

Proceedings of the International Symposium

**PERFORMING THE SELF AND
PLAYING WITH THE OTHERNESS:**

CLOTHING AND COSTUMING UNDER
TRANSCULTURAL CONDITIONS



Proceedings of the International Symposium

*“Performing the Self and Playing with the Otherness:
Clothing and Costuming under Transcultural Conditions”*

held on October 26th, 2020

Editors:

Yukako YOSHIDA, Ranny RASTATI, Manami GOTO

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Andrian WIKAYANTO

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ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

Date: October 26th, 2020

Venue: Online

Moderators:

Ikuya Tokoro (ILCAA, the director of KKLO)

Ibnu Nadzir D. M. SC (PMB- BRIN)

Co-hosted by:

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Core Project (Anthropology)-The Potential Value of Indigenous Knowledge in Managing Hazards in Asia and Africa: The Anthropological Explorations into the Linkage of Micro-Macro Perspectives 2, ILCAA, TUFS.

Theme ■



International Symposium

“Performing the Self and Playing with the Otherness: Clothing and Costuming under Transcultural Conditions”

At present, we are living in a transcultural world, where people, goods, cultures, and information easily cross the boundaries of regions and nations. Given this situation, we have come to understand the facial and bodily expressions in new ways. For instance, innumerable images of the face and body appear on the social media, magazines, in movies, and other platforms. What these images seem to indicate is that, on the one hand, there is an emerging universal definition of “beauty,” and a beautiful face or body. On the other hand, there is an increasing interest in the locally or culturally specific facial or bodily practices, such as veiling the face in Islamic regions, or the phenomenon of “cosplay” to allow individuals to experience the “otherness.”

The changing attitudes that have given rise to new preferences and fascinations suggest pertinent questions. How do people represent, perform, or transform themselves, in transcultural settings? How does their choice of clothing, costuming, or acts of self-projecting, such as taking selfies reflect such conditions? How do people construct, invent, or negotiate their cultural identities through such acts? In this international symposium, the scholars from Indonesia and Japan will explore these questions.

Presenter's ■
profile





Masami K YAMAGUCHI

Chuo University

Masami K Yamaguchi is a professor from the Department of Psychology in Chuo University, Tokyo, Japan. Since 2017, she has been leading an interdisciplinary research project titled “Construction of the Face-Body studies in transcultural conditions,” sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (MEXT Grant-in Aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas). She holds a PhD in Psychology from Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan. Her teaching and researching career include being a Research fellow at the ATR Human Information Processing Research Laboratories in Kyoto; an Associate professor at the Department of Psychology in Fukushima University, Fukushima, Japan; and a Research fellow at PRESTO, Japan Science and Technology Agency.



Tetsuya KONO

Rikkyo University

Kono, Tetsuya is a professor at the Rikkyo University, Department of Education, Tokyo, Japan. He holds a PhD (philosophy) from the Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. His main research interests are phenomenology, philosophy of the mind, and philosophical psychology. Recently, he has also taken interest in environmental philosophy. He teaches the philosophy of education, moral education, and special need education in the Department of Education of Rikkyo University. Major publications (books, all in Japanese):

Everything Will Revert to Wild Someday (2016), Phenomenology of the Environment (2016), Phenomenology of Body and Special Needs Education (2015), Phenomenology of Boundaries (2014), Introduction to Philosophy for Children (2014), Consciousness doesn't Exist (2011), The Ecological Self (2011), Re-questioning the Concept of Morality (2011), etc.



Momo SHIOYA

The University of Shimane

Momo SHIOYA is an associate professor of anthropology and Asian studies at the Department of Area Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Education, The University of Shimane. She obtained her Ph.D. from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Her current research topic is Clothing and Identity in Indonesia, with Central Java as the primary field of research. She is also investigating artists and studios in Japan. Her publications include “Increasing Interest in Islamic Clothes and ‘Correctness’ in Indonesia” (2018) and “The Wedding Ceremony as an Expression of Modern Muslim Identity: A Case of Central Java.” (2015).



Widjajanti M SANTOSO

Research Center for Society and Culture

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

Widjajanti M Santoso is a researcher from P2MB-LIPI. She received her B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Indonesia and her M.A. from the Australian National University. Her focus was on gender and the media. Her interest in fashion started early, by discussing the meaning that whiteness has to the Indonesians. Recently, she and her colleagues have published "Fesyen Muslimah dan Transformasi Kultural," discussing the veil and its impact on the Indonesian society. Her other works include conference papers such as 'Muslim(ah) Fashion, a Contested Commodification and Middle Class in Indonesia' (2016), 'Upin and Ipin and the Discourse of Diversity in Indonesia's Case' (2017), 'Women in Nationalism Movement, Forgotten Subject in Post Secularism' (2018), as well as a book chapter 'Gender Politics in Higher Education' (2020).



Yustina Devi ARDHIANI

Sanata Dharma University

Yustina Devi Ardhiani is a lecturer at Sanata Dharma University in the Cultural Studies Graduate Program. Her dissertation entitled, "Satire of the Women's Body of the Sahita Art Group on the Performing Arts Stage", is aligned with her interest in performance art, her field of study. Her interest in this field is also demonstrated through her work as an editor of a book entitled *Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia Pasca Orde Baru* (2014). The book contains a collection of researches related to the performing arts by various researchers from Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Australia, which was previously (in 2010) presented at an international conference titled, *Cultural Performance in Post New Order* at Sanata Dharma University, where Ardhiani served as the event's coordinator.

Email: devilitto@yahoo.com



Yukako YOSHIDA

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Yukako Yoshida is an assistant professor at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA). She holds a PhD from the University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan. Her main interest lies in cultural anthropology and anthropology of performing arts. Her work includes research on dance, drama, music, mask culture, and Hindu rituals in Bali. Recently, she has been investigating the transmission and development of Balinese performing arts in Jakarta. Her English publications include the 'Masks as Performers: Topeng, a Balinese Masked Dance Drama' (2018, in *An Anthropology of Things*) and 'Balinese Dances in Multi-religious Jakarta: A Preliminary Study of Muslim Learners and Hindu Instructors' (2018, in *Islam and Cultural Diversity in Southeast Asia (Vol.2)*). She is also an amateur gamelan player and a performer of Balinese mask dance.



Ranny RASTATI

Research Center for Society and Culture

National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

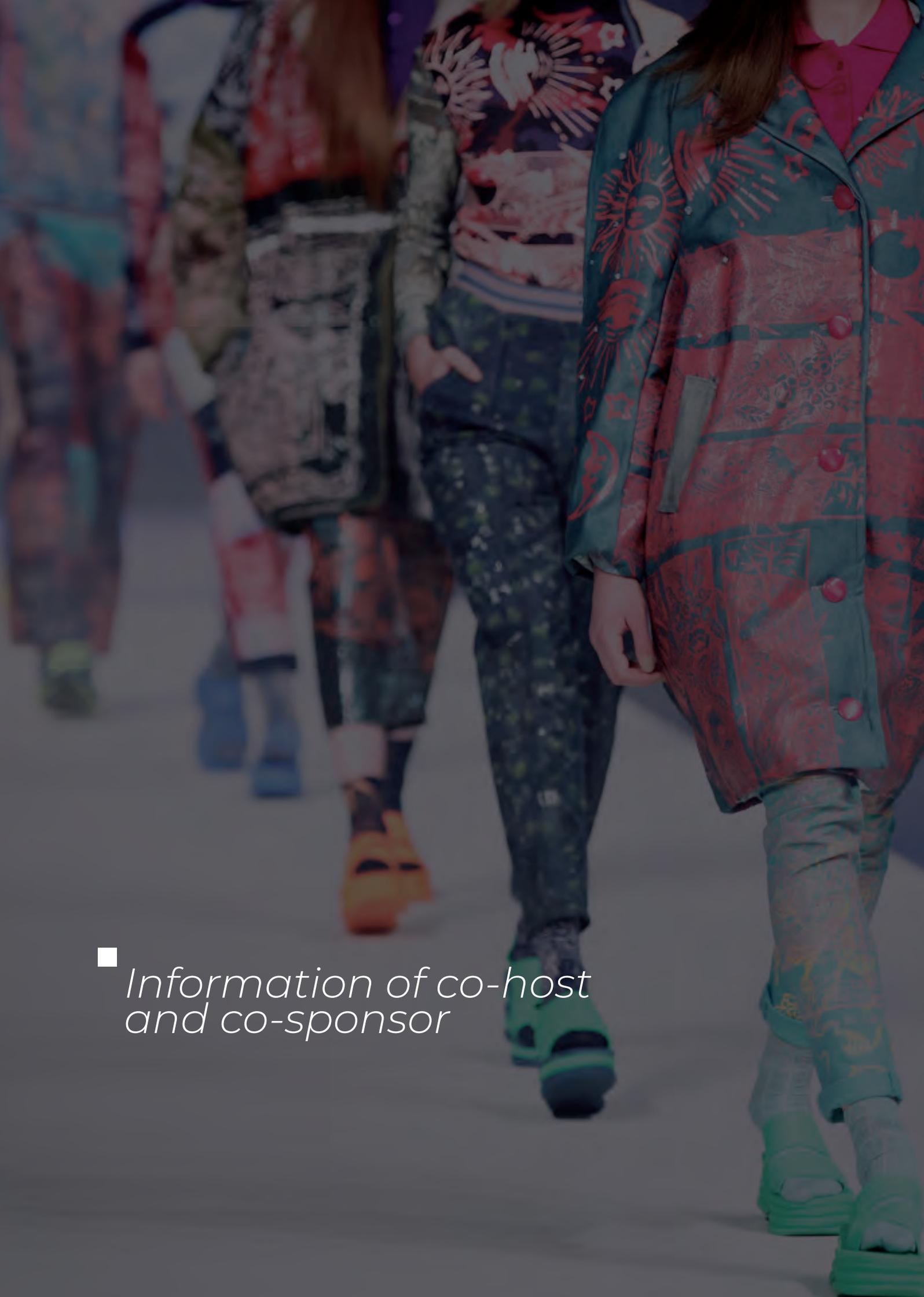
Ranny Rastati, often called Chibi, is a Researcher at the Research Center for Society and Culture- National Research and Innovation Agency, Republic of Indonesia (PMB-BRIN). She received her bachelor's in Japanese Studies at the University of Indonesia and master's in Communication Studies at the University of Indonesia. Her publications include popular books, such *Ohayou Gozaimasu* (2014) and *Korean celebrity: Daehan Minguk Manse* (2015). The articles published in journals include those on hijab cosplay (2015), cyberbullying (2016), Islamic manga (2017), media literacy (2018), halal tourism (2018), cosplay as creative da'wah (2019), and cosplay tourism (2020). Her research interests include cosplay, Japan, and Korean pop culture, and media studies. Her current research topics are hijab cosplay as a method of preaching Islam, cosplay as contents tourism, and halal tourism, and these have been presented in the USA, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Since 2013, she also manages a charitable nonprofit organization, namely, the Chibi Ranran Help Center (www.chibiranranhelpcenter.com). Her works can be viewed via her personal blog rannyrastati.wordpress.com. She can be contacted at ranny.rastati@gmail.com.



Manami GOTO

JSPS/ TUFSS/ the University of Exeter

Manami Goto is a postdoctoral research fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and an honorary research fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. Her main areas of interest are dress, material culture, oral history, and the rituals of women in the Persian Gulf. Manami holds a PhD in Arab and Islamic Studies from the University of Exeter, and her thesis is focused on the female face mask and its relation to socio-cultural identities in the coastal cities of southern Iran and the eastern Arabian Peninsula. She is currently researching the dress politics of the Gulf Arab states, analyzing how migrant Iranian women have utilized different types of dress to express their sense of belonging, integrate into the society, and reject certain social norms imposed on them.



*Information of co-host
and co-sponsor*



MEXT Grant in aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas “Construction of the Face-Body studies in Transcultural Conditions”

URL : kao-shintai.jp/index-en.html

Principal Investigator : Masami K Yamaguchi (Chuo University)

Purpose of the Research Project

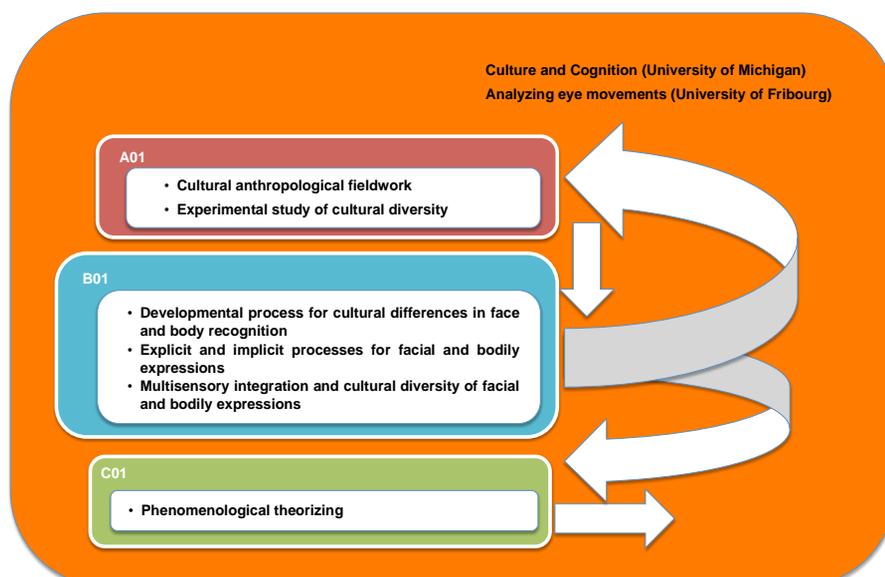
Facial and bodily expressions are mediums through which nothing can be hidden; they conspicuously reveal individual histories and allow a person to be read by others. In the current atmosphere of growing globalization, this project aims to bring awareness regarding the unconscious facial and bodily expressions and cultural differences in such expressions. Using psychological, anthropological, and philosophical perspectives, this research aims to reveal differences in facial and bodily expressions across diverse cultures, and to explore the possibilities for developing a cultural understanding through faces and bodies of members.

