

Everyday life in Javanese children's homes

A study of three panti asuhan in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

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Abstract

This thesis is a social anthropological study of babies, children, youth and women in three Javanese *panti asuhan* (orphanages/children's homes). I want to show the complexity in Javanese *panti asuhan*, and I hope to challenge the typical notion of children and childhood. In my material I focus on everyday life activities which take place in the *panti asuhan*.

I argue that the inhabitants are socialised according to a court model of selfhood that leads the children and youth away from their less refined background. This has to be seen in light of the marginal situation the children and youth come from. The children are separated from their "village" background when they move into a *panti*, because the administrators in Javanese *panti*s want to socialise the inhabitants according to an "urban" setting. This is done as a way to improve the children's social status.

Another central topic of this thesis is that Javanese *panti asuhan* are, I suggest, "matrifocal" institutions. This happens because mothers and women are connected to the institutions, while fathers and men only have peripheral roles. The matrifocal pattern normally found in Javanese households are transferred and adjusted to a *panti* setting, and I show that Javanese *panti*s are homes and institutions at the same time. I also show that women use, and in a sense internalise, the traditional model of womanhood in order to get a high social status within and outside the *panti asuhan* sphere.

Finally I argue that the employees are not the only ones working in the institutions, because children and youth also perform a large variety of work in *panti asuhan*. Work is an important part of the socialisation in the institutions, because it creates a connection and a sense of community with the rest of society.

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Many people have contributed to this project, but I can only find the space to thank a few of those persons here.

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I also wish to thank “Save the Children” in Norway, for believing in my project by financing a re-fieldwork which took place in January 2007. After I started to write my thesis I understood that there were some areas where I needed more information, and thanks to “Save the Children” I got a chance to gather this important information.

Professor Signe Howell has been my supervisor during this project, and she has given me insightful guidance both in the preparation of the project and during my writing. Her help and comments have been an enormous help, thanks to her great knowledge about the region I choose as my field, and the topic for this thesis.

Finally I want to thank my husband “Mas Ari” who stayed with me during most of my fieldwork. Thanks to his presence in the field, some features about the Javanese society became especially evident to me, like expectations connected to love and marriage. However, the next time we are going to stay abroad I promise that we will go to a country where the inhabitants speak a language you understand. Thank you for your patience.

1. Introduction

My interest and material

As an adopted child I have always been aware of the fact that there are many ways to create kinship relations and relatedness. The traditional Western way of looking upon kinship has been through a focus on the nuclear family and blood ties, while in reality there are a variety of options when it comes to the creation and maintenance of family life (both in our own culture and in other places). My interest for these themes was further expanded during the autumn of 2004 when I attended a series of lectures given by Marit Melhuus, at the University of Oslo, in a subject called “Blood thicker than water? Newer perspectives on anthropological studies of kinship”. The focus was on different kinds of relatedness and included, among other things, studies about lesbian and gay families, adoption and newer reproductive technologies. Despite my enthusiasm for these lectures I felt a little bit disappointed over the curriculum, because the studies about adoption mainly focused on the time after the children came to their (adoptive) families, and less about children living in orphanages and what kind of life and relatedness they experience in the institutions. I tried to find literature about these children, but I realised that few anthropological studies have examined these kinds of children’s institutions. My decision about studying different kinds of children’s homes came after I discovered that this is an almost unknown field in anthropology.

The Indonesian term for “orphanage” and “children’s home” is *panti asuhan*. “Panti” can be translated with house/residence, institution or home while “asuhan” means upbringing/rearing, education, leadership/direction or sponsorship (*An Indonesian-English dictionary*: 2004). The Indonesian term *panti asuhan* does not distinguish between homes for orphans and homes for children who for social or economic reasons live away from their parents, and in some of the *panti asuhan* there are both orphans and children who do have parents. To avoid comparison with how we use the

English words “orphanage” and “children’s home”, I will from now on use the Indonesian term “Panti”¹ for the three children’s institutions in this thesis.

In this thesis I want to give a presentation of Javanese pantis. With everyday activities as my starting point I attempt to show what babies, children, youth and employees in Javanese pantis do, and why they do it this way. My leading question is what kind of relationship there is between pantis and the rest of society. I will examine this question mainly in two ways. First I will analyse the process of socialisation in connection with Javanese perceptions of selfhood. What can an examination of socialisation and ideas about selfhood in pantis tell us about the Javanese society? Secondly I want to analyse the pantis in light of the different categories of people who are connected to the institutions. How do these people affect the organisation of the pantis, and how do the inhabitants relate to society?

Gullestad (1989) says that everyday life (*hverdagsliv*) has been neglected in social sciences, because activities connected to this sphere have been looked upon as trivial. She argues that we need to focus on this arena in order include children, women and “ordinary people” into our analysis, as a contrast to focus on high class men who often are part of our analysis. Everyday life concerns the daily organisation of activities, and it also concerns experience and cosmology (ibid.:17-18). One way of including everyday life into our analysis is to focus on activities instead of having different groups as our starting point. Gullestad writes from Norway and says that people’s houses or homes (*hjem*) are central when we want to study everyday life in a Norwegian context (ibid.:22-23).

To use houses or homes as analytic concept is also common in other parts of the world, especially in Southeast Asia. Howell (2003) writes that Levi-Strauss made the house a new theoretical focus within kinship studies, because he came across

¹ When Indonesians use the official language, Bahasa Indonesia, they like to express themselves as simply and easily as possible, which among other things means they use abbreviations if possible. For example “panti asuhan” will often just be called “panti”. This abbreviation will also be used in this thesis.

societies in Indonesia and North America which had few principles of social organisation connected to kin based relationships. Levi-Strauss solved this problem by analysing the groups as “house-based societies” (ibid.: 17). This approach has been adopted by many social scientists who have done research in Southeast Asia (see e. g. Carsten 2004 and Howell 1995).

Despite the fact that Southeast Asian groups often have been studied as house-based societies, children have not been included into the analysis in the same way as women and “ordinary people”. In my thesis I will study Javanese *pantis* and I will include children into the analysis by focusing on the activities which take place in the *pantis*. Javanese *pantis* are societies which are not based on a kinship structure, because *pantis* are arenas where solidarity, obligations, support networks and sharing of resources are not necessarily created through “blood”. I therefore find it useful to take into consideration Gullestad’s point of view in order to grasp the reality of Javanese *pantis*. However, one important note has to be made about the *pantis*. The *pantis* share some of the same features as other Indonesian houses, in the sense that they are someone’s home and someone’s place of work, but they are also institutions. Javanese *pantis* are similar to the “total institutions” described by Goffman (1961), because they are residential communities and formal organisations at the same time. A *panti* is a private home where inhabitants can withdraw from society’s demands and etiquette, while at the same time it is an institution which seek to socially shape or improve the inhabitants’ lives.

My arrival

I want to describe my arrival in the field and give a short overview of the institutions I was connected to. The aim is not to give an exhaustive description of the institutions, but to give the reader a general idea about the access and duration of my stay and the places where my fieldwork took place.

My fieldwork took place in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from the 13th of January 2006 until the 10th of July 2006, with an additional three weeks in January 2007. Before

my fieldwork started I was able to establish contact with a foundation named Yayasan Sayap Ibu (YSI), which runs orphanages in Yogyakarta and other places in Indonesia. They read and approved my project design and told me that I was welcome to do my research within their organisation. Their head office is in Yogyakarta, and the chairwoman of the foundation, Ibu Utaryo, met me upon arrival in Yogyakarta. She took me for lunch and told me briefly about YSI's mission and work. She further explained to me that she had made contact with a Protestant *panti* named Reksa Putra. She recommended that I start my research there, because the children in YSI's orphanages are mainly babies, from 0-2 years old and disabled children and youth, and for this reason it would be difficult for me to learn the language quickly if I spent all my time there. She therefore wanted to take me to Reksa Putra, but told me to keep in touch with YSI. Later on she also introduced me to a Muslim *panti* named Aisyiah, and to a mother's home run by YSI.

Reksa Putra²

The *panti* was founded in 1950 after initiative from the Protestant church *Majelis Gereja Kristen Djawa Gondokusuman*. Today the Reksa Putra Foundation runs two Protestant *pantis*, one for girls and one for boys, and I was connected to the *panti* for girls (*Reksa Putra bagian putri*). The main aim of the *panti* is to give spiritual and formal education in order to help the girls to get a livelihood and income on their own, along with teaching them to care for others (Isananto 2006). Today there are twenty-two girls between eleven – twenty-three years old in the *panti*. Twenty-one of them have one or two parents who are alive, while one girl lives in the *panti* because both her parents have passed away.

Some families have to send their children to a *panti* because of economic or social reasons. In situations like this the tie between the child and its family is not broken, although the intensity of this relationship varies. In some cases neither of the parents

² See appendix for maps over the three *pantis*.

are educated, or they have only been to elementary school. Both of them may be wage labourers with low paid jobs, and it is financially difficult to take care of a family. This becomes more evident when the child reaches school age. Education is expensive in Indonesia, and each family has to pay for books and school uniform in addition to the school fee. For poor families this is a big financial burden, and some families can not afford to send their children to school, or they can only afford it for a short period. By sending their child to a *panti* the child will be given an education, in addition to accommodation and food, and the child is no longer an item of expenditure for the family.

The composition of the family has great impact on the economic and social situation in the family. To be a single parent is not easy, and if one of the parents has died or ran away, the remaining one will be in a difficult situation. Williams (1991) points to the fact that “single fathers cannot really care for a family unless they have a daughter old enough to take on the motherly role (ibid.: 193). The traditional division of labour in which the mother is the one in charge of running the household, including being the main caretaker for children, puts fathers in situations they can not handle if the mother passes away. In cases where the mother has been working outside the house, the income will decrease if she is no longer a part of the household. Williams goes on to describe how “families without fathers need more financial help than otherwise” (ibid). The father has traditionally been the one working outside the house and bringing money back to the household. If the main financial contributor leaves the household there will be a tremendous economic pressure on the ones left behind.

The inhabitants in *Reksa Putra Reksa Putra* come from poor families, and most of them moved into the *panti* when they reached school age. The majority of the girls are originally from Java, but it also occurs that girls from other islands move into the *panti*, most likely because their local church has informed and recommended the *panti* due to the family’s economical or social difficult situation. All the girls go to school, but the *panti* has few donors and are normally not able to pay for higher education. Most of the girls therefore start to work at the age of eighteen.

Bu Endang (56) became the administrator of the *panti* when she succeeded her father in the position, and Bu Endang's brother is the administrator of the boy's *panti* (*Reksa Putra bagian putra*). Bu Endang lives in the *panti* together with her family: Pak Isananto (49), Dorah (21), Nanil (17) and Dhana (11). Bu Tri (43) is the only staff member in the *panti*, and she has been part of the *panti* for more than ten years. She is an unmarried social worker who considers the people in *Reksa Putra* as her family. She is always around the girls because she arrives before the girls come home from school and goes back home late in the evening.

The *panti* is a square shaped building which is built around a small square shaped garden. The different rooms face the garden which is the centre of the *panti*. The inhabitants occupy three bedrooms, called bedroom North (*lor*), South (*kidul*) and East (*uetan*). Each bedroom can host eight girls, and Bu Tri has a bed in bedroom north where she takes her afternoon rest. The inhabitants also have their own bathroom area and kitchen, and a place next to the well where they do their laundry. Bu Endang's family have their own rooms, which include their own kitchen, bedrooms, living room and bathroom. The rest of the *panti* consists of common areas open for everyone in the house, but are mostly used by the inhabitants. This includes a big hall, a dining area, a TV corner, and a garden on the outside of the *panti*. When I wanted to stay the night in *Reksa Putra* I borrowed Bu Tri's bed, because she seldom sleeps over in the *panti*. I spent my first three months solely in *Reksa Putra*, while I spent half of the time during the last two months in this *panti*. Due to the amount of time I spent in this *panti*, its inhabitants are my main informants.

Aisyiah

After three months in *Reksa Putra*, with only sporadic contact with Sayap Ibu, I came to know that Ibu Utaryo in YSI was going to attend a meeting in a Muslim *panti* called *Aisyiah*. I asked if I could join her, and if she could introduce me to the administrator in *Aisyiah*. At that time I had almost entirely been around the Protestant inhabitants in *Reksa Putra*, and I wanted to expand my field by participating in and observing a Muslim *panti*. I was introduced to *Aisyiah*'s administrator, Bu Hariyah,

who knows both Ibu Utaryo and Bu Endang, and I asked if I could spend a month in her *panti*. She agreed, and one day later I started to visit Aisyiah six days a week, with the last day of the week spent in Reksa Putra or Sayap Ibu.

The *panti* was founded in 1921 by Aisyiah. This organisation is the women's department of Muhammadiyah which is the oldest and second largest Muslim organisation in the country. The main aim of the *panti* is to give religious teaching and formal education to the inhabitants, while at the same time encouraging women to act in public (see e. g. Markoes-Natsir 2000 and Suryochondro 2000). Today there are eighty girls between eight – twenty-three years old in the *panti*, which makes Aisyiah the biggest Muslim *panti* for girls in Yogyakarta. The inhabitants are abandoned children and youth whose parents for different economic or social reasons are not able to care for their children. Most of the girls are Javanese, but there are also a few girls who come from other parts of the country. The *panti* attracts a lot of donors, because they are run by a big Muslim organisation, and the economy of the *panti* is better off compared to Reksa Putra. This can among other things be seen in the formal educational possibilities offered to the girls. Everyone who wants to take higher education is given the opportunity to do so. As already mentioned, higher education is expensive in Indonesia, and normally it is only youth from upper class families or people who have been given a scholarship who can afford this kind of education.

Bu Hariyah has run the *panti* for years, and she used to live in the *panti* together with her husband and children, but now she is a widow, and her children are married and live by themselves. Bu Nanik is the social worker in the *panti*, and she lives in a house in the middle of the *panti* area. She is unmarried and has been part of the *panti* for decades, but she has a more distant relationship towards the children and youth than is the case in Reksa Putra. This distance is also characteristic of the other child – adult relationships in Aisyiah, although there are more than thirteen employees who perform different roles in the *panti*. Part of the reason, I think, is due to the size of the *panti* and the number of inhabitants. The number of inhabitants makes it difficult for

the adults to develop a close relationship towards every child, and the same goes for the relationship among the inhabitants themselves, which is less close compared to Reksa Putra. This makes Aisyiah similar to an institution, while Reksa Putra, as I experienced it, is run more like an extended family where everyone interacts daily with each other inside the house.

The office and the *musholla*³ are at the entrance of the building complex, with a big assembly hall next to the musholla. The inhabitants share nine bedrooms which are situated in two rows on each side of a garden. In between the two rows there is also a house which among other things houses bathrooms, a study room, a big hall and accommodation possibilities for guests. Bu Nanik's house is situated between the main bedroom area and the kitchen area. The kitchen area is big, but hardly anyone eats here because normally the food is brought to the bedrooms when it is time to eat. Next to the kitchen there are two classrooms where the inhabitants can do their homework, and on top of the kitchen area there is another hall which is not in use. When I spent the night in the *panti* I slept on a mattress on the floor in bedroom 1.

Sayap Ibu and Wisma Ibu

The Sayap Ibu *panti* was established in 1981 by the Sayap Ibu Foundation, and their aim is to protect babies from the moment they are conceived⁴ and, further on, into their childhood. The *panti* believe that all babies and children should have the same rights regardless of religion or social situation, which among other things demands that all new born babies should get a birth certificate in order to be registered as citizens. This *panti* is similar to a Western orphanage because the children are abandoned or otherwise neglected. There are approximately seventeen babies in the babies' section, but the number varies according to the number of adoptions and the

³ A small building or room set aside for performance of religious duties.

⁴ Safe abortion clinics are open only to married women, thus unmarried women have great difficulty accessing safe abortion. Unmarried women are judged immoral, and a great number of these women seek illegal abortions, which often leads to situations where the mother or foetus get hurt (Utomo 2005). The Sayap Ibu Foundation is aware of this practice and seek to protect children from the time they are conceived.

number of newcomers. For the time being (April 2007) there are also five children at the age of five and six in another section.

Wisma Ibu is situated behind the *panti* and is a home for unmarried pregnant women where they get care and support before and after birth. Wisma Ibu is part of the Sayap Ibu Foundation and has a strong connection to the *panti*, because after giving birth the mother can choose if she wants to return home with her baby, or if she wants to leave her baby behind in the *panti*. In January 2007 I stayed in Wisma Ibu for three weeks. During my stay one mother and her new born daughter stayed in Wisma Ibu.

Almost all the employees who work directly with the children are young, unmarried women. This division of labour is based on an assumption that small children need a mother figure in their life, while the fathers are less important for babies and children. These employees do not have their own families because the job is difficult to handle if you are married and have your own children. The employees work shifts which require that they have to spend the night in the *panti* and be away from home for longer periods.

The staff in the main Sayap Ibu office administrates all the three branches of Sayap Ibu, which are situated in Jakarta, Banten and Yogyakarta. They run services like *pantis*, kindergartens, playgroups and different kinds of parent counselling services. The administrator of the Sayap Ibu *panti* in Yogyakarta lives together with her family in a house situated on the backside of the *panti*, and the administrator of Wisma Ibu stays in a room on the second floor in Wisma Ibu, which was next to the room where I stayed for three weeks in January 2007. During my main fieldwork in 2006 I spent time in Sayap Ibu during the last two months of my fieldwork.

My informants

I have introduced my informants through the description of the institutions, but I want to clarify certain aspects about my informants. I have divided the inhabitants into three groups; Babies, children and youth. The baby section in Sayap Ibu is for babies and toddlers below three years old, and I refer to the same age group when I

talk about babies. I refer to inhabitants between three and twelve years old as children, while I refer to inhabitants who have finished elementary school as youth. I differentiate my informants according to age, because the socialisation varies according to age, and this is a central subject in my thesis. I also find it important to clarify that my informants are mainly girls and women. Boys and men are hardly mentioned in my thesis, not even in the parts which state that I will talk about gender. I chose to select my informants in this way, because I wanted to experience as much as possible of everyday life in the institutions, thus it was most convenient to be connected to girls' institutions. By being around female inhabitants I could freely move in and out of the inhabitants' bedrooms and private sphere, and I could spend the night in the *pantis*. It also turned out that mostly all employees in Javanese *pantis* are women. In order to get reliable data about men I would have needed to use written materials, but I have chosen to focus on the material I have collected through my fieldwork, hence the lack of male voices.

A note on language

The official language in Indonesia is Bahasa Indonesia, but according to Smedal there are between 300 – 400 hundred local languages in Indonesia (1996: 448), including Javanese which is spoken in Yogyakarta. Children who go to school learn Bahasa Indonesia, and in big cities like Yogyakarta almost everyone is familiar with the official language, although Javanese is their first language. Since my informants would mostly be children and youth, who do not speak English, I decided to learn some Indonesian before I left for my fieldwork. Among other things I took a language course in Bahasa Indonesia at the Indonesian Embassy in Oslo which gave me a basic knowledge of the language. When I arrived in Yogyakarta I immediately started on a 150 hours language course, and after three months I was able to take part in most of the everyday conversations, as long as they were in Bahasa Indonesia. Among themselves my informants spoke Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese or a mix between those two languages.

I never learnt the Javanese language, and I was unable to understand what people spoke about if they did not speak Bahasa Indonesia. However, all of my informants mostly spoke Bahasa Indonesia when I was present, a gesture I am very thankful for. The consequence of not knowing Javanese is that I have not able to study status differences as expressed through the Javanese language. When people speak Javanese they use different words of address and intonations depending on the status they have vis à vis the person spoken to, and this was a feature of Javanese everyday life that is not present in my material (for more details about the relationship between the Javanese language and social status see e. g. C. Geertz 1960).

The word “panti”, the names of the four institutions and personal titles are Indonesian words I use throughout this thesis. I have chosen not to mark these words in italics, while all other Indonesian words are marked in italics. I also want to inform the reader that the Indonesian language makes a noun into plural by repeating the word, but I have chosen to make Indonesian nouns into plural by adding –s, which is the English way of making nouns into plural. I have decided to do it this way because I think the text becomes easier to read for people who are not familiar with the Indonesian language, hence the word “pantis” is the plural form of panti.

I have given fictitious names to the children and youth in the pantis, and to unmarried mothers connected to Wisma Ibu, but their age and other information correspond with reality. I have chosen to give fictitious names to the children and youth because they always considered me as a friend, and not as an anthropologist, and I do not think they were fully aware of the fact that I collected everything they told me and everything I observed, for later on to write a thesis about their personal and private lives. The unmarried mothers often came to Wisma Ibu in order to hide their pregnancies from the rest of society, thus discretion is necessary. The name of the pantis, its staff members and other adults appear with their original names, and the same is the case for Bu Endang’s family.

