Waria Genres: Identity, Embodiment, and the Performance of Gendered Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia

By

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Professor Juana María Rodríguez, Chair
Professor SanSan Kwan
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Abstract

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Waria Genres: Identity, Embodiment, and the Performance of Gendered Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia describes the ways that the gendered body is experienced and produced for *waria* across performance genres within their geographic and historical contexts. It does so by describing, in dialogue with ethnographic and historical data, transformations in understandings and experiences of trans femininity within professional and amateur performance practices. The main focus of this thesis is the *waria* community, an Indonesian term which refers to diverse forms of gendered embodiment and social practices. *Waria* are persons who were assigned male at birth, yet practice a broad range of femininities. Given that embodiment and selfhood are understood by *waria* to be shaped by those with whom one interacts, a primary concern of this dissertation are understandings of *waria* generated between performers and audiences.

My chief finding is that *waria* artists across generations actively construct gendered embodiments as a product of the intertwining forms of intimacy and self-making enabled through performance. Furthermore, I argue that the boundaries of *waria* intelligibility expand or constrict in relationship to

genre. How then do embodied performance practices enable *waria* to narrate their own subjectivity and visibility—to help create the conditions for becoming *waria*? I answer this central question by analyzing how *waria* gendered embodiment is literally performed across genres with specific audiences and stages in mind and therefore consciously constructing the gendered performances in question. This suggests that while there is no stable embodiment to which all *waria* ascribe, their sense of gender and attendant performances are shaped by highly specific aesthetic and social scripts within their attendant historical and cultural contexts.

Chapter one contextualizes "*waria" by* laying out histories of gender and "male-bodied femininity" within Indonesia as it relates to early generations of *waria.* Chapter two argues that *waria* actively negotiate the boundaries of their gender expression through involvement in formally gendered dance practices. Chapter three looks to how *waria* negotiate their most public stage—the street. Focusing on the *pengamen* street performance genre, I argue that *waria* renegotiate public perception in the face of difficult social and legislative pressures through street performance. Finally, chapter four looks to the genre of *Lipsinc* and the beauty practices that shape it. Here I argue that *waria* are able to cultivate space for embodied forms of gender that expand beyond accepted Indonesian regimes.

For my Grandparents; Zemma, Paul, Roosevelt , and Theresa

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Glossary

Adat: custom

Asli: original, authentic, real

Banci (*béncong*):Often derogatory term used to describe transgender women or feminine men

Banci kaléng: Literally an "empty *banci*," a person thought likely to turn into a *waria*

Brondong: Term used to describe young, often adolescent boys or men

Déndong: Practices involved with cultivating embodied femininity

Gay: Masculine gay man

Ngondhék: Performance of femininity by men

Jiwa perempuan: A woman's soul or mind

Kucing: Literally a "cat," a male sex worker who is often *Brondong*

Ludruk: a form of east Javanese drama

Malu: A socially perceived sense of shame

Ngremo: The name of an east Javanese presentational dance

Nyébong: Social settings where *waria* partake in both transactional and unpaid sex

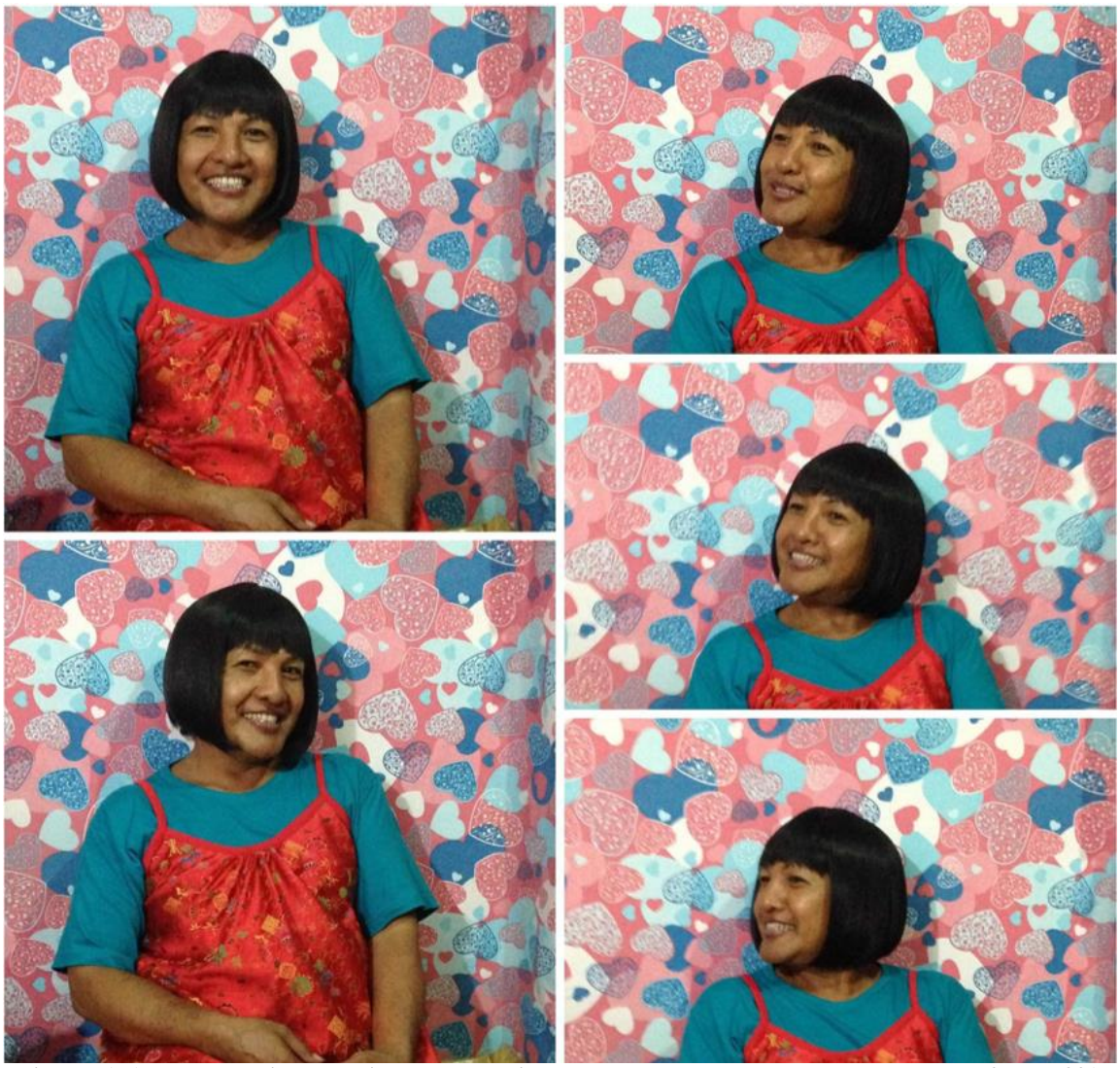
Prestasi: The performances of good deeds or accomplishments by an individual

Tandhak ludruk: artist who plays female roles in *ludruk*

Wadam: Trans woman (no longer in use)

Waria: Trans woman (currently use)

Chapter 1:Contextualizing *Waria*—An Introduction



(Figure 1.1 Bunda Yeti poses in her home in Yogyakarta, Central Java, February 24th, 2015)

Waria Genres: Identity, Embodiment, and the Performance of Gendered Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia describes the ways that the gendered body is experienced and performatively produced for *waria* across performance genre. I argue that embodiment and selfhood are understood by *waria*[1] to be shaped by those with whom one interacts. In doing so I describe, in dialogue with ethnographic and historical data, transformations in experiences and understandings of femininity within professional and amateur performance practices for *waria*. Thus, a primary concern of this dissertation are the conceptions of

[1] a moniker which combines the terms wanita (woman) and pria (man) and in contemporary Indonesian contexts defines non-gender conforming men who dress and often live as women

waria generated between performers and audiences within their geographic and historical context. I begin with this image, of a seemingly commonplace gesture of posing for a camera, because of the ways it captures *waria* investments in visibility and subsequently this project's investments in exploring how visibility is refined through genres of performance. I begin with this small moment of ethnographic exchange in order to convey a key tension that animates this study and to introduce the question at the heart of my research: How have contemporary *waria* understandings of gendered subjectivity been enacted through the performance genres that have become available over the past sixty years?

Productions of the Self

It is finally a dry evening in late February as I arrive at a fifty-six-year-old informant's house in Yogyakarta for a visit. Bunda Yeti is originally from Medan, North Sumatera but has lived in the city of Yogyakarta since she moved for her high-school studies in 1976. Bunda Yeti, like many *waria* lives in one of Yogyakarta's numerous *kampungs*, a traditional residential area for lower-income people. During this time of year, the monsoon season, many of these areas experience extreme flooding. Due to a recent bout of bad weather our interview was put off for two weeks. However today Bunda Yeti is happy to welcome me into her home. She explains that the floods did not do too much damage as she offers me a cup of tea and a packaged rice snack. Her home consists of two small rooms; a rest and socializing area attached to a small kitchen with a *bak mandi*.[2] The floor is papered over with a laminate hard-wood print that peels slightly in the corners. While the room we currently occupy lacks a source of natural light, Bunda Yeti has covered one wall in bright pink, blue, and white paper with a cheery heart pattern, brightening the space.

As we sip our tea she gestures to her hair, explaining that her wig is brand new as she smooths it down. Before I launch into my questions she tells me to take her picture. My first attempt is completely unsatisfactory so she quickly begins to stage manage our session, pointing out where I should sit as she poses in front of her newly papered wall. With legs demurely tucked under her red-satin dress, Bunda Yeti angles and tilts her head this way and that. At moments she looks directly into the camera with a full smile and at the next she tilts her head and gazes off in the distance. She keeps her folded in her lap, palms facing up,

[2] "the bath": in smaller, lower-income homes this usually consists of a large tub of water near a drainage hole in the floor

or gently resting on her hip. The five photographs captured above were deemed worthy of saving and sharing on WhatsApp.

Bunda Yeti is at once actor and director while I am implicated in her performance as both audience and participant. In the productive tension between the "done" (the shared photos) and the "doing" (the ongoing repertoire of behaviors and gestures reactivated and reenacted across the many photos) we can position this is one discrete act as a performance that works across time in powerful ways. In narrating our time together, I attempt to capture the now of performance as process, a living practice in its moment of activation and also performance as a thing done, a tangible accomplishment. Our extended photography session gestures not only to performance as mimetic repetition, but also includes the possibility of change, critique, and creativity within those frameworks of repetition.

The Co-Constitution of Gender and Genre

Waria Genres: Identity, Embodiment, and the Performance of Gendered Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia sits at the convergence of performance studies, queer studies and Southeast Asian Studies in order to trace lines of aesthetic continuity through a constellation of practices that coalesce as "*waria* performance". This project explores how *waria*—-as an identity, point of identification, social signifier of difference, and node within transnational queer codes—-manifests as a consistently identifiable gender through various "genres" of performance. These genres range from song and dance-based street busking to drag adjacent shows and traditional court dance. Looking to not only what performance is but also what it does, this project engages with these various doings and allows us to see, to experience, and to theorize the complex relation of *waria* to public embodiment. In reflecting on how performance vacillates between pretend and new constructions of the "real" this dissertation conceives of "genre" and "gender" as co-constitutive.

A brief detour through the historical definitions and etymology of these words--gender and genre--helps to illuminate the underlying connections that undergird my project. In the Oxford English Dictionary, following a primary definition in relation definition in relation to its usage as grammatical gender, the entry on "gender, n." includes a secondary meaning:

> a. A class of things or beings distinguished by having certain characteristics in common;(a mass noun) these regarded collectively; kind, sort

b. That which has been engendered; product, offspring.[3]

Although these meanings are now obsolete, with the last use recorded in 1847, for the purposes of this project this secondary definition opens space for critical inquiry and holds a similar place of importance as the two more familiar tertiary definitions:

a. *Gen*. Males or females viewed as a group;=sex. Also: the property or fact of belonging to one of these groups
b. Psychology and Sociology (orig. U.S.) The state of being male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences, rather than biological ones; the collective attributes or traits associated with a particular sex, or determined as a result of one's sex. Also: a (male or female) group characterized in this way.[4]

The secondary meaning noted above is significant for this project because it points to the similarity between the impulse towards classification involved in defining people in (typically binary terms) in regard to their gender and sexuality and the need to classify embodied creative expression within particular genres. The word "genre, n." is defined as:

a. Kind; sort; style
b. *Spec.* A particular style or category of works of art; esp. a type of literary work characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose. [5]

Both words "gender" and "genre" come from the Anglo-Norman and Middle French, and if you search the definition for the word "genre" the OED links to the etymology for the word "gender". This deep etymological linkage leads me to question what it would mean to examine *waria* as both subject position and aesthetic demarcation. Among the questions I ask are: What purpose do these performative practices serve within the *waria* communities? In what ways do these performances cite

[3] Oxford English Dictionary, "gender, n.1". OED Online. June 2019. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125 (accessed July 31st, 2017).

[4] Ibid

[5] Oxford English Dictionary, "genre, n.1". OED Online. June 2019. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125 (accessed July 31st, 2017).

international queer aesthetics? What is the relationship crafted between performer and viewer? The genres that *waria* produce resist classification in the same way that *waria* themselves resist attempts at classification in relation to gender and sexual conventions. This refusal to conform reflects how genre as a form is intimately related to *waria* constructions of gender and sexuality.

In the last decade of the Twentieth-Century, there has been a shift in the humanities and social sciences from considering texts as the bearers of culture, toward performative ways of knowing the world. Performativity offers a non-essentialist approach to the production of identity, grounded in action and practice. While scholars have interrogated the relationship between the types of work in which *waria* are involved and *waria* identity, few think about their performances as work or the "work" of performance. This project explores how what I define as performative practices shape public perception and understandings of *waria*. I see "performative practices" as positioned at the intersection of "performative" and "performativity" for *waria* subjects. While the body (with all of its attendant problems) occupies a privileged site in performance, language also plays an important role. British philosopher J.L. Austin highlights how words, in certain contexts, actually do things, how language can become action. For Austin, these "performatives" are more than simply a description of an act, they are moments when the language becomes the "act itself".[6] However, like performance, performatives ask us to also consider their frame so that:

> Speaking generally, it is always necessary that the *circumstances* in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, *appropriate*, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should *also* perform certain *other* actions, whether 'physical' or 'mental' actions or even acts of uttering further words.[7]

Thus "performatives", according to Austin, only function in circumstances that abide by specific conventions.
while also creating spaces that allow *waria* to forge individual,

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[6] J.L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed.(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1975), 7.

[7]J.L Austin, *How to Do Things*, 8. italics in the original.

and solidify communal, gendered subjectivities. Therefore, this project takes seriously the curatorial process behind the conventions and spaces in which *waria choose* to perform. My research looks to the coded conventions with which *waria* engage in their own performances and the tensions and disruptions to these conventions that wider social-political environments enliven. Therefore, while happening in the "now," attention to the performatives embedded within *waria* performances exposes how these genres are "never for the first time," but always , as Derrida puts it, "citational" even as individual agency and resistance are still possible.

This citationality becomes essential for the notion of "performativity". In theorizing "performativity", Judith Butler states that it "must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act' but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names".[8] Gender identity, for Butler, is not a theatrical enactment or performance. Nor is it a performative in the Austinean sense in which a "a subject brings into being what s/he names." Rather, for Butler, it refers both to the entire regulatory system that produced gendered subjects through a series of normative behaviors and to the possibility of a response so that "performativity describes both the process of being acted on, and the conditions and possibilities for acting, and that we cannot understand its operation without both of these dimensions".[9] Butler's notion of performativity offers a dynamic way of understanding performance practices in its assertions that identities are constituted through what people do, rather than who they are, and that bodily practice is central in this process.[10]

Translating these insights into an Indonesian context suggests that *"waria"* are always already immersed *in* discursive practices that shape how they will be viewed by the wider normative population, what behaviors and identifications and public displays will be deemed appropriate, and what other options or identification will be foreclosed or disavowed as abject. These systems and genres predate the performance of them and exert pressure on the local context even as they come into being. Being

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[8]Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*,(New York: Routledge, 1990),72

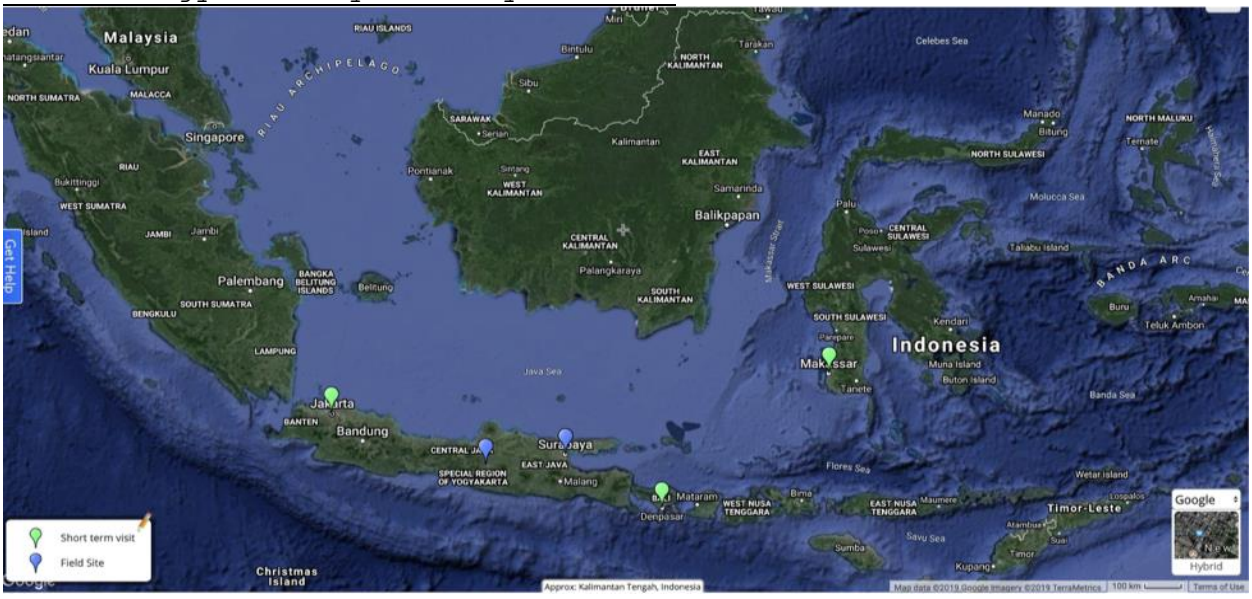
[9] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 72

[10]Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, (London: Routledge,1993),xii.

attuned to how the performative functions, allows us to see performance events as not only taking place in time and space, but also capable of constituting understandings of time and space along with the performing body. In theorizing through the frame of "performative practices" I shift attention to the regulatory and citational systems around, not only performance, but also performative manifestations of gender in performance. A focus on "performance practices" highlights the actions of *waria* performance events as it also establishes their performative potential, i.e. the iterative possibilities for *"waria"* as both subject position and terminology.

Waria performative practices range from highly choreographed shows staged in nightclubs and cabaret style dinner theatres to unsolicited, unauthorized performances where *waria* sing and dance on public transportation or outdoor eating areas, and subsequently demand payment. *Waria Genres* delves into the productive tension between demonstrations of alterity and desires for belonging that circulate within these performances. I argue that contemporary genres of performance enacted by *waria* not only work to produce a sense of national *waria* subjectivity and community identity, but they do so in ways that seek acknowledgement from and enfoldment into state-sanctioned constructions of Indonesian gendered-identity and artistry.

Methodology and Key Primary Sources



(Figure 1.2: Map indicating field sites and locations of short-term visits undertaken during fieldwork)

Based on fieldwork over the course of four years across three islands—Java, Bali, and Sulawesi—and five cities—Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, and Makassar—this project

reinvigorates scholarly interest in non-binary subjects in Indonesia[11]. By placing this fieldwork in conversation with the recent analytical possibilities offered by transgender studies and performance studies I shift attention to the social and economic forces that shape gendered embodiment on and off the "stage". In doing so, I offer a detailed ethnographic account of contemporary *waria* subjectivity. Rather than seeing gender as the property of an individual, this thesis reflects on the concrete practices involved in accomplishing femininity undertaken across performers and audience. Following Butler, this project takes up the position that ethnographic work should move beyond binaries such as author/reader, body/text and subject/object. Instead I argue that genre and identity co-constitute one another, and that each is produced by, and productive of, myriad corporeal practices. Like genre, gender identity may be temporarily fixed, but it is always fluid and contested, and always being deployed in new ways.

Waria Genres: Identity, Embodiment, and the Performance of Gendered Belonging in Contemporary Indonesia looks at multiple practices that make up the medium of contemporary live *waria* performance. In order to begin answering the questions central to this project, I propose a way of thinking about *waria* performances as practices that both shapes and informs the "contemporary" while simultaneously deeply engaged with discourses of tradition. I build upon the work of performance scholar David Román who understands "the contemporary as a critical temporality that engages the past without being held captive to it and that instantiates the present without defining a future" in order to call attention to the importance of the process of exchange between *waria* artists and their audiences and the moments of performance that compose a temporary and conditional "we".[12] Roman goes on to position performance as an especially effective means to engage the contemporary because:

> Performance's liveness and impermanence allows for a process of exchange--

[11] It is worth nothing that the adjective "non-binary" with the specific meaning of "Designating a person who does not acknowledge or fit the conventional notions of male and female gender, and instead identified as being of another or no gender, or a combination of genders; (also) of or relating to such a person" dates from 1995 and was added to the OED in 2018. http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125 (accessed July 31st, 2017).

[12] David Román, *Performance in America: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the Performing Arts*,(Durham: Duke University Press,2005, 2

> between artists and audiences, between the past and the present-- where new social formations emerge. these new social formations constitute a counterpublic that offers both respite and change from normative structures of being and belonging assumed both in the national culture and in the subcultural worlds that form a part of it.[13]

While *Waria Genres* is especially drawn to understanding how performance critically substantiates and reinvents what is meant by "*waria*", it is equally committed to understanding how the contemporary engages with the histories that precede and help produce it. The contemporary in conversation with *waria* understands their performative practices as that which both carries and reinvents particular moments and performances from the past while also carving out space in the present, and maybe the future as well.

The first performance practice I explore is what I term a "drag adjacent genre." This is a genre in which *waria* lip-sync to contemporary Western and Indonesian pop music with accompanying choreography in public and semi-public locations such as dinner-theatres, clubs, and malls. The next genre of performance practice I investigate is what I categorize as "unsolicited public performances". Here *waria* also sing and dance, often with the accompaniment of a small portable stereo or other *waria* playing make-shift instruments, in public spaces such as outdoor eating areas, the sidewalk, approaching cars stopped in traffic, or on public transportation. In these unsolicited public performances, the audience is subject to forced engagement, although this does not preclude audience participation and enjoyment. Cultural heritage performances constitute a third designation of practices. These include *waria* participation in *adat*(custom) dance genres at public cultural events, beauty pageants, and as *tandhak* in *Ludruk* theatre performances. My dissertation argues that within each of these performance genres, the personas crafted by such performances confront local and scholarly discourses of *asli* (authenticity) and *adat* (custom) as they pertain to, and shape, performance practices within contemporary Indonesia.

Using a combination of critical ethnography and archival research alongside performance analysis, this dissertation looks

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[13] David Román, *Performance in America,* 2005, 3

to how *waria* carve a substantial place for themselves in the contemporary Indonesian performance landscape as well as how they construct local and national collective identities through their engagement with gender within these performances. Guided by my commitment to ethical, feminist, and queer forms of critical ethnography , it is primarily in my interactions with performers and other members of the *waria* community where I most successfully document the thoughts, concepts, and techniques that govern participation in the constellation of performance practices outlined above. Critical ethnography begins, as D. Soyini Madison asserts, "with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain...to probe other possibilities that will challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge, and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning, and denigrate identities and communities".[14] I follow an approach to ethnography of performance grounded in the position that one must enter the research situation not only as a participant observers but also as co-performative witnesses when afforded the opportunity.

Performance scholar Catherine M. Cole emphasizes how the labor of research requires embodied participation in, and attentive witnessing to, the performance events before us.[15] Such positioning allows for an orientation to the social exchanges that constitute ethnographic engagement as performance. Furthermore, Madison points to how critical ethnographic practices necessitate the contextualization of our own positionality as ethnographers, thereby making it accessible, transparent, and vulnerable to evaluation. Frequently throughout my fieldwork I was strongly encouraged to participate through performance. Whether in dance rehearsals or at private events my interlocuters demanded a more embodied investment on my part. More often than not entertained by my lack of skill, the *waria* I worked with invited me to experience the rigors of genre and to experience the ways in which forms rendered my own femininity legible or illegible within an Indonesian public context.

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[14] D. Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*,2nd ed.(Sage Publications:2012, 5-6. See also Dwight Conquergood, *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*. (University of Michigan Press), 2013.

[15] For more on this process in regards to Cole's interviews and performances with the Ghana Concert Parties Union and the Jaguar Jokers Concert Parties in Accra see Catherine M. Cole, "Reading Blackface in West Africa: Wonders Taken for Signs" *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 1 (1996): 183-215.

This project concentrates on the ways in which the performance practices of *waria* put pressure on normative ideals of gender embodiment in Indonesia. This dissertation highlights several social and cultural changes that transpired during what is termed as the New Order. Within Indonesia, the use of the term "New Order" or *Orde Baru* is now generally used to mark President Suharto's political regime (1966-1998). This phrase is meant to establish an epistemological and ideological distance from what would subsequently become known as former President Sukarno's "Old Order" or *Orde Lamu*(1945-1966). As Dwyer(2002) and Suryakusuma (2011) argue, from the beginning of the New Order, development and social control were unified through the assertion of narrow roles and forms of embodiment described in terms of idealized forms of masculinity and femininity. From the late 1960s, the Indonesian state took its cue from modernist definitions of men and women in terms of narrow, biological reproductive functions within the family: masculinity and femininity contained within one body to the exclusion of the other . New Order gender ideology took specific care to define "women as appendages and companions to their husbands, as procreators of the nation, as mothers and educators of children, as housekeepers, and as members of Indonesian society — in that order".[16] The obligation to marry heterosexually, with the additional stage of reproduction and childrearing for women, are essential to becoming a "national and economic subject" under Suharto's regime.[17] The nuclear family and gender normativity implied by it are strongly implicated in understandings of national belonging and a collective desire for development.

I observed *waria* define practices of femininity in two key ways. The first is the youthful, glamorous and often eroticized beauty characterized by *déndong*, the main outcome of which is not becoming a woman, but rather preparing the body to participate in social settings with other *waria*. The second way that *waria* describe femininity is via its relationship to the aspiration for the *halus* (refined) and demure behavior that appears to be inspired by modern understandings of heteronormativity introduced at the beginning of the New Order. Modern femininity can only be achieved through significant effort. Both understandings of femininity are unified by the central stress that *waria* place on the cultivation of the body. Attending to

[16] Julia Suryakusuma, "The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia", (Durham: Duke University Press),1996, 101.

[17] Tom Boellstorff, "The Perfect Path: Gay Men, Marriage, Indonesia", *GLQ* 5, no.4(1996):492.

the practices of *waria* femininity in turn contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between gender and national modernity in Indonesia. In addition to showing the centrality of gender performativity in the archipelago, the performance genres themselves highlight the intimate entanglements between *representations* of queerness in *waria* cultural performances and everyday embodied *practices* of queerness (affective, material, and multiply-affiliated) that shape these performances.[18]

Performance and the structuring mechanism of genre are crucial for understanding the contemporary *waria* subject position and its place within Indonesia and global queer networks. By performance I mean to invoke its variegated and contested meanings as an embodied practice, critical trope, and interpretive methodology. My approach to the sites of performance discussed throughout this dissertation combines scholarly theories of performativity, phenomenology, affect, queer and transgender theories with close readings of aesthetic objects. My project blends a combination of methodologies found in anthropology as well methods found within my field of performance studies such as participant observation, performance ethnography, interviews, and archival work looking into literary and mediated materials on gender and sexuality produced by Indonesian scholars not easily accessed in the United States, along with discourse analysis.

In attending performances and conducting interviews with *waria* performers, stage managers, venue owners, audiences as well as administrators of NGOs that work with the community *Waria Genres* offers a multi-locational ethnographic portrait of *waria* culture as it manifests in contemporary performance practices. I also looked to the material culture of the various field sites as well as any archival documentation of the performances in the form of video and audio recordings, scripts, and photographs. In light of the limited scholarly attention to the performance practices of *waria* as discrete subjects, this archive presented its own limitations. Thus my research aims to ultimately produce an archive of the contemporary; a project that David Román(2005)makes clear has not been a popular academic endeavor, in part due to the varied research methods necessary for

[18] A Performance Studies methodology has long been attentive to the constructed nature of gendered and sexed identity. Indeed, Butler's (1998) work on J.L. Austin's conception of performative speech acts as central to gender constitution is one of the discipline's defining texts

constructing this archive. There is no monolithic *waria* experience; the way *waria* and queerness are experienced and represented in Indonesia reflects continuing classed, gendered, and religious inequities and highlights how identity is actually located in numerous, intersecting subject positions. *Waria* performances explore the relationship between these multiple shifting and intersecting subject positions. National ideologies shape conceptions of self and other, creating the very locus of identity, yet they can also occlude and dematerialize the conditions in which they are created. *Waria* interactions with national space—both material and ideological— through their performances shape and are shaped by the realities of their bodies, their histories, their geographies, and their desires. Through their presence and interaction with audiences *waria* shadow, or bring to the surface, the continued, unsettled debate about what it means to be Indonesian.

When asked to identify themselves within the context of formal interviews many of my informants responded with some version of "real name or *waria* name?" in order to clarify if I would prefer their names assigned at birth or their chosen names as *waria*.[19] Thus for data collected during interviews as well as participant observation, I have followed anthropological convention and used "pseudonyms", an individual's chosen every day, or a subject's stage name as *waria*, as agreed upon with my informants. Scholars working on gender and sexuality in Indonesia such as Sharyn Graham Davies (2010)and Tom Boellstorff (2007) have tended to pay significant attention to pronoun-usage out of concern for gender identification, with different outcomes. While sympathetic to these debates (and recognizing that they reflect Western political anxieties around representation of queer-identified subjects), I suggest that they encourage a misreading of the meaning of gender when introduced into Indonesian and other contexts. For example, gender is significant in terms of address even though the Indonesian pronoun "you(*dia*)" is gender neutral. As in many Southeast Asian contexts, Michael G. Peletz (1996) clarifies how the pronoun "you(*dia*)" is in fact rarely used; rather, relational (and gendered) terms like "*Mbak* (sister)" or "*Ibu/Mami* (mother)" are almost always used in everyday contexts. This is the case for *waria*, who are usually referred to and refer to one another using female terms of address. This is why I use the pronoun "she" when referring to *waria* and consider it

[19] Kassandra.(*waria* performer in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. October 22nd, 2014. Conversation was conducted in English per the interviewee's request.

to be a relatively straightforward fit.

Due to the profile of my informants, an important caveat of this thesis is that not all *waria* share the kinds of experiences that I describe. As a result, my data are limited to a specific range of experiences and individuals who share certain characteristics. It may seem as though I am using *waria* to refer to a profile of an individual who is generally lower class, young and performs as a main source of income, characteristics which not all those who identify as *waria* always share. However, my data has the strength of offering important insights on the important and underexplored intersection between class and gender performance in Indonesia. The very meaning of the national category *waria*, has been historically shaped by its relationship to flamboyance, lower class status, public visibility, transactional sex, and a certain degree of shamelessness. Historical legacies which not only inform public perception, but public policy as well, and therefore shape the conditions with which my contemporary informants contend on a daily basis. Furthermore, given the consistency of my experiences across each of my field sites and corroboration with historical sources, it is possible to generalize some of the more fundamental findings of this dissertation to reflect on shifting understandings of gender in relation to modernity since the late 1960s in Indonesia. For example, I met dozens of *waria* who lived in Yogyakarta but were originally from Sumatra, but also *waria* from other parts of Java, Bali, Sulawesi, Papua and even East Timor. In Denpasar, Bali, I met *waria* who had migrated from every part of the country. Like many Indonesians, *waria* are exceptionally mobile: I was often amazed at the distance that they covered in the course of a lifetime, or even a matter of a few days. On a more practical note, this meant that sometimes *waria* informants who I had spent time with for some months would suddenly disappear overnight, their room cleared of possessions.

