
LANGUAGES OF GENDER AND NEUROSIS IN THE INDONESIAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1945-1949*

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A Confidential State Department Report

On October 8, 1948, a senior official in the Netherlands Embassy in Washington DC handed an English translation of a Dutch memorandum to Frederick Nolting, who at that particular moment served as acting director of the Philippines and Southeast Asian Affairs Office (PSA) in the State Department. Classified as secret, the document bore the title "Relevant Portion of a Confidential Report of an Important Netherlands Source in Indonesia dated September 13, 1948." A few weeks earlier, the original Dutch version of the report had begun to circulate in Jakarta under the signature of Lieutenant-General Simon Hendrik Spoor, the Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch military forces in Indonesia.¹ The first three paragraphs of the text conjured up a well-

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¹ "Relevant portion of a confidential report of an important Netherlands source in Indonesia, dated September 13, 1948," in Records of the Department of State, decimal files (Record Group 59, hereafter RG 59; RG 59 refers to the decimal files unless noted otherwise), Box No. 6440, 856D.00/10-848, in National Archives II, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NA II). The original Dutch version, which began to circulate in Jakarta in mid-September, can be found in S. J. van der Wal, P. J. Drooglever, and M. Schouten,

connected bridegroom and his fabulously rich fiancée, who were being urged by relatives abroad to resolve their personal discord, chronicling “a family romance” gone awry.²

The introduction made General Spoor’s report extraordinary. His narrative depicted the Dutch-Indonesian confrontation as a nasty fight between a rational, if possessive, Dutchman—acting in the manner of a “macho stud,” as Frank Costigliola has recently typified such behavior in the context of US foreign policy in the post-World War II era—and a neurotic Indonesian bride-to-be.³ In Spoor’s story, the Indonesian Republic emerged as a volatile woman, who had acknowledged that her relationship with her Dutch fiancé was a travesty.⁴ Since the birth of the Indonesian nationalist movement in the first half of the twentieth century, it had gradually dawned on her that any kind of union with the northern European groom would always be based on exploitation rather than kindness or generosity. At the Indonesian woman’s behest the couple had separated on August 17, 1945. This was the day when a group of restless young nationalists had pushed Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta into proclaiming the sovereign Republic of Indonesia. Since then, the newly liberated woman was adamant about receiving her official freedom, and she pursued her independence fiercely. As Spoor intimated, however, the ill-fated couple was under enormous pressure from the international community to reconcile their differences.

My analysis, in this instance, is not preoccupied with General Spoor per se, even if he plays a central role because the confidential report appeared in his name. Instead, I rely on the General’s perceptions of his Indonesian enemy, registered in his idiosyncratic narrative, as a multi-layered cultural text. The author and his eccentric story function as devices that can illuminate the lingering habit of male Dutch colonizers, whether in military or civilian positions, to inscribe Indonesians with feminine attributes, consisting of such human qualities as weakness and malleability.⁵ I also use his allegory as a point of departure for an examination of the metamorphosis that had taken place in the autonomous agency of the revolutionary guardians of the Indonesian Republic. I do so by exploring the ways in which they understood, articu-

eds., *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen* (hereafter NIB), vol. 15 (1948) (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis/Martinus Nijhoff, 1992), p. 49.

² Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

³ Frank Costigliola, “The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance,” *Diplomatic History* 21, 2 (Spring 1997): 165; Emily S. Rosenberg has noted that during the Cold War “the word ‘neurosis’ became largely attached to the ‘problem’ of female adjustment and was almost totally feminized.” See Emily Rosenberg, “‘Foreign Affairs’ After World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics,” *Diplomatic History* 18, 1 (Winter 1994): 67.

⁴ Y. B. Mangunwijaya, in his novel, *Durga Umayi* (1991) has also used the figure of an “abused, angry woman” to “enact symbolically the trajectory” of the Indonesian Republic’s history; see Michael H. Bodden, “Woman as Nation in Mangunwijaya’s *Durga Umayi*,” *Indonesia* 62 (October, 1996): 69.

⁵ Or, as Spoor wrote in the Netherlands armed services magazine in Indonesia, *Wapenbroeders*, the “defenseless and submissive Indonesian people”; quoted by Ton Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal, door zijn vrienden en soldaten* (Amsterdam: H. Meulenhoff, 1953), p. 78.

lated, and acted upon their newly discovered intellectual and physical confidence or "self-sacrificing valor."⁶

In this context, the specific date of Spoor's memorandum is highly relevant. He wrote his story at a time when the Republic's defenders had shocked and bewildered most of their former Dutch colonial overlords with an unprecedented display of toughness. Their sudden vigor could be defined as masculine in character, as if they had evolved into a novel "species of Super-Indonesians."⁷ Since independence had made its "radiant entrance" and provoked an "epidemic rage for politics" in August, 1945, as Pramoedya Ananta Toer described the situation in his short story *Dia jang menjerah* (She Who Gave Up), the Republic's protectors appeared to have absorbed a brand new identity.⁸ As a result, they perceived themselves and their fellow revolutionaries as liberated, at long last, from Dutch colonial inscriptions of effeminacy.

Nonetheless, Spoor still invoked metaphors of gender and pathology that found their origins in the language of Dutch colonial mastery. This discourse, in turn, was inflected by the legacy of the European Enlightenment, which had yielded in the modern era a characterization of indigenous peoples in Asia as fragile creatures, in desperate need of masculine guidance from the West. Secondly, Spoor's statements about his antagonists also hinted at the psychoanalytic language invented by Sigmund Freud, whose ideas about sexuality and neurosis had entered the imaginative world of many reasonably educated Europeans and Americans in the post-World War II period. A third influence on Spoor's story derived from the rhetoric of the newly created United Nations, which formulated the hope that every country in the world would join "The Family of Nations" and submit to the UN Security Council's arbitration instead of resorting to armed struggle in order to resolve conflict.

But Spoor's parable, perhaps unwittingly, reflected Indonesians' new intractability, too, because he represented the Republic as a thoroughly modern woman who was firm and feisty instead of soft and submissive. His report began as follows:

Speaking in the House of Commons in December 1946, Mr. Churchill said with reference to India: 'If either bride or bridegroom fails to appear in church, the result is not what one would call a unilateral marriage. It is absolutely essential that both parties be present.'

The present situation in Indonesia is even more unsatisfactory than the contingency described by Mr. Churchill. The bride not only refuses to appear in church; no, she has induced her friends and the best man to institute proceedings in court against the bridegroom; she allows her admirers to commence all sorts of unusual and unseemly acts in her bridegroom's house; she belies and deceives

⁶ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution, 1944-1946* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 31.

⁷ Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Verwerking en koloniaal trauma," *Bzzlletin* 228 (September, 1995), pp. 3-8; P. M. Van Wulfsten Palthe, *Psychological Aspects of the Indonesian Problem* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949), p. 46.

⁸ Henk Maier, et al., translate the title of this story as "Resignation" (*Berusting*), in Harry Poeze and Henk Schulte Nordholt, eds., *De roep om merdeka. Indonesische vrijheidslievende teksten uit de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam/The Hague: Jan Mets/NOVIB, 1995), p. 117; Benedict R. O'G Anderson, "Language, Fantasy, Revolution: Java, 1900-1950," in Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey, eds., *Making Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Studies on Southeast Asia, No. 20, 1996), p. 38.

him, engages constantly in flirtations with adventurous suitors, and has even allowed herself to be ensnared by a great-uncle, a real bear of a man, who is after her innocence and wealth. As if that were not enough, she contests the validity of the marriage settlement, although it was drawn up with the most scrupulous care, never hesitating at the same time to invoke the document when alleging fear that her bridegroom is about to assault her. Finally, she has shown such peculiar leanings in the field of business that the bridegroom and his family, and in fact the friends of both parties, have been utterly shocked thereby. In short: the bride's mental equipment appears to be slightly out of order.

Normally the marriage would, of course, not take place. She would be entrusted to the care of a few competent doctors, who in all probability would suggest a period of treatment in a center for neurotic patients under the guidance and supervision of some husky nurses. On his part, the bridegroom would look for another bride, perhaps—so as to create the least possible scandal—from the mentally more normal sisters of the bride. But the Family Council—a family [council] with the widest ramifications throughout the whole world—has decided that, willy-nilly, the wedding has to take place, and to that end it has engaged a firm of lawyers rather than a neurologist, in order to keep the bride away from the sensuous great-uncle if at all possible, binding her at the same time to her groom by another marriage-settlement. Small wonder that each day the latter feels more uncomfortable.⁹

The Context and Meanings of General Spoor's Story

At the time Spoor wrote his introduction, efforts to resolve the Dutch-Indonesian conflict by diplomatic means had reached yet another impasse. "Stubborn, reciprocal distrust" continued to hamper the negotiations, especially after Dutch military forces had mounted a full-scale attack on the Indonesian Republic in late July, 1947.¹⁰ This first Colonial War—or "police action," as the Dutch labeled it euphemistically—had provoked a resolution of the UN Security Council on August 26, 1947, which signaled the beginning of the United Nations' formal involvement in the Indonesian Question through its Committee of Good Offices (GOC) and later, the United Nations Commission on Indonesia (UNCI).¹¹

Under the auspices of American, Australian, and Belgian representatives to the GOC, a cease-fire accord had been signed on board the USS *Renville* in January 1948. The *Renville* settlement, however, proved to be "a lemon," as one of the US foreign service officers intimately involved in the deliberations, Charlton Ogburn, remembered many years later. It should have been called "the *Renville* non-agreement," Ogburn wrote in 1985, because the Dutch signed it with "one

⁹ "Relevant portion of a confidential report," September 13, 1948, RG 59, Box No. 6440, 856D.00/10-848, NA II.

¹⁰ "Statement of Senator [Frank Porter] Graham on the Indonesian Situation," April 5, 1949, *Congressional Record - Senate* (1949) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office) 81st Congress, 1st session, No. 95, 1949, p. 3922.

¹¹ See Robert McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-49* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 181-209, for a detailed discussion.

understanding" and the Republic's leaders with "quite another."¹² As a result, the murky compromise reached on board the USS *Renville* produced little more than a litany of formal complaints.

The bulk of Spoor's chronicle was typical of this acrimonious pattern; it constituted yet another Dutch attempt to call the attention of the GOC and, indirectly, American policy makers, to the Indonesian Republic's infractions of the *Renville* truce. These reports consisted of English translations of strategic directives issued by the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI), the official army of the Indonesian Republic, which Holland's Military Intelligence Service claimed to have confiscated. In Dutch narratives, such violations were perpetrated not only by the TNI, but also by armed civilian squads—"bands of gangsters," the Netherlands representative to the UN Security Council in Lake Success called them—consisting of young men who harbored a passionate loyalty to the Republic.¹³

Sporting colorful names such as *Beruang Merah* (Red Bears), *Barisan Gorila* (Gorilla Guards), *Harimau Liar* (Wild Tigers), or *Banteng Hitam* (Black Bulls), and equipped with left-over Japanese guns, samurai swords, machetes, spears, and all sorts of home-made weapons, these groups of fiery freedom fighters engaged in surprise attacks on Dutch military patrols. Such irregular crews of revolutionaries (*pemuda*) also raided European-owned plantations and allegedly coerced peasants in village communities outside Republican territory into providing them with food and shelter. Many of the Dutch protests filed with the GOC emphasized that Indonesians' incursions always occurred with either the full "backing" or at least the implicit "knowledge" of the Republican leadership in Yogyakarta.¹⁴

Every now and then, Netherlands officials were quite imaginative when conveying the statements of Republican politicians, whose communications they tried to intercept as often as possible. Dutch accounts purporting to describe the serious threat that communism posed to the Republic were equally inventive. Some American diplomats, however, learned to read in between the lines of such ominous tales. The US cultural attaché in Batavia, Willard Anderson Hanna, noted in September 1949, for instance, that the "grave danger" of communism was nothing but "a figment of the Dutch

¹² Personal letter from Charlton Ogburn to Gerlof D. Homan, circa August 20, 1985, p. 3.

¹³ George E. Jones, "UN Seeks Way to Help Indonesia," *New York Times*, August 22, 1947, p. 3. Quoted by Paul F. Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears: Fifty Years of US-Indonesian Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 38.