Method

To do fieldwork is a personal matter where you use yourself as a tool in order to collect information (see e. g. Haraway 1988, Steward 1998 and Stoller 1989); before I entered the field I had a strong wish to use participation-observation as my main method because I wanted to participate in the daily activities which take place in the *panti*. I imagined that I could take the role of an adult and employee in my approach towards the inhabitants, but this turned out to be impossible in two of the three *panti*. In Reksa Putra, Bu Endang introduced me to the inhabitants as “their new friend for six months”, and I later found out that this is how new inhabitants are introduced in the *panti* when they arrive for the first time. The *panti* was organized in such a way that the inhabitants themselves were in charge of administrating their everyday life, with only a little involvement from the adults. To take on the role as an adult would therefore have been inconvenient, considering that I wanted to get to know the inhabitants well. Although my arrival in the *panti* was similar to the arrival of new inhabitants, the equality between us stopped there. In addition to being a friend I was also considered as a guest, which established important premises for my stay. I was, for example, never involved in the duties and work which took place during the days, although I wanted to participate more in these activities. When I did some work on my own initiative, like cleaning the floor or doing the dishes, the girls always made it clear that this was something which was not expected of me. If I did someone else’s duty they seemed a little bit embarrassed and did not know what to do with the extra spare time. I therefore tried to do activities without taking someone’s job. Since I never escaped the role as guest, it was hard to accomplish participation-observation. I often ended up doing observation, in addition to having informal conversations with the girls and the staff.

When I was together with the girls outside the *panti* the situation changed. Then the girls guided and explained to me how things worked and how I should behave, just like they do when new inhabitants arrive to the *panti*. I was expected to behave more or less like them, and they would explain me what to do. Their socialisation towards

me often took place when we met friends, went to church or did other social activities. When we met people on the outside I was considered as part of the group from Reksa Putra, both by the inhabitants themselves and the people we met, and this made participation-observation easier; I was no longer looked upon merely as a guest but as part of the group in the sense that I was expected to take part in the activities.

I also collected data by talking to people who were connected to the *panti* in different ways, like members of the board, members of the church and other involved parties. I also did an interview with Bu Endang and with one former member of the Reksa Putra board.

My situation in Aisyiah was similar to the one in Reksa Putra in the sense that observation and informal conversations became my main methods, both in my approach towards the inhabitants and the staff. Since I only stayed for one month in this institution I chose to focus on the inhabitants in the bedroom where I sometimes spent the night. I followed them around when they did different activities and work, and in this way I also came in contact with other inhabitants and employees.

My days in Sayap Ibu were different compared to the other *pantis*. Every evening between three – six o'clock the *panti* is open for visitors, and normally there are between ten to fifteen visitors everyday. The visitors are mainly young women and men, and a few women who are already married. They come to the *panti* to play with the babies, and sometimes they also change diapers and feed the babies when necessary. The staff are used to having visitors who do this kind of “dirty” work, and they expected me to do the same thing. I therefore participated in the daily activities in a more direct way than I was able to do in the other *pantis*. I would normally arrive to the *panti* in the morning, and as the day went by I would participate in activities that the staff did, which included changing diapers, feeding and cleaning, giving baths and comforting babies. When the visitors arrived I would normally spend time in the section for older children, but in this section I was only observing and talking to people. When I came back to Yogyakarta in 2007 I stayed for three weeks in Wisma Ibu, but I mostly spent the days in the *panti* doing the same things as I was

used to from my previous stay. In addition to the approach I have mentioned above, I also had informal conversations with the staff in the main office.

After a month in Yogya I rented a house, because I needed a place where I could withdraw and have a private life, and because my husband would stay with me for four months. Although social anthropology for some people means “going native”, I did not have the energy to constantly be around my informants or other people. My rented house became a place where I could relax, write my field notes and read relevant literature. My husband stayed with me from March until July, but he was never part of the *panti*. He sometimes joined me if I was going to meet my informants in public, like in church or other religious meetings, but he spent his time working as a native speaker in French at the Gajah Mada University and making friends on his own. Despite the fact that my husband never was involved in activities in the *panti*, his presence influenced how my informants perceived me and how they talked to me. After the arrival of my husband people wanted to talk about marriage, love and expectations about gender roles within marriage, which were all subjects that I hardly heard anyone discussing before my husband came along. This situation opened my eyes and ears for new subjects which were important to my informants, but that had not been discussed with me previously. In this way my husband’s presence gave me insight into new dimensions of importance for Javanese girls and women.

Introduction to Yogyakarta and Java

Yogyakarta, called Yogya for short, has a population of 450, 000 and is situated in central Java. All the three *panti* I was connected to are situated in the centre of the city, as a contrast to the more quiet villages (*desa*) on the outside of the city. Despite the fact that Yogyakarta is a city where “Javanese language is at its purest, Java’s arts at their brightest and its traditions at their most visible” (*Indonesia: 2003*), the city is also a place where traditional life meets modernisation, a process which is characteristic for many of today’s Javanese cities. Half of Indonesia’s approximately 223 million population live in Java, which makes the island one of the most densely

populated areas in the world (*Aschehoug og Gyldendals store ett binds leksikon*: 2001). Sukarno and Hatta, the country's first president and vice president, signed the declaration of the Indonesian independence in 1945, ending occupation by both the Dutch (1789 – 1942) and the Japanese (1942 – 1945), and Yogyakarta functioned as the country's capital until 1949. Bråten (1995: 12) points out that Yogyakarta has not only played an important role in Indonesia's history, but is looked upon as the cultural centre, with respect to traditional Javanese art, and as an educational centre, with several universities and other schools for higher education.

According to Dzuhayatin (2003) a cultural battle between the Javanese and non-Javanese populations took place during the years before the independence, and the question to solve was how the new and modern Indonesian state should develop. The victory of Sukarno in becoming the country's first president was also the victory of Javanese culture, which led to the predominance of Javanese symbols on the national level. Suharto, the second president, put people from his own circle in the state administration and into political positions, and the Javanese domination was further strengthened (*ibid.*) These are a few factors which have contributed to a Javanese dominance in Indonesia. Javanese people not only occupy the majority of different leadership positions, but they are also, by many people, looked upon as more modern and civilized than the rest of the population who live on the other 13, 000 islands.⁵

Java has also gained a lot of scientific attention, and many anthropological studies have focused on this island. Clifford Geertz is a leading anthropologist who has written many anthropological works from Java. In the 1950s he arrived in Java for the first time, together with five colleagues including his wife. They were all part of a

⁵ For more details and a historical overview of Yogyakarta see chapter 2.

MIT⁶-project that aimed at describing various aspects of east central Java. One outcome of Geertz' stay is his famous book *The religion of Java* (1960). This book is an attempt to systematize the Javanese complexity, and Geertz categorized the Javanese into "three main cultural types which reflect the moral organization of Javanese culture" (ibid.: 4). These are the *abangan*, *santri* and *prijaji*, which are connected respectively to three main social-structural nuclei which are the village, the market and the government bureaucracy. The *abangan*-type represents a mixture of animistic, Hindu and Islamic elements and is found in the villages among peasants and other low-class people (ibid.: 5). The *santri*-variant stresses Islamic aspects and is related to the market and trading, while the *prijaji*-type is rooted in the Hindu-Javanese courts. *Prijajis* follow a refined court etiquette, and Geertz asserts that "the *prijaji* style of life remains the model not only for the elite but in many ways for the entire society" (ibid.: 6). This point is one aspect of the Javanese society that is important for my thesis, and I will describe this in chapter 2.

Although Geertz' study from 1960 has become a classic work, it has also been met with criticism. Bråten (1995) points out that Geertz' work has been criticised for drawing too strong a connection between economic status and religious orientations, and because some of the local terms he used are misinterpreted. He also claims that Geertz later on developed a way of representing his material in which human experiences and cultural models are not kept apart. Bråten writes about a pedicab driver in Yogya and says that his informant did not know or use the cultural types described by Geertz, and he asserts that Geertz' work has "limited use in illuminating actual cases of self formation" (ibid.: 181-182).

I will come back to this discussion later in this chapter, and in chapter 3, but first I want to introduce another book from the MIT-project of relevance to my study. Hildred Geertz describes the Javanese family organization and socialization in her book *The Javanese family* (1961), and this is the first anthropological book that

⁶ Massachusetts Institute of Technology

describes Javanese women. She asserts that the nuclear family is the most important kinship group (ibid.: 2), and that women have strong positions both within the family and in the society. She says that women and men have different roles, and she points out that men have peripheral roles at home and have a distant relationship towards their children (ibid.: 106). However, the relationships between wives and husbands are equal, among other things, because of the wives economic contributions to the households (ibid.: 46).

She continues to say that the nuclear family household not only has an economic- and socialization function, but it is also important for the functioning of Javanese society as a whole, because family members are taken care of when they need help. In this way there is less need for institutions that help the sick, the unemployed and parentless children because they will be taken care of by other family members (ibid.: 4). This leads to a situation in which each Javanese feels that members of her or his family are the most important people in the world (ibid.: 5).⁷

Sullivan (1994) is critical towards the Indonesian state ideology, Hildred Geertz and others who claim that Javanese women and men have different but equal roles. She claims that Javanese women are disadvantaged both within the domestic sphere and in the wider public world, and that the division of roles gives advantages to males (ibid.: 109). Sullivan asserts that Geertz is wrong when she says that women have authority and dominate at home, because men's roles at home are not without any function. Women and men are involved both at home and in the wider society, but their relation is characterised by inequality, because women have less authority and power compared to men (ibid.: 174).

My own criticism of Hildred Geertz' work is directed towards her strong faith in how the nuclear family works as a safety net for its members. She says that there is less

⁷ Many anthropological studies from Java have also emerged from Cornell University, from anthropologists such as Benedict Anderson, James Siegel and Ward Keeler. According to Ragnhildstveit (1998), these authors present cultural ideologies instead of describing individual variation and social differentiation (ibid.: 29). Bråten (1995: 184) calls for a search for a focus on the social dimension of selfhood in works written by these authors.

need for institutions to take care of family members who do not manage to take care of themselves, because they are taken care of by each individual's family. Geertz does say that the actual aid given to relatives outside the nuclear family should not be overemphasized, because the duty of helping relatives diminishes with the distance of the relationship (1961: 4), but her research lacks the dimension of people who do not get help from their nuclear family. My material show that the nuclear family is not always able to care of its children at all times, and that institutions have to help in situations where the families are not able to help themselves.

I have so far presented two studies from the MIT-project, and some objections against these studies. I have chosen to present these studies in the introduction to my thesis because in many ways they form the theoretical starting point for my thesis. At the end of this introduction I want to place myself within the theoretical framework that is briefly described above and give an outline of my thesis.

My point of view and outline of thesis

In this thesis I describe the everyday life of mostly female inhabitants and employees in three Javanese pants. The majority of my informants are children and youth, and I choose to study this group because they are underrepresented in anthropological research in general, and almost invisible in anthropological research from Java. Hildred Geertz did write about childhood, but her approach to the process of socialisation did not pay any attention to children's own stories. A similar approach towards children and childhood is a common feature for almost all anthropological literature about children. However, during the 1970s it began to be argued that women should have their own voices in anthropological literature (see e. g. Ardener 1975, Ortner 1974 and Rosaldo 1974), and it is about time that we give children and youth the same opportunity. I try to include children's and youth's own stories in my thesis.

I shall argue that a cultural model of selfhood which has derived from the sultanate has a considerable impact on the population of Yogyakarta. In many ways it might

seem that I have gone into the trap that Bråten (1995) describes: where cultural models and individual experiences are merged together, and where the complexities of Javanese lives are reduced to the views of the elite (*prijajis*) (ibid.: 183-184). However, this is not the case, because what I want to show is that the administrators and staff of Javanese *pantis* conceive the social positions of the children and youth in *pantis* in such a way that it is most beneficial to socialise the children according to the court model of selfhood. The employees want to help the children and youth to raise their social status. Most of the children come from poor families, and a focus on the court culture can be one way of pulling the children away from their poor and *kasar* background. The *pantis*' focus on the Javanese court model of selfhood are further reinforced by the Javanese domination which exists in Indonesia, where alternatives to Javanese cultural models often are looked upon as uncivilised and backward.

A similar explanation needs to be made in connection with the models of womanhood that I describe. For readers of this thesis it might seem like a contradiction when I say that a woman's self and authority exists in relation to a man, while at the same time I also say that women have high social status. It is important to understand that it is through the traditional female roles that women get high social status. Women are not passively following the traditional division of labour and other traditional gender roles, but they use these models in order to get respect and prestige.

In chapter 2 I describe the historical context for my thesis, with a focus on the establishment of the sultanate of Yogyakarta. The sultanate has created a context where social practises emerge and reach far outside the palace itself. I show how knowledge of, and to a certain extent the internalisation of, these social practises opens up the possibility to climb in the social hierarchy. To have the right etiquette and to have knowledge of art are two ways to exhibit that you have a refined selfhood. In chapter 3 I expand my description of the Javanese perceptions of selfhood. I show how my informants have clear ideas of different levels of selfhood, and how their views in many ways correspond with the sultanate's model. In chapter 4 I describe different categories of Javanese women and how they turn *pantis* into,

what I have called, “matrifocal” institutions. This happens because there is interplay between an outside- and inside world in connections with *pantis*, and because *pantis* are homes and institutions at the same time. In chapter 5 I focus on children’s work. I argue that the administrators perceive children’s work in a positive manner, because it creates a connection and a sense of community with the population of Yogyakarta.

2. Yogyakarta: A city of contrasts

A historical context

In this chapter I will give a brief historical account of Yogyakarta, with a main focus on the establishment of the sultanate which is situated in the heart of the city. The palace of the Sultan is not only the centre of the city, but it is also the centre of a court culture which reaches far outside the palace itself. The sultanate established important premises for a certain perception of selfhood which can be said to work as guide lines for the socialisation which takes place inside the *pantis*, as well as for other children in town. The palaces are viewed as sites where the authentic and "pure" Javanese culture has been preserved, and there is a relationship between the sultanate and the rest of society that opens up a possibility for people from marginal classes to learn and internalise certain features from the court culture, and thereby become "real" Javanese. I will argue that the socialisation in Javanese *pantis* is built on this relationship, because the aim of the *pantis* is to help the inhabitants away from their "less pure" Javanese background. The values taught to the children and youth are rooted in a court culture which started in the 18th century, but which still has a strong influence on everyday life of the city's population. The historical background of Yogyakarta is not something that only belongs to the past, but it is an important aspect of today's society.

Between the 3rd and the 10th century Java was influenced by different cultural traditions, with Hinduism and Buddhism having the strongest impact on the island. The most famous kingdom was the Hindu-Javanese Majapahit, but during the 14th century traders from Persia and from the western coast of India made connections with Sumatra and Java, and Islam was introduced to the islands (Smedal 1996: 449). The island's population was troubled with warfare between different combatants for centuries, and in the early 17th century the Dutch started to occupy territories. Bråten (1995) describes how the Dutch succeeded in freezing the pattern of division between different combatants and royal lines by giving the involved parties different territories

(ibid.: 12). This is also what happened in 1755 when Yogyakarta was founded. The Dutch divided the kingdom of Mataram into Yogyakarta and Surakarta courts, and gave Yogyakarta to Prince Mangkubumi, while Surakarta remained in the hands of the royal line of Pakubuwono (ibid.: 10). Prince Mangkubumi started to build a huge palace (*kraton*) and changed his name to Sultan Hamengkubuwono, and he managed to turn the sultanate into a powerful Javanese state. Later on in the 1940s Yogya became the symbol of resistance to colonial rule when the sultan locked himself in the palace as a resistance to the Dutch.

It is not the aim of this chapter to go more into detail about the historical events which I have briefly described above. Rather I want to focus on the sultanate in Yogyakarta, and explain how the sultanate lay down important premises for the socialisation which today takes place inside the *pantis*. The sultanate and the court culture is an important context of reference for my thesis.

Court culture

Sultan Hamengkubuwono transformed the village he was given in 1755 into a city, and today the Sultan's palace and the area around constitute a city within Yogya where close to 30, 000 people live. Bråten (1995) describes how the palace consists of two square-shaped wall structures where the inner one is the Sultan's residential area and the outer one is enclosing thirty-three palace neighbourhoods (ibid.: 10). The outer area has its own markets, schools and mosques in addition to two huge parks (*alun alun*), where people like to stroll in the evenings. The Sultan also built a pleasure park, known as the Water Castle (*Taman sari*), where he and the people in his nearest circle could relax. Bråten also points to the fact that the Sultan had a huge impact on the development of the city outside the palace, because he gave land to various categories of artisans and servants connected to the palace (ibid). Today's Sultan of Yogyakarta is Sultan Hamengkubuwono the 10th, and although the Sultan has lost the political power, the sultanate remains the centre of art and etiquette.⁸

⁸ See Pemberton (1994: 64) for a similar story about the *Kraton* in Surakarta and the loss of its political power.

Yogyakarta is looked upon as the cultural centre of Javanese art, and it is famous for its shadow puppet theatres (*wayang kulit*) *gamelan* music, *batik*, silver industry, wood carvers, singers and dancers. Throughout the week the palace arranges different kinds of artistic performances open for the public.

Today's sultanate is not only a cultural centre for Yogya's inhabitants, but it is also a moral centre. Asmussen (1999) traces this moral impact back to the traditional social structure of the Javanese kingdoms, which had a hierarchical and feudal structure with the king and court in the centre, versus the common people and village communities at the periphery. She refers to Koentjaraningrat⁹ when she says that this makes up two different cultures, namely a "village culture" and a "court culture", or a "peasant culture" and an "urban culture". Both cultures have complex ritual practices, and together they make up the "Javanese culture" (ibid.: 7). Geertz (1960) noticed the same thing, when he in *The religion of Java* describes a division between "court culture" and "peasant culture", but he used, respectively, the local terms *prijaji* and *abangan*. Smedal (1996) points out that *prijaji* originally was a title reserved for the aristocracy, which was developed during the Hindu kingdoms (ibid.: 458). The *prijaji* elite developed a way of being called *alus*, which means that you have refined artistic expressions and a body language characterised by controlled bodily expressions. You also have to follow certain etiquette in social situations. The opposite of being *alus* is, according to classical anthropology from Java, to be *kasar*, which implies that you are vulgar or uncivilized. The meaning and implications of *alus* and *kasar* will be further described in the next chapter where I talk about the Javanese perception of selfhood, but I have made a brief introduction to these terms because they need to be understood with reference to a historical context. According to Smedal the aristocracy was transformed by the Dutch into a state administration, and after this transformation the court culture lost political power, however the prestige connected

⁹ Koentjaraningrat, R. M. (1985): *Javanese culture*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

to *prijaji* remains in today's bureaucracy and among the white-collar elite (ibid.: 458).

The impact of the court culture is seen through the enormous impact the Sultan has on Yogya's population regarding perceptions of selfhood and how people should live their lives. This impact is, among other things, reflected in people's interests in different traditional art forms, a focus on controlled and graceful bodily movements and a soft and polite way of speaking to others. Asmussen (1999) points at how the ideology of the traditional court culture is still present today because the royal courts of Central Java lend lustre to the local identity of Central Javanese who identify themselves with the court culture; this represents the refined, authentic and real form of Javanese culture, as a contrast to other versions of the Javanese culture which are found outside Central Java (ibid.: 9). Geertz points at the same relationship between the traditional court culture and the rest of society:

(...) The Majapahit progress set forth the regnant themes of political thought – the court mirrors the world the world should imitate; society flourishes to the degree that it assimilates this fact; and it is the office of the king, wielder of the mirror, to assure that it does (Geertz 2000 [1983]: 134).

The inhabitants in Javanese *pantis* come from families who belong to a village culture. The aim of connecting the inhabitants' background to a village culture is not because I want to literally connect the inhabitants either to a village or to being peasants, but to connect them to a background which is far from the *prijaji* way of being, or the court culture. However, when they move into the *pantis* in Yogyakarta they are socialised according to an urban culture which is far from what they are used to. This gap between their background and their new home becomes especially evident in a "royal" city like Yogyakarta. The administrators and leaders of the Javanese *pantis* are part of the white-collar elite, and since they are in charge of the socialisation they decide that everyday life in the *panti* should follow *prijaji* values in accordance with their own urban background.