This study aims to promote the understanding of other people and cultures by bringing unconscious facial and bodily expressions to conscious awareness. Various cultural differences have been explained through such as eye tracking data. By bringing primitive, unconscious facial and bodily expressions to conscious awareness, this study aims to promote the understanding of the communication of various cultures, and the acceptance of heterogeneous

people. Considering the cultural and individual variations, our Japanese research group in the East Asian try to clarify the cultural commonalities and differences in Face and Body.

Content of the Research Project

This study aims to use an anthropological (A01) and experimental psychological approach (B01). Studies on implicit and explicit learning process of faces and their development process in cognitive science (behavioral experiments, eye tracking data and physiological responses), and functional brain imaging will be used to investigate the neural bases of these processes. Large-scale data collection will also be conducted to investigate the diversification of facial recognition and bodily expression capacities and strategies (A01 and B01). For A01, research will be conducted using a portable experimental system for cultural anthropological fieldwork. For the comparative phenomenological research on facial and bodily expression (C01), historical and cultural analyses will be used to interpret the use of cosmetics and other behaviors related to facial and bodily expressions.



Research Center for Society and Culture – National Research and Innovation Agency (PMB-BRIN), Republic of Indonesia (previously known as Research Center for Society and Culture – Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PMB-LIPI) is a research center under the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – National Research and Innovation Agency, Republic of Indonesia (ISSH-BRIN). PMB-BRIN's research and academic activities focus on social and cultural issues in Indonesia. The PMB-BRIN staff is a team of passionate researcher whose backgrounds span multiple disciplines, and consists of researchers who holding Ph.D. Degree, master's degree and bachelor's degree.

The grand design of our research is divided into four research clusters: 1). Multiculturalism and Culture; 2). Religion and Philosophy; 3). Social Ecology and Society Welfare; 4). Law and Society.

PMB-BRIN has a vision to become a center for research reference on society and culture in national and international level. The mission as follows: Discovering and developing social sciences in the field of society and culture, building a scientific community, and disseminating research result to the public at large.

PMB-BRIN has functions to carry out several duties including:

1. Preparing policy formulation, guidelines and provision of technical guidance of research in the field of society and culture.
2. Designing research programs and planning in the field of society and culture.
3. Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting research results in the field of society and culture.

Research topics that have been conducted include: 1). Plurality and Minority; 2). New Media and Social Change; 3). State and Sharia in Indonesia; 4). Economic, social, and cultural rights; 5). Science, Technology and Society; 6). Forestry, Maritime and Urban studies. In 2020-2024, PMB-BRIN has focused on the research of social change in the era of technological revolution.

Address: Widya Graha 6F, Jalan Gatot Subroto No 10 Jakarta Selatan 12710, Indonesia

Phone: +6221 5701232

Website: pmb.brin.go.id

Facebook Fanpage/ Instagram/ Twitter/ YouTube: @PMBBRIN

Email: pmb@mail.lipi.go.id





Kota Kinabalu Liaison Office (KKLO) of Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Director: Ikuya Tokoro (professor of ILCAA)

KKLO is in the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) which was established by the Sabah Provincial Government in 1985. It serves as an integrated base for social, economical and cultural studies and academic exchange activities in Sabah with the generous cooperation and assistance from IDS.

KKLO aims to promote international academic exchanges, forming international networks, strengthening joint research activities in order to advance the studies on Southeast Asian Countries.

Address:

Kota Kinabalu Liaison Office, ILCAA-TUFS

Institute for Development Studies(IDS), c/o, IDS lot2-5, Wisma Sedia, Off Jalan Pintas, Penampang, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Phone: +60-88-450500

URL: http://meis2.aacore.jp/base_kotakinabalu-lang=en.html

Inquiry About Overseas Satellite Offices:

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Phone: +81-42-330-5600, 5603

Fax: +81-42-330-5610

Core Project (Anthropology) at Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

The Potential Value of Indigenous Knowledge in Managing Hazards in Asia and Africa: The Anthropological Explorations into the Linkage of Micro-Macro Perspectives 2

Website: <http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/en/projects/anthropology-core>

Term : 2016.4 –2022.3
Leader : Ryoko NISHII
Members : Aya KAWAI, Kaori KAWAI, Hirohide KURIHARA,
Masahiko TOGAWA, Ikuya TOKORO, Yukako YOSHIDA



Globalization and modernization have generated hazards and risks across the globe that cannot be fully understood from a Western-centric viewpoint. Virtually all aspects of human lives are being endangered by various conflicts, environmental changes, population changes (e.g., the issue of marginal villages), economic crises, and natural disasters, which are uncontrollable by humans. As this situation escalates, people have started to believe that they have the power to control political, economic, social, as well as natural phenomena with reason-based modern technology in the interest of humans. Though this fallacy has been met with widespread opposition, effective solutions are yet to be found.

The main objectives of this research project are to investigate 'indigenous knowledge' or the way of doing things unique to individual regions in Asia and Africa by using the theories and methods that have been established through our 'explorations into the linkage of micro-macro perspectives', the main theme of the Core Research Program of Anthropology, and by integrating the isolated knowledge of coping with hazards and risks into unified human knowledge. This knowledge can be verified in and adapted not only to Japan, but to anywhere in the world. The mission of the anthropologists committed to the Core Research Program is to pave the way to move indigenous knowledge from Asia and Africa beyond individual experiences and apply it in a wider range of contexts, by sharing the achievements of this research with people inside and outside of Japan, thereby contributing to resolving several issues in Asia and Africa.



Greetings

Masami K. Yamaguchi

Chuo University

Project reader of MEXT Grant in aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas“Construction of the Face-Body studies in transcultural conditions”

I would like to thank LIPI and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for taking the opportunity to hold an international workshop online. I am sorry that the workshop scheduled for March was postponed. I hope that after the Coronavirus pandemic is over, we will be able to hold an ‘offline meeting’ as soon as possible.

This workshop is funded by a FACE&BODY grant supported by JSPS. I will briefly discuss our grant project.

We want to clarify the ‘implicit’ cultural differences. There are many culturally specific facial expressions and body language movements that we usually do not notice. We usually see a difference in greetings between Western and Eastern cultures, namely shaking hands versus bowing. Nowadays, Japanese bowing has become popular. Especially during the Coronavirus pandemic, bowing is a very appropriate greeting style for maintaining social distancing.

We are also studying Japanese pop culture based on Japanese technology. This is a powerful tool to change the ownership of our own faces and bodies. By using this useful tool, we can go beyond our own body. For instance, I spoke in a virtual reality chat, where chat users use avatars.

This is a unique phenomenon to think of one’s own body and body ownership.

As a Japanese face researcher, I notice a stark difference between Western and Japanese cultures regarding the wearing of sanitary masks. In Japan, even before the Coronavirus pandemic, wearing a sanitary mask is common practice.

On the contrary, Western people do not seem to like wearing them.

At the last winter Olympic game, I was surprised to see the Czech Republic gold medallist wearing goggles at the press conference. She won the gold medal unexpectedly and did not have any makeup, so she covered her face by wearing her goggles. Young Japanese women wear sanitary masks to cover their faces when they do not wear makeup. Meaning, Young Japanese women cover the lower half of their faces, whereas young Western women cover the upper half of their faces.

The difference between Westerners and East Asians is that they perceive the mouth and eyes differently. Emojis also suggest this cultural difference. That is, Western emojis show expression through the mouth, and eastern emojis showed expressions in the eyes.

The key point is the cultural

differences in perceiving facial expressions. Facial expressions were considered to be universal, as seen in famous studies by Charles Darwin and Paul Ekman. However, recent psychological data have shown that facial expressions are culturally based. A significant difference was observed between Western and East Asian cultures. Our collaborator, Professor Roberto Caldara’s studies showed that East Asians detect facial expressions from the eyes and Westerners detect facial expressions from the mouth. We can see this difference in the average East Asian and Western person’s facial expressions.

My lab and collaborators in Switzerland, Italy, and England have tried to study the developmental aspect of this cultural difference in perceiving facial expressions. We measured infants’ eye movements while observing the facial expressions of British and Japanese females, and investigated the origin of cultural differences in eye movement based on facial expressions. Our results suggested that even 7-month-old infants showed cultural differences. Meaning, Japanese infants see the eyes while British infants see the mouth when



perceiving facial expressions. This implies that the cultural influence of facial expression perception is established before the first year of life.

In the development of face recognition, perceptual narrowing is a well-known phenomenon that shows the adaptation of one's own group (culture). As adults, we can identify the faces of individuals in our own group easily, but it is more difficult to identify faces of individuals from different groups' (country, culture). This is called the 'Other-Race Effect'. However, before 6 months of age, infants can identify all faces, even from different species, equally. As they

develop further, at 10 months of age, infants lose this ability and it is narrowed down to only their own group's faces. This phenomenon is not just restricted to faces but also applies for languages. Infants of the same age narrow their hearing ability only to recognise their own group's speech.

However, recent multicultural studies have shown different results. Data from Malaysia indicates different development forms. We have to understand this further and therefore, we must discuss this cultural effect in Asian countries.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

CLOTHING AS AN EXTENSION OF THE BODY: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF CLOTHING UNDER TRANSCULTURAL CONDITIONS

Tetsuya Kono
Rikkyo University

1. Introduction: phenomenology of the clothing experience

In this paper, I discuss the implication of clothing for human beings from the viewpoint of phenomenology. Phenomenology, a philosophical movement initiated by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), is the philosophical study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. It describes meaningful experiences and analyzes the structures of the experienced world. The central structure of consciousness is intentionality, its interpreting ability. Intentionality works to “see X as A.” We see one object as a “tree,” another as a “person,” and another as a “dog.” The task of phenomenology is to describe such experiences from the viewpoint of the experiencing subject and analyze how the subject interacts with the surrounding world with their own interpretative activities.

From this theoretical background, phenomenology has studied various types of experiences. For example, there are bodily experiences such as perception, bodily awareness, embodied action, or desire; cognitive experiences such as thinking, memory, imagination, or volition; intersubjective experiences such as sympathy, imitation, or emotion; and institutionalized (or social) experiences such as linguistic communication, social role taking, gender, or disabilities.

Wearing clothing is a kind of bodily experience. It is also an intersubjective and institutionalized (or social) experience since clothes not only physically protect the human body but also show certain meanings to other people. I aim to analyze the experience of wearing clothes in the intersubjective and social context from a phenomenological perspective.

2. Functions of Clothes: Utility and Social Signs

Why do human beings wear clothes while other animals do not? In other words, what are the functions of clothing? There appear to be three primary functions.

The first is the utility to protect the body from damage, such as from low/high temperature, heat, poison, acids, shock, and slashing. Homo sapiens lost their fur during evolution. Thus, clothing has a compensative role to overcome the human body's weakness or rather as an enhancement to reinforce the functions of the human body.

The structure of an organism's body expresses the performance that can be expected from it. For example, the fixity of an insect's structure tells us that its intelligence is significantly constrained. In contrast, the human body is flexible and plastic, and even its fragility implies that human intelligence can be greatly expanded through various forms of learning. Just as so-called instinctive behavioral patterns in humans do not dominate behavior as much as in other animals and are largely open to learning through experience, the human body is full of “opening” or “room,” so to speak. It is fundamentally incomplete and in constant need of tools to assist, replace, and compensate for its own fragility and incompleteness. Clothes are one such tool.

However, we do not wear clothes only for its physiological practicality. The second function of clothes is that they symbolize social roles or positions. For example, clothing represents social positions such as status, affiliation, role, age, region, and gender. Typically, the uniforms of military personnel, policemen, religious people, and postmen, for example, represent their roles and status. In addition to social status, clothing also represents religion, politics, and ideology. For example, in Thailand, a yellow shirt symbolizes a group opposed to the political power of the Thaksin group, while a red shirt

symbolizes being pro-Thaksin. In Cambodia, black shirts and trousers and red scarves are symbols of the Khmer Rouge. Humans have thus used the language of clothing to communicate with each other. Similar to language, there are different vocabularies and rules in expression through clothing.

Accordingly, clothing as a display of social roles is also an extension of the body, because in various societies, social roles are expressed in the body with certain modifications. Body modification is the practice of intentionally adding long-term or irreversible deformations, wounds, or alterations to certain parts of the body. Examples include breast deformities, tattoos, circumcision, castration, skull deformities, skull perforations, tooth extractions, and foot dressings. Body modification is done to permanently imbue oneself with social roles and statuses such as gender, class, adulthood, mourning, marriage, punishment, and termination of rites of passage.

An individual's face is highly personal and strongly displays their characteristics. The same is true of the naked body, which vividly expresses one's history, characteristics, and abilities as an individual. Clothing suppresses the overt individuality of such nudity, neutralizes the directness of the body's flesh and blood expression, and cloaks it with symbols of social roles. Body modification and clothing equally represent such roles on the body. Clothing and makeup complement the body in this function. However, it may be that body modification is the embodiment of the roles of clothing and makeup. The boundary between the body and clothing is ambiguous.

