

CHAPTER II

WOMEN AND CULTURAL MOBILITY

IN NEW ORDER INDONESIA AND AFTERWARDS

Introduction

A key aim of this thesis is to explore how *Misteri Gunung Merapi*, as an entertainment, is a witness to the process of cultural transformation in Indonesia, especially after the fall of Suharto in 1998. The main focus of the attention is to look at how this sinetron responds to the dominant issues, in relation to gender matters, through the construction of the heroic female figures. In this chapter, I propose to sketch the main forces of cultural transformation using the concept of cultural globalization and drawing out the conflict between the consumerist ideology promoted in popular culture and the new Islamization that emerged in resistance to it. In the second part of the chapter I consider the way these two forces have impacted on ideas about femininity and the position of women, using the concept of cultural mobility to focus on the complex cultural identities that are constructed out of the clash of these and other discourses.

Part 1: Cultural Globalisation

From New Order to *Reformasi* Era

History acknowledges both revolution and transformation. Oetama has argued that in Indonesia the major change which initiated both transformation and revolution was the Declaration of Independence in 1945. Since Independence, Indonesia, from the populist model of Sukarno to the pragmatic paradigm of Soeharto, was in the process of defining its national vision and identity in relation to modernization. A recent major influence in this process, economic

globalization, has created considerable turbulence, and possibilities. It challenges older ideas of national independence to the extent that, following the flow of globalization, “reinventing Indonesia” has become the new theme.¹

Indonesia was already deeply implicated in economic globalization and when the Asian economic crisis occurred in August 1997 it brought in its wake major social and political upheavals. President Soeharto’s 32-year rule ended on 21 May 1998, with a wide range of demonstrations from various organizations calling for reform, and an end to the corrupt and collusive relationships of ‘KKN’ (the almost universally used acronym for Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme; corruption, collusion and nepotism). During the short period of President, previously Vice-President, B.J. Habibie’s transitional government the turbulence continued. State repression was eroded and civil society flourished dramatically. Suddenly, there were many freedoms of association and expression enjoyed by all sectors of society. The market became more liberalised, with a wide-spread reaction against controls.

The victory of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri as President and Vice-President in 2000² seemed to promise a government that would bring a return to social order as well as sensitivity to the needs of newly enfranchised social groups. Megawati was the first woman to occupy such a high position. Under this leadership, for example, there was a division of responsibilities in which Megawati took responsibility for empowering women. She appointed Erna Witoelalar as Minister for Housing and Regional Development, the first time a woman was appointed to a non-female-specific post,

¹ Jacob Oetama, "Indonesia Dalam Perubahan Dunia [Indonesia in the World Change]," in *Indonesia Abad XXI: Di Tengah Kepungan Perubahan Global [Indonesia XXI Century: Under the Global Change]*, ed. Ninok Leksono (Jakarta: PT Kompas Media Nusantara, 2000).

² This was the result of a compromise between Megawati’s party, which had become the largest party in the new national parliament but did not have a majority of seats, and the much smaller one of Abdurrahman Wahid. There was a mixture of reasons for the lack of support for Megawati becoming President, including an exploited opposition among many conservatives, particularly Islamic ones, against a woman President. However, two years later, after Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached and removed from office she, as the then Vice President, did become President for the rest of the five-year electoral term – with one of the leaders of the earlier opposition to her becoming Vice President.

and Ms. Khofifah Indar Parawansa as a State Minister for the Role of Women. The appointment of these women to public office raised women's expectations of social change.³

Megawati took power as President on 2001 after a series of demonstrations that forced Abdurrahman Wahid to step down. However, Megawati disappointed her supporters because of her lack of leadership, her weak efforts to fight against corruption, and her willingness to accommodate the military. She also disappointed women activists and women's NGOs, as under her leadership there was no significant change in the life of women.

It can be said that the first three post-Suharto leaders were unable to bring an end to KKN. At the same time the new era has opened up many freedoms for Indonesians, especially freedom of expression and the opening up of political space for social protest. Although the reform era did not quickly work as expected, Indonesia has still experienced tremendous social and cultural change. Further globalization of the economy has been accompanied by cultural globalization, no longer hindered by state ideological controls. The growing development of technology and communication has opened all borders and people are not immune to contact with many foreign cultures. The external global forces which the New Order regime had tried to control intensified their effects.

During the New Order era of Suharto's rule, 'development' was considered as the most important principle. Development was "associated with the concept of progress (*maju*) towards a clean, orderly and 'modern' society",⁴ in terms of not only economic but also cultural development. The New Order forged "modern life patterns and consumerism, associated with the global capitalist economy" through introducing "television, pop music and magazines, motorized transport, western dress, school or civil service uniforms, refrigeration, fast foods,

³ Mayling Oey-Gardiner and Carla Bianpoen, *Indonesian Women: The Journey Continues* (Canberra: Australian National University. Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2000), 1-4.

⁴ Patrick Guinness, "Local Society and Culture," in *Indonesia's New Order*, ed. Hal Hill (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 269.

and many other elements of contemporary consumer society”.⁵ The contradiction of the New Order cultural policy was that while it campaigned in favour of a modern way of life which embraced the logic of capitalism, at the same time it rejected many ideological features accompanying this development. The state continually warned of the danger of the impact of global forces on the national identity.⁶

Suharto, in Budianta’s opinion, behaved “in the manner of a Javanese King” in which power was centralised in the hands of the president.⁷ Nevertheless the New Order created various, mainly relatively subterranean, voices of discontent which reached a peak and burst out during the financial crisis. The post-Suharto era then witnessed the public rise of various ethnic, religious and ideological interest groups, all demanding reform. This was the beginning of a new era of identity politics.

In this chapter I will not discuss the political transition to democracy, but rather explore the cultural mobility accompanying globalization. Indonesia’s exposure to cultural globalization, together with the end of the New Order, accelerated the process of cultural transformation, but did not initiate it. Those changes were already established as a continuous process. However, social conflict over cultural values has become more overt and intensified in recent years.

⁵ Ibid., 269-70.

⁶ Melani Budianta, "Discourse of Cultural Identity in Indonesia During the 1997-1998 Monetary Crisis," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000): 109.

⁷ Ibid.: 117-8.

