

DRESS, BODY, CULTURE

Re-Orienting Fashion
The Globalization of Asian Dress

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Dress for Sukses: Fashioning Femininity and Nationality in Urban Indonesia

Carla Jones

On a hot afternoon in Jakarta in June of 2000, I listened carefully to one of Indonesia's foremost "experts" on professional dress and lifestyle explain her reasons for worrying about Indonesian middle-class women.¹ Eileen Rachman, owner of a nationally renowned self-improvement course for women, writer of a syndicated magazine column, and expert in a traveling workshop series on dress and manners, explained her reason for the need for these programs thus, "Carla, I must confess that sometimes I am embarrassed by Indonesian women's lack of appreciation of 'lifestyle.' I see Indonesian women, especially when I am traveling abroad, who make me feel ashamed because they don't know how to interact with others, they dress awkwardly, and they just don't seem world class. They just don't have a lifestyle. I feel it is a kind of responsibility for me to help them become more developed." Her comment was telling for its frankness, but also as an indication of how seriously the appearance and manners of Indonesian women were understood to be to a larger national debate on the future of Indonesian national culture.

In this chapter I suggest that a significant site for the contest over the terms of modernity in contemporary Indonesia is women's bodies, particularly through their dress and manners. I describe how middle-class women in the central Javanese city of Yogyakarta strove during the late 1990s, through a private course of personal development, to educate themselves and others on the appropriate ways of personal appearance and presentation. The course instructors and students were involved in cultural production, by distinguishing themselves from and with other class and status groups both within and without Indonesia, through consumption.²

As many scholars have argued about the link between dress and national identity, it is not uncommon for postcolonial nationalists to embrace a form of self-Orientalizing that represents the national collective through women's "traditional" dress in ways that make both the particular outfit and the connection between women's bodies and the national body appear to be natural and timeless (e.g., Chatterjee 1989; Comaroff 1996; Smith 1995; Schein 2000; Schneider and Weiner 1989; Taylor and Jonsson, Chapter 5 of this volume). As a result, while male citizens have been encouraged to attempt to pass as unmarked by wearing the increasingly global uniform of the suit, women are encouraged to become more marked through the donning of local outfits that become nationalized. In many cases this has been the outgrowth of racialist colonial techniques that emphasized the importance of dress and comportment as a mode of rule and superiority (Cohn 1989; Murra 1989). In the postcolonial context, such outfits then become glossed as traditional precisely because they are deemed to be the very antithesis of fashion, because they appear not to have changed over time. Yet what makes such outfits currently serve nationalist motives may contradict what Western definitions of fashion demand, that is, constant change. So the question then remains, what are the effects of a push for national fashion on citizens? And how do these effects vary according to gender?

Strikingly, many of the instances of such gender-specific nationalist self-Orientalizing are of women's "traditional" clothes that are typically worn infrequently, often for rituals or official functions that emphasize the sacredness of the outfit (e.g. Ruhlén, Chapter 3 of this volume; Leshkovich, Chapter 2 this volume). In the case of Indonesia, John Pemberton has argued that the Suharto regime's celebration of such traditional dress was part of a larger political project to link the regime's designs on national development to an apparently ancient and sacred Javanese culture (Pemberton 1994).³ In general, less attention has been paid to the ways in which national identities are refracted through and invested in forms of women's style that are not ethnically marked or that seem like contemporary Western styles, and yet that are increasingly the norm for women from a wide cross-section of classes in many postcolonial contexts. This is certainly the case in many of the urban centers in Asia. It is possible that the invisibility of this phenomenon on the global fashion stage is because these clothes appear to be inauthentic, unmediated imitations of styles originating outside the country.⁴ Yet in the case of Indonesia such an interpretation would misinterpret the motivations behind the development of national fashions. The cultivation of an indigenous Indonesian fashion industry, which celebrates neotraditional styles as well as Western-style clothing, has been a key element of national development strategy, development that has been figured as not only economic but also cultural. National elites have considered fashion, or

"*fesyen*" as it is called in Indonesian, to be one component of national cultural growth. Indonesian designers who have trained in Europe and the United States have local celebrity status within Indonesia, fashion shows are covered in close detail in women's magazines, and women who cannot afford their designs still know and track collections. It is possible that this kind of consumer awareness is a continued effect of the colonial concern with using dress as a marker of difference. During the nineteenth century, as Patricia Spyer has argued, Dutch colonizers in the Aru Islands of the East Indies used knowledge of fashion, acquired through both its production and its consumption, to negotiate rule there. While Dutch traders collected luxury items, such as pearls and exotic feathers for the European fashion market, they simultaneously criticized local tastes. Islanders were considered unaware of the inherent appeal of their commodities, yet were mocked as failed mimics when they wore European-style clothes. "[L]ike history and time, fashion belonged to colonizers and not the colonized" (Spyer 1998: 169). For contemporary elites in Indonesia, arriving on the global stage involves having local fashion. For Jakarta tastemakers and designers, having local fashion means not simply pride in and use of neotraditional women's clothes, although that is important, but also the knowledge and enjoyment of clothes that are appropriate to white-collar work (as opposed to manual labor or factory work). Showing that one can locate knowledge about local fashions' position in a global chronology of fashion references, revealing the ebbing and waning of trends specific to an Indonesian cultural context, all the while maintaining cultural authenticity, have been as important to producing developed citizens as other sectors of national development.

I situate my discussion of how Indonesian women citizens learned to value and consume fashion in a larger history of national development strategy in Indonesia. I make two separate but related points in my argument. First, I analyze how new forms of expertise, manifested most explicitly in private personal-development courses, educated women citizens into consumers of Indonesian *fesyen*, through knowledge about both the "traditional" uniform for women, the sarong and lace blouse ensemble called the *kain kebaya*, and the more apparently Western-styled professional skirt-suits and other outfits. The effect of these new discursive forms of expertise was that women instructors and students in the courses I studied learned to perform femininity in ways that created new gender and class identities. Following the work of Judith Butler (1990), and by extension Michel Foucault (1995 [1977]; 1990 [1978]), I suggest that such performances disciplined women into normative femininity but also allowed women consumers to see their performances as providing important cultural and material effects. Second, I argue that the women I knew considered their consumer work to be just that, cultural work essential to

personal progress in the public sphere, rather than merely pleasure located in the private sphere of the home. The argument that women's consumer activity is often undervalued or made invisible, by imagining it as self-indulgent pleasure, has been an important contribution in American feminist research (see, e.g., di Leonardo 1987; Conroy 1998; Hochschild 1989a, b). However, there is still little research on the ways in which new class and gender formations outside the United States interpret women's consumer activity.