¹⁴ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, p. 45. Anthony J. S. Reid, "The Revolution in Regional Perspective," in J. van Goor, ed., *The Indonesian Revolution: Papers of the Conference held in Utrecht, June 17-20, 1986*, *Utrechtse Historische Cahiers*, 7, 2/3 (1986), has noted that the *pemuda* rank-and-file were "distinctly amorphous" and that recruitment was unrelated to age, pp. 188-189; "Operatie order No. 1/stop/48 (Perintah Siasat)," June 12, 1948, from Panglima Besar Sudirman to Sukarno, Hatta, and high army commanders regarding "Wingate Actions." The Netherlands' Central Military Intelligence Service (CMI) seized this report from Mohammad Hatta's personal archives in the wake of the second police action in December, 1948. The Dutch delegation to the GOC used Sudirman's communication with Hatta as one example, among many others, to prove that the government in Yogyakarta was fully aware of the Republic's truce violations. *Yogya Dokumen*, No. 5319, *Arsip Nasional*, Jakarta (hereafter ANJ).

imagination," which they tried to substantiate by spreading leaflets and posters that were outright forgeries or "flagrant Dutch publicity stunts."¹⁵

Hence, Lieutenant-General Spoor's narrative belonged to a diplomatic genre in which both sides in the conflict had become quite adept. The Indonesian Republic's politicians also submitted a steady stream of grievances to the UN committee in Batavia, accusing the Royal Netherlands Army of similar transgressions. Both the Dutch delegation to the GOC and its Indonesian counterpart began to resemble antagonistic schoolboys, who represented their competitors' behavior in the worst possible light to their teacher. On May 20, 1948, for example, a memorandum arrived at the GOC offices in Jakarta which bore the headline "Dutch terrors and barbarities"; it quoted from *Merdeka*, a publication issued by the Indonesian Information Service in Bombay, India. A list of atrocities followed: the Dutch "massacre of forty thousand Indonesians in South Celebes, their suffocation of forty-six Indonesian prisoners-of-war . . . in a railroad car [at Bondowoso], the machine-gunning of three hundred Indonesians at Rawah Gedeh, the burning alive of Indonesians in Bandung, etc." These appalling events, which were more than mere allegations, happened after the *Renville* accord had been signed. To Republican partisans, it was self-evident that none of these agreements "have deterred the Dutch fascists from their inhumanities."¹⁶ General Spoor, for his part, admitted to a group of journalists in Holland in January 1948, that "of course" his troops committed truce violations, too, because "we are not saints!"¹⁷

The Indonesian side also tended to embellish the complaints it lodged against the Dutch in Java and Sumatra. In fact, UN administrators in Batavia—or the battery of UN military observers in the field (MILOBS)—had been placed in a role much more complicated than that of a schoolmaster having to cope with a flood of accusations unleashed by two querulous schoolboys. The task of UN officials was more akin to the therapeutic burdens of a psychiatrist, charged with restraining the behavior of two patients who were stuck in a pattern of aggression and paranoia.

Spoor's introductory paragraphs, however, distinguished his narrative from the avalanche of reports that had preceded and would follow it. In his introduction he used a model of marriage and the family—and its inherent conflicts and permutations—as a rhetorical devise designed to "naturalize relationships of unequal power."¹⁸ By transforming the conflict between the Indonesian Republic and its colonial rulers from the Netherlands into a neurotic family drama, he appealed to a

¹⁵ Willard A. Hanna to Glenn A. Abbey, "Observations Made on My Visit to Jogjakarta (Sept. 8 - 13) Regarding the Political Situation in The Republic," forwarded to the Secretary of State by Glenn A. Abbey, No. 329, September 19, 1949, RG 59, Box 6442, 856D.00/9-1949, NA II. It is likely that the Consulate's political officer, Glenn Abbey, disagreed with Hanna's report because he was convinced that the Republic was a hotbed of communism.

¹⁶ Netherlands Delegation (Security Committee) to the GOC, signed Major-General D.C. Buurman van Vreeden, May 20, 1948, No. 935, quoting from *Merdeka*, Nos. 17-18, March 30, 1948. DAG13/2.0.0./#4, Archives of Missions and Commissions, subgroup 13: Good Offices Committee (GOC) and UN Commission for Indonesia (UNCI), United Nations Archives, New York City (hereafter UN Archives, NYC). Ironically, this version was submitted to the GOC by the Dutch delegation in another attempt to subvert or ridicule the claims made by the Indonesian Delegation to the GOC; see also Ad Van Liempt *De Lijkentrein. Waarom 46 Gevangenen de reis naar Surabaya niet overleefden* (The Hague: Sdu, 1997).

¹⁷ Quoted by Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 136.

¹⁸ Costigliola, "The Nuclear Family," *Diplomatic History*, p. 163.

residual knowledge about conjugal unions between women and man and other kinship ties. Such relationships were eminently recognizable, regardless of the social sensibilities or cultural background of his story's readers.

Identifying the players in Spoor's narrative is an intriguing game. As an army officer with extensive military experience in the Indies during the 1920s and 1930s, he had assimilated Europeans' tendency to view their colonial subjects in Java and elsewhere as effeminate and childlike. This vision often implied, as was the case with British representations of Bengali men, that they lacked "manly virility." In such colonial constructions, feminine characteristics were projected onto native men and served as a proxy for passivity and weakness, which contrasted with sturdy Dutchmen, who possessed the masculine energy to rule the Indonesian archipelago.¹⁹

Spoor, however, transformed the supposedly delicate Javanese, who supplied the Republic's largest percentage of soldiers and politicians fighting against the reimposition of Dutch colonial rule, into a hysterical woman, about to be forced into a marriage to a Dutchman she despised and had long since rejected as a lover. But she needed to safeguard her future livelihood and economic interests. Despite the revulsion she felt for the bridegroom, she recognized that it might be expedient to continue her negotiations with the Dutchman and his family, even if she questioned the validity of the latest prenuptial agreement drafted on board of the USS *Renville*. Nonetheless, it was the only document to which she could appeal in moments of danger, when her spurned suitor had become so irate that he threatened to assault her.

At the same time, Spoor announced that the Dutch bridegroom hoped to make yet another attempt at an advantageous marital settlement with the bride, in a ceremony to be officiated by the anointed representatives of the world community of nations. After centuries of living in sin with his Indonesian *nyai* (concubine), he was finally prepared to make an honest married woman out of her. The suitor may still have harbored either a secret passion or a begrudging love for his mistress, now reconfigured as a newly emancipated fiancé who tried to defy the dictates of an arranged marriage. Above all, he wanted to preserve his access to her luxurious wealth. Her fortune, after all, had given the Dutchman and his relatives a delightful free ride in the past.

But the bride, Spoor intimated, continued to balk; she induced her friends and cousins, whether they hailed from India, Pakistan, Egypt, or Australia, into participating in "unseemly acts" while helping her to escape from the clutches of the despised groom. She also pleaded with the wedding's "best man" from America to defend her honor in the court of world opinion. Besides, the Republican bride allowed herself to be "ensnared" by "a real bear of man": her robust great uncle in the Soviet

¹⁹ Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester/New York: University of Manchester Press, 1995), p. 19; Gail Ching-Liang Low, in "His Stories? Narratives and Images of Imperialism," in Erica Carter, James Wishart, and Judith Squires, eds., *Space & Place. Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993), also approaches imperialism as a "culture of masculinity," p. 188. The best known example of this tendency in Dutch colonial literature is Louis Couperus's novel, *The Hidden Force* (Amsterdam, 1900; trans. London, 1922, reprint Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985). It should be noted here that other ethnic groups in the Indonesian archipelago were inscribed with manly attributes, such as the fierce Acehnese fighters in north Sumatra or the bold Buginese sailors in southern Sulawesi.

Union.²⁰ She did so because he might be able to strengthen her bargaining power in the prenuptial negotiations or, perhaps, because she was not entirely impervious to his avuncular charm.

General Spoor suggested that most members of the family were extremely alarmed, due to the appearance of a Republican dalliance with the Russian great uncle. They also feared that the Indonesian bride had been mishandling her economic affairs in an immature fashion, ever since she began to extricate herself from her Dutch fiancé.²¹ By ascribing “peculiar leanings” to her in the field of business, Spoor may have alluded to an offer of being adopted by a shrewd American entrepreneur named Matthew Fox.²² But every relative wanted to benefit from her fabulous wealth on a continuous basis. If she were to give Mr. Fox predominant access to her assets—treasures consisting of oil, rubber, tin, tobacco, and other valuable raw materials—or squander them in other ways, the whole family would be left out in the cold. In fact, some among them had become convinced that the Republican woman had taken leave of her senses.

Given these circumstances, Commander-in-Chief Spoor proposed that any form of settlement should be postponed indefinitely until she could regain her sanity. For the time being, the unstable Republican female should be committed to a “center for neurotic patients” staffed with “husky nurses,” if only to prevent her from engaging in foolish actions. This would give the “best man” in Washington DC some respite, by allowing him to straddle the imperialist fence a little longer. The bride’s temporary commitment to a mental institution would enable American foreign policy makers to continue their walk along the “tightrope,” as a personal friend of US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, formulated it in March 1949, they had rigged up between their long-standing support of an old friend, the Dutch groom, and their new concerns with securing the loyalty of the Indonesian bride, even if “some of the strands of the tightrope are actually rotten.”²³

While she would be hospitalized in a psychiatric clinic, General Spoor speculated that the Dutch bridegroom could perhaps find a pliable spouse among her “mentally more normal” sisters, all of whom were called *negara* (lit. state; in the context of Spoor’s

²⁰ Costigliola, in “The Nuclear Family,” *Diplomatic History*, has shown that US foreign policymakers used a similar language of predatory sexual prowess when describing the Soviet Union during the Cold War, p. 166.

²¹ This attitude persisted through the Round Table Conference. “Although politically the Indonesian[s] . . . have shown themselves very well prepared and astute bargainers, economically they are ‘like children,’” Arthur R. Ringwalt’s dispatch No. 1565, entitled “Indonesia,” from the US Embassy in London to the Secretary of State, October 3, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6442, 856D.00/10-349, NA II.

²² See the report from Sumitro Djojohadikusumo in New York to the Indonesian Republic’s government, “State Department’s attitude towards the Indonesian Question in general and our agreement with Matthew Fox in particular,” April 26, 1948, Yogya Dokumen, No. 5314, ANJ. John Coast, in *Recruit to Revolution: Adventure and Politics in Indonesia* (London: Christophers, 1952), wrote about Sumitro that he was “bespectacled, quick, slick, intelligent.” Coast described “Matty” Fox as “bald, plump, eager-eyed, romantic, emotional, a film wizard, a financial juggler, who with typical American bigheartedness wanted to adopt Indonesia—a dangerous psychological attitude to a sensitive and proud people,” p. 125.

²³ Personal, undated letter addressed to “Dear Dean” from Louis B. Wehle, a Wall Street lawyer, to Secretary of State Acheson, “re: Indonesia,” received on March 28, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/3-2849, NA II. Dean Acheson had become Secretary of State, succeeding George C. Marshall, on January 20, 1949.

story, *negara* referred to the different regions of the Indonesian archipelago that entertained a continuing colonial relationship with the Netherlands, separate from the Indonesian Republic). If the Dutchman played his cards right, the sisters might grant him a perpetual share in the abundant resources owned by the bride and her siblings. Hence, he progressed from his “disgusting flirtations” with several *negara* sisters who did little more than “sing Dutch songs”—as the thoughtful Dutch negotiator with Republican politicians, Willem Schermerhorn, recorded in his fastidious diary—to an unabashed search for a series of mistresses who might be an alternative to the Republican bride.²⁴

Indeed, while trying to isolate the Republican bride, the Dutch groom moved into a promiscuous mode. In the process of creating the United States of Indonesia, he set up a polygamous, neo-colonial household with the most docile among the Indonesian Republic’s sisters. The architecture of this polyglot residence in Indonesia was designed to “exclude” the intractable Republican bride from entering his new mansion; he also tried to cut her off financially.²⁵ But his efforts would fail. Eventually, as a progressive newspaper in Amsterdam reported, it would become clear that the Dutchman’s house was constructed on “quicksand” and would prove a ramshackle building, structurally unsound on the inside as well as the outside.²⁶

To Spoor’s dismay, the UN Security Council wielded a wide-ranging authority over family members scattered among the many corners of the globe, and it bore the economic interests and political aspirations of distant relatives in mind. Temporarily residing in the town of Lake Success on Long Island, while awaiting its move to newly constructed UN buildings in New York City, the family’s fractious Security Council was dominated by the US “best man” and his allies. But it also counted among its

²⁴ C. Smit, ed., *Het dagboek van Schermerhorn. Geheim verslag van Prof. ir. W. Schermerhorn als voorzitter der commissie-generaal voor Nederlands-Indië, 20 september 1946 tot 7 oktober, 1947*, vol. 2 (Groningen: Wolters Noordhoff, 1970), p. 755.

²⁵ Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *‘Renville’ als keerpunt in de Nederlands-Indonesische onderhandelingen* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff, 1980), p. 223.