Given that my fieldwork was primarily based in Yogyakarta and Surabaya, I developed the strongest relationships in these cities, and many of the key insights are indebted to participant observation conducted across these two locations. I spent a great deal of time, for instance, with *waria* from Jakarta and Makassar in Yogyakarta. Therefore, I rarely describe the research in geographically bounded terms unless specifically tied to a regional performance practice. This is the first study to wed performance studies and queer theory in examining the performative/performance work of contemporary *waria* cultural workers. Studies that emphasize transnational work makes these juxtapositions more fruitful. Specifically, *Waria Genres* shifts

attention to those genres that fall outside of officially recognized parameters of Indonesian performance rubric due to their assumed lack of value. I argue that a closer look at practices considered amateur, inauthentic, or "foreign" offers a multi-dimensional reading of the function of performance for *waria* subject formation. Furthermore, *Waria Genres* opens up how *waria* performance practices not only contribute to the construction of *waria* as a national subjectivity but also how this subjectivity is inevitably in conversation with international LGQBT and Western constructions of queer performance. This unsettles established discourses on *waria* subject formation while it simultaneously highlights how they participate in the construction of a queer world-making project that potentially connects them to global trans communities. Finally, my project aims to offer new ways to think about genre in Indonesian performing arts contexts, where regionalism or ethnicity gives way to gender and sexual subject position.

Ultimately, my project addresses the absence of critical scholarly attention to queer performance practices in Indonesia within the wider discourses that shape conceptions of the performing arts in and of Indonesia and their contributions to a sense of Indonesian identity. At the same time, *Waria Genres* links *waria* performance practices with discourses concerning transnational queer performance. This linkage opens contemporary Indonesian performances, that already exist in the margins of academically recognized practices, to critical queer analytics. Finally, this project challenges the ontological and epistemological parameters of queer performance as articulated in Western scholarship, carving out new productive space within discourses that frame queer performance as always and only subversive, counter-cultural, and outside national imaginaries.

Defining "*waria*"

I refer to my informants as *waria* both for ease and out of the desire to articulate respect, there are in fact a number of terms used for a wide spectrum of embodied femininities in Indonesia, each with its own history and connotations. *Banci* (referred to in *waria* and gay language as *béncong*) is a widespread (and often derogatory) term which refers to a diverse range of individuals and practices in Indonesia. Both are commonly used to refer to *waria*, gay men, cross--gender play, or behavior which is understood to be at odds with an individual's perceived sex. Female-bodied feminine and male-bodied masculine individuals alike are referred to using the term *banci*, although over the past thirty years the term *banci* has come to have a close association with particular iterations of glamorous visibility

connected to *waria*. *Banci* and *béncong* are terms which are more often used by *waria* and gay men in everyday life to refer to one another and themselves. The term *banci* possibly dates from the middle of the nineteenth- century, during which time it became linked to "lowbrow entertainment, petty commodity trading, and sex work".[20] Connotations that continue to haunt contemporary *waria* performance. However, sources are not entirely clear on the matter, and other accounts suggest that the use of *banci* to specifically refer to the male-bodied femininity of *waria* only dates from after Indonesian independence in 1945. While in the popular imaginary, the term *waria* is thought to be local, indigenous, timeless, in fact it originates in legislation. Marking the beginning of the state's investments in naming and regulating this population which was perceived as deviant and unruly, government legislation from 1978 is the first known entry of this term into the official archives of the state, a legislative act that constituted the very population it named.[21]

Today, *waria* is considered a respectful term used among *waria* to refer to one another, retaining a much higher degree of respectability than *banci*. Benjamin Hegerty(2017) whose anthropological work focuses on discourses of aging and subjectivity in *waria* communities suggests that many *waria* used the term *banci* to distinguish themselves from previous socially outcast forms of male-bodied femininity that failed to uphold modern standards of feminine beauty. *Waria*, by contrast, are able to transform themselves to become as beautiful as women. Some *waria* also frame this in terms of a capacity to contribute to society through the cultivation of specific skills in the fields of salon work and fashion. Dominant New Order notions of economic development are thus also entwined with *waria*'s understanding of their newfound capacity to accomplish modern femininity.

The term *wadam* (from *hawa* and *Adam*, the Indonesian terms for Adam and Eve) dates from the earliest part of the New Order, and was established by *waria* themselves around 1968. *Waria* say that they introduced the term *wadam* to replace *béncong*, which prior to the 1960s was often used in official and unofficial ways to hurt their feelings. While little known in contemporary Indonesia, *wadam* was a term which was used widely to refer to those now known as *waria* in the mass media until the late 1970s. This was also the term used for the first local and national

[20] Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia.*(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2005, 47-57.

[21]Ibid.

organizations for *waria* (*Perhimpunan Wadam Jakarta* and *Perhimpunan Wadam Indonesia*), founded in the 1970s in Jakarta. The establishment of the term *wadam*, which connoted a relationship to globally circulating ideas linking transsexuality to modern femininity during the 1970s, was one way that *waria* say they claimed credibility and respectability. The more modern term *wadam* also served to successfully distance male-bodied femininity from the pejorative and more situational meanings connoted by *banci* and *béncong*. As Boellstorff (2007) *narrates Wadam* was superseded in official discourse by the term *waria* in 1978.The newspaper *Kompas* reports that the change was precipitated by a religious organization's protest over the use of the name of a Prophet Adam. It is certainly possible that protest from Islamic organizations did influence this change. Especially considering long-standing disapproval of *waria* by devout followers of Islam from the late nineteenth-century at least. Hegerty hypothesizes that a more likely explanation for this terminology change in the late 1970s was "growing rigidity and scientific clarity in state definitions of femininity and masculinity in increasingly binarized and heteronormative terms".[22] I return to what Suzanne Brenner(2011)identifies as the ways "issues of gender and sexuality have become key arenas in which battles over competing views of democratization as well as Islamic morality are waged" in regards to *waria* public perceptions and performance in chapters three and four.[23]

While subjects may identify themselves by such terminology in local contexts, "*waria*" always exists as an accompanying moniker. This is evident in the fact that, despite regional identification and Indonesia's progressions towards a more decentralized state in the post-Suharto era, *waria* throughout the archipelago imagine themselves as part of a nationalized community. The question this dissertation asks, is how? My project proposes that, while not overtly political, the performance practices enacted by *waria* foster a sense of national *waria* identity and community formation, or what I tentatively refer to as *waria* genres. Echoing José Esteban Muñoz's (2006) writings on Latina/o affect in, I think through the critical potency of terms such as "*latinidad"* in relation to *waria.* Thinking with Muñoz I highlight performative modalities

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[22] Benjamin Hegerty "Becoming Incomplete: The Transgender Body and National Modernity in New Order Indonesia (1967-1998),PhD diss., Australia National University, 2017, 35.

[23] Suzanne Brenner, " Private Moralities in the Public Sphere: Democratization, Islam, and Gender in Indonesia" American Anthropologist, Vol. 113 No. 3, September 2011, 478-490, 482

that might bridge communities in difference and create affective structures of feeling "*waria.*"

Scholarly and popular representations of *waria* as an exemplary figure of gender diversity in Indonesia are common. They are subject to various accurate interpretations: as one aspect of a theatrical response to modernization(Hatley 1971; Peacock 1971), vestiges of Southeast Asian ritual tradition (Peletz 2009), or a subjectivity born of Indonesian national modernity (Boellstorff 2007). Far from unreflexively imagining themselves as timeless figures existing in a historical vacuum, however, the older generation of my *waria* informants had a profound sense of their own emergence. Some of the oldest, aged in their seventies, even insisted that *waria* did not exist at all prior to the 1960s. The vast majority of *waria* elders I met agreed — there may have been a prior generation of unsightly and disheveled proto-*waria* prior to the 1960s, but these were radically different to themselves. The period that elderly *waria* commonly referred to as their *zaman emas* (golden age) stretches from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. The timing is notable as the beginning of the New Order, which was characterized by episodic violence and the imposition of authoritarian control. Ultimately, I use the Indonesian term *waria* throughout this thesis given the inadequacies and clumsiness of the English equivalents, and because it is a more formal option than the alternatives *banci* and *béncong*. As a result, *waria* is a better suited term for the genre and intended audiences of this thesis.

Gender in the New Order

While this project is grounded in contemporary manifestations of *waria* performance, contemporary notions of gendered presentation and the performing arts have been shaped by Suharto era politics. From the beginning of the New Order, development and social control were unified through the assertion of narrow roles and forms of embodiment described in terms of idealized forms of masculinity and femininity (Dwyer 2002; Suryakusuma 2011). From the late 1960s, the Indonesian state took its cue from modernist definitions of men and women in terms of narrow, biological reproductive functions within the family: masculinity and femininity contained within one body to the exclusion of the other. New Order gender ideology took specific care to define "women as appendages and companions to their husbands, as procreators of the nation, as mothers and educators of children, as housekeepers, and as members of Indonesian society — in that order".[24] The obligation to marry heterosexually, with the

[24] Julia Suryakusuma, "The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia",1996, 101.

additional stage of reproduction and childrearing for women, are essential to becoming a "national and economic subject".[25] A relentless commitment to the ideology of *pembangunan* (development) also resulted in the expansion of a consumer capitalist economy (Robison 1996). This commitment also led to anxious proclamations of moral decay centered on gender and sexuality.[26] The nuclear family, and gender normativity implied by it, are strongly implicated in understandings of national belonging and a collective desire for development. The *waria* golden age thus unfolded at precisely the same time at which individuals came to find themselves ambiguously defined in relation to what the press reported as "perfect women" and "complete men" for the first time. *Waria* and those assigned female at birth continue to define themselves with reference to the historical emergence of these New Order ideologies of gender, which I explore through corresponding New Order ideologies of the arts.

It may seem odd that *waria* understand a period during which a dictator presided over a state which strictly enforced heteronormativity as their golden age. However, the very definitions and descriptions of gender and sexuality intended to normalize and naturalize understandings of men and women also facilitated a new vocabulary by which *waria* could understand themselves and one another. More generally, the new urban environments and spaces of leisure and work — dance halls, cafés, theatres and hairdressing salons — provided new opportunities for *waria* to come together and develop alternative forms of intimacy and public performance practice.

This period also signaled new social demands and obstacles to self-definition. *Waria* do not escape the pressure to define themselves with reference historical emergence of these New Order ideologies of gender. I describe a notable difference between this understanding of selfhood and the discursive work that *waria* perform to articulate a relationship to modern gender presentation. Tom Boellstorff (2005) has written extensively about gender and sexuality in Indonesia, drawing on his own ethnographic research. In the text *The Gay Archipelago* ,in reference to gay men in Indonesia, he describes how the confluence of middle-class consumerism,

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[25] Tom Boellstorff, "The Perfect Path: Gay Men, Marriage, Indonesia", 1996,493.

[26] For more on the relationship between *pembangunan*, gender, and sexuality see Brenner 1999;Anderson 1990; Siegel 1996

national heteronormativity and desire as love has given rise to "personhood-as-career" through which "the self becomes the self's profession… a story that the self tells to itself about itself."(119). This project then considers the literalized manifestations of this process, looking to *waria* not only subjective marker but also as a consciously reproduced role, a story told in real time through embodied performative practices.

In contrast to referencing the individual self, I have found that to transition into *waria* more commonly rests on the possibilities afforded by social relationships, particularly the relationship between audience and performer. I often observed that older *waria* define practices of femininity in two key ways. The first is the youthful, glamorous and often eroticized beauty characterized by *déndong* (glamorous comportment) the main outcome of which is not becoming a woman, but rather preparing the body to participate in social settings with other *waria* or in front of wider audiences. The second way that *waria* describe femininity is via its relationship to the aspiration for the "*halus*" (refined) and demure behavior that appears to be inspired by understandings of heteronormativity introduced at the beginning of the New Order. Modern femininity can only be achieved through significant effort. Both understandings of femininity are unified by the central stress that *waria* place on the cultivation of the body, a stress that continues for younger members of the community. Attending to the practices of *waria* femininity in turn contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between gender and choices concerning genre of performance practice. This interest the unfinished status of becoming calls attention to the ways that *waria* see their subjectivity as something that not only emerges through changing bodily presentation over the course of a lifetime, but also different senses of subjectivity that arise across the varied social interactions afforded by different genres of performance.

Histories of Gendered Understanding in Indonesia

The ethnographic and historical record of the region of Southeast Asia is overfull with descriptions of male-bodied individuals who are defined as embodying the characteristics of women.[27] In regards to male-bodied femininity, Benedict Anderson(1972) clarifies an important difference between

[27] for reviews of this literature see Blackwood 2005 and Peletz 2006

Javanese and Western understandings of gender:

> In ancient Javanese art this combination (male and female) does not take the form of the hermaphrodite of the Hellenistic world, but rather the form of a subject in whom masculine and feminine characteristics are sharply juxtaposed. (14)

More broadly speaking, gender normativity has itself long been observed as a far from universal fact in the Indonesian case. As Shelly Errington (1990) observes, powerful men in Javanese mythology may in fact "be graceful and slight of build" and even "strike Westerners as effeminate"(6). However, scholarly descriptions such as this also reflect long histories of problematic racialized representations that frame Asian masculinity in always already feminized —and thus compromised- terms.[28] To ascribe universality to modern ideas of masculinity and femininity is both to obscure the relevance of other kinds of practices and subjectivities, and to ignore the history of Western ideas that has established it as a universal standard in the first place. *Waria* gender performances appear to reflect regional understandings of the body that see it as "public in the sense that one's body stance does not express one's interiority…Rather, it registers the status of the person to whom it is oriented".[29] In Java, personhood is consistently observed to be understood as porous and vulnerable to outside influences, and able to be transformed through corporeal effort.[30] This is most evident in the way that *waria* almost always consider their desire to *déndong* (practices involved with cultivating embodied femininity)to have resulted from external influences, particularly "the reaction and commentaries of others".[31] This understanding of personhood also explains the frequent assertion in Indonesia that gender and sexuality are shaped by forces which are beyond the individual body.

The importance that *waria* attribute to embodied practices such as *déndong* are derived not only from globalized discourses, but also from the meanings attached to femininity and masculinity

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[28] See Nguyen 2014 and Lim 2014

[29] Shelly Errington, *Meaning and Power in a Southeast Asian Realm,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1989,155.

[30] See Kroeger 2003; Keeler 1988; Geertz 1976

[31] Boellstorff, *A Coincidence*, 88

which are constitutive of longer regional histories. An emphasis on a relationship between the body and one's subjectivity correlates with long regional histories about the relationship between interior and exterior parts of the self. Clifford Geertz (1976), for example, defines the distinction between categories of "*lair* (outer)" and "*batin* (inner)" and "*alus* (refined)" and "*kasar*" (course) as a defining feature of personhood in Java. He translates that *Batin* is "the inner realm of human experience" while *lair* "the outer realm of human behavior"(232). Meanwhile, *Alus* means "pure, refined, polished, polite, exquisite, ethereal, subtle, civilized, smooth," as opposed to *kasar* defined as "impolite, rough uncivilized"(232). It is through the integration of both of these poles of behavior and states of subjectivity that an individual's status is both accumulated and measured in Javanese culture. Geertz's description of the relationship between these states provides useful insights into *waria's* gender performances and performances of gender:

> *Lair* behavior, of which language (as well as music, dance, and drama) is a part, masks the *batin*; and thus only those who study the *lair* patiently and in orderly fashion are able to sort it out and get the 'feeling' that is subtly suffused through it.(232)

Geertz goes on to explicate how a person's inner state, thus understood, relies to a large degree on "greater and greater formal control over the external aspects of individual actions, transforming them into art or near-art" (233). Notable here is the parallel idea that it is constantly reiterated social actions or bodily practices permeate subjectivity, rather than an inner core of identity. This also offers one potential explanation as to why, in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, *waria* were described by James Peacock(1968) as able to perform a "super-womanly" (206) femininity as well as, or perhaps better than, female-bodied women in Indonesia. A person who reiterates particular forms of embodied action, including gender, is understood to have transformed their subjectivity.

A range of practices and terms constitute what is often glossed as male-bodied femininity within scholarship on Trans subjectivities in Indonesia. I find male-bodied femininity a categorical definition to be insufficient, especially given the general lack of importance *waria* and other Indonesians place on biological sex as shaping gender. The term male-bodied (and the insinuation of a penis that comes with it) femininity (as mere physical exteriority) often accompanies the assumption that there is some prior or original sex or gender from which *waria* are estranged. While male-bodiedness is certainly one aspect of how many *waria* understand themselves as gendered I use " Trans" in relation to their

confrontations with femininity, rather than other possible terms, to draw attention to the myriad ways that embodiment is shaped by its social setting.

Fields of Study

I locate this ethnography within the history of cross-cultural perspectives on gender and sexuality. While complex academic debates have outlined anxieties about "essentialized, cross-cultural and trans-historical transgender identity", rather than using transgender as a descriptive or discrete identity category, this project engages it as a mode of analysis.[32] This serves to, as Valentine(2007)argues, further problematize the use of gender and sexuality as "essentialized categories of identity" and the potential that their reification might "obscure the cross-cutting nature of social experience and identification"(125). I instead take these categories up as a means through which to view performance et al and genre more specifically. In this way, my use of "transgender" throughout this dissertation should be understood as comparable with the use of "queer" insomuch as I engage it to both exceed and complicate extant theoretical categories and possibilities encountered in the course of ethnography. This is not my concern alone, but also that of the emergent field of transgender studies, which explores "contemporary personhood in a manner that facilitates a deeply historical analysis of the utter contingency and fraught conditions of intelligibility of all embodied subjectivity".[33] I see this particular intersection between transgender and anthropology as an especially productive way to untangle culturally specific embodied and affective dimensions of power and performance, as well as how political-economic shifts have "rewired" masculinity and femininity as historical artefacts globally.[34] In attending to the specificities of the transgender body in Indonesian performance contexts, this research both engages with and problematizes Western-centric theories of the relationship between gender, sexuality and modernity.[35]

Research at the intersection of gender and sexuality has long been conducted in anthropology, mostly framed in reference to

[32] Blackwood 2005, 250; see also Towle and Morgan 2002

[33]Susan Stryker and Paisley Currah, "Introduction" *TSQ,* 2014, 8.

[34]see Rubin 2011

[35]see Jackson 2009; Wilson 2004; D'Emilio 1997

functionalist-inspired frameworks that mapped the sexual division of labor onto the presumed universality of biological sex.[36] With some exceptions (see in particular Newton 1979), research that was critical of heteronormativity remained sidelined within anthropology until the 1990s . The theoretical horizons opened up by Judith Butler's (1990) approach to gender performativity heralded diverse possibilities for the fields of Anthropology and Feminist studies. Numerous superb ethnographic accounts in a range of settings globally served to both clarify and separate out meanings of gender and sexuality, experiences which had otherwise been considered indistinct.[37] This understanding of sexuality intersects with racialized models of globalization as linear development, facilitating theoretical models which explain male- bodied femininity as a stage in progression to gender normative homosexuality. Tom Boellstorff's (2005) pathbreaking research on the national context for gay, lesbian and *waria* subjectivities in Indonesia is one example of ethnographic research that successfully problematizes this universalizing tendency in Western theory. Most notably, David Valentine (2007) charts how processes of gendered categorization and separation entail a "claim to invisibility" reflected in the assertion of a natural, self- evident relationship between homosexuality and gender normativity (52). This recent claim, he argues, relies to a large degree on the displacement of publicly transgressive practices (and their associations with non-white and lower-class status) formerly associated with homosexuality onto the category transgender. A displacement taken up within this project.

I engage with this literature to assert that neither transgender nor gender normativity can be understood as universal categories; rather, they form part of a broader reshaping of self-making within specific historical, cultural and economic, and I would add performance-based contexts. The cross-cultural relevance of this approach is illustrated by Marcia Ochoa(2014) whose work combines historical and ethnographic methods to focus ethnographic attention on the inadequacies of interpreting transgender-identified individuals in relation to an individual identity that follows from its discursive framing. Drawing on ethnographic research in Venezuela, Ochoa productively highlights how all

[36]see Blackwood 1984; Whitehead 1981; Wikan 1977; Evans-Pritchard 1970

[37]see Valentine 2007; Towle and Morgan 2002 Kulick 1998; Donham 1998; Johnson 1997; Besnier 1996

individuals accomplish gender "with similar symbolic resources, in dialogue with shared discourses, and employing similar kinds of techniques and technologies".[38] Ochoa criticizes the overarching tendency in Western scholarship and activism to see gender and sexuality as separate parts of an individual self, in this case with reference to Venezuelan beauty queens and *transformistas* within the shared conceptual framework of "spectacular femininity." However, Ochoa moves beyond discourse to suggest the centrality of the body to projects of self-fashioning in modernity, focusing rather on the "carnalities enfleshed in… relations of power." In critiquing the "universalizing, first-world tendency in gender performativity and embodiment frameworks," Ochoa draws attention to the way that a focus on performativity alone tends to frame gender as the property of an individual who is shaped by their social setting.[39]

I also draw on what I see as a shared interest in queer theory to examine the relationship between bodies, gender and work. Drawing theoretical inspiration from recent scholarship at the intersection of these concerns, I interpret the transformations that *waria* undertake to their bodies as both laborious and pleasurable efforts to accomplish femininity. Thus, this project is concerned with placing the longstanding preoccupation with what constitutes women's work within performance spaces in dialogue with recent approaches to the body from transgender studies. When informed by historical and ethnographic descriptions of lived experience, such an approach offers ways to understand the weight of everyday investments in shaping bodies and selves towards performance, while accounting for the practices that they involve. While early feminist engagement with transgender is limited by its reliance on theoretical emphasis on the sexual division of labor, it serves as a productive reminder of the importance of the relational forms of discursive work that makes gender legible as a primary symbol of difference in capitalist modernity. Jane Atkinson (1990) described the "mixed gender status" of male-bodied *bante* in Sulawesi in terms of "dress or work," inasmuch as it reflected a "preference for female work over more strenuous male labor" (92). Anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (1993) also problematizes Western understandings of social "completion" through which a person secures an

[38] Marcia Ochoa, *Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*,(Durham: Duke University Press), 2014,5

[39] Marcia Ochoa, *Queen for a Day*, 158

"unequivocal gender" as an adult male or adult female (43). Based on Melanesian ethnographic material, Strathern describes gender as a process that "brings out of the person the social relations of which he or she is composed"(48).This dissertation takes the relationship between performer and viewer seriously as a constituting social relationship. Thus *waria* subjectivity cannot be understood to stem from a discourse that shapes the body, but rather is the product of intersubjective and embodied work that translates masculinity and femininity into meaningful markers of experience.

Given significant historical and cross-cultural variation, I use femininity and masculinity as analytical terms that are not relevant across all historical periods and cultural contexts. Whereas the dominant Western view stresses a binary understanding of gender predicated on heteronormativity—male and female as distinct and separate gender categories that must become coupled through heterosexuality, such an understanding in Indonesia appears to have more recent origins. I also draw on the radical flexibility of the term "queer," while recognizing that the term is always in danger of being co-opted by what Lisa Duggan (2003) calls the homonormative class: often white, western, middle class gay men. I use "queer" in my project as a way to counter and problematize such usages. Throughout my project, I push the limits of "queer"—as both a way of interpreting given cultural performances and as a performative methodology and critical tool used to challenge and subvert conceptions of "the normal." By using "queer" in all of its messiness, I actively redefine and critique "queer" in my own scholarship, even as I position it as useful to reflect the complex layering of identities of transgender Indonesians.

What makes the Indonesian case especially interesting is that male-bodied femininity does not hold the same degree of stigma as it does in the West — despite their visibility, *waria* are in some ways more socially accepted than gender normative gay men.[40] Similarly, butch and femme couplings among women in Indonesia are socially accepted so long as they adhere to strict heteronormative roles, resulting in the interesting possibility that these individuals can be "proud and out, but not as lesbians".[41] In this context, gender appears not so much

[40] see Boellstorff 2004

[41] Wieringa 2007, 75

a process of being initiated into a social role that is the property of an individual body, as the symbolic activation or deactivation of different social relations throughout time and across space. This project thus advances intersubjective and phenomenological perspectives on performativity, revealing gender to be an embodied process which one works on and others work upon, effecting a being in the world that is always in progress and never quite complete. In short, I seek to reinvigorate ethnographic interest in the social and economic forces that shape gendered embodiment in conversation with the recent analytical possibilities offered by transgender and performance studies. Rather than seeing gender as the property of an individual, this thesis reflects on the concrete practices involved in accomplishing femininity and masculinity undertaken across various "stages". As a result, it contributes a detailed ethnographic account of *waria* subjectivity, as well as resisting the naturalization of gender normativity: attention to *waria* genres calls into question the near hegemonic view that masculinity and femininity are qualities possessed by and contained within one type of body to the exclusion of the other and instead looks to the conscious shaping of these qualities through performative practice.

Academic discourse provides many entry points for thinking about gender identity and performance within Indonesia Ethnomusicology and Anthropology in particular have turned an eye to what is commonly referred to in the literature as "cross gender" performance and gender variance as it circulates through various genres within Indonesian performance forms past and present.[42] These works illuminate performance genealogies and allow for investigations into how performance forms help produce and uncover place-specific senses of identity and gender ideology. Anthropologist James Peacock (1968) provides an insightful analysis of cross-gender performance in *Ludruk* (a proletariat theatre form) in early 1960s Surabaya. Peacock argues that *Ludruk* is a "rite of modernization" or symbolic action that has the social consequence of modernization (5-6). Christina Sunardi's (2017) exploration of "transvestite" *tandhak* in *Ludruk* performances in the Malang region of East Java has proved particularly invaluable. Sunardi specifically focuses on how gender is produced through the

[42] See Peacock 1978, 1987; Spiller 2010, 2012; Sunardi 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013; Hughes-Freeland 2008; Mrazek 2005

subversion or reinforcement of norms and how this produces senses of *Malangan* identity.

Belonging and authenticity are both performed practices that inform a sense of *waria* identity. These practices are seemingly invisible or self-evident but make themselves known through their constant repetition and institutionalization into popular consciousness. Far more than a legal designation, citizenship has been theorized in recent years as being multicultural, transnational, flexible, and dissident[43]. Moreover, by interweaving work on Queer[44] and postcolonial Indonesia[45] citizenship I am able to observe how citizenship is less about a piece of paper than about feeling like a member of society, feeling as if one "belongs." This sense of belonging is affective, a felt sensation more than something known in an easily apparent way, as made clear in recent writings by queers of color.

Surrounding both belonging and authenticity is an investment in *performance*, in that belonging and cultural authenticity are both lived, ritual, social practices if you will (see Butler, 1993 and Berlant 2011). Recent work in performance studies by Deborah Paradez (2009), David Román (2005), and Tavia Nyong'O (2008,2009) make clear how citizenship and racial/ethnic/sexual identities are created and performed in response to dominant culture. These authors argue that the performance of passing as American and being an American citizen occurs in a multitude of different spaces, from the stage to the building of public monuments and institutions. My work follows just such a polyvalent approach to performance, intermingling the aesthetic with the everyday, the popular with the experimental, and the cultural with the political.

My understanding of *waria* subjectivity builds on insights found across Queer, Performance, and anthropological theories that gender is not only the product of individuals but is also produced through social relationships. My informants, such as Ibu Sandra in chapter two, describe becoming *waria* as a process which commences in childhood, often related to the recognition of embodied signs of femininity by neighbors and kin. In this way *waria* gradually come to understand their

[43] see Ong 2000, 2008, Maria 2008

[44] see Phelan 2001; Canaday 2009

[45] see Prasad 2013; Suryadinata 2008; Rosaldo 2003; Sai & Hoon 2013

subjectivity not only out of identifying as feminine in some way, but through recognition of that identification in the eyes of others . Later on, *waria* say, their becoming is hastened through interaction with similar others, whether through employment in salons, *waria* community organizations, or within performance. A relationship between certain forms of employment and the resulting transformation of subjectivity is reflected in the common reference among *waria* to gender presentation as akin to a *profesi* (profession). This reflects how *waria* emerge via social interactions shaped by certain occupations, which are in turn generally understood to elicit greater *nampak* (visibility) over time.

Chapter 2: Negotiating *Waria* Selves Through Gendered Dance Genres

Audiences in Indonesia approach various genres of performance, from court dances and ritual trance ceremonies to *gamelan* orchestra concerts, with historically and culturally set expectations for how gender is situated on and off stage. These expectations may align assumptions concerning the sexed body of the performer with corresponding gendered boundaries of a genre. Or they may flag the categorical crossings, leakages, and slips shoring up popularized boundaries between gendered embodiment and gendered presentation. This chapter considers the ways audience expectations related to diverse genres impact how *waria* gender is understood within these local articulations of performance cultures. This dissertation develops the idea that performance and boundaries of gender and sex are integrally related. That is, performance, and performance genres, contribute to the continuous cultural processes of meaning-making around gendered embodiment—so that genre, rather than biology, determines the boundaries of gendered presentation for *waria*. In this chapter, I explore these gendered genres by focusing on the feedback loops that develop between performers and their audiences. By "feedback loop" I refer to the dialogical relationship between audience responses to *waria* performative practices and how *waria* process these responses, reincorporating them to further shape their own decisions concerning what genres to pursue.

In chapter one I framed *waria a*rticulations of gendered identity as predicated not only on an individual sense of corporeal subjectivity but also as firmly rooted in the social relations that emerge within performance. This observation led me to focus on how *waria* artists and audiences respond to the social sphere of performance in ways that influence both the cultural significance of the performative genres enacted by *waria* and the multiple facets of *waria* gender enacted. I then ask, what discursive forces shape the genres *waria* choose to perform and create the conditions of possibility manifest between the performing subject and the audience? This chapter moves towards answering this question by looking to how conceptions of genre within dance practices are parsed in Indonesia. I pay specific attention to how cultural and political discourses are densely layered, shaping and reshaping how and what distinct dance genres signify for *waria* gendered subjectivity. I argue that *waria*, particularly elder members of the community, are keenly aware of these

investments and the accompanying socio-political histories of individual dance genres and use this knowledge to shape their performative choices.

Genre as a Critical Frame

If one defines "genre" as a category of artistic composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content then, like the national and cultural borders that contain them, the concept of genre within Indonesian performance paradigms is far more malleable than designators such as "classical/ traditional/ folk" versus "contemporary" or "theatre" versus "dance" would have us believe. Rarely is presentational drama not woven through with choreographed movement. From the interconnection of genres such as the interweaving of the *gamelan* orchestra with scripted dramatic forms like *wayang kulit*, to what Benjamin Brinner points out as the more minute distinctions between *gamelan* music for "motion" and "emotion".[46] The lines that demarcate differences in structure, dramatic convention, character types, and stories, so often used to parse differences in genre, are porous within an Indonesian context.

In regards to style, ethnic, and regional specificity within Indonesia, performance practices exist in such a multiplicity of forms that they may appear to be a great, disconnected mass of distinct events and genres. Yet, Indonesian performance is far from a miscellaneous collection of unrelated forms and styles. Beneath their outward difference many genres are closely related. They have grown from similar cultural settings and share common characteristics. At different times, widespread and powerful waves of outside cultural influence have inundated all or large parts of the area: from India to China, to Western culture brought by the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, British and American. A proper understanding of "genre" as an epistemological boundary within Indonesia must proceed from recognition of both the underlying common properties that link various forms together and the variety of differences, which distinguish them from each other. In tracing the lines of continuity and discontinuity among the various performance forms in which *waria* participate I focus on the place of gender as a connecting thread across genres

[46] see Benjamin Brinner *Music in Central Java: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press), *2008* for more on the flexible and expanding structures of *gendhing lampah* see pg.126-32 and the types of *sulukan available* to the *dhalang* in *wayang kulit* performances see pg. 124-26

and its relationship to state power as manifested within pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial regimes.