Class-ifying Women in Yogyakarta

In the late 1990s, women in Yogyakarta who could afford to do so chose to find information on how to achieve a modern feminine lifestyle through private personal-development courses. I base my argument in my fieldwork on one such course on personal development, where women strove to educate themselves and others in the appropriate techniques of personal appearance and presentation. Ubiquitous attention to personal grooming and fashion choices was evidence of how the feminine self was increasingly under siege in the later years of the Suharto New Order regime, which began in 1965 and ended in the Asian Economic Crisis in 1998. Women were not to appear too rich, too backward, too poor, or too un-Islamic. Women therefore used their surfaces or "social skin" (Turner 1980) as a communicative palette through which to negotiate their social worlds. Terence Turner argues that decoration (or lack thereof) of the body is a universally "symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted" (112). However, I show that it is within particular histories and relations of power that dress and decoration can become a dominant element of the moral self. This is particularly interesting when there are forces actively trying to sell commoditized elements of this self to a target population, as was the case during the intensive advertising and marketing period of the heady last years of the Suharto regime. Indeed, a shared value of the importance of appearances, which the course I studied exploited, was in fact not new to Indonesian men or women. However, what the course did was to emphasize this value in new ways that were related to the history of the preceding thirty years.

Theoretical approaches to the study of consumption have often focused on the domestic sphere, because consumption seems to occur in private and for apparently personal reasons. Yet in making these assumptions, such approaches have also often dismissed consumer choices as either personal expression or imitative, strategic gestures designed to manipulate a viewing audience. For example, Thorstein Veblen's analysis of consumption argued that clothing choices were attempts of particular class members to emulate the styles of the classes just above them (1994 [1899]). In part because of the emphasis theorists

of Marx have placed on the role of production in forming class positions, until recently consumption has been understudied as a significant site for cultural work. Yet consumption can be a site for collective negotiation, as in the case of national debates on culture, while still offering a limited but material space for creating individual identities. This is particularly stimulating to consider in the context of women's uses of fashion. Veblen's critique of consumption interpreted the consumption of fashion as a uniquely feminine foible and plight. According to Veblen, women are trapped in a larger social system that forces them into meaningless attention to tasteful display. Fashions are particularly rich sites for such display, then, for it is through the clothing on women's bodies, and the fact that women seem to be so magically enamored of the allure of that clothing, that women can come to be seen as victims of a system that prevents them from producing.⁵ The display of status, often through clothing, ultimately serves to enhance the image of the man who produces the income supporting that consumption. Women in Veblen's analysis are thus limited by an economic and gendered system that turns them into consuming servants for men. In short, a man only looks as good as his wife's "look."

By contrast, more recent work on consumption suggests that Veblen's approach ignored the important cultural and personal meaning generated through consumption, particularly in the face of changing social conditions. This new attention to consumption has emphasized the possibility for a variety of alternative functions of consumption, including political resistance, kinship work, and identity formation, even as those changing social conditions create new class inequalities.⁶ Indeed, women in the course I studied did acquire techniques of display that equipped them to perform their femininity competitively, sometimes even above their material class positions, but such performances could, on occasion, also reveal the borders of gender and class identities. As a result, women's consumer choices in general, and fashion choices in particular, were not simply secondary manifestations of urban public culture in 1990s Indonesia. Rather, women's appearance choices were culturally productive acts central to creating that culture.

An important element of how this cultural work was made and circulated was the role of local and national elites. The global/local gap that globalization theories have cast as abstract was a much more complicated dichotomy for local elites in Yogyakarta, one which they mediated by offering fashion information to their fellow women citizens. For example, although foreign styles were visible on imported television programs, the personal development course I studied offered locally esteemed women a forum to inform students on how to adjust and correct such styles for the Indonesian context. In so doing, local elite women transformed their prestige into a form of noblesse oblige, securing their own positions, while introducing qualities they valued, such as national or religious identity.

The parallel use of the idea of development as both personal and national is not surprising to those who are familiar with the Suharto New Order state. Development was the explicit goal of the Suharto regime, which Suharto called the New Order to contrast with the perceived chaos of the previous regime of President Sukarno. In the context of gender in contemporary Indonesia, this is especially interesting. Indonesian citizens were constantly exhorted to focus their energies on the goal of development. Yet the kinds of people into which Indonesians were to become transformed were gendered. While to Americans this may seem natural, given anthropological discussions of gender roles in the region it is surprising. This is a region where women have enjoyed financial power, and access to divorce and property and inheritance rights; a region where conceptions of gender difference emphasize complementarity over hierarchy (e.g., Errington 1990).

National rhetoric about development did not emerge in a vacuum, however. The language of development and enforced order was shaped in part by international discourses about development, through which the Suharto regime benefited directly. By ensuring stability through political repression and endorsing the story of Indonesia's development as the creation of an emerging market, the last fifteen years of the regime saw considerable economic growth, averaging annual growth rates of over 7 per cent. In addition, while the elite grew fantastically wealthy, urban areas also saw the growth of a class of working poor and a growing middle class. As a result, the 1990s in particular in urban Indonesia were marked by considerable foreign and local investment dedicated to increasing Indonesian consumption, evidenced by the construction of large air-conditioned malls, traffic jams on city streets due to increasing car ownership, and generally conspicuous consumption. Yet while consumption was increasingly located in private homes, homes that were gated and locked from contact with neighbors, it was simultaneously one of the central symbols of public life in this period. Increased consumption was the sign that Indonesia had arrived on the world stage. As a result, consumption was not simply a secondary part of social life. Rather, it was generally acknowledged that consumption was one of the important sites for negotiating meanings and identities. From its foundations, then, this new middle class was marked by anxieties and struggles over the role of gender in the formation of a uniquely Indonesian form of modernity. Being middle-class meant more than just access to financial resources, but was a symbolic position as well, requiring self-surveillance and display, much as Pierre Bourdieu has argued (1989: 254-6). Being middle-class was more than access to the means of production, it meant access to the means of consumption.

One characteristic of both men and women in the new bourgeoisie was the sense that the future of Indonesian national social life would be shaped through

the efforts of self-cultivation and self-fashioning. The sense that the individual should be a personal project, almost a career, was linked to broader goals of social transformation. Although the specific visions of the future varied, depending on the particular group, most shared the opinion that self-discipline, manifested in confident, responsible citizens, would be the building blocks for Indonesia's collective future. Unfortunately, the reverse logic was difficult to bear when the economic crisis hit, because then the enormous social devastation was experienced by almost everyone I knew as both a national disaster, but most acutely as personal failure and shame.

However, the rhetoric of self-sacrifice for the common good was directed much more clearly at women citizens than at men. Indeed, the sort of disciplinary practices that the women I knew enthusiastically sought out were significant because they were in most instances the sort of practices that are almost invisible in Western society. The tools for achieving a successfully disciplined and gendered body were not only available for purchase for those who chose to attend the course, but collectively and consciously valued by both the instructors and students. This contrasts with the sort of class-exclusive hoarding of expertise that Bourdieu describes as one way that privilege is reproduced (1989). Because the privileged classes make the rules of social interaction appear natural, while not revealing those rules, members outside the class group are often prevented from full participation. In contrast, instructors of the femininity course I studied considered it their obligation to share this knowledge with women who aspired to be like them.