Village culture meets urban culture

At the end of my stay in Yogya, and in the middle of the girls' school holiday in July, Indah (11) and Ami (11) move into Reksa Putra. They are cousins and come from Temanggung, an area in Central Java which is also the place where a couple of other inhabitants come from. Both of them are very shy in the beginning, but after a few days Indah has overcome her shyness, and she starts to smile, laugh and play with some of the other girls who are the same age as herself. Ami is having a harder time adjusting to life in the *panti*. She is very shy the first weeks, and she misses her mother a lot. She often asks Bu Endang if she can make a phone call back home, and Bu Endang tells me that it is difficult when newcomers miss their mothers or families as much as Ami does, because Bu Endang feels there is little she can do in order to ease Ami's home sickness. Three days after Indah and Ami move into Reksa Putra, Prapti (13) says that she feels sorry for the new inhabitants because they are too shy and afraid to eat. "Yesterday Ami only ate one banana", Prapti tells me. Later on the same evening I look towards the table where the new inhabitants are seated for dinner, and Ami does not touch the food in front of her. Indah, on the other hand, is eating, but her way of eating differs from that of the rest of the girls around the table. She eats a little bit of rice with her fingers, but she does not touch her vegetables. After chewing the rice she licks off the rest of the rice from her fingers, in contrast to the rest of the inhabitants who use a fork and a spoon. This is the second time in Reksa Putra that I see someone eating with their fingers. The first time was one afternoon when there was chicken for lunch and the chicken leg was impossible to eat while using cutlery.

In the example above I have shown how newcomers to the *panti* meet an urban culture which until this point has been unknown to them. This was evident both in Indah's and Ami's case, but Ami had a harder time adjusting to life in the *panti* than Indah, and she expressed her dissatisfaction with her new living situation by not eating for days. Bu Endang explains this by saying that Ami misses her mother. I am sure this is part of the explanation, because obviously it is hard for a young girl to be

separated from her family and moved into a city and a *panti* she does not know. However, I think part of the reason she misses her mother that much is not only because of the physical separation; it is also because she feels that the other inhabitants behave differently from those she is used to in the village. They have a more refined body language and follow etiquette. She is not only a stranger to the *panti* and the city, but her new roommates act like strangers. They are different from her in the way they express themselves and the way they move their bodies and, as I have shown, maybe also in everyday situations like when they eat. These are important aspects which can explain why she feels shy and prefer to sit still most of the time. At least when she does not move the others will not pay attention to her non-*alus* way of behaving. Three days after Ami moved into the *panti* her bodily shyness appeared even more evident when it was is time for her first lesson in classical Javanese dance.

By describing a classical dance lesson I want to show that to learn this art form is one way of getting knowledge about *alus* behaviour. Mbak Tri (23) comes to the *panti* every Monday to teach the girls traditional Javanese and Balinese dancing. Classical Javanese dancing is about total body control. It is not enough to learn the moves, but you also have to focus on a controlled bodily expression and how every part of this controlled body should be exhibited to others in a certain way. Small details such as where your fingertips are pointed and where you glance are important aspects of the dance, and mastery of these details is one factor which divides the ones who are professionals from the amateurs. An amateur will know all the moves, but will not be able to pay attention to the small bodily details which a professional does. Most of the girls who do not have any other activities, or duties, gather inside the hall and participate in Mbak Tri's class. Normally there are around twelve girls in the class, and today Indah and Ami are joining for the first time. All the girls line up into three lines in front of the teacher, and they tie a long and narrow piece of cloth, which should reach at least below your knees on both sides, around their waists. This piece of cloth is a central element in a lot of the dances, while in other dances a hand fan is the accessory. Only one of the girls owns a hand fan, so the rest of the girls dance

with an imaginary one. Mbak Tri takes out the tapes from her bag and rewind to the song she wants. Normally they start class by repeating one of the dances they have already learnt. Ningsih (11) is always in the front row. She is one of the youngest, but also one of the best in class. She is very serious in what she does, and the teacher always gives her a lot of attention and guidance. Every Monday for almost a year the girls have been taking dancing classes, but still there are some girls who do not handle all the difficult techniques. Clifford Geertz (1960) was also amazed by classical Javanese dance, and he describes how the grace and skills necessary for the dance can only be learnt if you start to practise when you are very young, and “an absolute correct posture is required, the shoulders in just such a place that the shoulder bones do not protrude at all. Breathing must be shallow and not noticeable. Eyes must be kept fixed in one place, directly forward and a little down, giving a trance-like effect to the dance “ (ibid.: 284).

Some of the girls in Reksa Putra focus on learning the moves, while they pay less attention to the total control of the body, but Ningsih is always concentrated and she never gives up. She even masters the most difficult move which is a sliding sidewise movement with the head, where the shoulders should be kept still while the head slides from side to side. She looks like a small princess when she is dancing because her movements are very elegant, and she is in total control of her body all through the dance. Indah and Ami are standing in the back row of the class. Indah tries to learn the different moves, and she joins the dance when she is able to follow the others. Ami is just standing in the back and does not move much, although the teacher encourages her to try. I can understand that she does not dare to try. I have been asked many times to join the class, but I prefer to watch, because I know I will not be able to control my body as required no matter how much I try. My body is just not trained for this kind of self control. After an hour the class is over, and one of the girls runs to the kitchen to find a glass of water for Mbak Tri. She sits down on one of the chairs and drinks her water while she talks to the girls. After 5-10 minutes she leaves the class, and the girls start to do their afternoon duties.

I have already mentioned in the previous chapter that education and direction are important aspects in Javanese *panti*, and I do not see it as a coincidence that classical Javanese dancing is taught in the *panti*. Negoro (1998) describes how dancing has been an important part of the artistic life connected to the sultanates, and that classical court dance was originally a way of showing “concentration of mind”, “consciousness”, “self-confidence” and “no surrender”. The different Sultans of Yogyakarta have preserved and developed Javanese court dance, because this is seen as legitimating the ruler. By preserving and developing the court dance the Sultan shows that he is a true descendant of Majapahit (ibid). Negoro (1998b) goes on to say that since this early period the dance has been divided into court dance and people’s dance, but that people’s dance should also visualize the character of human beings, among other things reflected in the movements (ibid.). I therefore see the dance lessons in *Reksa Putra* as a way of teaching the inhabitants a correct body language, because one’s body language tells to others who you are. To master classical Javanese dance is a sign that you are *alus* and not *kasar*. By offering dance lessons to the girls, the *panti* is helping the inhabitants to get away from their *kasar* village culture and into a more pure and civilised Javanese way of being.

Brenner (1998) writes from Solo, a neighbouring city of Yogyakarta which also has a strong tradition of court culture. She has a particular concern with status and hierarchy and how this is played out against certain recognizably Javanese notions of personhood. Instead of seeing these as timeless facts of the Javanese culture, she argues that there exists a flexibility regarding these matters, and this flexibility enables members of marginal communities to assert their “Javaneseness” (ibid.: 20). This is made possible because hierarchy in Java is linked to a notion of cultural refinement which is connected to the dichotomy *alus – kasar*. People are placed along this dichotomy based on refinement in connection with, among other things, behavioural style and the knowledge of art (ibid.: 58). The administrators of Javanese *panti*s are, I suggest, aware of this flexibility, and they use it as a possibility to help the inhabitants away from their *kasar* background and upward in the social hierarchy.

In this way Javanese pantis are institutions of contrasts; the inhabitants come from a village culture, but they are socialised according to an urban culture.

The role of art

Clifford Geertz (1960) writes that classical Javanese art, such as Javanese classical dance expresses largely *prijaji* values, and the heart of these *alus* forms originated from the palaces, “(...) from which centre they flowed outward and downward as political and spiritual power themselves, to the masses“ (ibid.: 288). In this chapter I have so far shown the use of Javanese classical art in Reksa Putra, which makes the *panti* a place of contrast, because children from village cultures are socialised into a pattern based on *prijaji* values. I will continue to focus on drama as an art form, and by doing this I continue to assert that art and the influence of the court culture play an important role in the socialisation of children and youth in Javanese *pantis*.

More than a month before Easter the inhabitants of Reksa Putra start to create a drama which will be performed during a Christian Easter meeting in congregation 3 (*wilayah 3*). Dora (21), Bu Endang’s daughter, is in charge of making the drama, but some of the oldest inhabitants are helping her. A month before Easter the drama is ready and they start the rehearsals. Dora meets regularly with the girls in the hall, and Dhana (12), Bu Endang’s son, also wants to join them. He goes to Sunday school together with the youngest inhabitants, and he is used to doing these kinds of religious activities together with the girls. Together with Dora the actors practise how to speak loudly and clearly and what kind of appearance and voice go with the different characters. They also practise the dancing numbers, and they try to memorise all the lines. The dancing in the play is modern, accompanied by Dora’s modern Indonesian and Western music. After weeks of practice the girls start to remember the dances and their lines, and only small adjustments are needed. The day comes when the girls have to perform in front of an audience. In the afternoon, before they are about to leave for the meeting, Dora is packing all the requisites needed for the play. Just before leaving everyone gathers in the hall, putting on make-up in order to become their characters. Dora and Bu Tri are helping some of the girls, and they

transform the girls into witches, doctors, monsters and other roles in the play. The house where the Christian meeting is about to be arranged is close to Reksa Putra, and it only takes us ten minutes to walk there. This evening Bu Endang is going to lead the show, and she takes her seat in the front. Little by little the room gets filled up by people, and at the end approximately 150 people are gathered to celebrate Easter.

Although the form of this drama, with its modern moves, music and speech, is not similar to the “the ‘*alus art*’ complex” (*wajang, gamelan, lakon, djoged, tembangs* and *batik*)¹⁰ described by Clifford Geertz (1960: 261), its topic resembles topics from the classical art forms. By looking at two of the roles played by the girls, I want to emphasize that the drama tells a story about a struggle between *alus* and *kasar* feelings, between being in self-control and out of control. At the beginning of the play we are introduced to a country called *Ceria* (can be translated with pure or cheerful), where all children are happily living together. Little by little we are introduced to persons and creatures, like a monster, that are disturbing the happiness in *Ceria*. The monster is an evil creature with an evil heart that comes to the children when they are sleeping, and the monster is telling a mantra in order to turn the children into evil human beings. The evil nature of the monster is conveyed to the audience not only through the spoken words, but also through the behaviour of the monster. The monster quickly circles around the children while it says the mantra out loud. This is in contrast to a *prijaji* way of being where a slow and controlled body language and softly spoken words are used when you want to convince someone. One of the sleeping children gets affected by the monster’s mantra, and when she wakes up she has gone from being a sweet and happy child to an obstinate and stubborn girl who is complaining about everything. The other children are trying to help the poor girl who has been transformed from polite to rude. They call for a doctor, but she can not do anything so they have to call for a traditional doctor (*dukun*). The traditional

¹⁰ Respectively shadow play, classical Javanese music, myths, Javanese court dance, Javanese poetry and method of textile decoration.

doctor tries to heal the sick child, but after a while the doctor runs away while saying “I can not deal with this crazy child anymore” (*Aku sudah tidak tahan lagi dengan anak gila ini*).¹¹ When it looks like all hope is gone, one of the children suggests that they should turn to God and ask for help, and everyone goes down on their knees and prays for the health of the sick child. After a short nap the child wakes up, and she is the same sweet child as she used to be. Even the evil hearted monster has turned good, because it realised that in order to make friends you have to behave in soft and polite way.

The sweet girl’s transition from good to bad is interesting, because it shows how people who are *kasar* are not only hurting themselves; their way of behaviour is also affecting innocent people who, in some way or the other, are in contact with an uncivilised human being. The sweet girl goes from civilised to crazy because of the monster’s behaviour, and only God can save her from this misery. Again I have shown how the *panti* focus on art in their socialisation of the inhabitants. Through various art forms the *panti* teach the girls how to become *alus* and civilised. By performing the drama for an audience the *panti* show to the audience that they are aware of the dichotomy *alus – kasar*, and that they belong on the *alus* side of the same dichotomy.¹²

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have shown how a court culture which was founded more than 250 years ago still has a strong influence on the everyday life of inhabitants in Javanese *pantis*. With a focus on classical art forms, which have been preserved and developed in the sultanate, I have shown how this cultural impact has created flexibility in the social hierarchy that enables people from lower classes to climb in the hierarchy. Clifford Geertz (1960) describes art in this way: “Art, like etiquette, is seen as

¹¹ See chapter 3 for an explanation of the word *gila* (crazy).

¹² For Easter celebration in 2007 the girls in Reksa Putra did a dance performance.

providing a material form for an essentially spiritual content” (ibid.,: 269). The spiritual content Geertz describes is strongly connected to religion. By describing the Easter drama I have shown how people pray to God for spiritual help, in this case to change their behaviour, and that our behaviour yields our inner thoughts. In the next chapter I will continue to describe the Javanese perception of selfhood, where the interplay between inner feelings and outer behaviour is central.

3. Javanese selfhood

Social values

In this chapter I want to describe how babies, children and youth, who are living in *pantis*, are socialised to become Javanese human beings. I argue that to be born in Java does not automatically turn you into a Javanese. To be acknowledged as a Javanese human being, and thereby be able to get respect and authority, requires knowledge of a Javanese model of selfhood where the self consists of inward feelings and outward actions that must follow Javanese values. By looking at the socialisation of children I want to emphasize how it is necessary to learn correct discipline and etiquette in order to become a Javanese, and I also argue that perceptions of selfhood has to be seen in the light of gender and social status. Women in Javanese *pantis*, through their work, create Javanese human beings by socialising babies, children and youth according to a Javanese perception of selfhood, in which the value of *alus* is central.¹³

From the first day I arrived in Yogyakarta I felt that I was not fully fitting into the Javanese way of being. This was something I was often reminded of, both directly and indirectly, because I talked too loudly, I walked too fast and I did not go regularly to church. Some Javanese accepted and understood this by referring to the fact that I was a Westerner (*orang barat*), while others only found it strange (*aneh*) and smiled at me. I also strongly felt that I was not being a woman in the right way. I got a lot of attention for being a married woman without children, and people I hardly knew would openly and without any shyness tell me that “if my husband and I did some serious work we might be able to leave Yogyakarta with a result (*hasil*)”.

¹³ The formal education which takes place at school has many of the same functions but is not part of this argumentation.

People found it hard to believe that this was not my/our wish. Incidents like this made me realise that the way to become human varies according to time and place.

Howell (1990) describes how a psychological approach in social anthropology was banned in the British, and Norwegian, tradition for a long time. The consequence of this rejection was that research on selfhood, or the human nature, was not considered to be an anthropological theme. During the first half of the twentieth century the British tradition was mainly concerned about different collective representations, such as kinship, political institutions and religion, while subjects regarding selfhood were excluded. During the same period the American tradition was more concerned about the individual's development in social settings, with a focus on socialisation processes. This tradition was closer to psychological anthropology than the British one. In the 1980s European anthropologists began to study native perceptions of selfhood and emotions, because it was considered as social facts which should not be separated from the social institutions (ibid.: 20-22).

Bråten (1993) wants to clarify terms which often are used in research about the humane, such as individual, person, subject and self, and he points to the fact that most research done in Java does not manage to see the difference between these terms. According to Bråten Clifford Geertz' work from Java is not a description of Javanese self or person but a description of Javanese theories about human nature (*menneskenaturen*). Two years later Bråten (1995) elaborates his critique when he says that the social dimension in Geertz' work has been underplayed and subsumed under the term "culture". Bråten wants to see analyses from Java with more focus on how cultural models are socially distributed and individually experienced (ibid.: 181-185). Bråten points to the fact that there is a difference between cultural models and lived reality, and he might be right in his criticism of Geertz, but I find Geertz' insights useful when I want to describe and analyse how children and youth in pantis are socialised into Javanese human beings. To internalise the court model of selfhood provides a way for children from poor families to climb in the social hierarchy, and this is a strategy stressed by the pantis. The children and youth have limited room for

resistance against this cultural model because they have to follow, and in most cases they want to follow, a strategy developed by the *panti* which emphasizes that the inhabitants should internalise the cultural model which has its starting point in the old court culture. I therefore find Geertz' work useful and relevant for my thesis, and I will continue to use the term "self" since my argument is based on Geertz' work.

An indirect and discreet way of being is common for people who want follow the court model of selfhood. Clifford Geertz (1984) explains the Javanese indirectness by referring to the Javanese perception of the self, which consists of inward feelings and outward action. With inward feelings he refers to the emotional life, while the outward action is human movements and actions. The inward and the outward should be in *alus*, a condition which leads to civilised human beings. The inward becomes *alus* through religious discipline, while the outward needs etiquette (ibid.: 127). The word *alus* can be translated with "refined", "cultured" or "delicate", and to appear like this is important for most Javanese people. If you are not able to be *alus* it means that you are not able to be a Javanese human being. It is therefore essential for everyone to learn these values in order to be accepted as a Javanese.

In *The Javanese family* (1961) Hildred Geertz describes kinship and socialisation in a Javanese village. Her argument is that the nuclear family is the most important element in the Javanese kinship system because this is the arena where children are being taught social values (ibid.: 2). Children do not know how to show respect to people of higher rank, and they do not know how to control their feelings. The same is also said about mentally unbalanced persons and adults who are not properly respectful to their elders. (ibid.: 105). Geertz says that people who do not follow these social values are looked upon as not yet Javanese, but she does not give any further description of people who behave like this. Later in this chapter I will go more into details about this kind of behaviour.

Hildred Geertz points out that correct etiquette and discipline of your emotions are the two most important Javanese social values. With etiquette she refers to a correct manner of interaction with others, which is especially evident when it comes to

showing respect to other people. Discipline is concerned with self-control and is most evident when it comes to control of your own feelings. I agree with Hildred Geertz, but discipline is also important in connection with religion and work. By describing how discipline and etiquette are being taught in Javanese *pantis* I want to show that *pantis* are arenas where children and youth learn how to become Javanese.

Religious discipline

Since 1945 the *Pancasila* (five principles) has been the philosophical backbone of the Indonesian state, and the idea behind the introduction of the principles was that it should be a frame that could unite Indonesia's different ethnical groups. The five principles are 1) faith in God, 2) humanity, 3) nationalism, 4) representative government, and 5) social justice. People pay most attention to the first principle that states that everyone should believe in one God. According to the constitution six religions are recognized as equal: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and *Kong cu* (different Chinese religions). Human beings are believed to be religious beings, thus to be an atheist is the same as being non-human. A discussion of religion is therefore necessary since I want to describe Javanese perceptions of selfhood.

Clifford Geertz (1973) describes how ethos and world view are integrated through the use of symbols. By ethos he refers to the moral aspect of a culture, while world view is the way the world is looked upon with regards to concepts of nature, self and society (ibid.: 126-127). The world becomes meaningful through the use of symbols, because symbols are ordering experiences, and Geertz focuses especially on symbols used in rituals. Religion is, according to Geertz, a ritual practise where meaning is being produced. He writes that "the force of a religion in supporting social values rests, then, on the ability of its symbols to formulate a world in which those values, as well as the forces opposing their realization, are fundamental ingredients" (ibid.: 131). By studying religious activities we can get an empirical analysis of inward perceptions which at the same time is an analysis of outward reality (ibid.: 135).

Turner (1964) also focuses on the use of symbols in many of his works, and he claims that symbols and rituals are the most important angles of incidence if you want to study different societies. Symbols are the smallest units in rituals, and Turner points out that symbols are multivocal; they unite different meanings because symbols communicate different opinions through one single sign. Symbols have to sustain the society while at the same time they are used by individuals in their search for personal meaning (ibid.). Based on this view Turner (1969) suggests that rituals express two senses of community; a *communitas* that is an emotional bond between people in a group and a *societas* that is the social structure. In this way is society maintained while at the same time it takes into consideration people's emotions.

I think that symbols in Turner's works are made into a more personal matter compared to Geertz' work. This becomes especially evident if we look closer at Geertz' definition of religion:

“A religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (1973: 90).

Geertz suggests that research about religion should focus on how religion makes life meaningful for people involved in the rituals. I choose to use Geertz' definition of religion and symbols, because he focuses on how symbols create and transport meaning into individuals. In Javanese pantsis it is important to learn how to be an *alus* Javanese, and a focus on religion is one way to teach the inhabitants the social values required for achieving this kind of selfhood.

Religious activities are an important part of life in both Reksa Putra and Aisyiah. In Aisyiah all the girls pray five times a day, which every good Muslim is supposed to do. They also attend meetings in the musholla, where the girls and the staff discuss how to improve their Muslim way of being, and some of the oldest girls choose to go to a Muslim university where teaching of the Quran and learning Arabic is part of the curriculum. In Reksa Putra all the girls go to church during the weekend, and the

youngest ones go to Sunday school. Everyone goes regularly to Bible studies, prays before every meal and says a prayer before going to sleep. The biggest Christian religious rituals of the week are the prayer meetings which the girls have to arrange four times a week. There are certain elements which are always part of these meetings, and a rotating system makes sure everyone has to perform the different tasks once in a while. This means that all the girls regularly have to perform the different religious tasks which make up the Christian meeting. The following story is a description of the preparation and performance of one such meeting, which is one way of learning and achieving Javanese values.

