts" (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 3). For instance, the question of first Muslim incursion into the island rests on a gravestone dated 1082 AD (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 3).

The foundations for Java's current biography evolved out of information generated by national expansion during the Age of Discovery (15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries). The forms of information consisted of maritime documentations recording observations about their immediate surroundings; trade route information; and prescientific geographical, zoological, and anthropological data. Mercantile capitalism (Anderson, 2006) contributed to an aggressive European expansion in two-and-a-half centuries. European national interests directed outwards into unexplored territories. Mercantile capitalism decisively resulted in extending European spheres of social, economic and political influence in uncharted territories. English and European maritime expeditions foreshadowed imperial visions held by European nations deployed into territories and cultures unlike them. These maritime journeys also represented national desires to extend their influence into geographical nether regions around the globe. They initially focused on prospective traded goods. Ricklefs (1993) describes European preoccupation based on economic considerations prompting maritime adventures:

The Portuguese tried to keep secret the navigational details of the route to Asia, but there were Dutchmen in their service, the most famous of whom was Jan Huygen van Linschoten. In 1595-6, he published his *Itinerario naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien*

(‘Itinerary to the East, or Portuguese, Indies’), containing maps and detailed descriptions of the Portuguese discoveries. (p. 26).

Value of information gathered from maritime expeditions was not an end of its self, rather, the value rested with commercial prospects such information yielded. Ricklefs (1993) underscores the importance of the former Malay Archipelago in stating that Malacca was part of an island trading system “...linked to routes reaching westward to India, Persia, Arabia, Syria, East Africa, and the Mediterranean, northward to Siam and Pegu, and eastward to China and perhaps Japan” (pp.20-21; see Figure 13).

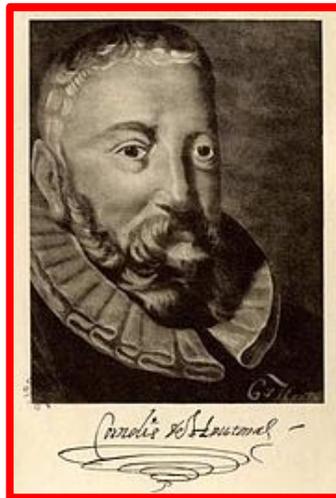


*Figure 13.* Malay Archipelago Trade Routes.  
<http://asiapacificuniverse.com/pkm/spiceroutes.htm>

The earliest European incursion into the Malay Archipelago was Portugal’s conquest of Malacca in 1511. Its conquest displaced the Sultan Mahmud of Malacca, who finally settled in Johor. The Portuguese attacked Johor nine times (1518-1587) and there were twelve attempts to destroy Malacca (1513-1629). Contests between European nations to dominate indigenous island cultures preoccupied what Ricklefs describes as the Age of Colonialism (1750-1945). Entrepôts served as strategic geographical locations. For instance, Malacca controlled sea traffic from the

Atlantic or Indian Ocean. Malacca was a strategic location on the Southwestern coast of the Malay Peninsula facing the east coast of Sumatra. Malacca monitored maritime passage to other islands in the archipelago. The Straits of Malacca was direct passage to further southern and eastern kingdoms. Far Eastern kingdoms of the Malay Peninsula, China, Japan, as well the Philippines to the north became accessible. Ricklefs (1993) describes the trade route to Malacca in the following superlative terms, “This was the greatest trading system in the world at this time, and the two crucial exchange points were Gujerat in northwest India and Malacca. The spices of Indonesia were one of the prize products of this system” (p. 21).

In 1595 (1993, p. 11), the first Dutch maritime expedition sailed to the archipelago, setting up a trading post in the kingdom of Bantěn, in northern Java. The expedition consisted of four ships and 249 men (1993, p. 27). Ricklefs (1993) described Cornelis de Houtman (1565-1599, see Figure 14) who led the expedition as being incompetent (p. 27).



*Figure 14.* Cornelis de Houtman (1565-1599)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelis\\_de\\_Houtman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelis_de_Houtman)

Nevertheless, van Houtman's incompetence did not prevent a modest return for those financial

investments committed to his commercial expedition.

In 1598, five different companies backed expeditions of twenty-two ships (1993, p. 27), followed by 14 more expeditions in 1601. Competing interests of five independent companies resulted with increase of expeditions to the Malay Archipelago. However, the increase in maritime adventures had an adverse effect, resulting in a decline of profits for the companies. Prices increased for local products and other traded products. The decline in profit prompted consolidation of competing companies into a single organization, Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC, 1602). The VOC was Europe's earliest corporation to have established an outlying trading post of Bantěn (Ricklefs, 1993) in the western most regions on Java facing the island of southern Sumatra. However, the VOC sought a more suitable central headquarter on the island of Java to administer other trading posts established throughout the archipelago. Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629, see Figure 15), the fourth Governor General of Batavia, considered Bantěn to lack natural, topographic features for VOC headquarters' logistical requirements. The Portuguese who prospered throughout the archipelago lost their economic advantage because of Dutch success in displacing the Portuguese of their control of strategic ports. Coen consolidated a maritime empire through the VOC, thwarting British attempts to plant trading posts on Java. He was intent on setting up the corporate headquarters of Batavia by the coastal town of Jayakërta (Jakarta). Ricklefs (1993) recounts Coen's scorched earth conquest of Jayakërta by recounting:

For two months, nothing much happened, except that the VOC personnel, spending their time in a mixture of debauchery and prayer, decided on 12 March 1619 to rename the place 'Batavia' after an ancient Germanic tribe of the Netherlands.

In May 1619, Coen sailed back into the harbor with seventeen ships. On 30 May, he stormed the town, reduced it to ashes, and drove the Bantěn forces out. The VOC trading post of Batavia, standing amidst the ashes of Jayakërta was now to be the

headquarters for the VOC's vast trading empire. (p. 30).



*Figure 15.* Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan\\_Pieterszoon\\_Coen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Pieterszoon_Coen)

Jan Pieterszoon Coen subjected Jayakërta to indiscriminate brutality, which identified how he administered conquered territories. The manner in which the Dutch reclaimed Batavia in 1619 was not anomalous. Ricklefs (2001) retells philosophical underpinnings of Dutch acquisition of foreign real estate. In his capacity of Governor-General (1619-23, 1627-9), Coen applied ruthless policies in order to establish:

...the VOC on a firm footing. If his predecessors had had any scruples about the use of force, Coen certainly had none. In 1614, he had told the *Heeren XVII* that they could have neither trade without war nor war without trade. From Coen's time onwards, the VOC in Asia saw clearly that there was only one-way to establish its power; by destroying everything which got in its way. (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 30).

Presence of trading posts on Javanese soil would be the first phase in what would lead to complete concessions to outsiders. However, intrusion of foreign cultures such as European forays into the Malay Archipelago was not unique. Indic culture established vast empires on the

islands of Sumatra and Java. Whether intrusion of Indic cultures in the Malay Archipelago occurred because of conquest or through assimilation with indigenous peoples is a subject that is outside the scope of this research. The first of the great empires was Srivajaya, 7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Srivajaya encompassed real estates of Sumatra, Western Java, Western Kalimantan, and the Malay Peninsula. The epicenter of Hindu-Buddhist kingdom was in southern Sumatra with Jambi as its capital. The empire declined during the fourteenth century, to be absorbed into the Majapahit Empire (1293-1527). The capital of the Majapahit Empire was located near modern day Trowulan in Central Java. Java's political and social entities consisted of feudal kingdoms of a centralized royal court surrounded by rural villages under its protection. This configuration is a prototypical entity to characterize Java's social life throughout its history. Preindustrial towns on the island of Java were "...either court centres, religious centres, or harbours" (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, p. 63).

However, a series of trading posts on Java or throughout the Malay Archipelago led to Dutch presence, but this development did not represent Java as a colony. Entrepôts were introductory institutions. They allowed a gradual expansion of Dutch political policies, economic motives, and social influences to enter into indigenous local cultures. Practice of indirect rule was responsible for transforming Java into what eventually became Nederlands-Indië (Dutch India, Brown, 2003, p. 2) or translated into Bahasa Indonesia as Hindia-Belanda. The resources valued by the Dutch relied on labor of local populations, considered an unlimited labor pool for production of desired agricultural products. Laborers were from rural villages meagerly compensated for their physical work. Dutch policies did little to improve lives of rural peasants. However, colonial administrators, members from Javanese royal court and the Dutch government

reaped financial rewards from profits gained from sale of foodstuffs and natural resources produced by a peasant labor force. Profits gained through monopolization of agricultural products paid for Dutch industrialization. Javanese who were of Chinese extraction oversaw indigenous laborers, but under a colonized system, the Javanese peasant was the lowest member of the social order. The relationship of indigenous population towards the Dutch, outside of royal court settings, most likely contributed to a cumulative disaffection for colonial governance. The tension that might have existed between the Dutch and indigenous populations overlapped into maltreatment of indigenous population in many cases. Sukarno graphically recounted such egregious cultural behaviors. He unabashedly recounted the personal slights and social humiliations he endured. However, both Dutch and Moslem compatriots were responsible for his memorable misgivings. Sukarno's review of his life lists a series of humiliations even though he was a person who came from a privileged class. His parents were from minor aristocratic families (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012). This raises the question, what did the rural poor, who lacked any type of social status and privilege, endure daily under Dutch oversight?

The VOC enacted a shrewd management policy, which left intact existing Javanese social structure and thereby, resisted direct control over local populations. Reynders describe the back-door approach in achieving Dutch aspirations:

The establishment of 'monopoly products' was pursued through 'monopoly contracts' and at times through the use of violence inflicted on the Portuguese, the English and the Spanish through the company's naval power. By this means (sic) they also had exerted their influence on some of the Asian communities, notably in Ceylon and the Moluccas. Other successes, such as being the only western entity allowed to trade with Japan through their trading post at Deshima, illustrate the VOC's diplomatic skills. Other

achievements demonstrated their committed entrepreneurship, at least for much of her first century of trading, an intricate knowledge of Asian trade relationships, and superior navigational and ship building skills. (Reynders, n.d., Introduction).

The VOC collapsed in 1811 (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Landholdings under the VOC transferred into Dutch national hands and Java acquired the designation of *Nederlandsch Oost Indië* (Dutch East Indiës). Dutch back-door approach to how it exerted its political and social influences on local culture proved too burdensome, because indigenous royal courts became increasingly more dependent on them for money. Ricklefs (1993) described its dependence on the VOC as a chronic cash shortage (p. 72) to refer to the kingdom of Amangkurat I (1646-1677). Amangkurat I was son of Agung Hanyokrokusumo (1613-1645) and the first Javanese king to take the title of Sultan. The balance of power shifted dramatically during the first half of the nineteenth century after the Java War (1825-1830). After the war, central Javanese royal courts gradually ceded much of their land to the Dutch. Javanese courts became what Ricklefs describes as "...ritual establishments and generally docile clients of the Dutch" (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 118).

The royal court continued to mediate Dutch interests, ultimately to affect lives of local populations. However, the court remained a moral and spiritual compass for Javanese's rural population. Dutch administrators viewed the priyayi who held civil servant positions as "...'traditional' prestige of the aristocracy in the cause of cheap administration" (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 122). Protection of royal court self-interests relied on Dutch possession of advanced armed power. Alliances between Dutch as outsiders with Javanese royal families as insiders protected local royal courts from familial challenges "...by rising younger men" (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 101). The support of Dutch administration pre-empted family intrigues from disrupting the stability of

royal governance. The exchange for services rendered by Dutch administration committed local royal courts to a series of contractual agreements. Ricklefs describes that

During the Java War, the Dutch contemplated various proposals for Java. All shared general aim of somehow procuring tropical produce at the right volume and price to make a profit, an aim which had been central to Dutch thinking since the first voyage set sail in 1595. (1993, p. 119).

The cultuurstelsel policy was a predatory policy, based on the idea that each Javanese village owed a land tax (rent) up to 40%. Tax was to be paid with crops in lieu of cash because of a dearth of currency. The price for the crops was predetermined, with the Dutch government keeping any excess profit over the amount of tax owed. The cultuurstelsel policy was a compulsory no-win situation for indigenous Javanese.

The year of 1830 was a watershed in Java's history. Van den Bosch (1780-1844, see Figure 16) with royal approval carried out Cultuurstelsel (cultural, 1830-1870) policy.



*Figure 16.* Count Johannes Graaf van den Bosch (1780-1844).  
<http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/en/items/RIJK01:SK-A-3798>

The defeat of local Javanese aristocratic rebellion, which fought Dutch rule (Java War, 1825-

1830) hastened Dutch complete political and economic rule over Java. The aristocracy receded into their private world. Central Javanese royal court increasingly detached itself from day-to-day oversight of the general population. Ricklefs (1993) commented unflatteringly about the royal court “...degenerated into an effete formalism, an elaborate and antiquated artificiality” (p. 128). This transition marked a client relationship of the Java with their colonial masters. Dutch governance of its territories maintained a tenuous relationship with indigenous Javanese populations masked by ritualized processions and performances held at the royal court (*kraton*, see Figure 17).



*Figure 17. Yogyakarta Court and Dutch Commissioner (circa 1900).  
McCabe Elliott (2004).*

These processions involved the Dutch Governor-General accompanied by the Sultan or Susuhunan dressed in their respective sartorial finery. Court instruments (gamelan) and royal court dancers, considered as being sacred regalia, followed behind these august rulers during the procession. With double or single canopied parasol in yellow, the procession symbolized a

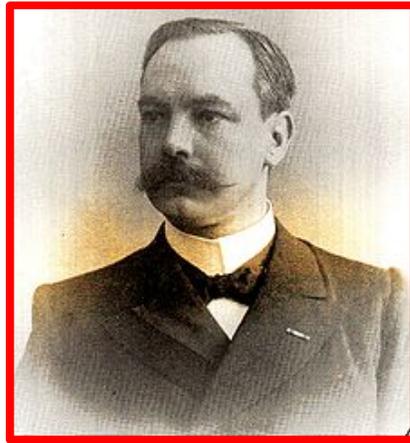
bonding. It equally signified a truce mutually agreed to which both the Dutch and the royal court benefited from. Procession symbolized marriage between military might and spiritual power. Such highly visible public events were intrinsic to Javanese kingdoms, particularly, those of Central Java. Pemberton (1995) offers a vivid description of the partitioning of Mataram kingdom in Central Java. In this historical event, the Dutch East India Company brokered the Treaty of Giyanti (1755) whereby rule of the eastern half of the kingdom went to Pakubuwono III [Surakarta] and the western half of the sultanate to Prince Mangkubumi [Yogyakarta] (Pemberton, 1995). The division in the royal household remains to date.

Processions were equally an iconic representation of the meeting of West with the East, a meeting of two unique cultural sensibilities. The procession is a metaphor that refers back polarity of masculine and feminine principles and therefore, a virtual representation of marriage of two cultures possessed by two different ethos. After 1830, Dutch administration fully determined Java's political and economic policies. Court life inverted towards itself, focused on cultivating and refining traditional Javanese cultural practices. Within the walls of court life, production of batik reached an unprecedented level of aesthetic refinement.

Total Dutch control of Java would last for another eleven decades. The indiscriminate violence associated with Coen's 1619 reclamation of Batavia would reverse itself in tactics taken by Indonesia's homegrown nationalists. Thus, the servant learned from the master to complete the circle. The indigenous populations, abused by Dutch political, economic and social priorities, were quite skilled in the practice of violence, which targeted Dutch citizens and their holdings. Indigenous nationalist movements during the first half of the twentieth century were not reticent in using of violent tactics. Their position evolved into a non-negotiable demand for the complete

removal of Dutch governance.

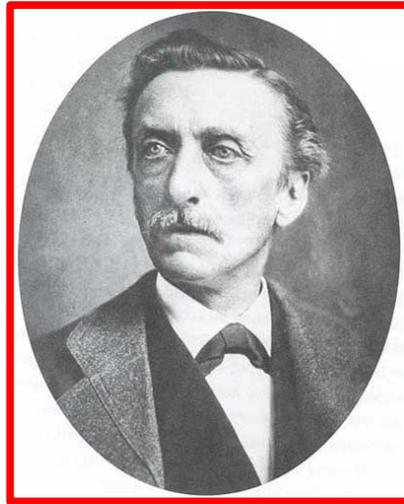
Dutch preoccupation for profit placed local Javanese population's welfare more as an afterthought. Under the administration of Governor-General Idenburg (1909-1916, see Figure 18), Dutch governance of their colonial protectorate changed.



*Figure 18.* Alexander Willem Frederik Idenburg (1861-1935).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Willem\\_Frederik\\_Idenburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Willem_Frederik_Idenburg)

Ricklefs describes this period as *A New Colonial Age* (1993, p. 151), representing Dutch Indies' colonial history when Java's governance was governed on Dutch Ethical policy. Both '...in humanitarian concern and economic advantage' influenced the development of social and economic policies (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 151). The policy change appeared as a response to collective cultural misgivings over colonial governance and its adverse effects on local populations because of previous policies. Dutch exploitation of island's natural resources and profits it gained did not trickle down to rural villagers. Such economic disregard found sympathetic ears in Dutch citizens. Douwes Dekker Multatuli's (1820-1887, see Figure 19) denounced Dutch colonial policies in his novel published in 1860, *Max Havelaar, of de koffi-*

*veilingen der Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (Max Havelaar: Or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company).



*Figure 19.* Eduard Douwes Dekker, (1820-1887).  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multatuli>

Chapter 4 began with an overview of historical incidences embodied by the word Indonesia. The purpose in deconstruction its meaning by acknowledging social and cultural histories changes how one understands this unassuming word, Indonesia. Such information points to its complexity that remained undisclosed whenever Iwan Tirta used the term to describe batik in his oral and written narratives. The purpose was also to establish a more accurate comprehension for how Iwan Tirta employed the word Indonesia in his discussion about batik, because he established a biographical profile for batik based on social conditions that are historically conditioned.

Chapter 4 will now focus on how the term came into existence. Its evolution parallels Western growing dominance over non-European territories. One option was assigning formerly

unknown territories with names. For instance, Western imagination is responsible for the word Indonesia. Twentieth-century Indonesian nationalist movements embraced the term. The term, Indonesia transformed a geographical location formerly referred to as the Malay Archipelago into an imagined geographical locus representing a sovereign nation after Sukarno's Declaration of Independence on August 17, 1945.

The idea that a single and bounded space with the name of Indonesia existed prior to 1945 is fictive. Equally fictive is the idea of a shared common identity. To suggest that the new nation state shared historical continuity with spatial and cultural settings prior to its nationhood is also fictional. Sukarno, a dominant, central political activist in nationalist movements after the 1920s, was instrumental to reifying his imagined Indonesia. Indonesia would embody a national identity displacing cultural identity based on ethnicity and social praxis. Social spaces prior to the 1945 declaration are distinct with unique phenomenological orientations in comparison to the Sukarno's anointed space under the name of Indonesia. The term, Indonesia, is a metaphor with contents influenced by Sukarno's aspirations for a socialist society tethered to Western traditions. Likewise, to speak of Indonesia is to take into consideration Sukarno's fertile imaginative concepts of Batik Indonesia, Indonesian Personality or Marhaen. Sukarno (Adams, 1965, p. 32) displayed his willful imagination by describing Indonesia's pedigree when he stated:

Open the book of Ramayana. In it, there's reference to "The land of Suarna Dwipa which has seven large kingdoms." Suarna Dwipa, meaning Golden Islands, was the name of our country when immortalized in the Hindu classics two thousand five hundred years ago.

By making this link, Sukarno endowed the word Indonesia with an imagined continuity, suggestive of a purported past linked to its mythic origins. His declaration melds fact with fiction, the

real with the unreal, which illustrates a peculiar characteristic to the natural world and experiences of it because of animistic influences exercised in mysticism. Sukarno's claim is problematic, for the simple fact that a single and unified country under the name of Indonesia did not exist when the Ramayana (BCE 400) appeared. Indonesia, in its designation of a geographical area developed out of a British worldview. The notion of a sovereign border is itself a fluid condition, even after Sukarno's success in accomplishing his political visions. For instance, Sukarno did not hesitate to implement an imagined claim which asserted that current day Malaysia was in fact to be incorporated into modern day Indonesia because of historical precedence.

Sukarno's glib association of Indonesia with descriptions in ancient Sanskrit text demonstrated contributions of fictive information to Indonesia's national biography. However, in his affirmation of Indonesia's imagined properties, Sukarno assigned Indonesia's sovereign aspiration its authoritative pedigree. The acknowledgement of Indonesia by the Ramayana is a detail that becomes part of a national narrative in affirming its *raison d'être*. Such unshakable pedigree tacitly justified his implementation of current political, economic and social policies, because it was for sake of Indonesia's nationhood.

Sukarno overlooked the Ramayana's poetic structure. Its text does not consist of empirically stated descriptions about a supposed Indonesia in BCE 400. The Sanskrit text is subject to interpretation in its reading. Mythical personages are symbolical representations of divine qualities. The cast of characters are mythical personifications of life's ideals that become part of belief structures to express life's wisdom. Nonetheless, by invoking the Ramayana to his discussion of the nation state of Indonesia, he insinuated Indonesia's divine origins. By all accounts, the Ramayana text is sacred to many people. The idea of divine intervention was not an anomaly in

Javanese life. It is a recurring theme as indicated by ideas characterizing Sukarno and Suharto's governances as incarnations of the messianic Ratu Adil, -the Just King.

Indonesia's Constitution 1945 represented Sukarno's persuasive powers to shape a nation's philosophical foundations (see Figure 20).



*Figure 20.* President Sukarno and Vice-President Hatta (1945). Proclamation of Indonesian Independence: The Raising of the Flag.

<http://mannaismayaadventure.wordpress.com/category/history-of-indonesia>

He sought to accomplish a single state with a single identity, in which racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity melds into an imagined personality for Indonesia's quintessential Marhaen. Sukarno's aspiration for a single cultural identity appeared as a metaphor of, Indonesian Personality. He could not explain or describe specific qualities for his notion for the existence of an Indonesian Personality. However, the metaphor referred to Indonesia's archetypical citizen who Sukarno met during one of outings in the countryside. He crossed paths with a rural villager named Marhaen. Sukarno recounted the circumstances:

I then asked this young farmer his name. And he told me, Marhaen. Marhaen is a common name like Smith or Jones. At that moment the light of inspiration flooded my brain. I would use that name for all Indonesians with the same miserable lot. From then on I would call my people Marhaenists. (Adams, 1965, p. 62).

The view taken by this research is that Sukarno's melding of fact with the fictive is characteristic to how Iwan Tirta spoke about batik, batiked cloth or batiking. In his case, he engages in imaginative constructionism to explaining batik's cultural properties. When he conflates batik with the term Indonesia, Iwan Tirta equally presumed a homogenous cultural identity prepossessed with a seamless continuity to Java's past. Foster (1991) and Anderson (2006) persuasively argued the case of sovereign boundaries being unstable, changing quickly because of unforeseen circumstances. Cultural identity is equally fluid. For instance, the *Economist*, "Indonesia's last frontier - Indonesia is a democracy. But many Papuans do not want to be part of it" (2010, p. 49), underscores the volatility of national sovereignty, placing into question politically coerced shared identity into an unstable position.

The idea that batik represents an Indonesian homogenous history is equally questionable. Such claim becomes more tentative when in his video interview, *Batik de Ziel van Java* (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996), Iwan Tirta made important assertions about batik. He stated the oldest representations of indigenous batiked cloth consisted of remnants from the end of the nineteenth century. He also stated that current day general understanding of batik referred to batiked cloth of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. In his 1996 video interview he commented, "In het algemeen denkt men dat batik niet zo lang bestaat. Misschien bestond wel een primitieve vorm" [Overall batik did not exist long. Perhaps, it existed in a primitive form]. If this is the case then, what does his

comment actually signify, which asserts that batik did not exist for long time? Is batik a nineteenth-century product? Where does Egyptian batik fit into discussions about Indonesian batik? Statements suggesting that batik came to Indonesia about 700 years ago muddle this further. Most significantly, Iwan Tirta disclosed in his interview that batik is a product affected by the natural conditions surrounding its production. It is indicative of specific environmental as well social conditions.

Batik, batiked cloth, and batiking are each an aggregate encoded with meaning that are determinative of spatial settings, cultural practices, and imagined properties. Iwan Tirta's contribution to modern day batik acquires a more accurate reading when evaluated against history that is more recent. Consequently, his commodities remain to be expressive of time and space, which impinges his public characterizations about Indonesian batik. His descriptions about Indonesian batik are at odds with historical conditions of when the islands were the Malay Archipelago. Since, the word, Indonesia, is tantamount of signifying unity of national identity; the term is itself a discreet aggregate filled with imagined properties.

The term, batik, has a double meaning. Batik can denote a process of dyeing cloth, which uses a wax resist medium, applied with an applicator of a copper well, the *canting* (*tjanting*). Dyeing procedures considered as batiking of tulis kain (panels of cloth) implicitly refer to use of a wax resist and an applicator. Use of both components is unique to Javanese batik. However, the term, batik, can also mean a style of patterning of cloth surfaces. Geometric designs characterized batiked cloth associated with the royal courts of Central Java. In contrast, during the nineteenth-century Dutch women in Java involved in production of batiked cloth introduced floral motifs. They appeared in a wide range of colors. Their choices for colors contrasted

sharply to those preferred by royal court centers in soga brown, indigo or dark green. Floral motifs also represented aesthetic inclinations of Java's coastal areas.

Iwan Tirta saw himself as a teacher and a guardian for *true* batik. His public discussions about batik re-educated parochial readers, but educated an international public. Iwan Tirta's quasi-analytical commentaries reinforced batik's association with Indonesia. His interviews and written texts affirm Indonesian aesthetic achievements as highest forms of wax resist dyeing method. Iwan Tirta's characterization about Indonesian batik, ironically, introduced a discreet criterion by distinguishing real batik from non-batik. His expressed scorn for non-batik, which targeted cloths produced in the West, which he disparagingly referred to as hippie cloth:

To control, innovate and lead in batik should be the goal of South-East Asian countries, to lift up the standard internationally of batik from the "cheap ethnic stuff, something for hippies" which it is tending to become nowadays. (Geh, 1991).

Emergence of the term Indonesia, hinged on production of text. However, it was not production of any type of text. The word, Indonesia emerged out of text characterizing Western preoccupation for scientific observations. Absence of such literature during Java's past also contributed to a lack of coherent interpretations about batik, batiked cloth or batiking from an insider's perspective. The critical development of what Anderson (2006) referred, as fifteenth century print capitalism, was not a phenomenon experienced by populations inhabiting the islands. Further, access to literary information by a local and literate population on the islands was moot since, a majority was rural peasants tied to labor-intensive agrarian way of life.

Production of text was a privilege exercised by royal court culture. Indigenous production of literature was a prerogative of the Sultan or Susuhunan. Handwritten text consisted of

histories or manuscripts as *Babad Tanah Jawi* (History of the land of Java) [Ricklefs, 1993, p. 9]. The scope of subjects had titles of, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* (Story of the kings of Pasai) or *Sějarah Mělayu* (Malay History; Ricklefs, 1993, p. 9). Existing island literature recounted Islamic changeovers and "...shared emphasis upon the roles played by esoteric learning and magical powers, upon the foreign origins and trade connections of the first teachers" (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 8). Javanese histories also consisted of apocalyptic prophecies. Ricklefs (1993) pointed out the complexity of indigenous literature, noting that later eighteenth and nineteenth century written accounts incorporated earlier revisions.

Further research is required for comprehensive textual analysis of Javanese literature for tone and manner in describing human experience and the natural world. Independently motivated written text from insider perspectives did not really appear in Java well into the twentieth century. There were no counterparts to Western novelists, scientific writers, biographers, et cetera. Iwan Tirta corroborated this observation when he affirmed that outsiders were primary authors about the subject of batik prior to his scholarly contributions. Neither did production of texts that exhibited indigenous reflexive interest for existing institutions, social practices, or its surrounding environments appear until the beginning of the twentieth century. Raffles (1830), as a European outsider, wrote the first definitive empirical text about Java. His two volume book documented geography of the island; described its natural resources, as well documented various indigenous Javanese cultural practices.