3. Fashion

Physical protection and social roles are not the only functions of clothing. Ordinary people wear clothes because of their practicality, but it is rather rare that clothes are made and worn solely for practical purposes. We also never display our social role in our clothes when not at work. Military personnel do not wear uniforms on holidays.

People wear clothes for the pleasure of dressing up. Although many wear clothes to express their personality, it is hard to ignore the fashions of the time. While it is difficult to define the complex and long history of fashion, for the moment, we can define fashion as a contemporaneous or synchronic imitation of a style of appearance such as clothing and makeup. This imitation can spread so rapidly

that we might be tempted to call it "contagious." Tradition, however, is the diachronic imitation of a style, the acceptance of a past style.

According to Washida (2012), a Japanese phenomenologist, clothes depict metamorphosis, which is considered the third function here. People imitate others to become like them. Some people imitate the clothing styles of their seniors or ancestors, following traditions. Others imitate their remarkable contemporaries and, by doing so, follow fashion trends. In both cases, people want to be others, but it means that they want to be possessed by others. In traditional ceremonies or rites, some people wear clothes that symbolize animals, gods, spirits, demons, and other imaginary beings. Wearing clothes is, in a sense, a kind of possession by what those clothes represent. In the second function, symbolizing social roles or positions, wearing a uniform is to be possessed by an anonymous person who plays a certain social role. Wearing the policeman's uniform is to be an anonymous officer, discarding one's name and hiding one's own personality.

According to Simmel (1904), fashion is "ambivalent." It is an imitation of the peers of the group to which we belong, but it is also what differentiates people from other groups. Fashion is the assimilation of oneself into a differentiated group. It is the simultaneous pursuit of individuality and conformity. Fashion tries to differentiate from the traditional styles of dressing of the past and of the recent past. It has the function of distinguishing its own group from others. Fashion accentuates differences in age, social class, gender, and region. However, the most important function of fashion is to show differences in lifestyles and values. For example, at a music concert, the audience is typically dressed similar to the performers, imitating the latter's lifestyles and values and making themselves stand out from the lifestyles and values of other social groups.

Fashion is not only about assimilation into a group but also an attempt to differentiate oneself personally within the group to which one belongs. By wearing similar but subtly different clothing, one shows one's individuality within the group. While the uniform is an imitation of tradition, it becomes an assertion of a person's individuality to wear it in their own way. Similarly, one can carve out one's own individuality and identity within a certain category of fashion. When this difference is imitated by others, it is regarded as the creation of a new style.

Fashion intermingles with the social role of clothing.

What is distinctive in fashion is the creation of difference just for the sake of it. For example, some fashions are created simply to make a difference from that of the last year. Fashion is good simply because it is “new” and “in vogue.” As a difference for the sake of making a difference, fashion is pure play, an activity that is enjoyed for its own sake, without necessity, any further reason behind it, or any purpose. Fashion is change, but it is not change with a purpose, a value, or meaning like progress and development. It is change for the sake of change and change for the sake of enjoying change. The immutable purpose, and even the meaning of the world that some people want to believe in, is ruined by the notion of pure change.

Fashion is a thoroughgoing absence of depth; it is the surface as a refusal of depth. A sincere and pious person fears it without being aware of it. Fashion implies the groundlessness of the world. As Washida (2012) says, authorities such as the state and schools abhor fashion the most. This is because fashion implicitly ridicules any kind of grounding. Fashion casts doubt on its immutable value and purpose by being oriented to change for the sake of change.

Fashion makes the present the past, that is, it brings an end to something by creating newness. Fashion gives us a vivid and intense sense of the present, distinguishing it from the past. However, what is fashionable now can be quickly relegated to the past and thus lose its luster. As people witness this change between the old and the new, they feel a quick shift between life and death. Fashion foreshadows death and apocalypse and is frivolously profound. It is as if fashion were time itself, like Saturn eating his own children (in the famous, early 19th century painting by Francisco Goya). Fashion is metamorphosing as any clothing is. It highlights and makes us understand transformation, the most fundamental function of clothing.

4. Passive experience of being seen in front of “Las Meninas”

If clothing is metamorphosing and transforming, how does it relate to one’s identity? Who are you? When you are asked this question, you usually give information that identifies you, such as your first and last name, occupation, address, and nationality. In some cases, you might show an ID card or passport. However, even if you totally lost your memory, losing all knowledge about your social identity, you would still experience yourself as being yourself. You would

still have self-recognition and point to your chest with words such as “This is me,” “I am here,” or “I exist here.” Where does the strong feeling that “I am here” come from? Where does this sense of selfhood come from?

In philosophy and psychology, it has been said that this sense of self is based on the sense of agency (Gallagher 2017; Gallagher and Zahavi 2013; Haggard and Eitam 2015). The sense of agency is the ability to self-attribute one’s corporeal movements as one’s own. In other words, we can feel that we have moved a finger now by our own intention (will, spontaneity). From a phenomenological point of view, Descartes’s concept “Cogito,” the thinking self, should be interpreted as the fact that “I am hearing my inner (i.e. mute) voice.” If the Cartesian cogito is reflective awareness of the mutely speaking self, it resides in the circuit of my hearing, of one’s inner speaking. Accordingly, it is also an expression of the sense of agency.

I agree to some degree with the view that the sense of selfhood is based on the sense of agency. However, I think that the sense of selfhood does not come only from the sense of agency; it can be ensured by using other circuits as well. I would like to maintain that the passive experience of being seen or being stared at contributes to the sense of selfhood. Hence, wearing different clothes changes one’s own selfhood and explains why clothing is considered as metamorphoses or transformation. However, why and how does the experience of being seen or being stared at contribute to the sense of selfhood?

I would like to offer my personal experience as an example, which tells us that the sense of agency is not a unique origin of the sense of selfhood. This event occurred when I visited the Museo del Prado in Madrid and stood in front of Velázquez’s famous masterpiece, *Las Meninas* (The Maids of Honor).

Spanish courtiers are cut out and depicted momentarily like snapshots in this painting. Some of the figures are shown looking at the viewer, while the rest interact with each other. The young Princess Margarita is surrounded by her attendants, two maids of honor, two dwarfs, and a dog. Behind them, Velázquez himself is depicted as on his way to the great canvas. This picture has been widely analyzed because of its complex composition, raising questions on the uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted.

When I was occupied with the standpoint where the glances of the figures including the painter, the

princess, and some maids in the picture converge on, I felt as if the pictorial space expanded to my standpoint and included me. The standpoint from where I view was the same position as the subjects of the painting, namely King Philip IV and Queen Mariana. The mirror hung on the back wall showed the reflected images.

The spatial structure and positioning of the mirror's reflection are such that the King and Queen appear to be standing on the viewer's side, out of the painting. It is the glances of the figures that made me feel as if I was in the painting. There are many paintings that successfully depict the depth from within. Velazquez's contemporaries were no less skilled at depicting such depth within a painting. However, these paintings are completely separated from reality at the point of their frames. The depth is only within the painting, and it is just a small plane that occupies a corner of the real world. In contrast, Velazquez created a depth that juts forward through the gaze of the figures in the painting, which expands his space and invades the real world.

My question here is phenomenological: "why can a human gaze construct space?" It is better to ask: "why can a human gaze introduce us into space?" or "why can a human gaze make spatial existence?" How can a mere black spot in the eyeball do such magic? My question concerns the relationship between the sense of selfhood and the experience of being seen or being stared at. My hypothesis here is that the sense of selfhood comes not from the sense of agency but also from the experience of being seen. This means that our existence is fundamentally, at least partially, passive, or the sense of selfhood is given by a passive experience.

In the following sections, I would like to show this passivity of the self, which is easily influenced by the gaze of others.

5. Reversibility in vision

A famous phenomenological definition of one's own body is reversibility. Husserl pointed out that the boundary between the self and what is not the self lies in whether the cycle of "touching-touched" is established. Our body, similar to other objects, can be seen and touched. In this sense, the body also appears like an object. However, unlike touching other objects, touching my left hand with my right one produces a sensation in a particular position on both hands. When you touch your left hand with your right hand, the left one also touches the

right one. The roles of the right and left hands are reversed, but these reversals can only occur when I touch my body. When I stroke the glass in front of me, I can feel its smoothness. However, I do not feel the state of my fingers as felt by the glass. Therefore, the difference between my body and a non-object is whether this tactile recurrence (reversibility) occurs.

My right hand touching my left hand can be touched by my left-hand touching my right hand. Touching and touched are not simply separate orders of being in the world, since they are reversible. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the French phenomenologist, explained:

I can identify the hand touched in the same one which will in a moment be touching...In this bundle of bones and muscles which my right hand presents to my left, I can anticipate for an instant the incarnation of that other right hand, alive and mobile, which I thrust towards things in order to explore them. The body tries...to touch itself while being touched and initiates a kind of reversible reflection (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 93).

Phenomenologists like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty claim that the hand touched is hence not merely another such 'object' among other objects but another "flesh," which is capable of reversing the present situation and being perceiving. Touching and being touched are two reversible aspects of a lived body.

With respect to vision, if the reversibility of touching and being touched is the condition of being my lived body, that of seeing and being seen must also be the condition of being my lived body. Being seen is the necessary aspect of my corporeal existence as being touched is another aspect.

However, reversibility is not established in the seeing-seen cycle. In the case of the right hand touching the left one, the dual sensation of touching while being touched is established. In vision, the experience of seeing while being seen does not occur. We cannot see our eye seeing. My eyes are unilaterally directed to an object in the environment. I can see some parts of my body, such as arms, legs, and torso. However, there are many parts of my body that I cannot see without using a mirror or a special camera, such as my back, the top of my head, and my face, including eyes.

The face is an important part of the body. Since we cannot see our own face directly, in order for us to have a complete visual picture of our body, we have to integrate the face in the mirror as part of our

own body here. To recognize the face in the mirror as one's own face is a complex process. Except for some types of apes, animals cannot recognize their reflection in the mirror as themselves. How do we perceive our own image in the mirror?

As Merleau-Ponty (1962) pointed out, the first face a child encounters is never his/her own but that of another person such as a parent. The fetus moves in the womb in various ways and touches different parts of its body. This is a type of primordial self-recognition. Self-recognition by touching starts in the early period of our life, but visual self-recognition does not occur until the child is able to look in the mirror, let alone in the fetus. Without a reflector like a mirror, humans cannot see their faces because of their body structure.

For humans, the face is first and foremost the face of another person. It is when we integrate our own face in the mirror with our body that we can get the whole picture of ourselves. Your face in the mirror is of the same kind as the faces of many others. To recognize the face in the mirror as your own, your face looking at you from the mirror must be regarded as belonging to yourself. Being able to integrate one of those faces as one's own means that the face of another is also a potential self-face and a potential part of one's own body.

In order to integrate the face in the mirror into myself, I must feel that the movements and expressions I am observing, such as the face and neck movements of the "other" in the mirror, and my own internal sensations, such as the kinetic sensations I feel when I move them, are two aspects of a single thing. This is the same way we empathize with others. It is the same as sympathizing with others because to sympathize with others is to simultaneously connect the vision of the movements of others' bodies with one's own internal, kinesthetic sensations. When we see others in pain, we also frown and feel a tingle in the same part of our body as others in pain. Therefore, to ascribe a face in the mirror to ourselves and to complete our own visual self, we must first have the ability to empathize with others. At the same time, we must understand that the face of the self is the same kind of thing as the face of the other, that is, ourselves is one of the others. Visual self-integration requires empathy for the other and objectification of the self. Therefore, only those who sympathize with others can objectify one's own self and accept the self, which is seen from the point of view of others as belonging to the self. I am another potential person.

Thus, it is by subtracting one's face from the faces of many others and getting it back to one's own that an integrated image of the self is constructed. For me to have a unified image of myself, first there must be the ability to capture a face among many others as part of myself. In other words, only those who can sympathize or identify with others can have an integrated self.

For Descartes, the body is not the essence of the self. Such a Cartesian cogito could not have an integrated self since it does not have a body for being seen, and it is never reflected in the mirror. None of the others see it. The Cartesian cogito never sees others as potential selves. Modern Western subjectivist philosophy, taking its basic ideas from Descartes, posits the human mind as a pure subjectivity that can see but cannot be seen. Such a mind is called "transcendental subjectivity," which observes the world in a one-sided way. The modern conception of the subject, which has taken on Descartes' ideas, lacks the passivity of being seen.

The Cartesian cogito is detached from the body and separated from the material world. It is like a viewer who is outside of the picture and only watches the world, which the picture depicts from the outside. Cartesian cogito is not influenced by the world of paintings. However, standing in front of the eyes of the figures in "Las Meninas" and being watched by their gazes, the viewer feels as if he or she has entered the space of the paintings though they are none other than the artificial figures in the paintings. I am able to enter a place through the gaze of others. We establish our own existence in the world by being seen. Velasquez painted the truth that Descartes and his successors never conceived of.

The self in the mirror is the other, which will become myself. We should read the following quotation of Merleau-Ponty in replacing the word "mirror" by "others":

The mirror appears because I am seeing-visible [voyant-visible] because there is a reflexivity of the sensible; the mirror translates and reproduces that reflexivity. My outside completes itself in and through the sensible (Merleau-Ponty 1962:168).

In this sense, we are fundamentally vulnerable since our existence is always exposed to the other; our sense of self consists in the circuit between me and the others, which we cannot put completely under control.