The New Order

The New Order's program to define what it meant to be an Indonesian woman became an explicit state project during the 1970s, as President and Mrs. Suharto developed their vision of the hoped-for national culture. More significantly, however, in 1974 the *Panca Darma Wanita*, or Five Women's Duties, were articulated by the state, just as women were increasingly entering the industrial workforce. According to the *Darma Wanita*, a woman's role in national development was to be exercised in the context of the family. Interestingly, then, while the Suharto regime was reaching out internationally to multinational investors through promoting their inexpensive female labor force, on the domestic front the Suhartos were promoting a vision of domesticity to Indonesian women. The ideal Indonesian woman's role was identified first and foremost as a loyal supporter of her husband; second, as caretaker of the household; third, as producer of future generations; fourth, as a family socializer, particularly of children, and last of all as an Indonesian citizen (Sullivan 1983:

171). What has come to be called "Ibuisim" (from the Indonesian term for mother, *Ibu*) is based in Darma Wanita organizations, one of the only women's organizations sanctioned by the state, and organizations that channeled state values to families through the role of the mother as housewife.⁷ Women in particular were therefore asked to make sacrifices and exercise self-discipline for the common good. As a result, the New Order image of the ideal modern Indonesian woman combined Western ideologies of bourgeois domesticity with local, so-called traditional ideologies of femininity and bureaucratic images of dutiful citizenship.

Interestingly, many older women I knew credited Darma Wanita for teaching them the importance of appearance in general, and the specifics of national style over ethnic style in particular. Ibu Tita, the 65-year-old wife of a retired military officer, reminisced with me about how she had learned to become a fully "Indonesian" woman in the 1970s and 1980s. She remembered her personal style before starting to attend Darma Wanita meetings as ethnic. Until then, she recalled, she thought it was appropriate to wear the lace blouse/batik sarong (kain kebaya) every day. Like most Buginese woman of mid-level status she had a limited but rich assortment of lace blouses and sarongs she would mix and match for everyday wear, in addition to Buginese silks she reserved for special occasions. Her wardrobe style had been, in her opinion, very Buginese. But through wearing the Darma Wanita uniform of pink blouse and skirt, she came to realize that kain kebaya was to be reserved only for the most special occasions, such as formal Darma Wanita events or weddings. She found the sarongs and lace blouses, which she had always worn with the family's savings in the form of her gold jewelry, to be signs of the status and ethnic identity of the wearer. In contrast, she found the Darma Wanita everyday uniform a much more up-to-date and refreshing equalizer of women, since Darma Wanita women all looked the same when wearing the uniform: Indonesian. For the same reasons that she had found the national language Bahasa Indonesia to be less hierarchical than Buginese, and had therefore insisted with her husband that they speak only Indonesian with their children, she likewise found the Darma Wanita uniform to be an important tool in creating egalitarian relations among women. It was through the habit of wearing the pinkish blouse and skirt uniform that she slowly put away her kain kebaya into moth-balled cupboards and started to wear other blouses and skirts on a daily basis. She and her now adult daughter, both admired by their extended family and neighbors for their personal appearance, also credited Darma Wanita for teaching them their makeup application skills. There they had learned how not to appear too backward or rural, by reducing the amount of gold jewelry they wore and by applying rouge and lipstick subtly. Through the instruction and performance of Darma Wanita meetings, they felt they had learned to

move beyond older, ethnic models of hierarchy and adopt a national identity that minimized differences.

Yet the other popular image of Darma Wanita, during the period of my fieldwork, was of the highly restrictive interpretation of the kain kebaya. The official version of the kain kebaya featured a batik design specific to Darma Wanita and furthermore represented to many of the women I knew the oppressive control of tradition over the body. The version of the kain kebaya that Darma Wanita made dominant was not the timeless tradition that it appeared to be. Rather than the more casual and loose version of the outfit which Jean Gelman Taylor describes as dominant in the mid-colonial period, before the boundaries between colonizer and colonized become more delineated (1997), the outfit that was the "national dress" for women had morphed into a far more constrictive form with Darma Wanita. The regular use by President Suharto's wife of a very tight interpretation of the kain kebaya, complete with lacquered hairbun (*sanggul*), dark sunglasses and large handbag, became the signature look for the Darma Wanita woman and the accepted interpretation of the "traditional" dress for women.⁸

While official development organizations like Darma Wanita offered instruction on appearance and housewifery, by the time of my fieldwork most of the women I knew found Darma Wanita meetings unappealing. Rather than domesticity, they associated personal development with a professional lifestyle. Instead of being sites for helpful instruction, Darma Wanita meetings were increasingly thought of as arenas for local political maneuvering. In addition, the once equalizing uniforms worn at such meetings by then seemed like examples of bad taste. As one instructor in the course I studied liked to say, "Be careful with wearing batiks, like the women at Darma Wanita. It is easy to end up giving the impression you are a tablecloth or curtains."⁹ Nonetheless, the general sense that the world is made up of populations of more and less developed peoples still held explanatory power for Yogyakarta women. The idea that movement between these levels was available to those who so strove was therefore attractive.

Indeed, it was precisely in a general sense of moral social decline in the later years of the New Order, frequently symbolized by the excesses of women who either consumed too much or incorrectly, that the crack in the New Order ideology of development was most visible. The gap between the promises of development and the limits young middle-class women faced in realizing those desires, frequently because of corruption, had created a middle class that not only felt left behind in the wave of consumerism but also was casting about for alternative ways to transform themselves and their society. In particular, upper-middle-class women in Yogyakarta, instructors and managers of the local venues of expertise for correct femininity, saw their roles as vital to assisting lower-middle-class women to negotiate this gap.

However, while this course was often seen as an alternative to official women's groups designed to teach housewifery, the effects did not directly conflict with state goals for development but rather existed in dialogue with them. Similar political work to the official women's groups was involved in the world of private femininity courses and the consumption skills they taught. It would therefore be a mistake to see the role of this femininity course, and the world of self-improvement education regarding women's bodies and behavior in Indonesia, as simply reactive to official state ideologies. Indeed, the model of modern womanhood on offer in the self-improvement discourses both resisted and reinforced state ideologies.