Cultural Globalization in Indonesia

Cultural mobility, according to Greenblatt, refers to the way people are exposed to changing values.⁸ An important source of exposure to changing values is the popular media, especially television, which in Indonesia is now no longer held in check by New Order ideological controls. Emmison describes this kind of cultural mobility as “the capacity to navigate between or across cultural realms, a freedom to choose or select one’s position in the cultural landscape”.⁹ ‘Choosing a position’ is the essence of identity politics of the kind that are now prevalent in Indonesia today, that can be seen in feminist and Islamist cultural debates. These forms of cultural mobility need to be understood in the context of cultural globalization.

Globalization is the crucial marker of the twenty-first century. It can be defined as “the increasing global integration of economies, information technology, the spread of global popular culture, and other forms of human interaction”.¹⁰ Giddens describes the process as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”.¹¹ It is neither an unambiguous concept nor a single and specific socio-cultural phenomenon. Globalization, according to Robertson, is “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”.¹² The manifestation of globalization has become evident at the level of everyday life experience which can be seen through the increasing range of the availability of imported products for sale, “international tourism and migration, internationalization of ownership,

⁸ Stephen J. Greenblatt, "Cultural Mobility," http://www.fas.harvard.edu/curriculumreview/essays_pdf/Stephen_J_Greenblatt.pdf2004, (accessed 25 May 2005).

⁹ Michael Emmison, "Social Class and Cultural Omnivore Thesis," *Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2003): 213.

¹⁰ Robert J. Lierber and Ruth E. Weisberg, "Globalization, Culture, and Identities in Crisis," *International Journal of politics, Culture and Society* 16, no. 2 (2002): 274.

¹¹ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 64.

¹² Chris Barker, *Global Television: An Introduction* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 16.

the shared possession and use across national boundaries of cultural icons and media products".¹³ So globalization can mean a social phenomenon and a form of consciousness which reduces the constraints of geography and interconnects people and ideas across time and space.

The spread of global popular culture is often considered to be cultural imperialism, which "imposes American values as well as products, promotes the commercial at the expense of the authentic, and substitutes shallow gratification for deeper satisfaction".¹⁴ However Legrain has argued that globalisation can produce beneficial impacts because "it can free people from any tyranny of geography". He has also asserted that it "increases individual freedom,... revitalizes cultures and cultural artefacts through foreign influences, technologies, and markets".¹⁵ An optimistic view is that the global media can support the creation of new communities because of its ability to facilitate the transformation of ideas and images across space and time; it can create a continuous cultural exchange. Both the pessimistic and the optimistic view of cultural globalization are expressed in Indonesian debates. Inevitably, they also involve differing views on the role of the state in cultural development. This is especially marked as the New Order state had exercised such stringent controls over art and entertainment so these debates have emerged publicly only recently.

In Indonesia cultural globalization is popularly understood as Americanization because nearly everything American is popular among Indonesians, from music, film, and television serials to fast food and franchising retail centres like Hard Rock Café or Planet Hollywood. But this popularity is questioned from several sides. In 1998 *Kompas*, a leading national newspaper, published an advertisement as a campaign against the impact of cultural globalization as a "monster to be defeated". The advertisement shows two shadow images, one taken from a shadow puppet show, representing Indonesian cultural

¹³ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and others, *Media in Global Context : A Reader*, Foundations in Media (New York: Arnold, 1997), x.

¹⁴ Phillippe Legrain, "Cultural Globalization Is Not Americanization," *The Chronicle Review* 49, no. 35 (2003), <http://chronicle.com/free/v49/i35/35b00701.htm>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

heritage, and the other in the shape of Mickey Mouse, an icon of American popular culture. The question under the two icons was “Ask your children who is this?” This advertisement, in Budianta’s opinion, promoted “the glorification of cultural heritage” with “the preservation of traditional art forms as the highest artistic expressions of the nation”; at the same time it was suggested that “reducing arts and culture to marketable goods” would “repress the function of art to voice social criticism”.¹⁶ This emphasis on art as a tool for social criticism was an expression of the *Reformasi* project. While traditionally the purpose of art was both for social criticism and learning about life, the New Order era repressed the critical function. It justified this stance by pointing out that the Indonesian Communist party had exploited literature and traditional performance to propagate Communist ideology. The New Order allowed only artistic expression in either ‘high culture’ or commodified popular culture. Budianta has criticized this emphasis on “unity and uniformity over pluralism, conformity over difference, with a strong favour for ritualistic performance”.¹⁷

With the end of the New Order, scholars have entered into a debate about the importance of the state continuing to control culture. For example, Huda argues that during the New Order, culture was an instrument in the national scenario to lead people to be obedient individuals, without critical thinking. This can be seen, for example, from the state’s selection of the social values and practices which were considered to support its preferred version of development, while values and practices which were considered not to support this development and national stability were regarded as ‘uncivilised’ and to be eliminated. Huda argues that the state does not have the capacity or competence to understand cultural pluralism.¹⁸

¹⁶ Budianta, "Discourse of Cultural Identity in Indonesia During the 1997-1998 Monetary Crisis," 116.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mh. Nurul Huda, "Negara Perlu Mengurus Kebudayaan? [Does Government Need to Regulate Culture?]," KUNCI, http://www.kunci.or.id/misc/huda_negara.htm2004, (accessed 13 January 2006).

In contrast, Rukendi considers that the state continues to be important in controlling cultural development. He believes that Indonesians' appreciation of culture and history is still low, such as the poor awareness of the importance of looking after cultural sites or conflicts between ethnic and religious groups. He argues that there is a need for the Department of Culture and Tourism to position itself as both educator and facilitator to support and empower people as agents of cultural development.¹⁹ Antariksa and Puthut agree that the state should play a clear role in keeping control on policies which could destroy shared resources, such as the privatisation of natural resources and educational institutions. They argued that cultural matters should be the responsibility of all departments, not only the Department of Culture and Tourism.²⁰

However these debates do not succeed in proposing ways to limit the influence of commercial popular culture. While, as we saw above, Western theorists often emphasise the beneficial results of cultural globalisation in terms of extending people's experience of other cultures and their openness to new ideas and values, concern in Indonesia about the negative effects of cultural globalisation has, for many years, fuelled moral protests against popular culture and the ideologies it promotes.²¹

Television is a prime target of this kind of criticism. Although most Indonesians do not travel abroad, the popularity of television and the affordability of television sets have changed the way of life of most Indonesian people. In 1997 the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*) reported that 23% of the Indonesian population age ten years and older read newspapers and/or magazines, 59% listened to radio and 78% watched television.²² Nowadays, with

¹⁹Cecep Rukendi, "Pentingnya Negara Mengurus Kebudayaan [the Significance of the State to Play a Role in Culture]," KUNCI, http://www.kunci.or.id/misc/cecep_negara.htm2004, (accessed 13 January 2006).