6. Poly-voiced-ness

The capacity of sympathizing with others is necessary to obtain an integrated self-image. My visual self-image is incomplete because I cannot see my face directly. I must take a mirror image of the face in my body image. The mirror image compensates for the lack of self-image. Seen from the other side, this means that I should be possessed by the face in the mirror to have a complete self-image. My self-image, my body image, needs to be made up by the seen image of my face.

I believe clothing (or body modification) plays the same role as the face image in the mirror. At first glance, seeing seems to be active. However, it requires us to adjust our gaze to the object we are looking at, to follow it with our eyes, to scrutinize it, and to accept it the way it is. In this sense, seeing is passive. In contrast, it seems at first glance to be passive. However, it is active because it draws the perceiver's gaze to itself, keeps its attention, and submits the perceiver to its own way of being. The passivity of being seen captures the other in the visibility that one emits and, by radiating visibility, transforms the attitudes of others surrounding them. To be seen is to tempt the viewer.

Clothing is a temptation in this sense. I enter the world of others by being seen, and by being seen, I take a place in the world. Clothing works on others and changes me by changing the gaze of others, namely the relationship with others. Clothing is a tool to change oneself. However, wearing clothes for metamorphosis is not simply or totally "possession by others"; rather, it is an experience of "double-voiced-ness," or "poly-voiced-ness" in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin.

Let us consider the case of language. We learn language from others. Learning language is not an abstract transmission of grammar and vocabulary, such as installing an application to a computer, but a kind of corporeal imitation of others. A baby laughs and smiles, simply imitating others' smiles without any intention or meaning. Language acquisition is an extension of this co-action or resonant movement. The child is attracted and enthralled by the movements of dialogue around him/her and tries it. Language acquisition already presumes a relationship with others, which precedes the language that will appear in this context. Then, they learn how to use language by imitating the natural voice of the caregiver. They also learn how to use it on what occasions in response to what kind

of speech, and with what subject matter; with what pronunciation, accent, tone of voice, and breathing; with what facial expressions; and with what gestures. Thus, babies learn the totality of the speeches. The non-linguistic context, subtle nuances, rhythm of exchange, and the use of typical expressions are also implicitly incorporated in the caregiver's speech, which, in other words, is a whole-situational text. What we learn is this whole conversation situation.

As we acquire language, we also take in the texts surrounding these speeches. We learn language through total communication with others; it starts from borrowing another's voice. Even when we learn a language and produce it of our own volition, we have no choice but to begin by imitating and borrowing the voices of others, dragging with us the way they were speaking at the time we learned the language. There is no other way to acquire language than to say the words as they are borrowed and then gradually make the expressions their own. It is, so to speak, to intend something through others' intentions. Then, we gradually appropriate another's voice into our own speech.

Language acquisition is also the incorporation of others' behavior into one's own system of behaviors. However, according to Bakhtin, this appropriation of language is not complete (Bakhtin 1986). Half of our speech is that of others.

Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degree of otherness or varying degree of 'our-own-ness,' varying degree of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate (Bakhtin 1986: 89).

Both whole utterances and individual words can retain their alien expression, even though they can also be reaccentuated. There are the utterances that we can use but are difficult to assimilate in one's own context. They remain borrowed even though we use them frequently. Accordingly, once another's speech in another's language is incorporated into my speech, it serves to express my intentions in a refracted way. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: direct intention of the speaker and the refracted one of others. Speech always constitutes a double-voiced utterance.

Others' utterances and others' individual words – recognized and singled out as such and inserted into

the utterance – introduced an element that is, so to speak, irrational from the standpoint of language as system, particularly from the standpoint of syntax. The interrelations between inserted other's speech and the rest of the speech (one's own) are analogous neither to any syntactical relations within a simple or complex syntactic whole or to the referentially semantic relations among grammatically unrelated individual syntactic wholes found within a single utterance. These relations, however, are analogous (but, of course, not identical) to relations among rejoinders in dialogue (Bakhtin 1986: 92).

Our speech is speaking through the voices of others and is almost like ventriloquism. According to Bakhtin, all our utterances are filled with others' words, varying in degrees of otherness or "our-ownness" and that of awareness and detachment. We learn other people's expressions and use them in our own speech. However, it is not always easy to use all expressions in the same way. There are some expressions that do not fit our intentions but which we continue to use because we cannot find any more, and yet they are still foreign to us as if they were someone else's words. Alternatively, there are words that, when used, do not assimilate well into their own context but are borrowed and trivialized as if they were someone else's voice coming out of their own mouth.

Ventriloquism is the process of making someone else's words one's own but not necessarily in the process of fully absorbing another's speech; it often remains borrowed, dragging with it a foreignness that we cannot understand. When we speak, it is an event in which several voices come out of our own mouths at once. This is what Bakhtin calls polyphonism, a state in which the reverberations of various other people's voices remain foreign and clash with the various voices within us, while retaining their original object of instruction.

7. Concluding remarks

Wearing clothes is a kind of ventriloquism rather than possession. We try to define ourselves by the way we wear our clothes: one's social role, acceptance of tradition, and following trends. However, we do not completely lose ourselves in our social roles. We do not completely assimilate the fashion models. We do not think of ourselves as being identical to rock stars. I do not completely wear traditional behavior. Something in me is preventing me from fully identifying with them. To wear clothes is to put on

a play. We are actors playing a certain role, but we also remain an individual while playing someone. By changing our clothes, we make ourselves different. The essence of clothes is the difference between the clothes and other clothes and the difference between the clothes and the naked body. However, clothes are not entirely separate from one another. We imbue our bodies with masculine behavior by wearing masculine clothing. By putting the monk's clothes on, we gradually become a monk while accumulating in ourselves what are not monks at the same time. However, we seem to be able to unite and stabilize this multiple self into one by being able to see ourselves clothed by others. To keep wearing the same clothes is to lose sight of the multiplicity of the self, which can be to lose sight of oneself. The reason we try to change our clothes is to avoid such self-fixation. It is an affirmation of one's plurality and potential. The use of metamorphosis is to be conscious of our double or multi-voiced existence. Clothes are an expression of the fact that human beings are capable of leading a life of repeated birth and nurturing oneself.

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CLOTHING AND IDENTITY IN INDONESIA AND JAPAN

Momo Shioya

The University of Shimane

1. Introduction

Clothing has diverse purposes, one of which is to express someone's identity as a member of a group (Yamada 2019:45-48). For example, schools and some offices in Indonesia and Japan have uniforms to demonstrate their members' identity.

Traditional clothing indicates one's identity within a group to other members (Inoue 2019:67). Members of the group could infer one's social class, profession, age, and marital status based on the kind of traditional clothing they wear.

Nowadays, in daily life, Indonesians and the Japanese mainly wear Western clothing. However, compared to Japan, traditional clothing or clothing that represents traditional characteristics is more visible in Indonesia. For example, clothing that uses batik cloth and adat clothing (regional or ethnic clothing) is sometimes worn. In addition to this, Muslim clothing has been widely worn in recent years (Shioya 2018). These types of clothing are symbols of national, regional, and religious identity.

In Japan, traditional clothing is rarely worn. Using field data from Solo city in Central Java, this study explores the meaning of clothing and identity by comparing the differences in the situations of traditional clothing in Indonesia and Japan.

2. National Policy and Westernization of clothing in Japan

Before the Japanese started to wear Western clothing, the choice of attire was based on strict social rules and automatically revealed one's identity (Daimaru and Takahashi 2016:21-23). For example, peasants were only allowed to wear kimonos made from cotton cloth dyed in indigo (Fukui 2000:57). Hairstyles too revealed one's social class, profession, marital status, and age (Tanaka 2016). This social class system was finally abolished by the government in the Meiji period (1868–1912).

Since the Meiji period, the Japanese government has promoted modernization and Westernization of thought, education, daily life, including clothing (Numata 2017:177). Male government officials, soldiers, and students started to wear Western

uniforms, and this trend spread among ordinary citizens as well. In 1872, the formal clothing of the Meiji Emperor changed to Western military uniforms (Osakabe 2010:6-9, 64–67). At that time, modernization was conceived as Westernization.

However, only a few women at that time, such as wives of diplomats, wore Western clothing. In the official portrait in 1873, the Emperor wore Western clothing while the Empress wore a kimono. In 1887, the Empress also started to wear Western clothing on formal occasions. However, women who had no connection with Western uniforms continued to wear the traditional garment (Fukai 2017:183; Numata 2017:177; Osakabe 2010:167-170).

In the Meiji period, a new clothing called *kairyō fuku* or "improved clothing" was designed. This style was a combination of kimono and Western clothing and was easy to wear. However, it did not become popular (Namba 2016:103-109). Western clothing first became widespread among women in the 1920s when the number of working women increased. Japanese women preferred the efficiency of Western clothing and started to wear it (Fukai 2017:185). The Westernization of clothing in Japan was ruled by the government and reflected the change in values.

3. Changes in clothing in Indonesia before and after independence

As was the case of Japan in the past, clothing also displayed one's identity in Indonesia. In the colonial era, Western clothing revealed one's social class. At that time, among local residents, Western clothing was worn only by those people who were connected with the colonial ruler (Pramoedya 1986). At the end of the 19th century, the European style had spread among the elites in Indonesia. Western clothing became popular among men and Western methods of education and science were considered key to achieve progress (Van Dijk 1997:58-59). This is similar to the Meiji period in Japan.

The *peci* cap was used as a symbol of independence during the independence period, as can be seen in the picture of Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia. The *peci* was the only special clothing

that was symbolic of the period. After gaining independence, Western clothing spread due to economic reasons and because it made social class invisible, compared to traditional clothing (Van Dijk 1997:69, 73).

Since the Declaration of Independence in 1945, Indonesian national clothing has existed as a symbol of national identity. Men's national clothing is the combination of a batik long-sleeve shirt and long pants or a combination of a suit and the peci cap. For women, a combination of the kebaya blouse and wrapped skirt was used (Agari 2009:16-17; Matsumoto 2015:43; Tozu 1989:78). In addition, adat clothing, which expresses regional identity and ethnicity, has been valued as a symbol of regional culture.

Since 2017, adat clothing has been used for the celebration of Independence Day and official participants have been required to wear the adat clothing of each region of Indonesia (Ihsanuddin 2017). Clothing that is symbolic of nation, region, and religion are not separated but the elements are sometimes mixed. Thus, a person can express multiple identities by using clothing.

For example, Muslim women who wear Javanese clothing can use a veil. The bride in this photo looks like she is wearing traditional Javanese clothing, but she has covered her hair with a black cloth. The front of her neck is also covered with a skin-colored cloth to less noticeable. By using this style, she maintains her identity as both a Javanese and a Muslim.

4. Traditional clothing in present day

In Japan, a formal type of kimono is used on certain occasions, such as rites of passage. The rules for kimonos became strict because they came to be worn only on formal occasions and not for daily use. For formal occasions, kimonos made from silk are mainly used, and the way of wearing the garment has become more difficult. The "manner books" in Japan explain what kind of clothing is suitable to wear for the occasion (Ito and Yajima 2016; Iwashita 2001). When kimonos were used daily, the rules were not as strict, and women sometimes combined the kimono and Western clothing. For example, they might wear a Western shirt under their kimono and wear shoes rather than traditional Japanese sandals, such as geta or zori (Daimaru and Takahashi 2016:176-178; Inui 2016).

The Japanese also use kimonos to express their national identity. However, it is mainly limited

to interactions with foreign people; for example, in international events and sports competitions (Namba 2018:52-53).

In Java, traditional clothing used for formal occasions is considered very formal. During formal events, for example, expensive handmade batik cloth is used and worn as a wrapped skirt with straight pleats.

A Javanese woman in Solo city commented that she can wear an inexpensive sewn-wrapped skirt for the wedding of relatives who live far from her local city. However, for local weddings, she feels ashamed to wear this kind of attire because local people know about and value the quality of the batik cloth. She also wears a long kebaya blouse that covers her knees.

Another woman in the city also commented that some Muslim women wear a kebaya blouse that covers their knees and a large veil that covers their chest to show that they are more pious. In the past, the length of the kebaya changed according to the fashion (Figure1). It showed the trend of the time or one's preference. However, in this case, we can see that new meanings have been added to traditional clothing to demonstrate more specific representations of one's identity.

5. Spread of semi-traditional clothing in Indonesia

In schools or offices, Japanese people do not choose to wear traditional clothing, although some students choose to wear traditional clothing for their graduation ceremonies.

The "improved kimono" appeared in the Meiji period, but it has not become popular in Japan. Separate two-piece kimonos were also made in the past to be easier to wear; however, they have not been widely accepted. Nowadays, two-piece kimonos, semi-traditional clothing, are only worn in traditional Japanese-style hotels or Japanese restaurants.

On the other hand, semi-traditional clothing that expresses regional identity has spread in Indonesia in recent years. It is sometimes required to be worn in schools or offices (Tempo.co. 2019). Starting in 2012, public offices in Solo city started to wear adat, or Javanese clothing on Thursdays (Suharsih 2012; Sri 2012). For the wrapped skirt, they used a sewn one that resembles a wrapped one. It is easy to wear for regular use and shows the characteristics of traditional clothing.

6. Conclusions

As we have seen, the Japanese do not express their identity using semi-traditional clothing because they feel that the kimono should be worn correctly (Kim 1998). They are less concerned about expressing their identity through traditional clothing.

However, in some cases, people use traditional garments to express their identity. For example, the Ainu people, who are indigenous to the Hokkaido Islands, sometimes wear their traditional clothing when they claim their indigenous rights. Korean residents of Japan express their identity by using traditional clothing as their school uniforms; a semi-traditional clothing designer has also appeared in recent years (Sung-I 2016).