New Cultures of Expertise: The Private Femininity Course Industry in 1990s Indonesia

In the decade prior to the economic crisis a small industry of instructional femininity courses flourished in many Javanese cities, as well as on Sumatra and Bali. The national expert quoted at the beginning of this chapter is one of the best-known femininity instructors, whose particular expertise is focused on white-collar career fashions and manners. However, the course I studied was offered by a small private business college run by a modernist Islamic institute (Achmadiyah) in a prestigious part of Yogyakarta. Like many such colleges, it offers short courses on business presentations, public relations techniques and public speaking, in addition to a course called "Personal Development" (*Pengembangan Pribadi*). I use the term femininity course to describe these courses because, although it is not based on the Indonesian term for the course, it conveys the gender-specific content of the course.¹⁰ However, the Indonesian course title is instructive. The course uses a different term to refer to development than the more ubiquitous term "*pembangunan*." In part because *pembangunan* referred to state-sponsored national development projects, such as large concrete edifices and the national car and airplane projects, it seemed ill suited to describe personal change. Rather, the private course in Yogyakarta used *pengembangan*, based on the verb *kembang* meaning to bloom or flower, as a more poetic and appropriate term to describe self-realization, and because it felt a step removed from the term that had been colonized by official definitions.¹¹

Based directly on the early twentieth-century American finishing program John Robert Powers, the course title suggested that the class concerned general self-improvement, and therefore might be helpful to both male and female students.¹² However, closer reading of the course themes revealed that the information conveyed was oriented to women. For 350,000 rupiah each

(approximately \$175.00 (US) or about one month's income for many students) approximately twenty students would meet two evenings a week for six weeks. Students came from a variety of backgrounds, but often were the daughters of low- to mid-ranking civil servants or teachers.¹³ They were instructed on subjects such as personal grooming and how to select and apply makeup, put together day and evening outfits, engage in polite conversation and eat Western-style meals.¹⁴ In general, two concerns seemed to motivate both the instructors and the students of the course: 1) the need to not be "left behind the times" (*ketinggalan jaman*) in an era of globalization and 2) to distinguish class and status differences, in particular to not appear "*kampungan*" or literally "village-like" or backward.¹⁵

Goals for most students included career and social advancement, which they couched in terms of desire for increased self-esteem, the sort of self-mastery and sense of identity that was appealing at a time of social flux (*percaya diri* or literally "belief in oneself"). Instructors in the course measured student self-esteem through vocal and carriage skills. Particular emphasis was placed on appropriating fashions and personal skills from expert sources (such as local and foreign magazines, television, and motivational philosophies such as Stephen Covey's) in ways consistent with what was considered Indonesian and feminine. The course I studied had been open for five years, although similar courses had been successfully operating in the capital city Jakarta since 1982.

The Jakarta courses featured nationally respected designers and fashion consultants, both male and female, some of whom traveled to offer weekend one-day intensive seminars in smaller cities. Local variations on the course, including the Yogyakarta course I studied, incorporated the expertise of these same designers and experts through magazines.¹⁶ Eventually the Jakarta courses expanded to cover a wide variety of lifestyle and consumer subjects beyond fashion, including one-day seminars on interior decorating, cooking, and etiquette. Full courses had appeared in Solo, Surabaya, Denpasar, Medan, and Yogyakarta by the early and mid-1990s.¹⁷ During the first few years of the course's operation in Yogyakarta, the students were primarily middle-aged wives of advancing civil servants. The skills taught at such courses were thought to be useful to women in their forties and older, helpful in finding ways to keep their husbands faithful, especially as their husbands advanced professionally and their careers required increased public socializing. By the time I conducted my fieldwork from 1996 to 1998, the majority of students in the course I studied were young women, aged 25 to 35, who were preparing to graduate from various levels of post-high school education and were seeking employment. The same skills taught earlier to keep husbands faithful were then deemed useful for young potential employees in getting work or keeping a boss content. In general, the economic advantages for students in taking the course

appeared clear. Graduates of the class were successful in getting jobs at the various offices, banks, and retail outlets in Yogyakarta. Indeed, the Matahari department store, anchor store of the main Yogyakarta mall, sent all its new retail assistants through a version of the course before formally hiring them. The most high-profile success stories from the programs were cases of graduates who had gone on to careers as presenters on local television programs.

Yogyakarta as an urban site is in a unique position. As a secondary city, it is thought to be not as exposed as Jakarta is to the cultural influences of globalization, but neither is it insulated, in large part because of increasing international tourism to the city and some multinational companies producing there. In addition, the women who ran the course often saw themselves as the first line of education for women arriving from rural settings just outside the city. The instructors therefore imagined themselves negotiating among good and bad taste. Good taste came from international influences acquired from personal travel to Australia, Singapore, or Europe and America, foreign magazines acquired through friends and family abroad, and Jakarta-based mass media. These sources were used to counteract the influences that students were perceived to bring to the classroom, such as rural backwardness and nouveau riche enthusiasm for displaying new wealth through flamboyant fashion choices, such as wearing brands or logos visibly on one's clothing. As a result, the instructors served as intermediaries in the often theoretically abstract global-local dichotomy. As mid-level elites and as women of considerable local respect, some with family or other personal ties among the *priyayi* or aristocratic class of the Yogyakarta sultanate, they served as vehicles of expertise on self-cultivation. Rather than simply reinforcing the model of Javanese power relations in which junior-status citizens seek the advice and blessings of royalty, the instructors' appeal and cachet was a hybrid of appeals to both their Javanese prestige and their reputations as people who move around the world. Travel and access to international standards of good taste was just as important in determining their prestige as ties to the Yogyakarta royal court.¹⁸

The instructors therefore felt a responsibility to the students, and their own developmentalist agendas, and were consequently highly attuned to global trends. Although they clearly profited from the course, all the instructors insisted that they were involved in the course because they did not want Yogyakarta to lose out in an era of globalization.¹⁹ Consistent with this, instructors intentionally kept the fees at the same price throughout the economic crisis (thereby, because of the drop in the value of the rupiah and dramatic inflation, effectively curbing the cost of the course by two-thirds) in order to keep it available to precisely those students who "needed" most what the course had to offer – i.e., tools for social mobility. In other words, if lower-middle-class women could most benefit from the content of the course, then

the fees should be kept within range of that clientele. This decision also prevented the course from closing altogether, as its many local competitors did during the economic crisis.

The course's explicit goal was to transform women's tastes and manners and as a result, transform their personalities (*kepribadian*) and their social status. At base, both students and instructors shared the opinion that personal development was the result of recruiting information, such as what styles are current or on the way out, in the service of change in social position. The goal of self-transformation was to be achieved through self-discipline. The basic assumption was that one's inner life is shaped if not determined by surface performances. Disciplining one's appearance would therefore result in alteration of the self. In fact, every student learned that the only way to fully know herself was to see herself in the eyes of others. Instructors frequently exhorted students to internalize the instructions from the course, stating after explaining various rules on dress or makeup, "you should really just make these rules your 'common sense,'" using the English phrase that communicated global cachet. Instructors also reminded students that the transformation might not be immediate, but students should be patient for the benefits to accrue.