Rudimentary forms of literature began with practical ends, appearing during the *Age of Discovery* (The Age of Exploration) spanning from 1500-1750. When Europeans explored the far-eastern southern hemisphere, the former archipelago encompassed islands of current day

Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, East Malaysia, and East Timor. These foreign destinations were valued for commodities on a large scale. Their acquisition through sea cargo began with Portuguese maritime forays into the Malay Archipelago. Various European nations competed with each other to establish long-term access to much-prized commodities. Therefore, there was a need to rely on efficient and reliable seafaring routes. Verbal designators assigned by Europeans mapped uncharted spaces, resulting in a comprehensible scheme used for charting trade ventures.

The term, Indonesia, corresponded to historical conditions experienced in Europe. Its denotative properties changed because the influence European intellectual interests had on the word. The term evolved over time, thereby reflects a trajectory consisting of phases of Introduction, Validation, and Metaphor. Outsider imaginative skills are origins for names assigned to unchartered geographical location, with the Malay Archipelago as a case in point. The term Indonesia did not evolve out of indigenous Javanese experiences. Brown (2003) stated that its etymological mutation occurred during England's Victorian Period. The influence of the Indian subcontinent's cultural and political prominence had on the region became the standard. It was a reference for how outsiders understood local kingdoms near the Indian subcontinent. For example, the English perceived the Malay Archipelago to be an extension of the Indian subcontinent's sphere of cultural influence. This geographical area in the southern hemisphere received the name of Indian Islands (see Figure 21).

The Indian subcontinent's eastern most islands were the Malay Archipelago, which had participated in a trading network with Greater India. Naming the Malay Archipelago as Indian Islands was also synonymous of Further India (Brown, 2003, p. 2). Categorization of foreign

geographical location illustrated British ranking of the phenomenal world to accord with their sense of ordering experience. Scientific ordering accompanied by ideas of certainty or objective representation of experience resulted in production of the term, Indonesia. The word, Indonesia, is consequent to combining the Latin word Indus, which directly refers to the Indian subcontinent, with the Greek word nêsos, meaning island. Since its introduction into English scientific community, the word, Indonesia has transformed into implied meaning representing national identity. Indu-nesians is the derivative for the word Indonesia, which George Windsor Earl in 1850 (1813-1865, see Figure 22) correlated to the name of Malayu-nesians. Earl was the first anthropologist focused on Papuan culture.

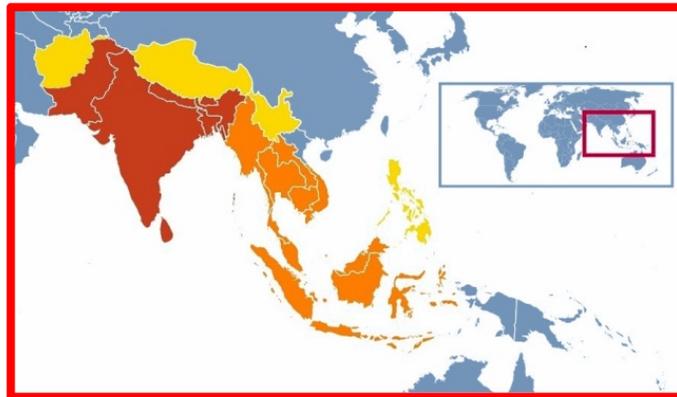
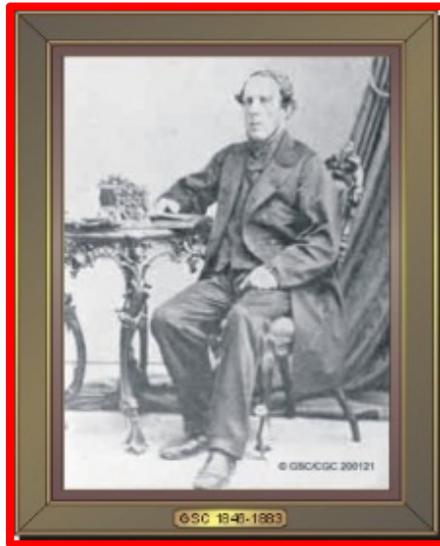


Figure 21. Greater India and Its Cultural Sphere of Influence.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_India)

English ethnologist, George Windsor Earl's nautical ventures recorded his observations of people inhabiting Southeast Asian region. He published, *The Eastern Seas or Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago in 1832-33-34 comprising A Tour of the Island of Java-Visits to Borneo, The Malay Peninsula, Siam &c. also An Account of Present State of Singapore*

with *Observations on the Commercial Resources of the Archipelago* (1837).



*Figure 22.* George Windsor Earl (1813-1865).  
Retrieved from <http://archive.kaskus.us/thread/2772948>

The title of his book disclosed British motivating interests for their exploratory adventures into nether regions of the Malay Archipelago. Earl's publication affirmed the primacy of commercial interest for his seafaring adventures. Most significantly, the title does not mention the word Indonesia, because his publication predated his 1850 publication in which the word first appeared. The title of his book also suggests the islands of Java and Borneo as independent and unrelated spatial locations. Therefore, they were not part of single unified ordered sovereign state. Earl's published title affirmed a motley group of islands consigned as simply a territory referred to as the Indian Archipelago. Earl devoted Chapters I to IV to documenting his observations about the island of Java. The total amount of printed space consisted of eighty-six pages out of 146 pages. His extensive documentation about Java underscores Earl's observer status as an outsider, whereby his preoccupation with Java reaffirms the island's political and cultural dominance

over its surrounding neighbors.

Earl's maritime adventures resulted with reliable empirical data that other explorers, naturalists and scientists of his day incorporated into their documents. British naturalists, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913) incorporated Earl's hydrographic findings for their publications. Wallace assessed the Malay Archipelago in the following terms, "It is inhabited by a peculiar and interesting race of mankind-the Malay, found nowhere beyond the limits of this insular tract, which has hence been named the Malay Archipelago" (Wallace, 2011, p. 1.). Earl on the other hand was responsible for the term *Indu-nesian*, to designate islands with latitude of 5°00' south of the Equator and a longitude of 120°00' east of Greenwich. His text resembles in format of a diary. It is very different from his predecessor, Raffles' clinical and factual descriptions of Java (1830). Earl's text also recorded his subjectivities, akin to existential descriptions of his encounters experienced during his journey. The following text is an example:

On landing I was accosted in tolerable English by an individual dressed in a shirt and native sarong, or petticoat, who enquired if he could be of any service to me, and on my informing him of the purport of my visit, he offered to conduct me to the commandant's quarters in the fort. From the dress of my companion, who proved to be the government secretary, I had at first taken him for a native, but the information he displayed soon undeceived me, and I found that his costume was that usually adopted as a morning dress by the Europeans in Java. We found the commandant making preparations for his morning walk, and he immediately gave me the desired permission. (Earl, 2011, pp. 8-9).

He wrote from a first person perspective and generously disclosed his personal feelings. Earl was equally generous in exposing his prejudices, as evidenced by his own accounting of his reactions to unexpected circumstances. Earl's textual descriptions about Java were in effect a forerunner for other descriptions in the offing about Java from outsider perspectives.

Since then, Indonesia's current biography consists of more sobering facts. The total numbers of islands in the Malay Archipelago varies, but, in general, Indonesia encompasses 13,677 islands (Sumarlin, 1991, p. 11). In 1991, 6,000 islands had a total population estimated at 182 million. From East to West, the islands expand the equator 3,200 miles, whereas from north to south the islands extend 1,100 miles. The five major islands are Java, a landmass nearly equal to England; Sumatra nearly equivalent to size of France; Irian Jaya equal in size to California; completed by the islands of Sulawesi and Kalimantan. There are also two groupings of islands, the Moluccas (Spice Islands) and Nusa Tenggara. The islands are part of a geological chain of volcanos beginning in the Himalayas, which extend to the island of Java. The geological formation contains a high concentration of extinct and active volcanoes. Volcanic activity is responsible for the island fertile soil, which, until recently, was predominantly an agrarian economy. Animism predated incursion of Indic religious practices. Although Java adopted Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, animism remains to exert influence on day-to-day Javanese life. The climate varies, depending on land mass' proximity to both the equator and bodies of water. Average temperature of the archipelago is 80° throughout the year. Fluctuations in temperature accord with a location's distance from sea level. The islands receive approximately 70-140 inches of rain per year, although East Java, Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi endure dry periods. Java is the political and economic center, a position held before the first millennium as suggested by the Ramayana (BCE 400). Sixty percent of the nation's population inhabits the islands of Java and Madura.

Different ethnic, linguistic, or racial populations inhabited the various islands of the former Malay Archipelago. As independent cultural populations, each group practiced

independent, unique social traditions. Nonetheless, Earl's label of Indu-nesian also intended to signify a generic racial classification, which minimized racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of island populations. Earl's presumption of a singular cultural identity differs from Foster's (1991) concept of homogenization of culture. Earl's assessment is an empirically based category, whereas Foster's concept represents a social condition produced by diffusion of cultural artifacts in their consumption. Indu-nesian represented a constructed racial profile defined by an outsider's imagined characterization of the islands. During Victorian England, one held view was what Wallace proposed as a Malay race populating the archipelago. Standing on its own its own geographical and cultural merits, the Malay Archipelago took form of a new identity by Earl's student, Scottish geographer and lawyer, James Richardson Logan (1819, see Figure 23). He viewed the Southeast Asian peninsula to be a distinct and independent geographical area, untethered from the Indian subcontinent's sphere of cultural influence.



*Figure 23.* James Richardson Logan (1819-1869).  
<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/53224023>

Logan designated the geographical location as Indonesia, thereby becoming a term to

denote a specific area in the southern hemisphere. The Malay Archipelago's designation as Indonesia ended a prevailing view that the islands were extensions to an Indian subcontinent's cultural umbra. The British idea of a homogenized culture presages a view revived in the political aspirations of twentieth-century Indonesian nationalists, culminating in Sukarno's political and social ideologies. Earl's seafaring interests mapped a geographical section of the world not fully understood during nineteenth-century Europe. However, European political imagination involved foreign territories initially targeted for their esteemed foodstuffs and other durable goods.

The idea that foreign territories were extensions to a parent country framed the argument for colonial occupation. The island of Java and the Malay Archipelago were not a single bounded space possessed by a single cultural identity. Once Dutch entrepôts existed on Javanese soil, its expansion of its sphere of political, economic and cultural influence gradually transitioned the island (s) into a colony. Exercise of Dutch institutions, its practices, as exhibited by the VOC, contributed to such expansion. Anderson (2006) spoke about institutional practices as formidable processes to contribute to outsider's control of foreign territories. Literature vis-à-vis intellectual property played a prominent role to secure sense for an integrated bounded space.

Anderson's (2006) discussed about the emergence of a vernacular language and its contribution of perceived social cohesion. His position is relevant to this research's discussion about batik. Language was critical to rewriting batik's biographical profile. Extant text about batik showed changes to its discursive presentations as a cultural artifact. Such descriptions revealed batik's cultural status to coincide with historical times of their writings. Batik entered into public discourse with Raffles' (1830) introduction. His introduction did not portray batik in extraordinary terms. Rather, Raffles documented batik as simply another facet to Javanese social life.

Batik's initial narrative focused on its economic prospects. For instance, Dutch administrator, S.C.J.W. van Musschenbroek (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001, see Figure 24) disclosed interest in batik for its potential market share.



Figure 24. S.C.J.W. van Musschenbroek (1827-1883).  
[http://www.musschenbroek.nl/sam\\_scjw.htm](http://www.musschenbroek.nl/sam_scjw.htm)

Legêne and Waaldijk (2001) interpreted Musschenbroek commentaries, as “...was not an end in itself. It probably was a result of growing insight into the differentiated Javanese market for printed cloth and imitation batik<sup>[35]</sup> aimed at improving Dutch manufacture” (p. 41). Thus, a parallel objective was expansion of European industrial prowess to influence foreign economies. The economic focus to expand market shares confronted an unforeseen appearance in discussions involving the subject of cultural authenticity. This required considerations of the concept of, *taste* and taking into account native consumers' knack to exercise their third sense in detecting genuine batik from fraudulent samples.

Batiked cloth eventually became a sacralized cultural artifact in the form of Art. Batik as Art did not refer to those artifacts consisting of tourist *tchotchkes*. Rather, its designation as Art

illustrated Art as found in major museums. Batik and its re-presentation of Art are inextricably wedded to the notion of cultural authenticity. Batik's narrative legacy takes yet another turn when it became endurable property of the state. Language contributed to batik's fixity (Anderson, 2006) as sartorial veneer contributing to cultural homogenization of preexisting diversity into a shared national identity. Only recently have Javanese insiders given their voice to commentaries about batik. However, their voice refers back to narrations written by previous European outsiders.

The word, Indonesia, developed out of a British cultural milieu seeking to satisfy geographical enquiries, economic interests, and scientific curiosity. History showed that twentieth-century homegrown Indonesian nationalists co-opted this designator. This unassuming word encapsulated their essential aspiration for a bounded and sovereign geographical space backed with the seal of approval from the international community. Both English and Dutch colonial elites were primary and authoritative commentators to textual descriptions about Java and batik. Legêne and Waaldijk's title for their monograph provided a pointed description to characterize emerging commentaries "...a Dutch outsider interpreting an unknown Javanese insider" (in van Hout, 2001, p. 41). Accumulation of literature built on the express purpose to inform about actual and prospective Western corporate investments. These texts authored by outsiders contributed to batik's biographical profile involving descriptions about a group of islands and their respective social lives. These constructed narratives remain imagined portraits of Java to which indigenous populations' would ultimately refer back to in order to understand themselves.

Accumulation of knowledge about Java during the nineteenth century constructed a stable Euro-centered perspective about the Dutch East Indies. The influx of foreigners to Java

also contributed to reimagining island life as documented by a variety of types of texts. Textual descriptions about Java validated emergent imagery associated with batik cloth, thereby to define its status as a cultural artifact. Its associations with Indonesia as a nation state would eventually be the dominant prism responsible for determining its emergent imagery. A vernacular was critical to the diffusion of such imagery to cement claims made about batik cloth. Likewise, language, in its usage and its implementation to affect social change, was a potent institution to secure Dutch interests. Literature, in its accumulation, magnified ideas, sentiments, and beliefs to support prevailing views to characterize the Dutch East Indies. The islands in being unknown became an identifiable singular bounded space. An example is information authored by S.C.J.W. Musschenbroek's (1827-1883), whose sentiments affected batik's status as a commodity, acquiring its own importance.

Dutch administrators relied on local Javanese populations to assist them in administering government policies. Under Dutch colonialism, the *priyayi* class intervened between Dutch administrators and the general population. The civil service of Dutch colonialism employed members from royal court culture. These members with unique and special status privileged themselves to experience direct contact with members of Dutch society. They privileged themselves by profiting from having access to Dutch primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Their exposure to Dutch education, ironically, contributed to furthering Western political, scientific, and philosophical traditions into Java. Indonesia's first President, Sukarno, recounted his early education, which referred back to literature from Western traditions. Vice-President Hatta (1902-1980) and Sutan Sjahrir (1909-1966), Indonesia's first Prime Minister in 1945, studied in the Netherlands. As political elite members, they became conduits for Western

intellectual thinking. The influence of Western intellectual traditions would appear as a cultural ethos to define the political foundation of the new nation state of Indonesia. The new governing class at the same time assessed the West negatively, blaming it for a 300 year colonial governance and for abuses endured by indigenous populations. Decolonization of Indonesia coincided with reversal of political fortunes of British India (1947), Burma (1948), British Malaya (1957), French India (1954), Vietnam (1945), Cambodia (1953) and the Philippines (1946). The Philippines was formerly an extension of the United States' commonwealth.

Sukarno conflated Western thinking with indigenous cultural ideas. It resulted in political policies that were ambiguous, untenable positions. Policies were subject to change at will only to reveal his unquestioned power and status in making significant policy changes. Indonesian nationalist movement's adoption of the term, Indonesia, illustrates a degree of ambiguity. In accepting the term, Indonesia, Sukarno and other nationalists overlooked their disdain for Western imperialism, which they saw as the source for colonialism. It appears that in adopting the term, Indonesia, which had come out of British imperial visions, did not constitute betrayal of their anti-colonial positions. In their capacities as colonial Indonesia's priyayi, Sukarno, Vice-President Hatta and Sutan Sjahjir were in positions to map a new course for the former Malay Archipelago. Their agendas focused on reclaiming indigenous culture and finding proper emblems to represent it.

Construction of an imagined biography describing the Malay Archipelago paralleled description of Java's prehistory and its cultural trajectory. Ricklefs (1993) noted that information transmitted formerly in forms of tales extolling historical incidences and iconic heroes. Tales consisted primarily of oral communication. Mythology included characters from Indic Sanskrit

texts, the *Mahabharata* (BCE 400-200) or the *Ramayana* (BCE 300-CE 400). These mythical characters integrated into public communication, whereby fact with fantasy mingled to explain social experiences or to describe natural phenomena. Sukarno participated in such evocative forms in communicating his thoughts. Mingling of unreal with real, fact with fiction is a thread in Javanese culture used to explain life's experiences.

Such cultural inclinations rest with a long-standing tradition of mysticism influenced by animism and Sufistic mystical traditions. The pervasive mystical orientation characterized lives at Javanese royal court culture as well rural villages. Mystical beliefs buttressed a top down social structure with the royal court at pinnacle having oversight of rural villages. A top/down orientation replicated in social interactions facilitated by sartorial sumptuary rules. As Iwan Tirta (1996) asserted, when it came to sartorial matters the royal court did not hesitate to exact punishment for infractions perpetrated by members of the general peasant population. The power of the royal court existed, because it mediated those demands placed by what by Mulder (1998) refers to as supernature with needs of a general peasant population under their care and protection. The Sultan or Susuhunan possessed magical powers. Royal court rule rested on its unquestioned position of spiritual authority giving them powers to secure and to maintain social harmony, – *rukun*.

The peculiar manner in explaining human experience in using fact/fictional constructions occurs in Sukarno's proposition of a supposed national cultural personality. This concept was essential to his vision for a nation in the making. Sukarno was charismatic and a formidable presence. He was a shrewd politician skilled in outmaneuvering his political opponents. His inventive mind created series of slogans accompanied by an equally bewildering number of

acronyms. His inventive capacities showed that he possessed strong instincts for symbolic forms. He understood the persuasive power of symbols to rally the general population. His concept of Batik Indonesia is an example of a symbol invented by Sukarno's fertile mind. The term, batik, which is indicative of a process of dyeing or a style of surface patterning, became wearable commodities to represent the nation state. Batiked cloth became a portable signifier for a unified cultural identity. Batiked wear had ambassadorial visibility, as public representations of Indonesian sense and sensibilities to the international community.

Sukarno rescued Indonesian batik from fading into history. He integrated his awareness of batik's potent possibilities. He was also aware of its possibilities to contribute to Indonesia's economy. Sukarno's resuscitation of batik by its transformation into a cultural artifact is another example of his instinct for symbolic forms. Batik would represent the essential characteristics of what he understood to be presence of an Indonesian Personality. Sukarno recognized how commonplace items used to meet basic everyday needs, could become fertile symbols. They worked in conjunction with political and social notions he held. His idea of an Indonesian Personality does not represent an incidental factoid; rather it is one of the many metaphors referred to for his expansive political vision.

In his vision for the new nation state, the general peasant class was eminent. His commitment to the common person represented his populist orientations with socialist political leanings. His conceptualization of Marhaenism, possessing an Indonesian Personality, resembles Marxist conceptualization of a ubiquitous proletariat. His metaphoric symbols provided Sukarno a philosophical context for his political activism. Existing institutions under his governance were prone to revisions through unilateral implementation of new policies. For instance, Indonesia under-

goes peculiar changes when the Federal Constitution of 1949 replaced the Indonesia's Constitution of 1945. The Provisional Constitution of 1950 supplanted the Federal Constitution of 1949, only to conclude, once again, with restoration of the original Constitution of 1945 in 1959. Sukarno's Indonesian Personality underwent changes during the decade of the 1970s. Under Suharto's governance and with the aid of Iwan Tirta's batik skills, Sukarno's Indonesian personality transformed into a more modernized persona. Iwan Tirta's interpretation represents Indonesian Personality into a cultural identity that took into consideration the influence of an international community.

Sukarno and Indonesian nationalist activist's aspirations for a single and unified state codified into the words "satu bangsa, satu bahasa, dan satu tanah air" (Ramage, 2005, p. 2). They allude to the origins for the Constitution 1945's Pancasila (Five Principles). The Constitution of 1945 is a summation of Sukarno's philosophy formulated during his youth that matured during his leadership of nationalist movements. Ramage explains Sukarno's concept of national identity trumping racial and ethnic diversity of the islands in the following comment:

Sukarno's formulation of what was initially the first principle, Indonesian national unity (*persatuan Indonesia*), stressed the imperative of maintaining the unity and integrity of Indonesia as a single state. Donald Weatherbee, in his work on Indonesian ideology under Sukarno, argues that this principle required the "submergence of regional and ethnic loyalties to an allegiance to the Indonesian State." (1995, p. 3).

Ramage traced Sukarno's intellectual reasoning, which had subsumed ethnic diversities of the archipelago under his political concept of national identity. Sukarno consolidated national solidarity through assimilating cultural artifacts, such as batik cloth, transforming them into symbols of state. Thus, he endowed artifacts with re-imagined contents turning them into potent

symbolic incarnations. These forms were testaments to Indonesia's Marhaen, the common person possessed with a unique Indonesian Personality. During Sukarno's life, symbolic forms consisted of male headwear, the *petje (peci)*, the linga/yoni national monument of Monas or batik cloth. Their usage was acts of their consumption. These corporal symbolic commodities targeted local and international consumers, to communicate Indonesian sense and sensibilities. With the case of batik cloth, it declared one's commitment to the idea of national identity. Therefore, Sukarno's ideational objects of Indonesian Personality, Batik-Indonesia and Pancasila were concepts that spurred his vision for a nation state of Indonesia.

Revival of batik under the rubric of Sukarno's Batik Indonesia overcame ravages Indonesia endured from the Second World War and Japanese occupation. Under Sukarno and Suharto's regimes, batik cloth became politicized forms of image objects, as discussed by Foster (1991). It refers back to Foster's (1991) proposition of the enculturation of objects, resulting in their transformation into receptacles for imagined properties. The independent efforts of Sukarno's directive to K.R.T. Hardjonagoro in comparison to Suharto's employment of services of Iwan Tirta centered on batik cloth and its commodification. However, the results of these two independent efforts resulted in different imaginings. Sukarno and Suharto governances produced different political and social milieu. The respective diachronic circumstances prompted by their governance defined the role batik cloth was to play in their respective visions for Indonesia.

At the behest of the state, batik cloth is what Foster (1991) considered as a deparтикуlarized object. Batik cloth's utilitarian position in village and royal court social lives changed into a sacralized form becoming commodified proxies for the state. Policy decisions made by

Sukarno and Suharto decided batik's imagined contents. Their decisions granted these object forms their distinctive properties based on at will policies backed by each man's feudal powers. Both men governed like pre-colonial feudal kings secured by consolidation of the ubiquitous military support. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro advised Sukarno and Iwan Tirta advised Suharto about Javanese culture, whereby batiked cloth in its re-presentations increasingly targeted international consumption. However, the results differed like night and day. These men, in their respective capacities as members of social or political elite (Foster, 1991) were responsible for remaking of Indonesian culture. Batiked cloth in its associations with each of these men reinforced its eminent cultural status. Their participation in redefining batik's enculturated property gave the object its patina of an unquestioned credibility.

President Suharto (1921-2008) did not abandon his predecessor, President Sukarno's, tenets enshrined in the Constitution of 1945. Sukarno's socialist ideological bent contributed to Indonesia's tattered economy during the 1960s. Suharto was more practical and less charismatic than his former employer, Sukarno, was. He focused on revitalizing Indonesia's economy. Western political and economic distance towards Indonesia changed with Suharto's political ascendance (1968-1998). Suharto reached a rapprochement with the West. Western economic models structured Suharto's economic policies, reversing the nation's economic misfortunes created by Sukarno's economic policies.

Indonesia's economic policies were due to efforts of Sumitro Djojohadikoesoemo, faculty of Economics at the University of Indonesia. With the support of the Ford Foundation, Indonesian students matriculated at University of California, Berkeley (The Berkeley Mafia, Frederick & Worden, 1993). Indonesia's economic policies took on Western approach to solving national

fiscal problems. Suharto reformed Sukarno's idea of a unified enculturated national personality. The concept of Batik-Indonesia shifted towards more explicit and visible presence of batik cloth. He prescribed it as a sartorial requirement for governmental employees and educational institutions. Government regulation of public life through sartorial prescription secured enduring and efficient display of national identity. However, the government's sartorial decrees reflected an increase *Disneyfication* of Indonesian culture as discussed by Kapferer (2008):

The USA as the wellspring of oligarchic nationalism provides numerous examples. The well-known discussions on Disneyfication or McDonaldnization provide some illustration. The ideological development of the family in the USA was a conscious state supported effort to forge a national unity among an extraordinarily diverse immigrant population. (p. 292).

The following commentary clarifies Kapferer's assertions:

The Indonesian government saw itself in the early 1990s having the responsibility to advance national culture. This obligation rested on ideas of national development and political integration. National culture had great appeal to regulate changing urban environments faced with more members of Indonesian population seeking employment in large, poorly integrated cities with diverse ethnic groups. Emergence of national culture came about by educational curricula, national holiday celebrations and control of national media (popular art, television, and print media). Evidence of an Indonesian national culture also appeared in the far less controlled layout and social organization of cities; routines of social interaction using the official national language, Bahasa Indonesia; patterns of eating and preparing food; the viewing of team sports, such as soccer, badminton, and volleyball; motion pictures; and material displays of wealth. (Frederick & Worden, 1993).

Likewise, services of Iwan Tirta aided Suharto in codifying national culture. Iwan Tirta's creative and financial fortunes flourished under Suharto's regime. Iwan Tirta became in effect Indonesia's high priest for batik. On official state visits, members of the first family escorted

foreign guests to his boutique for a brief lesson on batik. Iwan Tirta's high profile exposure to foreign and local elites proved to be profitable for his entrepreneurial aims. His work in batik applied most notably to designing sartorial forms that satisfied local and international tastes. Hand waxed cloth, batik tulis, is labor intensive and therefore, a costly method to decorate a cloth's surface. The cost value of a decorated cloth increased with gold leaf, prada, glued to the surface to accent patterns. Catering to diverse clientele, Iwan Tirta conceded to Western tastes as a determinative aesthetic standard. Sartorial silhouettes were far from being characterizations of being traditional. Iwan Tirta's imaginative skills created sartorial silhouettes with surface additions borrowed from the West. Touches of ruffles, excessive volume of cloth, trains, or layering of cloth for the lower torso are examples of Western aesthetic influences. In combining two different cultural aesthetics, Iwan Tirta's sartorial constructions are syncretic hybrids. His sartorial structures are studies of contrast between Western and Eastern aesthetics.

Colors and shapes deceptively simulated appearances of surface properties deemed as being traditional. However, Iwan Tirta's choices of surface patterns consisted of imaginary shapes mimicking Javanese aesthetic sensibilities. Supreme examples of faux traditional patterns were batik shirts designed for heads of states attending the 1994 ASEAN conference in Jakarta. Iwan Tirta's sartorial forms for women, on the other hand, targeted nymph-like creatures, which possessed physical attributes associated with Western high fashion runway models. His sartorial designs did not take into consideration that the general indigenous populations of Indonesia are shorter when compared to women from Western, northern European nations.