On the other hand, in Indonesia, clothing is often used to express national, regional, and religious identities. Diverse adat clothing has been used to express people's identity, and it is currently used as a regional uniform (Shioya 2016). Semi-traditional clothing has the same characteristics as traditional clothing, but it is easier to wear. As we have seen in the case of differences in kebaya blouses, new expressions of identity have been added, and traditional clothing is used to create more specific representations of one's identity.



Figure 1: Kebaya styles.

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SELASA BERKEBAYA: WOMEN RECODE FASHION WITHIN THE NATION AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Widjajanti M Santoso

National Research and Innovation Agency, Republic of Indonesia

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the *Selasa Berkebaya* (henceforth, “Thursday *Kebaya* Day”) movement that popularizes the *kebaya* not only as an easily wearable, formal and informal fashion apparel, for modern urban active women, but also points out its role in identity building. First, women have their own understanding of nationalism; unfortunately, Taylor’s *Women Creating Indonesia* shows that such contributions are invisible (Taylor 1997). Second, women provide the greatest support for fashion in the construction of femininity as presenting ideals of beauty, manner, and attitude in accordance with men’s values (Gilman 2002). We examine such constructions in the public sphere, through images shared in social media, as a method to understand and appreciate the role of the *kebaya*. The meaning of *kebaya* in herstory displays a love-hate relationship with colonialism, nationalism, and globalization. In terms of the relationship to colonialism, traditional dress shows some resistance to the West. This reflects the consciousness that western tastes still influence taste and preferences throughout the world (Adichie 2017). In this instance, fashion is a scape (Appadurai 2006; Urry 2000) of globalization, the center of the fashion is London, Italy, Paris, and New York. Fashion is also a scape of culture in Southeast Asia, where the *kebaya* has become part of a contested identity. This article begins with herstory from a women’s standpoint, to construct a framework to capture women’s agency, herstory, and social change with respect to the *kebaya*, and then proceeds to a description of the *Thursday Kebaya Day* as a movement, a way to express nationalism in everyday life. It also exposes the change and continuity of *kebaya*, as well as women’s attachment to femininity and nationalism. In conclusion, regardless of why women choose a particular fashion, whether for comfort or to support social and political activities, it is a valid choice whereby women express their autonomy to some degree.

2. The Herstory of the *Kebaya*

I use women’s standpoint because fashion is almost entirely about women; indeed, it is the reproductive mechanism of femininity. Fashion is a force that has the power to make people behave as the fashion intends. Gilman described five functions of fashion, two of which are general and, and the other three are for women. Gilman viewed fashion from women’s perspective; therefore, she was able to depict its meaning and function for both men and women. Western women’s femininity was represented by the corset, skirt, and shoes, preventing women from moving freely.

The *kebaya* itself has some traditional norms or standards, or *pakems* (Puspitasari 2014). Originally, the *kain*, which must be worn with a *stagen* or corset function to secure the *kain* from falling, as well as slimming the curves of the body. The *kebaya* is usually worn with sandals or *keloms* rather than with shoes. The *kebaya* shows a lot of resemblance to these fashions in reducing women’s mobility.

There is a long history of the *kebaya*, as an item of daily fashion, as the specific fashions that came with the introduction of Islam adopting *habaya* taken from Arabic (Femina 2017). The Dutch colonial government stipulated the *kebaya* as an item of clothing in its social policy for native women, colonial women, and Chinese descendants (Claudia et al. 2013). These *kebaya* have specific features, whereby native women used flowery motifs, colonial women used white ones with lace, and the Chinese Peranakan used embroidery and bright solid colors. In social terms (Simmel 1957), the *kebaya* is identified with the upper class, and *keraton*, in fact it shows empathy for women from other social classes.

Kebaya was represented as the image of the new country, as when *Life* magazine captured the image of a young woman with a flower-type *kebaya* and an embroidered *selendang* covering her head (Picture Life Magazine n.d.). The *kebaya* is a type of blouse that is also used by several ethnic groups; therefore, it expresses a multi-ethnic society and

diversity in Indonesia; it is also a part of traditional dress. As a consequence, we can view social change through the *kebaya*, especially from the women's perspective. It encapsulates a history that people seldom see in which women are always in the front line of nationalism. Through fashion, as trivial as people might consider it; it is at the core of the nation's imagery.

During the colonial period, men's clothes changed from traditional to western styles faster than women (Trismaya 2018). Taylor portrays the *kebaya* as a symbol of national identity with which women represented Indonesia in the time of revolution and the Old Order. Indeed, the *kebaya* was declared as the national dress by Sukarno (Tan 2020); his Japanese bride changed her dress from the kimono to *kebaya*. This, however, continued into the New Order when the first-lady Tien Soeharto used the *kebaya* with the *konde* and *slendang*. The *kebaya* has been used since by the other first ladies and has become the most commonly used item of women's wear on formal occasions, political inaugurations, or special events until the present (Yuastanti and Pamungkas 2016; Suciati 2016; Suciati et al. 2015). Obviously, when Joko Widodo endorses ethnic dress, the first lady follows suit; however, the *kebaya* is always represented in formal photos or events, such as political discussions or debates.

In everyday life, the *kebaya* lost in competition with Western or modern fashion (Agus and Kahfiati 2013). Such changes were shown in this advertisement for the film "Tiga Dara" (1956), in which two women wear western dresses and the third in a *kebaya*. In the New Orders, *kebaya* was still used in advertisements; however, it changed into jeans and modern fashion (Suwardikun et al. 2008). West influenced fashion scapes, to adopt the phrasing of Appadurai (2006) and Urry (2000).

3. Thursday *Kebaya* Day, the Movement

On June 25, 2019, the Jakarta new public space, the MRT-Mass Rapid Transport, the monorail, and its beautiful and modern station were packed with women wearing colorful *kebaya*. The call for participation uses the social media. The *kebaya* are modern, and women used a variety of shoes, sandals, large hand bags, and backpacks. In this loosely defined rally or parade, the women wore sneakers, some rode bikes, or took photos and posted them on social media platforms. They also brought banners to show the *kebaya* was an expression of identity as well

as multiculturalism. This was the *Thursday Kebaya Day*, a movement initiated by some women who view Indonesia as needing to celebrate the *kebaya* as part of its identity. They devoted great efforts to raise interest in the movement, using social media and other digital platforms, as well as contacting and inviting many institutions to take part and offer support, such as the Direktorat Kebudayaan or Directorate General of Culture, Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture; some men wore the *udeng* or traditional headband and other traditional items to support this movement.

To great surprise, there was some reaction against this movement, by using meme disseminate through social media the phrased using religious words such as *murtad*, labeling the *kebaya* as contrary to Islamic norms and values. At that time, this was something that would never have occurred to the participants as something that would provoke controversy, as the women who participated in the Thursday *Kebaya* Day also covered their heads with hijab. Therefore, we need to ask what the controversy was really about, be it resisting women's activities, seeing the *kebaya* as against Muslim fashion as marking a backlash against gender equality or feminism in general.

4. Change and Continuity

The meaning of the *kebaya* has come to mean a social change and is attached to the change of the regime. In fact, 1998 was a turning point for changes ranging from the issue of democracy to participation in civil society. The Reformasi has been a movement for the freedom of which *kebaya* fashion is a part. The designers give *kebaya* and traditional cloth a new meaning. Gea Panggabean, for example, brings simplicity and beauty to the *kebaya*, Anne Avantie exhibits *kebaya* that passes even further toward the avant garde fashion as a costume. The meaning of the *kebaya* has expanded to fashion, widening its span from everyday life into costumes, grandeur, and luxury. The *kebaya* reflects Indonesia's interpretation, such as by naming *kebaya*, even while transforming the previous version of the *pakem* into a classy costume. The *kebaya* also refers to formal and fashion apparel for events. At weddings, people use the *kebaya* with modern touches, such as reframing Muslim fashion.

In the market, the *kebaya* has been commoditized and examples are easily found with diverse fashions that still have some connection to the sources of the garment, such as *kebaya kutu baru*, *kartini*,

Sunda, Bali, encim, or Betawi. The *kebaya* has also been transformed into a type of Muslim fashion. Although it is interesting to view it in terms of the philosophical background, market influence more. At present, the *pakem* of *kebaya* has transformed into “*kebaya modern*,” (modern *kebaya*), adapting to special events. The *kebaya* uses many types of fabrics and has moved away from the *pakem*, such as the *kain* at present, could serve as a princess dress or A line skirt. The *kebaya* top is now a type of blouse.

5. Femininity and Nationalism as a Reflection

As has been shown, from one perspective, fashion is a force for femininity; fashion makes women accept the norms and value of their society. The Reformasi has been conducive to fashion, especially among the middle and upper classes, as shown by the avant garde and luxurious *kebaya* fashion. To some extent, the fusion of the traditional and modern Western fashions in *kebaya* is widespread, as fashion is fluid, easier to copy, and found in the market. At present, *kebaya* is for everybody in a similar basic fashion, though differing in the accessories and fabric.

The Thursday *Kebaya* Day transformed fashion to include the associated meanings of modernity and the contemporary social situation. Globalization has challenged countries with blurred borders, and scapes have changed the meaning of nationalism. The identity of nations that once could easily be distinguished at present have come to have shared meanings, especially for countries in regions such as Southeast Asia (Agista et al. 2019). We share an identity in language, fashion, religion, norms, and values. Once it came to reflect the nation as at present, it became a brand identity for the sake of tourism, for example. From the perspectives of scapes and globalization, traditional identity become

a contested identity to attract tourism and show the “true” identity.

In everyday life, the Thursday *Kebaya* Day makes a statement through the type of dress that actually has been a special marker of identity for women; for men, this is more the role of the *batik*. It elevates the everyday use of the *kebaya* as a formal dress, but still allows some comfort in shoes, skirts, pants, or even jeans. Women activists usually have *slendang* and other traditional clothes or accessories to indicate their support for the women who produce the cloth. However, this had been scattered, and Thursday *Kebaya* Day has made it public. This is once again a mark of women supporting nationalism, as Taylor explained.

6. Concluding Remark

The movement has shown that many women use the *jilbab* as a way to adapt the *kebaya*; therefore, women choose their fashion without turning their backs on their beliefs and femininity. This reaction not only shows the conservative turn that has been one indication of the increased influence of religion, but also the backlash on women’s movement in general. The expressions of fashion, femininity, and nationalism have been seen as engendering religious meaning, which is not the case. Women still accept their religion and their norms and values without abandoning it.

Women who accept the general construction of femininity actually accept male perspectives that are far from comfortable. Therefore, the memes against the Thursday *Kebaya* Day reflect male perspectives of religiosity that once again see women captive to their own norms and values. This movement exhibits women’s agency in seeing that fashion is in keeping with their own choices and again nationalism, in everyday perspective.

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RELIGIOUS DEMOCRATIZATION IN WEARING THE HIJAB: A STUDY ON THE THEATER PERFORMANCE TITLED ISLAM YANG MANA?¹

Yustina Devi Ardhiani
Sanata Dharma University

1. Introduction

This paper discusses a theatrical performance titled *Islam yang Mana?*, translated as “Which Islam?” The performance represents a phenomenon that examines how Muslim women are intimidated into accepting hijab styles that are considered the most appropriate. This performance was enacted by the women’s theater group “Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama” (Fatayat NU) of the Yogyakarta Special Region with the support of the Yogyakarta Actors Forum. The performance was staged on July 3rd, 2019 at the *Taman Budaya Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta Cultural Park) in celebration of the 69th anniversary of *Fatayat NU*. The theatrical script for *Islam yang Mana?* emerged from the discussions that took place among the actors. There are three polemics presented in this staged performance: 1) variety of hijab styles, 2) polygamy, and 3) terrorism. This research discusses only the first polemic, namely the various styles of headscarves and the accompanying problems.

Contextually, one of the principles followed by most Muslims requires Muslim women to wear veils. There are disagreements among fellow Muslims in relation to the above, especially regarding the kind of hijab style considered the most correct in accordance to their respective beliefs. This study mainly examines the intimidation experienced by Muslim women who adhere to hijab styles that are different from that of their peers.

The study does not address as to which beliefs are right or wrong; rather, it focuses on exploring the following three questions: 1) How does the women’s organization, *Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama*, represent the phenomenon that examines the intimidation of Muslim women to accept hijab styles that are considered the most appropriate through theatrical media? 2) What kind of social reality lies behind the polemic concerning the various ways of wearing the hijab in the theater performance titled *Islam yang*

Mana? 3) Why did *Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama* choose theatrical performance as a medium to express their concerns?

A book edited by Daniels (2013) tries to understand how performance in Indonesia and Malaysia mediates piety in various ways and means. Its writings try to explore the practices of esthetic forms and how they construct, connect, and negotiate with social relations and religious piety. In contrast to the book, this paper explores how a religious organization, namely Fatayat NU, makes use of the theater performance stage as a medium to voice issues concerning religious life.

According to Khoiri (2019), when responding to a religious extremity, moderation appears to be the only final solution to every problem. Khoiri noted that, in the last two decades, the aspects of Islamic violence in Indonesia have become more massive and have gained great public attention. The strengthening of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia further emphasizes the main challenges faced by this plural country. Thus, efforts should be made towards the preservation of unity in diversity. The moderation of Islam as an urgent need and the prevalence of extremism presents the emergence of a paradoxical phenomenon in Indonesia.