²⁶ The word “quicksand” was used in “The Fiasco is Now Nearly Completed—On the Way to Destruction,” an editorial in *Het Parool*, March 15, 1949, sent by Counselor Robert D. Coe in US Embassy in The Hague to Secretary of State, “Transmitting Leftist Labor Editorial on Indonesia Problem,” March 22, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/3-2249, NA II.

Regarding internal divisions in the Dutch military efforts at re-colonizing Indonesia, the British chargé d’affaires informed a US Foreign Service officer in Nanking, China, in July, 1946, that morale in the Netherlands Army was low, because “there were 673 white Dutch troops hospitalized in Surabaya with self-inflicted wounds.” Taken from incoming telegram from Nanking, signed Smyth, July 6, 1946, RG 59, Box 6439, 856D.00/7-646, NA II. By early 1949, the discontent of Dutch soldiers had allegedly progressed from “self-inflicted wounds” to a full-fledged “mutiny of the Dutch army.” A Republican Radio Broadcast from West Sumatra reported that “213 Dutch soldiers from the Royal Netherlands Army [KL] and the Royal Netherlands Indies Army [KNIL], stationed at Bukit Tinggi, were shot dead for revolting against their Army Command . . . resulting in a gloomy and strained atmosphere”; in addition, “Fifty Dutch soldiers from the ‘Blauwe Pijpers’ Unit surrendered to the Republican guerillas in the Karo region.” Reported in *Merdeka*, Indonesian Information Service (25 Rifle Street, Colombo 2, Ceylon), vol. II, no. 3, February 20, 1949. In RG 165, Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs, Military Intelligence Division, Regional File Netherlands East Indies, Box 2634, NA II.

members a range of dissenting voices, speaking in either Polish or Russian, which contested America's patriarchal power.²⁷

Nevertheless, the Council decided that in order to protect the wealthy bride from lustful, bear-like figures such as the Soviet great uncle, some form of compromise between the quarreling couple had to be secured. Council members clung to this vision because the suitor from Holland had earned his spurs as a crafty businessman; in the past, he had administered his concubine's vast wealth with great efficiency, while allowing his uncles and cousins to share in the lavish profits generated by her fertile soil.²⁸ Hence, instead of locating a competent psychiatrist, the family's Council in Lake Success hired a firm of wily attorneys. This pack of lawyers was instructed to provide their "Good Offices" and bully the rebellious bride and agitated groom into some kind of marital arrangement once again.

Here the fable ended. The Commander-in-Chief composed his curious introduction on September 13, 1948, a mere five days before an uprising, orchestrated by radical organizations on the "crossroads of the left," which opposed the Republican government's policies, took place in the city of Madiun in central Java.²⁹ Owing to their decisive action against the rebels in Madiun, Sukarno and Hatta managed to convince the State Department in Washington DC and observers in western Europe of their anti-communist credentials, despite Dutch propaganda depicting Republican leaders as political extremists, who were entirely beholden to directives from Moscow. Spoor, for his part, invoked family rhetoric yet again. He described the Madiun revolt as a dispute between brothers (*broedertwist*).³⁰

The Republican government's forceful suppression of the insurrection in Madiun renewed America's involvement in trying to reach a diplomatic solution brokered by emissaries of the UN Security Council. But soon thereafter, the feverish negotiations to reach a Dutch-Indonesian settlement stalled again. As a result, on December 19, 1948, Spoor and his troops were instructed to mount another military attack on the Yogyakarta Republic, resulting in the arrest of the top leaders of the Indonesian Republic and their incarceration on the island of Bangka. Rather than being able to rest on his laurels, though, he noted with growing frustration that the Dutch military assault on the Indonesian Republic's life seemed to constitute a moment of reckoning for observers abroad. Most countries, whether they belonged to the American or the Soviet bloc, finally realized that it was unlikely that the Indonesian Republic and the Netherlands would ever be able to coexist, even if their liaison would be constructed as a "loose relationship," a "light union," or a "soft link."³¹

²⁷ *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-1948* (Lake Success, New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1949), pp. 363-364.

²⁸ See the general discussion of Gerlof D. Homan, "American Business Interests in the Indonesian Republic, 1946-1949," *Indonesia* 35 (April, 1983): 125-132.

²⁹ For a recently published analysis, based on his 1968 MA thesis, see Soe Hok Gie, *Orang-orang di Persimpangan Kiri Jalan: Kisah Pemberontakan Madiun September 1948* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Budaya Bentang, 1997).

³⁰ Quoted by Petra H. M. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië, 1945-1950* (The Hague: Sdu, 1991), p. 137.

³¹ The phrase "loose relationship" was attributed to the conservative Dutch politician C. P. M. Romme; see US Ambassador Herman Baruch in The Hague to Secretary of State, Telegram No. 274, reporting on a

Spoor's *blitzkrieg* on behalf of the Netherlands had obviously failed to produce the desired outcome. Instead of prompting the Republican leaders to accommodate by allowing Dutch administrators to take over the economic and political management of the archipelago again, the Indonesian Republic had emerged as a hapless victim of Holland's military aggression. In the eyes of allies overseas, Dutch behavior had gone beyond the pale of propriety. According to George Kennan's influential Policy Planning Staff in the US State Department, it comprised an "incredible piece of Dutch stupidity" which had antagonized most of Holland's allies and business partners.³²

Due to a worldwide condemnation of the Dutch military action, General Spoor was forced to concede that the attempt to create a Dutch-Indonesian Commonwealth had been jeopardized. At the same time, the Security Council prodded the increasingly self-confident Republic and the chastened colonial rulers from the Netherlands to settle their division of property. Some Dutch politicians admitted, meanwhile, that their actions had been "stupid and arrogant" because they had "flouted world public opinion."³³ At the Round Table Conference in The Hague the two parties finalized their separation agreement. In late December 1949, the Indonesian Republic received complete freedom after its political leaders as well as the Dutch government had "jumped" through a large number of "hoops" held up by the United States.³⁴

Sources of General Spoor's Gendered Language

This parable provides a novel perspective on the birth of an independent Indonesia as well as the role played by the United States. In the starkly gendered imagery of the report's introduction, the Netherlands emerged as a "manly" nation; so did the US, through its paternalistic position within the UN Security Council. America had been called upon to referee the conflict, even though America as a "trans-ocean patron," in the text of the Soviet publication *Red Star*, would probably reduce Indonesia to a "puppet" in the exact same way as the Netherlands had done.³⁵ The Indonesian Republic was "demonized" as a quintessential female, who engaged in all sorts of devious tricks while trying to disentangle herself from a loathsome suitor. In the eyes

conversation with Romme, then the leader of the Catholic Faction (KVP) in the Second Chamber, March 23, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 644, 856D.00/3-2349. "Light Union" was the formulation of a Netherlands Embassy official in Washington DC, H. A. Helb, in Memorandum of Conversation with Frederick Nolting, "Indonesian Developments and Netherlands-US Cooperation," June 15, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/6-1549, NA II. The phrase "The link between the Netherlands and its former colonies, however 'soft' it might be," was used by Ali Sastroamidjojo in a letter to Frank Porter Graham, April 2, 1949, Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

³² As George Kennan's Policy Planning Staff referred to the second police action in a draft policy paper on southeast Asia, February 28, 1949, in folder labeled "Policy Papers (miscellaneous)," RG 59, Philippines and Southeast Asian Affairs Office (hereafter PSA), Box No. 5. In the final National Security Council's policy paper No. 51, "US Policy Towards Southeast Asia," this phrase was replaced with "this Dutch course of action" in RG 59, PSA, Box No. 7. NA II.

³³ US Ambassador Herman Baruch in The Hague to Secretary of State, Telegram No. 523, June 17, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/6-1749, NA II.

³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between E. L. C. Schiff, Second Secretary of Netherlands Embassy in Washington, DC, and J. W. Scott of the Northern European Division, July 11, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/7-1149, NA II.

³⁵ Observer, "Conference in The Hague (The Traitors Unmasked)," *Red Star*, August 27, 1949, translation sent by US Embassy in Moscow to Secretary of State, No. 506, RG 59, Box No. 6442, 856D.00/9-349, NA II.

of some Dutchmen, meanwhile, President Sukarno's reputation for narcissism and emotionality may have functioned as a symbolic confirmation of the Republic's supposedly feminine character.³⁶

By recasting his enemy as female, Spoor tried to convince himself that his army could destroy the Republic with no effort at all. He apparently "boasted" that he could "break down the whole Republic within a week."³⁷ However cunning she might be, a woman who dared to fight with real men would quickly bite the dust, presumably because she possessed neither a killer instinct nor the requisite physical strength. One could speculate, in fact, that Spoor's imaginings about the Republic as a woman prompted him to underestimate its military muscle. Thinking of his enemy as feminine and frail may also have caused him to exaggerate the ease with which the Netherlands army could overpower the Republic.³⁸

The most pathetic figure in his story, of course, was the browbeaten Dutch fiancé, misunderstood by the outside world and driven to despair by the feminine antics of his intended. But this portrayal fitted into Spoor's amateur interests in psychology or gendered archetypes. He had described the first American delegate to the UN Security Council's GOC, Frank Porter Graham, for example, as suffering from "a well-known sentimentality complex known as underdog sympathy."³⁹ During the Fall of 1947 he had offered the opinion that the relationship between a skillful military commander and his soldiers should resemble the empathetic "bond between a father and his sons." In contrast, a bad army general was one who envisioned his role as a "majestic leader," in charge of legions of devoted followers in order to secure their "adultery." This type of military commander would accomplish little, because he did nothing but cultivate a "powerful feminine-hysterical element."⁴⁰

An example of such a perverse leader was Hitler, Spoor argued, because he had presented himself as a "grand seducer: mysterious Adolf, who made the hysterical Gretchen's head spin." In the case of Nazi-Germany's military rank and file, too, he depicted the enemy as a woman. Symbolizing Hitler's "mesmerized" disciples, Spoor asserted that "Gretchen-in-uniform" had been an incompetent soldier. Because Hitler

³⁶ Susan Jeffords has argued that in many national histories, enemies have often been "demonized as feminine," while domestic heroes are celebrated as "manly," in "Commentary: Culture and National Identity in US Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 18, 1 (Winter 1994): 92; Joop van den Berg, et al., "President Soekarno: Portret van een aartsvijand," *Bzzlletin* 228 (September, 1995): 9-21.

³⁷ Quoted in Letter No. 13 from Louis Damais in Jakarta to Claire Holt in Washington DC, May 28-31, 1946. I am grateful to Deena Burton for giving me access to these remarkable letters and to Adji Damais for granting me permission to quote them.

³⁸ UN Military Observers (MILOBS) informed the GOC in June, 1948, that Spoor's army might be able to occupy Yogyakarta, but would not have the necessary strength to pacify the entire Republican territory. When Spoor learned of this assessment, he dismissed it as "nonsense"; quoted by Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, p. 131.

³⁹ Hubertus van Mook to Eelco van Kleffens, January 21, 1948, NIB, Vol. 12, p. 304; see also General Spoor to chief of staff, December 3, 1947, NIB, vol. 12, p. 55, and Robert Lovett to US delegation to GOC, February 13, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), vol. 6 (Washington DC: State Department, 1948), p. 96.

⁴⁰ Leonhard Huizinga, *Gesprek met de generaal* (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen, 1952), pp. 13-14. Spoor's wife, meanwhile, was known to the troops as "Mother Spoor"; reported by Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 112.

had not offered himself as a benevolent military father, nurturing the courage of his "soldier-sons" for the sake of protecting the sanctity of the family, his troops had been transformed into dizzy creatures named "Gretchen." In the end, she had done little more than "sit behind her machine gun, fantasizing about the hero of her dreams!"⁴¹

In light of these bizarre ruminations, it is possible that Spoor subjected his own frustrations over Holland's precarious position in its southeast Asian colony to the same kind of peculiar analysis. Moreover, in September 1948, he also may have struggled with a sense of impotence he felt civil authorities imposed on him. After all, he was a zealous young soldier in the prime of his life, who pursued interests in music, literature, and psychology that transcended his narrow military existence. His personal library was filled with the collected works of western civilization's most significant thinkers, and through his lofty reading habits he strove for "spiritual perfection."⁴² When faced with a difficult decision, he secluded himself for a few days to meditate and to play his beloved violin, a talent and passion for music he had inherited from his father, André Spoor, the concertmaster of Amsterdam's *concertgebouw* orchestra. A US Army Colonel went so far as to praise him as "the [Douglas] MacArthur of the Netherlands East Indies."⁴³

But Spoor was also "vain and ambitious" and full of bravado. Although he was often applauded as a capable personnel manager and logistical organizer, his political views were those of "an old-guard colonial reactionary, bubbling over with impatience to play the role of Van Heutsz" in a modern guise.⁴⁴ The legendary Dutch General Van Heutsz had defeated the rebellious Acehnese in northern Sumatra in a protracted guerrilla war around the turn of the century, and in 1948 Spoor hoped to destroy the Indonesian Republic in the same gallant way, albeit more quickly.