The following three examples show how Iwan Tirta characterized batik. They are three different claims sharing themes of 1) Indonesian culture; 2) Expressive of continuity with

Indonesian past; and 3) Internationalizing batik into updated representations. Iwan Tirta claimed:

- ❖ Batik is a way of Indonesian life says Iwan (San, 1977)
- ❖ Batik forms an integral part of the Indonesian culture. In spirit it is one with 'wayang', with the wall paintings of old and with the music of the gamelan (Another Plus for Batik - Indonesia's Iwan Tirta scores again, 1979)
- ❖ He set out to revitalize Indonesian batik and at the same time internationalize it (Butler, 1982)

However, Iwan Tirta's claim that batik represents an Indonesian way of life presents a problem. His rhetoric that they are on par with batik commodities produced within a royal court and rural village social settings is nonsense. Batiked cloth produced within Central Java's former social life is not an equivalent of batik produced under Sukarno's national culture or Suharto's modernization of Indonesia. The ideal citizen of Sukarno's archetypical Marhaen is as distinct from cultural identities of being Javanese, Sudanese, or Papuan. National identity embodied imagined properties determined by men and women with political power or who were fortunate to possess high cultural standing. I submit that Iwan Tirta's claim of batik as representations of Indonesian culture, in fact refers to cultural or social life that began on August 17, 1945. I am also suggesting that the designation of pre-Indonesia aptly describes social and historical circumstances for spaces existing prior to Indonesia's Declaration of Independence on August 1945. The before/after dichotomy refers to two independent social realities. Unique set of governing values and mores dictated their respective phenomenological experiences.

Even with concerted efforts of Indonesian government to establish a national culture since 1945, parochial ethnic identity remains supreme. The following anecdote illustrates the eminence of ethnicity in determining parochial identities:

In 2010, a friend and her husband, Andrew M. Leeds, (Ph.D.), traveled on business to the island of Bali. Dr. Leeds, a Clinical Psychologist, gave a keynote speech at an EMDR conference in Bali. I asked if she would mind locating for me *krontjong* music in a CD format. She made a number of inquiries and faced perplexed responses from local shopkeepers. One of the respondents said something to the effect of, "Oh no, that is not our music it is from the island of Java." My friend's experience illustrates the eminence of ethnic identity as determinative factor for one's personal identity. The experience is all the more poignant because only two miles separates East Java from Bali. (D. Taylor-French, personal communication, March 20, 2010).

Ethnic and cultural diversity are not indicators of unity. Diversity is indexical of difference distinguishing ethnic populations with their own set of social practices (the case of Aceh, Northern Sumatra). The suggestion that the nation state of Indonesia embodies a single continuous historical past is fictional. There are multiple, independent historical pasts experienced by various populations inhabiting the islands. Java historically dominated culturally and politically over its surrounding neighbors. Java continues to exert its dominance over surrounding islands; a perception supported by Sukarno's declaration, which informed the public about citation of Indonesia in Indic literature. The term, Indonesia, and the national culture it represents are imaginative constructs and remain as such, -imagined. Indonesia biographical profile is one written by Sukarno with support of indigenous nationalists and outsiders sympathetic to his cause. The nation's biography highlights his preoccupation for a singular national vision accomplished by sheer power of will; his astute capabilities as a politician; and a self-understanding that he is fulfilling a preordained destiny.

It is within this social context, as described above, that a precise understanding about Iwan Tirta's contributions to Batik Indonesia are possible. He characterized batik as representing Indonesian way of life. His characterization of way of life is vague, because he does not offer a

cogent explanation about such characterization. Iwan Tirta does not expand with descriptions about what Indonesian way of life entails. More significantly, how does Indonesian way of life correlate to batik cloth representing Javanese way of life? Indonesian way of life is questionable, especially when Iwan Tirta portrays current day batik having historical and spiritual continuity with the island's past. When viewed within the context of Java's ancient royal court and rural village social settings, production of batik cloth escapes the preponderance of commercial interests in influencing its social value. Java's primordial social configuration represented distinct and unique phenomenological conditions that no longer exist. Batiking, batik tulis are inextricable property of Java's past prior to Indonesia's Declaration of Independence in 1945. Iwan Tirta's claim that he bridged Java's past with modern-day Indonesia in characterizing his commodities is untenable. Iwan Tirta undermines his claim as indicated by the following comment:

But Iwan soon discovered an inherent weakness in traditional batik.

"Foreigners would come into my shop, examine a piece of batik I had worked on for six months and say: "This is nice, but it is just not a luxury item." (Iwan Tirta, 1991, pp. 18-19).

His statement is telling. It clarifies his orientation to batiking and its commodification. His entrepreneurial inclination conflicted with his intellectual ideas about batiking. His comment unequivocally asserts that tastes experienced by non-indigenous clientele dictated his commodification of batik cloth. In making this declaration, his comment describes the overriding aesthetic properties Iwan Tirta sought after for his batik cloth, in its commodification. In my interviews, he expressed an overriding concern for his commodities to display aesthetic qualities that induce experience of luxuriousness for wearer and observer. Iwan Tirta's intellectual position about batiking tries to mediate the old with the new. His attempt to mediate

different cultural conditions of pre-Indonesia versus post-Indonesia was a source for Iwan Tirta's intellectual ambivalence about batik. His sartorial constructions are indexical of Indonesian modernity, a nation fully engaged in a globalized economy involved with tasks of marketing its own culture. His ambivalence exhibited in a telling comment he made to me during my interview, when Iwan Tirta remarked about his teacher and mentor, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, as a purist.

If the term Indonesia is a legitimate description to characterize batik in a limited capacity, what is the description, Javanese, role in the discussion of batik? Deconstructing the term, Java, for its historical and political contents argues that Indonesian national culture masks Java's continued influence in modern day Indonesia. The following chapter will also affirm how politics contributed to secure a national culture that remains premised on a Javanese world-view, an ethos encoding the name, Indonesia. The result is a dumbing down of culture, because the idea of culture is consequent of a singular vision experienced by a single man, -Sukarno. What occurs is presentation of culture akin to Indonesia's Taman Mini, consisting of watered down set of imagery communicating to consumers as being authentic.

### **Chapter 5: “Java”: The Real “Indonesia”**

The term, Indonesia, might indicate the privilege of signifying a nation state and thereby, to suggest a shared ethos. However, chapter 5 argues an alternative view, which suggests that the term Indonesia is in fact a proxy for the continued domination of Javanese sense and sensibilities. Javanese cultural influence, as an unstated standard for the nation state, has a long history. Chapter 5 offers examples to support the claim that the word Indonesia, in fact referred back to Javanese sense and sensibilities. This chapter seeks to articulate prominent characteristics inherited in the word Java. The central question is, what does the term Java signify in relation to the term Indonesia? Political policies and reactions to policies by the governed were accurate indicators to describe the relationship of the term Indonesia to the term Java.

The transition of Indonesia's colonized governance into an independent state resulted in Sukarno's central tenet for religious pluralism. His governance had the appearance of following Western democratic tradition. The question remained whether or not the transition from a colony into a sovereign nation state changed Java's longstanding cultural influence over its neighboring islands or over non-Javanese populating the island of Java. The Constitution of 1945 formally recognized the religions of Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Religious pluralism is the first sila (principle) out of five silas. Nonetheless, the neutrality suggested by the first sila appears to resist theocratic governance, although the Constitution 1945 does not equivocate in the belief in one God.

The evenhandedness of Pancasila allowed Sukarno to inject ideas, which addressed some key issues. If neutrality accurately characterized Pancasila, then Sukarno's concepts of Indonesian Personality, Batik Indonesia and Marhaenism logically follows. These metaphors are

themes critical to implementing and securing Pancasila. Sukarno resolved the problems of ethnic diversity by suggesting the idea of an overriding Indonesian Personality. Indonesia's population consisted of the prototypical Marhaen, who embodies an Indonesian Personality, in representing the new nation state. In order for the Marhaen to survive and flourish, he or she needed artifacts to reinforce his national identity.

Artifacts symbolically portrayed ontological properties to describe Sukarno's national identity and its universal application irrespective of ethnicity. Thereby, material forms were critical to maintaining a Marhaen's national identity. In his or her representation of national culture, Sukarno's Marhaen was conceptually possible, an imagined creature, molded into a dutiful citizen of the state. Sukarno relied on K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to provide him with the details that would describe the essential characteristics of the Indonesian Personality. By relying on K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, Sukarno also unwittingly secured Javanese cultural domination. Sukarno spoke to another Javanese with academic and intellectual inclinations committed to Javanese culture. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's long ties with a Central Javanese royal court reinforced his interests. Therefore, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's insight on cultural matters could not avoid his Javanese predisposition, as a prism to define cultural standards. Sukarno's successor, Suharto, reinforced Javanese cultural eminence through his wife, Raden Ayu Siti Hartinah a.k.a. Madam Tien Suharto (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996, see Figure 25). She was very active in Indonesia's cultural life and played a prominent role in expanding its cultural sphere of influence. Ibu Tien involved herself in high profile events promoting Javanese sense and sensibilities. Iwan Tirta credits Ibu Tien for her insistence that a *selendang* (shawl) was as an essential item in completing an Indonesian woman's

traditional attire of a kain-kebaya, as shown in the portrait.



*Figure 25.* President Suharto (1921-2008) and First Lady Raden Ayu Siti Hartinah *a.k.a.* Madam Tien (1947-1996).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Suharto\\_and\\_Ibu\\_Tien.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Suharto_and_Ibu_Tien.jpg)

Both Sukarno and Suharto social and political policies aimed at homogenizing national identity. A Javanese prism filtered political and social policies to protect both cultural (public) and personal (private) Javanese interests. Concentration of power held by Sukarno and Suharto facilitated such protection. Sukarno's charisma is well known and recognized whenever he spoke at meetings at nationalist organization throughout the second quarter of the twentieth century (Adams, 1965). Coupled by his tactical skills, he presented himself as a formidable personality that contributed to his rise in power. Conversely, Suharto's power rested on consolidation of military power. Both men participated in establishing governance that had all the qualities of feudal governance. Ricklefs (1993) offered the following insight by expanding his descriptions about Sukarno:

Attempts have been made to characterize guided democracy as a system of government, a process rather similar to describing the shape of an amoeba. Some scholars accept Sukarno's view that this was a return to something more in keeping with Indonesia's, and specifically Java's past. Sometimes such analyses have the flavor of a psycho-cultural determinism, as if the spirit of Sultan Agung whispered in Sukarno's ear. It is true that some aspects of guided democracy would have seemed familiar to Sultan Agung, for Sukarno was in some ways like a pre-colonial Javanese king. He represented a centre of legitimacy, which others needed. Conspicuous display was the outward expression of legitimacy; stadiums, statues, and great public occasions were perhaps similar in function to the court ceremonial and buildings of an older age. Sukarno had little organized power of his own and was obliged to manipulate, threaten, and cajole other powerful men. Intrigue and conspiracy became the common fare of politics. The financial and legal systems became increasingly arbitrary and irregular as bureaucratic norms disintegrated. Local government relied increasingly upon unpaid labour from the peasantry. (p. 257).

Ricklefs (1993) critique portrays Sukarno's governance as feudal. His commentary also confirms a replication of governance from Java's past. Modern day feudalism simply took a different face, masked by rituals of democratic elections. Sukarno arbitrarily governed the nation state of Indonesia, as noted by Ricklefs (1993), instead of overseeing a government consisting of checks and balances ensured by the independence of governmental agencies and institutions. Such absence allowed for Javanese continued influence over non-Javanese populations. The concentration of power and its arbitrary exercise of it allowed Javanese cultural leitmotifs to remain intact. The means by which Javanese cultural sensibilities expanded was through a patronage system. Javanese cultural sentiment expanded its social, cultural or aesthetic influences because of a patronage system as shown in the examples of Sukarno and K.R.T. Hardjonagoro contrasted to Suharto and Iwan Tirta.

Characteristic to constructing a biography, for such an important cultural artifact as batik during Indonesia's modernity, was to look to Java's history, a point affirmed by Ricklefs (1993). For example, Java's historical past was a trove for attributes suited to endow modern day Batik

Indonesia its cultural meaning. Iwan Tirta's resorted to such reminiscences in his narrations about batik throughout his career. Java's history was the primary source for batik's meaning. Current production of batik was essentially modern day objectification of what batik meant, but one determined by the prism of Java's glorious past. In the case of Batik Indonesia, its associations with Java's historical past endowed it with pedigree for its cultural continuity and therefore, secured its status of being culturally authentic.

Sukarno's presidency emerged out of World War II, with a political agenda focused on securing Indonesia's national stability. However, secessionist aspirations tested Indonesia's national stability, a problem that persists to date. Much of Sukarno's political capital during the years 1949 -1959 responded to restive populations as documented:

The possibility of a federation of loosely knit regions was denied by the use of force-first in the crushing of the Republic of South Maluku (RMS) in 1950 and then the Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic (PRRI)-Universal Struggle Charter (Permesta) regional rebellions of 1957 to 1962. (Indonesia-Government and Politics, 1992, n.p.).

Sukarno's inventive skills in creating new policies and departments could not deflect Indonesia's economic collapse during the 1960s. Indonesia underwent a constant state of chronic hyperinflation. Sukarno's political diversion leaning to Marxism, compounded by his desire to establish closer ties with Beijing, foreshadowed an abrupt end to his presidency. Orde Lama, (Old Order) refers to period when he governed.

Suharto's rise to power ushered in Orde Baru (New Order). Orde Baru economic policies took a more Western approach as previously noted. Suharto did not abandon principles of Pancasila, enshrined in the Constitution of 1945. He simply reinterpreted it to suit his political ends and personal needs. Neither, did Suharto abandon Sukarno's feudal type of governance.

Orde Baru governance relied on Indonesian Armed Forces (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia [BRI]), in consolidating Suharto's power. The basis for his power and his governance involved "...governing through consensus, traditional mysticism, military repression and authoritarian control" (Berger, 2008, p.2). Suharto's public policies used artifacts for their symbolic contents to influence public life. Suharto's state mandated sartorial wear for official and unofficial events completes Sukarno's notion of an Indonesian Personality. Wear of Batiked cloth was required at educational and governmental institutions (Boehlke, 2008). Although Suharto may not have officially acknowledged Sukarno's concept of Marhaen, it was clear that his position supported the idea that the state is involved in the business of shaping Indonesia's national identity. His government issued prescriptive sartorial mandates for the general population.

Under Suharto's governance, culture was indexical of high culture. Suharto's draconian edicts sharply Sukarno's ardent approach in persuading his adversaries. The difference between these two men was like night and day, passion versus authoritarian coercion. Culture embodied Javanese sensibilities, publically demonstrated by donning batiked dress. Batiked sartorial representations of state uniforms served as a veneer to indicate cultural unification. Companion prescriptive mandates required government employees to enroll in annual remedial courses on Pancasila. Had national identity been an enduring quality, governmental requirement for remedial courses on Pancasila would have been irrelevant. Thus, batiked cloth acquired meaning largely defined by the state.

Although Indonesia's governance involved a consultative approach towards making policy decisions, it was in fact a patronage system. Governance resembled a personality cult,

particularly with Sukarno:

President Sukarno has never been a man who liked to take orders or even suggestions, however calm and collected the voice. From the start, he has held a mystic faith that he, and only he, speaks for the Indonesian people. “Don't you know that I am an extension of the people's tongue? “he demanded of a critic once.” The Indonesian people will eat stones if I tell them to.” His charm can lay ghosts, his oratory stills critics, his famed “luck” has led him safely through imprisonment, exile, uprisings, attempted assassination and narrowly averted coups d'état. (Time Magazine Vol. LXXI No. 10, 1958, n.p.).

Through such governing schemes, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro under Sukarno and Iwan Tirta at the behest of Suharto became spokespersons for Indonesian culture. Both men weighed in on cultural matters. Their vocal, high profile unofficial official positions served to remind their compatriots about their cultural legacy.

Sukarno's Indonesian Personality found forms in the designs of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. His designs consisted of a visual vocabulary drawn from his years of experience with batik cloth as well from his intellectual inclinations and relationships with Central Javanese royal court. Thus, batiked cloth produced by K.R.T. Hardjonagoro fundamentally reflected a Javanese's cultural ethos. However, his commodification of batiked cloth, like that of Iwan Tirta was inherently a product of artistic license. Sukarno chose K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to assist him with reviving a war-devastated batik's industry. He became Iwan Tirta's future teacher. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro not only advised him on technical matters of dyeing cloth. More importantly, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro educated him on the intellectual properties associated with batik. Traditions representative of Javanese ethos defined such intellectual properties (Kühr, 1996).

Sukarno asked K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to transform batiked materiality into objects that would express characteristics associated with a typical, common Indonesian. Hence, the idea of an Indonesian Personality followed. Sukarno's idea of Indonesian Personality had a companion

in the idea of Batik Indonesia. The monumental task that Sukarno asked K.R.T. Hardjonagoro prompted him to travel the island of Java in order to discover Batik Indonesia's ontological properties. Batik Indonesia would visually embody those common characteristics. Sukarno's directive to K.R.T. Hardjonagoro illustrated a form of cultural reflexivity. The privilege in exercising it extended to Suharto's \$26 million building project of Taman Mini (1972-1975) in West Jakarta (Hitchcock, 2009).

Both Sukarno and Suharto shared problems of ethnic dissension due to long-standing ethnic distrust for the Javanese. Replacing ethnic identity with national identity as a means to homogenize diversity was untenable. Ongoing resentments based on long held ethnic antagonisms as documented in the following headline, "Indonesia Turns Its Chinese Into Scapegoats (Mydans, 1998)" indicate the failure of a common national identity. The newspaper article described a massacre in capital city of Jakarta in 1998. Eruption of violence was a reminder of the limitations of national identity. The incident illustrated how quickly national identity forged through political culture disintegrates when old grievances reappear. Hence, cultural identity based on difference remained to be fundamental for the general Indonesian population.

Presidents Sukarno and Suharto were instrumental for Javanization of Indonesian Personality to continue. Sukarno achieved this accomplishment through services of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, considered an eminent scholar of Javanese culture. The social and political milieu represented by decades of the 1950s and 1960s are foils highlighting Iwan Tirta's contributions to Indonesian culture. His career in batik began during the 1970s. The cultural value held by Iwan Tirta's body of work emerges when observed within a limited period that began in the

1950s.

The question not raised is, what aspects of Iwan Tirta's lived-experiences contributed to create value? The data suggest his social, political and business networks are important influences that established his legacy for Indonesian culture. Iwan Tirta's official and unofficial social relationships allowed him to affect the ongoing discourse on batik on a national and international scale. His networks gave Iwan Tirta access to elite segments of Javanese society. Iwan Tirta highlighted his social and political networks in his narratives about batik cloth. In bringing these details to the public's attention, he reinforced his unquestioned position as commentator of Javanese sense and sensibilities. His networks were sources for clientele, whose tastes largely reflected international savvy. These worldly movers and shakers with their *haute* sensibilities influenced silhouettes for his sartorial constructions. Yet, these sartorial structures retained a modicum semblance of Indonesianess. Iwan Tirta's clientele who donned his haute couture forms contributed to diffusion of Indonesian imagined cultural identity. His haute couture object forms also functioned as mnemonic sartorial entities. They were to remind the wearer of their Indonesian cultural legacy, as claimed by Iwan Tirta.

Iwan Tirta endowed batik cloth with cultural properties that he considered to have originated in Java's historical past. In some instances, he fluctuated between describing batik as being Indonesian and in others, as being Javanese. Iwan Tirta positioned the Central Javanese courts (Othman, 1991) as the source for Indonesian batik. Although Iwan Tirta characterized the development of batik after the 1960s as pan-Indonesian (Tirta, 1996, p. 26), his sartorial constructions were visual statements of Javanese sentiments adapted to modern sensibilities. He interpreted batik through his Javanese worldview with a privileged perspective defined by his position as

Artist. Iwan Tirta adapted pictorial forms from other indigenous social groups such as Ciberon, Yogya and Solo. He readjusted pattern elements to suite the silhouette of his sartorial construction. Although he re-presented batik as indexing national culture, his discussions and commodifications consisted of a vocabulary taken from Central Javanese royal court culture. Commodification of batiked cloth took two forms during Suharto's governance. Uniforms were attire for the civil state. However, this characteristic did not completely disappear with Iwan Tirta's haute couture forms. In their representations as Art, his haute sartorial forms blur their essential characterization as uniforms, glossed by their glitz and the glamour associated with them.

Both K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta are distinguished for their competencies in their respective métiers. Both educated men came from families with faultless pedigrees. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's family had a long history in producing batik, whereas Iwan Tirta came from a family with professional association in jurisprudence. The working relationships of President Sukarno with K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and President Suharto with Iwan Tirta represented two independent vertical, professional relationships. As independent relationships, they distinguish Indonesia's pre-modernity from post-modernity. Iwan Tirta provided a clue paraphrased by the following remark, "You know I am Indonesia's first designer" (Kühr, 1996). His statement prompted a rhetorical thought in a question, well, were there no designers in Indonesia before 1960? Iwan Tirta's comment implicated social and historical conditions inhered in his use of the term, *designer*.

Sukarno preceded Iwan Tirta's propensity to looking back to Java's distant historical past to characterize batiked cloth. Sukarno quixotic side appeared in his tendencies to enhance his

statements. In his 1965 interview, he characterized Indonesia in the following terms:

Open the book of Ramayana. In it, there's reference to "The land of Suarna Dwipa which has seven large kingdoms." Suarna Dwipa, meaning Golden Islands, was the name of our country, when immortalized in the Hindu classics two thousand five hundred years ago. (Adams, 1965, p. 32).

Sukarno's comment, which referred back to ancient descriptions, illustrated construction of Indonesian cultural identity. I reintroduced this citation in this chapter, because it embodies Indonesia's imagined cultural authenticity. Historical continuity with its liminal past was a fundamental ingredient to characterizing cultural authenticity. Therefore, Sukarno's idea of national identity was prone as being imaginative hyperbole, because he hedged with historical facts and did not evaluate his references soberly. He imputed the word, Indonesia, with a historical pedigree that originated in myth. Nonetheless, Sukarno presented the information as a point of fact.

The Ramayana is a tale, preceded by an oral tradition that began BCE 1,500. Valmiki, a poet/sage penned the Ramayana (BCE 300-CE 400). Recounting of the epic appears in *kāndas* (books). Each *kānda* consists of 67 to 128 *sargas* (chapters). Sukarno injected into his interview passages from the fourth book, Kishkindha Kanda, Book 4, *The Empire of Holy Monkeys* (Roa & Murthy, 1998). Chapters 25 to 32 reveal geographical information suggestive of the Malay Archipelago. Sukarno co-opted this information and integrated it into Indonesia's biography. In exercising this, Sukarno did not distinguish historic time from mythic time. He conflates them in order to make the claim of Indonesia's cultural pedigree.

Conflation of historic time with mythic time is an integral component to constructing identity resting on imagined properties. Sukarno's reference was important not for its lack of facticity. Rather, the value of his declaration by overlooking real versus fictive time defines anot-

her option in orienting towards the phenomenal world. His declaration asserts what I refer to as representative of a metaphoric presence in interpreting about something. The interpretation exists beyond or outside the moment, when the interpretation reifies as utterances. The interpretation is illogical sequencing in referring about something, but I submit that the act of interpreting, in which demarcation of real versus fictive, presents its own distinctive logic.

The Ramayana text appeared to authenticate Indonesia's illustrious existence. Suarna Dwipa (Swarna Dwipa) was, however, not a name that referred to a sovereign country. The reference referred to the island of Sumatra, with the translation as Golden Island. Further, Sukarno's citation to islands, implying that unity of the entire archipelago is a stretch of the imagination. Yawa Dwipa is the actual reference for the island of Java, designated as rice island (Directorate of Foreign Information Services, 2010). Sukarno's comment was not wholly realistic with the information he formally presented in his autobiographical account. Planting the idea that modern day Indonesia, which had come into existence in 1945 had historical continuity since the first millennium illustrates creative postulation. His response to Indonesia's geneology parallels Iwan Tirta's characterizations of Javanese batik in their commodifications constructed in his atelier. Unlike Sukarno, Iwan Tirta was not as brash about it or as totally convinced by his own public declarations.

Looking back to the past to retrieve historical pedigree, recurred with Iwan Tirta's narratives about batik. It appeared in descriptions like "...the embodiment of Javanese life and philosophy of" (San, 1977, p.7). Asserting such features as fact, Iwan Tirta granted batik its historical and cultural cachet. Iwan Tirta framed batik as materiality with cultural importance, because he gave the subject and its commodified forms with an aura suggestive of imagined

preciousness. He co-opted batik's materiality and re-presents it. Its revision exhibits Iwan Tirta's objectifications of how he feels, sees, and experiences batik. In asserting that batik expressed essential Javanese sense and sensibilities, its materiality became a sacralized object. For instance when Iwan Tirta stated meditative skills being prominent in waxing of cloth, illustrated sacrilization of batik.

Contemporary rural village women crouched on the floor at one of his factories, sitting as they waxed cloth surfaces in sublime meditative states demands suspension of credulity. Evaluating a waxer's meditative achievements within royal court culture, on the other hand, are possibly factual and credible. Individuals from local indigenous rural population mitigated their impoverished living conditions by rendering their services to the royal court. The exchange for their services was protection and compensation. Within the walls of the royal court, batikers were beholden to a patronage system. To produce and to ensure high standards in the execution of waxing would ultimately reflect back on the Sultan or Susuhunan, their august host and protector. Iwan Tirta confirmed the important role the patronage system played in batikting, "...before only the royalty of the *Kratons* (palaces) wore the beautiful batiks-they were the ones who could pay to support the artist and his family" (The Future of Batik, 1980, n.p.).

Within palace court settings, time was an asset. Circumstances were probably conducive to cultivating meditative skills as women waxed patterns on cloth surfaces. The weight of the Sultan or Susuhunan's supreme power placed a tremendous amount of pressure to create error free batiked cloth, and hence, reference of meditative skills being involved. Excellence in production of batiked cloth due to unparalleled skills in designing, were implicit demands in accomplishing visual properties to honor the sublime status of members of the royal court.

Batikers would have had time to hone not only their skills in batiking but also their meditative skills. They might have waxed with a keen attentive focus in conjuring a particular pattern. Although Iwan Tirta spoke about waxer's meditative skills as a significant component for the success of a batiked cloth, he did not elaborate on his statement. He did not offer any type of evidence to support his claim. Such lack in providing corroborating evidence equally applied to his characterization of batiked cloth as to be magic. His use of the word magic might have been more for its double entendre meanings in selling his pamphlet on batik. When he spoke about modern day Indonesian batik, he consistently referred to themes of magic, meditation, and Java. Nonetheless, I am suggesting that Iwan Tirta's narratives about batik are in fact a continuation of its biographical trajectory that began with Sukarno's revival of Batik Indonesia during the 1950s.

Iwan Tirta contributed to elevating batik's symbolic status in Indonesia's public life. Indonesia's participation in an international community influenced batik's elevation to its iconic status representing a nation state. Within context of international exposure, batiked sartorial forms became visible and portable mnemonic declarations of cultural fraternity. In essence, batik was prêt-à-porter proxies for Indonesian national identity. Iwan Tirta's commodifications of batik affirmed Indonesia's modernity. His commodification of batiked cloth was Iwan Tirta's response to Indonesia's position involving a sophisticated and glamorous international community. In that, his European counterparts of fashion houses had already an established record of accomplishment. Heads of states, dignitaries, and Hollywood iconic entertainers traveled to Jakarta. These eminent visitors, which included those on state visits, met face to face with the "Father of modern batik" (Youngblood, 1987). Accompanied by an entourage of Indonesian officials, these sightseeing tours were secular rituals. They had all the ceremonial gravity like

Pemberton's (1995) descriptions of the partitioning of the Mataram Kingdom (1755). Unlike the procession of past, bright yellow parasols were absent during these modern-day visits. These modern day aristocratic political and social elites ventured to Iwan Tirta's boutique on Jalan Panarukan 25, in the district of Menteng, Jakarta, with members of Indonesia's first family in attendance. Their visits provided these foreign guests a quick education, a primer of sorts, on batik. Their face-to-face meeting allowed Iwan Tirta, as master of his trade, to educate them about true and real batik (Butler, 1982).