The theater performance titled *Islam yang Mana?* explicitly brings to focus the strengthening of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia. The choice of hijab style and how to wear it, which is considered the most correct, is one of the manifestations of this phenomenon. If Khoiri presents the idea of Islamic moderation as an answer to the problem of Islamic fundamentalism, the analysis in this paper borrows the idea of democracy from Jacques Rancière, which is placed in the context of religious democracy.

Nurul Afifah (2018) wrote an article titled *Pakaian Syar’i, media, dan konstruksi kesalehan perempuan*. In this article, Afifah observes how media discourse

1. Many thanks to my friends at Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama Yogyakarta Special Region who have been very helpful in this research process. All informants’ names in this paper are pseudonyms.

attracts attention and constructs women's understanding of *syar'i* clothing by using the discourse analysis approach of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The results of her study reveal the following: 1) the discourse on *syar'i* clothing on social media is a form of social phenomenon in society, namely the emergence of a movement from certain groups in the State of Indonesia 2) basically these discourses are a form of hegemony towards clothes that are considered not *syar'i*; and 3) these discourses also indicate the existence of certain motives from the pro-*syar'i* group, namely demanding equality and recognition as part of the cultures of Indonesians.

The second inference from the results of Afifah's study, which indicates that the discourse on *syar'i* clothing is a form of hegemony towards clothes that are considered not *syar'i* is one of the footholds of this paper. However, this study did not use hegemony theory in its analysis. The phenomenon presented in the performance of *Islam yang Mana?* brings out the symbolic and verbal violence inflicted by certain circles on others. This research is analyzed using Michel Foucault's "regimes of truth" (via Barker 2004) concept and Jacques Rancière's concept of democracy (via Indiyastutik 2016). Truth in cultural studies is perceived as a matter of interpreting reality, which can be considered true. Foucault does not talk about truth, he speaks about certain regimes of truth that regulate and combine various statements concerning the world or reality, and in turn define the knowledge that is supposed to be true. This is to say that truth and knowledge are limited to a certain time and space (Barker 2004).

The idea of a truth regime is supported by Richard Rorty's opinion (via Barker 2004), who says that we cannot insist on maintaining a description of truth, for truth is not final. What is believed to be the truth is very likely to change when faced with a significant challenge, say in the form of ideas along with arguments that can be accepted by several circles. In this paper, the concept of truth regime is used for analyzing the phenomenon of forcing the truth in the practice of religious life, which has been represented in the performance.

Referring to Rancière (via Indiyastutik 2016), the essence of democracy is equality. Equality is the starting point for examining the reality of democracy in people's lives. According to Rancière, democracy is a power that has continuously fought against all forms of domination by minority over the majority. Democracy refers to a political action carried out

by demos to verify or find equality in the dominant social order. Democracy prioritizes dialog, rather than violence. Rancière opposes intolerant groups who demand leadership and social order based on a particular religion or ethnicity, for they are not political, and they are not demos. In this research, the concept of democracy is placed in the context of religious democracy to observe the phenomenon of living with intolerant groups that impose certain beliefs on others.

Data collection was carried out in several ways. I documented a staging poster *Islam yang Mana?* made by the organizers as preliminary data about theatrical performances that I studied (Figure 1). I conducted field observations by watching the theatrical shows of *Islam yang Mana?* live. I made video recordings, took some staging photos, and carried out literature and media searches. Following this, the screenwriters, directors, and performers were invited to discuss about things related to their theatrical performances.



Figure 1: This picture is a staging poster *Islam yang mana?* used as a publication of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama theater performance (PW Fatayat NU DIY 2019).

2. Results and Discussion

This section begins by narrating the story performed on stage to answer the formulation of the first problem. The second part answers the formulation of the second problem by describing the social reality that lies behind the polemic of wearing the hijab in various ways. The last section answers the formulation of the third problem by mapping the reasons Fatayat NU uses theater as a medium to voice their anxieties.

2.1. The Paradox of Piety Coercion

This section is titled the paradox of imposing piety, for coercion and piety are the two opposites that are present together. The following is a scene narrative related to the polemic of various hijab styles and their various problems as an answer to the formulation of the first problem.

The main character in the theater performance is Melati, described as a young Muslim woman who is active, cheerful, and loves art, especially music and dance. She is also described as someone who thinks and is critical of the problems that exist in religious life. In the dialog presented on stage, Melati expresses her concern about the term *Syar'i*, an Arabic word, which means, according to the rules (sharia or religious law). On the one hand, Melati is quite aware that the rules of human life include human relations with God, humans, and the natural environment. Melati also agrees that in Islam, hijab is seen as a *syar'i* garment, hence, as a Muslim woman, Melati wants to dress in accordance to the Islamic teachings. This desire indicates that the construction of piety is in progress in Melati's self, which she has come to accept.

On the other hand, since there are various styles of hijab, Melati is confused about making a choice (Figure 2). Melati worries that, if she chose the wrong hijab style, her friends might bully her. She displayed this concern by referring to data that proved the bullying of her friends by other friends, who were members of certain Islamic groups. Even though Melati was unsure, she eventually chose a hijab style that she considered comfortable and appropriate for her religious beliefs.



Figure 2: This image shows a scene in the performance of *Islam yang Mana?* when Melati was confused about choosing the correct hijab model (photo by Yustina Devi Ardhiani, 3 July 2021).

The next scene depicts the four friends wearing different hijab styles visiting Melati (Figure 3). They

introduce themselves by stating that the hijab style they wear is the most appropriate as per the Islamic teachings. Initially, their greeting were friendly; however, in the next scene, Melati, who was wearing trousers, was constantly bullied, for her clothes were considered to be incompatible with their Islamic beliefs. Each of them tried to influence her to change the way she dressed and to be like them. She was very annoyed by their attempts to persuade her, which led to she eventually shouting at them to shut up! This resulted in them not talking to her.



Figure 3: This image shows a scene when four friends of Melati came wearing different hijab models (photo by Yustina Devi Ardhiani, 3 July 2021).

The scene depicts how the regimes of truth represented by the presence of four women wearing four different hijab styles worked toward imposing a believed interpretation on Melati. While Barker (2004) emphasized that truth and knowledge are limited to a certain time and space, Rorty (via Barker 2004) emphasized on a description of truth, which could not be forced on others. *Fatayat NU* shows the opposite situation through the theater performance. Just because she wore the hijab differently, Melati became the target of bullies. Melati is shown to be under siege and fighting against it simultaneously (Figure 4).



Figure 4: This image shows a scene when four women were trying to influence Melati to change her hijab models (photo by Yustina Devi Ardhiani, 3 July 2021).

While the scene was hyperbolic, for it brought together four people from different groups trying to influence Melati, the scene was able to describe a phenomenon that transpired to real life. Several Islamic groups with different backgrounds and ideologies try to increase their followers by influencing anyone who is considered as a potential member of their group.

One of the ways in which the groups represent the truth regimes is by influencing the choice of hijab style worn by those who are their target. Melati is presented as a target, thus, it is up for grabs. She expressed her anger through the loud screams and emotions seen on her face. Her anger expressed her criticism of the Truth being forced on her.

2.2. The Power of the Regime of Truth

The second research question, namely "What kind of social reality lies behind the polemic concerning the different ways of wearing a hijab in the theater performance titled *Islam yang Mana?*," directs our response to the following two phenomena:

First, the issue of friendship is presented in the show. In reality, the different choices of hijab styles can potentially break friendships. In the focus group discussion, Ninik, who played Melati in theatrical performance, said that she had an experience similar to what she presented in the play. Rita, another actor in the theatrical show, reported a similar experience. There is another real story from Rita and Ninik. They had a close friend who suggested that Rita and Ninik improve their dressing. She further advised them to break up with their boyfriends. They felt uncomfortable with how she treated them and chose to break up their relationship with her. Rita and Ninik mentioned that there were other friends who also experienced such a thing.

Second, the issue of family relationships has been presented in the performance. In practice, the differences in religious beliefs have the potential to disturb family harmony. There is a real story available from Lilin. Her younger brother no longer wanted to greet her owing to their differing opinions on Islamic teaching. When she told him about her plan to continue her studies, he replied, "May God guide you on the right path, *semoga segera dapat hidayah dari Allah.*" This response further confirms their views on how one can be religious. Lilin's plan to continue studying was not responded to, for it was not considered important. However, since Lilin was deemed as a person who did not carry out the

Islamic teachings properly, her younger brother prayed for Lilin receiving immediate guidance from Allah.

Ninik narrates another incident that occurred immediately after her marriage. She was misjudged by her new family because the hijab style she wore was different from that of theirs. Ninik was worried that she would not fit into the family. This situation led her to rethink her religious teachings. She felt that there was nothing wrong with her clothes, even though her hijab was not the same as that of others.

The above phenomenon, which also occurs in many places in Indonesia, proves that the truth regimes tend to impose their point of view on how to dress, which is considered to be more correct and in accordance to the Islamic teachings. When a truth regime acts to impose its will, conflict situations are difficult to avoid. That was what Ninik and Rita experienced among their friends, and what Lilin experienced with her family.

2.3. Voicing Religious Democracy on Stage Performance

The answer to the third question, namely "Why did Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama choose theater as a medium to express their anxiety?," is as follows.

Around 700 people attended the anniversary celebration of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama and watched the theater performance. Those who were present were mostly members of Fatayat NU in Yogyakarta, students from several boarding schools, and a few guests from various circles. They are the main target of the message that *Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama* wanted to convey through the play *Islam yang Mana?*

The audience looked enthusiastic about enjoying the theatrical performances of *Islam yang Mana?*. The audience resonated the speech or actions of the players in the show by shouting "Go on! Great! and *Jangan Kasih Kendor!*," an Indonesian slang used for reverberating the spirit of not giving up. On the other hand, the audience would give a rumbling sound like *Huuu* when disagreeing with the speech or actions of the performers. The spontaneous remarks indicate how the audience participated in the play. While the extent of the audience's participation is limited to *celetukan*, an Indonesian word referring to interruption, there is chance that the presented material might induce the audience to rethink on the issue of religious life presented in the play.

Does the phenomenon presented in the Fatayat NU performance represents a democratic life? The answer is undemocratic because, when referring to Rancière's ideas, the essence of democracy is equality. There was no equivalence in the phenomena presented. The power relationship is very visible in the performance. On one hand, there are four women who represent the presence of truth regimes in the name of Islamic law; on the other hand, Melati represents those who are under siege and are fighting oppression.

Having watched the theatrical performance of *Islam yang Mana?*, the story disturbs me because it shows a lack of tolerance toward religious life. On the other hand, those who participated in the play were aware of the problem. If democracy is understood as a force that is constantly fighting against all forms of minority domination over the majority, then whoever taking part in the performance is struggling to achieve equality, which is the essence of democracy. Furthermore, if dialog is the priority of democracy, Fatayat NU is striving for the realization of democratic religious life through non-violent theater performances.

What I see, experience, and feel shows how extraordinary a play is. Thus, I agree with *Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama* Yogyakarta, who used theater as a medium to communicate the various problems that are faced in religious life. Theater proved to be a medium for voicing humanitarian issues. Theatrical performance has the potential to invite the audience to rethink on an issue without teaching, rebuking, and hurting others. Performers, thus, deserve the right to place theater as a medium to reflect humanity.

3. Concluding Remarks

This research demonstrates that an act of imposing religious truths on others runs the risk of ruining friendships, family harmony, and peaceful community life. This situation gradually paralyzes democracy in the life of religion. The principle adhered by Fatayat NU organization, which is the same principle adhered by Nahdlatul Ulama, is to uphold tolerance, respect differences, and uphold the tradition of observing and understanding Islamic teachings in the context of Indonesian culture. Thus, Fatayat NU accepts the different ways in which Muslim women wear the hijab and try to fight for a democratic religious life through theater media. The openness to appreciate the various kinds of hijab

styles, with the implied messages and explicitly voiced performances found in *Islam yang Mana?*, is expected to be the beginning of the realization of democratization in religious life.

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PERFORMING SELF, OTHERNESS, OR “OTHERNESS?”: BALINESE DANCE AND ITS COSTUMES IN JAKARTA

Yukako Yoshida

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

1. Introduction: The bilateral characteristics of costume

This study focuses on Balinese dance and its costumes. The dictionary defines the term “costume” in two ways: (1) “A set of clothes in a style typical of a particular country or historical period,” (2) “A set of clothes worn by an actor or performer for a role” (Pearsall 1999: 323).

The presentations in this symposium deal with kimonos, kebaya, hijab, Muslim masks, stage costumes, and cosplay. Some of these clothes fit into the first definition, while others do not. However, it seems all of them fit in the second definition if we consider the terms “performer” or “performance” in a broader sense to include ideas, such as performative behaviors that act out certain social roles. As many examples introduced in our symposium indicate, daily costumes can function as the medium through which people “perform” their social, religious, or national identities. Such performance through clothing seems to be important in Indonesia, where the use of both Western and traditional clothing is common, and detailed clothing rules or etiquette related to religions exist. Therefore, people carefully choose what they wear according to their social settings (e.g., see Kagami 2000: 8; Keane 2005: 195).

On the other hand, one can also wear a costume that can make one look entirely different from who they are. Cosplay is an extreme example of changing one’s appearance using a costume through which people can transform themselves into fictitious characters from movies, manga to anime. Kimonos worn by foreigners may be perceived as a kind of cosplay. Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many foreign tourists wore kimonos while walking around Kyoto. By wearing traditional clothes from other cultures, foreign tourists can enjoy an exotic appearance that suits the atmosphere of historical sites in the old capital. Therefore, wearing costumes has bilateral characteristics in that, while costumes are closely related to self-identity, they also enable people to distance themselves from their own identity and experience “otherness.”