In particular Indonesia is well known for its many diverse dance genres. Among these are the sacred, ritualized dances of Bali and Java such as *Sanghyang and* the *Bedoyo Ketawang* from the region of Solo or the *Lengger Lanang* of the Banyumas regions in Central Java. Dance traditions today are as widely diverse as the various ethnic cultures and islands of which they are a part. Nurtured in the royal Javanese courts and princely homes, the classical dances of Central Java are highly stylized expressions having already attained their basic movements during the height of the Hindu-Javanese culture from the 8th to the 13th century.[47] Between the courts and the broad strata of villages there developed a reciprocal exchange of practices. These dances range from stylized presentational dance dramas like *Wayang Wong* to less formal social dances, which foster interaction between performer and audience and often display clear erotic overtones, such as *Tayuban* or *Gandrung*. Genre, as an epistemological demarcation within Indonesia, signals specificity of form, setting, musical accompaniment, and audience. However, "genre" also carries in its wake densely interwoven investments in what particular forms may signal concerning the value of, and the values attributed to, those who perform and those who watch.

Genres once considered classical can evolve into popular culture as easily as forms that are actually contemporary can be re- imagined and repackaged as "classical". In "When is Contemporary Dance" dance scholar SanSan Kwan troubles "temporal terms such as 'contemporary' and 'modern' and the ways that they are often linked with the geographical and cultural, that is, with the West." She goes on to parse how:

> In non-Western dance, 'contemporary' is a necessary qualifier when we do not mean to refer to traditional forms. Without it 'Asian dance', ' African Dance', or ' Native American dance' is immediately assumed to be traditional. Another way to think about this is that 'Asian' becomes the necessary qualifier for contemporary work that comes from Asia because 'contemporary dance' is otherwise assumed to be Western. Thus, ' Asia' is yoked to traditional' and 'contemporary' is yoked

[47] Felicia Hughes-Freeland, *Embodied communities: Dance Traditions and Change in Java*, (New York: Bergahn Books), 2008, 36

to 'Western'.[48]

I take seriously this fraught relationship between temporal markers such as "contemporary" and "modern" and conceptions of Indonesian movement-based genres. While chapters three and four engage forms that are enmeshed within the temporal and aesthetic connotations of "contemporary", this chapter considers practitioners of traditional forms who are shifting expectations within their traditions. Kwan asks, within the paradigm of the contemporary, how do we consider practitioners who innovate within traditions "without adopting the shapes of Western contemporary dance?".[49] The *waria* practitioners I sit with in this chapter take up this work of linking the traditional with the contemporary, not through Euro-American aesthetic interventions, but instead through reorientations to their own gendered subjectivities in relation to danced genres. This then brings me to a use of "contemporary" in relation to traditional and/or authentic embodied performance practices that "remind[s] us that art making is shaped by, and speaks to, its current time and place".[50] With this guiding thought I look to *waria* who take on traditional dance genres as not only a way of speaking to and shaping their present social and political desires, but also as a way of carrying forth and reinventing moments and performances from their past selves.

Social and Political Investments in Genres of Dance

Across the archipelago dance functions in a myriad of ways, elaborated through a multiplicity of genres to signal diverse forms of social interaction and engagement between audience and performers. *Gandrung,* for example, originally served as a ritual dance dedicated to the goddess of rice and fertility *Dewi Sri*. However, it is currently performed as a social dance of courtship and love in communal and social events, or as a tourist attraction. Ethnomusicologist David Harnish in his study of the *Sasak* ethnic variety of the genre brings to light that the role of the *Gandrung* dancer (also referred to as a *Gandrung)* was formerly occupied by a young man dressed as a woman, thus "enveloping male and female energy in direct and close interaction" in the presentation of themselves.[51] This

[48] SanSan Kwan, "When is Contemporary Dance?" *Dance Research Journal,* 49/3, 2017, 45.

[49] SanSan Kwan, "When is Contemporary Dance?", 2017, 46

[50] Ibid, 47

[51] D. Harnish, *Bridges to the Ancestors: Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival*.2006:160.

coupling was then reflected in the mechanics of the genre itself. However, in its contemporary manifestation the *Gandrung* genre is predominantly performed by young, unmarried female dancer/singers. Now describing a girl looking for love companions, the dance has evolved into a social genre. *Gandrung* has thus been de-ritualized, and has mostly lost its connections with the rice goddess. The *Gandrung* dancer starts at the side of the stage, surrounded by the gamelan ensemble. When the music starts the dancer moves with erotic hip thrusts to the center of the stage. When she spots someone with whom she would like to dance, she throws her *slendang* (scarf) at him and retreats to her original position. As her *nibing* (male partner) dances and approaches her, the couple perform a spontaneous duet which may be erotic, artistic, or humorous depending on the partner and the dancer's response. When done, the *nibing* gives her some money and rejoins the crowd to emphatic praise. As the dance evolves from ritual to secular spectacle party the "enveloping of male and female energy" shifts from the body of the performer to the interaction between dancer and participant. Ultimately the shift of this dance style from one genre (ritual) to another (social dance) signals a broader attendant change in value and class markers associated with the form as well as a broader change in the general social investments of the genre.

During the second half of the Twentieth Century, dance in Indonesia in many ways became an important site for how the nation would view and present itself to the world. At this time, dance became a means to further solidify ideas concerning gender and sexuality for the new nation. Public performance, and dance forms in particular, became one of the central locations for inculcating social ideas about gender and was at the heart of the eruption of a new political order. In the transition from the Old Order (1945-1966) to the New Order (1966-1998), women were blamed for significant contributions to the chaos of the 1965-66 attempted military coup catalyzed by the murder of six Indonesian army generals. In the days and weeks that followed, the army, socio-political, and religious groups blamed the coup attempt on the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). Soon a mass purge was underway, which resulted in the imprisonment and death of real or supposed Communists Party members and sympathizers. Specifically, the communist party-oriented women's organization known as *Gerekan Wanita Indonesia* or *Gerwani*, was accused of sexual atrocities, including the castration of the murdered generals and subsequent social dancing in celebration. By associating communism with unleashed female

sexuality and chaotic dance, Suharto established an association of communist women to sexual depravity. During the Suharto era many of these women were "disappeared". This misrepresentation of communist women as wild and debauched came to define the acceptable boundaries of sexuality and politics throughout the New Order. Thus, the New Order state's narrative use of the female dancing body as a symbol of great power, albeit often an 'evil' power, becomes a point of departure to discuss the theorizations of bodily mimesis in relation to historical context. This is particularly significant for those, like *waria*, who were not assigned female at birth, and yet invest heavily in feminine modes of representation.

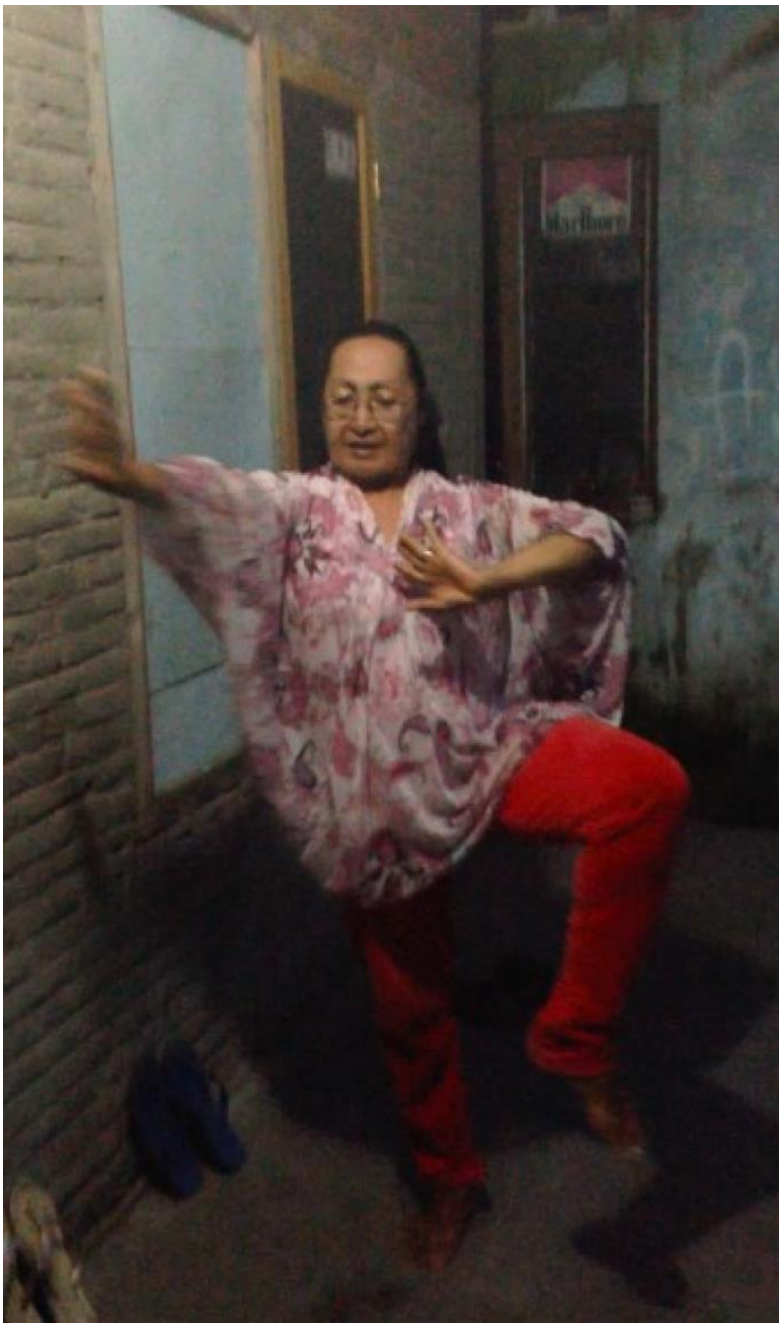
In contrast, involvement in dance genres specifically cited as "court dance" actually worked to shield the female dancer from the violence of the state in some instances. In *The Dance That Makes You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia,* performance theorist and Indonesian dancer Diya Larasati Rachmi recounts her own personal history with dance and state-sanctioned violence. She highlights how female dancers carefully negotiated the state-designated categories of " folk" and "court" dance. Specifically, she cites her involvement in Suharto-era *misi kesenian* or arts missions. These State-administered performances of traditional arts were presented abroad for various official events and functions that typically featured Javanese or Balinese ritual or court-based dance genres. Indonesia has produced a multiplicity of forms that fall under the designator, "court dance", however Larasati specifically calls our attention to the court dance *Bedhaya* and its codified notions of character types demarcated by ideas of *kasar* or *alus* (refinement or coarseness respectively). *Bedhaya* was chosen for *misi kesenian*, according to Larasati, because it supported the New Order government's attempts to draw connections between the symbolic centralization and mythic powers of Javanese kings and the current government's consolidation of power with Suharto effectively positioned as "monarch" along with the privileging of *alus* (refined) feminine comportment.[52]

I call attention to these two genres of dance in particular, *Bedhaya* and *Gandrung,* because they highlight two

[52] Rachmi Diyah Larasati, *The Dance That Makes You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-genocide Indonesia*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2013). 42

major points of inquiry for the remainder of this document in regards to the reciprocal relationship between social and political desires and choices concerning genre. *Gandrung* demonstrates the fluid nature of the concept of the body in Indonesian dance, the foundational contributions of male-femininity, and how these contributions and concepts change over time. *Bedhaya* demonstrates the changeable nature of how the State awards value and the connection between state-sanctioned status and refined and conservative types of feminine comportment. *Gandrung* highlights the porous possibilities of a non-binary bodily conception for the dancer as well as the significance of perception in social-dance genres to concepts of bodily value. However, the persecution of the dancing *Gerwani* women makes clear how easily perceptions may be manipulated by centers of authority. Ultimately, I argue that *waria* are intimately aware of the accumulation of perceptions imposed upon their bodies and beings. As such, participation in a genre is not undertaken without careful consideration of the socio-political residue attached to individual genres.

Defining the Self within Gendered Dance



(Figure 2.1: Ibu Sandra demonstrates a warrior's stance from the Ramayana Ballet)

It is a rainy evening in March as I follow *Ibu*[53] Sandra out of the inner courtyard of *Ibu* Shinta's home in the city of Yogyakarta. Both *Ibu* Sandra and Shinta identify as *waria.* At sixty-eight, *Ibu* Sandra is an elder in the community and shares:

Since I was a kid I have always been like

[53] *Ibu* translates to "Mother" and is frequently used to politely address older women. Sometimes shortened to the familiar term "Bu".

> this, girly. My father had a huge influence in me, my father was a dancer for the *Keraton.*[54] He played female roles when he danced. When my mother was pregnant with me, she went to see my father performing at the *Keraton*. I like to think that he gave me some sort of energy or influence, and that made me who I am right today. They[her family] knew my father was a dancer and he played female roles so it was not a big issue when they found out that I was a little bit "special". My father had a big influence in my life; I am gifted with dance skills because of him. From the start I have always learnt female-style dances, because that fits with my female soul. I refuse to learn male-style dances, I can try but I will not be as good.[55]

When I ask *Ibu* Sandra to explain a little more about the qualities of female-style dance, she springs from her seated position with a quickness and grace that belies her age and gestures towards an early life of formal dance training. Seeking more space to demonstrate, she leads me outside, through the rain, to a neighbor's front awning. With a large plane of smooth concrete underfoot and a single light-bulb overhead illuminating her moves in the darkness, Sandra dances for an audience of one with only the steady rhythm of rain as accompaniment.

With her hair pulled tightly back into a prim bun and a draped pink tunic over tapered pink pants, *Ibu* Sandra quickly kicks off her sandals and assumes the wide turned-out stance of a *laki- laki* (male) role from the *Sendratari Ramayana* (Ramayana Ballet). *Sendratari Ramayana (*Ramayana Ballet)is a visualization of the Ramayana epic in a highly stylized dance dating to the 1960s that combines dance, and drama, a full

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[54] The *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* is a palace complex in the city of Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia. It is the seat of the reigning Sultan of Yogyakarta and his family. The complex is a center of Javanese culture.

[55] Ibu Sandra.(*Waria* elder and former professional dancer). Interview by author. Voice recording. Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Central Java, March 2015.

gamelan orchestra and usually performed without dialogue. In Indonesia the Ramayana Ballet can be found in two major dance traditions; the Javanese and Balinese traditions. In Java, Ramayana ballet is part of Javanese *Wayang Wong* tradition, further reflecting Javanese court culture.

Ibu Sandra gracefully shifts her weight from foot to foot, arms outstretched from her body. Wrists cocked, middle finger and thumb pressed tight, *Ibu* Sandra shifts her weight onto a single foot and draws the opposite knee up to a ninety-degree angle with foot parallel to knee. Chest drawn up and forward, her movements give the impression of a graceful warrior as she thrusts her foot through the air and quickly lands on the ground. Although there are a range of "male" and "female" Javanese dance styles depending on regional specificities, character portrayed, and type of dance, in general male styles feature wider, more open stances; higher arm positions; and larger movement volumes. Pausing briefly, she stops to tell me that the next set of movements are that of a *perempuan* (woman). Her stance shortens as her head gently tilts to the side. *Ibu* Sandra keeps a steady count of eight as she glides gracefully across the floor. Her steps are short and swift as if she is wearing a *kebaya* and *kain.*[56] With arms gently bent at the elbows, her hands, spread like fans, gently weave a smooth rhythmic pattern through the air. Exemplifying how, in general, female styles feature more narrow stances, lower arm positions, and smaller movement volumes.

In demonstrating these two differently gendered dance styles, *Ibu* Sandra demonstrates her deep knowledge of both roles even as she makes the claim that "I refuse to learn male-style dances, I can try but I will not be as good". Clearly this assertion is not about lack of skill or knowledge of the form. Instead Ibu Sandra firmly positions her affinity, where her dancing pleasure lies, with the more rhythmic and flowing gesture of the female roles. In narrating the story of her

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[56] A *kebaya and kain* is a traditional blouse-dress combination that originated from the court of the *Majapahit* Kingdom of Indonesia and is traditionally worn by women. Furthermore, the only woman present during Indonesia's Proclamation of Independence, Dutch-educated activist SK Trimurti, wore a *kebaya*, cementing it as the female dress of nationalism. After Indonesian independence, Sukarno declared the kebaya as the national costume of Indonesian women, despite regional and ethnic variations in women's dress. For more on this subject see Clara Brakel-Papenhuijzen *The Bedhaya Court of Dances of Central Java,* (E.J. Brill: 1992)17-29.

life as *waria*, *Ibu* Sandra closely binds her gender identity and presentation with proximity to, and a desire for, dance. Framed as a patrilineal heritage ("My father had a huge influence in me, my father was a dancer for the *Keraton.* He played female roles when he danced"), Sandra articulates her affinity for female-style dance as in part due to her father's skill and position as a master of female-styles within the Yogyanese court tradition and the access to formal training afforded by his position. Yet, *Ibu* Sandra does not articulate her father's experience as tied to her own *waria* identity. Seeing him dance as a woman did not "make" her a *waria* just as dancing as a woman did not make her father *waria*. Instead the patrilineal connection is to performance, and access to knowledge of traditional art forms. What *Ibu* Sandra's story of her fathermakes clear is that while cross-dressing is part of a longer culturally accepted dance tradition, not all those who cross-dress in performance are *waria*. However, this gendered matrix within genre, while functionally serving to highlight the divergence between the performer's gender identity and the role performed, can also become a useful tool for *waria* to articulate and manifest their desires concerning their own embodiment and public presentation.

Local Gender Ideologies and influences on Genres

Performers throughout Indonesia construct, express, and demarcate femaleness and maleness in part by classifying dance into gendered styles. *Ibu* Sandra's story and stylistic demonstration highlights gendered style as an established aspect of Central and East Javanese performing arts traditions including social dance, masked dance, and popular theatre. Audiences across Indonesia, and across the wider region of Southeast Asia, acknowledge more fluid and expansive notions of gender embodiment and identity through their patronage of and desires for cross-gender dancers. Ethnomusicologists such as Wolbers(1989) and Sutton(1993) tend to link what they frame as "androgyny" to Hindu and indigenous Javanese imagery and representations of cosmic power, pointing to expressions of divinity, immortality, and fertility found in the male and female attr*ibu*tes of the Hindu god Shiva and the Javanese god-as-clown character *Semar*. However, rather than androgyny or the diminishment of overt expression of gender, there are a range of gendered male and female dance styles depending on regional style, ethnicity, character portrayed, and type of dance. Both men and women have performed male and female dance modes in different historical periods across Indonesia, and for different genres of dance. I have adopted the term "dance mode" from anthropologist Felecia Hughes-Freehand (1995), who

uses it to define "a prescribed system of movement"(190). This is significant because so much of gendered dance is predicated on styles of movement and not just corporeal appearance. Throughout Indonesia, regional dance modes include gendered modes for humans. There are also dance modes for monsters, animals, and clowns. Gendered styles can be further categorized—for example, there are "strong male" styles and "refined male" styles, and while female styles are predominantly refined, there are different degrees of refinement.[57] Typically, the performance genre determines whether women or men perform a particular mode. There are, of course, exceptions to the generalizations I have outlined, and the ways performers negotiate the conventions of performing gendered styles is a means by and through which *waria* reshape pre- existing constructions of femaleness and maleness.

Performance therefore contributes to the continuous cultural processes by and through which boundaries of gender and sex are negotiated, thereby affecting the ways in which femaleness and maleness are performed. Presentational conventions established within unique performance practices are inextricably bound with shifting ideologies about womanhood and manhood, contested and continually redefined as they may be. I approach gender as an unstable construct that is continuously constituted by and through what people do with and how they talk about their bodies. Many cultures naturalize discourses of gender and sexuality by eliding their historical variability and the system of powers that sustain them and thus ascribe gender to bodies in terms of the behaviors, social roles, and medicalized perceptions of embodied difference. While gendered dance modes characterize Javanese dance, the gender of the dance mode is not necessarily mapped to the sex assigned-at-birth of the dancer.

To explore the production of gender though dance, I rely on Judith Butler's (1990) explanation of gender as "an ideology tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*"(179, original emphasis). In his work on gender and Sundanese dance cultures in Indonesia, Henry Spiller (2010) draws on Butler comingling of gender and performativity into order to define of gender identities as "the matrix of ideas, behaviors, and assumptions

[57] For more on the specificity of distinct gendered styles across the archipelago see Hold:1967; Choy: 1984; Brakel: 1993; Hughes-Freehand: 1995.

that result in the division of people into at least two distinct categories that we typically characterize as ' sex' or 'gender'".[58] Both of these theorists see bodies as sites of cultural production and signifiers of culturally and historically constructed meanings. They are physical and affectual sites through which cultural meanings and cultural knowledge are lived, experienced, produced and transmitted.[59]

In citing the categories above through a reference that puts gender and sex in quotation marks, I further align myself with the position that both "gender" and "sex" are neither self-evident experiences nor natural explanatory frameworks. *Ibu* Sandra's own shift from dancing a desire for womanhood to dancing an embodiment as *waria* illustrates this complexity. Even so, the language I use to parse gendered genres in Indonesia reflects the categorical demarcations to which the dancers (and general population) refer which typically couple these two categories of identification.

As a way to situate "cross-gender" as a dance mode, I use "female" and "male" to refer to culturally constructed categories of gender that may refer to either or both the dance form and ways of identifying and presenting in everyday life. Therefore "cross-gender dance" indexes sets of practices where an individual dances in a mode that is counter to their assumed and/or claimed sex (or that of the character portrayed). There we often encounter male-bodied individuals dancing in a female mode or a female-bodied individual dancing in a male mode. "Same-gender" dance, in this lexicon then refers to an individual dancing in a mode that is the same as his or her presumed sex—a woman dancing in a female mode or a man dancing in a male mode. Noting here that mode doesn't always correspond with the gender and/or sex of a character portrayed, for instance a prince in the *Ramayana* dances of central Java would be portrayed by a woman dancing in a female dance mode to portray a male character.

The gendering of sexed bodies is a cultural process, shifting as individuals weave their identities out of local, national, and transnational ideologies I approach femaleness and maleness as a part of Spiller's (2010) "matrix of ideas,

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[58] Henry Spiller, *Erotic Triangles: Sundanese Dance and Masculinity in West Java*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2010, 22.
[59] For more on dance and cultural theory see Foster: 1986, 1995; Cowan: 1990:4,23; Franko: 1993; Hughes-Freeland: 2008b.

behaviors, and assumptions" (36) that includes culturally constructed senses of masculinity and femininity, assumptions about what makes a body male or female, and the stylized constitutive acts within a particular cultural context that are believed to signal sex and gender. Because femaleness and maleness, in Butlerian terms, are in a large part produced through performative acts, a body does not need to be biologically male or biologically female to produce maleness or femaleness. Given that "the body is both marked by culture and 'speaks' of and to cultural practice, the self, and history" people may use their bodies strategically to align themselves with particular histories and senses of identity.[60]

In my interview with Ibu Sandra, she defines herself through her repeated attachments to femaleness, but it is an alignment that is both about her everyday performances of feminine gender and also specifically marked by the gendered dance modes to which she feels most closely aligned. Although spoken about in binary terms, cross-gender dance ultimately demonstrates a gender pluralism in performance and in some cases in the off-stage lives of the performers. As defined by anthropologist Michael Peletz:

> Gender pluralism includes pluralistic sensibilities and dispositions regarding bodily practices (adornment, attire, mannerisms) and embodied desires, as well as social roles, sexual relationships, and ways of being that bear on or are otherwise linked with local conceptions of femininity, masculinity, androgyny, etc.[61]

Despite the gender dualism articulated in the discourse of most Indonesians with whom I spoke, performers were expressing pluralistic understandings of masculinity and femininity through performance, and in some cases in their offstage lives, which sometimes included senses of gender and sexuality that were outside the norm of dominant Indonesian ideologies. Such dominant ideologies have been shaped by nineteenth and twentieth-century Dutch colonial and Islamic discourses and have been promoted by the Indonesian government since the declaration of independence in 1945.

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[60] Helen Thomas and Jamilah Ahmed, "introduction", (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), 2004,7-8.

[61] Michael Peletz," Transgenderism and Gender Pluralism in Southeast Asia since early Modern Times." *Current Anthropology* 47/2,2006:310.

The history and significance of dominant gender ideologies has been well documented in the academic literature concerning public presentation in Indonesia, most notably by Indonesian gender theorist Dede Oetomo (2000) who offers "nine preliminary theses" regarding non-normative genders and sexualities in Southeast Asia, including the fourth theses which proposes "'Male' and 'female' remain powerful structuring principles for non-normative genders and sexualities, but in complex ways(50). The senses of gender that performers expressed with their bodies included complex relationships with masculinity and femininity. His work highlights the multifarious ways that gender is defined and operates in an Indonesia context. Such senses included female-masculinity; masculinity that is expressed, embodied, and owned by females as well as male- femininity; femininity that is expressed, embodied, and owned by males.[62] It is interesting to note how these scholars have emphasized the importance of context to the expression of particular senses of gender in the region, particularly the expression of gender as situational.

In her analysis of *tombois* (those who embody female-masculinity) in West Sumatra, Evelyn Blackwood (2010) offers forth the concept of "contingent masculinity" used to draw attention to gender subjectivity as "conditioned by circumstances, a process rather than an entity"[63]. Emphasizing the importance of context in the shifting expression and production of gender, she analyzes how individuals may "take up and embody sometimes contrastive subject positions in different contexts"[64]. Blackwood calls our attention to the ways that physical space, time, and historical allowances may provide a multi-faceted view of an individual's gender expression. This notion of contextual contrast provides a useful analytic in regards to *waria* who, like *Ibu* Sandra, shifted from performing as "women" to publicly living as and performing as *waria.*

My own ethnographic research reaffirmed the contextual importance in interpretations of gendered performance noted by

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[62] For more on concepts of "female masculinity" see Halberstam 1998; for studies centering Southeast Asia see also Wieringa: 2002

[63] Evelyn Blackwood, *Falling into the Lesbi World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press),2010,21.

[64] ibid:177

these scholars. In terms of cross-gendered dance, most performers recognized that a dancer's biological sex did not determine which gendered dances best suited him or her, however biological sex was not without consequence. Performers recognized differences between female-bodied and male-bodied dancers. Analysis of cross-gender performance in particular facilitates exploration into the ways *waria* negotiate the mapping of gender to sex in dominant gender ideologies. At the same time, cross-gender performance is not necessarily always subversive; gender reversals also may reinforce dominant gender ideologies even as such ideologies are challenged. Most performers did not specifically refer to the category of "cross-gender" dance.[65] For them, the dances are the dances and, as gendered styles, portray female or male personas regardless of the dancer's physical embodiment. Nevertheless, the term cross- gender dance—an individual dancing in a style that is in accordance with his or her assigned sex——and same-gender dance— which refer to an individual dancing in a style that is not the same as his or her assigned sex—have proven useful to scholars attempting to articulate the relationship between these gendered formations. Distinguishing cross-gender from same-gender dance allows me to explore the impact of *waria*'s sexed bodies on audiences and how this effect their perceptions of gender in performance.

Waria dancers claim specific senses of gender by embodying feminine gender presentation through genre specificity in order to reinforce and subvert dominant norms. Analysis of the performance practices of *waria* in general in relation to cross- gender performance in particular facilitates exploration into the ways *waria* negotiate the mapping of gender to sex dominant gender ideologies. In the case of *waria*, there is no "heterosexual law of coherence" in terms of dance performances, only dance modes that denaturalize sex through their enactments of forms of gender pluralism. Butler notes the idea of gender as a kind of insistent impersonation that passes as the real but *for Bu* Sandra, the aging *waria* dancer that began this chapter, this performance is not impersonation or imitation. Instead, it is a conscious taking up of the signifying gestures of specific gendered dance modes through which gender is established and a deep understanding in the power of choosing the right embodied gestural language and what that ultimately signifies to an audience.

[65] A notable exception is the dancer Didik Ninik Thowok, who is often directly asked about his practice in relation to cross-gender work. This will be further discussed in the conclusion.

Sandra's *Jiwa*

For Ibu Sandra it is the nature of her jiwa, or essential spirit, that allows her to shuck off the artifice implied by "impersonation" in order to mitigate the distinction between depth and surface.[66] The common narrative recorded among *waria* is that their feminine bodily presentation stems from having a jiwa perempuan (woman's soul).[67] Tom Boellstorff surmises that "Soul and bodily presentation, not just sex, secure gender in Indonesia" (2007,99). Rather than the deep interiority of a Western self, understood in terms of linear movement, *waria* tend to articulate a coming to one's embodiment through social relations. In her study of the Beskalan and Ngremo dance styles, Christina Sunardi observes that:

> While gendered dance styles characterize East Javanese dance, most artist in Malang recognized that a person's ability to perform a particular gendered style did not necessarily map to his or her biological sex. Most recognized that male style dance was not necessarily best when performed by a male, and female style dance was not necessarily best when performed by a female. Most linked a dancer's competence in performing a particular gendered style to his or her personality and disposition.[68]

While her respondents do not specifically use the term "*jiwa*" they emphasize the importance of an innate affinity for the most successful performers.

In our conversation, *Ibu* Sandra discusses her father's success within the cross-gender mode, dancing female-style dances in terms of skill. Dedicated training the court of Yogyakarta led to a long and illustrious career as a court dancer. She attributes her own success to a combination of skill (in-part attributed to her father's access to training) and *jiwa*. Unlike skill which can be learned or perfected, disposition is imagined as about a feeling of affinity, an inner sense of identification with a particular role that might add an additional layer of authenticity or verisimilitude to the performance. It is her

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[66] The Indonesian term *jiwa* can be translated as "soul", but it is also commonly used in state and medical settings to refer to the mind or mental state.

[67] see also Davies 2010,36; Boellstorff 2007,99

[68] Christina Sunardi, *Stunning Males and Powerful Females: Gender and Tradition in East Javanese Dance,*(Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 2015, 13

jiwa that sparks an affinity for only performing female-style dance, an affinity which shifts her relationship to, and our understanding of, various genres from one of "cross-gender" to that of "same-gender".

Ibu Sandra is *waria* but did not perform as *waria* in her youth. Or rather, she describes a desire to inhabit female style, and be recognized as female, in wholly different ways than she describes her father's practice, thereby further complicating the relationship between the performer's gender and that of the role they are embodying. *Ibu* Sandra explains, "my father was a dancer for the Keraton. He played female roles when he danced. In the past, women were not allowed to dance, the Princesses would get jealous. That is why male dancers fill the position including my father".[69] It is interesting to note here that the court dances of Central Java have, for centuries, featured female dancers. In fact, specific dances such as *Bedhaya* and *Serimpi* were exclusively danced by those assigned female at birth. As a result, it is interesting that Ibu Sandra frames her father's proficiently in female roles as that of external necessity and not choice. Effectively we see the confluence of genre, mode, and venue in *Ibu* Sandra's discourse concerning her father's practice of cross-gender dance within the Yogyanese court. Performance, as argued by Hughes-Freeland (1995) in Yogyakarta—among other places in Java and Bali, "is gender ascribed, but available to both sexes"(201). While cross gender performance in the scholarship and practice traditionally connotes someone, who portrays a gender opposite their everyday embodiment, *Ibu* Sandra points to an experience of dancing female roles effectively as a woman. Thinking alongside Tomie Hahn's (2004) approach to "performance as a process where boundaries of identity (gender, ethnicity, age, social class, etc.) are negotiated metaphorically" (323).I position *Ibu* Sandra's discourse concerning her own practice as not only a metaphorical negotiation of the boundaries of "woman" but also identity as bodily crafted through dance.