²⁰ Antariksa and Puthut, "Kuasa Ekonomi Politik Dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat [the Power of Society's Economy, Politics, and Culture]," KUNCI, http://www.kunci.or.id/misc/a_negara2005, (accessed 13 January 2006).

²¹ Popular culture in Indonesia usually refers to American popular culture

²² Quoted in Suzanne Brenner, "On the Public Intimacy of the New Order," *Indonesia* 67 (1999): 17.

95% of the population²³ having access to a television set, television is the main source of entertainment and information in Indonesia, regardless of social class.

However, in its early years, television did not spread to all of parts of Indonesia equally. Van der Kroef wrote in 1952 that “the Indonesian village is a closed society, traditionally self-sufficient and seclusive, with its own customs, its own law, and often its own religious practices” while from the colonial period the cities of Indonesia have been culturally dominated by European influences.²⁴ The New Order government took steps to use television to overcome this rural isolation and to unify the many ethnicities that make up the nation. In 1976, it established a satellite that would enable it to unify Indonesia’s ten thousand islands by communicating government ideology to the whole population through television.²⁵ In the 1980s the government distributed around 4000 television receivers in rural areas with the intention of increasing social consciousness of nationhood, social integration and knowledge of other ethnicities and cultures. However, a survey of seven provinces in Indonesia in 1977-1978 found that “2/3 of the inhabitants were still beyond the reach of television programmes”.²⁶ Social and cultural values, such as *adat* (locally traditional customs or customary law), Islamic norms, isolated hamlets and bad roads were important factors hindering the optimal use of television.²⁷ Susanto was describing a situation where there might be only one television set, in the house of the head of the village.

²³ Debnath Guharoy, "The Gadgets in Indonesian Homes to Day. And Tomorrow.," Roy Morgan Research, http://www.roymorgan.com/documents/indArticles/the_jakarta_post_article_15.pdf, (accessed 3 June 2007).

²⁴ Justus M. van der Kroef, "Society and Culture in Indonesian Nationalism," *The American Journal of Sociology* 58, no. 1 (1952): 11-12.

²⁵ Bart Simon and Joshua Barker, "Imagining the New Order Nation: Materiality and Hyperreality in Indonesia " *Culture, Theory and Critique* 43, no. 2 (2002): 146.

²⁶ Astrid S Susanto and others, "New Communication Order 2: Impact of Modern Communication Technology," *Unesco*, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000421/042196eo.pdf>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

When I did my *Kuliah Kerja Nyata*²⁸ (compulsory university student service) in Wonogiri, Central Java in 1989 electricity was not installed in this village and television was still a luxury for all villagers. There was no public transportation, only a small truck that came twice a week to pick up the village's products to transport outside the area. The market took place only every five days, and was more a barter system than the concept of a modern market. The villagers relied on radio for news and entertainment. Most young people in this village went to town as domestic workers or labourers. Meanwhile, Solo as the closest city of this area, only 50 kilometres away, was modern with high-rise buildings, supermarkets, modern transportation and colour television. This shows that the modern way of life planned by the New Order era did not reach all parts of Indonesia, even in central Java which is close to the Central Government.

Less than 20 years later, however, television is available to 95% of the population²⁹. In 2003 there were 9 major television channels that broadcast nationally. Although only two major networks (RCTI and Indosiar) could be received clearly by most villages³⁰, this still signifies an extremely culturally significant change. However, it does not mean that the cultural mobility accompanying modernization and globalization is spread evenly in all parts of Indonesia. As is commonly said about research on Indonesia, it is difficult to make generalizations about Indonesia because of the complexities of that society. However, we can paint a broad picture here as the context for the current debates about cultural globalisation.

Although the New Order government had warned that "Western-style modernity has been associated with the dangers of extreme individualism, loose

²⁸ In the New Order era, every university student had to do KKN (literally, Real or Actual Work Lecture) in a village. They had to stay in the village in a group of 6 for three months. They had to be involved in all kinds of village activities at the same time introducing and implementing various government programs such as contraception, modern systems of administration, new agricultural techniques, etc.

²⁹ See footnote 23

³⁰ Benjamin A. Olken, "Do Television and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence from Indonesian Villages," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, no. 12561 (2006), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12561>.

morality, and secularism”,³¹ the government had actually assisted the spread of modern communication technologies that would inevitably bring that modernity with them. With media containing so many images and messages with respect to the modernization of Indonesian society clearly such ideas would impact on the sense of identity of Indonesian people. Indeed, as Lockard argued, “popular culture involves ideological material and social patterns that are widely spread” and “has an enormous influence on people’s lives in most societies”³². As Bertold Brecht once asserted provocatively, “art is not a mirror that reflects society but a hammer that forges it”.³³ This is certainly true of modern popular culture.

The last decade of the New Order era carried considerable cultural transformation. New ideologies were no longer solely propagated through only deliberate state political and social indoctrination but through the glamour of commercial advertisements and the magic of television programs offering new perceptions and lifestyles. The large cities in Indonesia offered a more opulent lifestyle, which created a larger social and cultural gap between village and city. In the new era of open capitalism people were not afraid to display their wealth or to be considered rich, whereas in the past it had been important to appear modest, even if you were wealthy.³⁴

At the same time, increased rates of literacy in Indonesia and the popularity of print media that promote ideas of ‘being modern’ have reinforced the process of Westernization in Indonesia, especially among young people. Central to this modernity is the idea of the individual and the values of individualism. As Hall says, “the modern age gave rise to a new and decisive form of individualism, at the centre of which stood a new conception of the individual

³¹ Brenner, "On the Public Intimacy of the New Order," 22.

³² Craig A Lockard, "Popular Musics and Politics in Modern Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis," *Asian Music* XXVII, no. 2 (1996): 150.

³³ Quoted in *Ibid.*: 151.