Furthermore, a costume communicates something about its wearer, defining who you are and impacting your social relations. For instance, by wearing a hijab, you may be perceived as representing a modern Indonesian Muslim, while by wearing a fancy kimono and walking clumsily, you could be perceived as someone who loves the Japanese tradition. Costumes also physically restrict or support movements thereby controlling the wearer’s activities.

Let us imagine what happens when you wear a miniskirt; you cannot sit on the ground and would need to be careful where and how you sit. Costumes also define where one can and cannot be. In Jakarta and Bali, foreigners are welcome to enter a Hindu temple as long as they wear traditional clothing (pakaian adat) and tie a sash (selendang) around their waists, which is especially important. You cannot enter the temple without wearing a sash, even if you are a Hindu worshiper. In short, costumes define the identity of the wearers.

With these capacities of costumes in mind, this study focuses on the traditional Balinese dance of Indonesia and its costumes, particularly, for the case of Jakarta, where the majority of learners are non-Balinese, given that Balinese dances and costumes were originally steeped in Balinese culture and Hindu practices. This study discusses how the social, cultural, and religious identities of non-Balinese dancers conflict with, or are compromised or influenced by the “otherness” of Balinese dances and costumes.

2. The “Otherness” in Balinese dance costumes

Each Balinese dance has a particular costume that reflects the story’s setting and the attributes of the characters described in the dance. In a sense, for every performer, a costume is a tool to become the “other” since by wearing these costumes, a performer can transform into a prince, a warrior, or a bird in paradise.

My research reveals that costumes for Balinese dance carry three levels of “otherness” for children in Jakarta:

(1) Physical restriction or constraint: A costume not only signifies or describes the character being played but also works on the wearer's physical body.¹ When wearing a dance costume, their movements are physically restricted. For example, a tightly wrapped skirt (*kamen*) restricts step length. When you first wear an unfamiliar costume, you feel like you are deprived of freedom and manipulated by the costume. However, this restriction also serves as a guide. For example, a basic posture called “*agem*,” shown in Figure 1, is much easier to achieve when one is wearing a wrapped skirt as it determines how far apart the wearer can place their legs.

It should be noted that for such wrapped skirts, these first appear as unfamiliar garments, especially for children in Jakarta. Balinese traditional cloth includes a wrapped skirt. Therefore, in Bali, where religious and communal activities are so commonplace, people are accustomed to wearing such skirts, as they need to dress appropriately for every ritual as well as for other secular formal occasions. On the other hand, children in Jakarta have fewer such opportunities. Most beginners, especially those who are non-Balinese, cannot even wear it without their instructors' help.



Figure 1: A girl adopting *agem*, a basic posture of Balinese dance.

(2) Sacredness associated with headdresses: In Bali, dancers often consecrate their headdresses.

Balinese people say that a sacred headdress brings a supernatural aura or charisma called “*taksu*” to its wearer. A dancer holds a consecration ritual when they get a headdress, gives offerings to it before every performance, and prays to earn support from an unseen spirit that resides in the headdress. Usually, non-Balinese performers see this practice as something beyond their customs or beliefs, so they tend to avoid consecration.

(3) Revealing costumes: In addition, non-Balinese, especially Muslim female dancers, encounter a particular “otherness” within revealing costumes. I will elaborate on this point in the next section.

3. Balinese aesthetics and Muslim ethics

Muslims often consider Balinese costumes too “skimpy” or too revealing. Faced with this conflict between Balinese esthetics and Islamic gender norms, Muslim female dancers have created several solutions, one of which is modification of costumes. Nowadays, an increasing number of dancers wear a hijab and long-sleeved shirts on stage to cover their bodies. They tend to choose items with a color that matches their hair or skin so that those additional garments become less visible. They sometimes use stockings, instead of a long-sleeved shirt, to cover their arms. Balinese dances, in which these types of clothes are worn, are sometimes called “*tari Bali syariah*,” meaning Balinese dance compliant with Islamic teachings (Djelantik 2016). While this modification is generally considered acceptable in Jakarta, some people, both Balinese and non-Balinese, insist this reduces the aesthetic value of performances. Compared to Jakarta, such critics seem to be more common in Bali, where Muslims are a small minority.

Second, there are also those who avoid revealing costumes. Some Balinese dance genres have costumes that are less revealing than others, which is why some Muslim girls may limit their performances to genres such as *legong* in Figure 1. Miss. M, who had a Javanese mother and Sundanese father, was one of the most popular dancers in Jakarta at the time of my research. This Muslim woman (aged 23) explained that although she does not wear a hijab daily, she will

1. Examining Western theater, Margolies (2016: 12) argues a material object used in a performance functions both as “text and constraint.” These objects, including costumes and shoes, are attached with meanings to be “read” by both performer and audience, while limiting and regulating wearer's movement and posture (Margolies 2016: 14). “They encourage certain movement while discouraging others” (Margolies 2016: 14).

start doing so when she gets married. She said she plans to quit performing dances in skimpy costumes at that time and will continue dancing legong and other dances with costumes that cover her body (Interview with Miss M., September 7, 2019).

Another solution is to be less strict about Islamic teaching regarding dress. Several Muslim dancers, especially those who pursue their careers in Balinese dance at professional level, told me that they decided not to wear a hijab in daily life since wearing the hijab daily and removing it when they perform would be unethical. To maintain consistency, they do not wear a hijab both on and off the stage. This third solution shows that costumes not only transform the wearer on stage but can also affect her daily religious practices.

4. "Self" as affected and constructed by costume and dance

Over the course of training and repeated performances, costumes can affect or even construct "who you are" at both the physical and social levels. Years of training can transform the shape, posture, and movement of a dancer's body. In addition, to fit better in a costume, dancers may actively change their body by dieting, using make-up, growing their hair, and so on.

Moreover, one also experiences changes in social relations. Balinese instructors often invite non-Hindu learners to dance in Hindu temple festivals in and around Jakarta. By repeatedly performing at such rituals, these learners are gradually introduced to the spaces and communities of Balinese Hindus.



Figure 2: A dance performance at a Hindu temple festival in Bekasi, west of Jakarta city.

Regardless of whether the dancer is of Balinese descent, they gradually get familiarized with their costumes. Advanced performers feel that dancing is an indispensable part of their lives and that the

characters they often portray on stage become a part of themselves. Mrs. Lia (alias) is a professional dancer and instructor whose parents were originally from Sumatra. She explained that her friends sometimes call her "Lia Bali," which means "Balinese Lia" or "Lia of Bali" (Interview with Mrs. Lia, September 11, 2019). This case demonstrates that identity is perceived in a relative manner. Lia is not of Balinese descent, but to her non-Balinese friends, she is surely more "Balinese" because she has devoted herself to Balinese dance and is surrounded by other Balinese dancers. What we need to discuss is not so much whether a dancer is Balinese, but rather how much and in what way one becomes Balinese.

In addition to such ethnic identity, we should consider the state of Balinese dance as a part of the Indonesian cultural heritage. Many non-Balinese dancers in Jakarta stated that they see Balinese dance as a part of their national heritage, and thus, "our culture." Some learn to perform Balinese dance abroad because, according to them, the dance is internationally famous so it is a useful means to represent their nation when they get a chance to study or live abroad. Here, we again find that identity is relative. A Balinese costume that signifies "otherness" can also be a part of a dancer's identity if they are performing in front of a foreign audience. In that context, Balinese dance and its costume makes the performer more Indonesian.

5. Conclusion

For non-Balinese dancers and learners, the sense of self, "otherness," and "ourness" co-exist in a costume. A costume that transforms one into a completely different character can eventually become an indispensable part of oneself. This multiplicity of costumes is seemingly related to the multiplicity or plurality of the self, as mentioned by Dr. Kono in his keynote speech (Kono 2022). By wearing various costumes, reshaping their bodies, modifying their costumes, and adjusting their daily clothing practices, dancers repeatedly measure the distance between themselves and others. This process can be seen as an example of what Dr. Kono referred to as "affirmation of one's plurality and potential" (Kono 2022: 22). This research demonstrated that a costume actively affects the wearer's physical body, social relations, and identities. By surrendering oneself to such agency of costumes, dancers playfully explore their plurality and potential.

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HIJAB COSPLAY: WHEN MUSLIM WOMEN EMBRACE FAN CULTURE

Ranny Rastati

National Research and Innovation Agency, Republic of Indonesia

Introduction: The Practice of Cosplay in Indonesia

In this paper, I will discuss the hijab¹ cosplay phenomenon in Indonesia based on ethnography research in Jakarta, Depok, and Bandung.

Cosplay was introduced in Indonesia in the late 90s, albeit in a limited scope. It was only in the early 2000s that cosplay began to attract a wider audience through Japanese cultural events held at schools, colleges, and universities. Some of the first-generation Indonesian cosplayers, such as Pinky Lu Xun and Orochi X, helped popularize cosplay, particularly among young people.

At the beginning, Indonesian cosplayers mostly cosplayed characters from Japanese anime and video games. This is because Japanese pop culture products such as anime and drama have been widely broadcast on Indonesian national television from the late 70s to the 90s. Later, in the 2010s, characters from Western pop culture, such as Harry Potter and the Avengers, were heavily cosplayed. For cosplayers, there are at least three things that are at the core of cosplay: costume quality, the cosplayer's ability to impersonate the character, and performance skill.

In Indonesia, if someone decides to become a cosplayer, it does not mean that they will reveal their identity as a cosplayer to their family and friends. During my research, the majority of the informants admitted that they first kept their identity as cosplayers a secret. They worry that their parents will not allow them to cosplay and are afraid of being teased by their friends, since cosplay is considered an immature, cringe-worthy hobby.

Indonesian cosplayers generally have a stage name to conceal their real names. The pseudonym tends to be Japanese or an alias that has some philosophical significance. Apart from that, on various occasions, I met cosplayers that appeared in very different styles during events versus in daily life. Since cosplayers rarely disclose their personal information to the public, many have dedicated social media accounts that are used to display cosplay photos only.

Even so, there are also cosplayers who share their daily activities on social media. However, this occurred after a long period of time, when cosplay became more familiar to Indonesians. The high penetration of social media has made some cosplayers famous. They are known as celebrity cosplayers, who serve as brand ambassadors and guest judges at the most anticipated cosplay events (Rastati 2020: 146-147). Of course, the social identity of celebrity cosplayers has turned them into influential cosplayers.

There are several variants of cosplay that are practiced in Indonesia, including cross-dressing, indocosu, and hijab cosplay (Rastati 2020: 147-149). Cross-dressing (also known as crossplay) is a cosplay practice performed by cosplaying characters that are opposite to one's own gender. Cross-dressing began in 2004 and became popular in 2009. However, cross-dressing is currently less common because it is less accepted by the public. Meanwhile, indocosu, in which cosplay is practiced based on the characteristics of Indonesian pop culture, became popular in the period 2009–2010. At that time, there was an emerging effort in Indonesia to introduce characters from animations and television shows. Afterward, hijab cosplay began to be practiced by Muslim women who wished to cosplay without removing their hijab. This phenomenon appeared in the period 2012–2014. Since then, hijab cosplay has been found in many cosplay events.



Figure 1: Cosplay & Hijab Cosplay Event in Malaysia

1 Hijab means a veil or head scarf used by a Muslim woman to cover her hair and chest.

(Location: Subang, Malaysia)

Pros and Cons of Hijab Cosplay

The emergence of hijab cosplay in Indonesia is believed to have been influenced by the Hijabers Community, which was formed in 2010. The Hijabers Community is a community of Muslim women who promote fashionable and modern hijab styles. The image of the hijab, which, in its traditional form, is considered conservative and far from trendy, slowly changed into something chic and stylish. As a result, awareness of wearing the hijab among young Muslim women has also increased. The hijab cosplay phenomenon appeared as a response to the religious awareness of young people who wanted to channel their hobbies without neglecting Islamic teachings.

The emergence of new styles of hijab raises pros and cons. Stylish hijabs are considered inappropriate because they are not in accordance with Islamic sharia² or Islamic law. Unlike the stylish hijab, the shar'i³ hijab style is loose and modest; it covers the entire body and is perceived as unattractive. Meanwhile, the stylish hijab comes in a variety of colors, is attractive, and does not cover the whole body. As a result, Muslim women who wear the stylish hijab are considered less Islamic than those who wear the shar'i hijab.

Ironically, women who are not wearing a hijab are considered inferior to or less Islamic than women who wear it. However, hijabi, who wear flower ornaments and makeup, are also considered less Islamic by other groups who use different styles of hijab. Sometimes, people judge the other negatively.⁴ (Wahid 2016).

Hijab cosplayers have also experienced a similar polemic. Since its introduction, hijab cosplay has generated debate regarding its pros and cons within the cosplay community and with respect to the general public. Regarding cons, on the premise that adding a religious symbol (hijab) to a character is a careless act, hijab cosplay is considered to fail to present the character according to the original

costume and personality. For this reason, hijab cosplay is more suitable as a fashion than as a cosplay variety.



Figure 2: Hijab cosplay as Kanna Kamui from anime Miss Kobayashi's Dragon Maid (Location: Bandung, Indonesia)

On the other hand, regarding pros, it is argued that hijab cosplay is a solution for Muslim women who want to participate in cosplay without neglecting their identity as Muslims. Hijab cosplay shows that the hijab does not limit creativity. Moreover, cosplay is a hobby that can be taken up by anyone, regardless of nationality and religion. Hijab cosplayers display limitless creativity because of their ability to modify their costumes and make them appropriate for Muslim women.