Although pointing to an inherited lineage of expertise, *Ibu* Sandra is articulating something inherently different from her father's performing experience. He performed in a cross-gendered modality. While assigned male at birth, *Ibu* Sandra

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[69] Ibu Sandra.(*Waria* elder and former professional dancer). Interview by author. Voice recording. Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Central Java, March 2015.

does not describe her experience as a man performing female-style dance. She is performing as a woman. This performance is, in part predicated on being a male-bodied individual with a woman's (*jiwa*) (soul or mind) and *déndong* (feminine comportment, for more on *déndong* see chapter 4). The first cited account of a "*banci*" describing herself as possessing a *jiwa perempuan* "woman's soul" is in a newspaper report published by the newspaper *Kompas* from 1967. The report describes a "*banci*" at a court appearance wearing a "dress shirt and pants" who speaks with the "accented voice of a woman" and "plays with her hair with long-nailed fingers". When asked to explain herself, she states "I am a man, but I have a woman's soul, and I always associate with women". Cultural anthropologist Benjamin Hegerty (2017) suggests that the narrative that *waria* have a woman's *jiwa* "is what facilitated the abrupt shift towards greater tolerance between the late 1960s "golden age". He argues that this period marked an era where *waria* are no longer understood as "deceiving (*menipu*) men but rather to be expressing a gendered subjectivity that is the product of familial and social influence"(41).

For *Ibu* Sandra we see this discourse deployed in her familial narrative as a strategy for describing, influencing, and making sense of herself as *waria*. Her narrative makes clear that it was her "female soul" (*jiwa perempuan*), and her disposition which led to her desire to only study female style dance roles. In foregrounding dance as a mode of narrating and performing gender, *Ibu* Sandra stresses not only her interior feelings but an emphasis on the actions of others in the form of audience reaction in terms of how she makes sense of the self. For Sandra this is not impersonation or imitation, it is a conscious taking up of the signifying gestures through which gender is established accompanied by a deep understanding of the power of choosing the right embodied gestural language and what that signifies to an audience. For Sandra it is the nature of her *jiwa* that allows her to shuck off the artifact of impersonation and mitigate the distinction between depth and surface, intertwining a discourse of natural fact and cultural performance.

In Indonesia, appearances have never been a superficial matter, but rather might better be described as a conduit for new modes of subjectivity and recognition (Siegel: 1997; Brenner: 1996). While dance modes allow for certain forms of cross-gender performances to legible as masculine or feminine,

the audience is often not aware of the morphological sex or the gendered identity of the performers. For example, *Ibu* Sandra herself does not articulate her experience as cross-gender. When asked if those in the audience of the Ramayana ballet knew if she was *waria*, *Ibu* Sandra explains that "The people inside Ramayana knew me but not people outside [in the] community. They did not know. When I was younger, my body was perfect—slim—and I was pretty. People did not realize that I was *waria*." Here, *Ibu* Sandra articulates insecurities about beauty that are fairly common to both *waria* and those assigned female at birth; concerns about weight, prettiness, and age. However, as a performer, she also recognizes that the perceived value of her performance is also predicated in part on her ability to "pass" as female, rather than drawing attention to her difference as *waria*. But part of what makes Sandra's performance as a woman so effective, part of what keeps her from being "clocked" is partially enabled by the means through which genders are made legible within specific genres.[70] So, while she asserts that it is physicality and feminine comportment that causes the audience to perceive her as a woman and not *waria*, I suggest that it is in fact the genres of classical and folk dances that provide access to this particular instantiation of traditional femininity. *Ibu* Sandra wishes to perform as a woman, not as *waria*, and her mastery of female style court genres makes clear her desire for how she wants to be perceived. However, we must to turn to an examination of other dance archives, to see how traditional performance forms acted as a way for *waria* of an older generation to align with gendered ideals of the Suharto regime/ national femininity.

Waria, the *Ludruk* Genre, and Gender Presentation in the Indonesian Dance Theatre

The ways *waria* negotiate the contours of gender are made most clear to me though the genres they chose to practice and the way they talked about various cultural pressures, indicating how they and audiences contend with official discourses of gender. In both their quotidian performances, and through their participation in specific dance genres, *Waria* dancers contribute to the ongoing cultural production of tradition and

[70] "Clocking" is a vernacular term used mostly by trans women of color and drag queens in North America. It refers to the act of calling out someone's flaws, to uncover or reveal the truth in a situation or one's assigned at birth gender in contrast to one's lived gender. It calls attention to the especially rigorous forms of surveillance experienced by queer and non-binary bodies.

maintaining cultural space for female-bodied/born masculine subjects to access and make visible an expansive spectrum of femaleness. Discussions of how gender, genre, and assigned sex come together in Javanese theater, become particularly illuminated through a consideration of the proletariat theater genre *Ludruk*.

Generally known in Surabaya, Malang and other parts of East Java for featuring male-bodied performers in cross-gender roles, *Ludruk* features opening acts that include dancing, singing, and comedy; a play; and interludes between the acts of the play.[71] In contrast to expectations that female-bodied dancers would perform genres such as *Serimpi*, *Bedhaya*, and *Gambyong*, audience members typically expect that male-bodied dancers would perform *Ngremo Lanang* and/or *Ngremo Putri* for a type of east Javanese theatre called *Ludruk*. As American anthropologist James Peacock emphasizes, *Ludruk* has long been associated with male performers involved in what he characterizes as "female impersonation." In his book, *Rites of Modernization: Symbolic and Social Aspects of Indonesian Proletarian Drama*, Peacock cites what is the first recorded performance of *Ludruk* from 1822. This account, narrated by Dutch linguist Theodoor Pigeaud, a performance that is described as starring two "transvestite performers" performers, "a clown who told funny stories and a female impersonator".[72] The clown and the female impersonator have remained dominant elements in the *Ludruk* theatre. In reference to the *Ludruk* theatre of the 1960s in Surabaya Peacock notes:

> In general, because of the social and material situation of its actors and clientele, *Ludruk* is a rather happy and garish spectacle. Whores, gamblers, drunks, and thieves crowd into the audience. Beggars lie on the grounds outside the auditorium. Ushers are barefoot and shady. The show itself is wildly comical and often gross, featuring such personages as aging transvestites and hare-lipped clowns.[73]

As *Ludruk* developed as a form of theatre in the twentieth century, male-bodied performers tend to play both female and male roles. While the sex of dancers in particular contexts

[71] See Brandon 1967; Hatley 1971; Peacock 1987

[72] Pigeaud 1938:322, cited in Peacock 1987: 29.

[73] Peacock 1987: 28

has been flexible and subject to change over time, performer and audience do associate specific types of performance with male or female dancers in particular historical moments. This provides a useful analytical frame for the analysis of ways in which *waria* have negotiated conceptual and physical boundaries of gender through genres of performance. *Waria* conform to and/ or push at cultural expectations about their gendered and sexed identities through their roles in performance structures that usually feature firm gendered boundaries.

The *Tandhak* Role and *Waria*

Older generation talked about femaleness as performed in *Ludruk*. Historically, the casts of these plays have been all men; those who play female roles are called *tandhak Ludruk*, or simply *tandhak.* '*tandhak*' means 'female singer-dancer' and can refer to men or women who perform this role. Some of the linguistic terminology performers use to refer to dancers have specific gender implications, which are further complicated by *waria* enactments. For example, the use of the word "*tandhak*, commonly seen at *Tayub* events, *tandhak* sing and perform the dance genre *Ngremo Tayub (a female-dance mode)* as an opening number for the evening. Key in this usage is the assumed sex of the singer- dancer. *Ngremo Tayub* specifically calls for someone who was assigned female-at-birth to fill the role. However, the same term, *tandhak,* also refers to *waria* who specialize in female roles in the *Ludruk theatre,* where these singer-dancers are known as *tandhak-Ludruk.*[74]

In this linguistic phrasing, theatrical genre (*Ludruk)* is directly used to modify and make explicit both the assumed assigned sex and performative gender of the dancer. In this chapter, however, I refer specifically to *tandhak Ludruk*, who, in the past, have predominately identified as men, but since the 2000s in East Java have come to identify as mostly *waria*. *Tandhak* also sing songs dressed as women and dance *Ngremo Putri*. As *tandhak*, men worked hard to uphold constructions of femaleness that were consistent with Old Order ideal models such as the national female figure such as Kartini through dance performances that were refined, slow, sweet, polite, and graceful.[75] For the purposes of my argument I will use

[74] While early scholarship often categorizes these performers as "men", universally the performers I interviewed self-identified as "*waria*" or somehow implicated in "*warianess*"

[75] For more on how women made sense of their identities as women despite gendered ideologies dominant at this time, portrayed through

"*tandhak- Ludruk*" to refer to *waria* performing as *tandhak*. The use of *tandhak* by performers and audience members to describe female or male identifying performers contributes to the blurring of boundaries separating femaleness and maleness while simultaneously shifting the designation and its associated genres further away from a biologically inflected understanding of femaleness. This demonstrates how gender can be constructed through performer roles, allowing cultural and discursive space for both *waria* and women to be associated with femaleness.

Peacock identifies contradictory expectations that *tandhak Ludruk* faced in terms of their gender identities. On the one hand they were encouraged to be ideal women when doing so contributed to national unity through performance by singing songs in support of the nation on stage. On the other hand, they were discouraged from taking gender transgression into their daily lives; instead they were encouraged to be modern, Indonesian men—to have short hair, wear pants, and be heads of households.[76] Peacock also describes that nearly all of the *tandhak Ludruk* he consulted in the early 1960s embodied femininity in their daily lives by wearing women's attire and working jobs associated with women "such as tailoring women's clothes" and goes on to describe how many of these men "endur[ed] parents' discomfort and strangers' taunts to keep the role 'woman'".[77] However, the semantics of "roles" are really important here. In the case of the *Ludruk* genre and the role of *tandhak*, femininity is still closely aligned with this perception of woman as role. Role in this context is not associated with something external that one adopts, but rather roles, both social and theatrical, emerge through a sustained social negotiation with gendered expectations.

Expectations from audiences and other performers exert pressure on *tandhak-Ludruk*, pressures they navigate and negotiate through the strictures of the genre. Despite *waria tandhak's* embodiment of femininity, other performers and audiences usually—but not always—recognized their femininity as distinguishable from the femininity of female dancers who were "assigned female at birth". One assigned female at birth

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either Kartini or the "uncontrollable maniacs" that made of *Gerwani* see Sylvia Tiwon, 1996

[76] Peacock 1987:206-207; see also Boellstorff 2007: 86-87

[77] Peacock 1987: 207

tandhak performer expressed in passing that, although some *tandhak-Ludruk* can be more beautiful than "real women" there were still several features that made them different from "female" *tandhak*. She went on to cite examples such as the pitch of their voices and the fluidity of their movements, noting that they can sometimes be "stiff".

She also asserted that the sonic impact of *tandhak-Ludruk* singing in falsetto was usually different than a female's singing, as was their speaking voice.[78] Such commentary demonstrates how the role of *tandhak* requires mastery of both the particularities of choreography and voice, along with nuances of feminine presentation that align with the expectations of the *Ludruk* stage. It is understandable then that *Ibu* Sandra places such a strong emphasis on the importance of "skill". When I ask about younger *waria* and their contemporary relationship with classic dance *Ibu* Sandra explains:

> It is rather challenging for me to train other *waria* with art skills first because only some of them appreciate art and second when you try to teach them art they want the instant way, something quick. It takes time to learn true art. To learn a classic dance for instance, I had to fast and learn certain moves. Especially the royal classic dances. They have to fully understand the dance because if they don't, it will ruin it.[79]

Waria in Contemporary *Ludruk*

I first met Arry at the Darmo Trade Center mall in the working- class section of Surabaya. I ventured across town from my homestay because of an invitation to view a *waria lipsinc* competition (for more on this event see chapter 4.

[78]Gender differences in the voice are frequently treated as natural, direct products of sex differentiation even as biologically influenced features of the gendered voice, like pitch, are shaped by sociocultural practice (Zimman, 2018). Research suggests there is a reciprocal relationship between physical appearance and sex judgments of transgender women based on the voice (Borsel, De Cuypere, and Van den Berghe:2001). Studies have highlighted a relationship between the voice perception and positive quality of life for transgender individuals (R.K. Adler et all: 2006; Hancock et all: 2011) as explained by a rise in voice therapy, voice lessons, or voice modification surgery

[79] Ibu Sandra.(*Waria* elder and former professional dancer). Interview by author. Voice recording. Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Central Java, March 2015.

Among the numerous performers Arry's costume immediately stood out. While other competitors had chosen looks from the classically glamorous to the avant-garde to accompany their performances of Mariah Carey or Lady Gaga, Arry wore a traditional *Kebaya* and *Kain*. Accessorized with the traditional *konde* hair extension commonly worn by women in Java and Bali as a part of their *kain kebaya* costumes and accessorized with *kembang goyang*, golden flower ornaments attached to the hair bun, Arry looked the picture of traditionally elegant Javanese woman while performing to a slightly sped-up remix of a Javanese love song. Talking after the performance, Arry explained that the costume and overall performance was influenced by working as an apprentice *waria tandhak* with *Ludruk* Irama Budaya troupe. In choosing this particular visual aesthetic and performance style for a *lipsinc* competition (a decidedly more modern form of performance), Arry sought to "bring *Ludruk* to the younger people".[80] During our time together Arry clarifies this statement, explaining that while yes, it is nice to expose young people to *Ludruk* like her own experience in high school, really, she seeks to expose other young *waria* to the genre. What, then is the value of this form for other *waria* of Arry's generation?

At twenty-four, Arry is the youngest *tandhak-Ludruk* in the company. When I ask why, as a younger *waria* person, one would want to participate in the *Ludruk* genre Arry explains that:

> I start with *Ludruk* in 2008. My last year in high school, it start with my theatre extra-curricular in my high school. At that time, my coach is more concerned with *Ludruk* than modern theatre or other general style of theatre. So in my year, we often participate in *Ludruk* festival or *Ludruk* competition in East Java. From that I knew *Ludruk*. I fell in love with *Ludruk*. Before we join the competition, we will test the audience or test the stage or something like that to show, to see, where the mistakes are. The seniors in conventional *Ludruk* (laughs) I mean real *Ludruk*, professional *Ludruk* always

[80] Arry.(*waria Ludruk* performer in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. December 28th, 2014. Conversation was conducted in English per the interviewee's request.

> see our performance. They will comment and blah blah blah . And most of the professional *Ludruk* player says "*suka pengalian saya* (I like your style)", they say I have a talent in cross gender play, in *transvesti* play, like that. "*Kammu punya, jadi di Tandhak Ludruk* (You have it so you should be *tandhak Ludruk".* So, after I graduated from high school they asked me to join and I remember that my first performance in professional *Ludruk* is when we show in the area near Surumato bridge. There is no bridge, it's still in progress, we show there for a wedding reception. They want to see *Ludruk*, so that's my first performance in professional *Ludruk*. At that time, I just came and there's *Ibu Ibu* that make-up me, do my hair, even tie my sarong. I cannot do anything. I'm just come and they do all that stuff to me until I look beautiful. And I also happy, I say " oh it looks cool" (*mau lagi*) –I want more, I want to learn more of the art form like that. So, after that show I joined *Ludruk Irama Budaya* . We perform almost every day. So, if the viewer is more than ten, we play, we perform. But if there is no viewer, no audience, we don't perform.[81]

Further into our conversation, Arry clarifies that this first professional experience provided the catalyst for her open identification as *waria*. It was this intimate act of care provided by the *Ibu Ibu* (both *perempuan* and *waria)* backstage and the subsequent feeling of beauty that gave Arry the confidence to fully "*jadi waria"*. Arry explains that through diligent practice, not only has her dancing and singing become more elegant and beautiful, she has also developed better skills with her make-up and hair in daily life. Practice and cultivation of the *tandhak* skill set then allows Arry to begin to cultivate an expertise in her ideal *waria* embodiment. The skills of the stage then contribute to shaping embodiment and ultimately a sense of self in the everyday.

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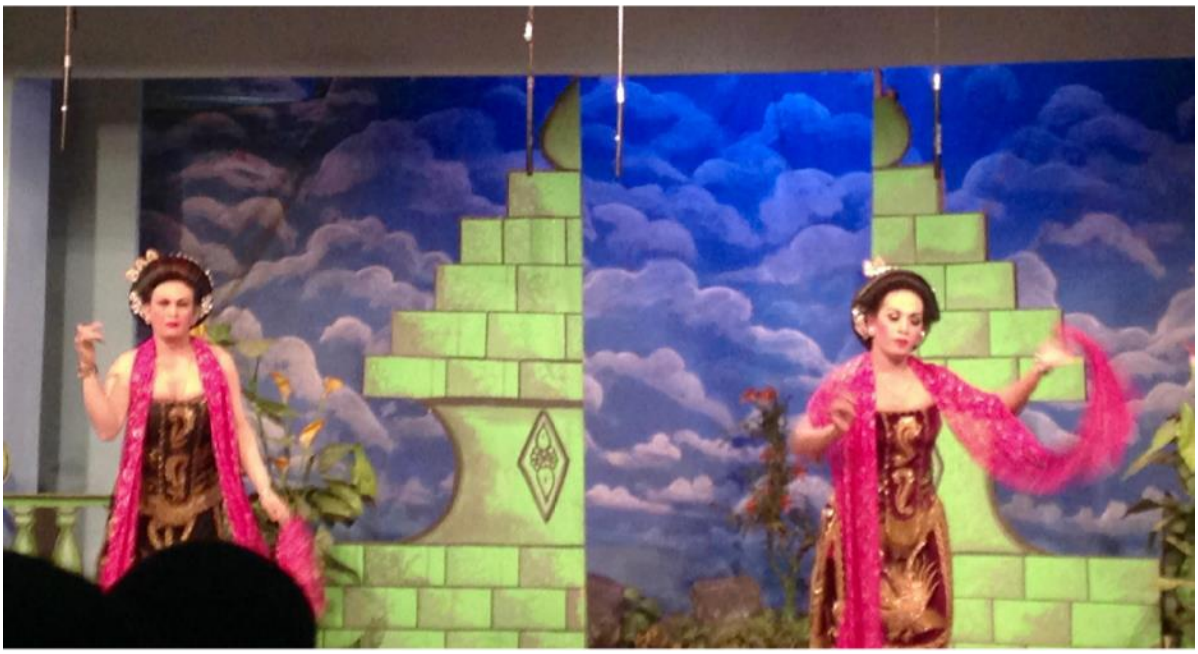
[81] Arry. (*waria Ludruk* performer in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. May, 2015. Conversation was conducted in English per the interviewee's request.

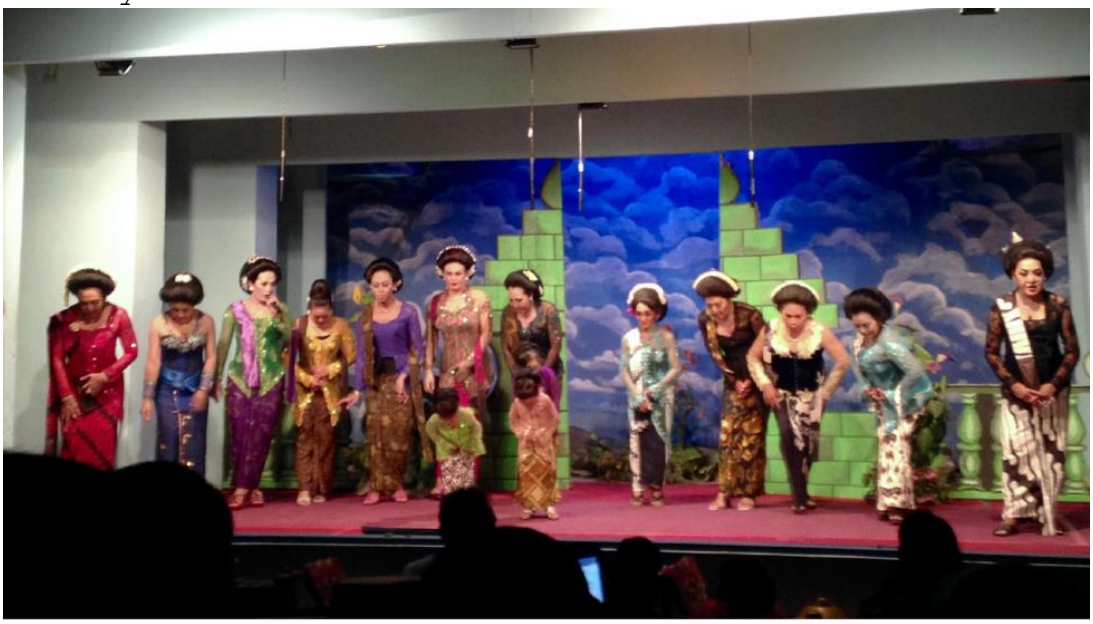


(Figure 2.2: Duetting waria tandhak at Ludruk Irama Budaya theatre)

Performing daily, Arry invited me to come experience a *Ludruk* show. Situated behind yet another mall, the older Grand City Mall, *Ludruk Irama Budaya occupies a small*, non-descript theatre. In fact, I passed is several times before finally stopping to ask the woman selling bags of snacks a few feet from the door if this was the right place. Inside approximately fifty chairs face a small thrust stage with three proscenium arches and a simple two-dimensional painted set. Despite the sparse audience the room is hazy with cigarette smoke. From my observations, most of the audience is comprised of older working-class men. With the exception being a small group of teenagers from a local high school AV Club, who were filming the performance for a school project. A small gamelan band sits in front of the stage in the down right corner of the room. To signal the opening of the performance two *tandhak* enter the stage, dressed in *kebaya* and draped in pink scarves as shown in figure 2.2. I observe, and later confirm, that the opening *tandhak* roles are both filled by *waria* performers. They sing and dance to open the show, frequently directly addressing the audience with flicks of their scarves. One audience member gets up and dances with a *tandhak-Ludruk* , grabbing one of her hands while raising his other to light applause. Satisfied with his dance, he passes along some money for the privilege and returns to his seat. The closing of this first act is signaled by the arrival of, presumably, every *tandhak* in the company onto the stage. Together they dance and sing a final number. In the middle of the finale one *tandhak-Ludruk* is afforded the

privilege of a solo. Smaller and much older than the rest, her voice is strong and clear, and her movements, while visibly slower than those performing the opening duet, are elegant and precise. The end of her performance is met with the loudest applause of the night.

After the performance Arry insists that I return the following afternoon in order to meet Surayadi. As the oldest *tandhak-Ludruk* and one of the longest tenured members of the company, Surayadi would be able to answer my questions about the history of *waria* in *Ludruk.*



(figure 2.3: Final bow for all of the tandhak at the end of a performance.)

At the time of our interview, Surayadi has just celebrated a seventy-eighth birthday. As figure 2.3 shows, Surayadi is diminutive in size, yet commands attention center stage. 1963 was the first time they took to the Ludruk stage debuting with the *Ludruk Jember Seletan* company in the Jember Regency of East Java.[82] When asked about this debut Surayadi tells me:

> I did not have any interest in Ludruk in the beginning. When I was seventeen, my neighbor who worked as part of the troop invited me to see the show with him. When I got there

[82] I use the third person "they" to refer to Surayadi in this chapter reflecting contemporary personal pronoun usage for non-binary persons. This reflects the absence of gendered third person pronouns in the Indonesian language. Instead the singular word *dia* translates to both he/him, she/her and can be further modified within conversational context by gendered referents such as the previously cited *laki-laki* or *perempuan.*

> everyone complimented my soft look. The next day they asked me to perform with them. Which I did but it did not go well due to lack of lack of practice [laughs]. I never learnt to play Ludruk before; it was all new to me. After being involved in the group for a while, eventually I started to enjoy doing Ludruk. Today, Ludruk losing its existence. Now, you can count how many high school or junior high school students how know what Ludruk is What is even sadder is that, we do not have enough Ludruk artists to teach the junior.[83]

Once again, narrative importance is placed on the practice of cultivating expertise and the necessity of preserving this expertise for future generations. Just as Arry described the profound sense of self that emerged through learning the skills of the *tandhak-Ludruk*, Surayadi describes being changed by the *Ludruk* stage. Or, I argue, that the *Ludruk* stage, much like the *Keraton* for *Ibu* Sandra, cultivates a public space for negotiation of a long-felt sense of self. Surayadi explains to me that "since I was little, I have always been feminine and soft. People knew me as Surayadi *Luwes*(*luwes* mean soft in Javanese*)*. If you are too masculine, you will not make a good *tandhak*.". "I used to be flirty– so people said. I was said to have been delicious, sweet."[84] Surayadi articulates an understanding that others in their community perceived them as effeminate, too.

Linking their abilities to perform as a *tandhak- Ludruk* to their own femaleness: because they naturally had a high singing and speaking voice, they said, they were *pantes* (suitable) for female roles. Some men who perform female roles, Surayadi generalized, are able to do so because they have *jiwa perempuan* or 'female hearts' (*hati wanita*).Much like *Ibu* Sandra's *jiwa*, Surayadi highlights an innate part of their subjectivity that facilitates notable skill in the genre. Dancers of this older generation subverted dominant gender ideologies by behaving as more female. Through the formal structures of their chosen female-mode "genres", and the specific investments in cultivating embodied feminine movement that these genres adhere

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[83] Surayadi. (*waria Ludruk* performer in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. May, 2015. Conversation was conducted in Indonesia and Javanese and translated with the assistance of Arry.

[84] Ibid

to, both Surayadi and Sandra are able to reproduce existing notions of womanhood in the context of their soft yet male bodies, effectively challenging assumptions about which kinds of bodies could and should occupy femaleness through their engagement with heritage genres.

Chapter 3: Crafting *Waria* on the Street: The *Pengamen* Genre and Contemporary Urban Space

First Encounters

While Indonesian performance styles are staged at numerous venues across the archipelago, for tourists, as part of national celebrations, and spiritual efficacy—and indeed are viewed as a prized manifestation of traditional culture, another performance genre, *pengamen*, is just as ubiquitous and serves as an illuminating case study in the correlation between performance genres, forms of spectatorship, and understandings of Indonesian gender. In the process, I explore the blurry boundaries between presentational and participatory dance practices, work and leisure, and authorized and unauthorized performance modes that are exemplified by pengamen performance.

I first encountered *waria* performing as *pengamen* performance in 2010 in the city of *Makassar* on the island of *Sulawesi* in Eastern Indonesia, having just completed my first week as an English Teaching Assistant with the Fulbright Organization. My teaching partner, along with a number of our colleagues, insisted on taking me to *Losari* Beach on a Friday for a meal and to take in the sunset. *Losari* Beach is mostly comprised of small open-fronted restaurants facing a boardwalk, a narrow strip of sand, and then the sea. Seated at a small plastic table with a group of women aged thirty to sixty-five we ate amidst families with their young children and groups of teenagers freshly released from school. A quarter of the way through our meal I heard a high-pitched noise coming from the street growing louder and louder. Soon a feminine figure in a short tight skirt and bright lipstick, pulling along a small karaoke set on wheels. My teaching partner *Ibu* Kartini grabbed my arm and gestured towards the entrance of the restaurant excitedly telling me "you will only see this in Indonesia". At the moment I wasn't sure if *Ibu* Kartini referred to the genre of performance, the figure that I would come to recognize as a *waria* performer, or the combination of the two. However, as I traveled back and forth and throughout Indonesia over the next eight years I realized that what *Ibu* Kartini could have said "you will see this *all* over Indonesia". Rarely have I encountered an urban center without at some point stumbling across or being stumbled upon by *waria pengamen*. Although the songs may change, from the East to the West *waria pengamen* are unmistakable and immediately recognizable. In a country so invested in generating knowledge concerning its own national arts practices, I was curious why there was so little discourse concerning what I perceive to be a trans-archipelagic

performance form.

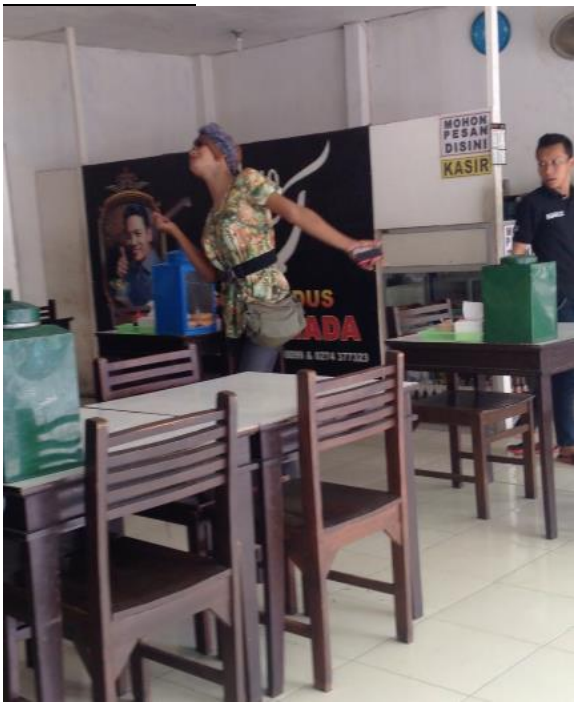
It is this genre's negotiation with the "public" in its multiple valences that marks *pengamen* performances as particularly fertile spaces for cohering *waria* subjectivity. The reshaping of space by *waria* though the genre of *pengamen* performance in turn produces public ideologies of *waria*. *"Waria"* then emerges not only as a subject position, but also as an affect, ontology, and epistemology of being on the street. When performing as *pengamen, waria* must continually negotiate public opinion. *Pengamen* performance is the genre that most continually shapes public perception of *waria* due to its negotiation of affective labor with the relationship generated between a spectatorial body and *waria* performers. The specific spatial practices of *pengamen* performance provide a means for *waria* to publicly contest, negotiate, and construct senses of *waria.*

This chapter mines the trans economies that become lost as contemporary economic and legislative forces refashion unauthorized, and often unsolicited, *waria pengamen* performances as practices dissident to contemporary Indonesia. Indonesia's shift towards neoliberalism creates an urbanity that demarcates certain types of bodies and labor as marginal or precarious in ways that are not seen as contributing to a progressive cultural ecosystem. What comes to be at stake are not only State sanctioned ideas about what constitutes artistry and what constitutes authorized labor, but also what and whose articulations of affective intensity are allowed to survive. Unlike the staged performances discussed previously, these unauthorized *waria pengamen* performances subvert and critique capitalist spatial practice through their counter-production of public, resistance thirdspace. This spatial critique and counter-production occurs not only through the aesthetic tenants of the genre but also how *waria* negotiate the various discourses that these tenets produce about their performance practice and how it shapes public perception of *waria*.

Through the genre of *pengamen* performance and the specific spatial parameters in which they occur, *waria* generate a shape and are shaped by both how space is produced and resisted. Henri Lefebvre(1991) describes the spatial regulations produced and resisted under capitalism as a "normative and repressive efficacy…that makes the efficacy of mere ideologies…pale in comparison"(358). In *waria pengamen* performances, a "thirdspace" sense of real-and-imagined place serves to disrupt and subvert the "normative and repressive efficacy" of this kind of dominant spatial regulations through

an integration of overlapping aesthetics, audiences, and legislation (Soja,1996:23). In order to provide a sense of exactly what *pengamen* performances construct, in this chapter, I first define the genre and the intersecting legislative forces that have shaped it within the last twenty years. Drawing on Lefebvre's spatial analysis and on thirdspace theorization, I then explore how the spatial experiences of *waria pengamen* performers critique this capitalist space through their production of an alternative thirdspace.