³⁴ Bre Redana, "Ongkos Sosial Gaya Hidup Mutakhir [the Social Cost for the Latest Lifestyle] " in *Ecstasy Gaya Hidup: Kebudayaan Pop Dalam Masyarakat Komoditas Indonesia [Life Syle Ecstasy: Popular Culture in Indonesian Commodity Society]*, ed. Idi Subandy Ibrahim (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 52-70.

subject and its identity”.³⁵ This concept of the individual and his or her autonomy is most evident in changing attitudes and practices with respect to sexual practices and marriage. Although the 1983 Marriage Law has not been reformed and still applies, most young people now tend to delay marriage. Many still hold the opinion that life without marriage and children is meaningless, but they refuse arranged marriages and practice dating. Some lose their virginity before marriage, although virginity is still considered important.³⁶ Such attitudes and behaviours create a “gap between young people and their parents and grandparents”. With their freedom of expression “to choose their education, marriage partner, career and goals in life and more and more are living away from home for educational or work purposes”, conflicts between the two (or three) generations are more apparent.³⁷

Munti’s recent study of print media concluded that globalization has changed the way that Indonesians consider sexuality. She found that the media depicts sexuality in ways that in the past were considered taboo. Virginity, love affairs, pre-marital sex, polygamy, and celibacy are contested and become hot topics in various print media. She shows that in global sexual discourse women should be active and enjoy sex as a form of self-expression. Women are encouraged to contest the taboo on sexuality and to consider sexual pleasure as an important issue. However, in her study of a number of articles about the growing number of Indonesians having affairs, Munti has found that most articles stress the need for wives to keep their husbands from having affairs by satisfying their sexual desire. In reference to pre-marital sex, she has found that some parents are now more permissive and let their children’s boyfriend or girlfriend stay overnight and sleep in the same bedroom with their children. However, most of them say no to live together without marriage. She has also found that there is a

³⁵ Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity," in *The Polity Reader in Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 119.

³⁶ Kathryn Robinson, "Indonesian Women: From Order Baru to Reformasi," in *Women in Asia: Tradition, Modernity and Globalisation*, ed. L Edwards and M Roces (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000); Kathryn Robinson and Iwu Dwisetyani Utomo, "Introduction," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 37, no. 1 (2003): 11.

³⁷ Robinson and Utomo, "Introduction," 7.

change in the perception of virginity among young people. Both young males and females agree that now there is not such a high value placed on virginity and the reputation of a woman is not related to her virginity. However, a survey conducted by *Femina* magazine shows that 80% of women still said that they should keep their virginity until marriage while only 10% of men would. Munti has also reported the debates concerning the controversial 2002 research conducted on a number of university students in Jogjakarta which claimed that 97% of university students are not virgins. She also found that people now enjoy remaining single, which, however, does not mean that they do not want to get married.³⁸

Another recent study of media images of sexuality suggests a different side to this so-called 'global sexual discourse': as popular culture has transformed the meaning of sexuality from procreation into recreation, sex becomes a commodity. Suryandaru has noted that nowadays advertisements for sex stimulants are booming, as well as adult shops in many of the large towns in Indonesia. He has noted that such advertisements have constructed an image of masculinity as macho, healthy, muscular, and aggressive. Meanwhile, the image of femininity is beautiful, sexy, and passive. Women are positioned as figures who merely serve male desire, who must ensure that their bodies stay slim and their vaginas tight.³⁹

These differing perspectives on sexuality can serve to introduce the topic of consumerism, the ideology which accompanies commodity culture and which profoundly influences cultural attitudes, values and practices. By 'consumerism' I mean a way of life defined by advertising, buying things, identifying oneself in terms of possessions and brand names. It involves the commoditisation of sex and sexuality, but also of health and any other qualities that a society considers desirable.

³⁸ Ratna Batara Munti, *Demokrasi Keintiman: Seksualitas Di Era Global [Democracy of Intimacy: Sexuality in Global Era]* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta, 2005), 71-115.

³⁹ Yayan Sakti Suryandaru, "Kuasa Perempuan Atas Tubuhnya Sendiri [Female Authority on Her Own Body]," *Kompas*, 12 August 2002, <http://kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0208/12/dikbud/kuas43.htm>, (accessed 5 March 2007).

Consumerism and Commodity Culture

Industrialization gives birth to a commodity society, which in turn leads to a growth of popular culture and the cultural industry. The production of goods and services is transformed from human need into profit and materialism. The market becomes more important than state and society. The production of meaning and value transfers from society to the agents of the cultural industry. Through advertising, the agent of the cultural industry, all dreams of society are commoditised and the rhetoric of the image is born. A person's individual identity is transformed from one of achievement to that of appearance. People believe that it is important to appear 'trendy', rich, beautiful, youthful, and luxurious. People place more value on their appearance rather than their own individuality.

The 1980s saw the growth of advertising in Indonesia. Most companies were convinced of the need to advertise their products and this led to a rise in consumerism. In this process image became more important than reality and people consumed not on the basis of need and purpose but for prestige. Affluent people were trained to obsess about their lifestyle. Both males and females went to beauty salons, to fitness centres, or to personality development schools.⁴⁰ This was the period in which the retail sector developed from the traditional markets into luxurious and glamorous shopping centres. People went to department stores not for shopping but for recreation: they just sat down and enjoyed the luxurious air conditioned mall.⁴¹ In Indonesia the modern shopping centre signifies the cultural transition of shopping styles for upper and middle class people. In contrast, the traditional market is characterised by social contact between seller and buyer. Bargaining is the special characteristic of traditional shopping in Indonesia, with sellers often heard saying "*tuna sathak bathi sanak*" (get very small profit but get a new friend).

The rise of popular culture also signified an era of mass production of goods, clothes for example. In the past, people would go to tailors or dressmakers

⁴⁰ Redana, "Ongkos Sosial Gaya Hidup Mutakhir [the Social Cost for the Latest Lifestyle] ", 52-70.

⁴¹ Ibid.

for their clothes. With standardization of size and design, people now tend to frequent the large retail stores to buy their new clothes. There are also other reasons, including industrialisation and globalization having produced items which previously were either not available from tailors or dressmakers or only at much higher prices. This phenomenon has been accompanied by the birth of the 'designer product'. People now tend to buy products with respect to a brand, often a globalized one, which has been evolved into a symbol of success.

Many cultural observers and community leaders, academics and NGO activists tend to have a pessimistic view of cultural globalization, in particular the consumerist ideology that accompanies its economic dimension. They blame commercial television for spreading anti-social messages with its blatant promotion of extravagant life styles, consumerism, sex, and violence. Religious leaders also take a part in this discussion to state their concerns about the decline in public morality.⁴² In fact, reformed and activist versions of Islam are leading resistance to these consumerist aspects of cultural globalization. But they, too, are evidence of global cultural flows.