When I did hijab cosplay for the first time, around 2011, other cosplayers saw me as strange. I was ignored and isolated. Of course, I felt a lack of confidence and insecurity. Then, I saw hijab cosplayers cosplaying as Hatsune Miku at Hobbyfest in 2012. When I saw her, I was motivated to continue cosplaying. I want to show others that we do not have to remove our hijab when cosplaying. (Rastati 2015: 381)

There are many questions about whether cosplay

2. Sharia law is a code for living that includes prayer, fasting, zakat (a donation to the poor), hijab, etc.
3. Shar'i means being in accordance with the Islamic teaching
4. Original version in Indonesian language: "Ironis yah, ketika perempuan yang tidak berkerudung dianggap lebih rendah, atau tidak cukup Islam, dibanding dengan perempuan yang menggunakan jilbab. Tapi kemudian, perempuan yang menggunakan jilbab, lalu memakai riasan bunga-bunga, memakai make-up, tetap dianggap kurang Islam, oleh kelompok lain yang misalnya menggunakan jilbab dengan gaya yang berbeda. Kadang-kadang semua orang seperti saling memandangi orang lain itu buruk."

and hijab cosplay contradict Islamic teachings. Some argue that it is indeed contradictory because some manga and anime have haram elements, such as sexiness, alcohol consumption, and LGBT. In Indonesia, there is no fatwa,⁵ except from the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI), which specifically prohibits cosplay. This is different from cosplay in Malaysia, which is prohibited by the Wilayah Persekutuan Mufti, Datuk Dr. Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri (Bossgeek, 2018), who argue that cosplay is haram,⁶ especially if it shows off the awrah and resembles another religion's deity.

Although there is no fatwa yet, Muslim cosplayers should pay attention to other fatwas that might be related to cosplay activities. For example, there are fatwas related to the prohibition of using other religious attributes⁷ and those prohibiting pornography and porno-action⁸ as well as LGBT behavior.⁹ These fatwas can serve as a guideline for Muslim cosplayers in choosing characters to cosplay, according to Islamic teachings.

Over time, hijab cosplayers emerged, promoting cosplay costumes in accordance with Islamic sharia. One of the groups actively promoting sharia cosplay costumes is the Islamic Otaku Community (IOC). The IOC has a special team to design cosplay costumes to suit Islamic law, such as costumes with hijabs that cover the chest and loose costumes. This demonstrates that hijab cosplay can be classified into two types: stylish and shar'i. The difference between the two can be seen in the style of costumes. The costume worn in stylish hijab cosplay is quite similar to the original character's appearance. For example, the shape of the hijab is made so that it resembles the character's hairstyle as closely as possible; it

is therefore unnecessary to cover the chest. On the other hand, shar'i hijab cosplay only matches the hijab's color with the character's hair color. Furthermore, in shar'i hijab cosplay, the costumes are looser, pants are often replaced with long skirts, and the cosplayers wear socks.

Hijab Cosplay as Islamic Dawah (Preaching Islam)

Regardless of the arguments against hijab cosplay, some uztads or Islamic preachers use cosplay as a medium for preaching Islam. For instance, Ustad Marzuki Imron is known as Ustadz Naruto. On various occasions, he has cosplayed Naruto when preaching at the mosque. His actions have attracted attention, which has encouraged many people to attend Islamic lectures.

At present, the old-fashioned style of dawah, which is traditionally delivered at mosques and formal institutions, does not have sufficient appeal to attract youth. To adapt to the modern era, dawah's style has undergone several adjustments. Consequently, it has begun to penetrate informal communication media, including social media and pop culture products such as animation and cosplay.

Concluding Remarks

Almost one decade has passed since the introduction of hijab cosplay. Hijab cosplay is now not only performed in Muslim majority countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, but also in Muslim minority countries like the United Kingdom. The hijab cosplay phenomenon shows that dawah can be performed through cosplay. Hijab cosplay can also be a solution for Muslim women who want to channel their cosplay

5. Fatwa means interpretation or legal opinion on a point of Islamic law given by a qualified mufti or jurist in response to a question posed by an individual, judge, or government. In Indonesia, fatwas are issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council or Majelis Ulama Indonesia.

6. Haram means forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law.

7. *Fatwa* Majelis Ulama Indonesia 56 Year 2016 regarding the Law on Using Non-Muslim Religious Attributes, <https://mui.or.id/wp-content/uploads/files/fatwa/Fatwa-MENGGUNAKAN-ATRIBUT-AGAMA-LAIN.pdf> (Accessed 29 Dec 2020)

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hobbies while fulfilling their religious obligation to wear the hijab.

The wave of Islamization and the growing Muslim middle class have inspired Muslims to take control of popular cultural production (Hariyadi 2010). It is essential that dawah's style adapts to the current generation. Dawah is not limited to a fixed set of preaching actions, such as Islamic lectures and Quran recitations; it also includes activities that highlight sartorial symbols of Islam, such as the hijab for women and the takiyah (cap) for men.

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MASKING CULTURE AND ASSOCIATED IDENTITIES: THE CASE OF SOUTHERN IRAN

Manami Goto

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science/ Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

1. Masking Culture in the Persian Gulf

As a result of the current worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, “masking” one’s face became the norm, even in countries where surgical masks were not previously commonly used in daily life. In the Gulf, however, the use of face masks has long been a diverse and unique practice. This article introduces a discussion of the little-known aspects of the masking tradition in southern Iran.

The female face mask, locally known as the *burqu’* or *batūle*, has played an important role in the coastal societies of the Persian Gulf for more than 500 years. For most of this period, women were expected to start wearing this face mask at the onset of puberty or on their wedding day and continue to wear it throughout their lifetimes. This unique regional material culture has not been studied in depth, and the significance of face masks for women and the societies they belong to has been underestimated. The female face mask is sometimes conceived in the Iranian context as part of the provincial dress of a minority group and is occasionally portrayed as an object signifying backwardness and inhibiting the modernization of society. However, it has a fascinating design, history, and purpose.

Many different types of face coverings have been adopted and used by women in the Middle East; however, what distinguishes the *burqu’* or *batūle* from other face coverings is its unique shape and material. Their most significant characteristic is a wooden or plastic piece inserted in the middle of the mask, lifting the nose part, retaining its design and shape, and facilitating breathing (Abu Saud 1984: 54; Al Azzi 1990: 19). When going out, women generally wear a multi-colored, patterned over-garment called a *chādūr* that covers the entire body. Women usually first cover their hair with a black fabric, *jilbīl*, wrapped around the head, and then attach a face mask with strings on each side, tied at the back of the head. Wearing the face mask is also strongly associated with honor, piety, and pride. Hence, the face mask is not simply a means of concealment; it is a visual symbol of a woman’s identity.

2. The Face Mask: A Legacy of the Portuguese Occupation?

While some researchers believe the face mask’s origin lies in the Arabian Peninsula or India, local literature and folklore both suggest that it originates from southern Iran, namely, the Qeshm Island (Al Azzi, 1990:19; Anjamrūz 1992; Yassavoli 1993: 130; Khaṭībīzādh 2010: 73). Local anecdotal evidence claims that Portuguese soldiers harassed local girls and women when they captured the coastal area and islands of southern Iran in the early sixteenth century. In response, to deceive the Portuguese, the women replaced the previously worn simple cloth veil with a face mask imitating a male moustache (Figure 1). Since then, the face mask has evolved with different shapes. Each is made by hand to fit the wearer’s face, and the mask’s shape, color, material, and design signify the wearer’s age, residence, marital status, ethnic group, religious or tribal affiliation, number of children, and socio-economic status (Maḥbtī, 2010: 73). The distinctive features of the face mask are named after places or ethnic groups, such as *muqāmī* (مُقَامِي), *ḥumīrānī* (حُمَيْرَانِي), *‘arabī* (عَرَبِي), *qaṭarī* (قَطْرِي), and *sikānī* (سِكَانِي) (Maḥbtī 2010: 73).

The fieldwork data collected by the author between 2014 and 2016 indicate that the spread of the face mask in Iran is concentrated in the Hormozgan Province, reaching almost to its boundaries, with a larger concentration along the coastal areas. Within this boundary, the face masks can be roughly divided into two categories: the golden/indigo face mask (Figure 1) and the colorfully embroidered Balochi face mask (Figure 2). The former is commonly used in the upper Hormozgan, whereas the latter is seen in the lower part amongst Balochis. Both types are believed to have been introduced later in eastern Arabia as well as in East Africa, through the exchange of people and goods.

3. Concealment or Beautification?

The materials and shapes of the face masks differ by place as well as their functions. These functions can be categorized into four broad aspects: social,

physical, religious, and cultural. The social function is to distinguish marriageable women from those who are already married. Women are traditionally expected to adopt the face mask upon their first menstruation. However, single women mainly wear a simple dark-colored version. When women marry, they are allowed to adopt brightly colored and richly decorated versions of the face mask and sometimes attach gold ornaments to the strings on the sides of their masks. Therefore, wearing the female face mask not only preserves feminine modesty while providing women with freedom of movement in public, but it also signals the wearer's availability for marriage without the question being asked.

The face mask is also used to protect the face from the strong sunlight and heat in the Persian Gulf, where summer temperatures can exceed 50°C. Simultaneously, it can disguise unattractive facial features such as wrinkles, blotches, and occasionally even the lack of teeth, while emphasizing other features, such as eyes circled with black eyeliner, for the wearer to appear younger and more beautiful. Therefore, the older a wearer gets, the larger the face mask becomes.

Another important function of the face mask is to fulfill women's religious obligations. Although it is not explicitly stated in the Qurān, many women in the region consider eyebrows as hair that need to be covered in front of non-*maḥram* (unmarriageable kin). Thus, women often ensure that their face masks are adjusted to cover their eyebrows. In one case that the author observed, some masked women criticized a photograph of a young woman whose eyebrows were not properly covered by her mask. One of them stated, "She does not know how to wear [it]! She is not from here!" For women who have experience wearing the face mask, covering the eyebrows is an important indication as to whether the wearer really appreciates the proper way of putting it on.

More importantly, the face mask serves a significant function as an embodiment of the wearer's identity. For example, when women marry men from different villages, they sometimes keep their face masks from their birthplaces, as they represent their origins. On the other hand, some women choose to adopt the face masks from their husbands' villages to show an accommodating attitude towards their new family, which helps them integrate into their new community. Women also change their face masks in accordance with special occasions, fashion, and circumstances. One woman offered the following

explanation:

It [the *burqu'*] has gradually become more beautiful and more decorative. They [women] often cut the material [for the *burqu'*] differently, attaching gold adornments or trimming some parts to make it narrower. They often look at themselves in the mirror and might think, "This way is prettier, so let's make this part narrower," or "I want to emphasize this part, so I will make this part bigger." Women create different styles and designs.

The face mask acts as a biographical object marking the wearer's background and achievements, rather than, as is sometimes believed, passively eliminating a woman's individuality.

4. Modernization and Preservation

Although the face mask has become one of the most iconic representations of the local female identity in southern Iran, the number of women using the mask on a daily basis is diminishing. One of the most frequently provided reasons for this is Iran's modern education system and the prohibition on face veils in schools, despite the absence of any legal restrictions on a national level against face coverings in educational institutions.

Young women further insist that wearing the face mask has gone out of fashion, and those who prefer to conceal their face often adopt a full-face covering—the *niqāb*—instead of the traditional face mask. However, these women often wear the face mask on special occasions, such as weddings and family gatherings, and tend to be strongly critical of older generations who also discard the custom of the face mask. This contradictory attitude illustrates their hesitation to abandon this long-established and worthy custom, while wanting to accept a modern way of life. One possible solution may be to elevate the face mask to an artistic endeavor. In recent years, it has been common for local women to start their own businesses as entrepreneurs, crafting and decorating products with face-mask motifs. These products, including wallets, handbags, and jewelry, are often purchased by locals for daily use and by tourists as souvenirs. In this way, these women contribute to family income and preserve their local traditions.

Some men also wear the face mask at theatrical performances—*ta'azīh*—during the important religious festivals for Shiites, such as *'Āshūrā*, at which tradition dictates that they act all the

women's parts. According to one of the performance organizers in a small village close to Minab, the female dress was modified to include the local face mask, to encourage local women to emotionally engage with the tragic events represented in the performances. Furthermore, in Minab and Bandar Abbas, paintings, statues, and monuments of masked women are increasingly seen in well-frequented public places as open acknowledgement of local heritage.

Today, the population of masked women is declining, and it is difficult to obtain detailed knowledge on the face-mask rituals and the traditional techniques of making the face mask. However, although the use of the face mask has changed over time, it still plays a significant role in representing local women's identity. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has reached southern Iran, and while some women wear a surgical mask under the traditional face mask, many women who do not wear the traditional face mask in their daily lives wear a surgical face mask to protect themselves from the virus. This social change in the way of covering one's face may lead to a new trend and use of the traditional face mask. Thus, it is important to observe the changes of this masking tradition during and after the pandemic, which can provide new findings to the face-body studies in transcultural conditions.



Figure 1: A face mask seamstress wearing the burqu' in the Salakh village of the Qeshm Island. Photo taken by the author in December 2016.



Figure 2: A woman wearing the Balochi face mask at the Thursday bazar in Minab. Photo taken by the author in July 2016.

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Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

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