# CHAPTER TWO: Historical Temptations

## WHO NEEDS HISTORY?

Subject positions, the topic of this book, do not always have names, but like any aspect of culture they always have a history. They come into being at a certain period of time, which shapes them, and they also change through time as long as they persist. Subject positions also always contain spatial scales within them (N. Brenner 1998; Harvey 2000). To be a "Yale student" has a different spatial scale than to be a "New Yorker" or "Japanese." The various subject positions through which one lives at any point in time may not have isomorphic spatial scales: one’s sense of self as a youth could be global, as a man local, and as a laborer national, all at the same time. Or to be a youth could be both local and global at the same time, intersecting. Thus, three crucial issues in the ethnographic investigation of subject positions are (1) their historicity (that is, the way they are shaped by their embedded notions of their own history and what counts as history); (2) their spatial scales; and (3) how they intersect with other subject positions and the histories and spatial scales of those other subject positions. This chapter focuses on the first of these issues.

Only since the 1970s or so have people in Indonesia called themselves gay or lesbi, yet many Westerners seek a clear temporal trajectory connecting gay and lesbi with "indigenous" homosexualities. This deep-seated desire for unbroken history has many precedents in the Western tradition, most notably the Old Testament chains of "begats" that establish legitimacy through a patriline. While on rare occasions I have encountered gay and lesbi Indonesians who share this concern with a clear temporal trajectory, what demands explanation is that most do not. It is not a meaningful connection; for gay and lesbi Indonesians, belonging, recognition, and authenticity are legitimated not through history but by the performance of good deeds (prestasi) in the present. Since this chapter concerns the historicity of the gay and lesbi subject positions, it is built around an empty center, a McGuffin—Hitchcock’s term for a plot element that is of intense interest (to Westerners, in this case) but has no content. The point is not to unearth the hidden past of gay and lesbi subjectivities, but to explore contingent contexts of homosexual desire in the archipelago—and why such "history" matters to the Western reader, where notions of

the "archive" as scene of legitimation remain powerful, and archives are often mined for their content without attention to the affective assumptions embedded in their form (Derrida 1996; Stoler 2002a).

"Indonesia," after all, is a self-consciously novel concept. The postcolonial nation came into being with the proklamasi (proclamation) of Sukarno on August 17, 1945; nationalism dates back only another forty years or so. The term "Indonesia" was coined by George W. Earl in 1850 and first used by his colleague James R. Logan that same year, but it was not used as a political term by "natives" of the archipelago until April 1917 (Avé 1989:220; R. Jones 1973:100–103; Nagazumi 1978:28). It is quite certain that no one in the archipelago called themselves gay or lesbi in the year 900, 1400, 1900, or probably even 1960. Yet by the early 1980s gay and lesbi existed in the archipelago as nationally distributed subject positions. These subject positions challenge narrativizing; their "history" seems to be all change and no continuity. This threatens the dualism of change (modernity) and continuity (tradition) that has been a motif of Indonesianist historiography (Benda 1972).

This problem—"can there be a history of sexuality?"—is not unique to Indonesia; it has been the topic of debate in scholarship on Western sexualities. But it takes on new urgency when globalization and postcoloniality are brought into the discussion. The most careful scholarship on Western homosexualities takes continuity into consideration while foregrounding "the irreducible cultural and historical specificities of the present" (Halperin 2002:17). In a postcolonial context, it can appear that without an unbroken historical timeline one must view gay and lesbian non-Westerners as derivative, converging on a single global conception of homosexuality.

One response to the problem of radical change accepts the premise that an unbroken historical timeline is needed to establish authenticity. Since the nation-state form is deeply bound up with conceptions of modernity, the idea of tradition is a central paradox of national thinking: nation-states are young, but they imagine themselves as of great antiquity (Anderson 1983:5). Tradition is the shadow modernity casts back in time to see itself whole. Often it is postcolonial nation-states that display a particular concern with an unbroken historical timeline because this appears to bracket the colonial encounter. Although one does not assume that a Western man born in 1980 is first shaped by conceptions of homosexuality dominant in the 1920s before calling himself "gay" in 2001, this response suggests that gay and lesbian non-Westerners are first and foremost products of indigenous locality—as if the history of a person repeats, in miniature, the ostensible history of a society. This developmentalist perspective assumes that non-Western "homosexualities" like gay and lesbi originate in homosexualities and transgenderisms of the past. It

makes it difficult to understand how a lesbi woman in northern Bali could say "I don’t know of any cases in the past where there were actually women having sex with each other" and not find this a cause for concern.

A more theoretically informed response to the problem of radical change questions the need for "the narrative continuity of history and identity" (Clifford 1988:341). Can there be a subject position without a direct historical predecessor? Is such a subject position necessarily less authentic? How can one think historically about the gay and lesbi subject positions without assuming that what came before is the foundation of what comes after? Concerns for "discovering gay and lesbian history" sometimes participate in the widespread assumption that such history always already exists; that its real or apparent absence is inevitably problematic; that its existence by definition has validating effects; and that these effects are necessary to the sexualities in question. This tempting chain of reasoning creates the desire for narrative continuity and delegitimates sexualities for whom such continuity really does not exist (and is not only waiting to be uncovered).