Islamization

In Indonesia today, globalization does not simply equal Westernization. The new pluralism encompasses cultural flows from all over the world, including from other Asian countries or Arab Gulf countries. A major force in recent decades has been the influence of Middle Eastern Islam. Bruinessen has argued that "the ongoing Islamization [of Indonesia] was part and parcel of this complex globalisation process" and that there is a new emphasis on the need to reform "the belief and practice of the Indonesian Muslims more in line with those of the

⁴² Effendi Gazali, "Negotiating Public and Community Media in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *The Public* 10, no. 1 (2003), <http://www.javnost-thepublic.org/issue/2003/1/>.

Muslims of Arabia, especially those in the Holy cities, whose religion was assumed to be purer and more authentic”.⁴³

Similarly, Hefner has argued that there is a complex relation between globalization and Islamization in Indonesia, which he traces back to the New Order regime. Historically, to counter the threatening ideologies of both communism and Western liberalism, the New Order regime required that all citizens profess one of five state-sanctioned religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism), and instituted religious instruction in schools.⁴⁴ Over the course of more than three decades of the New Order regime, with the growth of the urban population, the development of the middle class, and the expansion of higher education, a culture of a new Muslim middle class emerged, who “turned quietly to Islam as a new anchor for their public identity” because they disagreed with the “tradition of secular and socialist nationalism”.⁴⁵ “State programs and Islamic schools gave rise to a new class of untraditional preachers, concentrated in cities and committed to the development of new forms of piety and activism”.⁴⁶ In responding to the Islamic resurgence, the New Order regime shifted its policies to “systemic cooptation” in response to the demand of the domestic political market rather than the forces of cultural globalisation. The fall of Suharto and the financial crisis led to a diminution of “the influence of moderate Muslims, while amplifying that of the sectarian minority”.⁴⁷ To Hefner, focussed on the political consequences of this change, it is ‘unfortunate’ that economic globalisation, in this instance, did not bring cultural homogenisation.⁴⁸

⁴³ Martin van Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam," *Southeast Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999), http://www.let.uu.nl/~Martin.vanBruinessen/personal/publications/global_and_local_in_indonesia.n.htm.

⁴⁴ Robert W. Hefner, "Globalization, Governance and the Crisis of Indonesian Islam" (paper presented at the Conference on Globalization, State Capacity, and Muslim Self-Determination, University of California-Santa Cruz, 2002), 4, <http://www2.ucsc.edu/cgirs/conferences/carnegie/papers/hefner.pdf> (accessed 11 June 2007).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.

On this question, as on the question of modernization and the spread of commodity culture and consumerism, the New Order regime led and set the way. It “both fostered and domesticated Islam” while, at the same time, “has also aggressively pursued a policy of economic development and insertion into the global capitalist economy”.⁴⁹ Until the 1970s, “Indonesian Islam has always been defined by moderation – meaning that generally, it does not desire an Islamic state or an Islamic caliphate”.⁵⁰ In the 1970s, Siddique noted, there was a sharp upturn in the Islamic movement in Indonesia with the “growth of a reflective, personal piety that has occurred not because of access to political power”.⁵¹ Hefner argued that some consider Islam as the key to challenge “the anomie of urban life with precise ethical prescriptions”.⁵² The urban, lower-middle and middle-class activists who took on Islamic activism were eager to learn about contemporary Islam. They read and discussed the Qur’an to interpret its meaning and discuss its relevance to everyday life. They refused “the secularization, materialism, and alienation associated with urbanization and economic development”. But they also rejected “a return to tradition”.⁵³

As the flow of globalization comes from two different parts of the world, from the West and the Middle East, it is not surprising that there are two different ideologies developing in Indonesia that conflict with each other. I will discuss this conflict in more detail, especially in relation to ideas about women and gender.

⁴⁹ Suzanne Brenner, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women And "The Veil",
American Ethnologist 23, no. 4 (1996): 676.

⁵⁰ Sonja van Wichelen, "Contesting Megawati: The Mediation of Islam and Nation in Times of Political Transition," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2006), <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/mad/pdf/3%20-%20Megawati%20and%20Indonesia.pdf>

⁵¹ Malcolm Cone, "Neo-Modern Islam in Suharto's Indonesia," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2002), <http://www.nzasia.org.nz/journal/NZJAS-back-issues/NZJAS-4-2.html>.

⁵² Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: I.C.M.I. And the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56, (1993), <http://cip.cornell.edu/Dienst/UI/1.0/Summarize/seap.indo/1106968957>.

⁵³ Brenner, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women And "The Veil", " 673.

Part 2: Women and Cultural Identity

Discussion of cultural globalization is centrally concerned with the consequences of changing relations of time and space for the identity of people. Like ‘globalization’, ‘identity’ is difficult to define. Identity is so complex that we cannot determine it simply by identifying the individual based on physical features, place of birth or social position. We cannot even determine identity from country of origin, town or neighbourhood as these are always open to change as people move from one place to another. The rise of media, especially digital media and its reception, suggests the rapid transportation of ideas and images across geographical borders than can further contribute to the formation of complex identities. That is why debate about globalization is close to discussions about identity and culture.

National identity, in these circumstances, is a constantly renegotiated, contested, re-defined and re-imagined collective entity.⁵⁴ Previously, Hall has argued that cultural identities are not given but discursively constructed:

[As] identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of identical, naturally-constituted unity – an identity in its traditional meaning (that is, in an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation).⁵⁵

Barker relates this definition to the mobility that is typical of today’s globalized world: “cultures are no longer bounded by specific places but, through the migration of persons and the electronic transfer of ideas and images,

⁵⁴ Minelle Mahtani and Scott Salmon, "Site Reading? Globalization, Identity, and the Consumption of Place in Popular Music," in *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption*, ed. C. Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001), 165.

⁵⁵ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul duGay (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996), 4.

transgress established boundaries”.⁵⁶ Globalization and modernization have changed the traditional modes of living in Indonesia and people need to adjust to redefinitions of cultural identity. This general point about changing cultural identities can best be illustrated by looking at changes in gender ideology and women’s identities.

Gender Ideology in New Order Indonesia

In Indonesia, since the colonial era, women’s identities have depended on “the ethnic and religious group to which they belonged” because “women’s membership of families and religious and ethnic groups has been considered more important than their membership of their polity”.⁵⁷ Even when the state has tried to regulate women’s lives, community expectations have defeated these attempts. For example, during the colonial era the government tried, but failed, to stop the practice of parents marrying their daughters off at a very young age. After Independence, again, the state tried, but failed, to eliminate discrimination against women in marriage with the Marriage Law of 1974, since this was subject to religious code and ethnic tradition. While Indonesian women have always had considerable freedom in physical and social mobility, economic activity, control of their own property and the right to acquire knowledge, they are still likely to see themselves more as members of their community or ethnic group than as citizens of the nation. Further, between ethnic groups there are different expectations of the rights and obligations of women.⁵⁸

However, not all women were subordinated completely to their communities: the extent of their subordination was largely dependent on class and age. In the New Order era, women had moved from community to state

⁵⁶ Chris Barker, *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*, Issues in Cultural and Media Studies (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), 34.