Spoor had taken over as commander-in-chief of the Dutch military establishment in Indonesia on January 31, 1946, an army described by one of his biographers as resembling an "Augean stable."⁴⁵ But once he was placed in charge, the army grew in size as well as efficiency, and he had been chomping at the bit ever since to employ his troops and weapons. On various occasions he had advocated a military solution when diplomatic negotiations faltered. After the first formal confrontation with the Republic's military forces during the Summer of 1947, however, politicians in the Netherlands had not allowed him to use his army's resources aggressively to force the enemy into submission. Despite his command over a superior military might, he may have thought of himself as emasculated by cowardly politicians in The Hague.

Spoor's fortunes finally turned in mid-December 1948, when the Dutch government released him from his restraints and permitted him to unleash his soldiers

⁴¹ Huizinga, *Gesprek met de generaal*, pp. 14-15.

⁴² Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 65. See also Laurens van der Post, *The Admiral's Baby: An Extraordinary Episode in Twentieth-Century History* (New York: William Morrow, 1996), for a description of Spoor, p. 165.

⁴³ Julius Tahiya, *Horizon Beyond* (Singapore/Kuala Lumpur: Times Books International, 1995), p. 68; US Army Colonel Collin S. Myers, HQ Far Eastern Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, quoted by Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 113.

⁴⁴ D. M. G. Koch, *Verantwoording: een halve eeuw in Indonesië* (The Hague/Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1956), p. 264.

⁴⁵ Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 30.

and military hardware in an effort to subdue the Yogyakarta Republic. No longer bridled by civilian authorities, he managed to score a quick victory in the second so-called "police action," with only minor Dutch casualties. Fellow colonialists in England and France applauded his brisk, effective operation. As the *London Times* reported, Spoor's military maneuver produced "amazingly peaceful conditions" within two weeks, if only because 304 officers, who used to be the Indonesian Republic's loyal servants, allegedly surrendered to the Dutch occupation force. In a similar fashion, the French-language newspaper *l'Entente* in Hanoi exalted General Spoor's swift action in Indonesia as "a brilliant and masterful stroke, superbly effective and . . . in the best interest" of the Indonesian people.⁴⁶

However, General Spoor's moment in the domestic and international limelight proved short-lived. The UN resolution denouncing his army's lightning assault on Yogyakarta, which the Security Council passed in late January 1949, quickly transformed him from a heroic warrior on behalf of European imperialism into a warmonger. Not surprisingly, ever since his appointment as a youthful commander of the Dutch military forces, he had lived in Indonesians' imagination as "the great monster" who was suspected of indulging a fondness for "devouring little children." But since the second Dutch attack on Yogyakarta, his reputation as the "big black beast" spread beyond the borders of the Indonesian Republic, which proved to be his own psychological undoing.⁴⁷

During Spoor's honeymoon as commander-in-chief, the astute Willem Schermerhorn had already noted in his diary that every now and then Spoor elicited an impression among friends and foes that he was "abnormally nervous," "vitriolic," or "enraged."⁴⁸ Later, Spoor would routinely "unburden his heart in a highly emotional fashion," another contemporary remembered.⁴⁹ Initially, he had pleased Dutch civilian officials in Europe and southeast Asia as a more reasonable chief soldier than his predecessor.⁵⁰ Starting in January 1949, however, a range of critics, at home or abroad, depicted him as a diabolic character, who had mounted a military campaign that did not come close to achieving the political goal it was supposed to accomplish. Spoor and his supporters had hoped to "decapitate" the Republic and reduce it to a status on a par with the other member states (*negara*) of the neo-colonial United States of Indonesia.⁵¹ Instead, the Republic had emerged in the imagination of the UN

⁴⁶ *London Times*, January 6, 1949; article handed by Van Kleffens to Lovett, January 10, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6440, 856D.00/1-1049. It should be noted that the English government, however, condemned the Dutch military action. See "My Grain of Salt by Paul Munier," *l'Entente*, Hanoi, January 9, 1949; see also William M. Gibson, US Consul in Hanoi, to the Secretary of State, January 14, 1949, in report entitled "Comments of Hanoi Press concerning text of letter addressed by Under Secretary Lovett to Mr. Phillip Murray regarding Indonesia," RG 59, Box No. 6440, 856D.00/1-1449, NA II.

⁴⁷ *Het dagboek van Schermerhorn*, vol. 1, p. 35; vol. 2, p. 753.

⁴⁸ *Het dagboek van Schermerhorn*, vol. 1, pp. 407, 421; vol. 2, pp. 753, 766.

⁴⁹ Peter Schumacher, *Ogenblikken van genezing. Indonesische ervaringen* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1996), p. 181.

⁵⁰ Van der Post, *The Admiral's Baby*, p. 167.

⁵¹ The phrase "decapitation of the Republic" appears in Prof. Mr. P. S. Gerbrandy, *De scheuring van het rijk. Het drama van de Indonesische crisis* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1951), p. 194, and Ted Schouten, *Dwaalsporen. Oorlogsmisdaden in Nederlands-Indië, 1945-1949* (Zutphen: De Walburg Press, 1995), p. 133.

community of nations as a maiden in distress, in need of rescue by chivalrous outsiders.

When the dust settled, Spoor's mental strength disintegrated, and during the late Winter and Spring of 1949 he suffered from what may have been a nervous breakdown. His wife also collapsed physically; she returned to the Netherlands in March 1949 as an exhausted woman.⁵² Spoor thought that the human sacrifices of his troops had been rendered "senseless." His army, although undefeated on the battlefield, had been "stabbed in the back" in the most "disgusting" manner by politicians, whom he called "those scoundrels in The Hague."⁵³ The same political cowards, he fulminated, had made a mockery of his role as commander-in-chief. They had ordered him to serve as nothing but a director of peons in a "shooting gallery." He felt utterly abandoned by the Dutch political establishment and a few of his senior adjutants in Indonesia.⁵⁴ According to official press releases he died as a result of a sudden heart attack in late May. The media, whether in the Netherlands, Indonesia, or elsewhere, were mostly silent about the psychological demise that had preceded his death. Besides, even today rumor has it that his life's ending may have been caused by either suicide or poisoning.⁵⁵

Neither Spoor's personal sense of impotence, which he may have felt was forced upon on him by craven civilians, nor his predilection to play the dilettante psychologist can fully elucidate the gendered dichotomies of his allegory. His depression in the wake of the Republic's effective guerrilla operations, the UN Security Council's sanctions, and the conclusion of a Dutch-Indonesian accord in early May 1949—ordering Dutch troops to relinquish control of Yogyakarta—also cannot explain his gendered language in a compelling manner.⁵⁶ Projecting mental illness on the Indonesian Republic in mid-September 1948, though, was perhaps more than merely a rhetorical gimmick. Similarly, the tacit support of the imperialist lobby in either England or France fails to explain his portrayal of Indonesia's independence struggle as a conflict between a deranged woman and a sensible man.

The General and his colleagues had already concocted a host of pejorative names for the Indonesian Republic; "den of iniquity," "source of contagion," or "diseased country" were some of the least offensive among them.⁵⁷ By vilifying the Republic as

⁵² Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 105.

⁵³ Quoted by Schouten, *Dwaalsporen*, pp. 162-163, and Schumacher, *Ogenblikken van genezing*, pp. 180-182.

⁵⁴ Quoted by Johannes A. Jonkman, *Nederland en Indonesië beide vrij; memoires van mr J A Jonkman* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), pp. 84, 112.

⁵⁵ Schumacher, *Ogenblikken van genezing*, pp. 181-182. According to former Prime Minister P. S. Gerbrandy, "Spoor was lowered into his grave because he was a victim of the pacifism of the Dutch cabinet in the face of the Soekarno-Hatta clique"; in *De scheuring van het rijk*, p. 198. Schilling, in *Spoor, onze generaal*, provides a touching description of Spoor's sudden heart attack and his final two days, pp. 157-159. See also S. M. Smulders, *Een stem uit het veld. Herinneringen van de Ritmiester-Adjutant van Generaal S. H. Spoor* (Amsterdam: De Bataafse Leeuw, 1988), p. 117.

⁵⁶ After the conclusion of the Van Royen-Rum accord, a heart-broken Spoor apparently locked himself in his office with his head buried in his hands for several days, asking God "to help his soldiers." Reported by Schilling, *Spoor, onze generaal*, p. 145.

⁵⁷ Anak Agung, *Renville als keerpunt*, p. 52; Wim Hornman, *De laatste man. Mariniers in de gordel van smaragd, 1942-1950* (Bergen: Bonneville, 1992), p. 289.

an unstable woman, Spoor added the figure of gender to the tropes of pathology. Obviously, he did not conjure up these themes out of thin air. Instead, his narrative incorporated strains of metaphorical language that derived from a variety of sources.

The Indonesian Republic as The Daughter of the Enlightenment

The first source of these feminine and masculine figures of speech can be found in eighteenth-century western Europe, when explorers began to describe the “exotic” peoples they encountered in Asia, South America, or Africa as unenlightened children whom they often represented as helpless little girls. This earliest influence modulating the tone of Spoor’s allegory harked back to a set of parental metaphors that had been employed in many colonial settings since the European Enlightenment. While Western travelers during the Renaissance had viewed native people as “heathen” barbarians who belonged to the realm of demonology, chroniclers during the eighteenth century began to describe non-Europeans, above all, as defenseless creatures. The so-called primitive mind represented the infancy of the human spirit, which had reached its apex in Europeans’ intellectual capacities. After all, native people almost everywhere failed to recognize the primacy of reason and logic by invoking spirits or appealing to magic.⁵⁸

These portrayals of non-Europeans as not-yet-educated children—in fact, some observers, echoing John Locke, envisioned them as blank slates—eventually gave birth to a more wide-ranging set of gendered tropes. This novel idiom tended to represent European imperialists as mature, fatherly men, while depicting colonized people in Asia as guileless children who needed paternal protection and guidance. Europeans suspected, however, that indigenous men treated their wives and daughters as chattel or abused them as beasts of burden. Hence, colonizers often projected the status of innocent victim on to native peoples, regardless of gender, by inscribing them with feminine traits. In this manner Europeans could justify colonial mastery as a humane gesture, dedicated to the sheltering of hapless people from exploitation by patriarchal indigenous elites.

A next logical step was to characterize the entire Eastern half of the globe as an intrinsically female space, populated by fragile creatures in desperate need of powerful masculine guidance from the West, as if the Occident and the Orient belonged together as husband and wife. In these constructions, the West emerged as strong, energetic, and rational, while the East was weak, languorous, and emotional.⁵⁹ Thus, Spoor’s reliance on images of masculinity and femininity in portraying the relationship between robust colonizers from the Netherlands and the supposedly delicate population of the Indonesian archipelago was far from unique.

Scores of Europeans who resided in colonial settler societies constantly attempted to legitimize both their presence in Asia and Africa and their “natural” sense of

⁵⁸ Mott T. Greene, *Natural Knowledge in Pre-Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 66-67, and Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 56.

⁵⁹ Charles Boissevain, *Tropisch Nederland* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1909), as discussed by J. van Goor, “Indische reizen in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw. Van verkenning tot journalistiek toerisme,” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 105, 3 (1992): 458.

superiority towards indigenous peoples through a historically specific language of politics and culture. Hackneyed emblems of male occidental strength and female oriental vulnerability frequently informed these narratives. Gender-based figures of speech concealed, while also revealing, unequal social positions that were unrelated to female versus male identity per se. Instead, such analogies constituted widely recognizable symbols, giving concrete expressions to perceived differences in hierarchy and power, intellectual ability, or moral refinement.⁶⁰

The Dutch-Indonesian Conflict in Freud's Shadow

A second inspiration that shaped General Spoor's female and male imagery, although a more rarefied one, derived from the psychoanalytical language of Sigmund Freud. It could be that he was also aware of Carl Gustav Jung's reflections on the fluid coexistence of feminine and masculine qualities in the psyche of each human being, regardless of gender. His characterization of Indonesian or Nazi soldiers as either hysterical women or dreamy-eyed "Gretchen[s]-in-uniform" hinted at a familiarity with Jungian ideas. Spoor's story alluded to an array of psychoanalytic notions about the mechanism of hate transfer, the fracturing of the super ego, and father complexes or, in this case, an obsession with a "great-uncle." In the post-World War II era, both the memory and the lingering realities of colonial relationships were burdened with a Freudian resonance, as if individual neuroses also shed light on the use and abuse of power employed by European masters over their subjects, regardless of either the quiescence or defiance of the latter.