The primary contrast to a polished, up-to-date woman was the "*kampung*" woman, a negative identity associated with both rural backwardness and nouveau riche tackiness. One of the reasons why the label "*kampung*" was so threatening was that, increasingly, young village women were earning income through wage factory and domestic work. Economically, national development was to be achieved through neoliberal policies aimed at producing a successful export-oriented economy, based in large part in producing garments for sale in developed economies.²⁰ The production of textiles and clothing, which are among the most labor-intensive industries in modern economies (Dickens 1998: 296), have been increasingly moved offshore to low-wage countries, including Indonesia. Textile-production factories have been key sites for entry-level work for rural women migrating to cities. Indeed, development rhetoric outside Indonesia, particularly in response to the anti-sweatshop movement in the United States, has argued that garment-factory jobs are a first step on a ladder of economic development.²¹ Throughout the late 1990s, Indonesia's textile and clothing exports were third behind oil/gas and wood exports, comprising roughly 12 percent of GDP, and 28 percent of total foreign exchange exports (approximately \$12.6 (US) million) (*Europa World Year Book* 1999: 1772–78). Textile production was therefore central to the economy. However, in public rhetoric on development, the New Order state did not focus on the material importance of textile production in the national progress narrative, instead promoting the accomplishments of heavy industry and high technology projects. In contrast, factory women were

frequently symbols for a national struggle over what would be Indonesia's national culture.

As Aliha Ong has described for Malaysia (1990: 385–422), young women leaving parental surveillance to work in factories often face public criticism for their consumer behavior. Islamic groups in particular expressed concern that young women earning income away from parental control become negative elements in the wider culture. Similar rhetoric circulated in Yogyakarta. A frequent example of this was cited by young men whom I knew in Islamic student groups in Yogyakarta who complained of extravagant consumer behavior among factory women and domestic helpers returning from overseas. These women were accused of returning to their villages wearing jeans or Nike tennis shoes, signs that were interpreted as proof of inadequate control over their appetites or lack of moderation. As a result, women who dressed in a *kampung* way were not simply revealing their bad taste, but also revealing their failure to exercise self-control in general, including the sexual arena. As one young male academic confidently assured me, “Factory workers and domestic maids returning from abroad wearing those expensive tennis shoes, you know, they are usually having free sex.” Understanding the link between appearance and sexual propriety better explains the mandate of the femininity course to create “good women.” Frugality and sexual modesty as attributes of Islamic identity were key elements of such a woman. As a result, the stakes were high for women to give evidence of their grasp of middle-class propriety and good taste.

One of the other key distinctions between fashions recommended to students was based on a temporal scale, i.e., that left to their own designs, students might select “looks” that were out-of-date but about which they did not know they should feel embarrassment. As a result, the instructors felt their role was to explain the many choices available to women in selecting clothing that was attractive, current, yet proper. A strong sense of timelag shaped this assumption, a gap of both development and time between global cities, such as Paris or New York, from which good taste emanated, and its arrival in Indonesia. In this way, consumer goods such as fashion and makeup told a story about oneself to oneself and to others. Goods communicated one's position in a world of either more or less developed people (cf. Wilk 1990). Staying on top of trends required vigilance, and failing to inform oneself of what was “in” or “out” would reveal one's proximity to or distance from centers of power. Although access to communication from such perceived centers had increased through mass media and the internet, the women I knew still perceived themselves to be in a system in which Yogyakarta was a marginal site, second to Jakarta and global cities.

Similarly, students might be inclined to choose fashions that were direct imitations of Western fashions. But with instruction, students could learn what was wrong with Western fashions (that they are too sexy), while acknowledging the fact that Western fashions are clearly the international standard. As one celebrity explained in a magazine interview:

If an Indonesian woman is seen walking in the mall in a miniskirt, . . . or dressed without even a bra! Even if this esthetic [*estetik*] is beautiful and sexy, she is undoubtedly immediately going to be thought of as a “naughty woman.” If an Indonesian woman is so unfortunate as to acquire that label, there are many consequences that follow . . . [E]ven for special parties one must think a thousand times first [before selecting an outfit]. (Asokawati 1998)

This concern with appearances seems to confirm broad Western stereotypes of Asian cultures in general, and Asian women in particular, as obsessed with “face,” or outward appearances as linked to prestige or shame (cf. Hevia 1995). Dorinne Kondo argues that the perpetuation of this stereotype ignores the fact that the stakes involved in personal appearance can be high, not only for some imaginary group of Asians, however, but for most humans (1997). In fact, students' motivations should not be misunderstood as evidence of women who were either vain or gullible, but rather of women who fully grasped the importance of bringing into line all elements of their lives in order to achieve “*sukses*.” After all, real jobs were gained or lost and husbands really did threaten to or did leave wives for younger women. Moreover, the question of whether or not to take such a course, or to avail of Darma Wanita meetings, was always couched in terms that the information was just too important to risk ignoring.

Course Instructors' Goals

Although the course material appeared to focus on the manipulation of the surfaces of women's bodies, through fashion, hair styling, or etiquette, teachers insisted that the course was really one part of a whole transformation of students' personalities. The most explicit theme of the course was self-confidence. Teachers repeatedly mentioned that this was the most challenging part of instruction also, because they were working against what they perceived to be thousands of years of “tradition” in which Javanese women were valued for being demure and shy (*malu*). The force of generations felt to the instructors as though they were struggling against an impenetrable wall of backwardness. The section of the course on public speaking in particular was important in

this regard. Instructors struggled to get students to speak up and enunciate clearly, based on a model of speech designed to train television anchors.

Yet if the goal of the course was to change women on a personal, even psychological, level, why the focus on dress and appearance? The notion that the changes one made could be life-altering was central to understanding the popularity of the course. Students described the course as a way of altering one's *sikap* or character. The acquisition of knowledge and taste necessary for pulling off a look involved a change in one's mode of thinking, and such change could not come without focus and dedication. The director for the John Robert Powers franchises in Asia, during a visit to Jakarta in 1997, emphasized the importance of self-discipline in achieving the goals of the course, saying, "The most important thing is the desire to change."²² Several women in the class explained to me that one could not expect to become an attractive and modern woman without cultivation. As one student explained, "It isn't just going to happen . . ." (*Tidak akan terjadi saja*). Transforming oneself into a woman whose image is current and attractive and conceals any backward roots, requires learning. Another student explained, "This course gives me the theory, but if I am going to be successful, I have to apply this theory in practice. I will have to constantly remind myself throughout the day how to stand and how to smile. It's hard these first few weeks, but hopefully it will become a habit."

Instructors also encouraged students to see themselves as being observed and assessed, aware constantly that they were being watched by others. The goal was for students to internalize the feedback they received from all of their encounters with others, until they learned to see themselves as others saw them. As one expert was quoted as saying in *Femina*:

In Eastern culture, including that of Indonesia, the value of what is appropriate or not appropriate is highly connected with a woman's "image" (*imaj*) in the eyes of society . . . "Fashion" is a form of nonverbal communication. If a woman chooses to appear or wear clothes of a certain style, it is a way for her to indirectly say that she wants to state who she is and her point of view on life, what her personality is, her character, and much more. . . . (Asokawati 1998)

The course therefore offered not only the tools for learning how to construct one's appearance but also for learning how to look at each other. In this regard, students were taught to focus the gaze they were learning to apply to themselves on others as well. Instructions on how to assess someone in social interactions were part of the rules, such as "If a person wears glasses, they are probably in the category 'intellectual'" or "If you want see if someone is neat, look at her shoes. If her shoes aren't clean or appropriate, it doesn't matter what else she is wearing." However, this strategy gave students the impression that they should in fact be able to achieve the "looks" exemplified by the



Figure 6.1 Instruction scene during personal development course. Photo by Carla Jones.

instructors, even though they did not have financial or local access to the cosmetic products used in teaching. Consistently, the name-brand consumer goods used for teaching aids were not available for sale in Yogyakarta. To purchase those products, the prices for which were far beyond what most students could afford, students would also have had to travel to either Jakarta or Singapore.