⁵⁷ Susan Blackburn, "Women and Citizenship in Indonesia," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 34, no. 2 (1999): 189.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: 191-2.

subordination.⁵⁹ With the gendered state ideology of “State Ibuism”, state motherhood, women became mother-citizens,⁶⁰ as women’s citizenship was defined in terms of their difference from men. Through the *Panca Dharma Wanita* (Women’s Five Duties) which was regularly written into the five-yearly GBHN (Broad Guidelines for State Policy) and repeatedly propagated by the *Dharma Wanita*, the state-wide organization for the wives of civil servants, a woman’s role was primarily to be a supporter of their husband’s career, a procreator and an educator of children, and a supplementary income earner rather than as a citizen of the state. Ordinary women were expected to join the PKK (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Family Welfare Foundation), one of the main activities of which was an induction into being a “responsible mother” which entailed limiting the number of their offspring”.⁶¹ Women used contraception without broad information about side-effects and little or no after-care. This organization not only limited and defined women’s activity in the public sphere but also indicates how the state controlled sexuality.

Through this ideology the state dictated that to be good citizens, women should embody domestic qualities, to be a wife and mother. With this gendered responsibility, women have been disadvantaged and treated as second-class citizens in New Order Indonesia. However, women’s citizenship in terms of their status as wives and mothers has simultaneously been contested. The 1993 State Guidelines (GBHN) acknowledged women’s economic role, introduced the concept of women and men as equal partners and emphasized the importance of women as decision makers. This policy is evidence of the effort to change the role of women in nation building in accord with their growing importance to the economy.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 193.

⁶⁰ Julia Suryakusuma, "State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia " in *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, ed. Laurie J. Sears (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 98.

⁶¹ Blackburn, "Women and Citizenship in Indonesia," 196.

⁶² Robinson, "Indonesian Women: From Order Baru to Reformasi," 159.

New Female Identities in *Reformasi* Indonesia

There are several elements of the debate about the identity, including sexuality, of women. A publicly popular one is about the wearing of the veil, which many regard, perhaps over-simply, as also symbolic ('iconic') of other issues of the personal expression of identity. The far-reaching implications of changes in women's education and work, which began during the New Order, are becoming more obvious, as women more often take advantage of new freedoms of expression and new forms of citizenship.

With the increasing rate of literacy and the importance of mass-media in their daily life, many women, especially from the middle and upper classes of society, have become more aware of their rights as citizens and want to be active in political organization and expression. As noted by Blackburn, Indonesian women now expect gender equality: "most women want many of the things that most men do".⁶³ Budianta says that in the post-*Reformasi* era, in terms of identity, both outside and within the dominant paradigm of state-defined womanhood, women have begun to resist and reformulate the New Order gender ideology. However, these processes are often not visible, as they occur at a grassroots level "of plural, community-based groups in less structured organizations, working on basic humanitarian issues (land rights, human rights, and economic rights) with a growing political consciousness".⁶⁴

Indonesian women are familiar with mobility. Since most of Indonesia is still rural, urbanization - physical migration from rural to urban areas principally for the purposes of work and education - is a common phenomenon. This physical movement offers the promise of social mobility, a class transition from lower to middle class society and cultural mobility; it may also involve cultural adjustment and the experience of uprootedness. But rural women do not have to physically

⁶³ Susan Blackburn, "Gender Relations in Indonesia: What Women Want," in *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, ed. Grayson Lloyd and Shannon Smith (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 2001), 271.

⁶⁴ Melani Budianta, "Plural Identities: Indonesian Women's Redefinition of Democracy in the Post-*Reformasi* Era," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 36, no. 1 (2002): 35.

migrate to be affected by changing values: the mobility of cultural values or phenomena is made possible through media such as radio, newspapers, and television. Mass media has led to the circulation of values such as individualism, self-reliance, assertiveness, and freedom in sexuality. None of these values is traditionally Indonesian. But they are having their effects in women's lives.

For example, in recent years there have been vigorous debates about polygamy. In 1983 the Marriage Law, which is still the legal framework in Indonesia, was reformed in its prescriptions covering marriage, divorce, polygamy and concubinage, particularly for male civil servants. It introduced a requirement for husbands to obtain permission from their superiors before taking a second wife or divorcing. Women were prohibited from becoming the second, the third or the fourth wife of a civil servant, but they could marry a private citizen if they get consent from his first wife.

In recent years young women have vigorously contested the view that polygamy is endorsed by Islam, although "Muslim conservatives have stepped to the fore in public debates and vigorously promoted polygyny and early marriage (*nikah dini* or *nikah sirrih*) as solutions to what they view as a moral crisis".⁶⁵ Munti conducted research into a range of media responses to the 'polygamy award' conducted by Puspo Wardoyo, a roast chicken restaurant businessman who has four wives. Although polygamy is endorsed by the state and has long been a part of Javanese tradition, especially among upper class males, the great majority of respondents (63%), according to *Femina* magazine, do not agree with it. The pro-polygamy lobby argues that polygamy is sustained by Islam and it prevents extra-marital affairs and prostitution. Moreover, it is argued, that due to the size of the female population this allows all women to enter into marriage. The anti-polygamy lobby states that Islam discourages polygamy because to practice polygamy a husband should have permission from his wife and he should be fair

⁶⁵ Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "The New Muslim Romance: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Marriage among Educated Javanese Youth," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2005): 454.

in everything to all of his wives, but such ‘fairness’ is not humanly possible.⁶⁶ One of the popular Indonesian films which takes up the issue of polygamy is *Bebagi Suami* (Husband to Share) which can be considered as a ‘soft’ feminist anti-polygamy line. The director Dinata does not show explicitly her opposition to polygamy, but she provokes viewers, especially women viewers, to contemplate the issue through the story she presents.