Paralleling batik's emblematic status in representing Indonesian national identity, were his narrations that continued Javanization of Indonesian culture. Social, economic, and political prominence of individuals, like Iwan Tirta, contributed to legitimizing his narratives about batik. Direct governmental intervention through prescriptive policies secured Javanization of the former archipelago. Cultural integration faced on the other hand persistent threats of secession from the federal state by restive populations. Those who desired to set up an Islamic state continued with their vocal opposition to the parent state. Their ambitions desired to evade religious pluralism enshrined in the Constitution of 1945. The provinsi (province) of Aceh illustrated the strength of Islamicist aims. Aceh is located on the northern tip Sumatra. It is the only provinsi governed by Sharia Law, out of 33 provinces. Schlesinger (1990) summed up Aceh's grievance against the parent state in the following terms:

Not surprisingly, the orthodox Muslims on Sumatra and Sulawesi resented seeing their hard-earned rupiahs (the Indonesian currency) going to feed, clothe, and educate the Javanese "unbelievers," who practiced kedjawen. (p. 78).

Brown (2005) also provided the following insight:

Economic grievances were roused by the perception that the benefits of resource exploit-

tation accrued only to the Jakartan elite, with little returned to Aceh. These emergent spatial horizontal inequalities were given more explicitly ethnic overtones as Jakarta, partly in response to unrest in the province, encouraged massive Javanese migration into Aceh under its transmigration programme, allocating the migrants large tracts of often prime agricultural land. Aceh's economic grievances against the national government were, thus brought home into the province itself, as the Javanese took up a strong position in the local economy. (p. 2).

The dominant held view of local populations on the outer islands saw the central government vis-à-vis as Javanese's usurpation of local resources that stood only to benefit the Javanese. Such perceptions have been a thorn before and after Indonesia's entry into the international community.

Javanese culture remained to be a national standard for Indonesian cultural sensibilities. Discussion of cultural authenticity and its association to royal court culture magnified Javanization of Indonesian national identity. Iwan Tirta's persistent invocation of royal court culture underscored the importance of his much-desired biographical claims. Extending such claims to material forms endowed them with impeccable virtual credentials. His state employer, Suharto, affirmed his commodified batik cloths, to secure their virtual kinship with artifacts expressive of the best of Javanese culture. Iwan Tirta's association to the palace court reinforced the cachet his commodities held.

Iwan Tirta asserted "...Indonesian philosophy of harmony and beauty" (Tatu, 1986, p. 346) to be essential characteristics of Javanese sense and sensibilities. In failing to offer, an explanation for a claim filtered through his Javanese worldview, renders such characterizations meaningless. Absence of any explanation left readers to their own devices to interpret its meaning. In contrast, to have commodities associated to members of the royal household, or to

socialize with them placed one at the apex of Javanese society. The priyayi formerly represented members of the immediate family of Central Javanese royal court and therefore, were originally a hereditary aristocratic class. They had high standing within a colonial social constellation because of their Western style education. In contrast, Sukarno and Suharto represented modern day members of the priyayi class. Sukarno's Western education combined with his charismatic personality secured his privileged status. Suharto's association with the aristocracy appeared to have two sources. Suharto's biographical profile described that his family had a low-level Javanese nobility connection, but still received a good education. Extant documentation suggested that his royal connection came from his wife:

Indonesia's re-orientation towards the West under Suharto represented his willingness to consider Western economic models. This reversed the effects of Sukarno's tattered economy. The Indonesian population overall benefitted from changes of economic policies, as indicated by the emergence of a middle class (Boehlke, 2008). The variety of malls dotting the city of Jakarta, like American malls, provided convenient venues to display couturier scents, apparel or furnishings. These cavernous spaces were indeed centers for middle-class Javanese to fantasize and to play out their "...adorned dreams" (Wilson, 2003). Suggestion of an emerging middle-class, as a social classification, had its own set of problems. Ricklefs (personal communication, January 25, 2012) cautioned such characterization stating, "...a Javanese middle class was emerging in the nineteenth century and was often associated with Islamic reform movements." His statement communicated that social classification becomes meaningful when its interpretation considers the historical context that defines it. However, the task in clarifying the term, *middle class*, within the context of Indonesian modernity is beyond the scope of this research. Individuals like Iwan

Tirta are not representative of Indonesia's middle-class, by virtue that he was beneficiary of Suharto's largesse. Iwan Tirta shares the social distinction in being a member of modern day Indonesian priyayi. Indonesia's change in economic fortunes gave indigenous populations access to all sorts of commodities that are available in the West. Indonesia's engagement within a global economy was forward-looking, setting its sights on playing a regional leadership role. Indonesia's political and economic successes were statements of its modernity. Indonesian's were in a position to procure and consume goods and services at will. This characterized a sort of mobility afforded through middle-class consumption and the ability to choose a lifelong trajectory embodied as one's career (Ansori, 2009, p. 91).

Sukarno's royal pedigree came from his patrilineal and matrilineal sides of the family. Sukarno's father was addressed as, Raden Soekemi Sosrodihardjo. However, this is another example showing the fluidity of words and their meanings. It is an honorific title stressing the fact that Sukarno's father was a priyayi from a lesser nobility. In Sukarno's biography, Adams (1965, p. 19) informed readers that Raden translated into Lord. Ricklefs took issue with such characterization. He contested Adams' translation with the following critique, "Sukarno's father title of Raden indicates quite low level of aristocracy; it does not translate as 'lord'" (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012). His mother's, Ida Ayu Nyoman Rai, came from a Balinese patrician family. According to Sukarno, the last King of Singaradja was his mother's uncle (Adams, 1965, p. 19).

Suharto's royal associations came through his wife, Raden Ayu Siti Hartinah a.k.a. Ibu Tien (1923-1996). Ricklefs cautioned on the significance of her title, *Raden Ayu*, stating, Suharto's wife as one who made much of her connection to the Mangkunegaran. He elaborated:

...but in fact it was sufficiently remote that she was refused permission for her parents to be buried at the Mangkunegaran graves. As a matter of diplomacy, this was said to be because the MN graveyards were too full. So she built the Soeharto mausoleum on Mt. Law. Raden Ayu is a female aristocratic title that has not specific link with the MN (Mangkunegaran) house. (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Ibu Tien's biography becomes more complicated because newspaper and magazine articles portrayed her having experienced "...the flaming womb" (*wahyu*). On the other hand, Ong Hok Ham, a prominent Indonesian social historian, said in an interview, "When Suharto rose to power, people believed the wife had the 'wahyu' (the flaming womb) and whoever united with her would get the 'wahyu'. After her death, people began to sense the 'wahyu' was gone (The power of a First Lady - Asia Part II, 2011)."

Both written testaments attest to Ibu Tien's mythological *wahyu* experience. Ricklefs (2012) took great exception to Ibu Tien-Suharto's public biographical detail. He unofficially rebutted, "Ibu Tien certainly did not have a 'flaming womb' or ever-to my knowledge-make any claim to having received *wahyu*. That is just nonsense" (M.C. Ricklefs, personal communication, January 25, 2012). The contests of meaning embodied by a given word or description showed the murky and tenuous natures of oral and discursive language. The dueling biographical texts about Ibu Tien-Suharto underscored Foster's (1991) and Anderson's (2006) central themes of imagined properties. Biographical pedigree bestowed on an individual simply because of suggestions of being associated with the royal court in one form or another, was a significant attribute. Direct royal association is an unquestioned attribute that describes K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. The royal Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta awarded K.R.T. Hardjonagoro the honorific title, Kanjeng Raden Temenggung (KRT) Hardjonagoro. He served as the royal court's *bhupati* (village head) and considered as a member of the royal family.

Iwan Tirta's relationship with the royal court was in a capacity as a researcher of batik cloth. Iwan Tirta inherited high social status because of his father's, Moh Husein Tirtaamidjaja, appointment as Indonesia's first Supreme Court judge from 1950-1958 (Angara, 2010). His academic credentials and his associations with the United Nations (Edmond, 2010), produced a biographical profile that gave him access to elite Jakartan and Javanese social circles. Iwan Tirta showed keen interest in sacred dances of the royal court, before he committed himself to his entrepreneurial venture in batik. He documented the sacred dances of the Court of the Susuhunan of Surakarta, funded by the John D. Rockefeller III fund (Kurniasari, 2011). Iwan Tirta indicated that he received an honorific title by the royal court (Kühr, 1996). This research could not verify his claim; neither did his list of awards and achievements existing in a bound book given by his office support his claim. Iwan Tirta kept a professional position with royal court members throughout his career. He had unfettered access to K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and the court itself. As Iwan Tirta's former teacher, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro remained active in producing batik in a studio built out of bamboo on royal court grounds. Pakubuwono XII appointed K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to oversee the court palace's museum in 1969 (Wijaya, December 15 2008, n.p.). Therefore, Iwan Tirta had access to rare batik collections for his research, as material artifacts experienced within their original settings. Further, his research on royal court batik collections resulted in understanding inventory within contexts of royal court social life, which is inaccessible to the public (Wijaya, December 15 2008, n.p.).

The sense of prestige gained through direct or indirect association with royal lineage affects one's reading of biographical profiles of these four men, Sukarno, Suharto, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta. Their royal pedigree varied in degree, scope and circumstance.

Such characterizations are possibly questionable. Whether their associations are fictive or factual, they are biographical details that exist within the public domain. Therefore, such details are prone to integrate into future texts that involve discussions about Indonesian batik, batiking or batiked cloth. Any implicit or explicit suggestion of being associated with the royal court distinguished individuals, such as these four men, from the general Javanese population. It gave them prestige with an authoritative voice for Javanese sense and sensibilities. They are men of prowess.

The Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta (Solo) is older than the royal seat of the Palace of the Sultan of Yogyakarta. Central Javanese royal courts are direct descendants of the Mataram kingdom (16th-18th centuries) and its cultural traditions. Partitioning of the Mataram kingdom (1755, Treaty of Giyanti) resulted in an agreement between two royal households not to infringe on one another's social, aesthetic, or philosophical practices. Each royal seat was not to replicate the other's practices by incorporating them into their household, thereby maintaining their respective social integrity (Tirta, 1996).

Each of these principalities emphasized specific Javanese aesthetic sensibilities. *Adi Peni* is associated with the Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta. According to Iwan Tirta (1996), this represented ideas of elegance and beauty. In contrast, the Palace of the Sultan of Yogyakarta exhibited, *Adi Luhung*. It embodied majesty, regality, and stateliness. Differences in aesthetic dispositions appeared in architectural motifs, material objects and rituals. However, these qualities found their most expressive forms in the deportment and body movement of royal court dancers.

Stylistic differences exist in the movements and the stance of the dancers. Dancers from the courts of Surakarta move their bodies from left to right and sideways, swaying like rice

fields in the wind, while the dancers of Yogyakarta have a more upright posture, moving up and down sturdily like young trees. The Yogyakarta dancers have a more masculine aura about them, which is not very surprising, since Bedaya dancers performed by young boys. This practice remained at the Yogyakarta courts until the end of the 19th century. At the court of the Susuhunan of Surakarta, women always performed the dances. They also served as ruler's ladies-in-waiting or courtesans. (Tirta, 1996, p. 80).

The underpinning for both philosophical principles is the archetypal dyad of halus (refinement) and its contrast kasar (vulgar, Tirta, 1996, p. 66). This polarity influenced all aspects of Javanese social life and was emblematic of a person's refinement.

Iwan Tirta showed interest in court dancers before he started his career in production of batik. He documented a performance held at the Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta (Tirta, *A Bedaya Ketawang Dance Performance At the Court of Surakarta*, 1967). The royal dancers are serene examples of Javanese court culture (see Figure 26).



*Figure 26. Bedaya Ketawang.*

<http://indonesianfolklore.webnode.com/java/bedaya-ketawang-dance/>

However, the royal dancer became a primordial image of Javanese femininity under Iwan Tirta's aesthetics. He interpreted and replicated these qualities into sartorial semblances, in forms of

*haute couture*. Iwan Tirta's batik formal eveningwear for women referenced Javanese royal court dancer. His eveningwear was a poetic sartorial description in color, line, and texture. Such haute forms reified Javanese sense for refinement. One of his interviews characterizes him in the following terms:

Interest specifically to the batik was born when on a grant from the John D. Rockefeller III Fund, Iwan had the opportunity to learn dance at Kesunanan Surakarta palace. It was there when Iwan decided to explore batik and was determined to document and preserve batik. (Gaya, 2011, n.p.).

Importance of Iwan Tirta's association with Javanese royal court appeared in his 1994 and 1996 staging of his fashion events. Both catwalk galas recreated royal court settings and both events involved dance. As stated, the singular source of inspiration for Iwan Tirta's sartorial designs was classical Javanese dancers. By default, his sartorial constructions embodied virtues and qualities associated with royal court culture, as suggested by respective settings staged for both his fashion galas. Femininity characterizing classical Central Javanese court dancers revealed itself in their reticence. Yet, they remain engaged with circumstances as dictated by time, space and setting. Their presence might express outward passivity towards their circumstances however; such appearances in demeanor are in fact a dancer's active participation as with the waxer and her cloth described by Rouffaer.

Hence, movement positively affirmed action. Movement reflects an ability to suspend diachronic existence in order to enter into synchronic experiences of time and space. Unlike the West, the cultural position of the Bedaya Ketawang is unlike performed entertainment or Art. I am suggesting that it is ritual. Ritual gives movement and its performance a complete different sense to its meaning, altering the texture of performance itself. Ritualized movement such as the Bedaya Ketawang invariably involved a distinctive direction towards its own destiny. The series of subtle

motions expressed in the deportment of the dancer are vocabulary, representing the sacred contents of ritual. The power of Bedaya Ketawang's sacred status harnessed all present into becoming participants of ritual. Ritual is constitutive of movement that binds the audience through their vicarious consumption of performance.

Bedaya Ketawang of the Kasunanan Palace of Surakarta and Bedaya Bedah Mediyun of the Palace of the Sultan of Yogyakarta are sacred properties of the royal courts. Koentjaraningrat explained, "The reason is that in the course of time a complex of superstitious beliefs has developed about a number of these classical and sacred compositions"<sup>79</sup> (1989, p. 296). His explanation described how small and incidental occurrences can prove to be potent catalysts to change directions taken in human life. What might appear to be mundane and an incidental day-to-day experience, can in fact bring significant change to every day experiences. Such seeming incidentals bind the sacred with the profane that is continually present in forms of mundane experience. It constitutes a mystical condition, characteristic of a Javanese cosmology described by Mulder (1998, p. 36) as *supernature*. Performance of the Bedaya Ketawang honors a deity. Performance, as movement, acknowledged her powers. The sacred dance, Bedaya Ketawang, admits the deity of the goddess of the South Seas (Indian Ocean), Nyai Roro Kidul, to realize herself ritually. She is consort to the ruler, Susuhunan of the Kasunanan of Surakarta. Her mystical marriage to the Susuhunan originated with Kanjeng Panembahan Senopati (1584-1601), founder of the Mataram kingdom. The Susuhunan consummates his connubial commitments through a series of ritualized activity performed annually.

Melding of Javanese intuitive acceptance of supernatural realities with every day experiences are fundamental to Javanese experience. Sukarno's unabashed declaration illustrated

this point:

The morning I left, Mother had a premonition that I would never again come home to live. In front of our house she ordered, "Get down on the ground, my child. Lie flat out in the dirt." Then Mama stepped over my body. Back and forth three times. This was in accord with the mystic belief that passing over your child with the part of the body from which he came and which contains the magic powers of life transmits to the child the everlasting benediction of the mother. It's as though each time she says, "This child comes from my womb and I bless him."

Then she bade me arise. Again, she turned to me toward the East and solemnly, "Never ever forget, my son, that you are the child of the dawn. (Adams, 1965, p. 31).

Suharto's was no less under the influence of mysticism:

As a teenager, Soeharto lived with and assisted a religious teacher (kyai) who was famed as a shaman (dukun). Here he lived in that world on the boundaries between the popular version of Orthodox Islam, with its Qur'anic recitations and mysticism, and the spirit of the realm of Java, with its spectres, folk remedies and magic. He became, and remained, devoted to the intense inner mysticism of rural Java, a mysticism where Islam exists only in its more esoteric form and religious legalism has little force. Here Soeharto found an inner peace, which may partly explain his apparent cool-headedness throughout his years of rule. Soeharto admired Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX of Yogyakarta and desired the kind of supernatural legitimacy, which Javanese rulers claimed. He is said to have brought some holy regalia (*pusaka*) from the court of Surakarta to surround him in Jakarta in 1966, and to have returned them hastily when severe floods in Surakarta were interpreted as supernatural retribution for their removal. (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 286-287).

Mysticism equally influenced K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, whereas Iwan Tirta viewed it with skepticism. Nevertheless, he did not eschew this cultural property in narrating about batik. Iwan Tirta was discrete when he spoke about this attribute by simply referring to it as, *magic*, to describe batik's feature. However, Iwan Tirta's description inadequately communicated about its ontological properties. Ricklefs (1993) offered a more evocative insight by describing such interaction in characterizing Suharto a "...intense inner mysticism of rural Java" (p. 286).

Ricklefs (1993) in a few words conveyed degree and extent of mysticism exerted on Javanese's worldview. Whether this remains to be integral quality in post-Suharto, Indonesia is possibly a future topic. Ricklefs (1993) continued to describe "and desired the kind of supernatural legitimacy" (p. 287). His characterization also underscored the importance that status and pedigree plays in Javanese social constellation. Iwan Tirta's narratives on batik exhibited their importance as cultural values.

Iwan Tirta's biographical profile mirrored K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's personal history. Both men were connoisseurs of Javanese classical dance. They engaged in the production of batik to become masters of the craft. Both had close ties with their respective nation's first families. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta's social proximities to the royal court authenticated their roles as de facto arbiters of Javanese culture. The culture of royal courts determined aesthetic and Javanese embodied sensibilities constructed out of Byzantine ritualization of phases of social life.

Chapter 6 focused on Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, as well on those considered arbiters of Javanese culture in men of K.R. T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta. The interactions between these men as employer/employee, ruler/ruled or benefactor/beneficiary were high profile personal and professional relationships. They participated within a social continuum whereby, Sukarno, Suharto, and K.R.T. Hardjonagoro contributed to Iwan Tirta's historical importance. The four men represented a social and professional constellation, which mutually benefited each of them. All four men represented Foster's (1991) proposed idea of cultural elites. In this case, they secured ongoing Javanization of the new nation state of Indonesia thereby, to affirm Java's cultural eminence. How each of these men experienced their own sense of status or conditions described as conditions of authenticity, legitimacy, and mysticism, ultimately expresses sets of

distinct, unique experiences. Their respective experiences abetted them to leaving an enduring mark on Indonesia's cultural life. Historical circumstances bound these men, as men of prowess (Bowen in Szanton (Ed.), 2004, p. 409), a term coined by Wolters (1982) that describes a person "...claimed to possess higher quality 'soul stuff'" (p. 418). In their respective positions, they possessed an authoritative voice with capacities to persuade others of their spiritual powers, resulting in conflating politics with their respective personal sense of national destiny.

Political power held by Sukarno and Suharto was central to implementation of very different visions for Indonesia. In their capacities as leaders of a new nation state, their eminent positions underscored their personal privileges to education and social connections. Spiritual currency shared by all four men enhanced their respective sense of personal prowess. Third parties conferred their spiritual currency, to assure each man of his special destiny. For instance, incantations of his mother secured Sukarno's spiritual prowess. Suharto's, on the other hand, came from advice from his personal spiritual counselor, a dhukun (shaman). Sukarno was well aware of his own destiny, a long held self-understanding since childhood (Adams, 1965). Suharto assumed his presidency with all the characteristics of a reigning feudal monarch of old. Sukarno did not hesitate to invoke the prophecy of the just King (Ratu Adil), which is a persistent cultural motif of a messianic king in Indonesian politics (Koentjaraningrat, 1989, pp. 335-336).

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, on the other hand, acquired spiritual prowess through his institutional relationship. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro was associated with the sacred grounds of the royal court. He was of Chinese descent and considered a family member to the court of Kasunanan of Surakarta. His longstanding association with the courts began as a childhood friend of the current Susuhunan Pakubuwono XII. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro studied classical

Javanese dance at the royal court (KRT Hardjonagoro [Go Tik Swan], 2008). His appointment as the village head for the royal palace reinforced his familial connections to the court.

Javanization of Indonesian culture extended to all facets of Indonesian life. Boehlke (2008) provided examples of Indonesia's mandatory use of batik uniforms for governmental functions. Batik forms of dress are metaphorical representation of Indonesia's civil religion. Boehlke (2008) documented how uniforms differed in their everyday use or for special occasions. Sartorial wear consisting of batik cloth became a social imperative, a requirement representing the state in official capacities. Javanization of Indonesia during the Suharto presidency amounted to calcifying (Boehlke, 2008) Javanese sensibilities.

Batik cloth and its commodifications represented one type of calcified emblem of state. It was available for personal consumption as well consumption on a grand scale, when it became officially a component to a governmental scheme. Adherence to sartorial protocol by wearing batik cloth represented a person's commitment to Pancasila. Dress became a visible and visual allegiance to the philosophical and intellectual foundations on which the nation state of Indonesia rested. Batik cloth in its commodified form gained prestige, in its representation of Indonesian national identity suggestive of sharing of culture. Batik cloth and its commodified forms became stable enculturated material objects. Donning of expected attire consisting of batik dress illustrated the coercive force of the state and institutional capacities to forge national identity as cultural identity.

Calcification of culture took on many forms. The most pronounced example of calcification of culture was the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, ([TMII] Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park, 1975, East Jakarta). The Taman Mini is a self-contained architectural microcosm celebra-

ting Indonesia's ethnic pluralism. Modeled after Disneyland, its mission statement was "...to be a vehicle for the preservation and development of the culture and a means to strengthen the unity and integrity of the people of Indonesia. (Ri4one's Travel Profile, 2010)" The website also attributes President Director, Sugiono, expanding his on thoughts with the following statement:

TMII as a vehicle presenting the diversity of the people of Indonesia and the variety of the cultural wealth enables the community to gain interesting experience, knowledge and information regarding various aspect (sic) of culture, tradition, customs, forms of art as far as the introduction of cultural objects. (Ri4one's Travel Profile, 2010, n.p.).

Sugiono's mission statement suggested a view about culture, its commoditization compressed into a single setting experienced within a limited period. Experience of culture was possible through a single visit. Taman Mini marketed culture on a grand scale involving the state. This approach to marketing of culture reenacted on a lesser scale with Iwan Tirta in events such as, *A taste of Indonesia* (A taste of Indonesia, 1983). Iwan Tirta considered himself in the following terms, *Other people cater food-I cater culture* ("Other people cater food - I cater Culture", 1981). These traveling road shows marketed Indonesian culture. Compression of culture into tidy commodities leveled high culture, reducing its inherent value into the value of a purchased ticket. Likewise, Taman Mini is a theme park providing a variety of visual delights. These visual delights are to edify a distracted public about their own culture that the state has interpreted for them. These corporal emblems celebrate cultural difference by reducing such difference into its lowest common denominator, presented to be expressions of Indonesian culture.

Reduction of culture into a consumable single event took form of traveling shows, (Tourism festival launched & Festival opens, 1983) a practice that recurred under Suharto. New Order cultural expeditions traveled to Bahrain, Singapore, Brazil, and the Philippines. The

international community faced a potpourri of Indonesian delights, which included sight of real batik. Iwan Tirta's haute couture object forms shared a stage with Javanese dancers accompanied by gamelan music. These spectacles unfolded on stage as the audience ingested culinary delights. The combination of food, artifacts, fashion and performance effectively placed Indonesia on the international map. Although Hitchcock directs his remarks to the Taman Mini project, his observations are relevant to Boehlke's characterization of *fossilizing* (2008 p. 42) of enculturated materiality. Nonetheless, these emblems of state are skin-deep messages. They are incapable to secure an enduring unitary cultural identification, because as new points of references, these concocted emblems of state mask ingrained ethnic tensions. Mischaracterization of Javanization as being Indonesian contributed to a cultural conundrum as described:

Taman Mini is not devoid of serious ethnographic references, but in common with other ethnographic museums that adopt an overarching theory, it risks becoming a museum of a particular period, in this case Soeharto's New Order government. The provincial pavilions that comprise the heart of Taman Mini, unless they are allowed to evolve and reflect Indonesia's changing social and cultural realities, not least the ongoing devolution of power to the districts by-passing the provinces, Taman Mini may simply be relegated to a showpiece of the early part of the Soeharto era. Instead of remaining « ancestors of the future » (Pemberton, 1994: 249), the pavilions may over time become « ancestors of the past », the relics of a discontinued lineage with no links to the present. (Hitchcock, 2009, n.p.).

Metaphysical associations inherited by material objects played an important role in Javanese life. Iwan Tirta reduces metaphysical properties associated with batik cloth into verbalized tokens referred to as description of its magic or indexical of meditative skills. Iwan Tirta's texts reveal his orientation to Javanese mysticism with passive skepticism, far removed from Koentjaraningrat's persuasive description of:

Javanese kebatinan mysticism views human existence in a wide cosmological context and as only a small part of an eternal cosmic life, representing “a brief stop to have a drink” along an endless road, in search of the ultimate unification with the Creator. (1989, pp. 402-403).

Iwan Tirta's characterizations of batik as being expressive of Javanese ethos are prosaic. He did not venture to peel off layers of presumptions in his characterizations about batik, to come to a core understanding about contemporary batik's cultural meanings. In part, his off-the-cuff remark made during our face-to-face 1996 interview affirming that his commitment to batik as “It is a great way of making a living” (Kühr, 1996) undermines his sacralization (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1986) of batik. His declaration is tantamount of his entrepreneurial focus reinforced by couching his batiked commodities as Art.

Iwan Tirta's interviews have a consistent format followed by consistent textual contents. Although Iwan Tirta's commentaries on the subject of batik were to re-educate local readership or to educate international consumers, his academic vita prominently appeared in his interviews. His newspaper and magazine interviews consistently highlighted his former university lecturer position and his degrees in law. Iwan Tirta's interviews also consisted of discussions about revival of old batik patterns; his idea of batik as forms of art; and some reference made about Central Javanese court culture and its relationship with batiked cloth or batiking. His cursory statements lack substance. His interviews document repetitive responses that do not veer from their tacit script. They remain forms consisting of passing remarks.

His response, exhibited in a 1964 interview for the Indonesian Observer, “Good batik is a piece of art, as much as a beautiful painting,” is a cliché, which consistently appears throughout his interviews. Iwan Tirta's avowed commitment to batik and his scholarly expertise would suggest that his responses would be both instructive and substantive. Such expectations are

congruent to his claim of wanting to educate both local and international public. Instead, his interviews avoid comprehensive discussions about batik, resulting in failing to pursue his claims to any type of educated conclusion. Iwan Tirta's interviews are series of ripostes, befitting of magazines. The information he offers with each interview was neither new nor unique. Much of the information about batik already existed in the public domain written primarily by outsiders of past. Nonetheless, unique about Iwan Tirta's literature, such as his 1996 publication, is the accompaniment of splendid photographs of the royal court and members of the royal household.

Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial instincts were markedly evident when his office presented me with a loose bound book at my arrival at his boutique. The loose bound collection, *PT. Ramacraft Collated Handbook* (1996), like his interviews, emphasized his academic credentials. The book informs the reader of his achievements and lists his high profile clients. The book is an expanded business card. It vouchsafes Iwan Tirta's cultural position as Indonesia's unofficial cultural ambassador and arbiter of Javanese taste.

Although his interviews and written texts reveal consistent themes that have persisted over four decades, they show a gradual evolution in his thinking. However, his narratives revealed some inconsistencies. The most glaring inconsistency is Iwan Tirta's ambivalence about batik origins. His populist view characterizes batik, as being "...should be a living art, a people's art for the people" (Tatu, 1986, n.p.). His advocacy of inclusivity (Bourchier, 2008) increasingly changes to exclusivity. His change of allegiance reflected the effects of New Order policies as well, possibly, oblique effects in the gradual decline of poverty (Asra, 2000). Urban centers had higher concentration of Indonesians with higher incomes. The economic elite from these urban centers replaced traditional aristocratic priyayi class, a social class that Iwan Tirta was a member of because of his

family's social status. Like Iwan Tirta, the new priyayi are urbane, wealthy, and trot the globe.