Ria (19) practises the guitar in bedroom “South”. She plays hymns from a Christian song book, and she makes sure she remembers all the different chords. Before dinner all the girls will meet in the hall for a Christian gathering, and this evening it is the girls in bedroom “South” who are in charge of organising the meeting.¹⁴ They have already agreed on tonight’s hymns and Ria, who is a good guitar player, will accompany during the singing. On the wall there is a list of the different tasks that have to be covered during a union, and everyone in the bedroom knows what to do. Mats are put on the floor like a square before the meeting starts, and soon all the girls and I are together, with the Bible and a songbook in front us. Today Murni (10) leads the meeting. She wishes us welcome to tonight’s gathering, and while the meeting goes on she introduces the songs and tells where to find them in the songbook. After the first song Murni says “If anyone has a special song they want to sing, we have time for these wishes later on in the union, but now Nani (13) will be saying the opening prayer”. Nani is praying for the well being of friends, family and for being able to gather tonight at Reksa Putra. While she says the prayer most of the girls close their eyes, and when she finishes everyone says “amen” together. Next Murni tells everyone to stand up and she introduces the next song which is a song where we also have to dance. Later on when we sit down again Imel (17) reads tonight’s text from

¹⁴ Three times a week a half hour meeting is held at the dining tables, but once a week a one hour meeting is held in the hall.

the Bible. After reading, she asks us what we think those words mean. Tonight no one responds to her question, and she gives an explanation and interpretation about what she just read. On occasions when Bu Endang joins the meeting and reads from the Bible the girls are normally more active, but this time no one is in a mood to respond or to discuss the Bible. Fitri (18) then leads a short prayer before Umi (11) closes the meeting with another prayer.

To plan and participate in religious meetings is an important part of life in Javanese *pantis*, and the inhabitants use a lot of their time on these activities. Clifford Geertz (1973) has described a Javanese way of thinking in which a subjective experience, like religion, is an experience to which everything else can be tied. This is possible because the Javanese do not differentiate between “feeling” and “meaning”, in the sense that inward perceptions yield the outward reality. The more refined your emotional life is the more refined will your actions and moves be. Religion is therefore the foundation of your selfhood and needs to be elaborated in a proper way. Religious discipline is essential in order to go beyond the emotions of everyday life and find the genuine feeling-meaning which lies within us all (*ibid.*: 135-136). Both Islam and Christianity often present the emotions of everyday life in connection with sin and evil, as a result of inadequate self-control and unregulated passion. To be able to discipline yourself is therefore an essential theme according to these two religions, something which should be reflected in people’s outward actions, according to the Javanese perception of the self. This can explain the strong focus on religious activities in Javanese *pantis*.

In Sayap Ibu there are children from different religious backgrounds, and the *panti* does not have a religious training program, like they have in Reksa Putra and Aisyiah. When abandoned children arrive in the *panti* they will be given the religion of the mother, if she is known. In cases where both parents are unknown the child will be given the religion of the majority, which is Islam. However, after the child has been given a religion there are few opportunities inside the *panti* to learn about one’s religion. The employees say it is impossible to have religious training in the *panti*

because the children do not have the same religion. Mbak Indah (27) who works in the *panti* tells me that Muslim children can go to the *musholla* when they want, but this is voluntary. This one, she says while pointing at a baby who is Catholic, is not given any religious training at all, because most of the people working here are Muslims. She asks me about the religious training in Reksa Putra and Aisyiah, and I tell her what I know. She says to another employee; “Did you hear that? The children who are living there are more well mannered (*anak di sana lebih sopan*). That is better than the situation we have here.”

Mbak Indah and the other employees in Sayap Ibu emphasize the importance of religious discipline. They use the words “*sopan*” when they talk about children who get more religious training than the inhabitants living in Sayap Ibu. *Sopan* can be translated with “respectful, well mannered, polite or to civilize”. Religion is turning people into civilized human beings who know about important social values like discipline and respect. People who are without a religion are considered to be less human, and very few people will openly admit that they do not practise a religion. Mbak Indah is, through her comment, saying that it should be the *panti*’s responsibility to teach the children to be *sopan*, or *alus*.

The children and youth also find it important to do religious activities. Inhabitants in Reksa Putra and Aisyiah told me that religion is an important part of everyone’s lives, and they gave me the impression that it is part of human behaviour to be active in religious activities. Some of the youngest children would look at me with great surprise when I told them that I do not regularly participate in religious activities in Norway. Older inhabitants or an adult often had to explain the youngest ones that I am a Westerner (*orang barat*) and that it is normal to be less religious where I come from. To be active in religious activities is seen as a natural part of being human, and the girls in Reksa Putra and Aisyiah often prayed in their rooms without any adult telling them to do so.

I have so far described how religion works as a starting point for achieving a Javanese self for children and youth in Javanese *pantis*. Religion as a subjective

experience refines your inner and outer life, and these are processes which are fundamental in achieving a Javanese self.

Discipline through a harmonious social appearance

Control of one's emotions is another important aspect of the Javanese perception of selfhood, and I will argue that a division between a public- and a private sphere is important in connection with emotional expressions. Goffman (1959) says the same thing in his famous book *The presentation of self in everyday life* where he argues that social situations can be looked upon as performances. Impression management is important in these performances because people have, to a certain degree, the possibility to control what kind of expression they want to give others. This is most evident in the "front stage", in public situations. There is a continual negotiation in the public sphere regarding people's social statuses, because people have a great amount of freedom to interpretate their own roles. People are more relaxed "back stage", for example at home, because this is a place where people do not act in the same way as they do front stage.

The Javanese also behave differently at home compared to what they do in public. Emotional exclamations are reserved for the private sphere, or for children, mentally sick people and foreigners, and the following story is taken from the first week of my stay in Reksa Putra. At that time I was still considered as a guest, and the story will exemplify that impression management is an important part of the front stage life.

After a long day in the *panti* it is time for me to leave and go home. I am tired after spending hours in the *panti* on a very warm day. It is already late in the evening and the sun has gone down, so the temperature is more pleasant now. I am looking forward to walking home and getting some fresh air. When I say good night, Titien (16) og Maryke (17) put on their shoes and tell me that they want to accompany me home. I tell them it is not necessary and that I would like to walk back home alone. They repeat that they want to accompany me back home and again I tell them that I prefer to go back home alone because I am very tired after a long day. They keep on

insisting that they accompany me, and to make sure that they understand that I really want to go back home alone I raise my voice a little bit and emphasize with my body language that I seriously do not want any company on the way. Instead of getting respect and acceptance for my decision, as I expected, the two girls burst into laughter and point at me while saying “You are angry, you are angry”. They call for the attention of some girls who are watching TV nearby and say “She is angry”, while they continue to laugh. I understand that to show anger is not the Javanese way of getting your will, or gaining respect and authority. I start to laugh myself because I understand that I have lost the battle, and Titien and Maryke accompany me back home.

When I started to stay in Sayap Ibu, where almost all the inhabitants are babies, I realised how I had literally acted like a baby that one time when I raised my voice. I also found out that the reaction of Titien and Maryke were identical to the one the employees take towards babies who still do not know how to act like a Javanese. Small babies up to five-six months old are given attention as soon as possible if they start to cry or scream. Normally the baby cries because she or he wants to drink milk or because its diaper is wet and needs to be changed. When this is taken care of the baby will normally stop crying. Babies who have already reached six months will gradually be treated differently when they cry or scream. If they cry for milk or for a dry diaper the employees will still immediately help the baby, but babies who scream because they are angry are treated differently. This can be cases where the babies only cry for attention, or because they are not satisfied with the toy they are given or the person who plays with them at the moment. To show anger by screaming, like babies and toddlers do, is a sign that you have not yet become a Javanese because you do not know how to control your feelings. In order to teach the baby how to discipline her or his feelings the employees use a strategy similar to the one Titien and Maryke used on me.

Rosa is one of the babies in Sayap Ibu. She is ten months old and she is often angry. When she starts to scream she gets the employees’ attention, but instead of getting

comfort one employee will start to act like Rosa, in other words she starts to “scream” too. Very often this leads to a situation where Rosa gets even more angry, and the employee continues to act like the baby, accompanied by laughter. Very often the employee will call for the other employees’ attention and point at the baby and laugh, while saying to the others “Look at her, she is angry”. The other employees might start to immitate the baby too, often followed up by a laughter. The laughter serves as a way of telling the baby that she or he will not be taken seriously by acting this way. This way of teaching the baby how to controll its anger often creates a lot of noise in the room, because both the baby and the employees are noisy. When the baby stops screaming the employees will go back to treating the baby as a human being with whom it is possible to communicate normally.

Sadness in the form of crying is also a feeling which should be controlled and not publicly expressed. Babies who cry for no obvious reason will often meet the same reaction as when they are angry and scream. An employee will try to comfort the baby, but if the baby continues to cry the employee will often smile or laugh and point at the baby while saying “Oh, she is crying”. The employees often pointed at babies who cried and explained to me that “She is crying”, which was not necessary as I could clearly see it myself, without being told. Bråten (1993) has pointed to the fact that sorrow is a feeling which in most cases is not expressed in public. He refers to how Javanese (and Balinese) people keep on smiling when other people are around, although a close family member or a friend may have died. This happens because indirectness and a constant smile is the norm when people meet (ibid). Other feelings are also suppressed in public, because people do not want to be understood as *kasar*, or even worse as *gila*.

According to classical anthropology from Java, *kasar* is the opposite of *alus*. *Kasar* can be translated with “impolite”, “vulgar” or “uncivilized”, and is reserved for the private sphere (see e. g. C. Geertz 1984: 127). My informants also have an idea of what it means to be uncivilized, but they use the word *gila* when they want to describe someone who is the opposite of *alus*. My informants told me that *gila* means

crazy, and to exemplify what it means to be *gila* they told me that mentally disturbed people who walk around naked in the streets are *gila*. Sometimes when we went for a walk we would meet crazy people (*orang gila*) who were naked or drunk, or both, and the girls always reacted with fear and hurried away from the person, while they explained to me that this is a crazy person (*orang gila*). My informants use a different classification than previously described in anthropology when it comes to judging people according to what kind of selfhood they exhibit. Foreigners, and others, who do not manage to act typically Javanese, were often described as strange (*aneh*), which I interpret as the same as *kasar*, a stage in the middle of the dichotomy *alus* – *gila*. However, both *kasar* and *gila* behaviour are only accepted in the private sphere.

Reksa Putra is a family *panti*, which means that the organisation of the *panti* should be like a home and not like an institution. A home is a place where you can “take off the mask” that you carry in public and express yourself in a more direct manner. In many ways the *panti* is similar to a home, because inside the walls of Reksa Putra the girls sometimes allow themselves to be less *alus*. Ima (17) often teases or has verbal fights with the other girls, and sometimes she also shows anger and raises her voice. In the beginning of my stay in Reksa Putra the other girls would look at me and say “She is crazy” (*orang gila*) and laugh when Ima started to act like this. Individual differences and feelings are hardly expressed in public, but for the girls in Reksa Putra, and other people, it is allowed to be less *alus* at home. In the beginning when I started to stay in Reksa Putra I was considered a guest and not as a part of their private sphere. When situations occurred which involved disagreement and anger the girls always made it clear that this is a behaviour which is normally reserved for mentally ill or crazy people. By saying “She is crazy” they made it clear that this is not normal behaviour, and we know it is not normal behaviour. Later on when I became part of the everyday life in the *panti* they did not say “She is crazy” every time Ima raised her voice, because it is allowed to show emotions in your own home. However, outside the *panti*, Ima and all the other girls control their speech and body language in a very *alus* way. They never raise their voices, they walk slowly and hardly gesticulate, and they smile constantly. It is important for them, as it is for most

other people, to have a harmonious social appearance in public, because they want to be looked upon as grown Javanese, and not as children or mentally disturbed people.

Etiquette

While discipline focuses on self-control etiquette is about performing correctly in social situations. Etiquette is showing respect for other people by addressing people in the correct way and by using correct language while speaking to others. People use different intonation and words depending on the status they have vis à vis the person spoken to, but here I will focus on how babies learn how to address others. Hildred Geertz (1961) describes respect as an element of every social situation in Java, and it is primarily a matter of proper behaviour in specific situations (ibid.: 19). To have internalized the right etiquette shows that you have a civilized and mature inner state, which is necessary in order to be accepted as a Javanese (ibid.: 118). The employees in Sayap Ibu are conscious about the importance of socialising children according to this value.

Three of the oldest babies in Sayap Ibu have their beds next to each other in the *panti*. They are all boys and between one and two years old. Two of them already know how to walk, while the youngest one is trying to learn. The youngest boy can not speak, but he uses different sounds when he needs attention, just like the two others also do. The only exception is that the two oldest boys know how to address the employees in a correct way. Their first and only word is the term used to address young and unmarried women, like the employees in the *panti*, and this word is *Mbak*. When the boys use sounds to get attention the employees will not always pay attention immediately, but when the boys say *Mbak*, the employees will immediately reply to the boys. In this way the small boys are encouraged to use polite word, and they learn that in order to be taken seriously they need to show etiquette.

According to Hildred Geertz children learn how to show correct etiquette by listening to how the mother always refers to various adults by the polite terms (1961: 100). This starts at an early age, as I have shown above. For older children this is already

internalized. The girls in Reksa Putra always address older inhabitants as “Mbak”, although the person spoken to might be only one year older than herself. The only exception they made was with me. They did not address me using “Mbak” or “Ibu”, although I am twenty-six years old and married. By addressing me only with my first name the girls made it clear that their etiquette is Javanese and in this sense I am not one of them.

Selfhood and gender

So far the Javanese self has been described as a gender neutral quality. I now want to show how the Javanese self is gender divided, because the way to become Javanese is not the same for women and men. Ortner and Whitehead (1981) write that a gender ideology consists of a complex of associations, classifications and values linked to the social categories of woman and man, and that gender is a cultural construct which is shaped by social and cultural processes (ibid.: 1). In a Javanese setting Ortner and Whitehead’s view is useful, because there are clear associations and values connected to the categories of woman and man. The Javanese perceive that girls need to be taught about a Javanese feminine self in order to be acknowledged as Javanese women. Women are not born feminine, or Javanese; they become so by internalising a model of a Javanese feminine self. This is especially evident when it comes to work. For babies and small children who live in Sayap Ibu the teaching of a Javanese self is mostly seen in connection with learning how to control your own feelings and body language, and this harmonious social appearance is common both for girl and boys. For older children, like the inhabitants in Reksa Putra and Aisyiah who already know how to control their emotions, a Javanese feminine self is learnt through work.

Girls need to learn feminine work, and a framed picture in Reksa Putra describes the importance of educating girls; “To educate one woman means to educate one generation” (*mendidik seorang perempuan berarti mendidik satu generasi*). One day I stand next to the framed picture, and Maryke (17) comes next to me. She asks if I understand what is written in the picture, and I say yes. She tells me that “What is written in the picture is true, it is important to educate women, because we have lots

of responsibilities”. Bu Endang also refers to the same picture one time when we talked about education; “If girls are not given education the whole system will collapse, because it is women who have the main responsibility for the coming generation”, she says, while drawing an imaginary system in the air. She explains that nothing can come out of the system if women who are in charge of the system are not educated, and she says that the education the girls get inside Reksa Putra is as important as the education at school.

Both Maryke and Bu Endang emphasize that women need education, because women are in charge of the coming generation. Javanese women are expected to get married, have children and to be in charge of the household, thus they need to learn how to run a household. The education in the *panti* that Bu Endang refers to is household work. The girls learn different household tasks in order for them to run their own household when they move out from the *panti*. A big part of the education takes place in the kitchen where all the meals are prepared and cooked. They also do the dishes and boil drinking water in there, and next to the kitchen there is a place where the girls do their laundry. In addition to the kitchen duties, all the floors in the *panti* are cleaned and the two gardens have to be maintained every day.¹⁵

Every girl in the *panti* has her own working schedule and knows exactly what her duties are throughout the day. Although the days can be busy I never heard anyone complaining because they had to work. About one month after I came to Reksa Putra, Vera (20) moved out from the *panti* because she got a house-keeping job at a hotel and therefore was able to pay for a rented room and live by herself. Vera often came by the *panti*, because her rented room was nearby and her sister was still living in Reksa Putra. One evening after her visit, some girls and I sat and talked and I asked them if they were looking forward to starting work, like Vera. One of the girls looked surprised at me and said “Everyone in Reksa Putra is working”, explaining to me how everyone who wants to live in Reksa Putra has to work inside the *panti*.

¹⁵ See chapter 5 for a further discussion about the work performed by inhabitants in Javanese *pantis*.

Illo (1995) has done research in the Philippines, where the division of labour is similar to the one in Java; women work in the household while men work outside home. She writes that “the high social value accorded to being a wife, mother and a worker tended to rest on the premise that the self is sacrificed for the group” (ibid.: 221). In a Javanese setting the feminine self is sacrificed for the family. In most cases, an adult woman’s self only exists in relation to a husband and children. To be an adult Javanese woman is equal to being a wife and mother, and wives and mothers are expected to do household work. After marriage women are expected to be in charge of the household, including raising children, and to have been trained for this is therefore essential for Javanese girls. Bu Endang knows that in order to be accepted as Javanese women the inhabitants need to develop a Javanese feminine self. All the girls get formal education but, as Bu Endang says, it does not help to have formal education if you do not know how to act like a Javanese.

I have shown that gender should be discussed in studies about selfhood, and in connection with Javanese pants work might be one starting point for such a discussion. There is a clear division of labour between women and men in Java, and girls in Javanese pants know well the expectations connection to womanhood. I now want to look at selfhood and gender with the body as the starting point.

Howell and Melhuus (1993) address how gender is not being thoroughly considered in research about self and person. Ragnhildstveit (1998) wonders if this gap between gender and self is due to an avoidance of the body as a field of study. She says that if we, like Henrietta Moore, consider the body as people’s primary location in the world, it becomes hard to ignore the relationship between gendered sexual bodies and selfhood (ibid.: 108). Ragnhildstveit describes that the Javanese human body is thought of in at least three aspects: “ 1) as marking a difference between men and women based on their reproductive abilities, 2) as communicating differences between different women and between different men based on various aspects of personal rank, and 3) as expressing similarities between the genders based on their common humanity” (ibid.: 109). I want to use these three aspects as a starting point

for talking about the gendered body, which is an important part of selfhood for girls and women in Javanese *pantis*.

I have already described the division of labour between women and men in the household, but so far I have not discussed the division of labour which takes place in the public sphere. The female body should be handled with care because it is seen as more fragile than the male body. This is one possible explanation why women's work should be in a fixed place with little hard physical work involved. This division of labour can be traced back to the fact that women and men have different reproductive abilities. The woman is the one who can be pregnant and, because she is able to use her body in order to bring a child into the world, her body is different from the male body. What follows from this bodily difference is that women and men should use their bodies differently also during everyday life when there is no pregnancy involved.

According to Ragnhildstveit (1998) some kinds of work are suitable both for women and men, while most activities are clearly separated as either women's or men's work. Outside the household it is appropriate for women to work or run businesses which are fixed in one place, since this is considered safer for women than being involved in business which requires being "on the road". In addition to being involved in mobile enterprises men also work in the transport sector, or with carpentry, plumbing, different kinds of carving and related artisan work (*ibid.*: 132-133). My informants were very concerned that the female body is weaker than the male one. Women should not do physically hard work, like lifting heavy things or other kinds of work which exhaust the body. All married women are expected to have children, and if women use their bodies to do physically hard work it is seen as a threat to the female reproductive abilities. I once lifted a tank of water because I wanted to place it into a water dispenser, and all the women in the room shook their heads and arms and said "no no", obviously shocked over my behaviour. I told them that it was not too heavy for me, but they insisted that I put the tank down, and they called for a man to do the job. I tried to explain that there was no need to call for a

man since I could easily do it myself, but they explained that women should not lift anything heavy because it can hurt their inner organs in such a way that they can have difficulties getting pregnant. Every Javanese woman is expected to have children, and to hurt your body in such a way that harms your abilities to become pregnant is something most Javanese women fear.

The body is also used to communicate various aspects of personal rank.

Ragnhildstveit describes how individuals express social belonging through their outer selves (1998: 150). My informants were conscious about their bodies and they actively used their bodies in order to show other people that they already have internalised a Javanese feminine self. This was especially evident in connection with clothes, hairstyle and body language, which were all important bodily aspects which should be arranged properly when you are in the public sphere.

To leave the *panti* always required many preparations both for the girls and the employees in the *panti*, because no one would think about going outside before they had put on some of their nicest clothes and shoes. Inside the *panti* the girls and employees did not care much about what they were wearing, but the presentation of themselves in public was always well planned. Everyone preferred to wear a long pant or a skirt when they went outside, in contrast to the short pants they often used at home. Normally they would also replace their indoor sandals with shoes. This was in sharp contrast to me, who always used sandals and liked to wear shorts, or made my pant into shorts by folding the legs in order to make it shorter. They also put on a nice t-shirt or sweater, and all the clothes were ironed before they were used. After they put on their nicest clothes, they started to work on their hair style. Some used different kind of accessories like a hair ribbon or hair clip, but it was common that no one would leave the *panti* without newly washed hair. When all this was taken care of, a preparation which normally took about an hour, my informants were ready to leave.