This is one of the issues being taken up by the new generation of Muslim feminists. They contend that such issues as “women’s political leadership, women’s position in the household and in marriage (divorce, polygyny), and women’s right to interpret the Qur’an and the hadith” must be reconsidered through a contextual interpretation of the Qur’an. Through contextual analysis, they “deconstruct the present interpretation of women’s *kodrat* (religiously ordained position)”.⁶⁷ Mulia, for example, offers an alternative interpretation to a number of verses in the Qur’an and at the same time shows how dominant interpretations were influenced by misogynist and patriarchal views.⁶⁸ Wieringa has noted a number of Muslim feminist scholars such as Lily Zakiah Munir, Ratna Batara Munti, and Hindun Anisah, who “distinguish between the basic principles of Islam, which are unchangeable, *fiqh*, and the thoughts of the *ulama* (Muslim scholars), who are only human after all and therefore prone to be biased”.⁶⁹

The new ‘globalized Islam’ has its feminist spokeswomen in today’s Indonesia, and this can be seen most readily in public discussions about the veil. In the past, women wearing the veil demonstrated that they were devout Muslims or had already made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Women wearing the veil were mostly seen around Islamic schools and university campuses. In 1988, for example, girls could not wear the veil to school because it broke the national

⁶⁶ Munti, *Demokrasi Keintiman: Seksualitas Di Era Global [Democracy of Intimacy: Sexuality in Global Era]*, 180-88.

⁶⁷ Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, "Islamization in Indonesia: Women Activists' Discourses," *Signs* 32, no. 1 (2006): 7.

⁶⁸ Musda Mulia, *Muslimah Reformis: Perempuan Pembaru Keagamaan [Reform Muslim Women: Religious Revival Women]*, Cet. 1. ed., Khazanah Ilmu-Ilmu Islam (Bandung: Mizan : Didistribusikan oleh Mizan Media Utama, 2005).

⁶⁹ Wieringa, "Islamization in Indonesia: Women Activists' Discourses," 6.

school uniform code. In a study into the number of young women converting to the veil in Java, Brenner has argued that “the decision to wear Islamic-style clothing both effects and signifies a transformation of self for women in Java” and “veiling reflects the dynamic interplay of the personal and the social as Indonesian Muslims face an uncertain modernity”.⁷⁰ According to Brenner, veiling in Java is not the same as in the Middle East, where the veil makes it “easier for women to earn a living outside the home while maintaining societal esteem and self-respect”. In contrast, Javanese women “have rarely been confined to ‘private’ or domestic spheres, nor are public space considered a primarily male domain”.⁷¹ She has even noted that some women wearing the veil as recently as 1993 were “often branded as fanatical (*fanatiek*), sanctimonious, or merely misguided” and it was believed that veiling “might interfere with a woman’s career advancement”.⁷² However, now the veil has become more popular and many women activists have even begun adopting it. Their reason for veiling was not derived from “a moralizing and patriarchal social pressure”.⁷³ They refuse the interpretations of Islam “based on extremist political agendas or historically and culturally-specific patriarchal interpretations of the Qur’an that are biased against women”. They form a community to promote “a form of Islam and Muslim tolerance that recognizes women’s rights as a core Muslim value, rather than maintaining or imposing restrictions on women”.⁷⁴

The gap between older and younger devout Muslims can also be noted from the different public perceptions of wearing the veil in Java. The older generation saw young women taking up the veil as “threatening because it seems to announce that the standards of morality, religious practice, and social behaviour passed down from parents to their children are perceived by the children as

⁷⁰ Brenner, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women And "The Veil"," 674.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 675.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Clarisa Adamson, "Gendered Anxieties: Islam, Women's Rights, and Moral Hierarchy in Java," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2007): 10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 12.

faulty”.⁷⁵ From the perspective of the younger generation, their parents were not ‘aware’ and they had “relatively incomplete understanding of Islamic doctrine”.⁷⁶ The choice to take up the veil and the refusal to give in to pressure from parents suggests a growing individual awareness of a responsibility to conform to “God’s law as it is established in the Qur’an”; but at the same time it demonstrates their distinction from the tradition of understanding Islam as religion.⁷⁷ Here, it seems, the individualism accompanying cultural mobility in Indonesia can also conform to the new Islamization. The voluntary choice to wear the veil is an example of the spirit of individualism in young Muslim women.

Like any cultural object, the veil has many meanings. In the mid-1990s some fashion shows began to be held which focused on designing Muslim clothing. Many actresses wearing the veil merely added to its popularity. On the other hand, in 2002 the *Bupati Cianjur* (the Regent of Cianjur) in West Java encouraged the people in this region to wear Islamic clothing whereby women wear the veil and men wear the *koko*.⁷⁸ This is not because of fashion, but because of concern about public morality.⁷⁹ Swastika has noted the rise of Muslim youth culture as a counter to Western popular culture. Unlike most of the young people of their age, devout Muslim girls tend to spend their leisure time reading Islamic books, Islamic literature, attending Muslim forums and being active in Muslim organizations. They do not like going to shopping malls because for them it is meaningless consumerism.⁸⁰

Other young women respond positively to the ‘girl power’ ideal that emerged in popular culture in the 1990s. To respond to the emergence of ‘girl culture’ or ‘girl power’, many sinetron and films have been produced with teenage

⁷⁵ Brenner, "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women And "The Veil", 682.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 683.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ *Baju koko* or *baju taqwa* (‘pious’ shirt, a kind of loose shirt with polo neck and special hat)

⁷⁹ Nuraini Juliastuti, "Politik Pakaian Muslim [the Politics of Muslim Clothing]," Newsletter KUNCI, <http://kunci.or.id/2003>, (accessed 8 February 2006).

⁸⁰ Alia Swastika, "Anak Muda Islam Indonesia 'Lagunya Enak, Penampilannya Sopan' [Indonesian Islamic Youngster 'the Nice Tone, the Polite Appearance]," KUNCI, <http://www.kunci.or.id/teks/13muda.htm2003>, (accessed 13 January 2006).

girls as the principal actors and teen themes dominating the storyline. Girls' magazines have also responded to this global phenomenon and have made 'girl power' the main theme in their editions. 'Girl power' in Indonesia is translated as independence, self-confidence, being competitive, caring of the environment, and cherishing herself. It is about redefining the concept of being a woman in patriarchal society and introducing the idea that being female is wonderful. Rather than seeing herself as the victim of patriarchal society, for many young women, 'girl power' glorifies femininity as power. 'Girl power' also wants to challenge the assumption of the absence of female power. While it still appreciates male ability, 'girl power' wants to show that there are many skills in which females are superior, such as fluency, caring, sensitivity, leadership, and friendship. However, there are some contradictions: a girl is still expected to be beautiful and girl power stresses femininity, but on the other hand girls are expected to be equal with males.⁸¹

The opening of taboos on discussing sexuality can also be seen from the recent popularity of *sastra wangi* (chick lit) in Indonesia. The late 1990s witnessed the growth of a number of female writers, well-known as *sastra wangi* who openly focussed their writing on the female body and sexuality. Through the construction of the female characters in their novels, they questioned the meaning of virginity and orgasms from a female perspective.⁸² In Lestari's view these

⁸¹ ———, "Apakah Saya Feminis? Mengeja Girl Power Dalam Majalah Gadis [Am I Feminist? Reading Girl Power in the Magazine Gadis]," *Jurnal Perempuan* 37 (2004): 65-75.