In his July 5, 1977, interview with the *Hong Kong Standard*, the article reads, “Batik is a way of Indonesian life says Iwan” (pp. 7-8). The second paragraph of the interview, Iwan Tirta states, “It is in fact, the embodiment of Javanese life and philosophy.” His characterization of batik as being Indonesian but then Javanese represents another inconsistency. Pre-Indonesia that consisted of central Javanese kingdoms were independent cultures well into the twentieth century. They were distinct to other social bodies inhabiting the archipelago. Iwan Tirta’s declarations remain to be general presumptions. This distinction of whether batik represented a Javanese way of life or Indonesian way of life is important. Indonesian and Javanese represent unrelated historical conditions consisting of two independent social and political realities. They are parallel historical trajectories and therefore, do not coincide with one another nor do they share historical continuity. With the declaration of the nation state of Indonesia (1945), the island of Java and cultures on other islands became part of larger cultural social body considered as Indonesia. The designator, Indonesian, represented a national identity defined in political terms, where ethnicity fell under a single rubric. I am suggesting that the term Indonesian is in fact a pseudonym for a cultural identity defined by Javanese standards and ethos.

One significant reversal in Iwan Tirta’s narrations of batik is his declaration that, “But essentially, batik making has always been a people’s art for the people” (Another Plus for Batik - Indonesia's Iwan Tirta scores again, 1979, n.p.). The notion of Art, so integral to Iwan Tirta's narrations, recurs in how he characterizes batik in his interviews and in his written text. Iwan Tirta’s linking of batik as forms of Art is the topic focused on in chapter 6. On one hand, Iwan Tirta attributes batik’s origins in rural villages. Production of batik from such settings is unique

to such settings. Batiked cloth possesses symbolic properties representing phenomenological conditions that are unique of time and space as experienced by these social bodies. Thus, production of batik under such conditions is independent of batik motivated by interests defined by an entrepreneurial venture. There is no historical or spiritual link between the two independent forms of batiked cloth, distinguished by unrelated intensions motivating their production. Iwan Tirta's acknowledgement of batik's humble origins is incongruent to his haute couture object forms. He resolved such incongruence by committing its origins to royal court sites. Iwan Tirta described his characterizations of batik on a website since removed. His sentiments showed a shift in his thinking. However, the essence of his quote conveys recurring themes that are reasserted in his 1996 book on page 66:

Batik is one of several "court arts", along with shadow play of wayang purwa, court dances, gamelan or authentic Javanese percussion orchestra, and poetry. The arts are an extension of the philosophy based on the spiritual discipline. Control, etiquette, and harmony are of central importance to the Javanese. Any conflicts in design or style are to be avoided.

Batik incorporates a few elements of meditation. Breathing and total concentration are of necessity to draw fine, even lines with canting. Batik drawing requires calm and peaceful psychological state; observing it also induces a meditative state of mind. Controlled breathing is essential in painting batik. Like court dancers and gamelan performers, batik painter must clear one's mind through fasting or abstinence.

The ego must be contained to achieve a perfect harmony between the mind and the batik technique or design. A superior batik is synonymous with harmony. (Tirta, 2010, n.p.).

The website explains batik's cultural context by ascribing its materiality with specific attributes. Its royal associations vacate the idea of batik's rural village origins. Iwan Tirta makes tactical, verbal claims in asserting batik as an artifact with imagined Central Javanese royal

court's pedigree. The website's former description contradicts his egalitarian position expressed in the *Indonesian Observer* in 1964 in stating:

One common mistaken idea, he said is that fine batik is made by the “*kratons*.” The “*kratons*” inspired and refined batik, but this is a folk art made by the peasants in the time they can spare from the fields and in ancient times every girl knew how to batik. Even today it is the common people who work at these batik factories, they are the artists who are forgotten, an art that is disappearing and needs to be revived. (n.p.).

The clue that may point to Iwan Tirta's perspectival ambivalence rests in his attribution of batik as art.

The idea of Indonesian cultural experience being independent of Javanese cultural experience is also an untenable position. Java cultural world-view dominated the islands of the former archipelago well before the first millennium. Java's influence over the other islands continues through governmental policies such as forced migrations. Thus, referring to something as being Indonesian belies a national identity that is essentially a veneer for Javanese sensibilities. This chapter reviewed Iwan Tirta's position about his commodified forms having roots in palace court culture but it remains skeptical of such claims. The location of Iwan Tirta's body of work was not Javanese palace court culture, but in his imagination spurred by entrepreneurial interests. In its location, Iwan Tirta's characterization of batik as *Art* makes complete sense. Iwan Tirta's batik cloth, in all its commodified forms, is a retail object. It has all the marks of artistry associated with commodities that come out of Western fashion houses as haute couture.

## **Chapter 6: Incarnations of *Batik Orde Lama* and *Batik Orde Baru***

I found the word batik confounding because it did not have a simple denotative meaning. There are batiked artifacts from ancient Egypt, Japan and China, as well from West Africa. Batik as an artifact observed within Javanese social constellation is the subject of chapter 6. This discussion highlights aspects of Javanese's historical and current day social life that have contributed to its cultural importance. This chapter will not duplicate information about batik readily found in the public domain. However, there are specific features to batik dyeing that are unique to Java that require further attention. Batik underwent its own evolution such as technological advancement consisting of a handheld tool, the canting. When or under what circumstances the canting appeared is unknown, but Iwan Tirta (1996) affirmed the copper tool to be unique to Java. The canting a form of technological advancement reinforced Java's cultural eminence over its surrounding neighboring islands in aesthetics. The tool was a critical component in determining new levels of technical achievements in rendering surface aesthetic properties. Therefore, as an integral component to a dying process, the canting helped to establish batiked cloth into what became to be Batik Indonesia.

The island of Java came under scrutiny because of Dutch nineteenth century forceful presence. A portion of the knowledge amassed about Javanese batik consisted of business transactions. Advancement in European textile manufacturing created opportunities to expand their market by selling imitations of Javanese-like batiked cloth to indigenous populations. Batiked cloth came under increasing outsider scrutiny. Initially, prospects of batik's profitability were the focus of interests. Interests in batik by European outsiders transitioned into evaluating batiked cloth's esoteric properties consisting of ideas about its cultural authenticity, art, or as an

artifact deemed to be expressive of social life. As argued, extant text on the subject of batik was primarily Euro-centered. Empirical study of Sir Stamford Raffles' *History of Java* (1830) cued subsequent production of text during nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Java and its social life was a trove for topics that underwent intellectual evaluation to cull perceived cultural properties inherited by Javanese artifacts. Independent of Euro-centered literature was indigenous text produced within royal court settings. Their forms consisted of *babads* (chronicles, Ricklefs, 1993, p.10) or manuscripts documenting the History of the land of Java (Babad Tanah Jawi), Islamization of Java, specific kingdoms, or religious didactic text (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 11). Empirical approach in documenting cultural phenomena is distinctly Western and uncharacteristic of Javanese text prior to the introduction of education for local population during the nineteenth century. Thus, accumulated knowledge about Java consists of nineteenth-century European interpretative narratives. Iwan Tirta's texts extended those discussions about batik, batiking and batiked cloth that began with Raffles' (1830) introduction of Javanese batik to European readers.

Iwan Tirta stated that the precise social circumstances prompting production of batik remains a mystery. Heringa and Veldhuisen (2000) tentatively accept China as the origins of batiking. Their observation corresponds to patterned cloths (*laran*) of early forms with decorative surfaces involving rice resist dyeing methods. Such cloths appeared in mountainous areas of Northern Thailand, Laos and Burma and Southwest China. Iwan Tirta provided a contrasting overview:

The traditional patterns can be traced back as far as 2000 years and many have Middle East origin.

Says Tirta: "These designs became associated with Indonesia about 700 years ago. Prior to that the Batik patterns were being worn by Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Chinese and Japanese." (Living Colours, 1983).

His statement is unclear about designating which Javanese patterns had transnational roots. Neither did Iwan Tirta clarify how contrasting other cultural forms of batiked cloth differed from Javanese batik. Iwan Tirta did not explain how batiked cloth from other cultures compared to Javanese batik. His comment implied that Indonesian batik had ties with foreign origins and therefore, represented continuity with batiked forms from other locations and different historical conditions.

More probable of batik's primary influence was Java's long-standing trade in cloth with kingdoms located on the southern Indian subcontinent. Indic decorative influences, prior to and during the first millennium, are more plausible sources for Javanese aesthetics. Hindu-Buddhist empires flourished in Southern Sumatra and Java. The history of batiked cloth social usage is murky due to lack of reliable documentation. What does appear to be certain is that use of wax resist medium (Iwan laments abuse of the word batik, n.d.) is a technique associated with Indonesia. Therefore, for decorated cloth to be considered Indonesian batik, the wax resist is a minimum standard. Iwan Tirta expressed concern for authenticity by making the distinction between *batik cloth* from *batik proper* (Geh, 1991). Batik cloth is screen-printed cloth, whereas batik-proper underwent traditional wax-dyeing techniques using a canting to apply molten wax on a cloth's surface.

Heringa and Veldhuisen's description supports two important points about the Malay Archipelago, because it was a crossroad between Indic and Chinese cultures. First, entry of non-indigenous goods represented a process of inter-cultural fertilization as indicated by the following:

From China came trade ceramics and textiles, which enriched an indigenous design vocabulary. Over time the symbolic associations of particular images, such as the

butterfly or qulin.” (Heringa & Veldhuisen, 2000, p. 18).

Trading between various kingdoms introduced intellectual property into other localities. Second, inter-cultural fertilization affected changes to batik or brought to Java alternative non-indigenous patterns. Iwan Tirta's (1996) suggestion that early Chinese embroidered ritual cloths influenced batik patterns supports this view. Another source to influence batik patterning might have come from temple bas-reliefs of Hindu-Buddhist temple complexes in Central Java. Further, Dong Son (BCE 500-CE-500) metalwork found in the Malay Archipelago might have offered prototypical design patterns. These patterns might have been adapted and revised to suit textile patterns and local aesthetics. Dong Son bronze culture flourished in North Vietnam, in the Red River Valley starting on the coast near current day Hanoi and continuing in a NW direction.

Use of a resist consisting of rice paste to obstruct color from dye baths was an earlier form of method to dye cloth (Heringa, Veldhuisen, 2000; Tirta, 1996). The collection at the National Museum of Jakarta possesses a nineteenth-century example of rice resist panel, *Kain Simbut*, from the city of Banten, (Tirta, 1996, see Figure 27). Heringa and Veldhuisen (2000) suggested that *laran cloth* from the mountains of Southeast Asia represent an intermediary stage prior to emergence of Indonesian batik processes. However, Heringa and Veldhuisen's (2000) counters Iwan Tirta's presumption that Javanese batik originated out of palace court culture. His texts on Indonesian batik suggest a view that Central Javanese royal courts predominantly influenced the development of Javanese batik. Court influences diffused towards Java's coastal regions. This was a dominant view held in general literature about batik since the nineteenth century; however, Heringa and Veldhuisen (2000) introduced an alternative explanation to counter this entrenched narrative. They asserted that robust urban centers of Pasisir coastal towns

might have been a locus for batik production independent of production centers in the island's interior. Heringa and Veldhuisen's (2000) position suggested that Javanese batik represents simultaneous processes rather than a unilateral diffusion of Central Javanese batik. This distinction is important because it involves the idea of authenticity of batiked materiality. Under described circumstances forwarded by Iwan Tirta, decorated cloth designated as batik is illustrative of Javanese cultural essence defined by Central Javanese ethos. Determining the exact origins of Javanese batik is not a focus in this discussion. Rather, the idea of resist method within Javanese cultural experience is considered. Surface patterning and its aesthetic effects are results from the type of resist used for modifying cloth surfaces. For instance, Heringa and Veldhuisen (2000) describe different types of resists used to decorate cloth surfaces:

Several methods are known. A variety of materials or substances can either be applied to the unwoven yarn, as in *ikat*, or to a finished base cloth. The batik technique, in which vegetable paste, or wax have used as the resist, belongs to the second type.<sup>3</sup> (pp. 31- 32).



*Figure 27. Kain Simbut, West Java.*  
Tirta, *Batik: A Play of Light and Shades*, 1996

Boehlke (2008) discussed this particular aspect about batik. Heringa and Veldhuisen's (2000) position imply need for a different perspective to evaluating the term, batik. Javanese batik is one type of resist method to dye cloth. It is a specific process involving three critical elements of use of wax as a resist medium; use of a handheld copper applicator; natural dyes and local weather conditions. In Iwan Tirta's video interview in *Batik de Ziel van Java* (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996), he affirmed that sunlight was a critical element in how color settled. His statement implied that natural source materials from local surroundings as well uncontrollable weather conditions were significant factors to produce the particulars in a cloth's expressiveness because of surface modifications. The combination of ingredients resulted with artifacts indicative of specific local phenomenal conditions. Its meaning applies only to those conditions contributing to its production.

Observing production of batik cloth within its original spatial settings offers a more sober experience of the cloth. Likewise, extrapolation for its cultural meaning becomes a tad more accurate by observing the existential positions experienced by batikers involved in the production of a batik cloth. Meaning no longer exists in the abstract; although, it remains to be an interpretative composition. Heringa and Veldhuisen's (2000) alternative explanation about batik exemplifies discussion about it in phenomenological terms. A hermeneutic reading, which is a form of synchronic analysis, yields its own set of meaningful contents. Such contents provide plausible nuanced understanding of batik cloth when analysis undertakes relevant diachronic influences.

Extant early literature about batik framed discussions about Indonesian batik to be an artifact representative of a history in which Central Javanese courts dominate its biographical

contents. Such information provided an overview about the subject batik but it also represented information determined by European outsiders looking in. Such information tended not to document existential conditions to might have influenced production of batiked cloth. Therefore, information did not represent meaning as experienced by individuals responsible for the production of batiked cloth. The narratives presented batik conceptually. If the objective of material culture is to determine meaningful contents from an insider's view, there is a need for descriptions of existential contents associated with a batiked cloth. The indigenous voice, as an existential voice, is not an arbitrary component in analyzing it as enculturated materiality. Otherwise, reading of batiked cloth and the interpretation of such reading for its meaning becomes a unilateral exercise. The problem lies with the fact that production of literature as empirical studies is a recent development in Indonesian society. Iwan Tirta describes current day indigenous literary circumstances in modern day Indonesia:

Unfortunately, a young artist in Indonesia cannot simply go to school or to libraries and study the art as in Europe where for example you can find out almost anything on a particular architectural style. Here the tradition is not preserved in books or reference works, but handed down through families and these families are dying out. (The Future of Batik, 1980).

The dearth of literature about batik from an insider's perspective is even noticeable with K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. He wrote little about batik. Nonetheless, within existing body of literature, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's text is remarkable for its evocative contents. His narrations about batik situate his existential perspective to its discussion. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro did not speak about batik in abstract terms; rather he disclosed his experiences about it as a material object influenced by palace court cultural setting. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's intimate involvement with

day-to-day royal court social life, offered a unique insider's perspective. He provided interpretations not only from a Javanese worldview, but also through his unique perspective shaped by his experiences of a royal court setting. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro narrated about batik in phenomenological terms. His textual representations of batik, although limited in number, originates out of his lived existential positions.

Framing discussions about batik in existential terms, displayed the strength of van Hout's (2001) book. Types of documents analyzed in the monographs consisted of primary source documents of handwritten text of scribbled notes. They are handwritten notes from persons representing different professional capacities during nineteenth and twentieth-century colonial Java. Analyzing first hand and primary source texts buttressed a faithful interpretation about Dutch colonialism and its impact on Java's batik industry. Such source documents also provided a sober view about the inner workings of Dutch colonialism on Javanese social life or about batik's inclusion in Euro-centered discourse. My research did not explore to the fullest extent G.P. Rouffaer or Jaspers' research methods. Nevertheless, the following questions are pertinent. Did these esteemed scholars speak directly to batikers? Did their interactions involve assistance of an interpreter? What were the circumstances at the time these authors had direct access to batik objects under production? These factors would have affected their documented evaluation.

Even though the Dutch arrived during the sixteenth century (see Figure 28), complete Dutch colonization of the island of Java occurred during the nineteenth century. The map shows Dutch gradual encroachment of Java. Java's status as a Dutch colony occurred shortly after the Java War, 1825-1830.



Figure 28. Dutch Accession of Javanese Real Estate.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch\\_East\\_Indies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_East_Indies)

The shift in the political balance of power began under Marshall Herman Willem Daendels, Governor-General in Batavia (1808-1811, see Figure 29).



Figure 29. Herman Willem Daendels (1762-1818).  
<http://www.raden-saleh.org/displaypart1.html>

Louis Napoleon (1778-1846, see Figure 30) the future King Louis I of Holland a.k.a. Koning Lodewijk I (Comte de Saint-Leu) sent Daendels to the Dutch East Indies. Since 1795 the French regime of Napoleon I governed the Netherlands (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 111). Daendel's (1993,

p. 111) policies significantly revamped the relationship between European as occupiers and Central Javanese courts:

The Residents at the courts were now redesignated 'Ministers'. They were to be regarded not as ambassadors from one ally to another, but as the local representatives of the sovereignty vested in the European government and represented in Batavia by the Governor-General. In all matters of protocol they were to be the equals of the Javanese kings. This was a direct assault upon the relationship which had existed since 1750s. (Ricklefs, 1993, p.111).



*Figure 30.* Louis Napoleon (1778-1846).  
<http://www.betharnold.com/1/2009/12/paris-art-market-buzz.html>

Continued incursion of Dutch influence of Java gradually emasculated Central Javanese court powers, fostering resentments held by indigenous populations for the Dutch. Local resentments simmered into a rebellion, instigated by the eldest son of Sultan Hamengkubuwana III, Pangeran Dipanagara (1785-1855, Ricklefs, 1993, p. 115). His rebellion drew loyalties from fifteen princes

out of twenty-nine. Forty-one senior bhupatis (courtiers) out of eighty-eight participated in the rebellion (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 116). Palace court troops, villagers and the religious community also committed themselves to the Dipanagara's cause. However, Dutch power prevailed and placed responsibility squarely on the royal court for the devastation that had occurred. The outcome of a failed rebellion served to reinforce Dutch interests in their claim of sovereignty over Javanese real estate. The Dutch annexed outlying areas attached to the royal courts to existing Dutch holdings. Ricklefs (1993, p. 119) marked 1830, as the year when Dutch gained complete control of Java. The courts as docile clients (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 118) withdrew inwards directing their attention to production of literature, gamelan, and batik.

Dutch occupancy of the islands was one source to have introduced Java to nonindigenous ideas. However, another source also came from insiders such as Raden Saleh Sjarif Boestaman (1808-1880, see Figure 31), whose family ruled Sēmarang, a coastal town in northern Java. His skill in painting prompted his sojourn to Europe arriving on the continent in 1829. With his return to Java in 1851, he introduced Western aesthetics influenced by Romantic painter, Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) to Java. His contributions to Java's culture signaled adaptation to Western tastes and ideas. Literature of English Lieutenant Governor of Java, Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles, F.R.S. (1781-1826) had opened up bounded colonized space to European society. Cultures that had inhabited various islands but unheard of to general European public became public knowledge. Likewise, European presence in Java contributed to outsider interests for Java's social life, geographical information or economic prospects. Batik and its commodities took scholarly prominence only after its business prospects were adequately addressed (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout's, 2001).

Batiking took place in various towns and villages throughout Java. From the onset, 19<sup>th</sup> European literature singled out batik produced within Central Javanese palace courts culture as exemplary of Javanese culture. European collectors perceived these cloths to be the pinnacle of a dyed cloth considered unique to Java. Batiked cloth associated to Central Javanese royal courts represented high culture. Therefore, batiked cloths were material objects sought after by European collectors becoming part of public and private collections. Thus, batik's achieved status



*Figure 31.* Raden Saleh Syarif Bustaman (1807-1880).  
McCabe.Elliott, 2004

as Art as its original cultural position is inherently doubtful. The idea of imputing objects as Art does not align with demands made by Javanese royal court and rural village social life, because batik's original purpose was to dress the human torso for daily and ritual lives,. Within royal court life and village settings, production of batik also had ritual importance. Batik was an indispensable element for ceremonies that consumed palace court life. Batiked cloth was equally essential in marking calendrical transitions of Javanese social life or in ritualizing social status.

Batiked cloth is fundamentally a utilitarian object, functioning to bind social life. Within traditional Javanese social structure, the privilege of batik as Art conflicted with longstanding cultural practices. The proposition that batiked cloth was valued purely for its aesthetic properties is a leap of faith. Foremost, the idea that batiked cloth was to be valued for its investment prospects is in opposition to its metaphysical value, constituted with a vocabulary of the domain of magic. Its utilitarian intensions allowed batiked cloth to intervene on behalf of human beings to overcome life's hurdles or to communicate with preternatural entities. Batiked cloth also simply visually communicated one's place within a public social setting. It cued how one responded to and deferred to personalities that are more august.

Cultural introversion prompted royal courts to focus its attention to refine production activities such as batiking. Production of batik was practiced within social settings that became increasingly, more secretive, and therefore, thwarting indications of its transition into representations of Art. Object forms as Art were distinctly a Western phenomenon ( Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001) aligned to institutions of museums or becoming part of public and private collections. With both instances, the operating premise consisted of investment portfolios hedging on prospects for its value to increase based on its cultural authenticity.

A Sultan or Susuhunan's prestige was not associated with cloths he managed to amass as Art. His prestige came from his position within a cosmology of unseen forces and personalities mediating a preternatural world with daily-life. Furthermore, social realities of rural village settings determined by labor-intensive subsistence preempted the idea of Art to flourish. There was no retail system in place with a customer base for batiked products as would be required with Art. In stark contrast to royal court interior settings, the walls of a simple village house would be

bereft of decorative objects of Art to complement existing furnishings in its interior setting.

Impoverished conditions of rural peasant lives could not support such forms of consumption.

McCabe-Elliot portrayed central activity associated with village life in the following terms:

A second type called Kapas was spun by the Javanese: “As soon as the flowers are gone, there buds out a knot, containing the cotton wool, this cotton fit for weaving.” The labor required to produce handspun cloth limited the production of locally woven goods. Seven hours of continuous labor were required to produce one meter of cloth on a traditional Javanese loom, and this work, as well as the spinning of yarn, was done by women...

For the women, only the planting and harvesting of crops took precedence over these homespun duties. (McCabe Elliott, 2004, p. 36).

McCabe Elliot described a level of commitment villagers experienced to sustain demands of daily life. Her comment reinforces the idea of Art to be unrealistic in peasant rural village life. Further the preservation of village life relied on gotong royong (mutual self-assistance) and therefore, day-to-day activities could not be apportioned to production of Art. Art is a singular experience primarily motivated from the position of individuality that is understood to be independent of one’s collective sense in one’s identity. Production of batik within Javanese traditional settings in the interior were forms of social activities in which utilitarian needs merged with ritual needs. Both royal court and rural village cultures were in no position to abandon communal commitments, determined by long-standing traditions, to simply produce Art.

Lengēne and Waaldijk (in van Hout, 2001) provided an explanation about the emergence of Art and its intrusion into general discourse about batik. The answer was found in documents written by European outsiders. The colonial museum, Tropenmuseum, in Amsterdam (1864 & 1871), received a collection of textiles presented by Dutch colonial Tropenmuseum administrator,

S.C.J.W. van Musschenbroek (1873). The collection of batiked cloths came from the royal court of Surakarta and therefore, the collection of batiked cloths were designated as *The Surakarta sarungs* (in van Hout, 2001, p. 43). Lengêne and Waaldijk showed the evolution in how batik was assessed beginning with European interests in batiked cloth for their commercial possibilities. Initial attention focused on establishing a sustainable production of batiked cloth to meet prospective market demands on the islands.

Marie Prosper Theodore Prévinaire (1821-1900) invented the industrial machine, *La Javanaise* (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001). Its appearance contributed to an emerging discourse which compared the merits of imitation-batik to real-batik. *La Javanaise* mimicked both visual imperfections and olfactory qualities associated with recognizable properties of hand-drawn cloth, batik tulis. This resulted with discussions about batik's visual properties and its expressive capacity for cultural authenticity. The correlate was the social meaning batik's surface properties held for indigenous populations. European ability to make batiked-like cloth, made it a product cheaper in cost. Therefore, batik became more available for a largely impoverished population. Machine printed cloth was exported to Java, which imitated original prototypes that had been produced by traditional batik tulis methods. However cultural paternalism was skin deep as indicated by Belgian manufacturer, Francois Voortman comment "...to obtain in a lesser quality, objects that formerly belonged to the privilege of the upper classes" (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001, p. 40). Machine made batiked-like cloth were of inferior quality particularly its aesthetic expressiveness. But manufactured batiked cloth ultimately overshadowed traditional production methods of batik tulis. Its pervasive availability secured batik's European imitators with status of being considered to be Indonesian batik.

The importance of hand-drawn batik, batik tulis, is its capacity to embody cultural sense and sensibilities. The process of batik tulis is labor intensive. It required a variety of human skills and efforts to see the production process through completion. The batik maker as embodiments of culture and through choices that he or she makes reflect those historical conditions that define their lives. Thus the act of waxing a cloth is a residual effect of human lived existentials. How visual properties of a cloth are reflective of human experience illustrates enculturation of materiality. As previously stated, production of batik-tulis is fundamentally connected to bounded space responsible for its production. Space and social setting reflect historical conditions. Therefore, in the case of the interaction between batik maker and cloth, the given set of circumstances expresses an organic relationship, which becomes a cloth's ontological properties described by its biographical information. The change of batik into commodities, in which retail cost resolves its perceived value, displaces cultural motivations formerly determined by Javanese traditions.

Iwan Tirta pointed out that within traditional settings, waxers relied on their memory in creating patterns on blank surfaces of cloth, which would have been unlikely of batik makers in any of his factories. Iwan Tirta disclosed in an interview how current day women underwent a period of training before being hired. Unlike conditions of Javanese past, Iwan Tirta's success in production of batik cloth relies on external sources whether such sources involved hiring of employees; use of computerized design programs; or concessions made to aesthetic demands placed by prospective customers. Production of batik cloth was not motivated by needs and desires of a local, indigenous social body and therefore, indicative of a collective sense of identity. Rather, production involved external institutions described as:

Exemplifying that practicality is Mr. Tirta's "foster village" in Central Java. The people of Wukisari come to Jakarta at government expense to attend training workshops given by Mr. Tirta and his staff. They learn about batik and learn to produce batik products, which Mr. Tirta then promotes. (Tatu, 1986, p. 352).

Iwan Tirta was a consummate middleman of an entrepreneurial venture providing those with financial means costly commodities to be acquired, because of their inherent social and cultural prestige. Batiked cloth that came out venture capital, heavily subsidized by the government, resulted in artifacts that were indeed unique both in form and meaning in their own right. However, they did not share any common ground with batiked cloth of pre-Indonesian Java. The distinct quality about Iwan Tirta's batiked commodities is that they are consigned to be *Art* enhanced by an imagined cultural biography.

Lengêne and Waaldijk also pointed out that institutionalization of batiked cloth changed the, "However, in putting batik in a museum, the discourse on Javanese batik, which had so far been utilitarian was changed." (in van Hout, 2001, p. 43). Its placement within a museum setting rewrote its biography, one that reflected Java's in its colonial position. Batik's utilitarian consumption changed. It was replaced to become an object seen with value proportionate to social prominence of the artist as producer. Lengêne and Waaldijk wrote,

In the first guide to his museum, van Eeden reversed the usual North-South perspective in the comparison between batik and imitation batik by stating that this indigenous cotton manufacturing method was steadily improving and was still able to compete with European *sarungs*. To this he added a new observation. After the common remark that, due to the long production process, indigenous *sarungs* were much more expensive than European industrial products, he continued: 'however, their colours are stronger and their design is more indicative of the authentic artistic genius of the native.'<sup>[41]</sup> It is at this point that art entered the discourse, and batik became a 'collectable' in the Netherlands. (in van Hout, 2001, p. 43).