Girls and women who are in the public sphere have a bodily behaviour which is characterized by moving slowly. To move too fast is seen as vulgar and is a sign that

you are not feminine. When I walked around with my informants in the beginning of my stay I was often told that I walked too fast. This sometimes felt frustrating to me, especially if we were walking outside in the sun and I was longing to get to get inside somewhere and escape the burning sun. I often walked around with an Indonesian girl friend who normally lives in New York, but who was in Yogyakarta on holiday during the same time as I did my fieldwork. When the two of us walked together I could feel that her walking was a little bit slower than mine, but I did not pay too much attention to it, because at least she walked faster than my other Indonesian friends. One day when we were inside a mall she received a phone call from her sister, who lives in Yogyakarta, and she wanted to meet us. From the minute her sister arrived my friend changed her bodily behaviour and started to move and act like a native Javanese. She walked more slowly and her gesticulation became more controlled, and she went back to a typical Javanese feminine way of behaviour. Anderson says that “to be *kasar* is natural for humans, while to be *alus* is an achievement which requires constant concentration (cited in Ragnhildstveit 1998: 157). To be in the public sphere means that you have a chance to exhibit yourself as a person who has a personal rank, which may or may not coincide with reality. None of the inhabitants in the *panti* belonged to the upper class, but this was a fact none of them revealed while they were outside the *panti*. In the public sphere everyone was *alus* to their fingertips and very nicely dressed. I will come back to this in the last part of this chapter, where I discuss how *alus* behaviour has to be seen in connection with social status.

The third aspect mentioned by Ragnhildstveit is how the body can be used to express similarities between the genders based on their common humanity. This common humanity involves the discipline of your body. Both women and men express humanity by displaying a calm and controlled body, in other words a Javanese self. I have described this aspect earlier in this chapter.

Selfhood and social status

As mentioned, according to Clifford Geertz (1960) there are three religious categories in Java; these are connected to three main cultural types which reflect the moral organisation of the Javanese culture. The *abangan* religious tradition which is found among peasants in the village, and the *santri* religion which is associated with traders and the market. The third category, the *prijaji* religion, stresses aspects from the courts and is associated with bureaucratic elements and the white-collar elite (ibid.). The majority of the inhabitants in the three *panti*s come from families who can culturally be described as *abangan*, like Ningsih (11) who comes from a small village where her family work as peasants. Although Ningsih has an *abangan* background she has slowly moved away from her cultural background after living in Reksa Putra for some years, and she is aware of the difference between herself and her parents. One evening she came out from the bathroom with her hair wrapped inside a towel on the top of her head. She looked at me and asked if I normally wrapped my hair the same way after I washed it, or if I let it hang down my back. I told her that I do it the same way as she does, because I do not like my clothes to be wet. I found her question strange so I asked her why she wants to know. She explained that her mother does not like her to wrap her hair like that when she is back home in the village. "My mother says it is only girls who live in towns who behave like this, so she tells me to behave like a girl from the village when I am back home".

This example with Ningsih and her mother is not unique, although at first glance it seems like a small detail. Some children develop a distance to their parents which goes beyond the physical distance which separates them, and this can easily be seen when the parents or other family members visit the child in the *panti*. While some reunions between a child and its parents are characterised by happiness, other such meetings look like a meeting between two strangers, in the sense that the child and the visiting parent hardly speak to each other. Imel (17) and her father had one meeting in Reksa Putra which was like this.

Imel's father rings the door bell at four in the evening, and one of the girls runs to open the door. When she sees that it is Imel's father she leads him into the hall before she goes and tells Imel that she has a visitor. When Imel enters the hall she politely greets her father, and they sit down on a sofa. The father wears beige pants together with a white skirt, while his plastic sandals are left outside the door. Imel and her father sit at opposite ends of a sofa, and they hardly speak. Most of the time they look into the air, and I find it hard to believe that this is a meeting between two relatives who have not seen each other for a long time. One of the other girls serves them tea, and Imel and her father drink some of it before Imel leaves the hall. Some girls are gathered outside the hall, and Imel sits down and talks to them while the father keeps on staring into the air. After a while Imel enters the hall again, and the same silence is evident, only interrupted once in a while by a few words spoken. After 1 ½ hours the father goes back home, and Imel joins the other girls again, but she does not mention the visit with one word. For a long time I wondered why the reunion between Imel and her father seemed like a meeting between two strangers. Later, I witnessed other reunions between children and their fathers or mothers, both in Reksa Putra and in Aisyiah, which were more or less the same as the meeting between Imel and her father.

To explain the distance which can develop between a child and its parents I find it useful to focus on the Javanese perceptions of selfhood in connection with social status. Ragnhildstveit (1998) describes how *abangan* and *prijaji* are used as labels that characterize people of different rank and status. Her informants, who were mostly *abangan*, thought it was typically *prijaji* to be *alus*, and therefore they did not identify with the *alus* behaviour or etiquette. They described the *abangan* way of being as straightforward, while *prijaji* manners, such as *alus*, were not their ideal. One of her informants even said that she felt physically uncomfortable in the presence of *prijaji* people. It was, according to Ragnhildstveit, important for her informants to be *ramah* (friendly), and not so much to be *alus*. "To show affection for fellow human beings and to be involved in one's surroundings was regarded as positive, and not labeled as a sign of lacking self-control" (ibid.: 157-159). In other

words, the division between a public- and private sphere in connection with emotional expressions do not have the same importance for people who are *abangan*.

I find it likely that this can explain why there sometimes is a distance between children and parents. The girls are very focused on being *alus*, among other things in the way they dress, behave and speak, and I could clearly see that some of the parents did not follow the same standard. The inhabitants always present themselves in an *alus* style, although they do not come from such a background. Ningsih, who is one of the youngest inhabitants, has already felt the difference between herself and her parents, and the same difference is felt by her mother who told her not to act like a town girl. The *panti*'s focus on an *alus* way of being differs from the girls' *abangan* background. This creates a social difference between the girls and their families, which has an important impact on their relationship. People who are *abangan* and *prijaji* follow different social values which affect their relationship, and it affects the way they look upon humanity and selfhood. A person who is *ramah* may find an *alus* person less human or civilised, and vice versa.

Concluding remarks

I have shown how children and youth in Javanese *pantis* are socialised according to a model of selfhood in which *alus* behaviour is central. Clifford Geertz (1984) describes the Javanese self as "an inner world of stilled emotion and an outer world of shaped behaviour (ibid.: 128), and I have shown that the inhabitants learn *alus* behaviour through a focus on different kinds of discipline and etiquette. It is necessary to learn *alus* behaviour in order to be accepted as a proper Javanese human being, and the teaching of these social values is an important part of the everyday life in the *pantis*.

I have also described how the Javanese self has to be seen in connection with gender and social status. The way to become Javanese varies according to social status and differs for women and men. A female selfhood is, among other things, internalised through work, and I have argued that the girls internalise a feminine self through

household work. In the next two chapters I will expand my view on work by looking at how the pants are arenas where women and children work.

4. Matrifocal institutions

Matrifocality

If you spend time in a Javanese *panti* you are constantly surrounded by different categories of women who are connected to the *panti* in different ways. In this chapter I will describe how Javanese *pantis* are arenas where different representations of the feminine meet. I would like to show how their stories lead to an understanding of the Javanese female role as a role which is characterized by diversity. Despite the fact that different categories of women are connected to *pantis*, these women have one thing in common: They have a lot of influence and responsibility, which leaves the male role marginalised in the domestic arena. In the light of this pattern I will argue that Javanese *pantis* can be looked upon as “matrifocal” institutions.¹⁶ By using this term I want to argue that *pantis* are both homes and institutions, because there is interplay between the household sphere and the *panti* sphere.

Traditionally in anthropology, matrifocality refers to Caribbean households where women are in focus. In this region the households are described as more flexible compared to the traditional Western nuclear families, because women often have children with several men whom they may or may not be married to. The Caribbean fathers are often described as men who are absent from the household, or they have a distant and unstable relationship towards their children, women and household. The father’s economic contribution to the household is also unstable, and this leads to a situation where the mother has the main responsibility for the running of the household (see e. g. Smith 1956 and Eriksen 1996).

In her research on the Javanese family Hildred Geertz (1961: 2) describes the Javanese kinship system as bilateral, or cognatic. These terms are applied when a

¹⁶ I do not use quotation marks every time I use the word matrifocal in connection with *pantis*. It does not mean that Javanese *pantis* are identical to Javanese households when it comes to matrifocality, but I use the word matrifocal because I want to highlight women’s position in the *pantis*.

child is considered equally related to both its parents, but this aspect of the Javanese kinship system does not mean that the mother and father have identical roles towards the child. Hildred Geertz (1961) explains that an inequality between the parents exists because the Javanese households are matrifocal. She points to the fact that women have a central role in the household composition compared to the husband and father, who often withdraws his attention from household affairs. This kind of male behaviour, in addition to the closeness of the women in the family and their strong economic position, has led to a dominant role for women within the family (ibid.: 45-46). This matrifocal pattern does not only exist within the family. The network of relatives that each ego has outside her or his nuclear family is also characterised by female authority, influence and responsibility. The persons of greatest influence among the family members are women and the relationships of greatest solidarity are those between women (ibid.: 78-79).

Hildred Geertz describes Javanese households as matrifocal because of women's central role in the household compositions. I agree with Geertz that Javanese households follow a matrifocal pattern but, compared to the Caribbean setting, Javanese women do not have children with different men outside marriage, and the husbands are connected to the households. The weakness in Geertz' description is that her approach towards matrifocality is found only in connection with family life. I will argue that the matrifocal pattern found in Javanese households are reproduced and further reinforced in Javanese *pantis*, because this is an arena where men are absent and women are in charge. In Yogyakarta alone there are approximately twenty-eight *pantis*, and an expansion of Geertz definition of matrifocality is necessary in order to see how a matrifocal pattern also exists in Javanese *pantis*, an arena which is situated away from the nuclear family described by Geertz.

Matrifocality in institutions

Goffman (1961) describes institutions as often having a total character symbolized by a barrier with the outside world, and he calls these establishments for "total institutions". One common characteristic of total institutions is a split between the

world outside the institution and the life which takes place inside the institution. These two social and cultural worlds are not totally separated, but there is little mutual penetration (ibid.: 4-9). According to Goffman this separation may lead to irrevocable loss of relationships, a loss which can be painfully experienced by the parties involved (ibid.: 15).

Goffman also emphasises that total institutions are interesting to study because they are partly residential communities and partly formal organisations. He suggests that orphanages and foundling homes may be excluded from the list of total institutions, because these institutions differ from the institutions Goffman focuses on, which are mainly mental hospitals and prisons (ibid.: 12-13). However, I find his insights useful for my purpose, because Javanese pantis fit into Goffman's description of total institutions in two ways: 1) There is a separation between the *panti* and the rest of society, and this barrier is especially apparent when children move away from their parents. As I described in the previous chapter, the inhabitants come to the *panti* with a cultural background from life outside the *panti*, but after moving into the institution they start to live a different social life compared to the life they had together with their family. 2) *Pantis* are homes and institutions at the same time. *Pantis* are the inhabitants' homes because this is where they perform daily activities like eating, sleeping, watching TV, doing homework and working, and it is also a place where they get help, care and attention from adult caretakers. A *panti* is a home because it is the building which the inhabitants leave and return to every day, and everyone inside the house daily interacts with each other. At the same time a *panti* is an institution, because the building was founded in order to achieve a specific goal, or to solve a problem. A *panti* as an institution wants to help or direct the inhabitants into a life style and way of thinking planned by the *panti*, and the institution is constantly trying to influence the children and youth into a certain direction. The interplay between the outside- and the inside world, and between being a residential community and a formal organisation, forms, I suggest, Javanese *pantis* into matrifocal institutions. In order to explain how Javanese *pantis* are turned into matrifocal institutions I shall describe some incidents where the interplays described above are in focus.

First I will focus on the interplay between the outside- and the inside world of Javanese *pantis*, and I will start to describe the mother-child relationship. A matrifocal pattern is seen in Javanese *pantis*, because most children remain close to their mother and other female relatives although they live separated. It is the mother the inhabitants talk about and miss the most. Children and youth rarely speak of male relatives, apart from younger brothers. This is not surprising, because normally it is the mother who has the main responsibility for children and who develops a close relationship with them. Hildred Geertz (1961) points out that the mother in Java is the most significant person during the child's two first years. Before the baby turns two years old the father has relatively little to do with the child. Children between two and five years often have a close relationship to their father, but when the child gets older the father-child relationship becomes distant again. The relationship with the mother remains strong throughout life, while most of the time the father is a more distant person (*ibid.*: 105-107). Goffman (1961: 11) writes that family life is incompatible with total institutions, and this is also the case in *pantis* where children live separated from their parents. Despite this separation the main feature of the Javanese family pattern described above, where the mother and her children form a life-long relationship, is a pattern most inhabitants bring with them when they move into a *panti*. Life inside the *panti* reflects the traditional household organization because the children and youth remain close to their mothers. This is for example seen in the way the inhabitants talk about their mothers and other female relatives.

It is in the middle of the day and Maryke (17) and I are in the hall in *Reksa Putra*. At this time it is too warm to do anything. Both of us are relaxing in chairs and we do not talk much. A couple of houses away some musicians are playing outside a house, which is a normal way to beg for money. The music is loud, and they do not stop playing before the owner of the house has given them some money. Suddenly Maryke sits up straight, and I see some tears in her eyes. She is looking in the direction of the musicians and obviously something is upsetting her. I ask if something is wrong, but she quickly says no and continues listening to the song. When the music stops she turns to me and explains that the song just played is a

traditional Javanese hymn which is her mother's favourite song. She and her mother were living next to a church, and this was a very dear song to her mother. "I have been broken hearted so many times, but unlike other youth I have not been broken hearted because of a boy. It is because I miss my mother". She continues to talk about her mother and her family, which are living far away from Yogyakarta. Her mother is a Christian, and her father is a Muslim. When she was younger she tried to follow both Muslim and Christian traditions, but at the end she chose to be a Christian, like her mother. She tells me that her father took a second wife, and because of this she has two little stepbrothers, but her stepfamily is not living in the same house as her mother. In a few months she will have a school break and she is looking forward to going home to her mother.

Several inhabitants remained close to their mother and other female relatives. They often told stories about their mother, and some also talked about their siblings, and especially younger siblings, but I hardly ever heard any stories about fathers or other male relatives. If the father occurred in a story, he only figured as a peripheral person, while the mother was fronting the story, like the story told by Maryke above. A strong affection and longing for female family members was often expressed in these histories. If something happened which reminded them of their mother or grandmother, they would often tell a story connected to this memory, like Maryke did. Inside the family the mother is in focus, but a lot of children who move into *panti* never lose this focus, although they spend many years living away from their mother. Despite having a different everyday life compared to their female relatives, and despite the fact that they very seldom are able to meet with these relatives, a lot of the inhabitants keep the memory of their mother alive by seeing and remembering the mother through incidents that take place in the everyday life.

When inhabitants move out from the *panti*, a lot of the girls choose to keep on living in Yogyakarta, although their family is living somewhere else. The opportunity of getting a job is better in big cities like Yogyakarta, compared to smaller towns and villages. For girls who originally are not Javanese, or in cases where the family is

living far away, the relationship with their family may not change much when they move out from the *panti*, because they will not be able to meet more frequently because of the long distance between them. For others the relationship between themselves and the family changes. This is especially seen in the relationship between the child and female relatives, because they start to meet more often.

Vera (20) is, like Maryke, one of the oldest inhabitants in Reksa Putra and she has a close relationship with her mother despite the fact that she has lived for nine years in the *panti*. She is the first inhabitant who asked me if I wanted to see photos of her family. In an album she has several photos of her family which were taken while she and her sister still lived in the village. In one picture her mother and father stand together, lined up for the photographer. Both of them look straight into the camera but they do not smile. Vera also has pictures of some of her cousins, a picture of her sister and herself when they were smaller and some photos taken on a scout camp in Bali. At this moment I do not know that Vera plans to move out from the *panti*. A week later she tells me that she wants to move into a room in a boarding house (*kost*), because she has already started to work in a hotel and will therefore be able to pay for her own accommodation and food.

Three weeks later Vera moves out from the *panti*. The day before she moves her mother arrives in town. Her mother has taken the five-hour bus drive from her village in order to get to Yogyakarta to help Vera to move. Together they are going to clean her newly rented room. The mother arrives early in the morning and Vera takes her to the rented room. The same evening I meet her mother for the first time when Vera and her mother come back to the *panti* to have a shower. While her mother is in the bathroom Vera comes into the hall to talk to some of the girls and me. She is excited, both because she is moving and because her mother is with her. “Did you see my mother before she went to the bathroom?” she asks. I tell her that I got a short glimpse of her, but that I would like to meet her. When the mother comes into the hall, Vera introduces me to her. “My mother” Vera says in English. She continues in Indonesian, “She is very beautiful, don’t you think? She is just like me”, she says and

starts to laugh. I already know that Vera is close to her mother. A few weeks earlier her mother sent a sms to one of Vera's friend's phone telling that she had been sick for three days and that she was not able to get out of bed. For days Vera told me how worried she was for her mother, and from time to time she sent an sms to her mother by using her friend's phone. During the evening Vera and her mother spend in the *panti*, Vera is always next to her mother.

In Vera's case the relationship with her mother becomes more regular after she starts to live on her own. Not only does her mother help her to move, but Vera uses every opportunity to go home despite the long distance between Yogyakarta and her home village, and despite the fact that she is not making a lot of money. In the morning Vera takes the bus to work, but when she finishes in the afternoon she walks back home because she wants to save money, although it takes her an hour to get home. Right after Vera starts to work she tells me that she wants to take a bus back to her village and see her mother. About a week later she is using her day off from work to go home. Another time she and a friend drive a motorbike all the way from town to the village, and she tells me how nice it was to see her mother again, although she could only stay for one day.

The tie between the mother and her child remains strong although they do not live in the same household. Hildred Geertz (1961: 4) describes how the family works like a safety net for relatives who can not take care of themselves. Parentless children, and others who for some reason need help, will be taken care of by their family of close kinsmen. Again we see how Geertz' analysis does not move beyond family life, but the reality differs from Geertz' description. Children do move away from their families because not all families have the resources required to function as a safety net for the family's children. This does not mean that the matrifocal pattern ceases, because in most cases the solidarity between a mother and her child may remain strong despite the long distance which can be created when the child moves into a *panti*. The pattern of the traditional Javanese family organisation, where the mother is in focus, remains the same for a lot of children although they live in a *panti*.

I have shown that Javanese pantis are similar to total institutions because there is a barrier between the *panti* and the rest of society, but I argue that there is interplay between the outside- and the inside world. This is, among other things, seen in the relationship between children and their mothers. A matrifocal pattern exists in *pantis*, because the mother is the most important person in a Javanese child's life, and the mother's central position in the household is reproduced into a *panti* setting. I now want to focus on how a tie similar to the one between a mother and her child develops between employees and the inhabitants. This is not surprising when it comes to abandoned children, who do not have any other adult support, but the same is also happening in cases where the child is still in touch with her or his family. The interplay between the outside- and inside world is not only seen in the relationship between children and their mothers. I will show that the household organisation in traditional households is transferred into Javanese *pantis*.

The *panti* as a matrifocal household

Javanese *pantis* need governmental approval, which is given by the Ministry of Social Affairs (*menteri sosial*). After the approval is given the government does not interfere in the running of the *pantis*, but the government gives the *panti* 2250 rupiah¹⁷ a day for each child who lives in the institution. This amount of money does not even cover the food expenses for one child a day, and the rest of the money needed for food, education and other expenses has to be financed through donors.

Suryochondro (2000: 239) points to the fact that the Indonesian government needs the assistance of women for carrying out certain tasks. This is certainly the case when it comes to taking care of abandoned children and other children and youth who need help. It is mainly women who do this, and this is a feature common to almost all Javanese *pantis*. In the three *pantis* to which I was connected, only women were working directly with the children and youth. If men were involved they had

¹⁷ In 2006 1000 rupiah was equal to 0,7 kroner.

peripheral roles as a member of the board or as janitors. Female employees have the main responsibility for the children, and they act more or less like substitute mothers for the children and youth whom they take care of. A tie between the inhabitants and the employees sometimes takes the same shape as the tie between the mother and a child; because *panti*s are institutions where female employees work and are in charge.