Nonetheless, students were regularly asked to identify themselves by work type and personality type from a predetermined list of choices when selecting hair, makeup and wardrobe styles. Women who saw themselves as being a "librarian" selected a certain style, while women who selected "swimmer" or "artist" were given different style advice. Interestingly, rarely did students work as artists or librarians (see Figure 6.1). The desirable jobs the students sought were in banks, hotels or administration. But the students were not just expected to find an identity and then enact its style. While this may appear as a simple transfer of expertise on various looks from the instructors to the students, I suggest there was more agency involved. Instructors offered these identity choices as explicitly universal, arriving from America but true generally for any woman. The language in both the courses and the fashion magazines that were consulted were peppered with English-language-derived fashion terms. Tips on "*gaya jaket*" ("jacket style"), "*memilih vest*" (picking a vest), or "*kesempatan memakai jins*" (occasions for wearing jeans) might indicate that

Indonesian fashion and language are relying on global references for what were local creations (Figure 1.2, page 4).

However, instructors in the course told the students that these labels were to be applied loosely, and suited to the lives of Indonesian women. Instructors sought to point out that "looks" do not have naturally fixed meanings. "Modernization does not just mean techniques, but an adaptation of modes of thinking," said one instructor. "It is hard to separate the technology of the clothing from the meaning that can come with it. We have to fill these fashions from the West with our own interior meaning" (*batin*). Instructors reminded students that Western fashions had particular meanings appropriate to their original contexts. An example of this was the Western value of wearing comfortable footwear which was unattractive to the instructors, but which they interpreted as an effect of Western practicality. Likewise the Western power suit, with large shoulder pads, was too aggressive for Indonesian women but was appropriate for American women who are in positions of power. To make an outfit appropriate to the Indonesian setting meant not just a shift in the outfit itself, but an understanding of why this was necessary. For example, fabric colors were to be adjusted to maximize the Indonesian ideal of fair skin. White fabric was explicitly forbidden, as it contrasted with dark skin, making one look even darker. Off-white fabrics were recommended instead to maximize the local value for fair skin. Matching shoe color to handbag color was of particular importance. In addition, one instructor stated that even though "power suits" were to be the global trend for 1998, it did not mean they could be worn in Indonesia, or Yogyakarta especially, without at least some modification, usually meaning longer skirts or higher necklines in keeping with the fact that "we are Muslim women." Students were told that their greatest concern should therefore be with changes in trends. Careful attention to styles should precede any fabric purchase or garment design. Women were encouraged to exercise a critical eye in assessing fabrics, avoiding the temptation to purchase just because something was on sale. Instructors encouraged students to select natural-fiber textiles (often imported) over abundant and inexpensive synthetics (usually locally made). Fabric for outfits should be sewn into garments within two months of purchase, or the fabric would be out of style. One instructor enjoyed making this point by showing a piece of fabric that was a year and a half old, calling it "antique."

Disciplined Students, Gendered Students

Dress, therefore, as a method for forming one's personality, was also an indication of one's success as a gendered person. This position confirms claims

by theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) and Dorinne Kondo (1997) who argue that appearance and clothing are more than simple attributes of gender subjectivity but are in fact constitutive of it. Butler in particular claims that performing gender is gender, that there is no natural, authentic performer behind the act. A similar value on performance seemed to guide much of the advice in the femininity course. Although instructors frequently referred to various "laws of nature" (*hukum alam*) that dictate women's lives, such as "all women want to be beautiful," or "women like to shop," simply being born as a genetic female by no means guaranteed a successful woman. Rather, to fully realize one's potential as a woman required effort, and could perhaps be achieved through taking a personal-development course. One instructor described the success the course could have by pointing out a recent graduate. "When she arrived here for the course, she was a guy (*cowok*). Really a guy. The way she stood, the way she dressed. The change has been amazing. Since she took the course, she has become a woman." In contrast, women who refused to take their personal appearance seriously as a feature of their social position were not fully female. One woman friend who had married a doctor but continued to go around her house in a housedress, rarely leaving the house or dressing up, was described by her husband's family and friends as "not a woman." Just because she has given birth doesn't make her a woman," one acquaintance said, proposing that she should take a personal-development course. Indeed, her mother-in-law, who felt her son was being shamed by his wife's behavior, offered to pay for enrollment, but she refused. The fact that her son eventually no longer chose to live with his wife and children was therefore understandable considering that his wife's personal appearance was inconsistent with her gender and class status.

It was in the context of New Order gender ideology that the importance of class distinctions, in particular the contrast to being *kampungan*, was most clear. In the context of late New Order Indonesia, an environment saturated with selling the joys of being modern, any sign of less-than-modern taste was what students were paying to erase. While most students knew that they would probably never use the same brands of skin cleanser or hire the same tailors as the instructors, because of their different access to financial resources, the instructors nonetheless insisted that creative and attentive students could achieve similar results at a lower cost. A theme of the college was "looking good doesn't mean doing more shopping." Techniques emphasized savvy shopping instead. Students understood that they could appear to be more professional or wealthy than they might in fact be by striving for a complete "look." For example, the wardrobe rules in the course included ways to assess a tailor, evaluate fabrics and choose styles appropriate to one's body type. The final exam for the course required the students to model day- and evening-wear



Figure 6.2 Students in their evening-wear selections during a final exam. Photo by Carla Jones.

outfits that they had commissioned (see Figure 6.2). The instructors, in order to assess whether the students had in fact selected good tailors, inspected the inside seams and hem stitching of the garments in deciding if the student had paid too much for the outfit. So prevalent was this value of succeeding at the appearance game at as little cost as possible that I knew several women who could have enrolled in the course but chose not to, not because of lack of interest or funds, but because they felt that they could acquire the same knowledge through careful attention to women's magazines and soap operas on television.

The emphasis on frugality was a feature of middle-class propriety in New Order Indonesia. Just as Darma Wanita seminars instructed women on how to run a household on cottage-industry income, or make ends meet in creative ways, so did this course offer ways to achieve an upper-class look without spending a lot of money. Extravagant displays of wealth were discouraged. As Pierre Bourdieu has argued, this pattern is typical of social distinctions made between new middle classes and a more established bourgeoisie (1989: 254–6). According to Bourdieu, the newly rich distinguish themselves from the working class by showing their ability to purchase more than simply day-to-day necessities

yet still appearing hardworking, rigorous, and clean, through purchasing frugally. However, to the bourgeoisie these same expressions of new wealth may appear tasteless. Similarly, students in the course I studied found themselves torn between a desire to use the course as an excuse to purchase a new wardrobe or makeup ensemble and their instructors' more bourgeois, aristocratic desire for understated fashion choices. For example, students were advised that should they wish to spend a lot on a particular consumer good, items should not bear the brand logo on the outside, as this was evidence of being *kampungan*. Rather, the satisfaction of owning and wearing an expensive bag or dress should come from inside, inside oneself and inside the item (which is where the label ought to be, not displayed on the outside of the item). Indeed, one of the most common ways students lost points on their final exams was to have the examiners deem their garment choices too flashy or loud.