Walking the streets with *waria pengamen: ethnographic encounters*



(Figure 3.1: Sean performing as a pengamen in a warung on JL. Puntadewa in Yogyakarta, 2014)

At nine in the morning temperatures in the city of Yogyakarta already hover around ninety-five degrees. The air is heavy and humid with the waning rainy season's promise of unpredictable afternoon showers. The above images capture fleeting seconds of interaction from the first of many days I will spend walking the streets of Yogyakarta with Sean as she takes on the role of *pengamen*, which roughly translates to "street-singer" or busker. I spend four hours furtively tailing Sean on her winding six-kilometer route tagging along for only about half of her day. Furtive also serves as a productive hermeneutic for my own physical presence in the street, which is always marked as excess. At times, it seems this excess disrupts Sean's earning potential (hence the need for semi-clandestine behavior).Other times, my role as "international researcher" provides a sense of legitimacy to a practice often seen as "low brow",

unprofessional and increasingly deviant in the eyes of the state and seems to affords a layer of protection from State surveillance. Soon my own body begins to react to the heat of the day, accumulating a film composed of sweat, engine exhaust and the fine ever-present volcanic ash that is ubiquitous in Yogyakarta after the 2010 volcanic eruption. All of these human, non-human, and man-made elements are brought together into crushing proximity in the stifling heat. In her book, *Queer Phenomenology, Orientations, Objects, Others*, Sara Ahmed (2006) calls our attention to the ways in which objects accumulate affective value as they are passed around. Like my own body at this moment, Ahmed argues that affect is "sticky", and it is this stickiness that sustains the connection between ideas, values, and objects. As Sean literally carries her performance through the streets in her own body, her performance accumulates the variety of interactions that she produces, and in the process catalyzes continual revision even in its repetitions.

Sean enacts the same repertoire across multiple spaces. She carries a small radio in one hand and a bespoke miniature tambourine made of aluminum pop-tops in the other. With the radio playing her backing vocals on loop, Sean dances and sings to the same pop song throughout the day. Along her route she enters into a wide array of businesses: including casual open-air eateries, a used motorbike showroom, and a travel agency. Sean quickly assesses each space before entering in order to target whom to direct her initial efforts towards, reading the room in order to code switch along the way. When entering a dining establishment where most of the women are wearing the hijab or if there are Islamic prayers displayed on the walls, for example, Sean's entire habitus will change. She takes on a sense of demureness, lowering her voice and bending slightly at the waist—an Indo-Islamic gesture of respect. Accompanied by an Islamic greeting, this combination of verbal and gestural cues can pave the way for smooth, even welcomed, entry. One also sees these subtle changes when entering spaces dominated by men versus women—where she will often make immediate physical contact, a touch to the shoulder or a fanning gesture with her hands, as she shifts into a more flirtatious mode. Familiar faces may stop the *pengamen* work altogether, as shop owner and perform exchange greetings. New faces, doors that are closed in order to create interior space from the street versus more open spaces all present new tools and challenges to the genre.

The responses Sean elicits vary, including delight, indifference, confusion, and desire. Emotions align individuals affectively with communities through the intensity of their

attachments. They work in concrete and particular ways to mediate the relationship between the individual and the collective. To return again to Ahmed's notion of stickiness, she proposes that emotions work through adherence, they stick figures together, and it is this sticking that creates the effect of a collective coherence in *waria* identity (Ahmed, 20). While Ahmed refers to coherence, stickiness can also be that which binds through discordance. The performative disruptions that are *waria pengamen*, mixed with the city, seem to lend themselves more to a sense of confusion and instability. Or perhaps it lies somewhere in the middle, so that *waria pengamen* prove vital precisely for how they disrupt already disrupted city.

I want to take a moment to look more closely at a few encounters, out of the infinite little affective events, that make up *pengamen* performances. Upon entering their places of work, two uniformed men immediately take notice of Sean. After watching her sing and dance for a moment, they seem to catch Sean's hip shimmy, taking it into their own bodies in order to move in time to the music and small instrument. Performance theorist calls our attention to what she sees as the "fundamentally migratory quality of gesture endemic to black social dance".[85] In what she terms the "gesture and aesthetics of contagion" we see how one can "catch" an overwhelming need to move or someone's specific movement, like the involuntary spasms of a sneeze or the holy ghosts body shaking fits in the Black church.[86] As the men, in their white and orange polos, move their hips stiffly from side to side, Sean laughs, correcting their final pose (emphasis on a jutting hip)s for optimal sexiness. Soon their co-workers join in and all business as usual comes to a stop. *Waria pengamen* performances explode the quotidian and mundane of the "work" environment. The entire space of labor reorients around the performer, as conversations with customers are paused and back office doors opened to observe the new sounds and sights.

In pleasurable wake of her own work, the *waria pengamen* seducing the laborer into a new affective economy of pleasure and play. Participation (whether in the form of dance,

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[85] Rizvana Bradley, " Black Cinematic Gesture and the Aesthetics of Contagion", *TDR* ,2018, 16.

[86] Ibid,17

flirting, distress or an impromptu photo shoot) enfolds itself into the very structure of the performance. The very heart of *pengamen* work is the precarious moment of initial proximity, if the audience will open into an empathetic, if not also kinesthetic, orientation towards and with the performer.[87] Sara Ahmed offers a theory of emotion as economy, as involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive value. That is, emotions work as a form of capital so that:

> Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an affect of the circulation between objects and signs (the accumulation of affective value over time). Some signs, that is, increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to 'contain' affect.[88]

Epistemologies of *waria* are generated in the affective bind so that understandings of *waria* emerge in and through the circulations of their performances.

Defining the Genre

Throughout the chapter I switch from the use of *pengamen* to denote when talking about the contemporary practice of street performance in general and "*waria pengamen*" to designate both *waria* who "*ngamen*", the verb form of *pengamen,* as well as the particular affective strategies *pengamen* performances by *waria* generate. Across the archipelago, performances by young men with punk rock haircuts wielding ukuleles or high school choral groups may fall within the bounds of *pengamen* performance. *Waria pengamen*, however, cultivate a performance aesthetic all their own. Looped, tinny strains of Western pop or local *dangdut* music blast from small handheld speakers or cell phones. This is often accompanied by the rhythmic clink of small, cheap tambourines with a single pair of zils. Sometimes working alone, but more often than not in small groups, *waria pengamen* weave through traffic or hug the very border of the street, moving in and out of businesses along pre-determined routes. Often in full glamour make-up and hair, *waria* who *ngamen* brave a sensory onslaught

[87] Kinesthesia can be considered as integral to perception, seen as not purely visual but active and multi-sensory (see for instance, Gibson 1979; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Lepecki 2000

[88] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others,* (Durham: Duke University Press), 2006, 21.

comprised of heat, horns, pollution and semi-paved roads in order to sing, dance, flirt, tell jokes, catch up with friends and dodge enemies, for hours and miles and very little pay.

The *pengamen* genre finds its genealogy closely entwined within that of many other presentational and participatory dance practices historically found throughout the archipelago. In Indonesia "presentational" denotes those dance practices performed by trained dancers and implies set choreography enacted by trained dancers who are accompanied by trained musicians for an audience (which may include guests at an event) that is distinct from the performers. Meanwhile participatory performances are those for which "there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles" and which often include improvisational movement (Turino 2008: 26). In his observations of dance events in West Java, ethnomusicologist Henry Spiller highlights how the boundaries between audience and performer can be flexible and formative. Spiller outlines an event featuring the *Sundanese* men's social dancing known as *ketuk tilu*. Spiller describes a temporary stage (with a roof but no walls) where:

> Several female performers dressed in brightly colored formal outfits sit on a bench at stage high, ready to dance with male spectators. For each *ketuk tilu* dance number, one, two, or three men mount the stage and dance, each with his own partner selected from among the female performers, to the accompaniment of the instrumentalists and a couple of seated singers. At times, some of the female dancers take turns singing.[89]

A similar scene accompanies dance practices in *Banyuwangi* see Wolbers: 1986) and *jaipongan* (Hellwig:1993) performances, a modern style of dancing based loosely on *ketuk tilu.* Spiller goes on to illustrate the tenets of the *Bajidoran* performance genre. Here the space below the high brightly lit stage:

> Becomes crowded with men dancing—alone, in couples,[and] in small groups. At times the emcee's amplified voice cuts through the din of the gamelan, calling out the name of a dancer. The man whose name has been called approaches the stage and selects his favorite female performer, who come to the

[89] Spiller, 2010,4

> edge of the stage. Once there, he gives her money in exchange for the opportunity to—hold hands and sway together.[90]

Financial exchange also features prominently in performances of *Ngremo Tayub*, a Central Javanese genre, performed by *tandhak* and discussed in chapter two. In that context, male guests "enter into the dance space at certain points in the dance, tipped the performers, requested a song, and danced with the professional dancers for the duration of that song" (Sunardi 2015:13). Although *Ngremo Tayub* is a presentational style dance, boundaries between audience and performer can still be porous, and here we see monetary exchange as the catalyst of that porosity. In her study of *tayuban* events in Yogyakarta and Central Java in the 1980s, Felicia Hughes-Freeland explains how groups of men take turns dancing with female performers known as *ledhek* performing the *gambyong* choreography. Outlining the financial possibilities offered within this genre and exchange, Hughes-Freeland describes how a dancer in 1989:

> [A dancer] can bring home as much as RP 30,000 for a night's work as a *ledhek* at a *tayuban*. Or else she can work as a *ledhek unyil*, serving drinks to men as they listen to music or while other girls dance. In the month of *Besar* which is auspicious for weddings, a popular *ledhek* can earn up to half a million rupiah (about 150 pounds). This is nearly three times the amount a middle-ranking civil servant earns in a month.[91]

While these genres outlined tend to be performed on fixed stages and/or in designated event spaces, the performance of *waria pengamen* know no such formality. They are in and of the street.

Pengamen Performance as Street performance

In metropolitan centers across Indonesia it is often difficult to demarcate the borders of pedestrian means of passage, and the street. Signals for pedestrian crossing are a rare sight. Instead, crossing the street becomes a practice of communal kinesthetic; a moving together that defies singularity in order to form a mass that can part a sea of traffic with outstretched hands. This is the environment in which *pengamen* performances take place. On the street, winding between cars and trucks stalled in traffic, *pengamen* approach vehicle windows, alight

[90] Ibid,5

[91] Felicia Hughes-Freeland 1990, 38

onto buses, or dip into the open-air food stalls that often border the street. Street performers offer their bodies to the common goal of the performative moment without the safety of an impermeable frame.

As an important element of urban conceptualization, the street functions as social space, commercial space, cultural space, as well as channels of movement and symbolic representation of local tradition and culture. Since street spaces comprise not only physical element but also the people who are moving, using, acting, and dancing within and around them, informal street activities emerge as an integral part of street life. This characteristic is endemic to most urban streets in South-east Asia. There is a long tradition within Western cultural theory that conceives of the "street" as the place for opposition, disruption, and protest. While *waria pengamen* do not necessarily express a position of opposition and/ or protest they do cultivate a genre that finds its means on and through the street.

In addition to my own ethnographic field, in this chapter I also turn to Tamara Shougalou's 2014 documentary *Waria Streets,* shot in and around Yogyakarta's *waria* community in 2012, offers numerous opportunities to engage the kinds of intimate social interactions and exchanges that constitute *waria pengamen*. *Waria Streets* juxtaposes scenes of *waria* working in the streets as *pengamen* with personal testimonies concerning their daily lives and sense of community developed in the act of walking and performing together. Shougalou's documentary opens with an encounter with Sean. As she walks up to a large yellow truck stalled in traffic she declares loudly, "Give me money darling. I'll kiss you if you don't" (*Waria Street*s, 2014). This in and of itself is no easy feat seeing that smaller vehicles such as motorbikes, *becaks,* and bicycles constantly weave their way around larger vehicles. As the viewer, one can barely see the figure inside the truck. We cannot read his response. However, before we see the completion of a transaction, Sean turns to the camera, shimmies a bit and waves with a full smile and tongue slightly sticking out. There is an awareness of the other audience, the potential audience behind the camera, that belies the awareness that *waria pengamen* always have of performing for multiple spectators, seen and unseen. And yet, it is the physical conditions of the street which ultimately shape the aesthetic choices of *waria pengamen.* In light of this entanglement one cannot define the genre without consideration of its relationship to rhetorics of the street and discourses of street performance.

Scenes such as this one from Shougalou's documentary, and my own ethnographic observations, situate these *waria pengamen* performance within the larger context of street performances. In her study of "radical street performance" performance theorist Jan Cohen Cruz parses the genre clarifying that:

> By radical I refer to acts that question or re-envision ingrained social arrangements of power. Street signals theatrics that take place in public by ways with minimal constraints on access. Performance here indicates expressive behavior intended for public viewing. It includes but is not limited to theatre, which typically keeps actors and spectators in their respective places through presentational conventions supporting a pre-set script. Radical street performance draws people who compromise a contested reality into what its creators hope will be a changing script[92]

My aim here is not to suggest that the performances *waria pengamen* produce have a singular and overt political stance in the same vein as the agitprop and protest performances outlined by Cruz. However, the performances of *waria pengamen* fall within the rubric of street performance in that they respond directly to events as they occur, bridging imagined and real actions and marking the site of performance as one of transformation so that space and time are more contiguous with everyday life. Where theatre typically transports the audience to a reality apart from the everyday, "radical street performance strives to transport everyday reality to something more ideal"[93] (Cruz 2010,1). *Waria pengamen* produce performances at the interstice of these two potentialities, at once disrupting and transforming the everyday while also manifesting the possibility for greater interactions along lines of class, gender, and sexuality. But what, in the case of this genre, comprises the ideal?

In producing performances intimately entwined with street *waria* enact a "conscious move out of cultural spaces in the

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[92] Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Radical Street performance: An International Anthology*,(Psychology Press),1998,1.

[93] Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Radical Street performance: An International Anthology*,(Psychology Press),1998,1.

strictest sense of the word" and through this movement "posit that society as a whole is culture—the site in which symbols and identity are forged, negotiated, and contested" (Diana Taylor, 1997:52). I argue that the "more ideal" here then is just this space of active identity formation that *pengamen* performances opens for *waria*, affording them the opportunity to contest commonly held public perceptions of *waria,* and therefore potentially transforming the reality of how *waria* are seen in public. The usual rhetoric of street performance configures the street as the gateway to the masses. But the impulse to perform in the street reflects more a desire for popular access than its sure manifestation. Like community, truly public space may be longed for but non-existent materially. [94]Space is always controlled by someone and exists somewhere, inevitably marked by a particular class, race, and gender and not equally accessible to everyone. *Waria* are materially aware of these markings and through the uniquely public and urban form of *pengamen* performance negotiate not only a desire for access, but also a desire to define the boundaries of their subjectivities.

Taking the argument for walking in the city further, Marc Auge (2009) interprets "place" as merely a collection of inanimate elements "coexisting in a certain order" (80). "Space" is brought into existence by a human body moving across and through this "place". Pedestrians transform a street into a space. Henri Lefebvre is credited with introducing the idea that space is socially produced, further delving into the role of the state in social homogenization. His analysis includes a historical reading of how spatial experience has changed over time depending upon social circumstances. In *The Production of Space,* Lefebvre contends that "abstract space"(the space of bureaucratic politics)is utilized and dominated by the capitalist system of production while simultaneously imposing and reinforcing social homogeneity. Lefebvre theorizes a tripartite production of space that exists in dialectical tension: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. "Spatial practice" describes the cohesive patterns and places of social activity. It can be perceived in the everyday acts of buying, playing, traveling, and laboring, as much as in the everyday spaces of the home, office, school, and streets. *Representational spaces* are those spaces that the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. Usually dominated by the other modes of spatial production, these are clandestine and underground spaces lived by artists

[94] see Benedict Anderson 1983

and others who seek to describe alternative spaces.

This triad helps clarify the social patterns that produce the abstract space of contemporary capitalism, which Lefebvre is seeking to move beyond. He outlines an idea of "differential space" that would dissolve the social relations of abstract space and generate new, heterogeneous relations that accentuate difference and "shatter the integrity of the individual body, the social body … and the corpus of knowledge"(Lefebvre, 36). While street performance is often interrogated as an appropriation of space, perhaps Lefebvre's notion of *detournement* may prove more generative. For Lefebvre an existing space may outlive its original purpose and the *raison d'etre* which determines its forms, functions, and structures. It may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, and put to a use quite different from its initial one. *Detournement* is best understood as something done with pre- existing buildings, streets, fields, neighborhoods or cities. Appropriation seems to imply a certain sense of dominance, the power to co-opt a thing. Detournement implies a working within. I would stretch this even further to say that *waria pengamen* are working in spaces that have not necessarily outlived their original purposes, but instead are changing at a rapid pace. Public space in Indonesia has shrunk as private enterprise has taken it over for commercial purposes. What gets called street performance spills beyond the physical street and into parks, *warungs*, and motorbike shops, each with their own clientele. The mobility of *pengamen* performances seeks out diverse audiences. And in this seeking, *pengamen* work, and the effusive responses it elicits, signals a desire on the part of performer an audience for a type of "diversion" from the everyday.

Strategies and Tactics of *Waria* Pengamen

Waria pengamen performances are, in many ways, an effect and reaction to urban space. Their mobile performances serve as tactics of critical exploration that contribute to re-imaginings of urban geographies and the relationship between space and place. De Certeau has made famous a contrast between "strategies" and "tactics" of navigating urban space (1984). A strategy is defined as relating to the already constructed, static, given place/structure. Tactics, on the other hand, are the practices of daily life that engage and manipulate this structure. While De Certeau theorizes tactics as *opposed* to strategies but not subordinate to them, the setting of strategy is always the purview of power. Strategy presumes

control. In contrast to strategy, De Certeau characterizes tactics as the purview of the non-powerful. He understands tactics not as a subset of strategy, but as an adaptation to the environment that has been created by the strategies of the powerful.

The inherent contradiction of strategy is that the control is never perfect and the situation upon which the strategy was constructed is always changing, which constantly makes aspects of the strategy obsolescent. The self-segregation of in-groups magnifies these myopic aspects of strategy, because the walls that keep others out also obscure their vision. Strategy becomes dangerously self-referential. Tactics, on the other hand, are actions in a constant state of reassessment and correction, based directly on observations of the actual environment. A tactic is an action that insinuates itself within the space of the other, worm its way into the territory of that which it seeks to subvert (rather than takeover or destroy entirely). It claims no space for itself, relying rather on time "it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized on the wing'" (De Certeau,36). In addition, the gains from its minute coups are always discarded, "whatever it wins, it does not keep" (38). Tactics take place in fissures created in the panoptic gaze, which portends to be austere, totalizing, and omniscient. For de Certeau, the ordinary citizens of a city live "below the thresholds at which visibility begins" (93). Where exactly do tactics take place? De Certeau makes it clear that tactic must "...make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected.It is a guileful ruse" (37).*Waria pengamen*, traversing large stretches of the urban landscape daily, dynamically enact the possibilities and limitations of the kinds of strategies and tactics that De Certeau envisions. And unlike presentational genres, one of the primary obstacles that these performers need to navigate is surveillance by the state.

Interventions by *waria* into the everydayness of commercial and transportation spaces, and what I proposed as the affective economies which emerge from these interventions, can be read as a mode of "*La perruque*". To illustrate the aforementioned definition of "the tactic", De Certeau introduces us to "*la perruque*. La *perruque* is the worker's own work being performed at the place of employment under the disguise of work for the boss. Nothing of value is stolen.

Instead what is taken advantage of is time(De Certeau, 25). De Certeau further clarifies that *la perruque*" differs from absenteeism in that the worker is officially on the job.

This kind of intervention was well illustrated when about halfway through our day, Sean and I enter a large open-air eatery. In an unexpected shifting of roles, Sean moves towards a table and begins to perform on one side but then she moves towards the kitchen, located at the entrance, enters, and begins bringing out plates of food for people. When Sean takes on the role of hostess and waitress at this local *warung,* the easing from one type of labor to another provides a cover from state surveillance and regulation implemented through the anti-busking law. The labor of performance and the performance of labor bleed into one another, but also demonstrates the porosity of *pengamen* performance to the continually generated sense of the collective and the swell of affect, such porosity mobilizes.

Histories of Arts Upgrading and the *Waria* Present

In order to understand the current antagonisms against *waria pengamen,* we need to interrogate the state policies and practices that have defined the contemporary moment. Practices of "upgrading" and discourses surrounding pornography have both set the stage for public association of the *pengamen* genre, especially as enacted through *waria*, with vagrancy and prostitution. The performing arts and other forms of cultural expression have held a place central to Indonesian political life since the founding of the contemporary nation state. In fact, in her essay, "A New Artistic Order," Jennifer Lindsay (2012) documents the many delegations, comprised of dancers and musicians, that were sent overseas by President Sukarno's government in the 1950s and early 1960s, as an expression of "national confidence and pride", (195). Culling together what would fall within the boundaries of a new "national" culture for the fledgling postcolonial state was a common focus among state officials, political organizers, intellectuals, writers, and artists—all competing to promote their respective versions of the nation and its culture. Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia (1949-1965), created an atmosphere, that continues today, in which "local performing arts with roots going back generations have been valued as cultural capital, not only for the particular locale, but for the nation itself" (Sutton, 1998: 3). Sukarno sought a cultural arts policy to bring these forms to the fore and to modernize them for national gain. During the Suharto administration (1967-98), these policies intensified. President Suharto's New Order government took power after his

1965 coup and instituted a nation-wide program of top-down social and liberal economic development.

During this period, cultural activity writ large became, as Philip Yampolsky (1995) so aptly puts it, a site of centralized control and cultivation by the state. The arts, meant to represent the locale and empower the national under both presidents, were those that constituted the "peaks of regional culture" (704-05). Since ethnicity is generally not acknowledged by the Indonesian government, in this instance and others, 'regional' often serves as a euphemism for 'ethnic'. Nevertheless, regional performing arts are those linked by history, language, or culture to a particular region (*daerah*) of Indonesia. Regional forms, representing the cultural worlds of the rural-based majority population of Indonesia, were nurtured, developed and 'upgraded' in a process of conformity and "sanitization". Philip Yampolsky provides an excellent overview to the national policies, their often- conflicting philosophies, and the actions of the primary ministry involved—the Education and Culture Department (*Depdikbud)*. He asserts that *Depdikbud* sought to upgrade forms to be "neat and orderly, disciplined, inoffensive, attractive or impressive to look at, pleasant to listen to." The policies favored the urban over the rural in crafting an "aesthetic of respectability" that featured "fancy costumes, elaborate production values, professionalism, variety in programming," and modern, well-tuned instruments (712).

Virtually all regions of Indonesia were required to implement national arts policies during President Suharto's lengthy administration (1967-98), and the vast majority had to "uncover" and "cultivate" the performing arts to advance national agendas and achieve an acknowledged national quality. These "traditional" performance forms were seen to instill values supportive of the development project, such as self-reliance, dedication, simplicity, and orderliness. In this context, "traditional" connotes historicity but also the ideological project of reconstructing an idealized pre-colonial past. Respectability in the form of seemliness and propriety, frequently demanded in the name of an idealized traditional past, was the essence of the notion of upgrading artistic quality.

The fundamental premise underlying *Depdikbud's* upgrading programs is that there is something wrong with the arts as

they stand, and usually what is wrong is that they are too rough, too crude: not respectable. The thrust, according to Yampolsky was to control the political content, control the moral content, and upgrade the artistic quality. Unruly, unseemly, elements of performances, out of keeping with these lofty social goals, were suppressed and eliminated in support of a new idealized construction of Indonesian citizenship. Strategies undertaken throughout much of the country included registering performers, taking inventories, providing financial assistance to select groups, and staging revivals, festivals, and competitions while monitoring the contents. Ultimately these changes led to a sense of safe apolitical expression to regional arts practices within the newly unified nation.

With regard to moral content, the government was concerned that the arts not give offense to any of the five official religions of Indonesia, particularly to Islam; and that they not condone or be directly associated with activities that are considered immoral (gambling, drunkenness, prostitution, sexual forwardness). *Depdikbud's* unacknowledged operating principle is that urban is more respectable than rural, and hence performances that exhibit 'urban' standards - such as fancy costumes, elaborate production values, professionalism, variety in programming, and modern (usually Western) instruments - are more respectable than those that do not. Participatory genres like those discussed earlier, genres such as the Central and East Javanese *tayuban*, or other similar dance-party genres (such as *gandrung* in Banyuwangi), where the guests often get drunk and try to embrace the professional dancing-women, are thus prime candidates for the moral equivalent of upgrading. The anthropologist Amrih Widodo (1995) documents local *Depdikbud* efforts to discourage drinking at *tayuban*, to impose an abbreviated performance-length (giving the guests less time to get drunk).

These upgrading campaigns have had uneven results. Barbara Hatley (1990) reports that a sanitized *Reyog* is now being performed in *Ponorogo*, with female dancers instead of the pretty young men of the traditional form - but only for official visits. However, there have also been some unintended outcomes that evidence the myriad of ways that participants experience, interpret and respond to a hegemonic discourse of national respectability. Consider one of the great successes of the drive for respectability, the Sundanese *jaipongan* (Henry Spiller, 2010) dance. This was expressly created to provide an alternative to disreputable dance genres too

closely allied with prostitution and vulgar sexuality, however, *jaipongan* became so popular that a reclaimed, re-vulgarized version soon appeared among the urban poor. These kinds of inversions, also become tactics in the contest to determine and define national culture.

The Contemporary Political Landscape in Relation to Street Performance

Today performances in Indonesia take place under greatly changed social and political conditions. In 1998 Indonesia initiated the age of *Reformasi*—the reform movement that ousted president Suharto from power—with its implementation of an electoral democracy, the removal of restriction on political parties and activities and call for an independent media. The introduction of autonomous regional political systems, described as "one of the most radical decentralization programs attempted anywhere in the world" has seen the devolution of power from a highly centralized, authoritarian regime to district level parliaments and governments (Aspinall and Fealy,2003: 3). In this context funding and regulations, therefore cultivation, of the arts are determined at the local level. Without a central authoritarian state prescribing ideological values towards the construction of a national identity and the promotion of this ideology through tight cultural control, the shift to regional autonomy has laid the groundwork for a focus on local cultural distinction. In the post-Suharto cultural landscape of "reform" diverse local interests vie for political power, and a plethora of social identities—ethnic, religions, territorial, sexual, gendered—are asserted and contested with renewed vigor in the public sphere of performance.

Conditions vary across the archipelago, however, and the decentralization of the *Reformasi* era has led to new forms of control rendered onto artistic practices. These come not necessarily from a centralized state apparatus, but from regional authorities and their negotiation of local social, economic, and political concerns. I found it perplexing when older *waria* interlocutors would express a sense of nostalgia or longing for Suharto's New Order. Yet there is a pervasive sense of precarity that accompanies the loss of a stronghold central government (bolstered by said government's mass campaign of cultural forgetting concerning the violence shrouding its own rise to power) and contemporary re-imaginings of what constitutes the authentically Indonesian. Many scholars of music, theatre, and dance in Indonesia are of

the opinion that, in contrast to the New Order, there is currently no clear pattern of political and social organization that shapes expression in the performing arts. However, this approach of decentralization and deregulation can also be traced back to the global rise of neoliberal economic and political doctrine. If we stay attentive to how these modes of political engagement similarly inform cultural phenomenon, then we can begin to note the ways in which these practices call for the creation of new subjects and new performance practices. In its cultural mode this moment characterizes a transfer of ideas about the primacy of markets and competition from economic to social life. Post-Authoritarian Indonesia can be considered a neoliberal regime, albeit one which retains many authoritarian and oligarchic characteristics. This is in keeping with the practice, if not always the ideology that Harvey argues is fundamentally a strategy for the reassertion and consolidation of class power. The decay of the New Order did see the rise of flexible and fluid consumer identities and lifestyles, although these remain contested. Indonesian society—culture, politics, an economy—has become increasingly global and cosmopolitan, yet is also shaped by a sense of constant crisis, risk and precariousness. The experience of neoliberalism in Indonesia does not support a straightforward liberal narrative of democratization and marketization, but varied cultural, political and economic processes of liberalization can be identified, including the rise of a new culture industry.

As the Indonesian government refashions itself in favor of neoliberal economic policies, what constitutes precarious labor, too, has been continually remodeled. While *pengamen* performances take place across regions and islands, historically the city of Yogyakarta, the site of Shougalou's documentary, has a thriving *pengamen* culture. Since the late 1960s Yogyakarta persists as one of the core regions of tourism and development in Indonesia. As a result, *Yogyanese* cultural assets have come to represent some of the dominant imagery of Indonesia in international and domestic markets. In contemporary Yogyakarta's tightly controlled tourist-geared economy *pengamen* performances by *waria* communities now constitute a publicly negotiated field that marks the boundaries of surplus affect and labor. Simultaneously these performances demarcate a sense of the public that is, in Michael Warner's terms, a "poetic world-making" (2002). In the wake of the 1998 economic crisis, in which the Indonesian government agreed to privatize state-owned enterprises as a condition of the International Monetary Fund's $40 billion

bailout, one sees the rise of flexible and fluid consumer identities as consumer-driven lifestyles proliferate throughout the archipelago. Culture, politics, and the economy have become increasingly global and cosmopolitan, yet are also shaped by a sense of constant crisis, risk, and precarity of late capitalism. *Pengamen* work transforms the affective and embodied meanings of walking on the street, making eye contact, and of entering spaces by everyone involved with or without consent and thus transforms *waria* into an affect, an ontology and an epistemology of being on the street.

Criminalizing the Public Body

For *waria* the experience of abstract space begins with their historical association with prostitution. Public space for *waria* is the space of commerce of their bodies so that in urban spaces the mere emergence of their bodies in public associates them with discourses of sex-work. In post-independence Indonesia "*waria*" existed in relation to visible prostitution which echoes other contemporaneous accounts of the emergence of urban homosexual subcultures elsewhere (Weeks 1981). For example, a popular account of *waria* in Jakarta written by the journalist Kemala Atmojo (1987) includes first-hand accounts from *waria* born in the 1920s. They recalled the historical presence of *waria* sex workers in the city, especially in front of the Hotel Indonesia in the late 1950s (ibid,17-18). The first mention of "*waria*" in the national mass media in Indonesia is an article published by popular Jakarta-based weekly magazine *Siasat* in 1951. *Siasat* defines "*waria aktief* (active *waria*)" or *homosexuelen* (homosexuals) as older, gender normative, Dutch men who pay for sex and feminine "*bantji passief (*passive *waria)"* as younger, poor Indonesian who are paid for sex.

Foreshadowing a discourse that became firmly established in later decades, most *"waria"* are Indonesian, and they are laboring under a genuine understanding that they are women, and can thus be distinguished from Western "homosexuals" on that basis. Two figures in feminine dress, their hands tentatively tucked behind them, accompany the article. Under the photograph a caption reads "*Dua orang tjontoh orang waria* "Two examples of *waria*". Echoing elderly *waria*'s descriptions of the 1950s as a decade characterized by negative attitudes, the caption sensational warns " *Waspadalah kale menjumpadi"* "Be careful if they approach you" (*Siasat,1951)*. The central focus of the story is a group of eight "*waria*" detained in the context of sex work in an affluent suburb of Jakarta. Unlike in later decades, having "a woman's soul" is not introduced as

grounds for a degree of tolerance or acceptance. The main concern of the article is not the fact that they are prostituting themselves, or having sex with men (although both are certainly moral and legal transgressions of the time), but that the "*waria*" has "deceived (*menipu)"* men due to the fact that they are wearing women's clothes (Ibid). This combination of deception and moral transgression lingers into today with how *waria pengamen* are received.