A *panti* has some of the same features as a household, and the relationship between the inhabitants and the employees can grow into a tie similar to the one they have towards their mother and other female relatives. This leads to a situation where people other than your immediate family feel responsible for you. I have already described cases where the tie between a married mother and her child remains strong although the child moves into a *panti*, but the child also forms life long relationships with the women working in the *panti*. They manage to create and maintain everlasting ties both with their mothers and to the employees, and to balance their solidarity between different women.

Ririn (22) is a former inhabitant in Reksa Putra, and she often comes to visit the *panti*. She is originally from Sumba, an island east of Java, but she chose to keep on living in Yogyakarta after she moved out from the *panti*. She works and lives close by Reksa Putra, and she often comes by to spend time in the *panti*. If she has a day off from work she sometimes spends hours together with the girls. One day she tells me that she has to move back to Sumba because her grandmother is sick. She has quit her job and will leave in a couple of days. The day before Ririn leaves she comes by the *panti* to say good bye to everyone. After saying bye to the adults she goes to the door and the inhabitants follow her to the doorstep, and everyone gives her a hug. Ririn cries when she leaves the *panti* this day, and it is obviously hard for her to say good bye to everyone in Reksa Putra.

It is not common for adults to show any emotions in public, and when Ririn cries in Reksa Putra she shows how the *panti* has become much more than an institution to her. It has become a home where it is acceptable to show emotions, and it has become a home she does not want to leave behind. Through the years she has built a

strong relationship with Bu Endang, Bu Tri and the inhabitants, and it is difficult for her to break this relationship. However, the solidarity towards her family has not been weakened, although she has lived far away from them. I do not think it is a coincidence that she leaves because her grandmother is sick. I am not sure she would have felt the same need to go back home if a male relative was sick. After all, the solidarity between children and female relatives is much stronger compared to the relationship between children and male relatives. Hildred Geertz (1961) describes the same pattern in her book. In general women maintain closer ties with their kindred than men do. She also points to the fact that, after marriage, when the daughter has moved away she usually keeps a closer relationship with her family than sons do. This is not only valid for her own parents, but also applies to more distant relatives (ibid.: 26). Ririn is still close to her grandmother although they have not met for a long time. When her grandmother becomes sick, she sees no other option than to go back home, and this strong tie with her own family makes her quit her job and leave Yogyakarta. By looking more closely at the relationship between the employees and the inhabitants we can get a better understanding of why Ririn felt so sad when she had to go back home.

One afternoon I see that Bu Endang is dressed to go out, and I ask where she is going. She tells me that a former inhabitant is sick and has been sent to hospital. The sick woman is not originally from Yogyakarta and her family is too far away to visit her, so Bu Endang wants to go to the hospital and make sure the woman is alright. When she comes back from the hospital she tells me that the lady was ill of typhoid fever. Bu Endang feels sorry for the woman because her family is far away when she needs them. She tells me that she will go back to the hospital if the woman has to stay there for several days. Bu Endang often points out that former inhabitants keep in touch with the *panti*. Once a year these former inhabitants get together, and Bu Endang is always invited. From time to time former inhabitants also come by the *panti* to say hello to Bu Endang and Bu Tri. During visits like this the visitor will tell the employees what she is doing in life and that everything goes well.

Bu Endang feels responsible for the sick woman, although the woman moved out from the *panti* years ago. This pattern is similar to the one we find in Latin America. In this region circulation of children is seen as an advantage. Living with someone else other than your biological parents means that you create ties to more people, and this is useful the day you need some kind of help that your own family can not provide. Children who have lived with other people than their parents have access to more resources than children who have only been living with their parents (see e. g. Fonseca 2004). Circulation of children in Java is not done in light of this kind of thinking, but the consequences are sometimes the same. Hildred Geertz (1961) describes how the relationships of greatest solidarity are those between female relatives. Children living in *pantis* sometimes create the same kind of relationship with female employees. In Geertz' description the family work as a safety network when someone needs assistance or help, but in reality the same safety network can be found outside the immediate family too. Some inhabitants in *pantis*, like Ririn, balance their solidarity between their female family members and the employees who took care of them for a long period.

The relationship between employees and abandoned children follows a similar pattern, but in contrast to the inhabitants described above, these children do not balance their solidarity between biological parents and employees, because the tie between themselves and their family is broken. Abandoned children's only safety network is the one they develop with the female employees working in the institution where they live. Bu Hariyah is the administrator of *panti* Aisyiah, and some of the inhabitants in Aisyiah were abandoned as children.

“For some girls we are the only family they have”, Bu Hariyah tells me, referring to the abandoned children and youth living in her *panti*. To support her own statement she reaches out for an album which is under a coffee table. The album contains pictures from three weddings, and Bu Hariyah explains that all the girls in the album used to be inhabitants in Aisyiah. The pictures are taken from their wedding receptions which took place in the *panti*'s assembly hall. The girls did not have any

family, so the *panti* took care of all the wedding preparations. Hildred Geertz (1961) describes how Javanese weddings consist of different ceremonies and how the bride's family are in charge of most of them. A religious meal (*slametan*) is held in at the home of the bride, and it is also here the "meeting" (*ketemuan*) takes place.

Traditionally this is the time when the bride and groom meet for the first time. During this ceremony the mother of the bride plays an important part by symbolically including the groom into the family by offering him water (ibid.: 65-66). To arrange a wedding if the bride does not have a mother is difficult, because the mother plays an important part in the preparation for the religious meal and during the "meeting".¹⁸ Female employees in *pantis* arrange weddings for motherless young girls who want to get married.

Abandoned children who live in *pantis* create close ties with the employees. To be motherless creates a difficult situation for children, because normally the mother is the pivot in a person's life. We can see this clearly in rituals like weddings where the mother plays an important part. Inhabitants in Aisyiah who do not have families keep on living in the *panti* until they get married, a situation common to other youth. Marriage is seen as a transition from youth into adulthood, and this transition is important to women because it is as wife and mother they achieve most respect and prestige. By arranging weddings for the abandoned inhabitants the employees are helping the girls to start a new life outside the *panti*. The young women are ready to start their own matrifocal family.¹⁹

I have shown that the matrifocal pattern found in traditional households is adjusted and transferred into *panti* settings, because female employees develop relationships

¹⁸ A friend of mine, who does not belong to any *panti*, will get married in August 2007. She tells me that her mother started to plan the wedding a long time ago and, because my friend is the only daughter in the family, her mother takes pride in arranging a wedding in the best way possible. The mother has during my friend's childhood managed to save 40 million rupiah which she will spend on her only daughter's wedding.

¹⁹ I once asked Bu Endang in Reksa Putra why the girls move out from the *panti* when they get a job, since this is not normal in *pantis* like Aisyiah. Bu Endang says that this is a choice taken by the girls who move out, because they want to give their places to other girls who need help.

with the inhabitants that are similar to the mother-child relationship. I will expand my view on pantis as matrifocal households by describing how a matrifocal pattern is found in pantis where the inhabitants are biological mothers and their children conceived outside marriage. In these cases a matrifocal pattern is seen in the different kinds of networks which develop between the female employees and the unmarried mothers who use the institution. Through my descriptions it will also become clear that pantis are institutions, in addition to being homes. People turn to pantis because they need help, and by describing Sayap Ibu this feature of Javanese pantis becomes evident.

Motherhood outside marriage

The official Indonesian (and Javanese) language differentiates people according to their status. Unmarried and young Javanese girls and women are addressed as “Mbak” (Miss). Although you can address a young and childless married woman as “Mbak”, it is less common practise. After marriage most women will be addressed as “Ibu” (Mrs), which literally means “mother” and is also the correct form of addressing older women or women in higher positions or standings. Younger men are addressed as “Mas”, while elderly men and married men are “Bapak”, which literally means “father”. When I arrived in Yogyakarta I soon learnt the importance of addressing people correctly, because failing to do so is looked upon as being rude. By looking at the way the unmarried pregnant women talk to each other, and by looking at the way the employees speak, we can see how the language reflects certain attitudes towards unmarried mothers.

When I met new people for the first time, and before I started a conversation with them, I always tried to figure out the correct way to address them. In the case with Mbak Lina and Mbak Yani, which I will describe below, I could see that they were older than I am. In addition to their age, one of them was nine months pregnant and the other was already a mother, so to address them without a title would for these reasons be extremely rude. For the same reasons it felt natural to me to address them as “Ibu”. However, I soon found out that this was wrong, because all the employees

addressed the two ladies as “Mbak”, and they also address themselves the same way. There exists a differentiation between different kinds of motherhood, and this is manifested in pants like Sayap Ibu, where most of the children are conceived outside marriage. Unmarried mothers are, socially speaking, not mothers in the same way as married mothers.

Contrary to motherhood in less fortunate families, where the relationship between the child and its mother may remain strong, motherhood outside marriage is often characterised by an ending of the tie between the mother and her child. Children and childhood should take place inside a family, because to become a single mother is a family constellation which is associated with shame. Unmarried women who become pregnant are judged immoral, and to be in this kind of situation is worst case scenario for most young girls. The Sayap Ibu Foundation runs, among other things, the Sayap Ibu pants for abandoned children, and Wisma Ibu²⁰ which is a home for unmarried pregnant women. These two institutions are situated next to each other, and by focusing on the mothers, and other women connected to these two institutions, I want to argue that a matrifocal pattern is visible in connection with these women, although they are not considered to be mothers in the same way as married mothers. The matrifocal pattern is seen in way these women solve their difficult situation. The pregnant women create relationships with women who work in the institution, and then transfer the responsibility of the baby to the institution. Unmarried pregnant women create networks among themselves and with the employees, similar to the networks created among kindred.

Mbak Lina (27) is one of the inhabitants in Wisma Ibu, and she comes from Semarang, a city which is a three hours bus drive away from Yogyakarta. When she got pregnant her aunt told her about Sayap Ibu, and one month ago Mbak Lina moved into Wisma Ibu. A couple of days before Mbak Lina will give birth, she tells me that

²⁰ *Wisma* is a name used for public buildings. The noun after the name, in this case *Ibu* (mother), indicates what kind of public building it is. Despite of the name, the leaders and employees address the mothers who stay in Wisma Ibu as Mbak.

she has not been sick during the whole pregnancy and that she feels very healthy. Everyday she comes into the *panti* and helps the employees to feed and clean the babies. She spends at least two or three hours in the *panti* every time she comes by, and she seems especially attached to a two week old baby. The baby is sick, and he looks like a premature child because he is so small. His arms and legs are thin like matches, and he is too weak to cry. Mbak Lina has been living together with the boy's mother in *Wisma Ibu*, and she tells me that yesterday Mbak Farida, the baby's mother, and she cried over the baby because he is sick. I ask her what is wrong with the baby, but she tells me that no one knows, and today Mbak Farida returned back home to her family, leaving her child in *Sayap Ibu*. Mbak Lina sits down on the floor, and she holds the small baby in her arms. After a while she puts him down on a mattress, and she finds a towel and washes his face. After a few seconds the baby falls asleep, and Mbak Lina gets up. It is time to give all the babies a bath, and she helps the employees to undress all the babies before she goes back to *Wisma Ibu*.

Mbak Lina's decision of going to *Sayap Ibu* was influenced by information and advice given by her aunt. It is not surprising that a female relative was the one who provided this kind of information, taking into consideration that male relatives are distant when it comes to questions concerning family life, including children. Mbak Lina is still together with the baby's father, but she hardly mentions him in connection with her current situation. Hildred Geertz (1961) emphasizes that *matrifocality* is characterised by a female solidarity within the family and within the wider kinship network (*ibid.*: 79). In Mbak Lina's situation it is the relationship with her aunt which led her to *Wisma Ibu*, and she is the only relative Mbak Lina refers to when she explains to me about her decision of going to *Wisma Ibu*. Although her aunt helped her before she left, Mbak Lina is all alone in *Yogyakarta*. During the last month of her pregnancy, and right after giving birth, Mbak Lina is living away from her family and boyfriend, and the only people in her network are the other women living in *Wisma Ibu* and the employees working for the *Sayap Ibu* Foundation. By the description above we can see how Mbak Lina is creating ties with other women who are also connected to the institution. She is already close to Mbak Farida, and

when she spends time in the *panti* she looks after Mbak Farida's baby. By spending a lot of time in the *panti* she also creates a tie with the employees by taking part in their work. Left in the hands of strangers during a difficult situation, she tries to develop a relationship with these women. They will be the ones helping her to make important decisions regarding her own and her child's future. When the female solidarity within the family is not enough to help women through a difficult situation, women create similar relationships outside the kinship network.

Mbak Lina and other pregnant women do not consider *Wisma Ibu* as a home, but as an institution they turn to in a difficult situation. During their stay in *Wisma Ibu* they will be given guidance in how to best solve their situation, and the assistance given by *Wisma Ibu* covers spiritual, social, medical, psychological and legal aspects concerning their pregnancies. In cooperation with the staff in *Wisma Ibu* the women have to come up with a solution, but it is the main aim of the foundation to arrange for the mother and the new born to go back to the mother's family. If this is not possible the mother is given two options; to leave her child in the *panti*, or to leave her family and try to make a life together with her baby. If the mother chooses to leave her family, *Sayap Ibu* will give her training in some kind of skill so that she can be able to find a job and take care of herself and the baby, but everyone knows that it is hard to be a single mother.

Sullivan (1994) describes how single-female-parent families have the third lowest income in the range of eight family types, and generally these families are among the worst off in the neighbourhood (*ibid.*: 118-119). Mbak Yani is a former inhabitant of *Wisma Ibu*. She has temporarily left her son Ari in the *panti*, but she dreams of taking her child back home, and thereby becoming a single parent. The following description is from one of Mbak Yani's visits in the *panti*, and it shows the difficulties of being an unmarried mother.

Mbak Yani moved into *Wisma Ibu* when she was six months pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. Ari has lived in the *panti* since few weeks after he was born, but she has not given him up for adoption. Now her baby is five months old, and she tells me

that in a week's time she wants to take Ari home. She is a tourist guide and has been working hard since the delivery in order to save money and be able to take care of herself and Ari. The last month she worked so much that she was not been able to visit Ari. Among other things she went to Lombok and Bali guiding German tourists, she tells me. After Mbak Yani has spent some time in the *panti* with her son, one of the ladies who work in the Sayap Ibu office, which is situated in front of the *panti*, comes to greet Mbak Yani. "I have saved a lot of money and right now I have four million rupiah."²¹ I want to take Ari home in a week's time", she tells the lady from the office. "Oh, you must have worked hard; do you never have a day off?", the lady replies. "When I returned home from Wisma Ibu I took one day off, but since then I have been working every day", Mbak Yani answers. The lady from the office emphasises that taking care of a child requires a lot of discipline. Somehow I get the feeling she is not sure Ari will be able to go home with his mother. For four hours Mbak Yani feeds, cleans and plays with Ari, but in the afternoon it is time for her to go home. She will take a *becak* (pedicab) from the *panti* to the main road and then catch a bus and start on the two hour drive back home. After Mbak Yani has left I ask one employee if Ari is really going home. None of the employees is sure if Ari is going home, and some of them do not even know of Mbak Yani's plan. I start to wonder if Mbak Yani's plan is more a dream than reality.²²

Although women are influential and have the main responsibility for children, motherhood outside marriage places women on the outside of what is socially accepted, and this situation limits their room for manoeuvre. The social stigma connected to conceiving children outside marriage, in addition to the financial burden it is to raise a child on your own in a country with no welfare arrangements, sometimes makes it impossible for women like Mbak Yani to raise their own

²¹ An average salary for a civil servant in Yogyakarta is around 1 million Rupiah a month, in addition to a pension scheme.

²² On my re-visit in January 2007 Ari still lived in the *panti*. During the same visit the employees told me that Mbak Lina brought her baby back home. They say that this is possible in situations where the mother's family support her. The reason pregnant women move into Wisma Ibu is not necessarily because they have been thrown out from their families, but because the family is too shy (*malu*) to have an unmarried pregnant daughter living at home.

children. Married women may not be depending on men when they raise their children, but women depend on men to be able to become mothers. Without marriage there are few chances to become a mother because unmarried mothers are a non-existent category, and they are not socially accepted. Women who give birth outside marriage are not considered to be mothers in the same way as married women; among other things this can be seen in the way they talk about themselves and how others address other women who are in the same situation.

The only way you can become an “Ibu” or “mother” is through marriage, or by getting old. To give birth to a child does not automatically turn you into a “mother”, because real mothers only exist inside a nuclear family household. Many young and unmarried pregnant women see no other option than to give the baby to a *panti* and to hope that a married couple will adopt it. In the meantime the baby is in the hands of the female employees. In this way women who work in *pantis* are part of the safety network for the unmarried pregnant women. Matrifocal solidarity does not exist only among relatives but can also take place among women outside your own family. Women help each other regardless of family ties because, as Hildred Geertz says, the greatest solidarity is found among women.

I have argued that a matrifocal pattern exists between women who are not related. Unmarried pregnant women depend on this kind of network in order to solve their difficult situation. A married woman can become a mother and create a matrifocal household, but an unmarried mother does not have the same possibility. In addition I have shown that *Sayap Ibu* exemplifies in a good way that *pantis* are both homes and institutions. Unmarried pregnant women turn to the *Sayap Ibu* Foundation because they need help from an institution in a situation which their own families and homes can not solve. At the same time *Sayap Ibu* is a home for abandoned babies and children where everyday life follows a matrifocal pattern. Unmarried mothers leave behind their children in the *panti*, and the employees become substitute “mothers” in a substitute “household”.

Women power and prestige

I have so far described different representations of the feminine by focusing on the relationships between female inhabitants, relatives and employees connected to Javanese *pantis*, and how they form a matrifocal pattern outside the immediate nuclear family. I will now look at power and prestige in Javanese *pantis*.

Koentjaraningrat (1980: 134) describes the Javanese perception of power as an “ascribed quality which is obtained through inheritance or by divine favour”. This stands as a contrast to the European view, where power is perceived as “particular types of human relationships (ibid.: 133). I agree with Koentjaraningrat that Javanese power is seen as a personal quality, but there are other ways to obtain power than through inheritance or by divine favour. Power can also be achieved through everyday favours, and by everyday favours I mean work. By looking at some of the women I have presented in this chapter, in connection to what kind of favour, or work they do, I want to argue that Javanese *pantis* are arenas where women articulate power.

Sullivan (1994) criticises Hildred Geertz, and others, who claims that there exists a female dominance in the domestic sphere and that this female dominance can be pushed out into the wider society. Women have more responsibilities than men at home, but women do not enjoy more authority and influence within their families (ibid.: 113). In her conclusion she says that “in terms of relative power and authority females are subordinated to males in both spheres” (ibid.: 174).²³ Other research on Indonesian women also claims that women have less power than men at home (see e. g. Sitepu 2000). I suggest that these researchers have based their conclusions on a western perception of power. To be able to grasp the Javanese perception we have to look at how women, through their social roles and through work, get power and prestige.

²³ She refers to the public- and domestic sphere.

Karim (1995) calls for more research on alternative paradigms of power and prestige in Southeast Asia. She points to the fact that power can take on another form than through visible, formal and bureaucratic systems, and if we want to study women and power in this region we need an anthropology of informality (ibid.: 15-19). She continues to say that women allow men to dominate religious and political life, but they hold important areas of decision-making in the informal sphere. Through female spheres and activities women determine important rules of decision-making and should therefore be studied properly (ibid.: 27).²⁴

I agree with Karim that we need to realise that power can be found outside the public sphere, and this is important in a Javanese setting.²⁵ Javanese women's most important social roles are as wives, mothers and heads of the household, and through these roles women get not only power inside the household, but also respect and prestige which are not only confined to the household. Women get public value through the domestic roles they perform. Karim (1995b) writes that women can use this position and exploit it for commercial venture and financial gain. In this way motherhood diffuses the boundary between the public- and domestic sphere and it gives women the legitimacy to explore other forms of personal or social activity outside the family (ibid.: 50).

The social workers and the administrators in *pantis* work as substitute mothers. Most of the administrators and other white-collar employees are married and have their own families, while the employees who work directly with the children in most cases are unmarried women without higher education. By taking care of children and youth who need help, these two groups of women are following the traditional gender division of labour, and through their jobs they get domestic power and public

²⁴ See Ardener's argument about mutedness, page 77, for a similar point of view.