Frederik Willem van Eeden (see Figure 32) was Museum director of the Colonial Museum cum Tropenmuseum. His remarks responded to colonial administrator, S.C.J.W. van Musschenbroek's, donation of 80 batik kains (panels) to the museum.



*Figure 32.* Dhr. F.W. van Eeden (1829-1901).  
<http://www.geni.com/people/Frederik-van-Eeden/6000000017233073105>

Van Eeden comment belatedly acknowledged indigenous technical abilities required for the production of batik, batik tulis. The technical facility also revealed artistic genius of the indigenous population (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001). The quote also showed the privilege of colonial dominance in condescendingly designating indigenous population as “..native,” in context of the overall text. This quickly changed into praise in descriptions of “...authentic artistic genius” (Legêne and Waaldijk in van Hout, 2001, p. 43). Van Eeden's remark introduced another aspect to batik's biographical profile. Batiked cloth from its colonial period transitioned into a culturally sacrilized material object. Batik's new found preciousness was inevitable, yet it still needed to adjust to unfamiliar spatial settings of a museum because of being elevated from its utilitarian condition into an object illustrative of high culture. Its

institutionalization removed it from the daily life batik cloth supposedly represented. In this instance batik cloth became materiality, a cultural artifact, susceptible to imagined biographies. Subsequent biographies about batik are rewritten to accord with historical circumstances defined by a variety of intentions, as is the case with my formal response to my research question.

Nineteenth-century discourse on batik expressed its own dialectics, pitting batik's for-profit against its representation of high culture. The dialectics of batik was not unique but ongoing, to reappear in different formats. The dialectics of batik represented a contest between two different existential positions taken about production of batik cloth and therefore, speaking to its *raison d'être*. The contest described by such dialectics parallels contrast as indicated between Sukarno's and Suharto's vision of batik and its social role. Such tensions in the differences of their respective positions extended to how K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta viewed production of batik cloth.

K.R.T. Hardjanoro's social pedigree was not representative of Sukarno's Marhaenism. He came from a family with a long history in production of batik cloth. His family produced cap batik cloth for three generations (Heringa & Veldhuisen, 2000). Hardjonagoro's interest in Javanese philosophy, history, and culture underscored his wholistic understanding of social practices such as batik. He applied such understanding towards production of artifacts with long cultural ties such as the production of keris (dagger). K.R.T. Hardjonagoro was exemplary of the following description:

Within the court system that supported the birth and zenith of Javanese traditional batik. The system of 'empu' which is a Javanese term for a master who has excellent technical skills, a deep philosophical grounding and esoteric abilities in meditative practice which

such a master would have used to approach the creation of sacred objects. The term is more than the master artist for not only does the term ‘empu’ imply a master of aesthetics but it also is essential that such a person has the capacity to create objects which bear symbolic significance and act as a mediator between the seen and the unseen world. (Ismoyo, n.p.).

Hardjonagoro understood how these different métiers shared certain correspondences. He was quoted that a good dancer would make good learner of batik (Go Tik Swan, batik guru from Solo, 2002), only to underscore his wholistic understanding about production of batik cloth. His understanding mirrored his existential orientations, one intimately tied to Central Javanese royal court environments.

Both his lofty honor and his learning have been important to the way Hardjonagoro operates his batik factory. Unlike other owners, Hardjonagoro explains to his workers the significance of the motifs. Working for a nobleman apparently gives his batikers special status: “The product satisfies them...they’re working for someone highly exposed to culture and the outside world,” says he. (McCabe Elliott, 2004, p. 186).

Within the walled sacred compound of the royal court, human activity is accompanied by activity dispensed through non-human artifacts. The relationships are vital. Human and object were on equal footing. Human and object have their place in Javanese social life, being inextricably linked to processes of living out social life. Both are necessary for social life to unfold in accordance with an overarching preternatural cosmology. All that is contained within the natural world and introduced to human experience mediates *kasektan* (living) energy (Soebadio, 1998, p. 205). Objects are active and potent mediators between the seen of the natural world and unseen world of supernature within Javanese traditional social settings. In the West artifacts are preponderantly accepted as inanimate lifeless things. They are presumed to have no connections to

human beings. Artifacts are exploited for their use or monetary value. The view that material forms are vital entities are implicitly and explicitly acknowledged in the few pieces of literature written by K.R.T. Hardjonagoro.

Sukarno employed the services of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro giving him a directive to revitalize Indonesia's batik industry. The vitality objects might hold as with batik changed into an object prepossessed with symbolic properties. Sukarno sought an appropriate representation for national identity under the rubric of Batik Indonesia:

Indonesia's first president, Soekarno introduced his concept that the artistic and cultural merit of batik should be a mark of national identity and simultaneously expressed the message of Indonesian unity: batik in the future would no longer be known as coming from a specific batik-producing area but would reflect Indonesian unity in its elements, both design and colors.

As the first step in turning this concept into a reality, Soekarno brought together traditional court batik designs and the coastal batik process. This was followed up with the development of designs drawn from woven ornamentation on textiles throughout Indonesia, for example Bali, the Dayak people, and Papua. Thus, there came into being a batik style that he dubbed "batik Indonesia", which to this day still serves as inspiration for batik artists and entrepreneurs in creating their works. (American Batik Design Competition, March-November 2011, n.p).

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro explored batik centers throughout Java in order to determine an aesthetic that would represent Sukarno's typically Indonesian (Bambang, October 11, 2002, n.p.). Hence, he was asked to discover visual properties that were to represent Indonesia's *Marhaen*. McCabe Elliott (2004) described Hardjonagoro as being "...skeptical" (p. 186) about Sukarno's directive. Although he visited important batik production centers throughout Java, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro failed to discover attributes that would describe qualities associated with a general and typical Indonesian. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro underwent an epiphanic change while meditating in a

cave near the home of Walter Spies (1895-1942, see Figure 33), a Dutch painter near Campuhan, Ubud, Bali. Campuhan is where the West Wos and the East Wos Rivers meet. The place where the rivers converge is sacred because of its water ability to heal people. Hardjonagoro recounted, “One night while they were sitting on the verandah, I saw the full moon fall down on me and explode. Strangely, I was the only one who experienced it” (Bambang, 2002, n.p.). His confession was indicative of K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's mysticism, which are underpinnings of his Javanese experience. His mysticism influenced how he viewed batik cloth and its role in Indonesian's social life.



*Figure 33.* Walter Spies (1895-1942).  
COLLECTIE TROPENMUSEUM  
Portret van Walter Spies op Bali TMnr 60022997.jpg

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro did not find or discover a typical Javanese batik style to represent a new national culture. The objectification of Batik Indonesia instead became an extension of K.R.T. creative imagination. He enlarged batik motifs with brighter colors associated with north coast batik (see Figure 34). K.R.T. Hardjonagoro presented Sukarno with his samples that represented his efforts to comply with the directives given to him by his employer, Sukarno. Sukarno

received his *kains* with unreserved acclaim. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro on the other hand appeared to have refrained from claiming the title of artist.

Although Sukarno desired a national emblem, the production of batik and its commodification remained for local consumption. Mass production of batik predicated on Indonesia's experience of internationalism that had yet to emerge. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's exposure to the sacred grounds of the royal court influenced how he viewed batik. Women at the presidential palace, Merdeka Palace (Freedom or Independence Palace, see Figure 35) purchased his batiked cloths.



*Figure 34.* Batik Pattern - K.R.T. Hardjonagoro.  
Tirta, Batik: A Play of Light and Shades, 1996

Unlike Iwan Tirta, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro did not adapt panels of batiked *kains* (panel) into non-traditional forms of dress, which showed a strong allegiance to Western silhouettes. His work appeared to maintain a balance between innovative vision and Javanese tradition. Although his batiked cloth suggested a startling change, on closer inspecting his surface patterning is conservative, illustrating his respect for Javanese cultural traditions. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro remained within boundaries of Javanese tradition. His conservative approach to surface

patterning sheds light to Iwan Tirta's cavalier comment about him. In my 1996 interview, in speaking about his former teacher, Iwan Tirta stated that he offered him to start a joint business venture focused on production of batik. However, the market for these cloths was to expand, to include international customers. Iwan Tirta qualified his statement by characterizing K.R.T. Hardjonagoro as being content with production of batik cloth for the parochial settings of the environs of Jakarta. An alternative view suggested that K.R.T. Hardjonagoro showed an instinctive respect by curtailing his creative sensibilities. His batik cloths were not outright visible declarations of his personal sense of being an artistic genius, which was uncharacteristic of Iwan Tirta.



*Figure 35.* Merdeka Palace, Jakarta, Indonesia  
<http://www.lintangbuanatours.com/index.php/merdeka-palace.html>

Both men appear to agree about batik's central role in rural-peasant culture as well its special place in royal court settings. Nevertheless, Iwan Tirta's perspective on batik diverges from K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. Indonesia's rapprochement with the West influenced how Iwan Tirta saw batik's functional role within immediate regional settings as well within a larger social and cultural contexts. Batik no longer represented parochial boundaries. It became an object that would participate within an international forum. Batik's change in direction is attributed to and

described by the following remark:

By the late 1960s, Western concepts of fashion had increasingly made inroads into the art of batik. With the increasing use of batik for Western clothing a new phenomenon, the batik designer emerged. (Tirta, 1996, p. 141).

He committed himself to mediate between the influences of Western culture and preservation of tradition. Iwan Tirta does not restrict his concept of designer to developing innovative surface patternings. Rather, haute couture would be his tour de force. When he was a student in London, Iwan Tirta had his epiphanic experience. He realized that he

...that I knew much less than I thought about Indonesian art and culture. In fact, I knew more about British architecture than our own traditional palaces and monuments. The English cathedrals like Yorkminster, St. Albans and Salisbury or the Regency terraces in the city of Bath loomed in my mind instead of the magnificence of the structures of my homeland. (Tirta, 1996, p. 161).

He claimed that he underwent intensive training of Javanese culture as a youth. However, Iwan Tirta's comment contradicts his self analysis, which unequivocally asserts that he experienced greater ease with Western culture than his own. His reclamation of his Javanese cultural identity supports the idea that his identity was that of an outsider rather than his own Javanese heritage. His outsider status reappeared when he returned to Indonesia after his father's death:

One of our student boarders was the brilliant Benedict Anderson. He strongly encouraged me to get more involved in batik and to photograph the pieces lest they be sold with no documentation of their existence. I bought a camera and together we began making photographs of the batiks, which we draped over the clothesline in the back garden to allow for good light exposure. (Tirta, 1996, p. 162).

It took another outsider to instruct him about the merits about batiked cloths, as a cultural artifact. His interest in batiked cloth began during the 1960s. The subject of batik provided him with the

opportunity to claim himself as an insider. His disclosure also explained his 1996 interview's unsolicited remark that batik was a "...good way of making a living" (Kühr, 1996). Iwan Tirta's relationship with batik represented an aspect of his primary entrepreneurial interests. His business venture fulfilled needs created by an influx of American visitors traveling to Indonesia.

Charles Nijo describes Iwan Tirta in the following terms:

But uh, uh, people, I mean Americans, for the first time coming to Indonesia had wanted to know about batik, you know, what kind of batik. And there wasn't that much of an industry at that time, you know. I was all so... But he was the first one to really exploit this whole trend. It was really kind of trendy at that time to have batik coverings and things. (Kühr, 1996).

Under the artistic supervision of Iwan Tirta, production of batiked cloths and its commodification changed from its sublime cultural position into production for interior home and public decorations. Iwan Tirta's commitment to his entrepreneurial venture shifted batik from its sacred cultural position. Its cultural position determined by ritual changed into prosaic commodities. Further, Iwan Tirta's sartorial object forms did not have Sukarno's Marhaens in mind. His commodities targeted Westerners and local elites, who replaced the formerly indiginous royal court aristocracy, the priyayi. Although Iwan Tirta considered himself as an insider, he viewed batik and its untapped prospects from a Western orientation. Iwan Tirta's batiked commodities synthesized two cultural aesthetics. His sartorial silhouettes appeared in structures adapted from the West, decorated with surface patterning borrowed from parochial sources. Nevertheless the underlying standard of measure for excellence relied on a Western business model guided by the following sentiments: "Today the upper classes have gone into eclipse. So I have had to step into the shoes of the aristocracy. After all aristocracy is just a state of mind (Youngblood, 1987, n.p.)."

Iwan Tirta (1987) suggests that aristocracy was simply a "...state of mind" and therefore, adequately replaced a cultural orientation that had evolved well over two milleniums. His statement also negated his position characterizing batik to be the art of the people. More telling was the closing statements made by his long family friend Charles Nijo with:

Daniell:           What do you think drives Iwan?  
 Nijo:               Well, glory!  
 Daniell:           Do you think it is money?  
 Nijo:               Glory ! (Kühr, 1996).

Nijo's characterization of Iwan Tirta paralleled a question I posed to Iwan Tirta about what were the effects he sought after in his sartorial constructions. Iwan Tirta's response was "...to be noticed" and "...luxuriousness" (Kühr, 1996). His first response was an homage to Western individualism, which is uncharacteristic of Javanese value placed on gotong royong (mutual self-assistance). Gotong royong represents Javanese strong sense for collective identity, in which restraint is a premium.

Nijo's comment also pointed to a cultural personae that produced generational as well cultural alienation. The alienation relates to a greater social differentiation with Indonesian society. Nijo provided his understanding about the emerging middle class under Dutch colonization "Just completely, unnatural you know." Nijo proceeded with:

Well as I say, I, I actually did not connect with the new generation. Iwan was probably more...They should know what, uh, the new kind of elite, but a... based on money. Although there are plenty of people who have also studied abroad. It is not for studying abroad that you have a... You can study as much as you like but can still be an asshole, you know. It is something that probably our lives are different, and quite gentle. (Kühr, 1996).

Iwan Tirta's promotion of "luxuriousness" reinforced class distinction differently from traditional social categories of palace court and rural village social body. Class distinctions in Indonesia's modernity consisted of an urbane monied elite contrasted to those eking a life for themselves. The new elite were an entrepreneurial elite, who flourished under Suharto's economic policies. Even though Iwan Tirta commodified batik for this emergent social class, his narratives about it are described in a vocabulary from Java's colonial past.

His narrated and written texts are repetitive in contents. When assessed in their entirety, Iwan Tirta's interviews appeared to be orchestrated marketing strategies, which he and the state both benefited from. Even Iwan Tirta's haute sensibilities could not resist the Disneyfication of culture, as demonstrated in the following newspaper accounts: "La Splendeur Indonésienne (1996)," "Mauritius gets a taste of Indonesia (1996)." or "Mélange de tradition et d'exotisme (1996)." His newspaper and magazine interviews were intended for an international community, who were considered to be potential clients. Interviews provided Iwan Tirta a means to market his commodities while educating both local and international public about batik. Repetition of imagined contents about batik turned into a script that Iwan Tirta could rely on. This is confirmed by the similarity of contents between his newspaper interviews and my face-to-face interviews of Iwan Tirta. Nijo offered the following views:

Daniell: Investment (Nijo looking for words to complete his thought)

Nijo: Ja, for even doing in bigger scale and, eh, that he was riding that wave. And, uh, well everyone talked about him...in societies. Because every new comer, especially foreigners in society wanted to see the house. So it became also a tourist kind of attraction. You have been there, right?

Daniell: What do you mean? ( A follow-up of Nijo's comment about Iwan Tirta' for "the gift of gab")

Nijo: Uh, ja, he, he, well he kind of draws very interesting people to his place, ok. And, uh, one day, and this very funny, but, uh one day I remember. One day there came to the house an American and who was then in Indonesia for some business. No, not for same business. I don't know what he was doing...studying or something. Anyway this man was Bill Bradley, the Senator. He became Senator later but I mean, I, if, he, and he, even was running for President, so I was thinking, "If he becomes the President of the United States, I can tell them that he sit, sat on my terrace, you know, with Iwan, people like that. Then the other day I was at his house and there was Lauren Hutton there, and they were... I mean he just draws them in, I mean, I don't know why, uh, uh. Its, he has this facility with the chic, ex-patriots chic. (Kühr, 1996).

Chapters 4, 5, and 6, in their entirety, provided a series of historical surveys in order to assess the topic on batik. Each chapter underscored the richness of denotative and connotative meanings of the terms Indonesia, Java, and batik. The chapters highlighted the fact that these three words did not possess singular meanings. All three descriptors are quite fluid in their representations of a variety of social, cultural and political incidences. Therefore, it was incumbent for this research to acknowledge preexisting contents the words, Indonesia, Java, and batik held. Iwan Tirta's use of these words and their meanings within his narratives required understanding how each word was shaped by its own history as determined by the results of this research. The accumulation of batik commodities and the texts written by Iwan Tirta portrayed him as an insider. This portrait relies heavily on these three words of Indonesia, Java, and batik. However, his interviews are essentially syncretic compositions borrowing diachronically determined historical information. Hence, the thrust of chapters 4, 5, and 6 was to determine the precise relationship between Iwan Tirta to an enculturated commodity referred to as Indonesian batik cum Batik Indonesia.

Closer inspection of Iwan Tirta's texts revealed that his outsider status was camouflaged by a constructed self-image. His public persona matched his recurring script voiced in terms of

an artist anchored to entrepreneurial commitments. Terms of Indonesia, Javanese, and batik are natural recurring references in his texts. Each term carried with it assumptions that gave each word its suggestive meanings. However, Iwan Tirta did not clarify the terms, whenever he invoked them in his discussions about batik. Each term was deconstructed, a preliminary task before Iwan Tirta's texts could be analyzed for its suggested meanings. The results of deconstructing the said terms served as foils to compare Iwan Tirta's texts to. Such comparisons yielded extrapolated information produced by evaluating his narratives.

In associating the word batik with the term Indonesia within the discussion of Iwan Tirta and his cultural contributions, this combination resulted in meanings restrictive to a specific time frame that began in the 1950s. As such, descriptions about batik gained meaning when referred to when the archipelago transitioned into a nation state of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 and onwards. Descriptions about batik, batikung or batiked cloth in relation to Iwan Tirta depended on social and political conditions following Indonesia's Declaration of Independence (1945). Indonesia's history does not represent an unbroken continuity with its historical past. Indonesia's sovereignty did not come about because groups of people migrated to the islands laying claim to property, exemplified by seventeenth-century Great Migration into New England. Neither was Indonesia's nation state status a result of a transplanted group of people expanding claimed borders by exerting physical force or its cultural expansion seeking to establish a unified social body.

The archipelago consisted of a group of islands settled by independent racial and ethnic groups. Differences in linguistic and social practices reinforced the independence of these social groups. Sukarno's political activism in Indonesia's twentieth-century nationalists movements,

which resulted in wresting political power from Dutch colonizers, was the most significant contributing factor to establishing a national culture. Before Indonesia's Declaration of Independence, feudal social organizations of a royal court overseeing rural villages populated Java's real estate. Java's coast consisted of urban-like towns reliant on trade. Their robust social lives were independent of Central Javanese kingdoms and therefore, unrelated. The term Javanese gained meaning when observed under such historical conditions. Thus social life and the production of culture of pre-Indonesia when compared to post-Indonesia describe presences of unique spatial entities with independent phenomenological prospects.

Iwan Tirta's emergence as Indonesian cultural arbiter occurred, because of his relationships that involved the state; his access to K.R.T. Hardjonagoro; and his connections with Central Javanese royal courts. The state in its relationships with K.R.T. Hardjonagoro and Iwan Tirta described different phases to batik's expanded influence on Indonesia's social life. A transition occurred from Sukarno and K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's working relationship to one established between Suharto and Iwan Tirta. It is precisely this transition that does indeed reflect historical continuity, so prized by Iwan Tirta. Transitioning of these working relationships also suggested transitions from the old to new, which corresponded with Sukarno's Orde Lama (Old Order) versus Suharto's Orde Baru (New Order). Political continuity not only advanced batik's cultural position but redefined its meaning. This was due to its increased visible presence in high profile political settings that came to the attentions of an international community. Although Iwan Tirta claimed that modern day batik represented continuity with Java's past, his position was untenable. His production of Indonesian batik and its commodifications of interior and sartorial forms bear little resemblance to Javanese batik based on conditions of traditional settings.

## Chapter 7: Analysis

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 clarified elementary terms involved with discussions about batik. Analyzing words of Indonesia, Java and batik might appear to be redundant exercises however, their analysis was necessary for the following reasons. Their denotative and connotative meanings needed clarification. Results from their analysis yielded a context on which this research relied on to respond to my thesis question. Deconstructing each term for their respective contents minimized assumptions possibly generated by readings about Iwan Tirta and his commentaries. Thus, clarifications of the terms, Indonesia, Java and batik established point of references for my readings of written data. Such data consisted of accumulated series of interviews; literature written by Iwan Tirta; general information on batik that exists in the public domain; and historical information about the Malay Archipelago.

A pictorial representation, referred to as ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998, see Figure 36) was the specific visual evidence used to demonstrate my theoretical themes referred to throughout this dissertation. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) illustrated, correspondences, which correlated to contents represented by written texts. The source for ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) was from a VHS recording from Iwan Tirta's private collection. The cinematic recordings documented three fashion shows. Although ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is an image suggestive of a specific haute couture object, as such it nonetheless remains to be a visual metaphor.

There are two phases to my analysis. The first phase involves my analysis of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) using a portion of her system of analysis. The second phase involves assigning results of my visual analysis to one of van Manen's (1997) four lived existentials of

lived space, lived time, lived community, and lived corporeality. The focus of a pictorial analysis is to determine if Iwan Tirta's sartorial composition confirms or disconfirms his characterizations of Indonesian batik as voiced by his texts. The italicized terms are technical descriptions for experienced surface properties.



Figure 12. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998): *Adi Luhung*, Iwan Tirta, 1993  
Hilton International Hotel, Jakarta - Iwan Tirta's Personal Video Collection

Therefore, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) juxtaposed to accumulated written texts determines a self-contained, hermeneutic position, a condition subjected to further and multiple readings. Descriptions of those relationships considered correspondences to describe van Manen's (1997) four existentials, disclose essential conditions of human lived experience. Van Manen's (1997) theoretical position asserted, "These four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relation to the other can be differentiated but not separated. They all form an intricate unity, which we call the lifeworld-our lived world" (1997, p.56).

Hence, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) filtered Iwan Tirta's claims made throughout

his career about Indonesian batik. Van Manen's (1997) lived-existentials are categories to which I consigned my interpretations of correspondences extrapolated from my analysis of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), as an haute couture object and comparing my tentative sensory data with evidentiary written texts. However, extant written data directly related to Iwan Tirta do not represent preverbal structures as required by van Manen's phenomenological research methods. Therefore, van Manen's research model was adapted to existing circumstances of this research.

To assume that a flat surface area represented a specific something was tantamount to jumping the gun. The integrity in my analysis cannot make such assumptions. Adherence to analytical objectivity secured my integrity of my analysis. However, it forced me to recognize that I am observing a flat surface area with visible surface properties, nothing more nothing less. A two-dimensional surface area is an object in its own right. Consequently, I began my visual analysis by making claim that I simply have a two-dimensional surface before me with contents in need of descriptions.

### **ABC-1993—Simply a Flat Surface Area:**

ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is an object form consisting of surface area in two-dimension. The pictorial elements consist of different surface descriptions and variety of colors. The image functions also as a proxy summarizing real-time experience. The pictorial form involves an Iwan Tirta sartorial construction representing enculturated materiality. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is a virtual description memorializing a specific moment in time. The photograph as a medium in and of itself is not an enculturated object. Rather, enculturated properties exist with the pictorial representation suggestive of an Iwan Tirta's virtual haute couture construction. Deconstructing ABC-1993s (DeLong, 1987, 1998) visual properties is in

the same instance it reconstruction. The result is a pictorial surface understood for its surface properties. Their contribution to creating a logical and cohesive expressive whole provided visual clues that not only correspond to Iwan Tirta's lived-experience but also resonate with his commentaries on batik.

**Line-Its Pictorial Power:** Line is one type of surface area *modifier*<sup>1</sup> with transformative effects in ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). Lines in a variety of forms and types dominate ABC-1993 (DeLong 1987, 1998) two-dimensional surface area. It emphatically separates two independent parts of an area as well functions to describe edges to determine contours of shapes. The first set of critical lines is lines that form the perimeter of the surface area. The perimeter frames the visible contents within it, transforming the variety of visual modifiers into a singular pictorial experience. The four-sided frame separates the concentration of surface modifiers within a boundary from all that exists beyond it. Thus, a perimeter distinguishes the confined surface from the remainder of a physical page that contains it, drawing attention of a person to experience the aesthetic properties it yields. A frame secures the integrity of all that contained within it. The four-sided frame accomplishes the following conditions:

- ❖ The frame accentuates aesthetic properties contained within it
- ❖ By accentuating certain aesthetic properties, the restricted surface area induces the viewer to experiences degrees of perceptible intensity
- ❖ Perception of surface area properties limited in scope vis-à-vis surface modifiers facilitates a hermeneutic reading of the pictorial surface

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<sup>1</sup> Modifier-factors that affect the interaction of visual parts of ABC, i.e., size, number, spatial position, direction, and visual weight (1987).

- ❖ The frame promotes interaction with its contents

There are visible lines as well *implied lines*<sup>2</sup>. Implied lines establish the vertical and horizontal axis of the pictorial composition. In this instance, the vertical axis is the dominant orientation thereby, influences how I viewed it. Implied line can also be evocative for its expressive effect. An example is a general shape in color such as a rectangular area in blue, accentuating the horizontal direction between the two vertical sides of the pictorial frame. Overall, the variety in types of lines establishes a visual cadence. The implied cadence structures a surface area into apprehensive forms. With ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), lines define the following conditions:

- ❖ Delimit the degree and scope of the visual experience
- ❖ Reify a recognizable setting
- ❖ Reify the dominant theme that is of interest for this research
- ❖ Are primary elements responsible for conjuring virtual space

The effects of line describe the following perceptual conditions. Not only does a frame distinguish the natural world from the pictorial world, the frame itself is a metaphor of transition. Transition occurs through entering from one position into another; a threshold to experience different types of consciousness; or entrance into a unique world. As a threshold, the frame psychologically separates the spectator from the world it suggests and in the same instance entices the observer, like a lure, to enter into it. The capacity for lines to structure a pictorial composition begins with the bottom side of the frame. It parallels an implied line consisting of a

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<sup>2</sup> Implied lines - two points of interest connected by the viewer (1987).

colored rectangular area in Azure blue. There is an intervening surface area separating the two lines. At the left and right bottom corners of the frame, a visible line extends vertically approximately at 80° meeting at a point, forming one angle of an isosceles triangle. The implied triangle is a secondary frame to reinforce the stability of a centered shape.

The most significant effect line has in ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), is its capacity to transform strictly two-dimensional surface area into a complex composition suggestive of three-dimensional space. In their framed confinement, interactions between different types of lines and between visible and implied lines induce experience of virtual space. What formerly consisted of flat shapes and patterns acquired new expressive dimensions. Since, the surface area transformed into virtual space, the interaction between spectator and the pictorial world eases. Subsequent interaction to ensue represents a connection of two very different existential conditions. One direct result from such interaction is a composition that makes sense. Thus, the incomprehensible becomes sensible. In this instance, the pictorial composition is one that offers a virtual *gestalt*<sup>3</sup> form referred to by DeLong as an apparel-body-construct (ABC, 1987, 1998).

Thus, line contributes to establishing visual coherence whereby the spectator can make sense out of visual surface modifiers that structures this pictorial composition. The pictorial capacities of flat surface area occur, because of expressive effects of surface modifiers to simulate virtual space and its *gestalt*. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) pictorial space consists of three vertical sections. Its mid-section is visually more forceful when compared to outlying sections of

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<sup>3</sup> Gestalt psychologist-psychologists who concluded that the process of organizing a discrete entity (a whole) is interactive and automatic. Based on the principle that the sum is greater than its parts. Gestalt principles of organizations-four primary principles-similarity, closure, proximity, continuation-that explain the grouping and separating of visual parts in viewing process (see grouping segregating) [1978].

the remaining pictorial composition. Prominence of the mid-section is a result of a higher concentration of aesthetic variations in the surface modifiers it contains. Repetition of a series of vertical lines parallel to the sides of the picture frame is responsible for ABC-1993s (DeLong, 1987, 1998) compositional structure.