It was true that even before Freud's discursive cloud hovered over the lives of women and men in the Netherlands Indies, a Dutch psychiatrist around the turn of the century, Dr. Swart Abrahamsz, attributed the widespread sexual liaisons between Dutch men and Indonesian women to the residual "sadism" of the former and the "perennial masochism" of the latter.⁶¹ About two decades later, another Dutch psychiatrist, Dr. Travaglino, had diagnosed the Javanese psyche as being dominated by pre-pubescent, "primary instincts, a yearning for pleasure, and the excessive influence of sexuality."⁶² Travaglino's analysis echoed an intellectual curiosity about the homology between "primitivism and infantility" that had begun to fascinate a few of the younger acolytes orbiting around Sigmund Freud in Vienna. They had started to speculate about the parallels between the underdeveloped psyches of adult native people and Europeans' repressed memories of sexuality in early childhood, because examining these linkages might shed light on the formation of "normal" personality structures in the Western world.⁶³

⁶⁰ For an elaboration of these themes, see the "Introduction" to Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, eds., *Domesticating the Empire: Gender, Race, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, in press; forthcoming in 1998).

⁶¹ Dr. Swart Abrahamsz in *De Javabode*, 1898, quoted by J. H. F. Kohlbrugge, *Blikken in het zielenleven van den Javaan en zijne overheerschers* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1907), pp. 19-20.

⁶² P. H. M. Travaglino, "Het Karakter van den inlander," *Tijdschrift van de Politieke-Economische Bond* (Batavia, 1920-1921), pp. 342-343. See also *idem*, "De psychose van den inlander in verband met zijn karakter," *Geneeskundig Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, LX, no. 2 (Batavia, 1920): 90-111.

⁶³ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 13, and Octave Mannoni, "Psychoanalysis and the Decolonization of

Slowly but surely Freud's language seeped into the psychological understanding of a wide range of human behaviors at an individual as well as a collective level. Although ill-digested, in the post-war era these Freudian conjectures added spice to the imagination of a host of middle-class people in the West. One telling example of this generic familiarity with Freudian ideas is a colloquial expression that has entered the Dutch language, *ik ken mijn pappenheimers* (I know my *pappenheimers*), which means "I know with whom I am dealing." *Pappenheimer* is a reference to a young woman named Bertha Pappenheim, who had surmounted the debilitating symptoms of hysteria through a "chimney-sweeping, talking cure" with the physiologist Josef Breuer in 1880-1881. Under the pseudonym Anna O., her treatment became one of the central case studies analyzed by Freud and Breuer in their co-authored *Studies on Hysteria* (1895).⁶⁴

During the first half of the twentieth century, psychoanalytic concepts such as megalomania, masochism, or revulsion emerged as compelling descriptions of the colonial system.⁶⁵ The Indonesian nationalist Sutan Sjahrir, for example, wrote in the late 1930s with a Freudian echo that colonial mastery had always fostered "psychopathic" personalities, giving free reign to the "sadism and megalomania" among Dutch rulers and causing Indonesians' gentle souls to be "contorted by inferiority complexes."⁶⁶ But in due course Freud's influence moved beyond an explanation of either individual neuroses or the manifest power of Europeans over native subjects in Asia or Africa, by claiming to cast a stream of enlightenment on the time-honored belligerence of human communities in general.

In trying to cast his shadow more widely, Freud claimed in 1935 that psychoanalysis, while yielding an understanding of "the mental life of the human individual," could also divulge explanations that might "solve many a riddle in the life of the masses of mankind"—or at least, bring humanity's enigmas out of obscurity and into "their true light."⁶⁷ Memories of infantile sexuality and individual wish-

Mankind," in Jonathan Miller, ed., *Freud* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 1972), pp. 86-95. For a discussion in the context of evolutionary theory, see Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies, 1900-1942* (Amsterdam/Ann Arbor, MI: Amsterdam University Press/University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 124-125.

⁶⁴ For a detailed discussion of the significance of the Anna O. case in the development of Freud's psychoanalytic theory, see Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), pp. 63-69.

⁶⁵ Megalomania constitutes a mental disorder characterized by extreme overestimation of one's abilities and importance or an obsession with grandiose action. Masochism entails a sexual perversion in which the "victim" derives pleasure from emotional or physical pain, registering a pathological desire for self-destruction. Revulsion is a psychic mixture of a "fear of losing one's identity and a fascination with this loss." This ambiguous reaction is said to originate in early childhood, when the child detaches itself from the mother, a moment that establishes either individual or sexual difference and imposes on a child its first traumatic loss. For a lucid discussion of revulsion—and indirectly, megalomania—in the context of the Dutch East Indies, see Pamela Pattynama, "Secrets and Danger: Interracial Sexuality in Louis Couperus, *The Hidden Force* (1900) and Dutch Colonial Culture," in Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, Chapter 4, (in press); for psychoanalytical insights, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁶⁶ Soetan Sjahrir, *Indonesische overpeinzingen* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1945; reprinted 1987), p. 165.

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Joan Rivière (New York: Liveright, 1935), p. 150.

fulfillment could row "upstream," so to speak, to release insights into the flow of desires, appetites, and deep-seated aggressions of all human societies that were forced to coexist.⁶⁸

In the immediate post-war period, psychoanalytic terminology also inflected discourses at a collective level, enabling a State Department official to turn the tables on the Dutch and define their treatment of Indonesians as a display of "neurotic symptoms of frustration, inferiority, and over-compensation."⁶⁹ With such crude Freudian insinuations in mind, the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, as General Spoor implied, resembled a bitter dispute between two partners who once upon a time had been tied together in a symbiotic relationship, albeit grounded in power and weakness. When Freud's silhouette began to lurk in the background, however, this collusive liaison acquired an aura of sexual perversion, which often seemed to entail male mastery and female subservience. As a result, colonialism's pattern of European domination and native bondage was rebaptized, on occasion, as a sado-masochistic fixation.⁷⁰ But after August 1945, the passive accomplice was no longer willing to play the role of victim and had resolutely severed the sordid colonial ties by establishing autonomy. The Republic's abrupt escape into a realm out of reach and beyond control in Yogyakarta, in turn, produced an irrational fury in the formerly dominant partner from the Netherlands: this sudden distance prompted the latter to strike out in an undisguised attempt to destroy the errant Republic.⁷¹

During Indonesia's war of independence, yet another Dutch psychiatrist, Prof. Dr. Van Wulfften Palthe, used some of these Freudian ideas to psychoanalyze the Indonesian side of the equation. He noted that in the patrimonial colonial culture of the Dutch East Indies, Indonesian people had viewed the average Dutchman as a "father-imago," which implied the polar emotions of love and hate. But in 1942, the "militaristic typhoon of a small yellow race" descended from the north and swiftly toppled the Dutch East Indies government. The easy defeat of the Netherlands Indies military forces in 1942, though, made the colonial rulers seem like kernels of "sand blown from the rocks" by a gentle breeze rather than a mighty storm, the independent Indonesian nationalist and communist, Tan Malaka, commented in his diary.⁷² Japan's effortless victory prompted Van Wulfften Palthe to argue that it destabilized Indonesians' "child-father sentiments," which they quickly transferred from their Dutch fathers to the new Asian rulers from Japan.⁷³

During the Japanese occupation, however, Van Wulfften Palthe noted that Indonesians eventually transferred their feelings of rancor, too, perhaps because the

⁶⁸ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Jealous Potter*, trans. Bénédicte Chorier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 196-97.

⁶⁹ Policy Planning Staff/National Security Council, No. 51, "US Policy towards Southeast Asia," July 1, 1949, RG 263, Records of the National Security Council, NSC Policy Papers, Box No 7, AN II.

⁷⁰ Emily Apter calls it "the gendering of perversion," in *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-Century France* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. ix.

⁷¹ For an insightful discussion of the allure of femininity in the distance, see Danilyn Fox Rutherford, "Trekking to New Guinea: Colonial Fantasies of a Virgin Land, 1900-1942," Chapter 12, in Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire* (in press).

⁷² Helen Jarvis, ed.; Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, vol. 3 (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1991), p. 72.

⁷³ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 9-13.

Japanese were more hardhearted as “fathers” than the Dutch had been. The Japanese had not only inherited but also improved upon the “instruments of oppression” left behind by the Dutch, Tan Malaka recorded in his journal, which induced fear and loathing.⁷⁴ Although it may be an apocryphal story, a Dutch report in 1944 claimed that the inhabitants of Java paid obeisance to Japanese military officers during the morning hours by transforming the formal Japanese greeting *Ohayo gozaimas(u)* into *Hajo gasak mas*, meaning “come on, let’s kick him.”⁷⁵

In the wake of the Western allies’ defeat of imperial Japan in August, 1945, Van Wulfften Palthe argued that the Indonesian population could no longer attach their “polar sentiments” to a particular object. All father figures had disappeared and Indonesian women and men’s emotional polarities suddenly existed in a vacuum, “deranging the structure of their super ego” by emphasizing the negative, spiteful extremes of their emotional bi-polarity.⁷⁶ Initially, catch phrases such as *merdeka* (freedom, independence) with its accompanying “pseudo-Nazi salute,” as the Dutch psychiatrist called it, or red-and-white flags, functioned as fetishistic alternatives to the positive self-image Indonesians had previously derived from the paternal approval of either Dutch or Japanese officials.⁷⁷ Indonesians’ revolutionary slogans such as *rakyat* (the people) or *manusia* (humanity), *perjuangan* (struggle), *kedaulatan* (sovereignty), *semangat* (dynamic spirit), and of course *merdeka* and *revolusi*, began to function as magical credos, which expressed a newly forged intra-ethnic solidarity and produced an “ideological intoxication.”⁷⁸

Such “mantras” or “mystical chants” also bolstered the united purpose of Indonesians, even across the great social divide that existed between exalted *priyayi* (upper class) and simple peasants in the countryside.⁷⁹ But given Van Wulfften Palthe’s views concerning the inherent emotionality of the Indonesian people and assuming that hatred tends to function as an obstinate element in the human heart, he theorized that in the psychology of Indonesians, “a gradual fallback set in towards a

⁷⁴ Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, Vol. 3, p. 72.

⁷⁵ Charles Olke van der Plas, “Situation in the Netherlands Indies,” report forwarded to the US Secretary of State by Walter A. Foote from Canberra, Australia on February 26, 1944, Dispatch No. 58, in RG 165, War Department, General and Special Staffs, Military Intelligence Division, Regional File Netherlands East Indies, Box 2631, NA II. Foote added a flourish to his translation of *Hajo gasak mas*: “come on, let’s cut off his neck.”

⁷⁶ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, p. 42. For the psychoanalytic background of Van Wulfften Palthe’s analysis, see Sigmund Freud, “Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process,” in Philip Rieff, ed., *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), pp. 209-213. Freud had written in 1925 that in women such a derangement of the superego had different implications, because a woman’s “superego never becomes so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins” as a man’s, quoted by Gay, *Freud*, p. 516.

⁷⁷ Takao Fusayama, a Japanese officer in Medan in October, 1945, also observed that a nationalist leader, while addressing an audience, held “his right hand high like Adolf Hitler, the German dictator.” From *A Japanese Memoir of Sumatra 1945-1946: Love and Hatred in the Liberation War* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series, No. 71, 1993), p. 18.

⁷⁸ Benedict R. O’G Anderson, “The Language of Indonesian Politics,” in *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 123, 139-140.

⁷⁹ James Siegel uses the words “mantra” and “mystical chants” in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 212.

primitive stage of development."⁸⁰ Or, in the language of a Dutch pulp novelist in 1947: *merdeka* began to operate as "an incomprehensible, magical word without content," a term that disclosed all "the primitive bloodthirsty instincts of hatred."⁸¹

The Dutch psychiatrist asserted that these unique forms of regression, even among western-educated Indonesians who had achieved mental adulthood, produced "infantile reactions" in the affective sphere. This make-belief world of children gave "free play" to the most elementary impulses of aggression and cruelty, while in the intellectual sphere, "archaistic-intuitive reasoning" began to prevail and wish fulfillment superseded logic and rationality. In a comparable fashion, Schermerhorn noted in his diary that many Indonesians suddenly seemed to live in "an eternal dream world, in which no one dared to call a spade a spade."⁸²

According to Van Wulfften Palthe, a patricidal urge came in its wake, and Indonesians' ambivalent emotions "fell apart into their polar factors." On the one hand, the positive desire to please the father figure was replaced with a mother fixation—a set of feelings Indonesians began to express in a tempestuous new love for *Ibu pertiwi*, "mother earth," symbolically embodied in the Republic.⁸³ The Dutch psychiatrist also alleged that many Indonesians found a new love object in their own personalities as a form of "secondary narcissism," while all destructive emotions of anger and hatred were now projected onto Western politicians, Dutch soldiers, and "NICA-bandits" bent on vanquishing the Republic.⁸⁴

In 1997 many of us might respond to Prof. Dr. Van Wulfften Palthe's psychoanalytical diagnosis of Indonesians' atavistic behavior with uncomfortable laughter or a healthy dose of skepticism. But in 1948, when General Spoor summoned the metonymy of the Indonesian Republic as a woman with a shattered super ego, who was guided primarily by childish instincts and narcissistic impulses—which had driven her rational Dutch partner to unprecedented extremes of angst—the Freudian resonance may have been palpable to the people who read his narrative. The report's bi-polar clichés regarding femininity and masculinity presumably endowed his story with an aura of sophistication as well as humor, even though it may seem problematic to a reader today.