²⁵ According to Rosaldo (1974) access to power is a matter of getting access to the public sphere. She argues that the female subordination is a result of women being active in the domestic sphere while men are active in the public sphere. Ortner (1974) has a similar theory. She explains the female subordination by saying that people everywhere divide between nature and culture. Culture is superior to nature because culture is able to shape and tame nature, and women are physically, socially and mentally closer to nature than men. My material from Java shows that power is not only found in male spheres.

prestige. The amount of prestige and respect connected to the employees in pantis, and especially the administrators, is seen in the way they are known throughout the city. In a big city like Yogyakarta a lot of people know well who these women are and what kind of job they do. They are looked upon as intelligent and good hearted women and are highly respected. To inform the rest of society about the jobs done in pantis is a strategy that most pantis follow. One part of the program for Sayap Ibu emphasizes that their job is not only to take care of children, but also to inform society about their work through media and by holding seminars. They also develop different kinds of networks by trying to get various stake holders and by cooperating with other organisations and academia.²⁶

The female employees use their position to influence the systems outside the domestic sphere, and people do listen when these women speak. In connection with Sayap Ibu's 50th anniversary the Governor of Yogyakarta pointed to the fact that Indonesia is a country where the percentage of children living on the street has increased by 85 % the last ten years, and more than 36 million children are living under the poverty line. He said that in times like this the work done by Sayap Ibu is highly appreciated, because they take care of the future generation (Hamengku Buwono X: 2005). It is not only the governor who listens to women working in pantis. The work done by these women is noticed and appreciated throughout the city, and thanks to these women's work there is awareness about the children who live in pantis. People contribute to the pantis by giving money, arranging activities for the children or working voluntarily at the pantis. Women in Javanese pantis use their power and prestige in order to influence the city's inhabitants to help the children.

²⁶ Riegelhaupt (1967) also emphasizes the importance of female networks in connection with women and power. She describes peasants in Portugal where women formally and legally are subordinated men. Despite this formal subordination the peasant women have more power than men, both at home and in public. Men work alone in their field all day while women are left in the village, and during this time women met to exchange information and create networks. The bureaucracy is ineffective and people depend on networks in order to get things done, which makes women powerful in the public sphere. Women also travel to nearby cities to sell agricultural products, and in this way they are in charge of the economic situation of the family and get power at home.

So far I have discussed how women have power and prestige by looking at the employees in Javanese *panti*s. I have argued that valuable and appreciated activities and qualities in Java are not only found in the public sphere. At the end of this chapter I want to have a brief look at the starting point for the same power and prestige: the mothers.

As long as motherhood takes place inside marriage motherhood is the peak of female status. In this sense women depend on men to become mothers and thereby get access to power and prestige. According to a western view a mother who has sent one or more children to a *panti* might be looked upon as a mother who has failed, but in Java social status is not the same as class status. Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis (1987: 49) says that “social status is the traditional ingredient, the only possible way of retaining or achieving power in the Javanese sense”. If we manage to look beyond the material aspect of power, which is dominant in the western part of the world, we see that there are other ways to achieve power and prestige, and this opens up the possibility for Indonesian women and mothers to have prestige, even for mothers in poor families. Most married mothers manage to remain close to their children although they live separated from them. They manage to maintain the social relationship connected to motherhood although they are not able to take care of their child or children for a shorter or longer period. Their social status is still the same because once you have become a mother you remain a mother. The social status as mother is a lifelong status.

Mothers on the outside of marriage lack the social status other mothers have, and therefore they also lack the power and prestige connected to the motherhood. Motherhood which takes place outside marriage is no longer a powerful identity, because these women are placed outside what is socially acceptable. In some cases the relationship between the mother and her child ceases because the mother does not see any possibility to practice her motherhood, and she leaves the child in a *panti*. For these women the status as mother is a temporary and vague status, because they are

never fully accepted as a mother. Unmarried mothers take part in matrifocal networks, but for these women matrifocality is not connected to power and prestige.

Concluding remarks

Hildred Geertz (1961: 79) says that “matrifocality appears to be a characteristic mode of familial organisation in a number of different societies, which have differing cultural traditions but all of which have kinship systems which are bilateral and nucleating”. I have shown that her view on matrifocality may be expanded in order to understand how different representations of the feminine, which do not take place inside a traditional family household, also follow a matrifocal pattern. By looking at the relationships between mothers, employees and children who are connected to Javanese *pantis*, I argue that these women form *pantis* into matrifocal institutions. The matrifocal pattern in these institutions is a result of an extension of the traditional Javanese family organisation, as described by Geertz, and of the formal organisation which takes place inside the *pantis*. Geertz (*ibid.*) continues by calling for a cross-cultural comparison of matrifocality, in order to be able to look at the social and psychological circumstances which are associated with this kind of organisation. Javanese *pantis* can serve as one arena for cross-cultural comparison.

In Javanese *pantis* mothers and female employees are the pivots in the lives of children and youth, and women’s central role in this field is a reflection on the traditional gender division of labour in families. I have described how the employees get high social status through their work. Matrifocality is not only a way of organising family life and institutions; it can also be a way for women to attain power and prestige.

5. Socialisation through work

Children as “muted” group

I started my fieldwork in Reksa Putra, and one of the things that struck me right away was how devoted all the inhabitants were towards their work duties. Everyday life in the *panti* is organised around different duties that everyone has to perform, and the work is always performed very precisely and carefully, and normally without any adult supervision. Illo (1995: 210) defines work as “the production of goods and services for the market or for home consumption”. I think this is a good definition of work, because it does not define work as merely an economic activity. Work may also be a mean towards the maintenance of households, and by having this perspective on work I am able to show that children and youth in Javanese *pantis* have lots of work responsibilities. In this chapter I want to describe how children in Javanese *pantis* are socialised through work. I argue that children are socialised in this way not just because Javanese *pantis* are arenas where there are few adults who can perform the work necessary for everyday life. The administrators in *pantis* want to teach the girls how to become good workers, because it is a quality which is necessary to have on the day the inhabitants move out from the *panti* and have to live on their own. A strong focus on work is one way to create an easy transition from life inside the *pantis* to life on the outside, while at the same time it creates a sense of community between the *pantis* and the population of Yogyakarta.

Schildkrout (1979) writes from Nigeria, and she asserts that “women and children perform a very large variety of labour roles which tend to be overlooked (ibid.: 83). I find her insights useful in a Javanese context. In the time after Schildkrout wrote her article there has been numbers of writings about women’s work, and in the previous chapter I described the work performed by women in Javanese *pantis*. However, there is still very little attention paid to work performed by children and youth. The anthropological silence around children’s work has to be seen in connection with the Western perception of children and childhood. Ennew (1995) argues that the modern

Western view on childhood is characterised by *domesticity*; “the place for childhood to take place is inside – inside society, inside a family, inside a private dwelling” (ibid.: 202). Hecht (1998) also emphasises that a proper childhood takes place at home, but he also adds that childhood can be seen when children do not work (ibid.: 73). The Western view on childhood is, according to these two authors, based on two aspects; domesticity and dependency. Children should stay inside a family household where they are depending on adults to do the work necessary for livelihood and everyday life. Children who do not fit into these categories are not considered to be children or to have a childhood. This can be part of the explanation as to why there is so little research done on children in *pantis* and other institutions, or on the work performed by children, but it does not give an explanation as to why children who have a childhood “within” are also largely left untreated in anthropological literature. To understand this I find it useful to look at children and youth as “muted groups”.

Ardener (1975) introduced the term “muted group” in an article where he criticises anthropology for being a male dominant discipline. Women do talk, but they do not talk within the dominant code, and their viewpoints are therefore not acknowledged in the same way as men’s opinions. Since women do not express themselves through the dominant code, their versions of reality are subordinated to men’s versions. This local male dominance bias continues into academia because anthropologists are trained to see the pattern presented by men, while women are objects within the male universe (ibid.). This is what Ardener refers to when he talks about mutedness, but Ardener’s work can also be used to describe the position of other groups who do not manage to have an independent voice in anthropological literature, such as children and youth. Although there are numbers of anthropological works from Java, children and youth are hardly mentioned, and I assert that it exists “child blindness” in anthropological research.

Javanese childhood

The general pattern for Javanese childhood is similar to the Western notion, in the sense that children and childhood should take place inside a family where the parents

are in charge of organising the everyday life, although poor families allow their children to work outside home.²⁷ Shiraishi (1995: 170) says that the basic pattern for Indonesian family life is an authoritative, all-knowing father, an ever-giving, never-angry and all-knowing mother who is in charge of family life, and obedient children.

Hildred Geertz (1961) argues that Javanese babies are considered to be extremely vulnerable, and they need to be protected from dangers like a sudden shock, a loud noise, rough handling or other kinds of discomfort. The mother's arms or lap are considered a relaxed and safe place for babies (ibid.: 92). She continues to say that children younger than six years old are considered to be not yet Javanese (*durung djawa*) because they do not yet understand (*durung ngerti*) what it takes to be recognised as a Javanese. Children are perceived in this manner because they do not know how to behave in adult interpersonal relationships (ibid.: 105). Asmussen (1999) argues in a similar way when she says that new born Javanese babies are considered empty (*kosong*) because the body is looked upon as a container which needs to be filled with sociality. The new born is empty because it has not acquired any social relations yet (ibid.: 183). A Javanese person should be understood as relationally constructed rather than as an "individual", and as the new born grows she or he accumulates social relationships (ibid.: 193-194).

Both Asmussen and Geertz focus on how small children do not know how to act socially like a Javanese, and how children need to learn to form relationships with others. In chapter 3 I described socialisation of babies. My aim here is to look at how children and youth in Javanese pants are socialised. Socialisation is a phenomenon which not only takes place during early childhood; it is a process which remains important throughout late childhood and into the teenage-stage. I choose to focus on children and youth in this chapter, because accumulation of social relationships are

²⁷ It is also common for families living in villages to send their children to a city for education. Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have so far been associated with children from poor families, but lately these schools have also become popular among wealthy Indonesians.

viewed by the pantis as very important at this stage, and this is expressed very clearly in the socialisation which takes place in Javanese pantis.

Socialisation in Javanese pantis

Children and youth in Javanese pantis are socialised through work, because to be a good worker is looked upon as a way of creating relationships with people outside the pantis. In Reksa Putra there is a picture in the kitchen with the following inscription: “The spirit of work: 1. Love work. 2. Work skilfully. 3. Use the opportunity to work. 4. Do not differentiate between different kinds of work. 5. Be responsible when you work (*Jiwa makarya: 1. Cinta kerja. 2. Cakap kerja. 3. Menggunakan kesempatan kerja. 4. Tidak membedakan jenis kerja. 5. Tanggung jawab dalam kerja.*)”. This picture reflects the positive attitude towards work that children and youth in Javanese pantis learn to appreciate. Below follows a description of a typical working day in Reksa Putra.

At 04.00 o'clock in the morning Kartini (16) in Reksa Putra is waking up to the sound of her alarm clock. She quickly turns it off, but continues to lie in bed for a couple of minutes. When she was still living with her family she never got up this early, but in Reksa Putra she gets up at four in the morning twice a week in order to prepare breakfast together with girls from bedroom “North” and “South”. After a few minutes under the blanket she quietly climbs out of bed ready for work. Together with the two others she starts to prepare today's breakfast and lunch. Yesterday before they went to sleep they cut all the vegetables, so all that has to be done in the kitchen now is to prepare the rice, fry the vegetables and boil drinking water. When the food is ready they set the table in the dining area. One big bowl of rice is placed on each of the four tables, and the vegetables are served on twenty-one plates, one for each girl. At 05.00 o'clock some of the other girls are starting to get up, and they start to work as well, because there is still a lot to do before everyone can leave for school. The floors have to be cleaned, and the two gardens have to be maintained. Old leaves will be collected and put in the garbage, and they will also water all the plants, flowers and trees in the gardens. After everyone has eaten breakfast they also do the

dishes. Later on when Bu Endang gets up, the *panti* is tidy and clean, and the girls are about to leave for school which starts at 07.00. All the girls greet Bu Endang before they start walking to school. At 13.30 the school day is over for Kartini, and she starts to walk home together with the other girls from Reksa Putra who are in the same school. They do not eat at school and are looking forward to come home and have lunch. The walk home from school is less pleasant, because at this time of day it is extremely warm. The girls walk slowly because of the heat, and luckily the walk home only takes twenty minutes.²⁸ At home they eat the lunch that was prepared this morning. Since almost everyone comes home at the same time they eat lunch together, but hardly anyone talks. It has already been a long day and they are all tired and prefer to eat in silence. After lunch everyone goes to bed. It is time to rest.

Kartini tells me that when she was living at home with her mother and her siblings she never got up as early as she does in Reksa Putra. Other girls also express that life in Reksa Putra differs from the life in their family regarding work. Some did not know how to cook before arriving in the *panti*, while others were not used to doing their laundry, because these were tasks that their mother used to do. Javanese girls are trained to do household duties by their mothers, but the girls in Reksa Putra express that the work they are expected to do in the *panti* is far more than some of them were used to from home.²⁹

In the description above I focused on the morning routines. I will continue to describe a typical afternoon in Reksa Putra by focusing on the work performed by the girls after they come home from school. I want to emphasize that it is important for children and youth in Javanese *pantis* to learn how to work, because eventually they are expected to move out from the *panti* and, later on, get married, have children and

²⁸ To walk slowly is also a way of showing that you have internalised a refined Javanese body language, and I have described this in chapter 3

²⁹ My informants had the impression that they did more work in Reksa Putra than they did when they were living at home, but children who come from poor families are often forced to stop their education and start to work because the family need an extra income. I therefore see it as likely that my informants sooner or later would have stopped going to school and started to do paid work if they were still living at home. In that case the amount of work at home would be much more than they do in Reksa Putra today.

be in charge of their own matrifocal household. It is important to be a good worker in order to get a job outside the *panti*, and in connection with marriage.

At around three o'clock the girls slowly start to wake up from their nap. Now it is time to prepare dinner, clean the *panti* and maintain the two gardens. A group of girls start to prepare today's dinner. Today they have to prepare long, green beans with tofu, fried in oil, spices and sweet soy sauce and rice. One girl is chopping chilli, garlic and onion, while two others start to divide the long beans into small pieces. Inside the green beans there are seeds, and because of the seeds it is best to divide the beans by hand instead of using a knife. The girls have done this many times before, and it only takes them seconds to divide one bean by hand, using their thumb as a cutter.

It is always the oldest girls who are in charge of making food, but today Ningsih (11) is being told to boil the rice. She takes rice from a big can and pours it into a bowl. The other girls tell her how much rice she needs to use. Ningsih puts the rice into a kettle and starts to clean the rice with water. It has to be cleaned a lot of times and the kettle gets heavy with all the water inside. When she is done cleaning the rice she has to measure the water for boiling the rice but she does not know how much water to use. "How much water should I use?", she asks the others. "I will show you", Titien (16) replies. "First you fill up the kettle with the amount of water you think is enough. Then you place your longest finger on top of the rice and adjust the water until it reaches the second joint on your finger". While these girls are preparing dinner, some other girls are doing the dishes. The cutlery and plates used for lunch have to be cleaned, in addition to the cutlery they use to prepare dinner. All the dirty plates are put on one chair next to the sink, while the bigger cutlery is put on the floor in front of the chair. One girl will start to pour water over the dirty dishes before she starts to apply soap. When everything is rubbed with soap one girl will lift the dishes into the sink and wash off the soap. Another girl will take the dishes and put them into a second basin with water to make sure that all the soap is washed off before she places everything into racks to dry. At the end the kitchen floor will be cleaned, and

they bring the dinner into the dining area where the vegetables are divided into twenty-one helpings, one for each girl. The helpings are covered, because dinner starts in a couple of hours.

Other girls are working elsewhere in the *panti*. There are two gardens in the *panti* which have to be maintained, and Sulis (11) starts to rake the old leaves which have fallen to the ground. After she has collected all the leaves she throws them into the garbage cans, which the girls take to dunghill every morning before they leave for school. Some other girls go to the water pump next to the kitchen and start collecting water into buckets. When the buckets are full they are heavy to carry, but the buckets have to be brought to the two gardens where the flowers, plants and the lawn are watered. Sulis tells me that because of the warm climate the gardens have to be watered twice a day; otherwise the flowers and plants will die. To clean all the floors is also part of the daily duties. The floors in the bedrooms and elsewhere in the *panti* will be swept before they are cleaned with water. In between the work I have described above, the girls also need to do their laundry and iron their clothes. All this has to be done before dinner.

Everyone regardless of age works in the *panti*, but the oldest ones have more work responsibilities than the younger girls. It is the oldest ones who are in charge of making the food, and they also teach the younger inhabitants new skills, like the situation where Titien teaches Ningsih how to measure and boil rice. There is also a division of labour according to how long you have been living in the *panti*. After Sulis (11) is done with the garden she has to take care of some plants in the backyard. Indah (11) has only been living in the *panti* for two days, but she already seems attached to Sulis, maybe because they are the same age. They have been playing together during leisure time, but this time Sulis asks if Indah wants to help her out with some work in the backyard. Indah agrees, and the two girls go behind the house. They stay there for a long time, playing and working.

I have given two examples where girls teach other inhabitants how to perform certain kinds of work. Knowledge of household work is transferred from older inhabitants to

younger once, and from inhabitants who have been living in the *panti* for a while to newcomers. In this way the knowledge of household work is transferred from one generation of inhabitants to the next. In traditional households the mother is in charge of teaching household work to her daughters, but in Javanese *pantis* it is often the inhabitants themselves who transfer knowledge of household work to girls who need to be trained.

Goffman (1961: 10) asserts that the motives and attitudes towards work in an institution are different compared to the situation outside the institution, and this is also evident in Javanese *pantis*. The inhabitants in *Reksa Putra* have to work because there is no one else who can do the work necessary for living a normal everyday life and, and because the employees want to prepare the youth for moving out from the *panti*. According to a Western perception of childhood, this leads to a situation where childhood is taken away from the children. Bu Endang, on the other hand, considers this situation as an advantage, because it is an opportunity to teach the girls how to be good workers and how to be independent. She explains that *Reksa Putra* is only a temporary home for the girls, and when they move out they need to be good workers in order to take care of themselves. This means it is of great importance for the girls to be able to take care of themselves, and to be good workers, because they need to find a job and live on their own.

When the girls finish upper secondary school (*SMA*) they are eighteen years old and have to look for a paid job outside the *panti*. To look for a job requires a lot of patience, as there are always many people applying for the same vacancies, but Bu Endang tells me that all the former inhabitants of *Reksa Putra* have found a job two-three months after they finish school. She also says that sometimes her friends, or other people who know about *Reksa Putra*, come and offer the girls a job, because they know that girls from *Reksa Putra* are good workers. In these situations a girl's background as an inhabitant of a *panti* is looked upon as an advantage. Bu Endang's friends and acquaintances know that the girls have been working inside the *panti*, and

if they hire one inhabitant the employer knows that she or he has hired a girl who already knows how to work hard and who is very devoted towards work.

In other cases the girls have to search for a job themselves, because no one of Bu Endang's friends or acquaintances needs an employee at the moment. Most girls look for jobs in different kind of shops or hotels. The requirements for working in these kinds of establishments vary, but almost everyone requires that you have finished senior high school, and you need to be unmarried and not older than twenty-five years old. Some shops and hotels also set as a requirement that you have a pleasant appearance and that you are not overweight. When the girls search for a job outside Bu Endang's network they do not get any advantages, since these employers do not have information about Reksa Putra and how work has been a part of the girl's everyday life since she moved into the *panti*. In this situation the girl has to compete with a lot of other young women and men who are also looking for a job. When the girl gets a job she will be moving out from the *panti*, either to a rented room or back with her family. She has become economically independent.

The situation for the inhabitants in Aisyiah is similar to the one in Reksa Putra, in the sense that they too have lots of work responsibilities, but in Aisyiah there are female employees who work together with the girls on some duties, like Bu Sani. She lives together with her husband and their three children in a small house next to the kitchen area, and her job is to prepare food together with the girls. The girls prepare all the meals, but Bu Sani is always working together with the girls while they cook. Other women and men work as janitors, drivers or they make sure the house is in good repair. Some of them are living in the *panti*, while others return home in the afternoon. This creates an arena where the working situation in many ways is similar to a traditional household, but work is at the same time also an economic activity. Bu Sani and the other employees are paid to work in the *panti*, while the inhabitants perform the same work without getting paid. The *panti* exemplifies in a good way the interplay between the outside- and inside world, between being a residential community and a formal organisation, in connection with work.

Illo (1995) points to the fact that women who do household work are not looked upon as labour force participants in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia, and this is the reason female labour force participation is reported to range from less than 40 per cent in Malaysia to a little over 60 per cent in Thailand (ibid.: 209).³⁰ Javanese pantis are arenas where the work performed by women and children is as economic and productive as the work counted in labour force surveys. The small size of Reksa Putra makes it possible to run the panti without having employees to do part of the work, but the same thing is impossible in Aisyiah because of the amount of people living there. This leads to a situation where the nature of women's household work has to be acknowledged as economic in order to organise everyday life. Someone has to be paid to do the job. The inhabitants are performing the same kind of work, but are not paid. Children are, therefore, not looked upon as workers according to surveys where work is only recognised as an economic activity. Research which is based on traditional labour force surveys loses the sight of the children who are working.