Changes in line and in surface properties minimize the composition's horizontal monotony. Vertical straight lines in this composition also represent edges to architectural elements to define a specific *surround*<sup>4</sup>. The surround of ABC-1993 (DeLong 1987, 1998) suggests a stage setting. Conscious apprehension of a possible stage setting contributes to pictorial coherence cogently expressed. Coherence of pictorial surface also indicates other aesthetic properties mapped by a composition to communicate a definitive pictorial logic. These surface modifiers become visual cues to enforce compositional structure. They define the activity pictorially described when observed as a singular whole. Pictorial symmetry dominates this composition, wherein a slow rhythmic tempo enhances stability to the visual experience. The pictorial stability anchors the spectator's attention to a centrally situated ABC (DeLong 1987, 1998).

#### **A Slice from a Fashion Show-Its Deconstruction:**

**The Source for Pictorial Logic:** A plane inscribes a *figure*<sup>5</sup> in ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) and it is parallel to the front-most pictorial plane. The figure<sup>ABC</sup> establishes a vertical axis to an implied sphere, which accentuates a *viewer's*<sup>6</sup> spatial experience. The

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<sup>4</sup> Surround-space immediately around the ABC and between ABC and viewer (1987)

<sup>5</sup> Figure-that which we view as having object quality, appears to be in front of ground (1987)

<sup>6</sup> Viewer-one who views, bringing to the viewing process the combined influences of slowly changing traits such as education and personality and rapidly changing traits such as moods and momentary expectations (1987).

figure's<sup>ABC</sup> planar position also contributes to the viewer's<sup>ABC</sup> experience of possible space. It is the center for this pictorial two-dimensional surface area as well for the composition's virtual space. Therefore, figure<sup>ABC</sup> is the origin for ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) pictorial logic. In this instance the figure<sup>ABC</sup> is an example of DeLong's (1987, 1998) apparel-body-construct (ABC) consisting of a clothed human torso. The dominance taken by a figure<sup>ABC</sup>, as a primary body *form*<sup>7</sup>, is the visual focus for all virtual artifacts indicated by its surround<sup>ABC</sup>. Since the figure<sup>ABC</sup> is a primordial source for ABC-1993s (DeLong, 1987, 1998) pictorial logic, all corresponding virtual artifacts of the surround<sup>ABC</sup> conversely refer back to it. They nudge the spectator to scan back to the central pictorial motif. Compositional elements stabilize or destabilize a spectator's reading of visual text. The visual elements either fulfill or disrupt a person's *expectancies*<sup>8</sup>. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) offers a virtual instance representing a unique characterization of time. Although pictorial circumstances by nature simulate human conditions, their aesthetic structures can recreate persuasive sensations that are similar to the natural world.

**Setting the Stage:** Horizontal lines extend from one side of the pictorial frame to the other side. Lines vary from crisp to blurred, opaque to transparency or dull to iridescence. With ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), luminous areas adjoin dark lines. Alternatively, they appear as wide swatches to contrast adjoining subdued surface areas. Each of these compositional elements shares a common trait in their linearity. A plane appears behind the central figure<sup>ABC</sup>, consisting

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<sup>7</sup> Body forms-existing physical structure of trunk, head, and four limbs: component of ABC including body surfaces, all shapes created by body parts, body movements (1987).

<sup>8</sup> Expectancies-expectations the view brings to the viewing process because of experiences; anticipation by viewer of that which she/he considers the norm. (1987).

of a series of crisp lines to form architectural columns. Edges of the column at the bottom turn into a general pattern as decorative footings. The top portion of the architectural footing is smaller than the bottom resulting in a general shape reminiscent of an oriental calabash (*Lagenaria vulgaris*). The curves of the footing are luminescent contrasted to dull, darkened area. The expanse of olive green surfaces separates the vertical colonnades. The furthestmost planar surface area, which is a backdrop for this pictorial composition consists of asymmetrical surface areas. The surface area to the right of the central figure<sup>ABC</sup> shows silhouettes of human heads. The combination of the various pictorial cues, as described, all suggests a pictorial representation of a fashion-show. Such conclusion forces the spectator to reconsider perceptible shapes and all other aesthetic surface properties.

**Apparel-Body-Construct (ABC):** The center plane consists of shapes that produce a gestalt of a dressed human torso. Shapes conform to a human form presenting a sartorial structure of layered surfaces. ABC-1993, is an acronym for DeLong's (1987, 1998) apparel-body-construct, which exists as a perceptible cohesive, expressive whole. Exposed human body parts of head and arms are not incidental, inactive features. Rather, exposures of face and hands confirm ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) virtual spatial position. A dressed body form<sup>ABC</sup> appears in a single, frontal *viewpoint*<sup>9</sup>. The source for figure's<sup>ABC</sup> expressiveness comes from drapery that envelope the human torso. Its surface *definitions*<sup>10</sup> consist of variegated patterns. Parts of a human torso integrate into a single pictorial composite to produce a study in contrasts.

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<sup>9</sup> Body view-view of body form from frame of reference of visual field; single viewpoint (front, back, or side) [1987].

<sup>10</sup> Surface definition-the way in which surfaces of the ABC are characterized by texture and color (1987).

Since the pictorial composition suggests a body frozen in movement, the exposed body parts of the human head and hands are inert visual *definers*<sup>11</sup>. The body form<sup>ABC</sup> is the *controlling relationship*<sup>12</sup> determining how an observer understands the contrast of shapes in relations to one another. Equally, the body form presents a controlling relationship<sup>ABC</sup>, one characterized in two or three-dimensional terms. Presentation of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) within a surround<sup>ABC</sup> sets up a visual logic for this virtual spatial setting. Centering the figure form<sup>ABC</sup> reinforces its position to command, becoming a primary point of visual interest. The silhouette<sup>ABC</sup> of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) declares a dramatic presentation of elegance. The apparel-body-construct's evocative properties rest with visual tensions created by competing surface definitions<sup>ABC</sup>. Contrast of aesthetic intensities consists of competing hues, light and shade, degree of opacity and dynamics. All surface modifiers<sup>ABC</sup> contribute to ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) expressive power.

Central placement of a figure<sup>ABC</sup> form impedes a viewer's direct penetration of the virtual, pictorial space. Therefore, virtual space is not the primary impression dictating a viewer's experience of this pictorial composition. Rather, flat implicit and explicit visual cues influence a viewer's<sup>ABC</sup> experience. The figure form<sup>ABC</sup> interrupts scanning, because the gestalt is referent of a dressed torso consisting of richly textured surfaces. As argued, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is the primary compositional *axis*<sup>13</sup>. Its position determines a viewer's<sup>ABC</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Definer – a component of the ABC that produces visual activity; visual details of forms, e.g. line, shape, point, color, texture (1987).

<sup>12</sup> Controlling relationship - cause of visual linkage of parts, grouping, and separation of parts, e.g., a definer, a modifier, a Gestalt principle of organization (1987).

<sup>13</sup> Axis - visual reference used to gauge and compare parts. For example, center of ABC may be a vertical reference when sides are treated symmetrically (1987).

experience of virtual space stated in two and three-dimensional surface areas. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is also a surface with patterns anchored to its own logic to reinforce psychologically a pictorial coherence readily understood. The persuasive presence of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) blurs separation of pictorial space from real-time space. Overlapping of shapes that is expressive properties of lines compounded with play of light and shade establishes a single residual figure<sup>ABC</sup>. The residual apparition insinuates corporeality, claiming status that it is an object in the round. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) assertiveness appears as a composition of surface areas presented frontally, inherited with properties associated with sculptural plasticity. Although the figure<sup>ABC</sup> appears integrated into an aesthetic matrix, its two-dimensional vocabulary fundamentally controls the *viewing priority*<sup>14</sup>. Recognition of figure<sup>ABC</sup> as a human in form stimulates spectator interests to participate with a captured moment reified aesthetically.

**Surface Modifiers:** The human head and hands as surface properties appear visibly passive and inert when compared to adjacent shapes. ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) *silhouette*<sup>15</sup> consists of two *parts*<sup>16</sup>. The first consists of visual definers of line to define contours or edges. The second are implied lines<sup>ABC</sup>, which communicate distinct kinetic properties. Variations of straightness or curvatures in line combined with areas of color becoming elementary surface decorative descriptors. Evocative decorative surfaces of shapes in their

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<sup>14</sup> View priority -, that which attracts viewer attention first; that which is perceived as dominant in the visual field, related to its strength and amount of visual activity (1987).

<sup>15</sup> Silhouette-the outline of the ABC, defining the extent of the form distinctly or indistinctly (see closed; open) [1987].

<sup>16</sup> Parts-units of visual perception that achieve some measure of distinctness or separation from surround (1987).

representation of cloth dominate the overall aesthetic scheme. Decorative surfaces become visual clues to affect a viewer's scanning *direction*<sup>17</sup> as well to attract a spectator's attention. Enlarged red flowers in full bloom with highlights of gold are central motifs for a cream-colored surface area. In a set of three, the middle flower is this composition's aesthetic bulls-eye. Its placement is a point of intersection of this pictorial composition's vertical and horizontal axis. Their vertical alignment inclines the spectator to scan vertically.

However, the flower at the center also prods the viewer<sup>ABC</sup> to experience an upward perspectival direction. Its central position in fact confirms the viewer's position as a member of audience implied by visual cues. Opacity of orange-red surfaces of the flower petals highlighted with luminescent touches of gold evokes an expressive *intensity*<sup>18</sup>. The splendor these images evoke entices the viewer to *attend*<sup>19</sup> to their visual lushness. Once satisfied by the spectacle, the spectator scans upwards.

A cream-colored surface area representing a garment drapes the human torso. The garment wraps the body that begins at the bust line continuing to the floor. The décolletage of the garment exposes shoulders and neck of the figure form<sup>ABC</sup>. The human head completes an implicit vertical axis. The garment wrapped around three-quarters of the torso reinforces the human figure's prominence. Exposure of the shoulder body *surface*<sup>20</sup> reveals skin color in a tint analogous to cream-colored surface of the dress. The head is an endpoint for an axis established

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<sup>17</sup> Direction-viewer's impression of movement while taking the ABC (1987).

<sup>18</sup> Intensity-strength of pigmentation or degree of purity of a color (1987).

<sup>19</sup> Attending-process by which viewer is engaged in viewing an ABC, involves both attraction and sustained viewing (1987).

<sup>20</sup> Body surfaces-physical exterior of the body, including textures of skin and hair and colors of skin, hair and eyes (1987).

by vertical sequencing of decorative flowers. In context of this decorative composition, the head metaphorically represents a fully bloomed flower like its decorative counterparts on the garment. Aesthetic evocative expressiveness reaches a crescendo consisting of a simple and centered rectangular shape of cream color. At the center of the surface area is a *grouping*<sup>21</sup> of three independent, full and partial flowers in red. Their presence arrests the viewer from scanning randomly to other parts of the composition. Viewing two-dimensional floral motifs from a distance reinforces impressions of realism. Therefore, spatial distance is an active factor involved, to reify experience of virtual space and therefore, suggestive of virtual corporeality. Although floral motifs consist of abbreviated shapes, the patterns succeed in their representations of double-flowered camellias cultivars. Their implicit circularity of the flowers mimics circularity of the human head. These oversized shapes in forms of camellias span the surface width of the dress. Concentration of visible aesthetic opulence delays the spectator from changing his or her scan into another direction. Petals of each bloom express a dark red color modulated into a light orange-red, with accents of gold leaf, prada. Combination of these surface properties result in a successful portrayal of three-dimensional flowers. Blank surfaces of cream are opaque. Surfaces of the dress glisten, indexing interior lighting and its effects on the surfaces. Light modulates these surfaces, contributing to apperception of a garment form described three-dimensionally. Edges of the shapes define this garments silhouette<sup>ABC</sup>. A floor length robe in black overlaps the cream-colored dress, suggesting that it is integral component to the apparel-body-construct (ABC, DeLong, 1987, 1998). It established a visible stark contrast, projecting a

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<sup>21</sup> Grouping – the process of relating similar visual units in perception, an automatic, interactive viewer process that helps in understanding organization of ABC when brought to consciousness (1987).

vigorous shift in light to dark values<sup>ABC</sup>. The inner edge of the robe to the figure's<sup>ABC</sup> left abruptly breaks its continuity towards the floor. Its edge proceeds in a downward slope at an angle starting at the center of the dress. To this figure's<sup>ABC</sup> right, the bottom portion of the robe expands into of triangular shape. Unlike the figure's left side, the triangle shape does not possess decorative patterning that is independent of the layout of the triangular surface area.

A series of parallel and implied lines disrupt an uninterrupted surface area. These series of lines replaces a surface area lacking surface patterning. Swaths of contrasts of light and dark vary in widths, syncopating the changes made by the effects of light. It results in an expressive effect suggestive of pliable and tensile properties of cloth. Grouping<sup>ABC</sup> of a series of implied lines<sup>ABC</sup>, also indicates bodily movement creating folds in the cloth. A break in the line at the bottom of the cream-colored surface also indicates movement. Disruption of this portion of the dress covers the figure's<sup>ABC</sup> shins as to disclose activity. The figure<sup>ABC</sup> appears to be placing her left foot in front of right foot. The body form<sup>ABC</sup> suggests that it is propelling itself forwards towards an implied audience. ABC-1993 (DeLong, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) underwent analysis for its aesthetic surface properties. The pictorial composition is fundamentally a flat surface area. When observed in its totality, the perceptible visual definers<sup>ABC</sup> reproduce virtual space. Hence, this pictorial composition consists of two distinct modes. Foremost it is simply a flat surface area. However, this pictorial composition expresses virtual pictorial space. These pictorial modes are not mutually exclusive as demonstrated by this analysis. However, each mode, whether planar or spatial, produce their own set of *imagings*<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> *imagings* – creating a visual image in the mind; calling to mind a previous ABC or expected viewing pattern (1987).

Reification of virtual space affirms continuity with the spectator's visual world. This puts to rest human propensity of pitting the idea of something being real against the idea of something being false. Such judgments appear to be independent conditions. Human empathetic capacity to embody perceptible properties of the other bridges such illusions. The next phase in my analysis consists of how ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), as a visual metaphor applies to van Manen's (1997) lived existentials. It also asks, what do existing aesthetic clues revealed by ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) inform the viewer about Iwan Tirta's existentials of lived-space, lived-time, lived-community and lived-corporeality (van Manen, 1997). Analysis of each of these categories shall preoccupy the remainder of chapter 7.

### **Lived-Experiences**

**Lived-Space:** A pronounced change in staging existed between his 1991 sartorial spectacle *Sekaring Jagad* (Tirta, 1991) and *Adi Luhung* (Tirta, 1992). Iwan Tirta's fashion event held in 1992 recreates a fictive venue suggestive of a Javanese royal court ambiance. After acknowledgements were made of important persons who attended the event, the fashion gala began with a lengthy performance by royal court dancers from the Kraton of Surakarta (Solo). Their presence corresponded with a fictive environment suggesting a royal court setting associated with Java's antiquity. Iwan Tirta stressed that the dancer's costumes were not only originals from royal court inventory, but it was their first appearance outside of the sacred compound.

Incorporating royal court dancers into the 1992 event was an important feature. It signified Iwan Tirta's alliance with Central Javanese courts and sharing in its impeccable social credentials. His sartorial inventory acquired aristocratic preciousness by association. The event,

*Adi Luhung*, was performance, which claimed historical continuity with Central Javanese royal court culture. Although Iwan Tirta's natural inclination was to invoke royal court culture to describe his body of work, he could never totally ignore or divest himself of batik's proletarian origins. This precisely describes his ambivalence, the people versus the elite, whether it was represented by members of the royal court or Indonesia's new moneyed class. He shuttled between these two distinct claims of batik's origins throughout his career. He resolves his ambivalence by committing Indonesian batik once for all to its royal court heritage. He unequivocally asserted this position in his current website, Iwan Tirta: Private Collection (2012).

His conceptualization for the 1992 event was not a new concept. Likewise his inventory of haute couture was neither innovative. In 1981, the Indonesian Observer stated, "Before long Iwan will hold a fashion show called "Semalam di Kedaton" i.e. one night in the palace" (p. 3). The interview revealed Iwan Tirta's thinking and its direction about Indonesian batik accomplished by cultivating its imagined cultural pedigree. Although his interviews spoke about batik as a general topic, his characterizations about batik tacitly extended to his own body of work. His work claimed kinship to a cultural milieu "to reveal the beauty and cultural greatness of the Javanese palaces in Central Java" (One Night in the Kedaton, 1981, p. 33).

However, under Iwan Tirta's creative imaginative skills, he transformed ritual and its objects integral to royal court life into sartorial inventory for a Christmas and New Year's collection (One night in the Kedaton, 1981). Iwan Tirta confirmed the special and unique status of cultural artifacts associated with the royal court when he stated "a traditional art of considerable value which in former times could be only watched by certain circles" (One Night in the Kedaton, 1981, p. 33). The interviewer prefaces the comment with "Iwan Tirta wishes to disclose

to public in general...” (One Night in the Kedaton, 1981, p. 33). These two descriptive fragments when compared encapsulated his ambivalence. He sought its cultural preciousness on one hand yet; batik commodities are consumable goods for a general population. His commodities are accessible for an educated, privileged, moneyed segment of a population, who had benefitted from Suharto's governance and his economic policies. Iwan Tirta reframed cultural experiences described as traditional into popular vernacular forms of haute couture. The vernacular forms were testaments of ‘Kraton’ pedigree that communicated a 'noble' culture (One night in the Kedaton, 1981).

Iwan Tirta assures that his 1992 event is emblematic of performance. Its persuasive effects consist of four elements of (a) Well-dressed, (b) Suitable make-up, (c) Harmonious and dance, music, and (d). Health (One night in the Kedaton, 1981). These four essential elements represented what Iwan Tirta considered as a logical whole, a template to ensure performative success. Iwan Tirta's description resembles a woman's compact containing different colored powdered makeup. He elevated his characterization of his fashion show by comparing its possible performative failure with the task of caring for and maintaining an ancient temple, but neglecting its culture at the same time (One night in the Kedaton, 1981).

The fashion show, as performance, recreates existential conditions with the express purpose of transmitting cultural properties to sartorial commodities displayed for a select audience. In this case, transmission of culture to objects occurs through processes of association through sharing of a spatial setting. Spatial proximity of royal court dancers to Iwan Tirta's inventory allows members of the audience to accept the proposition that his objects share in identical cultural properties. The overall theme of the event solidifies Iwan Tirta's proposition of

cultural transmission using performance. *Adi Luhung* illustrated production of a performative aura suggestive of royal court culture, subsequently expressed by sartorial creations displayed at the event. However, the transfer of culture to Iwan Tirta's contemporary sartorial constructions leveled properties representative of historical conditions he had sought his commodities to identify with.

Granting dancers from the royal court to perform publically, seen in dress normally reserved for court functions, re-interpreted Iwan Tirta's sartorial inventory. Their properties reflective of their merits based on Art appear, instead, as objects identified by merits of their association with Central Javanese courts. Inserting kraton objects formerly associated with ritual into profane surroundings of Jakarta's International Hilton Hotel efficiently transmitted culture to contemporary object forms. The physical proximity between objects of ritual and haute couture forms instantiates a spiritual link, performatively shared between them. Iwan Tirta's implicit and explicit assertions suggesting cultural continuity between the distant past and modernity are gambits akin to those for an advertising scheme. Another facet to production of cultural pedigree and its acquisition is the role of Suharto's patronage. Iwan Tirta's claims about Indonesian batik dovetailed with Suharto's reinterpretation of Sukarno's Indonesian Personality. Suharto extended batik's emblematic status to represent Indonesian sense and sensibilities with prescriptive uniforms as required dress to attest one's civic duty.

**Lived-time:** Claim of cultural pedigree involved a discussion of continuity encoded in designators such as tradition or traditional. The term traditional appeared regularly when Iwan Tirta spoke or wrote about batik. Iwan Tirta suggested that his body of work reflected tradition or that his batiked patterns exhibited traditional patterns. However, Iwan Tirta undermined his

claim of tradition or traditional by asserting that batik cloth were forms of Art. Correspondingly, he viewed himself as an artist. Another detail was his understanding of being Indonesia's first designer.

Concept of Art or artist did not develop out of Javanese culture, but were transplanted ideas that emerged out of nineteenth-century discourse on the subject of batik. Dutch business interests in competition with preservation of culture resulted in injecting European outsider concepts of Art and artist into Java's social lexicon. These concepts are at odds with social bodies constrained by ritual and belief systems unique to a longstanding social structure of a royal court and its limited sovereign territory consisting of rural villages.

I have also argued that the aspiration of Art, in its commodified form, relies on ideas of investment and profitability. Therefore, such characterization was oxymoronic for cultural life entrenched in ritual. Esteem held for batik cloth for its aesthetic surface properties did not constitute in forms of a decorated cloth as Art. Incorporating artifacts of batik cloth into day-to-day social life intended to ritualize social status or simply to dress the human body is not necessarily Art. Neither would use of batik cloth to mark individual and collective experiences of passage be indexical of Art.

Production of batik cloth for ritual is at odds with the idea that celebrates a person's sense of individuality. It is at odds with implicit association to the notion of artistic genius. Within Javanese social structures outside urban centers or coastal towns, the cultural idea of *gotong-royong* (collective commitment) superseded personal interests. This long-standing cultural value was a central motif in constructing Indonesia's Constitution of 1945, which was a prototypical impetus in Sukarno's ideology. *Gotong royong* is particularly relevant to Central

Javanese social bodies, described as feudal entities. In essence, production of batik cloth for ritual contrasted to its representation of Art illustrated two independent phenomenological conditions. Therefore, the idea of cultural or historical continuity is implausible.

Iwan Tirta's claim as being Indonesia's first designer admitted that his batik commodities are in effect representations of a historical, cultural and psychological discontinuity. Modern day sociological factors that have influenced Iwan Tirta's commodities are largely responsible for their genealogical discontinuity. His commodification of batik cloth was more indexical of social privilege; socio-political economic conditions; and production of texts dispensed in different media forms addressing the subject of batik. His interviews targeted local and international readerships, which effectively re-educated local populations of their cultural heritage.

Iwan Tirta's narratives were cogent exposes on batik. His commodifications of batik pointed to the future rather than to its past, because his batik cloth and sartorial constructions conceded to modern international tastes. For instance, Iwan Tirta accommodated to concerns held by Japanese trade representatives. They pointed out that traditional use of cotton cloth for batik was not luxurious enough for Japanese consumers. Therefore, commodification of batik cotton cloth using cotton cloth as its base cloth was not financially sustainable in a Japanese market. This highlighted an evaluative scheme assigning commodities for their sense of luxury versus their sense of insignificance determined by the basic cloth used to decorate its surfaces. The impact of Japanese comments reinforced Iwan Tirta to expand into using different types of cloth, as a base cloth, for batik.

The extent to which continuity characterizes Iwan Tirta's commodities did not rest with

Central Javanese royal court of past. Rather, I have suggested that Iwan Tirta's commodities shared continuity with a trajectory beginning with Sukarno's policies and his ideologies that extended to an official discourse on batik. Iwan Tirta's commodities continued Sukarno's blurring of ethnic differences replaced by a cultural identity represented by a politicized national identity. In this respect, Iwan Tirta's advocacy of batik as sartorial haute couture forms or as home decor added another chapter to batik's biography. Sukarno wrote its first chapters introducing Indonesians to Batik Indonesia.

Commodification of batik brokered a mutually beneficial relationship. The discourse of batik fulfilled state needs as well protected Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial interests. Iwan Tirta's acquired patronage from the first family, a fact he openly admitted during his *Batik de Ziel van Java* (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996) interview. In exchange, Iwan Tirta acquired status as Indonesia's cultural high priest. He arbitrated batik's representation of national culture for both local and international consumers. Iwan Tirta's self-image as artist perpetuated his persistent hedging with the denotative and connotative demands inhered in the terms of tradition, traditional, Indonesia, Javanese or batik.

Perhaps, there are accepted design patterns that possess the elusive cultural patina of traditional. Javanese *parang-rusak* (broken dagger) motif is an example of a traditional pattern motif that emerged out of Central Javanese court life. It acquired significance through its use in Central Javanese court life. Iwan Tirta adapted this motif by making slight structural alterations to a prototypical template that developed under the aegis of royal court life. Although, Iwan Tirta's adaptations appeared to be parang rusak motifs, his adaptations are in fact semblances of the original motif. His adaptations represented Iwan Tirta's design interests that did not

necessarily coincide with palace court and village focus on ritual. Adaptations consisting of changes to lines; making slight changes to the general shape; or the imposition of non-traditional colors to a prototypical pattern fundamentally transform the visual integrity of a batik pattern. They dissipate any former social meaning it held. Hence, Iwan Tirta's motif becomes parang-rusak like. The final composition might appear to be traditional, but such adaptations attest to him exercising artistic license in using his imagination.

A code word that best described imaginative processes appeared in Iwan Tirta's declaration of the term, innovation. Ritual objects or objects used to complete ritual obligations embody opposite intentions from those intentions implicated in notions of innovation. However, the descriptor, innovation, appropriately characterized Iwan Tirta's position as artist, because his existential position fostered exercise of his imaginative capacities. Batik as ritual object versus its objectification through the idea of Art embodies two distinct and different potencies. The former focused on an object's transformative capacity in day-to-day living that was perpetually connected to a preternatural world. On the other hand, potency of an art object rested with surface properties. Their capacity to receive public approval rests with their authorial notoriety to secure sale of a decorated cloth as a commodity defined largely by its retail life. Art is sympathetic to Indonesian modernity rather than to social life of a royal court with oversight over rural villages.

**Lived-community:** Batik had a high profile role in establishing experiences of community designated as Indonesian. Iwan Tirta's role in promoting batik to be representative of a virtual national identity profited from two independent social conditions. Actions taken by others created social circumstances to allow batik commodities such as ABC-1993 (DeLong,

1987, 1998) to be an alternative representation for national identity. The national prominence of batik could not have occurred had men of power of Sukarno, Suharto, and Sadikin not giving consent to elevate batik's cultural status. Their decisions to integrate batik into Indonesia's contemporary social life transformed an utilitarian object into an emblem for Indonesian sense and sensibilities. Their respective decisions assisted with laying the argument that batik is uniquely Indonesian.

Sukarno's metaphors of Indonesian Personality and Marhaen are each other's complement. Both metaphors point to Sukarno's construction of a national identity to represent all citizens' regardless of existing differences in ethnicity and social practices. However, batik in form of Batik Indonesia paralleled Sukarno's concept of an everyday, common Indonesian citizen, the Marhaen. Both metaphors relied on common denominators that were expressive of essential qualities characterizing an Indonesian citizen. Sukarno described an epiphany he experienced on one of his bicycle outings into the Indonesian countryside:

A Marhaenist is a person with small means; a little man with little ownership, little tools, sufficient to himself. Our tens of millions of impoverished souls work for no person and no person works for them. There is no exploitation of one man by another. Marhaenism is Indonesian Socialism in operation. (Adams, 1965, p. 63).

Sukarno had a keen sense for symbolism. He was adept in translating his ideas into effective symbolic forms as previously discussed. Sukarno directed K.R.T. Hardjonagoro to find an aesthetic counterpart, to signify his much desired but elusive national common characterizations for Indonesia's new citizen. Ironically, Sukarno's directive had the unforeseen effect by reinforcing the idea of artist into Indonesian life. Sukarno was impressed with K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's innovative use of color and sizing of batik patterns. He bought K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's

entire inventory when presented with them. Thus, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's creativity reflected in aesthetic properties of his designs eclipsed production of batik cloth influenced by a sense of collective well-being.