Another example of the class tension between instructors and students involved accessories, especially gold jewelry. Although the course was designed to teach students how to display wealth, that did not mean students were encouraged to accessorize with gold jewelry. Like Darma Wanita meetings which sought to minimize local social difference by replacing those hierarchies with new state-based uniformity, similarly the instructors also discouraged the excessive use of gold jewelry. However, instructors had different motivations than had been at work in the Darma Wanita context. For them, gold did not simply communicate wealth. Rather, it identified one with a rural or merchant background.²³ Indeed, one of the most counterintuitive changes women in the course were told to make was to minimize the amount of gold jewelry they wore. The general rule was that women were to count the pieces of gold they were wearing before they ever stepped out of the home, including gold-colored buttons or belt buckles, never exceeding a total number of seven pieces. Students were informed that wearing a lot of gold at once was a sign of being *kampungan*. Instructors said that telling women they should wear no more than seven pieces of gold at a time invariably evoked groans from the class. As one instructor stated, "Women just like to add a ring every day." Students complained to me that limiting their jewelry was the hardest adjustment to make. For merchant and rural women in much of Indonesia, family wealth is often concentrated in a woman's gold jewelry and in part to safeguard this wealth a woman is to wear all of her jewelry at once.²⁴ Moving into middle-class status for the students in the course meant shedding this understanding of family wealth, instead endorsing the value of keeping savings in a bank account. Jewelry was to be seen as decoration rather than family financial responsibility.²⁵

A final point of tension between students and instructors centered on their often generational differences in interpreting Islam. Instructors in the course,

who viewed themselves as faithful Muslims and in many cases understood their role in the course with an almost missionary-style zeal, nonetheless increasingly found themselves faced with students who had chosen clothing styles associated with pious Islamic practice. The use of *baju muslim* or long, loose-fitting clothes, and the fitted headcovering (*jilbab*) had become an alternative but significant mode of dress for young urban women in Java during this period. Yet just as the instructors interpreted their use of white-collar professional dress as a counterpart to the Darma Wanita styles glossed as traditional, so too did students who had chosen *baju muslim* interpret their acts as resistant to styles, including apparently Western styles, that they felt were associated with corrupt upper classes.

Research on young womens' motivations for wearing jilbabs reveal that class position influences unique reasons for what might seem like a general increase in the use of *baju muslim* in Indonesia. Suzanne Brenner has analyzed how young lower-middle-class women in Central Java used the jilbab to make critical personal and social statements of the general moral and social decline in the New Order (1996). To them, the veil was a political sign, a claim to a pious alternative modernity rather than a feudal and co-opted past. In contrast, Johan Lindquist has argued that poor migrant workers to the island of Batam wore jilbabs for strategic performative goals. For these women, wearing a jilbab in a sometimes hostile and threatening labor context can provide both a sense of personal pride and physical protection (2002). However, because it is a marked sign, Lindquist argues that wearing a jilbab can also invite critical speculation about a woman's sexual activity.

In the context of the femininity course, perhaps because most students were of a class position to be able to afford the course, those who chose to wear *baju muslim* did so out of a desire to enact a critique of corrupt representations of femininity. To these women, Western-style dress was corrupt, not because it came from some place called the "West," but because it had become the style of an older generation of Indonesian women whom they felt had embraced a secular pursuit of personal enrichment. Differing interpretations of Islam were therefore a source of polite negotiation between instructors and students in the course. The decision to wear a jilbab was neither discouraged nor encouraged by the instructors. Students frequently asked etiquette questions on how to handle introductions between men and women, so as to avoid physical contact between the sexes. Instructors sometimes perceived students' questions around issues of Muslim clothing as a subtle critique of an instructor's choice to not do so. Students who chose to wear the jilbab were therefore carefully informed that their decision would entail additional steps of self-maintenance, including extra salon trips and hair treatments to manage skin and hair subjected to the effects of heat and damp fabric on the skin. What the instructors

and students shared, however, was a commitment to personal self-transformation through self-discipline, a theme that generally overcame the particular details of how to achieve that transformation.

Consumption of fashion, as appearance work, was therefore a way of performing and thereby producing gendered social difference in the late 1990s Indonesia. Although the importance of appearances was a shared value among both instructors and students of the course I studied, the details of what styles said about the self, and more importantly, what styles constituted the self, required instruction. As a result, middle-class women in urban Indonesia were not simply consumers limited to the private sphere, but producers engaged in contests over meanings and identities in late New Order Indonesia. While claiming that the search for self-improvement was purely for personal success and happiness, and indeed in many cases in fact acquiring a degree of the self-confidence and identity they sought, these women endorsed development ideology in ways that often had unintended personal and social consequences. Many of the women I knew perceived of their self-cultivation as a conscientious attempt at reconfiguring the dominant relations of power they felt the state was inscribing on them. They imagined themselves to be rejecting an official model of femininity for a more appealing and liberatory version that embraced attractiveness and women's professional work. Indeed, there were some key differences in content and motivation between Darma Wanita's rhetoric and the personal-development courses. While Darma Wanita focused explicitly on domesticity and a rather frumpy uniformity among women, the personal-development course mixed appeals to global cachet and style with the promise of potential professional success. By choosing the latter model over the former, many of the women I knew imagined their choices to be a small act of resistance against a state agenda that they did not endorse. However, both models of femininity shared key assumptions about the nature of progress and change, assumptions that positioned women as an unproblematic index of national development and thereby as the subjects of their own discipline. In conceiving of themselves as needy of personal development, as continual works-in-progress, the instructors and students in femininity courses such as the one I studied engaged in practices that both produced new individual subjects and reinscribed them into a larger community of citizens nonetheless participating in the persuasive project of a nation in development.

Notes

1. My title clearly borrows from the popular American business-dress bible, *Dress for Success*, by John T. Molloy, New York: P. H. Wyden (1975).

2. This chapter is the result of a panel on nationalism and dress at the Association for Asian Studies, which Ann Marie Leshkovich and I organized in 1999. This research was conducted as part of doctoral dissertation fieldwork from 1996 to 1998 (Jones 2001), for which I benefited from the material and logistical sponsorship of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, the Fulbright Educational Foundation in Jakarta, the Pusat Penelitian Kebudayaan dan Perubahan Sosial at Gadjah Mada University and the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia. I am grateful to Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkovich, Joanne Eicher, and one anonymous reader for detailed advice on this chapter.