The Infant Indonesian Republic and The UN Family of Nations

The international discussions that began in 1940-1945—focusing on what kind of new, global order should arise as a phoenix from the ashes of World War II—constituted a third inspiration for Spoor's picturesque narrative about the Dutch-

⁸⁰ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 13, 42.

⁸¹ Piet Korthuys, *In de ban van de tropen* (Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning, 1947), p. 204.

⁸² Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, p. 4; *Het dagboek van Schermerhorn*, vol. 2, p. 695. The Dutch saying is "to call a cat a cat."

⁸³ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 3, 43-45; Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Virgin Mother, Beloved Other: The Erotics of Tamil Nationalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial India," in *Thamyris: Mythmaking from Past to Present*, 4, no. 1 (1997), elaborates on *Ibu Pertiwi*'s counterparts in India, embodied in *Bharata Mata* (Mother India) and regional emblems of what she calls "language/nation/mother," such as *Tamiltaay* (Tamil Mother), pp. 9-39.

⁸⁴ Van Wulfften Palthe, *Psychological Aspects*, pp. 3-4, 9, 11-13, 42-43. NICA was the acronym for Netherlands Indies Civil Administration.

Indonesian family romance gone awry. When he painted a picture of a neutral international agency, trying to arbitrate the tension between two antithetical aspirations that were embodied in male and female stereotypes, he invoked yet another post-World War II rhetoric. This discourse proposed that only an impartial council of elderly and experienced trustees could prevent armed aggression among the world's independent nations in the future. On October 8, 1948, the day that Frederick Nolting in the State Department received Spoor's story about the Dutch-Indonesian confrontation as a misbegotten courtship, the gendered vocabulary of family relations had acquired both a scholarly and global twist. This modernized version was used by various statesmen and academics throughout the world once Nazi Germany had been defeated and the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 had sealed the fate of imperial Japan.

In the wake of the fratricidal carnage of World War II, a new structure of international relations was to be born. All independent countries across the globe would be incorporated into the family of nations by becoming active members of the United Nations. The UN Security Council, meanwhile, would monitor the world's harmonious co-existence and adjudicate family feuds in a paternalistic manner. The Security Council's permanent members, representing the most powerful elders of the world community of nations, would be joined by a constantly shifting array of elected members serving a two-year term.

The new global order would embrace every free and sovereign country, whether it was a long-established one or a brand new nation born out of anti-colonial struggles—the many “infant states” which had begun “to kick and bawl lustily, claiming a spontaneous maturity.”⁸⁵ As President Franklin Roosevelt had predicted: in the post-war era there would be “many minor children” among the nations of the world who might “need trustees.”⁸⁶ In the original creation of the United Nations and the definition of its duties, the United States played a role that was more significant than any other member state, both ideologically and financially.

As a result, the US was cast in the role of a venerable patriarch or a protective older brother, while the Soviet Union, as in General Spoor's allegory, was rendered as a sinister uncle who constantly tried to dislodge the American pater familias from his august position of power. He did so by seducing innocent daughters or swaying the loyalty of gullible sons in the family of nations. Family metaphors continued to infuse the dialogue about international relations and the Cold War, and southeast Asian nations—whether the newly independent Filipinos or their “martyred Indonesian brothers,” who were still fighting for freedom—were caught in the same old semantic web.⁸⁷ Thus, when the Netherlands finally relinquished its sovereignty over the archipelago in late December, 1949, President Harry Truman welcomed Indonesia into “the family of peace-loving, independent nations.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Coast, *Recruit to Revolution*, p. 7.

⁸⁶ Quoted by McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, p. 61.

⁸⁷ “Filipino Indignation at Dutch Action in Indonesia,” Dispatch No. 2 from Thomas H. Bockett in the US Embassy in Manila to Secretary of State, January 3, 1949, RG 59, Box No 6440, 856D.00/1-349, NA II.

⁸⁸ Quoted by Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 92.

The history of the American relationship with the Philippines was an instructive example. During the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s, when concerns with social justice had become a more prominent feature in US domestic as well as foreign policy, the formal process of decolonization in the Philippines reached its logical conclusion. The McDuffie-Tydings Act, passed by the US Congress in 1934, mandated the unequivocal independence of the Philippines in ten years.⁸⁹ Hence, in the immediate post-war period, the Philippines had emerged as a full-fledged member of the family of nations; technically it was allowed to squeal as “lustily” as any ancient European country. The emancipation of the Filipino nation was a source of self-righteous American pride. In 1944, for instance, Roosevelt’s Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, had reminded European colonial powers that “an excellent example of what can be achieved [in the colonial sphere] is afforded in the record of our relationship with the Philippines.”⁹⁰

But in the caustic opinion of the Indonesian Republic’s representative to the UN Security Council in New York, Leonardus Nicodemus Palar—“Nico” or “Nick,” as he preferred to be called—America “gloated” a little too much about the supposedly magnanimous way in which it had granted freedom to its “former wards.”⁹¹ Even though the country was now an autonomous member of the United Nations, Palar noted in June 1946, that the Filipino nation was nonetheless tied with “much more than merely amicable relations” to its former colonial overlord.⁹² From such jaundiced perspectives—and Palar was not alone in articulating this opinion—the relationship between the US and the Philippines in 1946 portended the phenomenon of neo-colonialism. As an editorial in *St. Louis Globe Democrat* noted in December 1948, the Filipino response to the “American course of indoctrination” often entailed a perception that it was nothing but “another means of permanent enslavement.”⁹³

Manuel Quezon, as he lay dying of tuberculosis in Manila towards the end of World War II, vented his anger at the American “neo-imperialists” and “condescending bastards” who hovered around him and his nationalist comrades. Americans, he wrote, would forever think that Filipinos were their “little brown brothers,” an attitude confirmed by Senator Robert Taft when he pontificated in the Senate in April 1946, that the US “shall always be a big brother to the Philippines,”

⁸⁹ Gerlof Homan, “The United States and the Netherlands East Indies: The Evolution of American Anti-Colonialism,” *Pacific Historical Review* 53, 4 (1984): 436. See also Frances Gouda, “Visions of Empire: Changing American Perspectives on Dutch Colonial Rule in Indonesia between 1920 and 1942,” *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 109, 2 (1994): 237-258.

⁹⁰ Cordell Hull made the statement on March 21, 1944. Quoted in full by Charles Bidien, “The United Nations and the Colonies,” in *Indonesian Review* 1, 2 (September, 1945): 4.

⁹¹ “Wards” was Clare Boothe Luce’s description of Filipinos in the US House of Representatives. In *Congressional Record- Appendix* (1945), December 6, 1945. She also referred to the failure of the US to pressure the Netherlands into settling its conflict with the Indonesian Republic as “moral laziness and moral cowardice,” p. A5731.

⁹² Nico Palar, “Indonesië na de verkiezingen,” June 3, 1946, pp. 5-6; Private Papers of L. N. Palar, dossier No. 005, ANJ.

⁹³ “Position Weak,” editorial in *St Louis Globe Democrat*, December 23, 1948. Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 33, from Leslie E. Reed, US Consul General in Curacao, to Secretary of State, April 7, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/4-749, NA II.

whether or not it was an independent nation.⁹⁴ However, America's position as a patronizing older brother among Filipinos would linger on, thanks to its extensive economic concessions and its foothold in an array of US military bases.

A similar attitude prevailed with regard to Indonesians while they battled for their right to be free. In April, 1949, for instance, an American businessman representing the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company—which maintained substantial interests in rubber plantations on the east coast of Sumatra—used identical language when posing an anxious question to State Department officials: “What are we going to do with our little brown brothers in Indonesia?”⁹⁵ Obviously, a large number of Dutch people and pundits in other Western nations dismissed the proposition that the meek inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago were ready to defend themselves or maintain the nation's internal harmony. A host of observers in the West regarded Indonesian independence as an absurd idea, because they perceived Indonesians as unskilled and naive—as a people who should merely “occupy themselves with *gamelan* music and *wayang* dramas,” while relying on the help of a father figure or an older brother from the West to guide them in the immediate future.⁹⁶

The Death of Effeminacy: Indonesians Reborn as Srikandi the Warrior or Macho Cowboy

The Dutch as well as other Westerners “had much to learn” in the opinion of Charlton Ogburn, who reached this judgment through his experiences in Indonesia in 1947-1948. If he had invoked the two female *wayang* characters who are among the most familiar to an average Javanese audience, he might have suggested that the Republic had ceased to be the lady-like Sumbadra. Instead, she had become the “masculine” and “strong-willed” Srikandi, whose defense of her “self-worth, even in the face of death,” was paramount.⁹⁷ For instance, when Ogburn visited the official Indonesian fighting forces under the command of Colonel Latief in east Java in early 1948, he recalled he only saw exceptionally “tough and competent blokes”: Indonesian soldiers who concentrated on winning their anti-colonial war with steely-eyed resolve.⁹⁸ Among civilians, many young dare-devils had become “self-appointed

⁹⁴ Quoted by Theodore Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan Against the West in Java and Luzon, 1942-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 285.

⁹⁵ H. L. Riddle, Assistant Comptroller of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, in Memorandum of Conversation on the subject of “Indonesia” with Charles S. Reed II and Charlton Ogburn in the State Department's PSA division, April 4, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/4-449, NA II.

⁹⁶ “Charlton Ogburn recalls the early days of a new nation,” *Newsletter of the United States-Indonesia Society*, Spring, 1996, pp. 7-9.

⁹⁷ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series, No. 37, 1965), pp. 21-22; Y. B. Mangunwijaya, *Roro Mendut*, quoted by Thomas B. Hunter, “Introduction,” to Y. B. Mangunwijaya, *The Weaverbirds* (Jakarta: Yayasan Lontar, 1991), p. xiv. Not surprisingly, one of the pro-Republican women's organizations was called *Barisan Srikandi* (Srikandi Guards); see Anton Lucas and Robert Cribb, “Women's Roles in the Indonesian Revolution: Some Historical Reflections,” in Taufik Abdullah, ed., *The Heartbeat of [the] Indonesian Revolution* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1997), p. 76.

⁹⁸ “Ogburn recalls the early days of a new nation,” *Newsletter US-Indonesia Society*, pp. 7-9.

guerrilla leaders" who roamed the countryside and took the law into their own hands to further the cause of one-hundred percent *merdeka*.⁹⁹

In the imagination of a handful of Western eyewitnesses in Java, these powerful freedom fighters had liberated themselves from the stereotype of mild-mannered Javanese men. As a British military officer, stationed in post-World War II Jakarta, concluded early on: Indonesian nationalism was not a "shallow, effeminate, intellectual cult"; instead, it was an "urgent affair."¹⁰⁰ Colonel William Meyer, the US military attaché in Bandung, also warned the State Department that the Dutch woefully "underestimated the strength and virility" of the Republic.¹⁰¹ Hence, it was unlikely that many of these tough blokes had any inclination to marvel at the magic of *wayang* performances throughout a long and sultry night. It could be that some among them agreed with Tan Malaka, who scoffed at *wayang* stories because "none of their answers made sense" and they did not nurture "intelligent thinking."¹⁰²

But most Republican soldiers probably did not watch the intricate plots derived from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* or the *Panji* tales unfold between sunset and sunrise owing to a lack of time and leisure. If and when they thought about *wayang* stories at all, Indonesian freedom fighters may have harbored the fantasy that they could personally enact the *wayang* legends about heroic *kesatria* (noble) warriors; they might have imagined they would soon defeat the Dutch in Indonesia just as Hanuman and his army of monkeys had routed the evil Rahwana in the *Ramayana* epic.