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro appeared to have imposed on himself an orientation, which sought to strike a balance between tradition and innovation. This might have prompted his decline of Iwan Tirta's offer for a partnership in a batik business. Unlike his student, Iwan Tirta, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro did not venture to any extensive degree in haute couture or into production of commodities responding to international taste. Regardless of his decorative startling effects, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's batik patterns reflected an aesthetic conservativeness when compared to Iwan Tirta's designs.

K.R.T. Hardjonagoro was highly skilled in classical Javanese dance. Likewise, he was committed to making kris (dagger) using painstaking traditional production methods. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro was an unquestioned authority on Javanese culture, and his unique status at the royal court reinforced it. These facts describe a biographical profile of a person less inclined to produce objects that portray a self-conscious artistic bravura. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro appeared to have retained batik's cultural position associated with a social order that Iwan Tirta claimed his sartorial constructions represented. K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's instincts appeared to resist pressures of modernity, in adjusting production of batik cloth based on mass consumption. Thus, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's batik cloth retains its cultural position associated with Orde Lama, a social order preoccupied with ritual life.

Iwan Tirta's sentiments about the position of batik cloth in Indonesia's social life contrasted sharply to his teacher, K.R.T. Hardjonagoro. Its former cultural position of batik

cloth was utilitarian in nature and integrated into ritual life. In the hands of Iwan Tirta, these essential features changed. Batiked cloth became foremost an object of Art exhibiting preciousness because of artistic genius. For Indonesians privileged to wear one of his sartorial constructions, batiked cloth mnemonically referred to a cultural legacy constructed out of texts that serially affirmed its cultural legacy. The enculturation of batik in its representations of Indonesian sense and sensibilities took on two forms. His haute couture commodities acknowledged growing influence of international taste weighing in on his sartorial silhouettes. Yet, Iwan Tirta's sartorial constructions reflected his allegiance to surface decorative patterning that he claimed steeped in Indonesian or Javanese traditions. Iwan Tirta's sartorial commodities are secular emblems crafted within an entrepreneurial setting. International market demand would ultimately settle their economic success.

Batik took the form as a sacralized (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1986) object, a result of state appropriation of batik as a cultural artifact. These forms were coterminous to Iwan Tirta's secular emblems driven by his entrepreneurial interests. Boehlke (2008) documented policy decisions made by governor-mayor of Jakarta (see Figure 37), former Lieutenant General Ali Sadikin and Suharto. Their official decisions secured batik's undisputed status as representations of Indonesian cultural sense and sensibilities. Prescriptive mandates, which required wearing of batiked dress in public settings, are coercive reminders of national identity. Under Sadikin's mayoral administration, batiked sartorial items became official dress, in forms of men shirts. Batiked shirts were not simply *de rigueur*, but became prescriptive sartorial forms for political and business events. Sadikin's decree represented the weight of the state as mirrored with Suharto's expectations of batiked sartorial wear required at official governmental functions. Iwan Tirta

admits that batik would have taken a different trajectory had Suharto not injected himself into the discourse of batik. Suharto affirmed batik's emblematic status for Indonesia (Nederlands-Textielmuseum-in-samenwerking-met-Museum-Textil-Jakarta (Producer), 1996), indicated by Iwan Tirta's statement:

Iwan said the textile underwent a mainstream revival when the late president Sukarno ordered local artists and designers to tailor batik in western-style garments in the 1950s. Sukarno's initiative was continued by Ali Sadikin, governor of Jakarta from 1967 to 1977, who promoted batik shirts and dress as official attire. (Batik king Iwan Tirta sizes up his heirs apparent, 2009).

Codification of batik into an emblem of state extends to all facets of Indonesian public life. Hutabarat, a fashion designer in his own right, summarizes ritualization of batiked wear in contemporary Indonesian social life:

In the book *Busana Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Dress)*, Edward Hutabarat said men might wear batik shirts as formal national dress for the following occasions:

- \* official state dinners
- \* cultural missions
- \* conferring of awards
- \* appointment or transfer of governmental posts
- \* launching of new products
- \* officiating at exhibitions, new buildings, offices and so forth
- \* wedding parties
- \* birthday parties
- \* gala dinners

For the same occasions, women can wear batik dresses, but a sarong with kebaya or kurung (long tunic) is more advisable. A modification of a traditional dress is acceptable, including a gown, as long as an accessory made of "traditional textile" is added, which in this case can be a batik shawl. (Bagdja, 2001, n.p.).

The transition of batik as a ritual object, so central to Java's social life and its change into required

uniforms undermined Iwan Tirta's characterization of its ties to an illustrious and noble heritage. Batik, as uniform, is a banal cultural object. It detracted those required to wear dress from being fully engaged in batik's cultural roots, which became elementary details to forming social and personal identity. Batik's pervasive presence as uniforms transformed batik into a commonplace item, which perhaps appear quaint to outsiders. Batiked dress as uniforms became objects unrecognizable for its indigenous cultural properties.



Figure 37. Sukarno and Lt. General Sadikin, Circa 1950.  
<http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://image50.webshots.com>

**Lived-corporeality:** Iwan Tirta's settings of his boutique on Jalan Panarukan 25 in Jakarta and his home at the same locale shared a common feature. One cannot help but experience a visual sumptuousness consisting of surface areas with a baroque flair of convoluted lines and ornate ornamentations. Iwan Tirta's professional and private spaces stated his aesthetic orientation in three dimensions, which took a life of its own in his sartorial constructions of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). The decorative attributes that describe his living spaces revealed

Iwan Tirta's aesthetic inclinations. In my face-to-face 1996 interview of Iwan Tirta, he did not hesitate to communicate to me that sumptuousness was the singular effect he valued most. Iwan Tirta placed a premium on sumptuousness to achieve the ultimate expressive effect in making one noticed to others. Thus, his haute couture forms contributed to establish a persona stated dramatically into an unforgettable, singular performative instance. My interview of Iwan Tirta's longtime family friend, Charles Nijo (1996) reiterated such characterization. He expressed his thought in the following manner:

...'expatriate chic', Charles Nijo described Iwan Tirta in the following terms, '...he can't be bothered to make things for the lower classes or for, for... involved for pop stars. Later on, he used to do that for hotels. Ok, so bed covers and.' (Kühr, 1996).

Iwan Tirta's position of batik as Art logically follows within the contexts of Nijo (1996) statements. In their role as Indonesia's new priyayi, Indonesia's moneyed elite were new custodians for batik. Iwan Tirta fondly reiterated that he viewed himself to be a replacement of former Javanese aristocracy. He glibly stated in some of his interviews that aristocracy was simply a state of mind. Exercise of an aristocratic state of mind was a privilege limited to and relegated to local economic and political elite members of Indonesian society. The Bangkok Post corroborated Iwan Tirta's position by quoting, "Today the upper classes have gone into eclipse. So, I have had to step into the shoes of the aristocracy. After all, aristocracy is just a state of mind (Youngblood, 1987, p. 34)." Thus, consumption of batik by international globetrotters secured continuation of "...aristocratic state of mind." Nijo referred to this social echelon as "...expatriate chic." To consider this particular social group to be guardians for true batik is casuistry. Within Iwan Tirta's social scheme, Indonesia's moneyed class replaced the royal court as new patrons who would perpetuate true batik's legacy (The Future of Batik?, 1980). As

primary consumers of batik commodities, their consumption intended to protect batik's survival. Their consumption of batik commodities also secured batik's cultural legacy in forms of Art. Iwan Tirta offered his insight:

I am not saying that mass manufacturers will not or should not go on putting out their products for the economy buyer.” Tirta says, “But to preserve and keep alive the true art from, people must realize that batik is an art, and for art you must pay. (The Future of Batik?, 1980, n.p.).

Iwan Tirta's support of conspicuous consumption is a problem on a number of levels. His unabashed claim that he embodied an aristocratic state of mind was perhaps legitimate for a number of reasons. He had direct exposure to Central Javanese royal courts. His direct access to members of the royal family through K.R.T. Hardjonagoro influenced him. They were dimensions to Iwan Tirta's lived experiences that were critical to his understanding about batik. These influences also shaped his understanding about the “...aristocratic state of mind” (Youngblood, 1987, n.p.). Production of batik motivated by business interests are not identical to its commodifications determined by ritual life. Further, Iwan Tirta's experience of “...aristocratic state of mind” (Youngblood, 1987, n.p.) does not necessarily replicates in which the consumer embodies such haute sensibilities. Commodities intrinsically determined by its retail value do not necessarily instill in consumers their personal sense of shared cultural identity. The ability to transform raw material into conspicuous expressive forms might be indexical of artistic genius. However, Iwan Tirta's haute couture statements, as object forms of conspicuous consumption, outright dismiss his characterization of it being a people's art. Such characterization prevailed during early stages of Iwan Tirta's entrepreneurial pursuits, reinforced by his romantic description of:

Once, common mistaken idea, he said is that fine batik is made by the “kratons”. The “kratons” inspired and refined batik, but this is a folk art made by the peasants in the time they can spare from the fields and in ancient times every girl new how to batik. (Fine Batikwork - An Art Revived: Nusjirwan Tirtaamidjaja Exhibits Classical Art of Ancient Patterns. 1964, n.p).

He does not clarify his use of words of peasants or ancient times; rather, they are descriptions left up to the reader's imaginative devices to comprehend the details that such descriptors might hold.

Iwan Tirta viewed himself as a teacher, to enlighten local and international public about real batik. His interviews have appearances of lectures; therefore, commentaries as cited above are problematical. He failed to take the next step in articulating his sources or providing more details about his characterizations about batik. Worse, his narrations about batik consisted of vague descriptions resulting in inconsistencies. The descriptor, elitism, increasingly appeared in Iwan Tirta's public discourse on batik. The transition of batik's humble origins into objects expressive of sublime Central Javanese royal court culture found its ultimate expression in an existing website, Iwan Tirta Private Collection : A Royal Compilation ([http://www.iwantirtabatik.com/col\\_batikcol.php](http://www.iwantirtabatik.com/col_batikcol.php)).

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### Summary

The concluding remarks responded to summaries outlined in chapter 7's analysis of the data. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) accomplished Iwan Tirta's aesthetic aim, which focused on simulating sumptuousness. Equally, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is a sartorial construction where aesthetic properties of a silhouette, the cloth's surface decorations and the venue under which they are experienced intersect. These factors converge to instill in the spectator a visible, luxuriant and tangible opulence. Such opulence appears as a singular performative drama. The evocative effects of those sartorial definers of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) instantiate within a production space that allowed Iwan Tirta to exercise of what the following commentary describes:

#### BATIK COLLECTION

Iwan Tirta Private Collection carries a wide variety of exclusive hand-made batiks, with luxurious materials like superfine cotton and silk, organza, and linen. Each of the cloth is a unique masterpiece; each is carefully designed by Iwan Tirta himself and delicately hand-painted by experienced batik painter which may take several months up to a year to finish." (Plaza Indonesia Shopping Center, n.d.).

Iwan Tirta and the term batik represented a relationship that spanned nearly five decades. During this period, Iwan Tirta became Indonesia's unofficial arbiter of Javanese culture. He left a legacy of artifacts in a variety of types of commodified batiked forms. He also left a voluminous amount of written texts that did not specifically address his commodified creations. Rather Iwan Tirta discussed the basic, shared properties it had with batiked cloth associated with the Central Javanese courts. His texts documented his views on batik for its historical and contemporary

cultural significance. Consequently, this research focused on Iwan Tirta, the person, as entrepreneur and artist in relation to term *batik*. My research sought to determine the nature of this relationship. This research analyzed Iwan Tirta's legacy, which consisted of written texts and commodified batik forms presented in photographic forms. Extant written texts and varied batik commodities produced during the five decades are in formats independent of each other. My analysis disclosed the respective contents held by each type of texts. Although each type of evidence yielded its own set of information, their juxtaposition produced this dissertation as my response to my research question.

His contributions reinforced public perceptions that batik was culturally unique to the nation state of Indonesia. Chapter 7's analysis clarified his discussion about batik in their textual representations. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 dealt with the deconstruction of the terms, *Indonesia*, *Java* and *batik*, needed before accomplishing any type of analysis. The second phase involved deconstructing ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) for its aesthetic surface properties. It involved analyzing a primarily two-dimensional surface area. However, through its analysis, two-dimensional surface properties disclosed a coherent configuration vis-à-vis an image about something. The comparison of the information yielded by written and visual texts disclosed a sense of meaning. Such meaning represented a response to the central question, which sought the precise relationship of Iwan Tirta to the term, *batik*.

ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) is a pictorial ode in praise of conspicuous consumption. The sartorial structure spoke about Indonesia's experience of modernity, an experience broken from its imagined Javanese lineage. Iwan Tirta's Javanese identity might have been a contributing factor in promoting him to become spokesperson for Javanese culture elite echelon. However, ABC-1993

(DeLong, 1987, 1998) projected conspicuousness that only undermined any claim of pedigree with the royal court and its oversight of rural villages. As previously state, it was not the distant past, but more recent history that is responsible for authenticating modern-day batik's cultural identity.

Batik's cultural lineage began with political imaginings of Sukarno. Therefore, ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) embodied a historical direction that began with Sukarno's seeking to reframe the idea of batik to coincide with an emerging nation state in its infancy. Sukarno adapted batiked cloth and batiking for a new social order intended to reflect those sensibilities of his imagined Marhaen. His pursuit for an appropriate emblem for Indonesia's new social order had a reverse effect. Sukarno reinforced batik's ascent towards its status as Art. Iwan Tirta would fully embody batik's new cultural proposition.

Batik's narrative presented as forms of Art relieved itself of its iconic status in symbolizing cultural identity associated with Java and its dominant ethnic group, the Javanese. The transition from a nation on the brink of economic collapse into a nation seeing an emergent middle class facilitated with changing a people's art into art for the elite. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) was emblematic of Indonesia's modernization. It reflected changes brought by Suharto's Five Year Development Programs, which created an environment sympathetic to business ventures. Business took on an international identity, evidenced by Iwan Tirta's commodification of batiked cloth geared to an international mass market. Traditional skills with traditional visual outputs could not sustain batiked commodities capable of responding to mass consumption. Production of batik for modern day Indonesian consumers became increasingly more responsive to international sensitivities. Indonesian batik required artists, whose privileges to savor "...cultures and people of the villages and New York and Paris" (The Talented Tirta, 1981, p.2), was a source for their creative outputs.

Individuals whose identities remained tied to parochial settings but who continued to be involved in batik, such as K.R.T. Hardjonagoro, doubtfully savored the subtleties offered in comparing village life to Paris. Their concern was simply to eke out a life using their skills to wax or dye cloth.

Iwan Tirta's discussions of batik as forms of Art reflected his ambivalence revealed in his narratives about batik. His commentaries did not acknowledge the position of modern day waxers or dyers. This begs the question of, who is the artist in an entrepreneurial venture, the frontline person or the entrepreneur him or herself? Revisionism of batik took effect into constructions “to rely increasingly on draping and simplicity of style but he sees a fuller future in wall hangings as well as batik paintings” (The Future of Batik, 1980, p. 2). My basic fashion principle is that the garment should fall around the body in the manner of a village woman’s wet sarong when she emerges from a stream after bathing (Allan, 1989). Iwan Tirta's description has its source in the West, one that is suggestive of an erotic image immortalized by actor, Bo Derek in the 1979 film '10.' His characterization for a desired expressive effect<sup>ABC</sup> is at best fanciful ruminations and at worst, hyperbole. It is unlikely that a future Indonesian CEO of an airline<sup>23</sup> company would be bathing in a stream. It is equally unlikely that she would display seductiveness simulated because of her wet look. Iwan Tirta's took a Western image, to describe aesthetic attributes that bore little meaning for either his waxers or for a royal court classical dancer.

It cannot be determined if his atelier strictly adhered to traditional methods of production of batik tulis with ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). To what degree and scope Iwan Tirta

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<sup>23</sup> At an Iwan Tirta private birthday party held during my first week in Jakarta, one of the guests was a young woman. During our introductory conversation the young woman, appearing to be in her early thirties, nonchalantly informed those present that she bought an airline company that afternoon.

applied traditional methods to his constructions of haute couture, as depicted by ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), will remain irretrievable. Were innovative methods relied on to produce surface patterning of this apparel-body-construct (DeLong, 1987, 1998)? Production of batik cloth for a mass market required innovative approaches to meet larger market demands. Emergence of carved wooden blocks, cap, to create patterned cloth illustrated Java's nineteenth-century response to increase production of batik cloth. Local or regional needs for batik cloth cannot compare to batik production responding to an international market. Volume production suggested the need for what Iwan Tirta referred to an integration of innovative approaches in production of batik cloth. ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) was Iwan Tirta's response to modernization entwined to an international, cosmopolitan identity. Iwan Tirta's description of his "...microscopic approach" (Tirta, *Batik: A Play of Light and Shades*, 1996) betrayed his commitment to a Western aesthetic. Iwan Tirta's clarified his description:

Put the object under a microscope and suddenly many imaginative new aspects of the objects emerge. Imagine, for example, the effect of viewing a snowflake under a microscope. I applied the same concept to batik. By blowing up the designs, I achieved a spectacular, exuberant effect, and the designs were more fitting to Western taste and dress. Moreover, I felt this microscopic approach did not deviate very much from tradition. (Tirta, 1996, p. 164).

The three enlarged camellia-like flowers on the front face of the cream-colored dress worn by his 1992 mannequin in *Adi Luhung* were examples of his microscopic approach. However, his innovative approach had its limitations. The width of the front panel of dress determined aesthetic choices for patterns. Size and scope for surface patterning were delimited. The front cream-colored surface provided an area that limited the extent in his use of a microscop-

pic approach. Surfaces of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) were not geometrical patterns normally associated with Central Javanese court designs. His design reflected aesthetics popular with nineteenth-century European women in the area of Pekalongan. Their batik designs consisted primarily of floral motifs represented in uncharacteristic Javanese colors. The flowers of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) illustrated the next step in conjuring semblance of pictorial realism. The technique of decorating a surface area populated with a series of small dots, stripes, or a combination of stripes and dots (*isen-isen*, see Figure 38) reinforced perceptual experience of realistic representations of objects. Such forms acquire three dimensions because of modulation of color and light.



*Figure 38. Isen-Isen detail.*  
Tirta, *Batik: A Play of Light and Shadows* (1996)

Iwan Tirta's pictorial concept of microscopic technique exemplified by *isen-isen* was not a new conceptual approach. Neither was it unique to Javanese production of batik. Blown-up images rendered to their extreme limits were Georgia O'Keefe's (1887-1986) pictorial trademark. Iwan Tirta was familiar with her painted works. Likewise, *isen-isen* paralleled *Post-Impressionist* painterly technique of Seurat's (1859-1891) *pointillism* (a.k.a. *Divisionism* or *Neo-Impressionism*

(see Figure 39). Seurat's pointillism and Javanese isen-isen consisted of placing a series of dots separated in various distances. Seurat's painterly surfaces and those of batik both recreated illusions of form in how surface areas were colored.

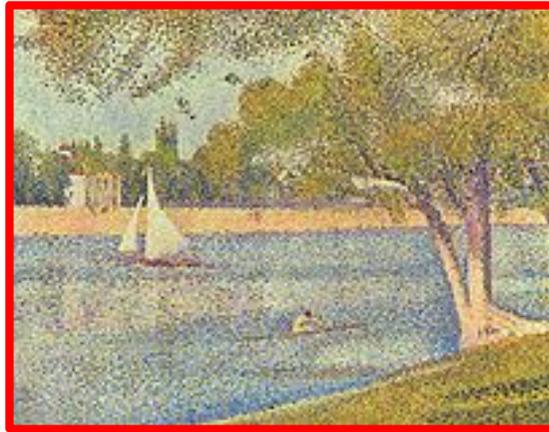


Figure 39. The Seine and la Grande Jatte-Springtime 1888.  
Georges Seurat (1859-1891)  
<http://www.discoverartists.info/GeorgesSeurat/des.html>

However, *visual definers*<sup>ABC</sup> of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) consisted of abstract shapes. Spatial distance between spectator and pictorial surfaces was critical to experiencing their formidable, aggressive re-presentations of three-dimensional forms. As such, these pictorial entities shared no kinship with traditional batik designs produced within traditional Javanese social settings. In describing his designs in terms of, *spectacular* or *exuberant effect*, Iwan Tirta accurately assessed ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998), as a testament of his creative artistic ingenuity characterized in Western terms. Iwan Tirta's persistent declarations of batik as Art signaled that Western aesthetic traditions arbitrated his sartorial *silhouettes*<sup>ABC</sup>. Although his biography indicated that he underwent Javanization during his childhood, as prescribed by his father, Iwan Tirta's epiphanic realization of his indigenous cultural heritage did not occur until

much later in life. His insistence that batik cloth as being on par with a painting was another example of Iwan Tirta's Westernization of his Javanese identity. His batik paintings consist of stylized shapes representing fauna and flora. A 1991 interview for *Sunday Style*, quoted Iwan Tirta:

He regards batik as a painting, which must have its frame, "Forty per cent of a good painting is in the framing, I want no loose ends, the work as a beginning and an end." (Ranee, 1991, n.p.).

Iwan Tirta's assessment reflected a Western orientation to describe activities involved in the production of batik cloth and its commodification. His cogent assertion obliquely pointed to production-time efficiencies central to a cost-efficiency language of a business. The term batik has sustained specificity in meaning possibly for nearly five centuries. Through political imagination of Sukarno and its subsequent reinterpretation by Suharto, batik became de facto Indonesian cultural property. However, Iwan Tirta's notion of innovation stretched the meaning of batik as shown in its application to dinnerware (see Figure 40).

Commodification of batik patterns into decorative dinnerware surfaces dethroned batik's cultural position traditionally influenced by social life of a Javanese royal court and rural villages. The term batik, which at one time denoted Javanese dyeing of cloth, but applied to non-textile representations are profane commodities. Production of dinnerware graced with traditional batik patterns are bereft of association to local culture responsible for production of batik. Is this what Marx referred to as an individual's alienation in what he or she produces? Material forms of porcelain cups with batik patterns reversed the emphasis of batik's primary traditional expression of social, ritual life. Batik has turned into a commodity vacated of any cultural meaning other than being pretty. The cultural heritage of porcelain cups decorated in batik patterns are not from

quarters of a rural village home or even from rarefied spaces of Central Javanese royal courts. They are Western *tchotchkes* whose monetary value secured their visible prominence through their consumption.



Figure 40. Dinnerware in Batik Pattern, Iwan Tirta.  
<http://mei1977.blogspot.com/2010/09/3.html>

### Future Prospects for Research

Prospects of future research can go in a multiple discreet directions. Further research can pursue interests more theoretical in orientation or about batik within Indonesia's contemporary setting. Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) proposed the idea of *involution*. Although Geertz' idea applied to Indonesian agricultural practices, would his theoretical model apply to analyzing Javanese batik or to Indonesian aesthetics in general? Of particular interest is how the concept of involution translates in its application to Javanese cultural artifacts. Does the concept correspond to aesthetic surface properties? Another, concept forwarded by Geertz is *thick-description*. At this writing, the precise attributes characterizing thick description is unknown. Can the concept of *thick-description*, be effective in analyzing enculturated materiality?

In my discussion about batik, I mentioned Iwan Tirta's interest in the sacred performance of the Bedaya Ketawang. However, exploration on a more personal level would enrich understanding about how a dancer perceived her position within the royal court setting. How does a Javanese court dancer understand those objects intimately tied to her in their ritual capacity? Central Javanese royal courts were important contributors to determine cultural sense and sensibilities, encoded in words like *traditional*, *classical*, or *real*. They are words involved in efforts to authenticate modern day batik for its cultural heritage. Therefore, how do current day social lives of royal courts influence ritual life and affect those objects involved in maintaining it? What is the extent of batik's role in modern-day court palace setting?

As argued by this research, Western concepts of Art and artist have become part of Indonesia's lexicon. Boehlke's 1992 thesis proposal of boundary artist remains a topic of value and therefore, to be revisited. Since, Iwan Tirta received in the past criticism of possible unethical conduct (Allan, 1989), a comprehensive analysis comparing K.R.T. Hardjonagoro's with Iwan Tirta's batiked kains would clarify the merits of such criticism.

Social conditions have changed in Indonesia where urban life appears to be undistinguishable from Western urban settings. Indonesia's full participation in a globalized economy under Suharto hastened emergence of an urban middle class. Has increase international exposure eroded batik's aesthetic properties? What forms have emerged post 1990's? Iwan Tirta's body of work suggested renewed efflorescence in how batik was understood by an international public and thereby, changing its direction as an enculturated artifact. He targeted foreign international elites, which forced Iwan Tirta to adjust batiked forms to cater to sensibilities of a privileged social echelon. Does use of batiked cloth, in their sartorial interpretations,

continue to have broad international appeal as consumable items? In contrast, Iwan Tirta's production of batik and their commodifications was associated with Suharto's regime. Suharto's despotic rule involved nepotism and excessive self-aggrandizement. Thus, unbridled excess came to characterize his regime. Has batik become emblems of excess for current day non-elite generations? Are there differences in generational views about batik? Since batik shirts have become a prominent part of official attire, how do differences in gender and age affect evaluation of batik by Indonesians? What do P.T. Ramacraft's sales records indicate about the direction batik has taken in Indonesian society?

Van Hout's (2001) collection of monographs on batik indicated that Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen) have source documents written when Java was under Dutch control. Textual analysis of primary source personal accounts that documented about batik during the colonial period could provide further insight on European outsider views. Contemporary writers on batik often cite early ethnographic writers. Comparative content or textual analysis of early writers would clarify how their textual representations marketed batik to an expanded consumer base. How did the discourse of batik change in its written presentation based on their respective chronological publications? What parochial and foreign political conditions contributed to batik's public portrayal? Are there other insider documentations written on the subject of batik prior to the 1970s? If such written material exists, how do their contents compare with textual descriptions about batik written by Euro-centered outsiders?

### **Limitations of This Research**

This research relied on interdisciplinary information in addressing the research topic focused on Iwan Tirta and his relationship to the term *batik* and its commodified forms. This

research represented a first attempt to applying a cross disciplinary approach to studying material culture. As a result, this research does not fully reflect methodological maturity. Achieving systematicness in constructing this research's internal logic and in the application of an interdisciplinary approach to researching material culture need further review. Therefore, formulating a research template for interdisciplinary research requires more thought. One of the premises for this research is van Manen's (1997) existential themes. However, van Manen's (1997) methodology relies on preverbal descriptions of how individuals respond to specific existential questions. The original intent of my face-to-face interview involved extracting such information through interview questions asked of Iwan Tirta. Due to time constraints and need for extended access to Iwan Tirta, this objective was not fully completed. Existing body of data relied on textual descriptions consisting of higher levels of abstraction. Such text is therefore, not pure representations of preverbal human experiences. How to apply van Manen's (1997) research method in an interdisciplinary research project requires further exploration.

Limits also exist in the lack of a corporeal sample of what ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) showed. The privilege of analyzing a physical sample immortalized by the sartorial image of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) would have provided greater depth in its analysis. Direct and on-hand observations of visual definers<sup>ABC</sup> associated with ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998) would have provided comprehensive documentation of tactile details associated with the formal evening gown. Another drawback of this research was lack of archived information regarding ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). Documentation about decisions made about ABC-1993's (DeLong, 1987, 1998) layout structuring would have strengthened my understanding of Iwan Tirta's aesthetic hierarchy. Layout structuring involved "...arrangement of the ABC by three-

dimensional means such as by seams, draping, pleats, gathers, manipulations of physical surfaces toward and away from observer and sometimes the three-dimensional effect of surface protrusions" (DeLong, 1987, 1998).

Had I experienced the privilege to attend one of Iwan Tirta's fashion shows, my attendance would have offered an added dimension to how I framed my analysis of ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). It could have provided a fuller understanding about performative strategies and their influence on interpreting ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). Iwan Tirta set up a template for his fashion shows that exploited allusion of royal court settings. My direct experience of his fashion show such as *Adi Luhung* would have added a visceral understanding about ABC-1993 (DeLong, 1987, 1998). Thus, direct experience of Iwan Tirta's fashion show would have provided its own set of nuanced experiences to render a fuller analysis of the data.

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