In a popular book written in the early 1960s, Islamic scholar Buya Hamka(1981) condemned *waria* on the basis of their equivalence with European homosexuality.[95] Of particularly grave concern was their visibility, how they were "prostituting themselves in full view of passing traffic (*melacurkan diri hadapan mata orang yang lulu lintas)*(Ibid., 270-271). In the context of the state expertise to define gender normativity as discussed in chapter one, it is no surprise that unruly "*waria*" drew the interest and ire of state officials and media, who deployed a variety of Western psychological and medical terms in attempts to both explain and contain them. Government support of *waria* organizations rose out of this entanglement of a concern for morality and a will to monitor. The Jakarta Governor Sadikikin implored that "every citizen should help to overcome the problem [of *waria*] (menanggulangi masalah itu)" (Kompas 1968). In 1969 Jakarta's chief of police shared his concern for *waria*'s relationship to visible prostitution. He explained: "they create an unpleasant view (*pemandangan yang tidal baik*), especially for foreign guests" (*Kompas,* 1969). The definition of gender normative masculinity and femininity condensed a range of anxieties as state officials and psychologist expressed concern for the lower classes as particularly impressionable to moral deviation. As Hegerty argues, the newfound visibility of *waria* in the 1960s was more commonly considered a problem of class-related anxieties about social order rather than one of inclusion (Hegerty, 43). In this way, early interest in *waria* on the part of the state can be seen to reflect a broader campaign, influenced by both local religious leaders and foreign political powers seeking to install middle class values amidst a growing "underclass" (Simone 2014, 38) of which *waria* were a part. State officials and psychologist

[95] The abridged version I cite here was published in 1981 but contains contents from the original version [1975]. References from the text indicate that this passage refers to Hamka's observations in the late 1960s.

expressed concern for the lower classes as particularly impressionable to moral deviation, bolstering such arguments with Western theories of deviance.[96]

In the last decade, *waria* have experienced relatively high levels of freedom to display particular repertoires of gender and experiment with public appearance and behavior. Within the first decade of the Twenty-First Century political events have led to a constriction of such performances. In October 30th, 2008, Indonesia's parliament passed the Anti-Pornography Bill, ratified the following November as Law No. 44 2008 on Pornography (Pausacker, 2008). Article 1 of the law states that:

> Pornography is pictures, sketches, illustrations, photos, writing, voice, sound, moving pictures, animation , cartoon, conversation, movements of the body, or other forms through a variety of communication media and/or performances in public which contain obscenity or sexual exploitations which violates the moral norms of society.[97]

The law carries a penalty of up to 15 years imprisonment or a fine of up to Rp750 million for actions that may include "erotic" dancing in public and public nudity, such as "showing the thighs and the navel". The passage of law caused widespread outrage and protest from female performers across the archipelago. In particular, practitioners of a wide array of traditional genres felt their practices were in particular threat due to costumes that feature body-hugging dresses and bare shoulder. As *waria* move through the city, more often than not, they do so in short skirts or tight pants and shoulder baring tops, clothing frequently combined with "sexy" makeup (bright red or pink lipstick, heavy eyeliner, and false lashes) and overtly flirtatious behavior as they dance and sing, blurring the line of what's considered "erotic" in public. With this legislation becoming official, *waria* felt increasingly at risk, with many revealing to me that they gave-up working as *pengamen* altogether for a year or two.

The 1999 fall of the Suharto regime (and its accompanying "New

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[96] for more on class and discourses of deviance see Susan Schweik, 2009

[97] *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2008 Tentang Pornografi.* full text downloadable from http://www.indonesia.go.id, 2008.

Order") catalyzed Indonesia's political shift into *Reformasi*. *Reformasi* simultaneously refers to political changes in the form of increasing democratic governance and economic changes in the form of greater transparency, free markets, and merit (rather than patronage) based systems of competition, compensation, and promotion. Daromir Rudnyckyj(2009), proposes that *Reformasi* is not so much a matter of structural political and economic change "as a matter of individual ethical and moral reform"(107). This question of how to shape a new moral citizenry exploded into the national imaginary with the FPI influenced introduction of Indonesia's 2006 Anti-Pornography Bill (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Antipornografi dan Pornoaski,* known in Indonesia as RUU APP). The February 2006 draft of the bill covered both pornography and what the lawmakers called "pornoaction". It defines pornography as "a substance in the media or a tool of communication that is made for the purpose of conveying concepts that exploit sex, obscenity and/or erotica" and pornoaction as " an action, in public, that exploits sex, obscenity, and/or erotica".[98] The bill caused considerable concern for many in the *waria* community because of its broad definition of what constitutes pornography. While the bill all but eliminates sex-work as a plausible means of economic survival, it also targets *pengamen* work.

Within this new legislative reality, the affective and aesthetic economy of street performance is not undertaken without risk. *Waria pengamen* often work through a performance aesthetic that makes full use of a hyper-sexualized presentation of the feminine. Young *waria* in particular are prone to tight flashy outfits accompanied by full glamor make-up. Performing in outdoor eateries, parks, on public transportation and sidewalks, street performers roll their hips, shimmy and lip-sing to fast-paced pop music or heartfelt ballads. The final draft of the bill that passed into law in 2008 interestingly focuses on the arousal of public desire. It thus encourages the (male)viewer to see female presenting bodies and behaviors as sources and sites of obscenity and loci of "pornoaction".

[98] *Rumusan hasil seminar pembahasan Rancangan Undang-Undang Antipornografi dan Pornoaksi (RUU APP) dari perspektif budaya, hukum dan seksologi. Denpasar: Universitas Udayana.* 21 February 2006

This dramatically expands the initial definition of the pornographic from media to behavior. A cornerstone of *waria* street performance lies in the interaction between male viewers and *waria. Waria* will often target male viewers through flirtation, establishing a delicate dance of desire and disavowal. The law gives members of the public an explicit enforcement role, encouraging individuals to prevent the production, distribution, and use of pornography. This enforcement role implies that the criteria for establishing what constitutes pornography are purely objective. Local councils have implemented laws banning prostitution so that "anyone who by virtue of their suspicious attitude or behavior creates the impression that he/ she/ they are prostitutes are forbidden from being in public streets, squares, places of accommodation hotels, boarding houses, rental accommodation, coffee shots, places of entertainment, performance venues, street corners, or alleys". Such laws, and their local interpretations and manifestations, effectively criminalize not only the performances of *waria* street performers but their very embodiment, delimiting the enfolding of their bodies into the world.

Regulating the Street

The informal activities that comprise street culture play a significant role as an integral part of urban culture and image. Who and what comprise a sense of the "good" urban is highly regulated by legacies of class, race, gender, and ability. The contextual relationship and interaction between people and the built environment emphasize this significant ambience and the role of informal street activities in the current urban design approach. Informal street activities have a significant role in enhancing diversity in the use of street, activating public life and increasing attractiveness. Despite these positive attributes, these informal activities are seen to be one major obstacle in the process of managing urban spaces by local authorities because of the inherent issues of conflicting occupation of public urban spaces that result in the hindering of pedestrian and vehicular movements, decreasing sidewalks space and more often, general cleanliness of the urban environment. Urban design solutions are formulated to exploit all possibilities to conserve the informal street activities as significant attributes in enhancing the richness and the complexity of the street and at the same time try to resolve the problems that arose in managing the conflicts and issues pertaining to these activities and the spaces they occupied.

One sees the concern for the lower classes as particularly

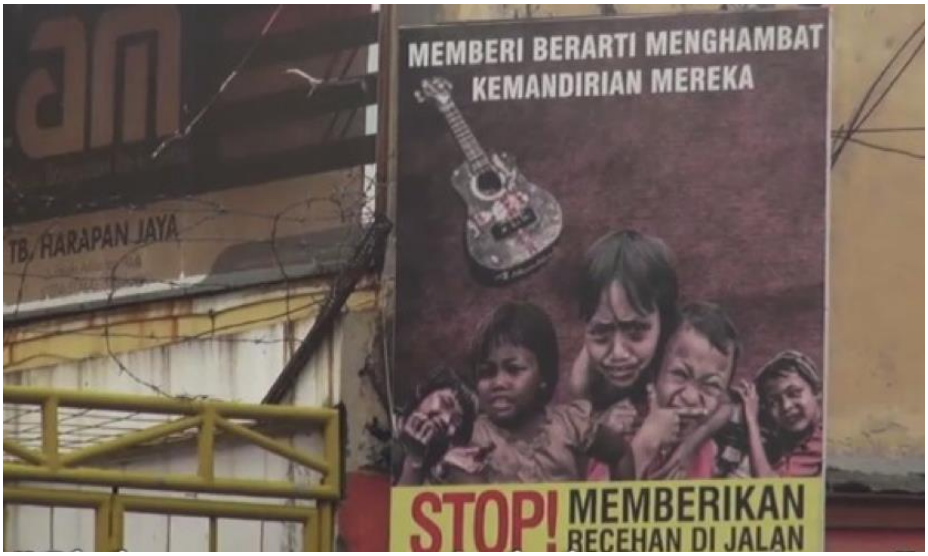
impressionable to moral deviation continuing into the Twenty-first Century with adoptions of theories of deviance in the form of vagrancy laws. Since the late 1960s the city of Yogyakarta has been considered one of the core regions of tourism and development in Indonesia so that 'Yogyanese' cultural assets have come to represent some of the dominant imagery of Indonesia in international and domestic markets. As the Indonesian government refashions itself in favor of neoliberal economic policies, what constitutes precarious labor, too, has been continually remodeled. In contemporary Yogyakarta's tightly controlled tourist-geared economy *pengamen* or "street performance" now constitutes a publicly negotiated field that marks the boundaries of surplus affect and labor. *Pengamen* work, a performative genre transforms the affective and embodied meanings of walking on the street, making eye contact, and of entering spaces by everyone involved with or without consent. *Pengamen* work brings up the limits of the law and for whom the law works. For Marx, individuals are contingent on what they produce and how they produce, so that the nature of individuals depends upon the material conditions determining their production. We are made in our labor, produced and reproduced by the work that we do.

As the Indonesian state continues to encourage social and economic life to unfold in the private sphere, the differences between being hired to perform in the enclosed privatized space of the mall or club (as discussed in chapter four) versus walking the streets and performing within the semi-public space of outdoor eateries and businesses grafts itself onto *waria* entertainers with an innate valuation. The state apparatus affectively devalues the sense of "*waria*" produced within the genre of street performance. If the accumulation of affective value shapes the surface of bodies and worlds, proposes, then the move away from *pengamen* performance can be seen to support the construction of a new *waria* disassociated from the street and its connections with prostitution, vagrancy, trash, and pre-modernity. However, this is a move that will simultaneously disenfranchise and marginalize those that don't or can't "upgrade" their practice. Ultimately leaving them beholden to discourses that disavow their practices not only what *waria* "do" but also how they are seen to exist in the world.

Legislating *Pengamen*

The last fifteen years have seen the rise of flexible and fluid consumer identities and lifestyles within Indonesia.

Indonesian society, culture, politics, and economy—have become increasingly global and cosmopolitan, yet they are also shaped by a sense of constant crisis, risk and precariousness. The experience of neoliberalism in Indonesia does not support a straightforward liberal narrative of democratization and marketization. Instead varied cultural, political and economic processes of liberalization exist simultaneously, including the rise of a neoliberal culture industry fueled by tourism. While the anti- pornography law was instituted as a national regulation the legislation in Yogyakarta falls under the category of a PERDA. PERDA is an acronym that stands for *Peraturan Daerah* or "Indonesian Regional Regulation". These are a new category of legislation implemented under the Regional Autonomy Laws in the post-Suharto decentralization effort. Jennifer Lindsay notes the restrictive implications of regional regulations often introduced as the behest of tourist driven economies for non- normative arts activities across the archipelago. In 2015 the city of Yogyakarta officially implemented one such PERDA. Officially the legislation is titled *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Nomor Satu Tahun 2014 Tentang Penganganan Gelandangan Dan Pengemis* or "The Yogyakarta Regional Regulation No. 1 Year 2014 on Handling of Vagrants and Beggars". Couched in the language of welfare for "street youth" and "beggars" the law, as put into effect on the ground, disproportionately singles out *waria pengamen* for surveillance. As a part of the public campaign for the PERDA, billboards began appearing around the city of Yogyakarta featuring dirty undernourished children, huddled together while a beat-up guitar looms ominously over them.



(Figure 3.2: Signs in Yogyakarta read Memberi Berarti Menghambat Kemandirian Mereka. STOP! Memberikan Recehan di jalan! "Giving Prevents Their Independence. STOP! Giving Spare Change In The Streets")

Although couched in the language of welfare for "street youth" and "beggars" the law as put into effect on the ground, is disproportionately singles out *waria pengamen* for surveillance. While the act of walking for DeCerteau is theorized as a way to dodge the panoptic eye, the *waria* body is subject to ever increasing modes of public surveillance. Within the language of the law those targeted "are people who live in conditions that do not suit the decent life within the local society and do not possess a residence and a job in a specific area and stray in public places…and whose lives are moving about in public places." This language, at once vague and prescriptive signals a slide between affective and moral economies, where feelings participate in making things "good" or "bad". Taking a moment to look more closely at the language of the law, we see the use of *Gelandangan* and *Pengemis*, terms which translate to "vagrant" and "beggar" respectively. The word *pengamen* (busker) does not show up in either the legislation or the accompanying document which acts as an explainer for the legislation. As detailed in the legislation:

CHAPTER II
CRITERIA OF VAGRANTS AND BEGGARS

BAB II
KRITERIA GELANDANGAN DAN PENGEMIS

Article 5
Vagrants are people with the criteria of inter alia:
A. Without card of identification (KTP);
B. Without a permanent residence;
C. Without a means of income; and/or
D. Without a certain future plan for self and his children.

Pasal 5
Gelandangan aclalah orang-orang dengan kriteria antara lain:
A. tanpa Kartu Tancla Penduduk (KTP);
B. tanpa tempat tinggal yang pasti/tetap;
C. tanpa penghasilan yang tetap; clan/ atau
D. tanpa rencana hari depan anak-anaknya maupun clirinya.

Article 6
Beggars are people with the criteria of inter alia:
A. Whose means of support depends on charity of other people;
B. Dressed in a shabby, tattered, and insufficient manners;

C. Dwelling in public places;
D. and/or manipulate others to stimulate charity from other people.

Pasal 6
Pengemis adalah orang-orang dengan kriteria, antara lain:
A. mata pencariannya tergantung pada belas kasihan orang lain;
B. berpakaian kumuh, compang camping dan tidak sewajarnya;
C. berada ditempat-tempat umum;
D. clan/ataumemperalat sesama untuk merangsang belas kasihan orang lain.[99]

The PERDA in Yogyakarta is opaque in that it is difficult to tell if the true goal is the wholesale exclusion of particular persons from the public sphere or simply "care" for those bodies. The language of the ordinance (including its discursive circulation) vacillates between the extreme prohibition of certain subjects from being on the street rather than the (perhaps) more moderate prohibition of certain behavior on the street. One question we can ask is if the law targets *(waria) pengamen* as status or a set of behaviors? Legal scholar Melissa Cole Essig offers important interdisciplinary work at the intersection of transgender theory and disability studies is particularly useful in understanding the impact of these discursive difference. Essig argues that:

> the obligation to hide the very thing that might constitute oneself as 'diseased' or 'maimed', and the prohibition of all conduct such as limping or crawling that might identity one as 'deformed' were no less discriminatory than laws that directly target disability as a status rather than a set of behaviors[100]

The use of *pengemis* and *gelandangan* provide the key for understanding not only the impetus behind the law, but also the contested measures by which it has been put into effect. Ultimately, I argue that *waria* are disproportionately targeted by this law because *waria* as an identity catalyzes the elision

[99] Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Nomor Satu Tahun 2014 Tentang Penganganan Gelandangan Dan Pengemis. Full text downloadable from https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/25699

[100] Melissa Cole Essig, "Deviance and disability in the law", 126

of *pengamen* (busker) into *pengemis* (beggar), by way of a perceived proximity with status as *gelandangan* (vagrant). In a way this legislation marks a type of critical theorizing at the intersections of Trans and disability scholarship, where Trans gets read *as* disability under the law, as an (in)ability to live in another way.

Importantly, Shougalou's *Waria Streets* documentary captures the moment this PERDA emerges into public discourse in Yogyakarta. Towards the end of the documentary Shougalou captures one of many town halls held in a local ombudsman's office to discuss the pending law. *Waria* and other street artists who *ngamen* gather to publicly address their concerns. Mama Vinu, a prominent *waria* activist in the local NGO scene attempts to clarify that "what they understand about *pengamen* is all wrong. What they see are fake beggars. People that can work but choose to be beggars. That's their view because they have been to school and to university. While for us everything is lacking. No money, no skills, no connections. Our fate is completely fucked" (*Waria Streets*, 2014). Once again, we see the centrality of discourses concerning labor. None of the billboards or posters around Yogyakarta feature images of *waria* or other healthy, adult *pengamen*. These images clearly draw a connection between busking and poor disadvantaged youth. It is unclear, however, what exactly *Ibu* Vera attempts to argue. Do "they" fail to understand that *waria pengamen* are real beggars, lacking money, skills, connections, education, and therefore the opportunity to participate in *real* work? Or do "they" fail to understand that *waria pengamen* are neither fake nor real beggars but indeed fulfilling some other social and cultural function that the state refuses to acknowledge? Ibu Vera's statement is indicative of larger tensions within the community concerning what it means to define "*waria*" in relation to the street. *Pengamen* work brings up the limits of the law, for whom the law works. I argue that it regulates not only the boundaries of art but also who is allowed to occupy the public sphere.

I want to direct our attention to one final point within the law:

CHAPTER I
GENERAL
PROVISIONS
Article 3
Treatment of vagrants and beggars aims to:
A. Prevent the occurrence of vagrancy and begging;

B. Empower vagrants and beggars;
C. Return vagrants and beggars to a dignified life; and
D. Create public order.

Pasal 3
Penanganan gelandangan clan pengemis bertujuan untuk:
A. mencegah terjaclinya pergelandangan dan pengemisan;
B. memberdayakan gelandangan clan pengemis;
C. mengembalikan gelandangan dan pengemis clalam kehiclupan yang bermartabat;
D. clanmenciptakan ketertiban umurn.[101]

The final two points here provide further keys in dissecting the work of the PERDA. Here the phrase "return to a dignified life" stands out. The shift from the language of the law (that targets beggars and vagrants) to the enactment of the law (that disproportionately targets *waria* buskers) is predicated on the concomitant construction of the *waria* and the vagrant.

Ultimately *waria pengamen* are seen as undignified in the eyes of the law. The law cannot see the relationship between *waria* and *pengamen* work as anything other than abject, or to borrow from Lauren Berlant (2011), as anything other than a "cruelly optimistic" relationship to labor and the self. *Pengamen* work has become a compromised condition of the possibility of being in light of the two-fold blow of the anti-pornography and anti- busking legislation in conjunction with increased anti-LGQBTIA rhetoric and their calls to "create public order" through regulations of proximity and desire. Both legislative acts set the stage for public perception of the *waria pengamen* genre and the *waria* subjects who enact it. The state, in its objective to create the conditions of what it deems "a good life" fundamentally misunderstands how *pengamen* work could ever be understood as good. These laws then regulate not only who is allowed to occupy the public sphere but the aesthetic boundaries of public performance practice—what counts as "good" performance. Association with the pengamen genre, as determined through this legislation, elucidates how the genre shapes public perception of *waria*. Thus, pengamen work exposes the limits of the law as it reveals for whom the law works.

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[101] *Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Nomor Satu Tahun 2014 Tentang Penganganan Gelandangan Dan Pengemis. full text downloadable from* https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/25699

Performance as Resistance

By continuing to perform as *pengamen* in resistance to the PERDA, *waria* use *pengamen* performance as a means to negotiate public perception of national culture. *Waria* radically rework the spatial relation between audience and performer by way of *pengamen* performances. De Certeau problematizes framings of space as some type of static exteriority against which resistance can be constituted. For De Certeau space is neither fixed nor stable. De Certeau creates a dialogue between the institutional structures in charge of planning/administering urban public space and the everyday users of that space. *Practice* thus contrasts the experience of a city from above the ground versus an experience of the city when enmeshed in the streets themselves. Ultimately De Certeau criticizes what can be seen as the "top-down" view held by public officials who neglect the small dynamics that bring life to the city. This binary dynamic may contribute to an understanding of space as an immutable container whose proper meaning/form manifests only within the framework of institutional structures, implying that there is a pre-given structure and intention for urban space that decides its use and function. The tension found between a conceptualization of urban space as neither fixed nor stable and an acknowledgement of how disciplinary powers are infusing society with their grid of control more and more extensively. His question is how an entire society can "manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them"(xiv) De Certeau is interested with what devices, actions, and procedures people use every day on the micro level in order to subvert, for brief moments, the disciplining powers. The myriad ways in which power structures urban space from the top down produces a mode of political thinking which continually works to uncover and produce urban meaning. While performance can be seen as a negotiation and navigation of space as closed or as a given, *pengamen* work emphasize the becoming public of space through a multiplicity of actions, relations and performances that open up possibilities of a new relations and forms that are not already authorized.

In the documentary, *Waria Streets,* Mama Tata clarifies for the council that:

> This grouping of vagrants and beggars with *pengamen*, this is what we as *pengamen* are against. Because we have roofs over our heads. We have professions. We work you know. As *waria* we make ourselves pretty so that they are interested. Even if I sing with only a bottle cap as an

> instrument, I still sing in tune. And if we can't sing, we say something that entertains people. If they enjoy my performance they will pay.[102]

Here Mama Tata insists on the social value of *pengamen* work, specifically as cultural labor that enriches the lives of those they encounter and of the city itself. The fight to keep *pengamen* work legal and viable can be seen as an attachment not just to a financial space. In a public address the governor of the Special District of Yogyakarta situates the arts as "a site of interaction between traditional, local, and modern global cultures where performers[are]the protectors of the conscience of society".[103] This echoes Suharto's rhetoric, implying a need to contain and hegemonic control artistic practice because art reflects and influences the great moral status of a society.Therefore, the state, whether in the form of central or local government, takes on the role of protector despite what that may mean for the "protected". Speeches such as these often cite the vital importance of maintaining local culture in the face of an all-consuming globalization. But what we also see here (when framed by the new law) is a covert semantic slippage into the regulation of proximities.

While visibility cannot always be equated with freedom, there is a freedom in the visibility of *pengamen* work coupled with an attachment to other senses of the possibilities of being and being with others. The debates around the PERDA are not only an attempt to speak back to the state and define *waria*, but also to define the art they produce as art. To mark out *pengamen* performances in general, and performances by *waria* in particular, as artistic practice then stakes a claim to inclusion in the wider legacy of Indonesian performance. To claim *pengamen* work as art and therefore *waria* as artists is not merely a matter of semantics, but one of self-fashioning and survival.

Mama Ruli, an older *waria* activist and artist, attempts to draw out these historical connections for those present at the meeting. "If implemented this law will change the way of life of our community where the majority work as *pengamen*. As for the facts, *Waria* and their profession dates back to a long

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[102] Transcribed from the documentary short *Waria Streets*, dir. Tamara Shogaolu, 2015.

[103] Bambang Muryanto and Yuliasri Perdani, " Yogyakarta Divesity in Peril" *The Jakarta Post*. May 31,2014.

time ago. Long before our generation *waria* were already buskers. And from the start I have seen myself as an artist because I graduated from an art academy". Mama Tata clarifies for the council that "*waria* and other buskers get dressed up at home. This is a selling point. A proper selling point, right? Right? So, this falls under entertainment. So, it doesn't matter if they use a tool or not. They just say, 'excuse me sir, I am a woman from hell', for example. They will laugh, that is entertainment. The man will say here I give you something. That is already an art form so the definition of art is not so narrow". Mama Tata stands out as a prominent voice at the meeting. She positions herself as living in a community of *waria* that mostly work as *pengamen* and asserts their refusal "to have *pengamen* categorized as vagrants and beggars in this council regulation of Yogyakarta. With reason the work of *pengamen* is categorized as artistic work". Again, here we have two desires at play: a desire to prevent the collapse of *pengamen*, and specifically "*waria pengamen*", with the troubled category of "vagrants and beggars". Secondly, we have the desire for public acknowledgment of the artistry and labor behind the work of *waria pengamen*.

One can read this language, in part, as a haunting of the Suharto era (in which Mama Tata would have come of age) which so heavily emphasized the importance of being useful in society. In the New Order, citizenship was construed as an active, performative process and practice. Not as a static category of membership. These practices were known as *prestasis*.[104]The term bears colonial traces; it derives from the Dutch *prestasis,* a noun meaning "achievement" or "feat"; the verb form of which can mean "achieve" and "perform". In standard Indonesian, *prestasis* means both to achieve and to perform. *Prestasis* requires observers, the concept of hidden *prestasis* is an oxymoron. When Indonesians refer to *prestasis*, it is always with an audience in mind, the national or general society (*masyarakat umum)*. The distinguishing characteristic is that *prestasis* are positive and foster social connectivity, in contrast to selfish actions with destructive or centripetal consequences. Prestasis are often described as leading to *sukses (*success), a key New Order term for the exercise of proper citizenship. In contrast to the current political moment, under Suharto's tenure *waria* performances were

[104] The term bears colonial traces; it derives from the Dutch *prestasis,* a noun meaning " achievement" or "feat"; the verb form of which can mean "achieve" and "perform".

explicitly categorized as a form of *prestasis*.

Who deserves the mantle of artist does not go uncontested within the community. A Papauan *waria* speaks up in the meeting "If we agree that we are street artists, prove it. That we really are artists. If you just sing with a bottle cap as an instrument, that's not an artist. If you call yourself an entertainer, then go perform in formal places…in a café or a tourist place. That's what you call an artist. *Waria* have to show that they have talent". This statement, and similar views expressed in the meeting, explicitly mark the street out as the place of the untalented and discourages any other reading of *waria pengamen* work. In the meeting Mama Ruli begins to unpack the greater stakes of the law and the nuances of what it means to be associated with the street. She astutely points out that "everyone who is here is a *waria*. So what we are actually discussing here is gender sensitivity. Some *waria* also work as sex-workers. So of course, there are things linked to the definition of *waria*".[105] To mark out *pengamen* performances in general, and performances by *waria* in particular, as artistic practice then stakes a claim to inclusion in the wider legacy of Indonesian performance. To claim *pengamen* work as art and therefore *waria* as artists is not merely a matter of semantics, but one of self-fashioning and survival.

Later in the film, Sean and another young *waria* enter a *warung*. These semi-open-air eating establishments are known for cheap quick meals as opposed to western-style, closed door restaurants found in malls and stand-alone buildings. Sean approaches a table, swaying her hips and shaking her small tambourine while her friend carries a portable speaker. Before Sean stops at the table, the young man already has a few coins out. This can be read as a preemptive measure to have the interaction end as soon as possible. Sean refuses this initial transaction and instead says "come on, shake it, what's your name, can you shake it with me" while grabbing his hand. The young man laughingly pulls his hand away amidst the teasing of his tablemates and quickly points to his friend seated across him, all but imploring Sean to turn her attention elsewhere. She doesn't let up and swings her hips into his face cooing "shake it for me baby" and then proceeds to spout a dirty joke. He doubles over in embarrassment or laughter. It is difficult to tell. But his friends are enjoying the show. One

[105] Transcribed from the documentary short *Waria Streets*, dir. Tamara Shogaolu, 2015.

even pulls out his phone to film the interaction. Sean's interaction with the young man is both work and pleasure. Once uploaded onto a phone, it is also unclear how far this performance will travel or what future interactions it might inspire or generate. No matter where *waria pengamen* move they create the ability to generate a counter-hegemonic third space production, a queer world making potential in their wake.

Chapter Four: *Lipsinc* And the Cultivation(s)Of *Waria* Space[106]

Defining the *Lipsinc* Genre

Lipsinc occurs when someone performs with a recorded soundtrack for an audience, substituting the voice of the artist elsewhere for their own. Mouth and speech do not always match-up, and neither necessarily do performer and persona. It is akin to yet distinct from dubbing, which is when someone overlays their own voice to recorded images. In dubbing, mouth and speech do not match up and in *lipsinc*, depending the skill of the artists, they do. However, it is person and persona that do not. The *waria lipsinc* performers are not "singing" themselves, but neither were Ariana Grande or Beyoncé in the videos from which *waria* get inspiration for costumes and poses. Like dubbing, *lipsinc* is a productive theoretical concept because of the central position *asli* (authenticity) holds both in Indonesian understandings of ethno-local tradition and the modern nation. This chapter uses performance and discourse analysis, alongside ethnographic scenes from clubs, malls, and dinner cabarets to explore the relationship between gender's felt sense and visibility for *waria* who participate in the *lipsinc* genre. In doing so I argue that, although not performing as oneself, *lipsinc* as a genre offers *waria* performers the space to confront public narratives concerning *waria,* and thus space for configuring one's sense of being in the world.[107]

Throughout the text I choose to italicize *lipsinc* in order to demonstrate that it is terminology that is both translatable and translated. *Waria* reach halfway around the world to take up the term and subsequently transform it through practice to reflect local experiences and understandings of gendered play. I consistently italicize *lipsinc* when utilizing it as an Indonesian term therefore positioning it as related to but distinct from the English construction "lip-sync". It is clear to *waria* of any ethnic or religious background that the term *lipsinc* does not originate in locality or tradition. However, as *waria* have continued to shape the genre as a negotiation between personal style, local audiences, and a wide range of local venues they now use the term *lipsinc* as an *asli Indonesia*(authentically Indonesian) description of their

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[106] "Lipsinc" reflects the spelling found on signage across all events attended during the course of fieldwork.

[107] Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Professing Selves: Transsexuality and Same-Sex Desire in Contemporary Iran*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014),276.

performances. Because of the interplay between local and global *Waria* re- territorialize *lipsinc* and as a result they have developed their own local history and dynamics for the term. It is not just "lip-sync" with an Indonesian accent. Through italicization I use a typographical device to hold the term at arm's-length for the reader. Through this act of estrangement on the page I highlight the terms existence as an embodied local practice for *waria.*

While *lipsinc* performances can take place anywhere, I focus on venues that range from the semi-private club to the quasi-public shopping mall. Connecting these locales is their sense of interiority. The changing landscapes of media, technology, culture, and politics, following the end of the Suharto era makes it less possible for *waria* to forge public spaces of queer kinship and pleasure. As the street, and therefore the "the public", has come to be reshaped in the post-Suharto era this chapter looks to the new forms of intimacy and legitimacy that the interior affords. The material body in and shaped by performance has affective consequences that activate both individual and collective memories *of waria* public presence between the *lipsinc* stage and the spectator. In taking up *lipsinc waria* then create the potential for alternative forms of sociality between performer and audience.

This chapter argues that the various ways *waria* interact with the new internal spaces of *lipsinc* performance allows for a richer understanding of how *waria* gendering happens in relation to global conceptions of transness. I do so by calling attention to the interconnected nuances of venue, legislation, and audience as well as the accompanying aesthetic choices forged by *waria within lipsinc* performance . As a result, the concept of *lipsinc* as developed in this chapter is relevant to an understanding of the formation, maintenance, and radical expansions of gender norms for *waria*. This chapter highlights how *the lipsinc genre* provides *waria* with the platform to convey a more nuanced understanding of the lived gender experiences at play within the community. I argue that the work done on the contemporary *lipsinc* stage shifts critical attention towards a more expansive, less binary forms of gender expression in the discourse surrounding *waria* communities.

Ghosts of *Lipsinc(s)* Past

Early in Tom Boellstorff's chapter on *waria* he poses a rhetorical question to the reader: "How might one encounter

warias in Indonesia?".[108] In answer, Boellstorff takes us to the *Taman Remaja Surabaya*(Surabaya Youth Park) to experience a "*Waria* Night with Live Band, Thursday Nights". He goes on to assert that "the Thursday Night *waria* show at *Taman Remaja* is a well-known showcase for *waria* in Eastern Java" and cites an article by David Plummer and Doug Porter as the only reference for the fact that this event is known throughout Easter Java.[109] Curious as to what insights a chapter on "The Use and Misuse of Epidemiological Categories" could offer about this "well-known" showcase for *waria*, I sought out Plummer and Porters work. Nestled in the center of their chapter there exists a subsection titled "Inter-male sexuality in Surabaya, Indonesia" and it is here that we first encounter their description of the *Taman Remaja waria* show. They describe how:

> In Surabaya, a major city in East Java with a predominantly Moslem population, there is an amusement park known as Taman Remadja.[110]In most respects, this is a classic twentieth-century development: a little run down, it offers bright lights, circus rides, cappuccino and fast food and it is popular with families. Every Thursday evening at 9.30 p.m., Taman Remadja advertises a *Waria* Show which runs until the park closes an hour later.[111]

In 1997, almost two years after Plummer and Porter's account based on field work in 1995, Boellstorff details his own visit to the park and explains that the:

> Taman Remaja Surabaya (Surabaya Youth Park) can be found on a downtown thoroughfare next to the Surabaya Mall. It is nighttime and the Mall is closed—a hulking, padlocked mass to my left as I pass a sea of motorcycles, becak (pedicabs), and buses pulling up at the curbside. Together with a couple thousand

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[108] Tom Boellstorff, *A Coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia*(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007),79.