At the same time, such lofty dreams were translated into down-to-earth military strategies and guerrilla tactics. The warriors operating in the Javanese or Sumatran landscape, Ogburn suggested, were tough as nails—or, in the words of an awed Dutch soldier who had seen the official TNI army as well as *pemuda* units perform in the field: "I raise my hat to them, because these soldiers are as hard as metal."¹⁰³ As the Indonesian writer Subagio Sastrowardjo wrote in his short story *Kedjantanan di Sumbing* (Masculinity on Mount Sumbing), the battlefield of the Indonesian revolution

⁹⁹ The term was used by Chinese Consul General Tsiang Chia-Tung in a letter to UNCI in Batavia, September 14, 1949, complaining about the "many Chinese residents [who] have been forcibly removed from their places of abode . . . under the pretext of affording protection to the Chinese population." In DAG13/2.0.0./#6, UN Archives, NYC.

¹⁰⁰ Laurens van der Post's secret report to the Foreign Office in London, "The British Occupation of Indonesia, from September 19, 1945 to November 30, 1946," in *The Admiral's Baby*, p. 225.

¹⁰¹ Col. William Meyer to American Consulate General in Batavia, August 1, 1948, "US Problems in Indonesia in Event of War," Enclosure to Despatch No. 300, August 5, 1948, Charles A. Livengood to Secretary of State, in RG 263, Robert D. Murphy papers, Communism in Indonesia, Box 117, NA II. It should be noted that the naval attaché, Captain D. J. McCallum, offered a different assessment; on July 30, 1948, he wrote to Livengood that "unquestionably the Dutch have a sufficient military force to eliminate the Republican government or to capture any object they may desire"; also enclosed in Despatch No. 300.

¹⁰² Quoted by Rudolf Mrázek, "Tan Malaka: A Political Personality's Structure of Experience," *Indonesia* 14 (October, 1972): 26.

¹⁰³ In "Transmittal of Letters of Dutch soldiers in Indonesia published in *Vrij Nederland*," the same Dutch soldier also wrote that "We reviled the Germans for their cruelty but a Netherlander is not a bit better in this respect." Enclosure of translated passages in Air Pouch dispatch No. 71, February 28, 1949, from US Embassy in The Hague to Secretary of State, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856D.00/2-2849, NA II.

was an arena in which “only masculinity was held in esteem.”¹⁰⁴ The staunch defenders of the Indonesian Republic had organized themselves into a disciplined army and an effective guerrilla force, with no other purpose but to resist the reimposition of Dutch colonial control. According to one account, these rugged soldiers instructed ordinary citizens living in Dutch-controlled territory “to remain faithful to our Republic of Indonesia . . . and murder people who help the Dutch” because they “are traitors.”¹⁰⁵

Such commands registered the determination of the Republic’s guardians to battle their former colonial masters to the bitter end. When the anti-colonial struggle demanded subversive action, they violated the truce agreements with the same impunity as their European adversaries. Rather than conforming to Dutch stereotypes about the submissive and fey Javanese or the clever but reasonable Minangkabau, the defenders of the Indonesian Republic proved to be hardy fighters. Some among them also hoped to undermine the feudal hierarchy of traditional Javanese communities, in which patterns of command and subordination were grounded in the putative superiority of local *priyayi* and the diligence of peasants.

“Our troops,” Mohammad Hatta wrote in July 1948, were able to continue “the guerrilla struggle in the mountains, ravines, forests, and other remote places, because they were loyal to the government and complied with its orders.” Hatta patted himself on the back when he emphasized, for example, that “each of the 35,000 TNI soldiers, whose whereabouts [in Dutch controlled areas] were heretofore unknown, executed the command to move to Republican territory in a universally disciplined manner.” This efficient response proved that the Republican government “controlled its military apparatus and was able to instill order among its troops.”¹⁰⁶ If the Dutch played hardball and tried to coerce the Indonesian Republic into making concessions, Republican politicians responded in kind, as if wanting to remind their Dutch antagonists of Winston Churchill’s pithy comment: “if you want to play rough, we can play rough too.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Subagio Sastrowardjo, “Kedjantanan di Sumbing,” translated as “Mannelijkheid op de Sumbing,” in Joop van den Berg, ed., *Bersiap Nederlands-Indonesische verhalen* (The Hague: BZZToH, 1993), p. 116. Both the Indonesian word *jantan* and the Dutch verb *zich vermennen* have the dual meaning of masculinity and mustering courage. According to Lucas and Cribb, “Women’s Roles in the Indonesian Revolution,” in Taufik Abdullah, ed., *The Heartbeat of [the] Indonesian Revolution*, p. 75, note 12, the term *pemuda* initially embraced both female and male nationalists. Eventually it became more exclusively associated with men, whereas a new word, *pemudi*, emerged as a female form. During the Revolution, the growing gender specificity of the word *pemuda* was also suggested by names such as *Pemuda Putri Indonesia*, *Pemuda Putri Republik Indonesia*, or *Barisan Pemuda Putri*; see Irna H. N. Hadi Soewito, ed., *Seribu Wajah: Wanita Pejuang Dalam Kancah Revolusi ‘45* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1995), pp. 367-371.

¹⁰⁵ “Extract from Instructions to a Kampong Head, 5th November, 1947, Brataadisasmita, A. W. R. I. in Boelakamba, to the Loerah of Doekoehlo, November 5, 1947”; report translated and forwarded by the Dutch delegation to the GOC, In DAG13/2.0.0/#1, UN Archives, NYC.

¹⁰⁶ “Ichtisar singkat tentang perundingan Renville,” (signed M. Hatta in pencil), July 30, 1948, Yogya Dokumen No. 5403, ANJ. Colonel C.S. Meyers, a UN Military Observer (MILOB), noted the “shock of our smug [Dutch] ‘friends’” when they had to concede that 35,000 Indonesian guerrilla troops had operated in Netherlands controlled territory; quoted by MacMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁷ A good example of the Republic’s cool political calculations is the anonymous report, “Tjatan tentang keadaan perundingan,” November 1, 1948, Yogya Dokumen No. 5671, ANJ. See also Thijs W. Brocades

On the left of the political spectrum, Tan Malaka, about six months before his death in February 1949, had extolled the guerrilla fighting force, which "will establish [our nation's] one-hundred percent freedom with bamboo spears, hand grenades, hand guns, submachine guns, mortars, and torches, however long it will take, whether with or without the United Nations." In celebration of May Day in 1949, a magazine of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), *Bintang Merah* (Red Star), applauded "our guerrilla fighters who have forged a powerful unity and have risked their bodies and souls for the freedom of our country."¹⁰⁸

In a similar vein, the American cultural attaché remarked in September 1949, that thousands of Republican foot soldiers had willingly left their families in order to embrace a rugged "semi-nomadic" existence, "with the government providing many of their needs," even when villagers in the countryside had occasionally given them "food and shelter." These young men had proven their masculine, self-sacrificing valor. They had braved "the adventures of guerrilla life" while enduring many "deprivations," but both the "student army" and TNI troops had also exhibited self-discipline and a cooperative spirit.¹⁰⁹

On both sides of the battlefield, observers made an analogy between Republican freedom fighters and macho cowboys in the American Wild West. The references to cowboys probably drew upon the rich heritage of Javanese or Malay epics about brigands, social bandits, or spiritual wanderers in search of enlightenment. Such traditional chronicles recounted the exploits of seemingly invulnerable *jago* (champions). These "magico-religious bandits," filled with mystical knowledge, had deserted their fixed places "in the cosmologically sanctioned social order" and thrown themselves into a tramping life of adventure, robbery, and fighting. A well-known character in Malay folklore was Si Pitung. Si Ronda, Si Jampang, or Si Tjonat were other champions who had entered the popular imagination.¹¹⁰

In addition, inexpensive Dutch translations in the 1930s of Karl May's stories—a German equivalent, to some extent, of James Fenimore Cooper's tales—about American Indians who bravely resisted the onslaughts of European settlers, cowboys, and soldiers on the western frontier, may have functioned as a source of inspiration,

Zaalberg, "Paving the Way to Independence: Nationalism, Communism, and the Changing American Role in the Indonesian Struggle for Independence," MA Thesis, History, University of Groningen, 1997, p. 106.

¹⁰⁸ Tan Malaka, *Sang gerilja dan gerpolek* (stencil, Pustaka Murba, May 17, 1948, written while he was in prison in Madiun), pp. 77-78; in *Yogya Dokumen*, No. 5278, ANJ; *Bintang Merah*, Bulletin No. 8, labeled "Agit-Prop, C.C. Darurat PKI," May 1, 1949, in *Yogya Dokumen* No. 5716; stenciled pamphlet *Rakyat Indonesia*, December 20, 1948, in *Yogya Dokumen* No. 5433, ANJ. It should be noted that Indonesians affiliated with the PKI—or followers of Tan Malaka's independent ideological legacy—tended to denounce the Republic's democratic leadership of "Hatta, Sukiman, c.s." as "traitors" to the Indonesian struggle for independence.

¹⁰⁹ Willard A. Hanna to Glenn A. Abbey, "Observations Made on My Visit to Jogjakarta (Sept. 8 - 13) Regarding Political Situation in The Republic," Forwarded to the Secretary of State by Glenn A. Abbey, No. 329, September 19, 1949, RG 59, Box 6442, 856D.00/9-1949, NA II.

¹¹⁰ See especially Chapter 1 on "Youth and Crisis" in Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, pp. 1-15; Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), pp. 1, 73; Margreet van Till, "In Search of Si Pitung: The History of an Indonesian Legend," *KITLV Bijdragen* 152, 3 (1996): 461-482; F. Pangemanann, *Tjjerita Si Tjonat. Satoe Kepala Penjamoen di Djaman Dahoele Tempo Tahoen 1840* (Jakarta: n. p., 1900).

too.¹¹¹ Moreover, a record of the superhuman escapades of another hero from the United States, Flash Gordon, appeared in serialized form in the weekly newspaper *De Oriënt* in Batavia in the late 1930s. And before the outbreak of the Revolution in 1945, a few movie theaters in the bigger cities on Java and Sumatra had featured American Westerns, familiarizing a part of the Indonesian public with notorious outlaws and righteous sheriffs in the Wild West.¹¹² Even in the small town of Sibolongat in north Sumatra, Karo Batak boys had formed an organization in 1938 that sponsored monthly film showings in the local marketplace, and it is not unlikely that cowboy movies appeared in the regular repertoire.¹¹³

During the Indonesian Revolution, the customary references to flamboyant *jago*, who had stepped outside the ordained hierarchies of daily life in order to pursue the goal of Indonesia's *merdeka*, were modernized, so to speak, and translated into a more contemporary imagery. The writer Idrus, in his classic short story *Surabaja* described the *pemuda*, who fought the British Gurkha troops in Surabaya in November 1945 tooth and nail, as "cowboys" confronting "bandits" with faces as "black as locomotives." When the bandits, with bayonets pointed at their rivals' hearts, shouted "Your gun or your life!" the cowboys refused to put up their hands or to surrender their weapons. Instead, they yelled back: "'Take our lives,' and as they shouted these words, they began to fire. The bandits too opened fire and a fierce fight ensued."¹¹⁴

A month later, when troops under the British South East Asia Command (SEAC) cleared the city of Batavia and routed many fiery nationalists in "Operation Pounce," one of the more colorful revolutionary champions, Imam Syafe'i, left town mounted on a white horse with followers in his wake.¹¹⁵ In the imagination of those who watched his theatrical exit, it is possible that this spectacle conjured up characters in cowboy movies such as Jesse James or Billy the Kid, riding across the prairie with an angry sheriff in hot pursuit. Some Indonesian revolutionaries replicated American cowboys' romantic attachment to their horses, highlighted in many Hollywood westerns, because they were similarly fascinated with horses as "symbols of power, freedom,

¹¹¹ J. D. Legge, *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Following Recruited by Sutan Sjahrir in Occupation Jakarta* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series, No. 68, 1988), p. 76.

¹¹² Batavia's former and future US Consul-General wrote to General Douglas MacArthur in 1944 that "the natives of the East Indies" were especially fond of American "Westerns," quoted by Gardner, *Shared Hopes - Separate Fears*, p. 8. On November 1, 1944, the well-known Dutch movie director, Joris Ivens, was appointed as Netherlands East Indies Film Commissioner. Ivens had many contacts in the US film industry. During the war, he directed a "Lester Cowan United Artists Production" in Hollywood called "Woman of the Sea"; it is not unlikely that he arranged for American Westerns to be shown in the Indies. See "Biographical Notes on Prominent Individuals in Government Service and in Business," OSS, R & A No. 2647, March 15, 1945, RG 165, War Department, General and Special Staffs, Military Intelligence Division, Regional File Netherlands East Indies, Box 2631.