3. Pemberton's research did not focus primarily on the sartorial elements of the New Order's celebration of tradition and ritual; rather, he includes dress as one cultural form that the Suhartos found malleable to their goals. A number of studies have focused more closely on Indonesia's rich and diverse textile traditions (e.g., Gittinger 1989; Heringa and Veldhuisen 1997; Niessen 1993).

4. This may also be related to continuing Orientalist tendencies within the fashion industry itself, as Lise Skov's Chapter 7 in this volume clearly reveals. Western-style fashions designed anywhere other than in Europe or North America can, in this logic, only be imitations, while authentic Asian fashion must bear evidence of essentialized, Orientalist elements of a nostalgic "tradition."

5. See, for example, Abelson 1989 and Pinch 1998, for research on how women in Victorian England were imagined to be so desirous of luxury goods, fashions in particular, that they were driven to marginal mental states and shoplifting.

6. See, for example, Abu-Lughod 1990, Breckenridge 1995, Comaroff 1990, de Grazia and Furlough 1996, Freeman 2000, Hannerz 1996, Howes 1996, McCracken 1988, and Rutz and Orlove 1989.

7. This term was first coined by Julia Suryakusuma in 1996. See, e.g., Suryakusuma 1996.

8. Interestingly, within months of the fall of the Suharto regime it became fashionable for young urban women to wear a *kebaya* in a casual style, thrown loosely over a camisole and paired with jeans or informal sarongs. I consider this to be an example of the loosening connections between what citizens had felt was a strong grip on cultural expressions deemed "traditional," mixed with new self-Orientalizing motivations that reconfigure neotraditional dress as mutable, trendy and thereby fashionable.

9. In contrast, many of the older women I knew credited the early version of *Darma Wanita*, held for wives of military officers in the 1960s, with teaching them that everyday dress should not be the *kain kebaya*. It was there that they said they learned the *kain kebaya* should be saved for special occasions such as *Darma Wanita* meetings and family events.

10. Identical programs did not exist for men, although courses on self-esteem and business skills were offered for men and women at John Robert Powers. However, appearances were nonetheless linked to masculine identity. An example of this was a computer-training institute's slogan in Yogyakarta as the "school for people who wear ties" (*sekolah orang berdasi*).

11. Johan Lindquist (2002) found similar notions of personal development to echo national official rhetoric among migrants to the Indonesian island of Batam, although they used another term. Migrants, coming from Java and Sumatra in particular, described their motivations for moving to Batam as a desire for *kemajuan* or personal advancement, which was ideally achieved by earning income from multinational factory jobs but could also be acquired through newfound religious piety if their financial dreams did not materialize. Similarly, Tom Boellstorff's research among lower-middle-class gay men found that these men imagined themselves as personal projects, or what he calls "personhood-as-career," working to achieve an upwardly mobile subjectivity that was profoundly written onto the self (Boellstorff 2000).

12. The courses are successful across the Pacific, operating in Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Korea, Guam, Australia and Japan. It is also still in operation in the United States, with a focus on modeling training. The American courses are mixed-sex, offering training for aspiring male and female models.

13. Since the economic crisis of mid-1997, the course has not materially raised its fees. In the summer of 2000, the course still cost 400,000 rupiah (\$50 (US)), which, because of the dramatic devaluation of the rupiah over the intervening years, actually represented a decrease in cost.

14. The need to know how to politely navigate the arrangement of utensils and plates at a formal Western-style meal was the by-product of increasing multinational corporate presence in Indonesia. Many office jobs required that employees be comfortable at evening receptions at hotels at which the menu was presented in a continental style.

15. There has been considerable romanticization of rural life in contemporary Indonesian public culture, through a nostalgia focused on images of lush green rice paddies, carefree children and women in "traditional" dress, i.e., *kain kebaya*. That positive nostalgia has been associated with the term for village "*desa*," whereas the more derisive term "*kampung*" more closely describes either urban poor or those nouveaux riches who overdisplay their wealth.

16. The magazine instructors especially found useful was *Femina*. This is not surprising considering the magazine's deep structural and economic ties to the best-known experts and courses. Experts had regular columns in the weekly magazine, and the courses in Jakarta were richly and regularly advertised, even though much of the readership did not live in Jakarta.

17. The course I studied was the only such course in Yogyakarta to survive the economic crisis. All others in the city, more than 25, closed due to the inability of potential students to afford the fees in a time of economic duress. The Jakarta John Robert Powers has survived the crisis nicely, recently opening a new expansion on their building, and upgrading the program to the prestigious "Five Level System."

18. The fact that some of the instructors had ties to the royal court is not surprising considering the court's historical role. During the colonial era, it was precisely the members of the royal court who held audiences with foreign visitors and used imported commodities (see, e.g., Taylor 1997). Their role as diplomats and mediators of outside influences was established well before the development of the personal development

industry. Indeed, members of the Yogyakarta royal court are still considered unique precisely for their cosmopolitanism and experience with foreigners, both from foreign travel and in hosting foreign visitors to Indonesia.

19. This attitude sounds similar to missionary talk justifying religious expansion. Some instructors were members of modernist Islamic groups, like Achmadiyah. These experiences might have instilled a passion and sense of desire to aid and educate fellow citizens. Lizzy van Leeuwen observes a similar connection between personal and interior decoration and religious zeal among wealthy Jakarta wives who give praise to God by beautifying themselves and their surroundings (1997: 340).

20. Textile industries typically employ inexpensive, unskilled female labor. For more on this pattern, see Chapkis and Enloe 1983.

21. For an example of this evolutionary logic in transnational garment production, consider Phil Knight's response to anti-sweatshop movement targeted at Nike in a *Washington Post* story on development. "Working in a shoe factory doesn't take much education and is very labor intensive. . . (countries) grow that way until they get to wages of somewhere around \$10,000 a year, by that time there is a basic infrastructure built, and the workers can go across the street and start making computers and cars, and the shoe industry begins to fade" (Swardson and Sugawara, 1996).

22. His comments were translated into Indonesian, "Yang pening keinginan berubuh."

23. This attitude was particular to the interests of instructors. Before the economic crisis, some of the new super-wealthy in Jakarta regularly rotated their jewelry as a gesture of praise to God for their good fortune (cf. Van Leeuwen 1997: 340).

24. Suzanne Brenner has described how women merchants of Solo invest family wealth in gold jewelry, women whom she describes as considered distinctly "unmodern" (1998: 184–9).

25. Interestingly, selecting and trusting a bank in Indonesia was a tricky proposition even before the economic crisis. An abundance of bank brands made selection challenging, and it was nearly impossible to find a bank that was not publicly known to be the property of a Suharto family member or crony. Indeed, by the end of 1997, instructors in the course had joined the long queues of citizens to claim their funds from bank accounts. Cash seemed a safer proposition than trusting a bank that IMF deregulators might close without warning. Sadly, though, gold was also no longer a secure investment either. Families needing cash flooded local markets with gold jewelry, causing gold prices to plummet.

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