[109] Tom Boellstorff, *A Coincidence of Desires*,79

[110] "*Remadja"* reflects an alternate spelling of the term.

[111] David Plummer and Doug Porter. " The Use and Misuse of Epidemiological Categories" in *No Place for Borders The HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Godfrey Linge and Doug Porter,41-49. (New South Wales: Allen and Unwin Press, 1997), 43.

> Surabayans, I plunk down 1,300 rupiah to pass under the glittering neon and white bulbs of Taman Remaja's gates…Every few minutes a low electric drone announces the approaching monorail, a cramped affair four feet wide and no longer than a car. It grinds uncomfortably along a red steel track only five feet above the ground…Beyond the monorail's track, encircling the rides, is a wide stage fitted out with colored lights and glittering disco balls, looking out over a seating area with rows of wooden benches. To the right of the stage is a permanent sign about two meters high by three meters wide: '*Waria* Night with Live Band, Thursday Nights. The band is warming up before the promised performance, and by 8:30, the seating area is partially filled.[112]

Although published ten years apart, both descriptions open with a focus on the amusement park atmosphere of the venue, creating a tension between the mundane and the fantastical. The reader is made aware that, although publicly accessible, this is a liminal space at once accessible to and cordoned off from the everyday. Liminality remains one of the most frequently cited attributes of performative efficacy. Introduced to performance studies via anthropologist Victor Turner(1969),liminality, in terms of social structure and time, is an intermediate state of being "in between" in which individuals are stripped from their usual identity while being on the verge of personal or social transformation. In terms of liminality, as it is used within the field of performance studies, the efficacy of performance lies in the fact that it is a mode of activity whose spatial, temporal, and symbolic "in-betweenness" allows for social norms to be suspended, challenged, played with, and maybe even transformed. I see this "betwixt and between" quality of the *Taman Remaja waria* show reflected in how both works cited above gesture to the space of performance as situated at the intersections of pleasure and commerce, at once public and policed.[113]Policed by its internal social logics and the literal police, tasked with keeping these internal logics from spilling

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[112] Tom Boellstorff, (2007),79-80.

[113] Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," in The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), pp. 94-113, 125-30.

out into the wider public. While the performances themselves are housed within a site of commercial exchange, the performances themselves open alternate spaces of pleasurable exchange.

As each text quickly moves into an assessment of the audience, we see varying relationships to liminality as key to articulating performative efficacy conceived of as transgressive or resistant. In an effort to hypothesize HIV risks, Plummer and Porter continue their description of the *Taman Remaja Waria* show with a thorough set of descriptions to categorize perceived identities, backgrounds, masculinities, and sexualities:

> Just prior to the show, the families start to drift home and the park is left to several distinct groups of young men…In the front of the stage is a large paved area (about 30 m x 15 m) where an audience of between 100 and 200 men stand and watch. As the show progresses, the men in the audience pair off and dance a slow, almost erotic dance that also has traditional origins.
>
> They dance looking at each other and coming within millimeters of touching. The perimeter of the paved dance area is patrolled by the park's male security guards. The dancers are not interrupted by the guards, provided they confine their activities to the paved area. However, anyone who strays off the dance area and beyond their behavioral `quarantine zone' is promptly struck by the nearest guard with a heavy-wooden baton until they step back again. From time to time, a guard faces away from the group holding his baton behind his back. One of the dancers then takes the opportunity to bend down and stroke the baton as if it were a phallic symbol. To one side, along the border of the dance area, is a path over which runs a monorail and beyond which stands a fourth distinct group of around 100 men. These watch the show from a little distance but generally do not dance nor mix with the men who do. These men are `gay identifying' in the contemporary Western sense and they spend most of their time socializing, meeting friends and swapping names and addresses. Although they

> take advantage of the sexual ambiguity of the event to socialize and they watch the show, they neither identify with the *warias* and scarcely mix with them. Finally, beyond the collection of `gay men' is a kiosk, surrounded by tables and chairs, that sells hot dogs, soft drinks and coffee. Sitting on the tables and leaning on the chairs talking, smoking and watching the spectacle are a fifth group of young men: these are selling sex. They do not identify with any of the other groups present, they are not gay but will sell sexual services to anyone who wants to pay.[114]

Due to their epidemiological research interests, Plummer and Porter turn a keen eye to the modes of social interaction and sexual identification of the audience. The audience of the *waria lipsinc* show, in their reading, use the space created by the performance to enact potentially transgressive modes of public social engagement. Although the term "queer" never arises in their text, Plummer and Porter effectively offer the *waria lipsinc* event as a nucleus for queer worldmaking within the family-oriented space of the amusement park. Queer theorists Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner first position the term "worldmaking" in relation to queerness in their influential essay, "Sex in Public". The generative and demanding idea of queer worldmaking: as altogether creative, performative, intimate, public, disruptive, utopian, and more opens a wider set of implications for readings of *waria lipsinc*. Among these implications is the idea that *waria lipsinc* does not simply act as the background for the marginal and transgressive practices of the audience, but that the performers and performances themselves actually construct alternative counter space for multivalent queer practices. Of such a "world-making project" Berlant and Warner wrote: "The queer world is a space of entrances, exits, unsystematized lines of acquaintance, projected horizons, typifying examples, alternate routes, blockages, incommensurate geographies".[115] Similar to liminality, we see an innate emphasis on movement and crossing, an aspect reflected in the Plummer and Porter's description of the various zones of audience interaction and engagement and the potential shifts across these unseen

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[114] Plummer and Porter(1997), 44-45

[115] Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Intimacy (Winter, 1998): The University of Chicago Press,558.

boundaries. In the application of concepts such as "liminality" and "queer world-making" I am able to read life on the margins as a source of creativity and constraint.

I quote Plummer and Porter's observations at length in part because the detailed account gestures toward points of interest for this chapter at large; including how *waria lipsinc* performances can offer a space for queer eroticism and transactional sex as well as connections to national social dance traditions. But I also fully cite the portion of their chapter specifically concerned with the scene of performance because of what is so obviously absent…the performance itself. Similarly, Boellstorff points out that:

> Perhaps 80 percent of the audience is made up of men between fifteen and thirty years old; flip- flop plastic sandals and well-worn work clothes mark their blue collar, low income status. Cleared of benches, the twenty-yard area in from of the state is occupied by these men, who are smoking and conversing with each other. The benches behind the front area are filled by a more diverse audience, including better-dressed husband and wives, and young children perched on laps or chasing each other down the aisles. There are about thirty *waria*s in the audience; some sit at the benches in small groups, but most gather next to the stage… Many of the single men in front of the stage begin to dance with each other, both feet on the ground, swaying slowly and sensually to the music, laughing and comparing moves, or swinging their hips and rubbing arms to chests with closed eyes, hypnotically, as if alone in a small room. A few *waria* dance in a corner by themselves or in pairs with a man.[116]

I want to highlight a point of convergence as well as divergence across these two readings. Both texts are invested in the coupling of gender and sexuality and therefore pay particular attention to those audience members they assume identify as men and their interactions with one another. However, it is interesting to note that there is a point of divergence when it comes to tracking the presence of hetero-

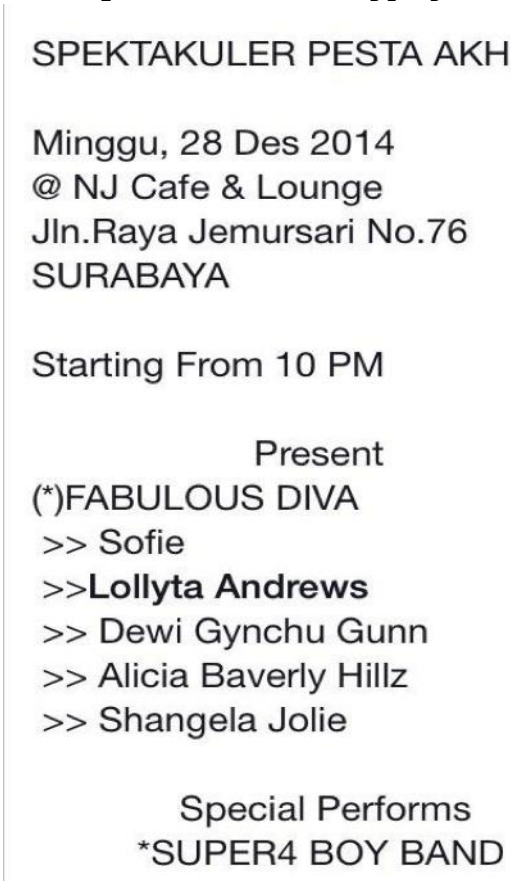
[116] Boellstorff (2007),80.

familial units within the audience.Plummer and Porter frame the spectating audience as all male identifying and *waria*, with the families having left before the show. Meanwhile Boellstorff highlights the "diversity" such heteronormative familial units bring to the audience sphere. The slippage between these two readings, families as present and absent, points to the centrality of the hetero-familial unit in scholarship concerning public presentation in Indonesia as discussed in chapters one and two of this manuscript. For the Western scholars cited above, the gendered and sexual identities of the audience only come into relief in contrast to heterosexual coupling, whether physically or merely ideologically present. However, this observational discrepancy also calls into question who exactly comprises the *waria lipsinc* audience. In the slippage between these two accounts I was left wondering about the contemporary composition of the *waria lipsinc* audience.

I lay out this lengthy transcription of both texts in part because it is this citational thread forms the groundwork for my own questions concerning *waria lipsinc*. Almost twenty-years later I went in search of the Thursday Night *Waria* show at the *Taman Remaja* and encountered a very different scene. The amusement park survives and the tram still meanders along although it is light on passengers. There are not many people in the park at all. After inquiries with amusement park employees, security, and food-vendors no one could point me towards a *waria* show of any kind. Gone was the large open-air venue for performing, dancing, and cruising. At present, crumbling and rusted bandstand is all that remains. Where did *waria lipsinc* go and what spaces does it now occupy? Like many other urban centers in Indonesia (see chapter 3), as Surabaya's economic and political make-up has changed so too have the spaces that public performances occupy. My search would take me from the open-air venues of *lipsinc's* past into the interiors of its present. Key to my reading is an attention to this spatial shift indoors of the once open-air, *waria lipsinc* events.

Lipsinc on the Club Stage

On December 28th, 2014 I received a "flyer" on the popular messaging platform WhatsApp from Lollyta Andrews, a well-known *lipsinc* performer and MC in Surabaya's club scene. Lollyata and I had yet to meet in person. However, a *waria* entertainer named Agnez, from the popular queer venue Bali Joe's in the tourist center of Denpasar Bali had passed along my information in anticipation of my arrival in Surabaya. Incredibly busy and mostly booked for events in Jakarta and Singapore, Lollyta had only recently returned home to Surabaya in anticipation of the New Year. The message, an easily forwardable jpeg image, read:



(fig 4.1: WhatsApp image received from Lollyta Andrews." Spectacular End of the year party")

In her study of queer latin@ dance venues in San Francisco Juana Maria Rodriguez observes that:

> Keeping track of all the various dance parties requires precise planning as club nights appear and disappear with predictable frequency. This contingency of space and place requires a different sort of relationship to urban culture. Because there are few physical nightclub spaces that are readily available to

> house this range of queer subcultural scenes, information about which parties are held when and where requires a connection to a social network, someone in the know who can point newcomers in the right direction."[117]

What Rodriguez gestures towards is an alternate form of mapping necessitated by the dynamics of a social sphere that is neither public nor afforded permanence in privacy. However, this "contingency of space and place" Rodriguez cites does not manifest due the pressures of multiplicitous "queer subcultural scenes" within Indonesia. Instead one must look to the lingering effects of the 2002 Bali Bombings. Attributed to various members of the *Jemaah Islamiyah,* an Islamist militant organization, the attack targeted three nightclubs leaving approximately 202 people dead. Such events have made club spaces particularly precarious in the face of further attacks. Although not specifically featured in the language of the promotional material, the "Spectacular End of the Year Party" is happening as a part of Surabaya's roving *G Night* or "Gay Night" with the latest event taking place at Club NJ. Post-2014 Indonesia has increasingly seen police targeting LGBT groups. According to reports released by Human Rights Watch and the Community Legal Aid Institute in Jakarta, the situation has worsened in the wake of a number of high-level politicians portraying LGBT communities as immoral or a threat to the nation.[118] In 2017 alone, 213 people were arrested within queer social spaces.

Only through trans-archipelagic word of mouth was I afforded the approval necessary to enter this flow of communication. A barrier to entry caused as much by a dearth of physical space as a growing need for caution in the wake of increased state

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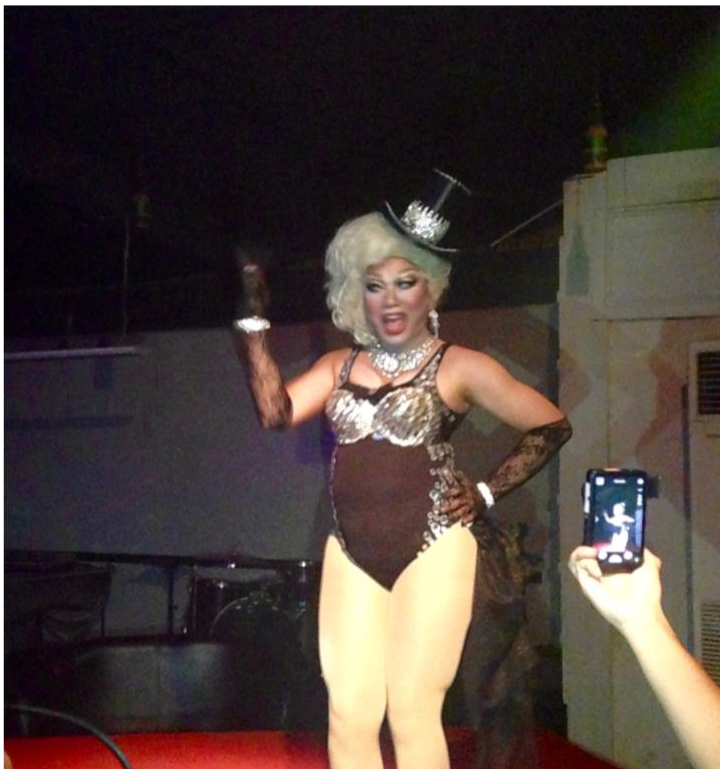
[117] Juana Maria Rodriguez,*Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings,* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2014), 12.

[118] see " These Political Games Ruin our Lives: Indonesia's LGBT Community under Threat", August 10,2016 Human Rights Watch report; " Scared in Pubic and Now No Privacy : Human Rights and Public Health Impacts of Indonesia's Anti-LGBT Moral Panic", July 1 2018, Human Rights Watch Report; OutRight Action International, "Creeping Criminalization: Mapping of Indonesia's National Laws and Regional Regulations That Violate Human Rights of Women andLGBTIQPeople,"2016.https://www.outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/ CreepingCriminalisation-eng.pdf; Amnesty International, " Indonesia: Crackdowns on LGBTI People hit alarming Level", 6 November 2018

and religious surveillance. I arrive at Club NJ around eleven in the evening accompanied by Edyth. A well-known *waria* entertainer in the city of Surabaya, Edyth no longer performs in the G-night *lipsinc* circuit. However, tonight she serves as my "someone in the know" and her presence affords me a privileged access to spaces both public and private within the club. Inside the lights are dim and a thick haze of unfiltered cigarette smoke hangs heavy beneath the low ceiling. The small club is already crowded, mostly with young men. With the caveat that there are many exceptions to the following generalization, I found that G Night parties in Surabaya, Yogyakarta (and other cities) were heavily populated by young queer men. They hang in a loose constellation of clusters around the room, smoking, standing close together in order to be heard over the music shaking the walls and pulsating through the floor. The stage is triangular in shape and wedged into the corner of the v-shaped club, covered in faded red felt-like material. Over the course of the night, the five *waria* listed on the flyer perform two numbers each ranging from Britney spears to Tina Turner.



(fig. 4.2: Lollyta performing "Diamonds are a Girl's Best friend as the opening number G Night at Club NJ)

The lights dim even further and a spot light appears on stage. The audience parts before Lollyta as she makes her way from the side door to the stage. The image above captures Lollyta in the night's opening number. She is outfitted in a black leotard with a bedazzled bra with rhinestone encrusted side details and sheer sparkly "tails". Arms ensconced in elbow length black lace gloves her wrists also sport thick "diamond" bracelets and form a matching set with accompanying necklace and earrings. Atop a platinum blonde curled wig sits a small top hat with bedazzled trim. Jauntily angled to the side. She begins the evening with a *lipsinc* performance set to Nicole Kidman's rendition of "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" from

the 2001 film *Moulin Rouge*. The song choice provides further context for Lollyta's costume in that it mirrors Kidman's clothing during this musical number in the film.

Lollyta steps towards the edge of the stage while extending both hands simultaneously to the side. Almost as if choreographed, two young men from the audience help her descend the stairs downstage center into the waiting crowd. As Lollyta moves through crows she interacts with audience members, running a gloved hand across one patron's cheek and blowing kisses to others. This further reflects the choreography of the dance number within the film. In an earlier interview with Sofie, who will also perform as a part of the evening's entertainment, she explains that videos in particular the digital platform YouTube serves as a consistent source of inspiration. When asked how she feels while performing I received a candid response:

> Sofie: My feel? Sometimes I still confused by my show time, if I should look like who, maybe Beyoncé, maybe J.lo. Sometimes I am confused in how to be learning how to dance that. If *lipsinc*, I try to just [pause]sometimes I not see the lyric. Just listening like [mouths vowel sounds to show mimicking words] like that , sometimes not perfect if I *lipsinc*. Just articulating.
> Paige: do you choreograph original dances or just look at the music video and try to do the dance from the video?
> Sofie: Yeah, I see the video from the video clip, and I learn by myself and the steps are not perfect.[119]

Sofie calls our attention to a gestural language transferred between screen and body. The gestural vocabulary generated by specific performances by specific pop and R&B divas is cited repetitively and frequently across nightclub field sites. In taking up a queer analysis of Bollywood, performance theorists Kareem Khubchandani attends to the mimicry of Bollywood screen divas by gay South Asian boys and men in the eroticized space of the nightclub. In mimicking the gestural vocabulary of the actresses as youths, these gay men were met with responses ranging from praise to the discipline. Khubchandani takes up domestic and everyday gender performances and analyses how they

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[119] Sofie. (*waria* performer in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. December 10th, 2014. Conversation was conducted in English per the interviewee's request.

interact with film text and collective queer spaces in order to explore how " the iterative turn to gestures and choreographies of Hindi film actresses of the 19880s and 1990s as a reparative act on the gay dance floor".[120] Jose Muñoz (2009) also calls our attention to the efficacy of gesture in queer nightlife spaces. In his book *Cruising Utopia,* Muñoz finds, in queerly cultivated gesturality, especially as exemplified in the performance work of nightlife diva Kevin Aviance, strategies to move otherwise, in an indulgently queer manner.

As Muñoz explains, Aviance uses gestures within performance that allow the hyper-masculine gay men that dance with and watch Aviance to " see and experience the feelings they do not permit themselves to let in".[121] Here, gestures may be assumed to offer some kind of liberation framework for white men who in their spectatorship consume the Black diva. That is, in witnessing Aviance's black queer femme spectacle, the white gay men of the club may momentarily release some of the pressure imposed upon them by homonormative standards of body sculpting and hypermasculine presentations of self. In taking on the gestures and appearance of various R&B and Pop divas within the walls of the nightclub, *waria lipsinc* performers enact their own momentary escape from the pressures of normative standards of feminine presentation in Indonesia. A femininity that is embraced through the dance practices outlined in chapter two and out of reach due to proximity to the street in chapter three. In the club, gesture becomes a resource, a mode of performance that plays on the surface of the body and reaches into the depths of the material, affective, and marginal alike.

Lipsinc as Drag Adjacent Genre

A memetic relationship to the diva elsewhere forms the foundation of the *waria lipsinc* performance within the club. Across club stages, *waria* performers not only play with the movement vocabulary they witness on screen but also reinscribe the physical appearance through their own bodies. While the definition of *lipsinc* that I offer at the beginning of this chapter focuses on the substitution of one voice for another as a foundational characteristic of the genre. In an interview with Edyth backstage during the performance, the

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[120] Kareem Khubchandani, " Snakes on the Dance Floor: Bollywood, Gesture, and Gender", The Velvet Light Trap, Number 77, Spring 2016 University of Texas Press. 69-85. 70

[121] José E. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 65–82.79

mimetic relationship to the artist elsewhere is reintroduced as the primary distinction between drag and *lipsinc*:

> Edyth: I think in Surabaya we already have drag queens too, but I think the drag queen from Surabaya is different than the US. A drag queen in Surabaya depends on [pause] Drag queen in Surabaya is someone who is performing , who has unique makeup, it's not like their everyday makeup, and it can be everyone you know, a gay , a transgender. I know not in Indonesia, drag queen is just for a gay.
> Paige: So what you're saying is when you use the term drag queen, it's more about the costume, the make-up.
> Edyth: That's right!
> Paige: Is the type of music or dance different? Edyth: Yeah
> Paige: Is it mostly *lipsinc*, or do people actually sing?
> Edyth: No just *lipsinc*
> Paige: Ok. And how do you think that got popular here? Did it come to Indonesia from other places? Edyth: In this time, drag queen is more popular for *lipsinc* you know, because it's something new in Indonesia. Everyone likes something new you know [laughs] and everyone called their selves as a drag queen when they're *lipsinc*ing you know.
> Paige: Is there a difference between *lipsinc* and drag queen? Can you do a show where you *lipsinc* without being a drag queen?
> Edyth: I think when you, in here [indicates club], when you to be a drag queen you already *lipsinc*, but when you *lipsinc* you are not actually a drag queen.
> Paige: So you have to have the *lipsinc* plus the make-up and hair?
> Edyth: Yeah that's right, because , you know, *lipsinc* like Celine Dion, Beyoncé, it's our culture to *lipsinc*, but when you choose to *lipsinc* like Nicki Minaj and you have a make-up like Nicki Minaj or the wig, they call it drag queen.
> Paige: They used to have a weekly *waria* show at Taman Remaja right?

> Edyth: Yeah but *Taman Remaja* is already closed Paige: But those shows, were those *lipsinc*ing or drag shows
> Edyth: no in *Taman Remaja* we just have a *lipsinc* and dancing[122]

In our conversation, Edyth begins to articulate a specific dramaturgy for *lipsinc* as a multifaceted genre dependent upon various intermingling of performance space and performative presentation. In a synecdochical slip "drag queen" stands in for the genre of drag as a whole. Edyth goes on to frame drag and *lipsinc* as intimately linked yet distinct performative modes, where taking on the role of drag queen as a more modern intervention into an *asli*(authentic) *lipsinc* form. Here we see *lipsinc* firmly positioned as a part of *waria* culture and it is only through the corporeal transformation into an "other", that the status of drag queen can be achieved. In embracing a shift in the foundational *lipsinc* form what modes of liberation might drag.

I position *lipsinc* as "drag-adjacent" in order to emphasize how *lipsinc* ultimately does a different type of work in regards to the framing of the central performing subject when positioned in proximity to drag. This work consists of affording *waria* more expansive forms of gendered subjectivity. For scholars, "drag" commonly refers to the practice of temporarily adopting cross-gender attire and mannerisms for the purpose of entertainment. The most popular roles within drag include drag queens, typically cisgender men (men assigned male at birth) performing femininity, and drag kings, typically cisgender women performing masculinity.[123] Esther Newton, an American anthropologist best known for her pioneering work on lesbian and gay communities in the United States, published the first substantial ethnographic work on drag subculture in 1972. Within this text, Newton deconstructs the term "drag queen" asserting that:

> The homosexual term for a transvestite is ' drag queen'. 'Queen' is a generic noun for any homosexual man. 'Drag' can be used as an adjective or a noun. As a noun

[122] Edyth. (*waria* performer in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. December 28th, 2014. Conversation was conducted in English per the interviewee's request.

[123] Cisgender refers to individuals whose gender identity is congruent with the sex they were assigned at birth. For more on this term see Brammer, R., & Ginicola, M. M. (2017).

> it means the clothing of one sex when worn by the other sex...The ability to 'do drag' is widespread in the gay world, and many of the larger social events include or focus on drag('drag balls', 'costume parties',etc.)[124]

With a focus on "professional drag queens", *Mother Camp* maps the world of stage and street "female impersonation" in the late 1960s. Theatre historian Laurence Senelick traces twentieth century Western drag practices back to the Victorian interest in metamorphosis. Senelick describes how, beginning in 1860, the interest in verisimilitude on stage combined with a new cohesive homosexual subculture to create a new genre of men dressing as women.[125] In *Drag! Male and Female Impersonators* cultural scholar F. Michael Moore asks "Why then has the tradition of drag performance continued? What does a performer hope to accomplish—what does he or she offer to an audience—by performing in the guise of the opposite sex?".[126] While this chapter is driven , in part, by similar questions concerning the affective linkages generated between *waria lipsinc* performers and audience members, I am particularly struck by Moore's use of the term "guise". The implication here, that drag performance calls for the concealment of one's true nature, aligns with dominant narratives across twentieth-century scholarship that frame drag as a matter of temporary gendered impersonation and/or presentational crossing.[127]

The absence of attention on the performers/performances themselves leads me back to one oft-repeated point in the *lipsinc* archives laid out above. Plummer, Porter, and Boellstorff all refer to *waria* with some variation of "male-transvestite", "male-transsexual", or as inhabiting "a male-femininity". For Boellstorff in particular, an example from the *Taman Remaja lipsinc* show underscores this

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[124] Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonation in America*,1972. 3

[125] Laurence Senelick, " Boys and Girls together: subcultural origins of glamour drag and male impersonation on the nineteenth-century stage" (London: Routledge), 1993, 84/

[126] F. Michael Moore, *Drag! Male and Female Impersonators on Stage, Screen, and Television*, 1994

[127] For more on drag as "female impersonation" and/or cross-dressing see Garber,1992;Hamilton, 1993; Baker, 1994; Tewksbury, 1994;Fleisher, 1996;Senelick 2000;Schacat, 2000; Rupp, L. and V. Taylor, 2003.

interpretation. In the park, there were two toilets as described by Boellstorff. The sign on one toilet read "*wanita* (woman)" while the sign on the other read "*pria/waria* (men/*waria)*".[128] Plummer, Porter, and Boellstorff position the open-air *waria lipsinc* show as a place that helps to define *waria* in strict relation to their underlying "masculinity" and sexual preferences for the male audiences they attract. Such readings effectively ignore the aesthetic specificities of *lipsinc* as a genre. In doing so they fail to consider the work that this genre of performance does for *waria*, not just as a potential transactional space for sex work, but as a means to articulate endemic understandings of their own gendered embodiment. Boellstorff , Plummer, and Porter all insist on a presumptive circumscription of *waria* bodies through as primarily male and *waria* gendering as therefore derivative of maleness, albeit uniquely tempered by national discourse. Even with the malleability of gender constructs that this is supposed to highlight the naming set forth still presumes a primary importance of male-bodiedness. I link this framing, that attempts to define *waria* gendering through vocabulary that centers maleness with a wholesale conflation of the *lipsinc* and drag genres. Drag, within a Western context is predicated on an understanding of a male-identified performer "performing" as a woman.

As Edyth so succinctly explained in the interview cited above "Drag queen in Surabaya...it can be everyone you know, a gay , a transgender. I know not in Indonesia, drag queen is just for a gay." Mapping the concept of drag onto non-US contexts can be a tricky matter, however, since the distinctly binary conceptions of gender and sexuality do not necessarily hold in cross-cultural contexts. Martin Manalansan demonstrates this in his study of Filipino *Baklâ* living in New York.[129] *Baklâ* are male-bodied, third-gender people who wear feminine attire, exhibit feminine mannerisms, have relationships with heterosexual men, and may perform onstage. However, they do not conceive of themselves as dressing in drag in the Western sense and in some cases (but not all) they identify as women. *Baklâ* is thus a distinct gender and sexual identity that does not translate to the US context. The more expansive form of gendering that the drag-adjacent *lipsinc* stage displays, and

[128] Boellstorff (2007),32

[129] Martin F. Manalansan, *Global Divas*, (New York: New York University Press), 2003.

its accompanying "staging", unsettles the understanding of *waria* as simply feminine-males. While this may be the preferred means of identification for some, attention to the ways *waria* produce a sense of the self through *lipsinc* performance allows for a deeper engagement with more malleable forms of gendering not dependent on binary relations expressed at present. The analysis offered here demonstrates how *waria* subjectivity is informed by a more complicated confrontation with gender that shapes their sense of self and public perception. While both texts cited above use *lipsinc* to theorize how *waria* are perceived, they neglect how *waria* actively uses the specificities and nuances of the genre to shape this perception.

Transforming *Waria* in the Club

(fig 4.3: Nikita and young man performing as Beyoncé and Jay-Z at club G-Ground March 2015)

It is two-thirty in the morning when the stage clears in preparation for the final act during G Night at club G-Ground. After nearly three hours the air is thickly clouded with the smoke of unfiltered cigarettes so that the stage lights cut colored beams above the audience. Lending the *mis-en-scène* a boost in production value. As the DJ cues the music for the final number the club sonically expands. We, the audience, are no longer in the narrow space G-Ground, holding maybe 200 people. Instead we have been transported to a stadium, an arena, and are now engulfed by the voices of 20,000 screaming fans. Despite the empty stage Jay-Z's voice fills the room. Demanding those of us watching put a lighter or a cellphone in the air to light the stadium up. In this small club in the city of Yogyakarta, on the Island of Java in Indonesia, no one pays attention to this directive. However, it immediately fills me with recognition. Taking me back to when I was one of those 20,000 fans sonically elevating this moment as Jay-Z and Beyoncé performed the closing number of their recent "On The Run" tour. Nikita takes the stage sporting a tawny kinky-curly wig, wrapped in teal and gold satin. She is followed by a young muscular man, outfitted in a shiny satin teal suit and a metallic snapback hat. In many ways this performance is unremarkable, in that it fits within the aesthetic boundaries common among *waria lipsinc* performances throughout the archipelago within club spaces. Glamour, as an aesthetic, reigns supreme. Authoritative knowledge of lyrical content comes second to a sweeping gestural vocabulary. Many of my *waria* interlocutors admitted to not fully understanding the words to most of the songs they choose to perform, beyond the chorus, depending instead upon repeated listening and viewing of music videos on-line to capture the feeling of the song.

Nikita physically takes on aspects of Beyoncé through the use of darker make-up and tights and a wig that more closely mimics Beyoncé's African-American hair texture. Such a move is significant in light of the prevalence of skin-whitening routines across Indonesia. The preference for *putih* (white) skin color within in Indonesia exists within larger transnational and institutional structures of sexism, racism, colorism, and nationalism. The transnational movement of people to and from Indonesia, coupled with colonial legacies, has helped to configure dark skin as an abject form of femininity.[130] There is also a gestural component of the

[130] For more on racialized beauty standards in Indonesia see: Saraswati, L. Ayu. " 'Malu': Coloring Shame and Shaming the color of Beauty in Transnational Indonesia", *Feminist Studies* 38, no.1, 2012, 113-40.

performance, a rolling of the neck and flicks of the wrist. Movements of Beyoncé's recognizable in their American-Blackness which have been studied and taken-up by Nikita. In a subsequent interview with Nikita I ask her about her musical preferences. She comments " I listen to Black Music, RnB, Jazz, and soul. I like Jennifer Hudson, Beyoncé. Jennifer Hudson is my favorite, from the way she sings".[131] When I ask her to elaborate further she goes on to explain that " they sing with their soul and that is beautiful" and that she seeks " to match the lyrics with how the singer performs on stage".[132]

The globalization of Western performance aesthetics, both through expert knowledge and the mass media, interact with regional understandings of personhood to produce specific forms of intelligible gendered embodiment in Indonesia. However, *Lipsinc* also allows for a performance of racial and ethnic femininity not usually possible for *waria*, but that speaks to their own marginalized ethnic and gendered embodiments. The performative link created by these cross-ethnic and racial performances creates an affective space of expanded femininity for *waria*, moving beyond the confines of femininity and masculinity offered in the space of contemporary Indonesia. Juana Maria Rodriguez captures the social and communicative work of gesture that *lipsinc* makes available to its performers and audiences in that " gestures emphasize the mobile spaces of interpretation between actions and meaning".[133] In this way gestures register the kinetic effort of communication. For *waria*, the gestural language of *lipsinc*, buoyed by the circulation of diverse diva imagery, brings into being not only the possibility of a communal *waria* 'we' across the archipelago, but with a multiplicity of femininities across racial and ethnic boundaries. These gestural and affective embodiments, rooted so often in global circulations of divaness, taken up by *waria* perform kinesthetic and sensorial labor that transform *waria* bodies

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[131] Edyth. (*waria* performer in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia), in discussion with author. February 12th, 2015. Conversation was conducted in English and Indonesian per the interviewee's request. Original Indonesian: *Aku kiblat nya lebih ke Black Music, RnB, Jazz, soul. Untuk artis aku lebih seneng Jennifer Hudson, Beyoncé, kalau untuk cara pembawaanya Jennifer Hudson.*

[132] Ibid. Original Indoneisan: *"mereka pake soul dan itu susah untuk ku mendapat jiwa...mencockin lirik dan gimana penyayi nya membawa lagu nya"*

[133] Juana Maria Rodriguez (2014), 2

into the more-than-everyday.