⁸² Lestari Manggong, "Menelanjangi Shakuntala: Mengupas Tubuh dan Seksualitas Dalam Diskursus Pascakolonial [Denuding Shakuntala: Discussing Body and Sexuality in Postcolonial Discourses]," in *Seks, Teks, Konteks : Tubuh Dan Seksualitas Dalam Wacana Lokal Dan Global [Sex, Text, Context: Body and Sexuality in Local and Global Discourse]*, ed. Taufiq Hanafi, Rasmus Budhyono, Abdul Hamid, Sandya Maulana, Hikmat Gumelar, and Bonardo Maulana Wahono (Bandung: Kelompok Belajar Nalar Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Padjadjaran, 2004); Mariana Amiruddin, "Perempuan, Stigmatisasi Seksual, Dan Pernyataan Tubuh [Women, Sexual Stigmatization, and Body Statement]," in *Seks, Teks, Konteks: Tubuh Dan Seksualitas Dalam Wacana Lokal Dan Global [Sex, Text, Context: Body and Sexuality in Local and Global Discourse]*, ed. Taufiq Hanafi, Rasmus Budhyono, Abdul Hamid, Sandya Maulana, Hikmat Gumelar, and Bonardo Maulana Wahono (Bandung: Kelompok Belajar Nalar Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Padjadjaran, 2004).

works show both an internalisation of and an opposition to patriarchal values.⁸³ Pramodawardani has argued that the way the writers question sexuality supports Foucault's argument that sexuality is socially constructed.⁸⁴

Nevertheless there has been a considerable amount of criticism about the way these writers depict sexuality and breaking taboos. Their critics consider such writing as vulgar and pornographic.⁸⁵ 'Pornography' was also an accusation thrown at the erotic dancing of Inul Daratista during public debates about her performances in 2000. Rhoma Irama, as the head of PAMMI or *Persatuan Artis Music Melayu Indonesia* (the Association of Melayu Music Artists), asked Inul to 'repent' and stop her 'erotic gyrating' because it seemed pornographic, and was considered immoral. However, the pro-Inul faction gave her sympathy and supported her right to freedom of expression and the freedom of the press to report it. Inul argued that a woman's expression of her sensuality indicated the gradual recognition of sensual expression as part of women's rights.⁸⁶ Obviously there is a good deal of confusion about the meaning of 'pornography'⁸⁷ here but, as in the West, public criticism and attempts to control sexuality are directed more at women than at men.

Amid these extremes of freedom and restriction, piety and the breaking of taboos, women's cultural identities are more mobile than they have ever been.

⁸³ Indah Lestari, "Tubuh(Ku) Menari Di Teks(Mu) [(My) Body Dances on (Your) Text]," in *Seks, Teks, Konteks: Tubuh Dan Seksualitas Dalam Wacana Lokal Dan Global [Sex, Text, Context: Body in Local and Global Discourse]*, ed. Taufiq Hanafi, Rasmus Budhyono, Abdul Hamid, Sandya Maulana, Hikmat Gumelar, and Bonardo Maulana Wahono (Bandung: Kelompok Belajar Nalar Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Padjadjaran, 2004), 14.

⁸⁴ Jaleswari Pramodawardani, "Merayakan Tubuh Perempuan: Lesbian, Seksualitas, Dan Kekuasaan [Celebrating the Female Body: Lesbianism, Sexuality, and Authority]," in *Seks, Teks, Konteks : Tubuh Dan Seksualitas Dalam Wacana Lokal Dan Global [Sex, Text, and Context: Body and Sexuality in Global and Local Discourses]*, ed. Taufiq Hanafi, Rasmus Budhyono, Abdul Hamid, Sandya Maulana, Hikmat Gumelar, and Bonardo Maulana Wahono (Bandung: Kelompok Belajar Nalar Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Padjadjaran, 2004).

⁸⁵ Manggong, "Menelanjangi Shakuntala: Mengupas Tubuh and Seksualitas Dalam Diskursus Pascakolonial [Denuding Shakuntala: Discussing Body and Sexuality in Postcolonial Discourses]," 34; Lestari, "Tubuh(Ku) Menari Di Teks(Mu) [(My) Body Dances on (Your) Text]," 8.

⁸⁶ Munti, *Demokrasi Keintiman: Seksualitas Di Era Global [Democracy of Intimacy: Sexuality in Global Era]*, 204-8.

⁸⁷ I will talk about this in Chapter 9

Girl power and Muslim piety, social activism and consumerism, further education and migrant employment, all meet and conflict among women of all ages, regions and classes. Many New Order expectations of women are still present, but complicated by the accelerated rate of changing ideas about what women want and are capable of. All of this indicates that, as Indonesia is experiencing accelerated cultural mobility, there are now many more and more complex and shifting versions of 'female' in the public arena that women, especially young women, must negotiate among in constructing their own dynamic identities. They are doing this in a more complex, contested (often aggressively contested) and negotiable context than was the case only a few years ago.

Conclusion

A consideration of various issues which have been discussed by scholars from many disciplines, shows that Indonesia is experiencing a deep and complex cultural transition. Just as it is almost impossible for scholars and commentators to offer a coherent picture out of this complex and ever-shifting cultural transformation, no sinetron could be expected to respond to all of its facets. However, at least we may have a background against which to assess the ways in which *Misteri Gunung Merapi* represents gender and power in a period of intense cultural transformation.

As the sinetron, as part of popular culture, deals with current issues in order to be 'up to date' for viewers, what issues does this particular sinetron foreground for its intended audience? Given that popular culture reflects the values, interests or characteristics of the audience, how and to what extent does *Misteri Gunung Merapi* reproduce those of Indonesian people to provide what these Indonesian audiences want? In the next chapter I will discuss the significance of *Misteri Gunung Merapi*'s popularity in the wider context of the entertainment industry.