¹¹³ Rita Smith Kipp, "Emancipating Each Other: Dutch Colonial Missionaries' Encounter with Karo Women in Sumatra, 1900-1942," chapter 10, in Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire* (in press).

¹¹⁴ Idrus, "Surabaja," *Oriëntatie* 5, 44 (1952); an English translation of this passage can be found in Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 160.

¹¹⁵ Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries*, p. 72.

and defiance.”¹¹⁶ Imam Syafe’i’s retreat on horseback may also have summoned memories of Karl May’s stories about Old Shatterhand and Winnetou, when forced to regroup after Yankee soldiers or rowdy cowboys had invaded their ancestral hunting grounds.

Some Indonesian commentators lamented the phenomenon of cowboyism among TNI soldiers or the Wild West behavior of the more unruly *pemuda* squads in such areas as the countryside near Cirebon. “Since the beginning of our Revolutionary era we have noticed the emergence of ‘cowboy-isme’ symptoms,” an article in *Kutipan Patriot* (Patriotic Quotations) stated on October 14, 1947; “Our nation’s sons have become brash people who behave like highway robbers or think they resemble the pistol-waving heroes they have seen in motion pictures with Humphrey Bogart or the Dead End Kids.” There were too many “fake guerrilla fighters who behave like cowboys,” another central Javanese eyewitness wrote, such as the “bogus para-military units led by Hindartono, the adjutant of Tan Malaka, who actually employ Gestapo tactics.”¹¹⁷ About six months later, a Dutch amateur photographer took pictures of TNI soldiers strolling through the streets of Yogyakarta, dressed up, he remarked, as “veritable Wild West characters.” Some Dutch soldiers in the field, meanwhile, were not immune to the Wild West style or cowboy fashion: they had special leather cowboy holsters made for them.¹¹⁸

In addition, in the coastal town of Tuban to the northwest of Surabaya, a rogue lieutenant-colonel named Zakaria, who had been dismissed from the Indonesian Navy (ALRI unit XIII), had formed a mobile brigade that engaged in shameful conduct, prompting the population to hate the renegades. It was reported that the brigade’s members in Tuban resembled “pirates,” functioning as an “armed gang of robbers who steal from the inhabitants: they confiscate possessions and sabotage government services.”¹¹⁹ It could be that in this context, yet another American movie idol—Errol Flynn, playing a swashbuckling buccaneer in a series of Hollywood motion pictures—came to mind. And in the central Javanese city of Solo in mid-September, 1948, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had supposedly tried to create a “Wild West area of agitation and general lawlessness” to deflect attention from the build-up of PKI power in the town of Madiun in central Java.¹²⁰ A few months later, the Solo “*kraton*

¹¹⁶ William H. Frederick, “The Appearance of Revolution: Cloth, Uniforms, and the ‘Pemuda Style’ in East Java, 1945-1949,” in Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward Appearances: Dressing the State and Society* (Leiden: KITLV Press, in press), p. 23.

¹¹⁷ Rosihan Anwar, interview with Paul F. Gardner, September 10, 1994, reported in *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 67; “Cowboy-isme,” *Kutipan Patriot* 61 (October 14, 1947); Toeroenan, “Gadoengan laskar à la cowboy,” undated, addressed to Dj. M. Santoso and Adj. Insp. Moch. Djen of the Republican Police, in *Arsip Kepolisian Negara RI, 1947-49*, No. 47, ANJ.

¹¹⁸ In a lecture in the Savoy Homan Hotel to a group of European residents in Bandung on June 30, 1948. The amateur photographer was Lieutenant Drielsma, whose presentation was reported and reviewed in *De Preangerbode*, July 1, 1948. In *Yogya Dokumen*, No. 5284, ANJ; Willem Moraal, *Mariniers in actie op oost-Java* (Venlo: Van Spijk, 1983), quoted by Frederick, “The Appearance of Revolution,” in Schulte Nordholt, *Outward Appearances* (in press), p. 23.

¹¹⁹ R. Mujomiseno, in Economics Section of Ministry of Defense in Yogyakarta, to Chief of the Secretariat of the Ministry of Defense regarding “the Abuses in Tuban,” January 22, 1948, *Yogya Dokumen*, No. 5729, ANJ.

¹²⁰ George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 271; see Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern

family and *bangsawan*" (i.e. Sultan Pakubuwono XII on behalf of his entourage and noble relatives) addressed a pathetic appeal to President Sukarno: "the so-called popular movement in Solo has generated excesses and provoked anxiety among the city's population, which seems in doubt as to whom it should obey and whom it can trust." The *kraton* spokesman complained that the uncouth members (*kasar*) of the neighborhood committees in Solo terrorized the city's inhabitants through kidnapping and random violence.¹²¹

Conclusion

By employing what Frank Costigliola has called "tropes of gender and pathology," Spoor appropriated masculinity and rational thinking as core values of the Dutch nation, while he demonized the Indonesian Republic as a hysterical woman. His representation of the Republic's custodians as an out-of-control female registered his scorn for his adversaries; he continued to view them as colonial subjects, presumably because they lacked virile strength and manly self-discipline.¹²² The commander-in-chief seemed incapable of acknowledging the effectiveness of hard-as-metal Indonesian soldiers. He also failed to concede the sophistication of Republican politicians, whose wish to throw off the yoke of Dutch colonialism merged with an attempt to loosen the shackles of feudal Javanese values—at least, on the part of the social democrats among the founding fathers of the Republic.

In this combined effort, grace and humility were useless attributes during a lightning guerrilla strike. Displaying refinement was an equally futile exercise during a formal TNI engagement with Dutch military forces. Neither ceremony nor intricate forms of courtesy helped Republican political leaders when they were forced to play rough with their equally rough Dutch counterparts. As the Deputy Commander of Central Java, Colonel Suharto, reputedly told his TNI troops in the wake of the colonizers' second "treacherous" military attack within three years: "the fighting spirit of the people" has triumphed. Our Dutch enemies have misinterpreted "Indonesians' goodwill and peace-loving attitude . . . as a sign of weakness. [We] have now taken up arms and do not intend to lay them down" until the Dutch comply with our "just demands."¹²³

Within the newly configured cultural landscape of the Yogyakarta Republic, iron-willed determination conferred greater personal status and yielded better political and military results than a soft-spoken expression of delicate Javanese breeding. As an Indonesian freedom fighter would remember thirty years later: when the struggle for independence grew fierce and dangerous, most revolutionaries "became braver and

Indonesia Project, Monograph Series, No. 69, 1989), for a discussion about the authenticity of the documents on which this quotation is based, p. 89.

¹²¹ Unsigned Letter, in Dutch, from the Surakarta Kraton to the President of the Republic, December 29, 1948 (found by CMI in archives of State Secretariat in Yogyakarta), Yogya Dokumen, No. 5290, ANJ.

¹²² Costigliola, "The Nuclear Family," *Diplomatic History*, pp. 163-183; Elaine Tyler May, "Commentary: Ideology and Foreign Diplomacy: Culture and Gender in Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 18, 1 (Winter 1994): 71; Ching-Liang Low, "His Stories? Narratives and Images of Imperialism," pp. 185-190; Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 1-32.

¹²³ "Message from Col. Suharto, Deputy Commander of Central Java," *Merdeka* (Ceylon), II, 3 (February 20, 1949): ii.

more determined (*nekad*), even to the point of being increasingly mad (*gila*).¹²⁴ While ousting the Dutch colonial overlords was their principal objective, some defenders of the Republic may also have cultivated their toughness in an effort to undermine the age-old patterns of Javanese lordship and bondage.

Master and servant relationships had established co-dependence in Indonesian society under Dutch colonial rule before the Japanese occupation; such entrenched social habits had endowed the *status quo ante* with a gloss of coherence. In 1942, though, the future president of the Indonesian Republic had pleaded with all Indonesians to throw off the *jiwa budak* (servant spirit) in their souls. Occasionally, Sukarno marked the Javanese willingness to oblige and follow commands as a feminine trait. He had worn European trousers for most of his adult life; it has been reported that he mocked deferential *priyayi*, who still dressed in a traditional batik *sarung*, for “looking like a woman.”¹²⁵ True independence, Sukarno implored, could only take shape if Indonesians learned to exult in their *jiwa ksatriya* (noble spirit), which may have been a reference to the unambiguous masculinity of a *wayang* personality such as Bima.¹²⁶

During the Revolution, the leaders who struggled to create an independent Indonesian nation seemed to heed Sukarno’s admonition. The Republic’s rank-and-file embraced a “romantic brotherhood” and tried, in some places, to reach across social and ethnic divisions.¹²⁷ Republican politicians, meanwhile, displayed a boldness and cunning that could be designated masculine in character. Collectively, Indonesians’ behavior provided a stark contrast with Spoor’s archaic description of the Republic as a mercurial female. In 1983, the Indian psychiatrist Ashis Nandy classified this new determination and vigor, whether in India or in other societies warped by European imperialism such as Indonesia, as the “hypermasculinity” of nationalist movements, which was a necessary step in the “discovery of self” on the part of colonized men, who had been emasculated by colonial rulers for hundreds of years.¹²⁸ Of course a range of so-called Dutch experts observed the new intractability of their former colonial subjects with astonishment and disbelief. They labeled Indonesians’ rock-solid stance as infantile obstinacy, retrogressive behavior, or a gratification of “secondary narcissism.” Other Dutchmen, in turn, produced a diagnosis of insanity or mass hysteria.

But Spoor’s narrative went beyond the tendency to represent male colonial subjects as antipodes. Instead of characterizing Indonesian Republicans as merely languid and unmanly, he dressed them in full-fledged female guise. He conjured up a picture of the

¹²⁴ Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, p. 220.

¹²⁵ Richard Cribb’s Interview with Wim Hendrix, November 19, 1981, p. 3. Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2nd Division, 2.22.06, Losse Aanwinsten na 1980, preliminary No. 188, “Texts of interviews conducted by the Australian historian R. Cribb with prominent Dutchmen and Indonesians about the period 1945-1950.”

¹²⁶ Theodore Friend, in *The Blue-Eyed Enemy*, elaborated on the Hegelian metaphor of lordship and bondage to explain Javanese society and pre-war colonial culture, pp. 8-11. When still speaking in Dutch, Sukarno used the phrases *slavengeest* (slave mentality) and *heerengeest* (lord spirit or master mentality), p. 11.

¹²⁷ Frederick uses this phrase in “The Appearance of Revolution,” in Schulte Nordholt, *Outward Appearances* (in press).

¹²⁸ Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, pp. 1-63.

Republic as a feisty, modern woman whose “facelift,” to borrow the language from Y. B. Mangunwijaya’s novel *Durga Umayi*, had given birth to an unprecedented self-confidence.¹²⁹ Since the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, she knew exactly what she wanted and her primary goal was to terminate for once and for all the family romance with a Dutchman she loathed. She was just as “disputatious” as the *wayang* character Srikandi.¹³⁰ She was also capable of strategic political thinking and aggressive behavior, if necessary, to achieve her objectives. In Spoor’s rendering, the Indonesian Republic, from the day of its inception, had spurned the Javanese mandates of being mild-mannered and refined (*halus*).

Besides, it is possible that Spoor’s analysis of the Yogyakarta Republic as a female neurotic, who suffered from mental illness and required psychiatric help, might have served as an avoidance mechanism that prompted him to project his subliminal emotional anguish onto his enemy. The outside world’s response to the Republic’s unbending strength and intelligent manipulation of international public opinion perhaps contributed to the psychological unraveling of General Spoor, too. Indonesian politicians had been reincarnated from gentle “lambs” into “wolves,” former Minister of Overseas Territories in the Netherlands, Charles O. Welter, stated ruefully in May 1949; he noted that the predatory instincts of these “wolves” were reportedly boosted by “American capitalism,” enabling them to destroy the “lifelines of the Dutch nation.”¹³¹ By transforming themselves into uncompromising soldiers as well as hard-nosed politicians in the course of their anti-colonial struggle, the architects of the Indonesian Republic ceased being docile little “lambs” and managed to throw off the emblem of effeminacy altogether.

¹²⁹ Bodden, “Woman as Nation in Mangunwijaya’s *Durga Umayi*,” p. 53.

¹³⁰ Anderson, *Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese*, p. 22.

¹³¹ Charles O. Welter in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament, May 7, 1949, translation by British Embassy Press and Information Service, The Hague, sent to the Secretary of State by US Embassy second secretary Daniel Gaudin from The Hague, “Transmitting Government Statements and Summary of Indonesian Debates, May 17-18, 1949,” May 25, 1949, RG 59, Box No. 6441, 856.00/5-2549, NA II.