The Emergent Intimacies of Queer Clubs

As James Farrer(2015) has noted, although nightlife is often dismissed as play—as opposed to serious labor—nightclubs are in fact ideal spaces to consider the relationship between social mobility and subordination, particularly in countries such as Indonesia where sex work is prevalent. From this perspective the club becomes an ethnographic starting point from which to consider broader cultural, economic, and political transformation, and through a concern with performance in particular, the embodied tensions between pleasure and visibility in a globalizing world.

The backstage environment *lipsinc* event bridges two quintessential *waria* activities, Déndong and *Nyébong*. *Déndong* are practices involved in the cultivating of embodied femininity that *waria* perform on a daily basis for public audiences and *nyébong* are social settings where *waria* partake in both transactional and unpaid sex, involving intensive social interactions. The archival accounts cited at the beginning of this chapter gesture towards this wider relationality in terms of the audience and intimate entanglements of sexual desire. During the course of fieldwork, I came to understand that *déndong* has an important historical relationship to the street corners where *waria* combine transactional sex and socializing in the form of *nyébong*. In some ways *nyébong* is comparable to cruising spots for gay men, places of gay geography forged within spaces of modern Indonesia to find friendship, sex, and love, although all forms of sex at *nyébong* involve monetary transactions. *Nyébong*, however, is understood as the exclusive social domain of *waria*, and given that participation is based primarily on self-presentation through *déndong* it is perhaps more accurate to describe *nyébong* as open to all male-bodied individuals who *déndong*. This also means those who *waria* identify as *banci kaléng* (person likely to become a *waria*) also spend time there. For these individuals, interactions with other *waria* in the course of *nyébong* and committing to transactional forms of intimacy are key conduits through which they might begin to commit to a sustained practice of *déndong* on a daily basis, and in turn " *jadi waria*" or become *waria*. However, I propose that the stage itself and the practices of *déndong* that sustain the performances seen there, becomes a site of critical inquiry into this process of becoming.

Lipsinc is a kind of performative *déndong*, a "making up" that

lies between authentic and inauthentic, natural and artificial. As public spaces of sex-work became targets in Indonesia's cultural wars, and as public sites of *Nyébong* are continually threatened or shut down, the *lipsinc* stages, became new spaces of *nyébong*. The stage itself and the practices of *déndong* that sustain the performances seen there, becomes a site of critical inquiry into this process of transforming popularized notions of *waria. Lipsinc* is a kind of performative *déndong*, a "making up" that lies between authentic and inauthentic, natural and artificial.

Waria practice a broad range of femininities depending on their audience. Cross generationally *waria* see their gender presentation as a product of relationships of intimacy and dependency. *Waria* describe these understandings of intimacy and forms of self-making as a process of "*jadi waria"* (becoming *waria*) and therefore more truly visible over time. Given that embodiment and selfhood are understood by *waria* to be shaped by those with whom one interacts the cultivation of that whom in the form of social relations among *waria* and their audiences. While there is no stable embodiment to which *waria* ascribe, preferring more fluid forms of self-fashioning and refashioning traditional ontology cannot explain this kind of presence that literally, through makeup (déndong), "makes itself up" as it goes along. Makeup is key here: although *waria* may take female hormones or inject silicone, no *waria* would do such things without also making themselves up. Supporting the apparatus of the *lipsinc* performance is *déndong* where their subjectivity is "produced by the regulation of attributes along culturally established lines of coherence" (Butler 1990:24) while they simultaneously expand the boundaries of those lines on stage. Given that becoming appears to be a relational practice, it follows that wearing makeup and women's clothes on a consistent basis (*déndong*) is centrally concerned with the specific audience to whom it is addressed. As mentioned, prior scholarship tends to focus on the social worlds of transactional sex (*nyébong*)and salon work. To this framing I also add *lipsinc* a constellation of practices that sits at the intersection of these dual social worlds. Participation in these forms of work and the consistent practice of bodily transformations is what completes the process of transition into *waria*. Most accounts gloss *nyébong* as either "cruising" or "sex work" and *déndong* as related to the desire for feminine gender presentation.

Starting in 1998 opposition to red-light districts by community and religious groups had grown in frequency and

tenor. In 1999, as Suharto's government and its centralized control withered, the government of Jakarta closed its largest red-light district after protestors set brothels on fire. In 2013 news reports began circulating concerning the Ministry of Social Affair's plan to close down 50 red-light districts across Indonesia. Five major cities were identified for the initial crackdown on sex work including the *Pasar Kembang* district in Yogyakarta (walking distance from Malioboro Mall discussed below) and Dolly in Surabaya. On the morning of Wednesday June 18th 2014 approximately 1500 sex workers were evicted from Dolly, the biggest red-light distraction in Indonesia and some say in Southeast Asia, and the area was "closed" for good. However, older *waria* generally describe the period of money making vis-à-vis urban sex work, and youthful beauty as *jadi waria* (becoming *waria*). Such descriptions are tinged with nostalgia as they depicted a world of younger and more beautiful selves inhabiting well-known locations for sex work and intimacy. is at *nyébong* that these *waria* performed their most glamorous and visible femininity. Such spaces are generally described in the mass media either as red-light districts or areas for sex work. For *waria*, on the other hand, these are recognizable places for solidarity, friendship, and income generation.

In the 1980's the Thursday Night *Waria* showcase at the friendship park in Surabaya *discussed in the previous chapter* accomplished both. A well-known showcase for *waria* in eastern Java , and a famous *Nyébong* location after the stage lights dimmed, showcases in open-air venues like the park are now rare occurrences. As the economic model of neoliberalism reshapes public space in Indonesia, productions such as these have either shifted inwards to malls, clubs, and private events, or disappeared. In this way we see how Policy concerning the public boundaries of sex-work also contribute to spatial boundaries of *lipsinc*.

Redefining the Normative at the Raminten *Lipsinc* Cabaret

Edyth was my initial guide to the world of *waria lipsinc.* Although we met in the city of Surabaya, where the lives and works as a successful *waria* entertainer, I received a WhatsApp message from her on afternoon in Yogyakarta. She was in town and wanted me to accompany her to the Raminten Cabaret. Her friend, Anjelica, was making her debut as a top-billed performer and Edyth had decided to come into town to celebrate her success. Situated on a busy street in the heart of

Yogyakarta is Hamzah (formerly Mirota) Batik[134] also doubles at the home of the Raminten Cabaret Show. Established by businessman Hamzah Sulaiman, Hamzah Batik is one of the largest sellers of *batik* clothing, cloth, and souvenirs in the city. The store is meant to evoke the cultural heritage of Javanese tradition, with older women providing live *batik* demonstrations surrounded by antique *anklungs*[135] and small *wayang golek* theatres.[136]

If you can manage to wade your way through the packed first floor you will find a narrow set of stairs towards the back of the store. On the second floor lives The House of Raminten Restaurant and Cabaret. Established in December of 2006 the Raminten cabaret runs every Friday and Saturday at 7pm. Tickets are affordably priced at Rp 40.000 or Rp 50.000 (between $2-$4 USD) for VIP seats nearer to the stage. From families with young children to clusters of *Ibu Ibu* decked in *jilbabs*[137] and their monochromatic civil servant uniforms a wide variety of patrons occupy low tables crowded with food and drink. Scattered throughout the mostly Indonesian crows are a smattering of obviously foreign tourists, gesturing towards the venue's successful advertisement. While club allows for moving beyond the norms, the cabaret works to make *waria lipsinc* the new norm.

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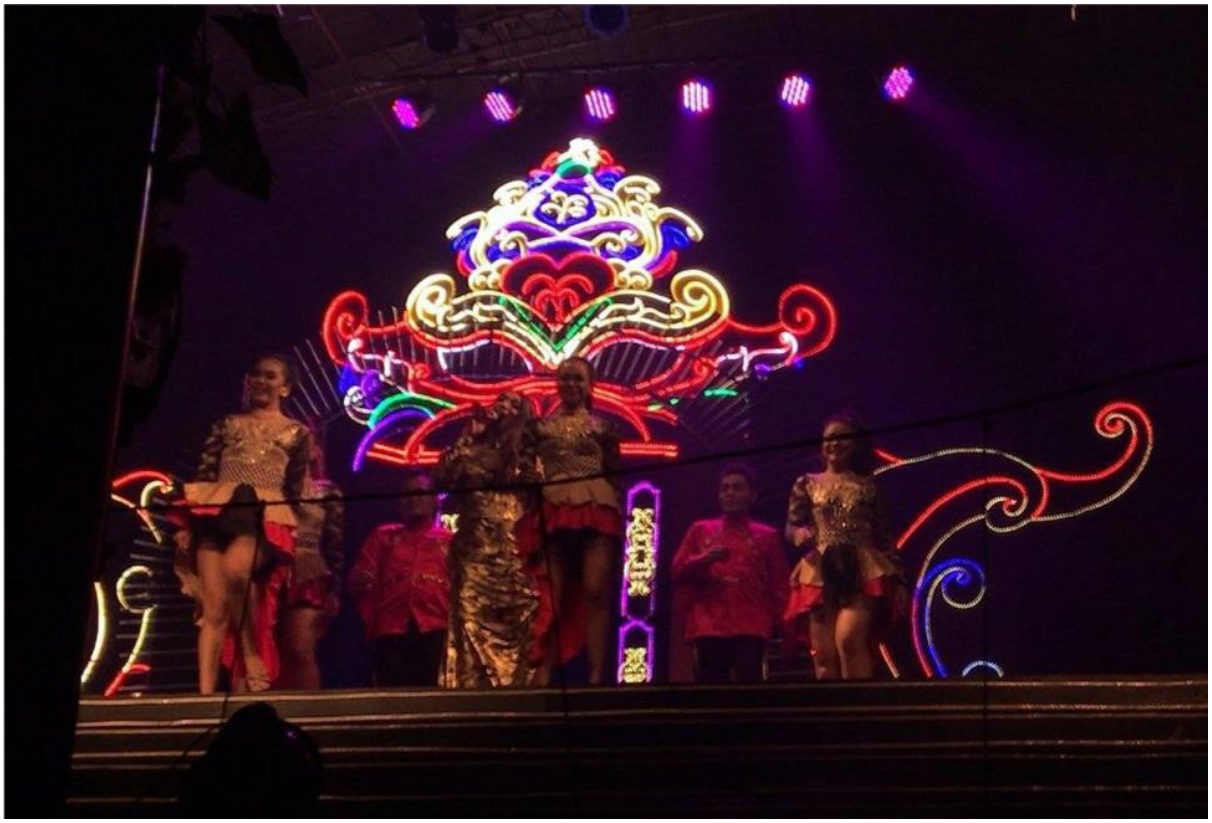
[134] a wax resistant dying technique now designated by UNESCO as a "Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity"

[135] The *angklung* is a musical instrument from Indonesia made of a varying number of bamboo tubes attached to a bamboo frame.

[136] A traditional rod puppetry form.

[137] Indonesian term used to refer to the headscarves worn by Muslim women



(Figure 4.4: Performers at the Raminten Cabaret)

As the image above displays, the Raminten stage is outfitted with professional lights and even a small wind machine that performers make prodigious use of during the show. A shallow downstage shortly gives way to a wide set of stairs traveling upstage, rimmed with multicolored led lights. A large wall of LED lights mark the upstage border of the performing space. Throughout the show these change colors, flash, and move. Combined with a high, barrel-curved ceiling supporting swags of sheer fabric, the entire effect brings to mind Las Vegas variety shows or the opening *mise-en-scène* of modern-day beauty pageants. The evening includes fourteen separate numbers including a grand finale featuring the entire company of back-up dancers. When Anjelica first takes the stage, it is to perform Kylie Minogue's 2001 hit "Can't Get You Out of My Head". She wears a gold sequin leotard decked out with red fringe, matching heels and a long blonde wig. As she sings, three young male back-up dancers in join her own stage, performing synchronized choreography. At one point she lays across their arms as they spin her around, never letting the hand-held microphone (although obviously not live) drop from her mouth. At various points during her performance, the colored pinwheels flash behind her, smoke machines erupt, and the sound machine tosses her blond hair. The overall effect

reminding me of pop diva's Las Vegas residency. The name *Raminten* comes from a character that Hamzah Sulaiman used to perform in a televised *Ketoprak* program entitled *Pengkolan*. He performed as *Ibu* Raminten, an old Javanese woman, who sold herbal drinks, liked to sing *Sinden* songs and dance. Cartoon depictions of Sulaiman in *Raminten* drag, striking humorous poses with provocative gestures are prominently displayed around the restaurant. Before entering the cabaret, one passes a kiosk stocked with *Ibu Raminten* memorabilia including the life-size statue of *Ibu* Raminten in a traditional Javanese *kebaya* and hands demurely folded seen below. There is typically a line of patrons taking photos with the statue. Given Sulaiman's own history of cross-gender performance it may come as less of a surprise that he chose to establish a "drag queen cabaret" within a family focused restaurant above a popular craft shop. Hamzah thinks that people should be more open-minded towards those who identify as transgender and people of other sexual orientations in Indonesia. When asked about the place of *waria* in society he says that "'Their personality is different from the bodies they were born with. For example, they were born as male, but they have the feelings of women'".[138]

For Sulaiman the city of Yogyakarta also plays a large role in this attitude. He explains, "Society here [Yogyakarta] is embracing diversity. In Indonesia, it is a little bit inconvenient to be transgender. However, in Yogyakarta it's okay…The Sultan of Yogyakarta does not mind at all about sexual diversity".[139] One can of course question the veracity of this statement. However, Sulaiman takes steps to manifest this perspective, and not simply by the act of hiring *waria*. The organization of Mirota itself is a reparative act. While the store downstairs offers a cultural display of *asli* (authentic) heritage, locals and tourists alike gather upstairs to see *waria* take the stage. The proximity Sulaiman cultivates positions as authentic Yogyanese, if not Indonesian, *waria* culture.

Around me the audience is enraptured from the opening number

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[138]House of Raminten: Jogya's Diversity Embracing Restaurant (2015, July 13) *The Jakarta Post* https://www.thejakartapost.com

[139] Uly. (2018, August 17)*Di Balik Pesona The House of Raminten, Culture Jawa Dan Modernasi* [web blog post] Retrieved from https://www.ideaidealy.com/2018/08/di-balik-pesona-hause-of-raminten.html

to the group finale. They cheer, clap, and laugh all the while enjoying food and drinks. Individual acts range from tightly choreographed group numbers to heartfelt solo ballads. Songs from Beyoncé, Ariana Grande, Jesse J and Indonesian pop-star Agnes Monica dominate the program. In comparison to the mall based *lipsinc* competitions discussed later in this chapter, and the hauntings of outdoor performances, the Raminten Cabaret occupies a particular sphere of professionalism. Even though discerning eyes may note that not all the performers are perfectly synced with their backing tracks (especially the English language numbers), this is a space of high glamour and spectacle. While the *waria pengamen* performers of Yogyakarta's street must fight to be recognized as artists engaged in a valuable practice, the *waria lipsinc* performs of the Raminten Cabaret are offered the chance to regularly display their skills in a venue whose tickets must often be reserved weeks in advance.

As this project continues to argue for the dialectic nature of genre and space in shaping *waria* public aesthetics I propose that it is significant that the Raminten *lipsinc* performances are categorized as cabaret. In her comprehensive cultural history of the European cabaret Lisa Appignanesi(1975) proposes that "what all cabarets share are the presence of spectacle and an intimate space in which people can smoke and talk, usually eat and drink"(1). The idea of intimacy is particularly useful here. There is a generative power in situating *lipsinc* as cabaret in that it is a space which provides intimacy cross difference. Similar to the mall performances discussed later in this chapter encounters after the show offer new spaces of intimacy. Here fans can purchase merchandise and have professional pictures taken with the *waria* headliners that then may be uploaded along with reviews on Trip Advisor and Yelp. This, of course, is not the same (sometimes undesired) intimacy generated by the *waria pengamen* flirtatiously joining a table of young men. Through negotiation of proximity and distance at the Raminten Cabaret, aesthetics and public intimacy intertwine in new ways within spaces formed by capitalism to shape a newly emergent "professional" *waria where intimate encounters are sought after* before intimate encounters with the audience are typically in the form of *pengamen* work. this allows for intimacy and professionalism the space of the *lipsinc* cabaret helps to reconcile the feelings against public sexuality associated with *waria* and lack of professionalism.

Conclusion: Dancing at the *Pesantren* and The Limits of Visibility

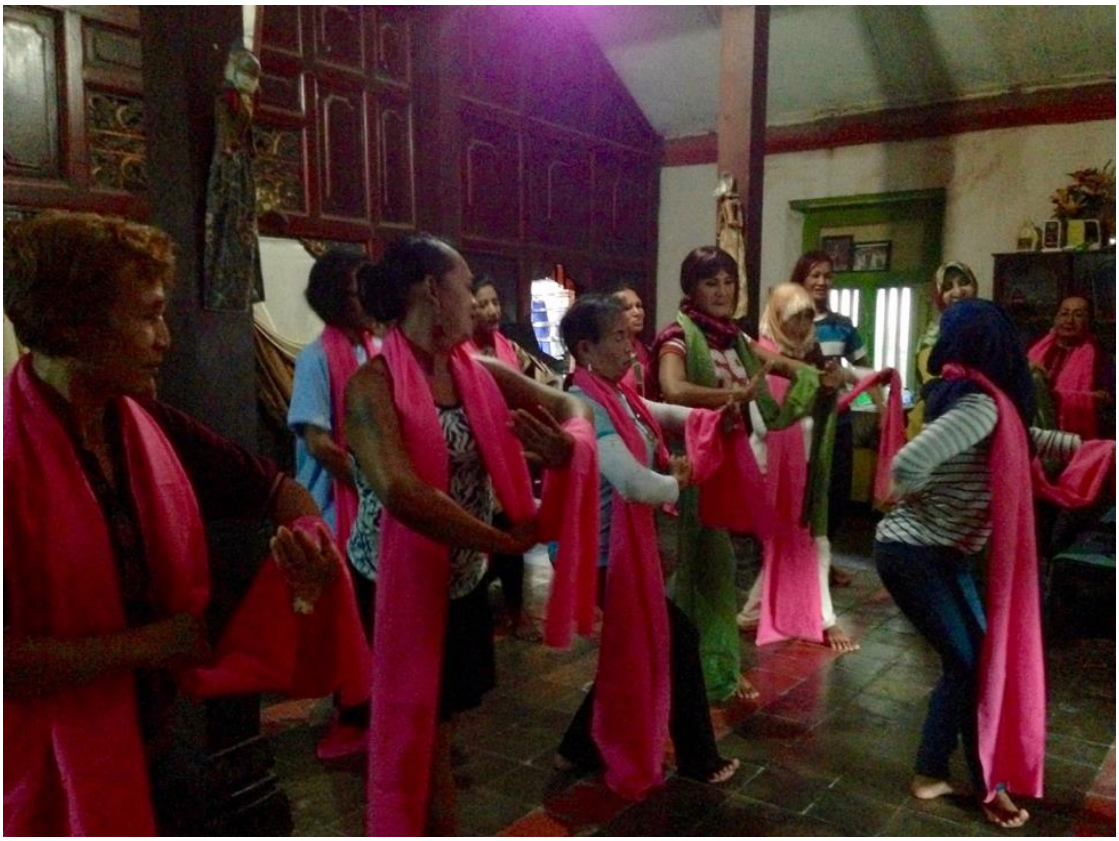
At the end I would like to turn back to the beginning. Or at least one of my first sustained ethnographic encounters We were with *Ibu* Sandra as she demonstrated classical gendered dance styles in the home of *Ibu* Shinta. Yet I did not explain that *Ibu* Shinta's home also serves as the primary meeting space of the *Pondok Pesantren Khusus Waria Al-Fattah Senin-Kamis Yogyakarta* or the Islamic School Only for *Waria* Monday-Thursday in Yogyakarta. *Pesantren* have played a pivotal role in the continuum of Indonesian traditions within Islam (Dhofier 1999; Van Bruinessen 1995), the emergence of movement centering "modern" Islamic values (Lukens-Bull 2001), and the role of religious leaders as "cultural brokers" (Geertz 1960). In *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam,* sociologist Zamakhsyari Dhofier explains that the word *pesantren* stems from *santri* (novice students at the *pesantren*), with the prefix *pe*-and suffix an-, thus literally meaning " the place for *santri*". Meanwhile the term *pondok*-which translates to "bamboo hut"-describes the made-of-bamboo dormitory where *santri* live (Dhofier 1999:2-3). Accordingly, conventional *pesantren* possess such essential elements as: *kyai* (the owner of and the most powerful man in the *pesantren*), pondok (the dormitory for s*antri*), *santri* (often segregated according to gender identification), and traditional Islamic teaching. The words *Khusus waria* (only for *waria)* are interesting because they deconstruct the deeply rooted social construction concerning the exclusivity of the conventional *pesantren* regarding identity and gender.

In contrast, one will not find large dormitories housing numerous *santris* learning normative Islam nor students with a watchful *kyai* monitoring their behavior at the *Pondok Pesantren Waria*. Instead, within a complex maze of small older homes found in the Jagalan subdistrict of Yogyakarta, marked by the seal of the Sultan, I encountered approximately eleven *waria* praying *maghrib*.[140] The *pesantren* was founded by an elder in the *waria* community known as Ibu Mariani after the 2007 earthquake in

[140] The Islamic religion as practiced by the majority of Indonesians requires all Muslims to do 5-time-prayer (*shalat*), either individually or communally. Times for performing *shalat* are: *subuh* (when the sun rises, about 04.30-05.30 in the morning according to Indonesian zone time), *dhuhur* (midday, about 12.00- 14.00 o'clock), *ashar* (in the afternoon, about 15.00- 17.00 o'clock), *magrib* (when the sun sets, about 18.00- 19.00 PM), and *isya* (after 19.00 PM).

Yogyakarta. At the time it served as a place where members across the religious and queer spectrum, gathered to pray for the victims and raise donations. After Ibu Mariani's death in 2011, Ibu Shinta relocated the *pesantren* to her own home. The space consists of a large open interior room connected to an outdoor covered platform, raised off of the ground almost like a small stage. This open-air platform faces a courtyard shared by numerous neighbors who don't seem to mind the almost daily gathering of *waria* coming together to share meals, sing, and gossip.

While a wide variety of academic studies, popular media, and documentaries focus on the entanglements of gender identity and piety that a *pesantren* for *waria* represents, few have paid attention to what I refer to as its "performance wing". Every week, in addition to gathering exclusively for the purpose of *shalat jamaah* (communal prayer) and *pengajian* (religious congregation to discuss or listen to sermons and Quaranic verses about particular issues, *waria* of varying ages and religious identifications meet to practice and learn *seni musik Islam* (Islamic musical arts) as well as regional classical and fold dances.



(figure 5.1: Heni teaches waria at the pesantren gambyong)

In the above image Heni, the young woman in the striped shirt and navy *hijab* teaches a room full of mostly older *waria Tari Gambyong*, a popular traditional dance form from Central Java. Heni is currently pursuing a master's degree in dance from *Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta*(The Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta ISI Yogyakarta)known colloquially as ISI Yogyakarta. however, she came to know of the *Pesantren* through a presentation given by Ibu Shinta when she was an undergraduate student at The Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN) in Yogyakarta. In our casual conversation, Heni expresses how this first encounter with Ibu Shinta gave her a new perspective and increased sympathy for *waria*. A shift in perspective she chooses to put into action through volunteering her time at the *Pesantren*. She expresses to me that it is her *pretasi and* privilege to teach *waria* dance if it helps them to be more accepted.

The group comprises various levels of experience and exposure to formal dance training. While Ibu Sandra can be seen stoically standing off to the right in the image, surveying the progress of the group, Ibu Ruli takes up space front and center. Sporting a zebra striped tank top and a black skirt Bu Rully, as she prefers to be called, hails from South Sulawesi. Claiming fifty-four years of age and originally hailing from the southern region of the Island of Sulawesi in Eastern Indonesia, Ruli tells me that she moved to Yogyakarta in 1983. She has been a member of the pesantren since its founding. Like Ibu Sandra, Bu Rully comes to the pesantren with formal dance training and professional performing experience. She tells me:

> I moved to Jogja to be a *Cantrik* (servant/pupil to professional artists) at *Bagong Kumsumardjo*, I learnt traditional dances from the very basic lessons. In the same year I started to study dance at a dance academy in Jogja from 1983-1988. Although I had to take some breaks in between, but I manage to finish my study in 1986 when I was 26. I wanted to continue studying dance, I did some research and learnt about ISI Yogyakarta, it was newly opened then.[141]

Ibu Ruli frames her access to formalized spaces in the arts, particularly her education at the prestigious ISI academy as the conduit through which she was able to effect the most change in her early career working for NGOs. She tells me:

> Back in the day, people were too scared to for work for NGOs. In the Order Baru (New Order) it

[141] Bu Rully, 2014. Conducted in English per request of interviewee

> was a different situation, you could be arrested for working with NGOs. Lucky, I knew some people from Cendana Family (President Suharto's family) so it was an advantage for me. However, my NGO worked in a different field. I did not start working on Trans issue until 2004, when I first joined the community [in Yogyakarta]. During that period [prior to 2004] I maintain my existence as a *waria*. I would work with PKK (the national family planning program) with housewives. I would ask them if they knew *waria* in their neighborhood. I knew the wife of the Governor, city council and other important persons. They would invite me to events in Sulawesi and Jaya Pura. One thing that made me sort of popular, I approached them through arts. I would dance traditional dances for their events for instance. I would teach them how to play music instrument like *Suling* [a simple bamboo flute], violin, and guitar.[142]

What Ibu Ruli expresses to me in the above exchange is the idea that, although not directly working on *waria* issues at the time, her formal knowledge of the arts allowed her to be actively reshape how *waria* were perceived. Furthermore, this cultural outreach was achieved through knowledge of "traditional dance". This skillset allowed Ibu Ruli to be visible not just as the lone *waria* of any PKK gathering, but also as the guest-star at government events, and therefore a productive member of society.

At the *Pesantren* I witness a group of elders reclaiming the space of feminine youth by learning the dances they may have been denied in their primary education. Associating with the folk allows them to not just exist as the rigorously shaped celestial female of the classic tradition, but to identify more closely with the community of women around them through embodied practice. *Waria* dancing as the *pesantren* not only act as an archive and a repository of historical dance, but they also enact an active and present site that undergirds and supports those *waria* that seek out this space of community.

Although I try to stay silent and unobtrusive in the scene, soon *Ibu* Ruli is taking her scarf off, draping it around my shoulders and pulling me into the lesson, wiggling her hips and laughing. Her gesture mimics that of the social dance, keying into the easy slippage of erotic playfulness characteristic of the

[142] Ibid

nyebong ethos of *waria* gatherings (see chapter 4) and *tari Gambyong's* roots in the folk *Tayub* form (see chapter 2).Yet the invitation to perform at the cultural festival hosted by the Muslim college is not insignificant especially in light of the current uptick in a more conservative Islamic influence across the archipelago. By performing at *adat* festivals, *waria* are able to visually connect their existence with Indonesia's cultural and religious history. Not only reclaiming forms originally danced by "transvestite dancers" but also linking their displays of femininity with the cultural cache of the proper performing woman.

The rehearsal captured above is for a public presentation at *Sunan Kalijaga* State Islamic University, Heni's alma mater. This public demonstration is the culmination of a project undertaken with master's degree students at the university interested in sexuality and Islam. Such collaborations are not an uncommon occurrence, as Ibu Shinta has cultivated a reputation for the *Pesantren* as the locus of cultural exchange between the *waria* community and the Yogyakarta's populous university system. In doing so, Ibu Shinta consciously opens the traditionally enclosed space of the *pesantren* to the public eye. One may argue that the consistent maintenance of such cultural outreach indicates a deft understanding of visibility as a technology of power. While the neoliberal order depends on the visual metaphors of "exclusion" or "obscurity" for the maintenance and reproduction of relations of domination, in her work the Argentine *piquetero* movement of the 1990s Paula Abal Medina(2011) argues that that " the subjects of this exclusion become living beings when they begin to struggle for visibility, exposing the relations of exploitation that characterize neoliberal capitalism"(89). Subjects who then are able to reconfigure areas of social inclusion.

In the Introduction to their anthology, *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, Eric A. Stanley, Reina Gosset, and Johanna Burton (2017) look at the increasing representation of trans identity throughout art and popular culture in recent years as paradoxical. They argue that Trans visibility is touted as a sign of a liberal society, but that it has coincided with a political moment marked both by heightened violence against trans people (especially trans women of color) and by the suppression of trans rights under civil law. They see trans people as being offered "doors"-- Entrances to visibility and recognition -- that are actually "traps," accommodating trans bodies and communities only insofar as they cooperate with dominant norms.

In the process of writing this dissertation I received with sadness the news that *waria*, gay and lesbian Indonesians have become subject to persistent attacks from the national media and their own government. Since the beginning of 2016, Indonesia has witnessed an enormous growth in egregious commentary about non-heteronormative practices and bodies, usually framed in terms of the acronym "LGBT." This was unthinkable when I started my fieldwork in 2014. It is important to note that *waria* have been spared (but have not been immune) from the most spectacular condemnation, which has largely focused on gay-identified men. Especially lamentable is the arrest of dozens of gay men in Surabaya and hundreds in Jakarta for attending gay parties or venues, and the meting out of corporal punishment to two men in Aceh, the first for homosexual acts under that Province's interpretation of *shari'a* law. While this was foreshadowed by earlier events such as violence directed at gay men when making political claims (Boellstorff 2004), the passing of a pornography law (Bellows 2011), and the intensification of the employment of shame as a disciplining force (Bennett and Davies 2015, 13–14) what occurred in early 2016 was a remarkable escalation. A Human Rights Watch report on the events that precipitated the attacks on LGBT at that time provides a sense of its immediate aftermath (Knight and Harsono 2016). Tom Boellstorff's (2016), and Benjamin Hegerty and Ferdiansyah Thajib's (2016) essays, provide an overview and preliminary analysis of these events. In February of 2016, members of the Islamic Jihad Front (FJI) descended on the pesantren demanding its closure. Caught in the trap of visibility Ibu Shinta subsequently agreed that the *Pesantren* would remained closed until 2018.

While this project has traced the ways that *waria* invest in visibility through public performances as a path through which they might have access to livable lives, at the end I confront the limits of those investments. Ultimately Stanley et al. speculate about a third term: "the trapdoor, neither entrance nor exit, but a secret passageway leading elsewhere". Perhaps *waria* investments in performance will ultimately lead elsewhere, to other ways of being and defining oneself in public.

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