I have so far shown that inhabitants experience the transfer from home into a panti as an incident which led to more work responsibilities. This happens because the administrators in Javanese pantis want to prepare the inhabitants for life outside the panti. It is important to have knowledge of work, because many of the girls will be living on their own after they move from the panti. Knowledge of household work is necessary because eventually they are expected to create and manage their own matrifocal household. In the rest of this chapter I want to focus on another form of work; Voluntary work. I argue that participation in voluntary work is one way of creating a sense of community with the rest of society. Again I focus on the interplay between the outside- and inside world in connection with Javanese pantis.

³⁰ Women in Western countries who are working at home are also considered as non-labour force participants by labour force surveys.

Voluntary work

People who do voluntary work are also left out of traditional labour force surveys. It is very common for people in Yogyakarta to do voluntary work on a regular basis or occasionally. Many people are part of religious organisations in which voluntary work aimed at helping poor people is part of the organisations' program, while others join projects that are limited to a certain amount of time.³¹ I now want to show how a natural disaster made people put in weeks of voluntary work, and how this created a sense of community for the inhabitants of Yogyakarta regardless of age, sex or social status.

Early in the morning on the 27th of May 2006 an earthquake, measuring 6.2 on the Richter's scale, hit Yogyakarta and woke up the whole city. People ran screaming out of their houses because they feared that their homes would collapse. The epicentre of the earthquake was in Bantul, a village south of the city, but the shake was strongly felt throughout Yogyakarta and all the way up to the northern area where I was living. Yogyakarta has earlier been hit by earthquakes, but not as strong as this one, and people in my neighbourhood gathered in front of their houses listening to the radio for more news about the quake. My neighbourhood was mostly an upper class area where no houses collapsed, because they were more solid than in other areas, but slowly we received news from poorer neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods in the south where houses had collapsed. We also heard about people lining up in front of the hospitals searching for help. I tried to call my friends in Aisyiah, in the southern part of town, but the lines were busy. Later on I received a sms saying that they were safe, and that only a few people were hurt when pieces of the ceiling fell down. Everyone in Sayap Ibu was also ok, but I was still not able to get in touch with Reksa

³¹ Different kinds of work ethics have been studied in order to understand what motivates people to work. One of the most famous books about this theme is Weber's *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. In this book Weber asserts that Christianity, with its focus on hard work in order to be saved, influenced the development of modern capitalism (1995). Muslims should follow a concept called *zakat* which is an economic obligation that says that everyone who has an annual wealth that exceeds a minimum level should give alms to the poor. It is beyond the objective of this thesis to go into details about people's motivation for working, but religion may play a crucial part in the effort which is put into voluntary work in Yogyakarta and the focus on work in the pants.

Putra. After a couple of hours I received news from Bu Tri that everything in Reksa Putra was alright too, but that the children were shocked (*kaget*). Later on the same day, and for days to come, we received news about a great number of dead and homeless people. A huge number of shops and restaurants chose to remain closed, because the owners and the employees wanted to do voluntary work in order to help the hurt and the homeless. People started to bring food and clothes to injured people who were sitting outside the hospitals or lying in the corridors because there were not enough rooms or doctors to take care of everyone. People also collected food, blankets, water, baby food and other items necessary for livelihood and sent them to Bantul where the need for help was most urgent. About 5000 people were dead and more than 200, 000 people had become homeless, and everyone wanted to help.

One week after the earthquake Bu Tri informs me that the oldest inhabitants will do voluntary work for the Christian organisation “Church World Service” (CWS) in order to help the victims of the earthquake, and she asks if I also want to join. At this time all the girls’ schools are re-opened, and she tells me that tomorrow the girls will be picked up after school by CWS and taken to the CWS office where they will be preparing first aid bags which will be sent to Bantul. The next day two cars from CWS wait for the girls when they come home from school. The girls take off their school uniforms and change into normal clothes. They do not have time to eat lunch as they normally do at this time, but they go straight to the cars. The CWS office is a ten minute drive from Reksa Putra, and when we arrive we see two big tents in front of the office which are filled with boxes. Pak Eko meets us in front of the tents. He tells us that his wife has made food and that we have to eat before we start to work. Pak Eko is the one who contacted Reksa Putra and asked if the girls wanted to work for CWS. Pak Eko used to work as a priest, and he is a former member of the board of Reksa Putra. The last years he has been working for CWS because he likes to participate in social activities, and he has known Bu Endang and Reksa Putra for years. Pak Eko already knows that inhabitants in Reksa Putra are good workers. He tells me that all former inhabitants of Reksa Putra have managed to find a job and become economically independent, although most of the girls do not receive

university education (*diploma tiga*). He emphasizes that the inhabitants are very devoted towards work, and he thinks the girls will like to work for CWS for a while, because the inhabitants too, as the rest of the people in Yogyakarta, will do everything they can in order to help the victims of the earthquake.

The girls are already known for being good workers, and this reputation are confirmed through the work they do for CWS. Although the girls are busy with school, and with the work they have to do inside Reksa Putra, they manage to find time and energy to work for CWS. Pak Eko says that this eagerness to help the victims after the earthquake is not unique for the girls, but is characteristic for all the inhabitants of Yogyakarta. In this way the girls, through their work, are connecting themselves to the rest of society. In the days and weeks after the earthquake a common characteristic of people in Yogyakarta was that they worked hard in order to help the victims, and through voluntary work people of Yogyakarta got closer together because they shared and participated in one common experience.

After lunch we go inside one tent, and we are told what to do. There are small plastic bags inside the boxes, which should contain a towel, facecloth, a bar of soap, tooth brush, tooth paste and a nail cutter. However, there are two problems. The first aid bags were prepared years ago, and have been stored away. A lot of the tooth paste has therefore expired, and we must open all the bags and check the expiration date on the tube. If the paste has expired we need to remove it. Secondly, the first aid bags are gifts from private persons, and some persons have added a nail file to the content. This must be removed, because people in need of first aid may be in a very desperate situation and may use any sharp object as a weapon in order to get more first aid. The girls start to organise the work. Ria (19) starts to open the boxes and pour the contents to the ground in front of me and four other girls. We open the bags and look at the date on the tooth paste and search for any nail file. After checking the contents we put the bags next to us, and Maryke (17) and Fitri (18) are in charge of putting new tooth paste in the bags which do not have one, and they tie the bags and put them into the empty box which Ria has placed next to them. Titien (16) arranges the bags

in the boxes in order to fit as many bags as possible into one box before she seals it and makes piles of boxes in the back of the tent. We work like this for 6 ½ hours, only interrupted by a short dinner break at six o'clock. We sit on the ground, and slowly my back starts to hurt and my legs fall asleep because we sit in the same position for so long. The girls only take short breaks to drink water, and I feel that I can not take more breaks than they do, although my body is aching.

While we work we talk about the earthquake. Ria (19) tells me that her sister lives in Bantul, and that Bu Tri will take her on her bike so she can go and visit her. The sister is alright, but Ria would like to go and see her anyway; after all her sister lives in the worst off area right now. The rest of the girls have all received phone calls from their families who were worried that something might have happened to Reksa Putra. Titien emphasizes that everyone in Reksa Putra is lucky, because no one got hurt. Only the ceiling and roof got damaged. She also tells me that after the earthquake she climbed up on the roof and put back the tiles which had fallen down. "I had to do it right away, because we were afraid that it might start to rain", she says. As time goes by, everyone in the tent gets quieter. We are tired and very happy when two employees in CWS take us back to Reksa Putra just before half past eight. It has been a long day for the girls, and tomorrow after school they will come back to CWS. The sixth day we arrive at the CWS office we realise that today we will be able to prepare and pack the last boxes of first aid. After three hours we are done, and we are given cake and juice, in addition to a note pad and a pen as a thank you.

After the earthquake many people who normally had paid work put down their work and started to do voluntary work. People explained this change of work as necessary, not only in order to help the victims but also as a way to ease the trauma and shock this kind of experience causes. Through voluntary work people got together and shared their fears and talked about how they experienced the dramatic seconds that changed the atmosphere and life in Yogyakarta. This went on for days and, for some people even for weeks. Everyone who was in a position to do voluntary work did so, and to do otherwise was looked upon as greedy and selfish.

The staff in Sayap Ibu also changed their normal work schedule in order to help the victims of the earthquake. The foundation placed a poster outside the main building which informed people that the foundation was looking for first aid contribution for children and pregnant women (*posko bencana alam balita & wanita hamil*). The staff started to use the playroom next to the main office as a store for food and other items, which they later on packed and gave mainly to parents who had infants or children. People from outside came to Sayap Ibu as soon as they realised that the foundation was in charge of collecting and sending first aid, and every day for weeks people gave various contributions that Sayap Ibu later on distributed to the victims. Between the 27th of May 2006 until the 19th of June 2006 Sayap Ibu manage to collect and send 2645 packets of baby milk, 2384 packets of porridge, 1089 packets of other baby food, 1644 blankets, 11, 527 pieces of clothes, 990 medicine items and 1740 other items necessary for baby and small children, such as feeding bottles and diapers. A couple of women who were in the end of their pregnancies, and whose houses had collapsed during the earthquake, were also given shelter in available rooms in the Sayap Ibu complex. In this way cooperated Sayap Ibu with people who wanted to give first aid, and at the same time they cooperated with the victims of the earthquake.

Wallman (1979: 2) says that work controls the identity as much as the economy of the worker, and this became especially evident in Yogyakarta after the earthquake. Everyone who was in a position to help was expected to do so, regardless of age, sex, religion or class. Children, women and men worked together, and I did not know anyone who did not do some kind of voluntary work, either privately or through their work place. Any objection towards voluntary work at this time would hurt your social status and cause a loss of authority and respect. You would literally lose your humanity if you did not help in some way. The girls in Reksa Putra expressed gratitude because they were able to help through CWS. Reksa Putra is situated next to “Bethesda”, one of the biggest hospitals in town, and many of the girls had gone down to the hospital and looked at all the wounded people who were standing and lying in line waiting to get help. Everyone in Reksa Putra knew very well that people

needed help. Maryke (17) told me that she got tired after working for CWS, because already she felt tired when she got back from school, but that she liked to help, and she had not thought about not going. At this time everyone in town worked hard in order to help the victims, and she liked to take part in the same work. A friend of mine, who was not part of the *panti*, explained that Javanese people always like to help each other, because it is typically Javanese to be helpful. To look after your own business instead of helping the victims is therefore looked upon as non-Javanese behaviour.

Concluding remarks

The socialisation of children and youth who are living in Javanese *pantis* is organised around work. Younger inhabitants are taught how to work by the oldest ones, while newcomers to the *panti* learn how to work from the inhabitants who have already been living in the *panti* for a while. Knowledge of work is in this way transferred from one generation of inhabitants to the next. I argue that the *pantis*' focus on work is one way of connecting the *panti* to the rest of society. The girls need to work in order to get integrated into society, and they need to know household work as future wives. The transition from living in the *pantis* to living on their own is made easier because they are used to work in the *pantis*.

While still living in the *pantis*, the girls connect themselves to the rest of society by taking part in voluntary work. The girls create a sense of community with the population of Yogya through this kind of work. Their effort after the earthquake reinforced their Javanese identity, because it is looked upon as Javanese behaviour to help others.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis I have focused on three Javanese *pantis* that help babies, children, youth and their families, who for different reasons need assistance and care. I have focused on everyday life activities, and I have shown that different categories of children and women are connected to the institutions.

I have argued that children and youth in Javanese *pantis* are socialised according to a model of selfhood in which *alus* behaviour is central. This model of selfhood originates from the court culture, and the *pantis* focus on this model of selfhood because they see it as an opportunity to socialise the inhabitants away from their less refined background. The cultural model stresses discipline and etiquette, and knowledge of this model of selfhood gives the inhabitants a chance to improve their social status. I also argue that research about selfhood needs to include a focus on gender. I show how Javanese girls learn about the Javanese feminine self through household work, and that the body plays an important part in connection with selfhood and gender.

I have also described that the three different *pantis* can be analysed by using Goffman's theory about total institutions; There is interplay between an outside- and inside world in connection with Javanese *pantis*, and the *pantis* are homes and institutions at the same time. In the light of this I have argued that Javanese *pantis* are "matrifocal" institutions. Mothers and women are connected to the institutions, while fathers and men only have peripheral roles, and the matrifocal pattern found in traditional Javanese households are transferred and adjusted to a *panti* setting. I have also show that women use, and in a sense internalise, the traditional model of womanhood in order to get a high social status within and outside the *panti asuhan* sphere.

The interplay between the "inside" and the "outside" is also visible in connection with work. I have shown that women are not the only ones working in the *pantis*.

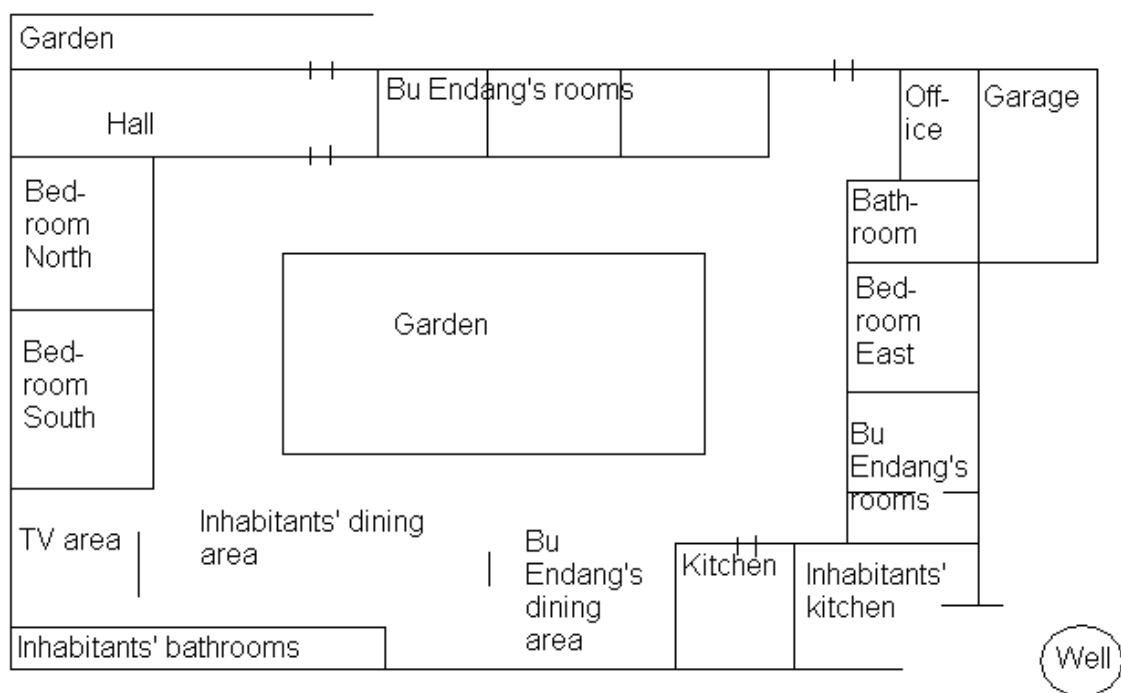
Children and youth also perform a large variety of work, because the inhabitants are socialised through work. To be a good worker is not only necessary in order to maintain everyday life, but it is also seen as a way to create ties and a sense of community with the rest of society. To be a good worker is essential when the inhabitants move out from the panti, and to help others through voluntary work reinforces the inhabitants' Javanese identity.

Few anthropological studies have been made about children who live Javanese institutions, and I hope that my thesis can give the reader an alternative understanding of children and childhood. It is my hope that we start to study children in the same way as we study gender. Gender studies describe relationships between women and men, but I argue that it is also important to study another form of relationship; the relationship between children and adults.

Appendix

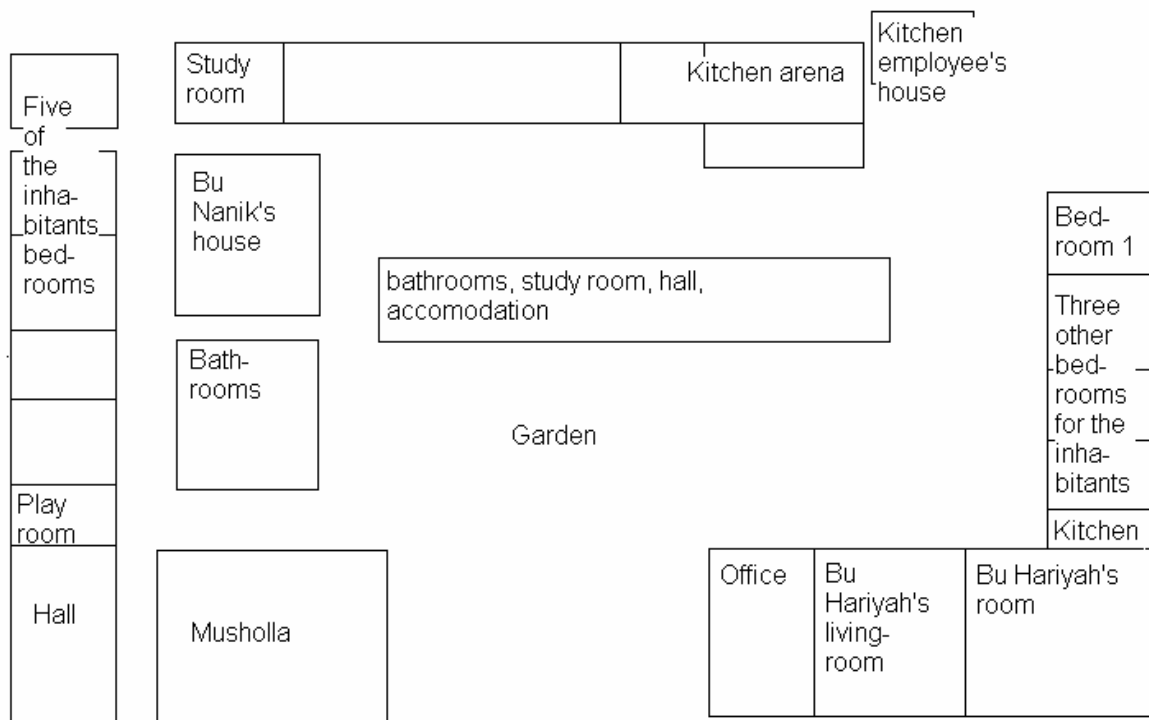
Maps³²

Reksa Putra:

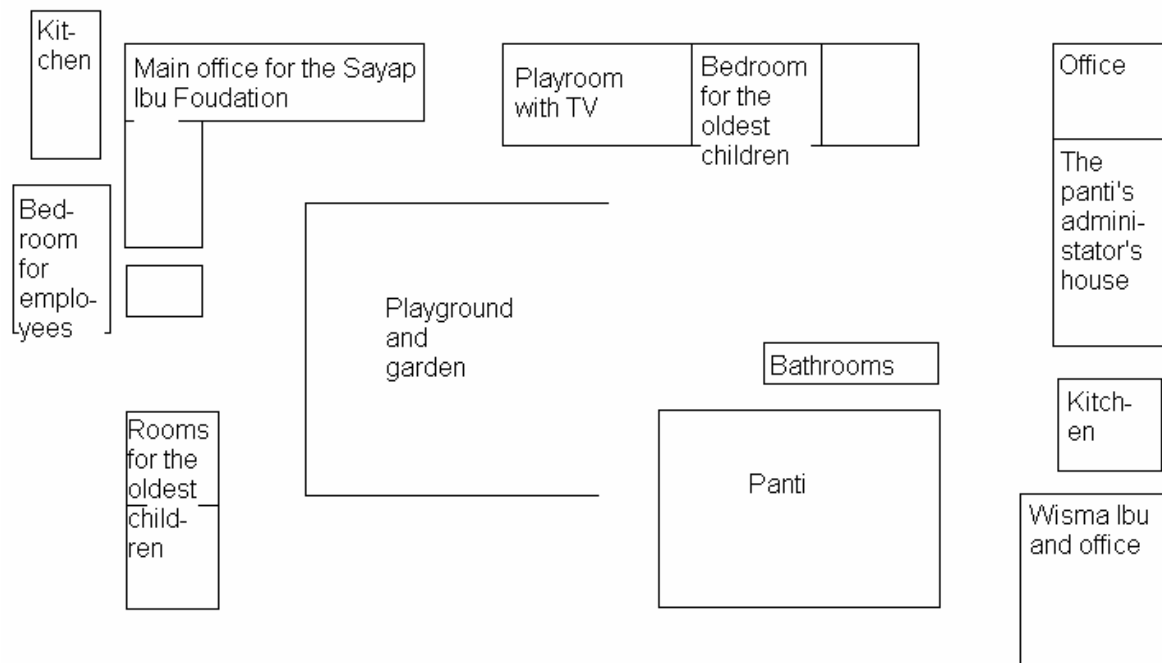


³² All the maps are simplifications, but serve as an illustration of how the inhabitants and the employees live.

Aisyiah:



Sayap Ibu and Wisma Ibu:



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