I am not saying that historical research on nonnormative sexualities and genders is misguided, but that tradition is not the same thing as history and that proper historiography requires being open to a variety of causal relationships between the past and present, including no relationship at all. There may be no "perfect path" between past and present, just as there may be no genealogical lineage between "gay" and "lesbian" sexualities in the West and non-West (Boellstorff 1999). A less reproductive and heteronormative metaphor is needed in place of the genealogical grid. One such metaphor I develop in this book is that of the archipelago.

Forging histories of nonnormative sexualities and genders outside the West presents methodological as well as theoretical challenges. While the barriers to historical research on homosexuality in the United States may only "appear, at first glance, to be unusually daunting" (Chauncey 1994:365), outside the West much more than appearances are involved. The available documentation is often so minimal that one is forced to make do with limited sources and craft the best narrative possible (Jackson 1999a:369). Written documents by persons from the archipelago now called "Indonesia" are primarily limited to courtly texts. These sometimes address homosexuality and transgenderism, but not in a sustained manner; it is unclear to what extent they reflect everyday life outside royal circles. One can often read between the lines of colonial documents to find data concerning homosexuality and transgenderism (e.g., Proschan 2002). In Indonesia, the remarkable lack of colonial documentation on male (and female) homosexuality underscores how Dutch civil law paid little attention to sodomy until the end of the three-century presence of the Dutch in the archipelago. Stoler (1995:96) notes that her own "silence

on this issue and the prominent place I give to heterosexuality reflects my long-term and failed efforts to identify any sources that do more than assume or obliquely allude to this ‘evil,’ thereby making the other ‘lesser’ evils of concubinage and prostitution acceptable."1

This chapter examines past nonnormative sexualities and genders in what is now called Indonesia without assuming that this past contains the present in embryonic form. Gay and lesbi subjectivities can represent an innovation, even a radical break, with understandings of sexuality in Indonesia and still be authentic if they are conceptualized in terms of conjunctural, "dubbed" histories of homosexual desire.

## RITUAL AND DRAMA

Scholars of sexuality in what is now called Indonesia have tended to focus on what might be called "indigenous" homosexualities and transgenderisms. The best known is probably the bissu subject position, associated with Bugis culture in southern Sulawesi. Bissus are linked to pre-Islamic traditions and first entered the Western written record with the visit of Antonio de Paiva to Sulawesi in 1545. They appear in sources from the 1600s, as well as the travelogue of the "white raja" James Brooke in 1840 (Andaya 2000:41; Bleys 1995:117; Pelras 1996:56).

At present it is typically assumed that bissus are male transvestites (Hamzah 1978:6; Pelras 1996:165–167), but female bissus appear in Bugis mythology (Pelras 1996:83), and historically the majority of bissus were apparently women (in the I La Galigo myth cycle, for instance, thirty-two of the forty original bissus were women, including We Tenriabeng, twin sister of the cycle’s hero Sawerigading).2 To the present day there are women bissus (known by the terms bissu makkunrai or core-core) whose presence is required for certain rituals (Lathief 2004:48–49). Although refraining from sex has long been a way for bissus to protect and increase their power, and despite the fact that bissus sometimes married women, since at least the sixteenth century most bissus have been male transvestites who engage in sex with men (Pelras 1996:83).3 Following what is usually at least three years of training (Lathief 2004:43), bissus historically engaged in a lifelong profession of guarding royal regalia and conducting rituals for nobles, particularly for life events like childbirth and weddings, as well as rituals for the fertility of the rice fields. In performing these activities, bissus would dress in an androgynous fashion, combining men’s and women’s clothing. One of the best-known bissu rituals involves trance proven through maggiri, where bissus attempt to stab themselves with ceremonial knives (krises); if the bissus’ bodies are truly possessed by gods (dewatas), the knives will not be able to enter

(Graham 2003). At present, however, this ritual is not performed by all bissu groups (for instance, it is not performed in the Bone region; Lathief 2004:75).

For several hundred years, bissu rituals coexisted with the Islamic faith now followed by virtually all Bugis. This changed radically with the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist movement of Kahar Muzakar in South Sulawesi in the mid-1960s. One element of this movement, "Operasi Tobat" (Operation Repent), took aim at practices considered un-Islamic, particularly bissu practices. It was also claimed that bissus were in league with the Communist Party of Indonesia, which was in the process of being eliminated by Soeharto’s New Order government. Sacred regalia were burned or thrown in the sea, rituals forbidden, and bissus offered the choice of death or leaving the bissu profession, dressing and working like "normal" men (Lathief 2004:79–80). As a warning, the head bissu of the Bone region, Sanro Makgangke, was decapitated and his head publicly displayed; many other bissus were killed as well.

Since the late 1990s there have been attempts to revitalize bissu practices. In part this reflects the refetishization of adat (traditional custom) across the archipelago in the wake of Soeharto’s fall in 1998, supported by new government policies of regional autonomy. This has included the production of at least two documentary films by Westerners on bissus. However, it appears that these attempts to revitalize bissu practices are failing. Bissu rituals have been radically simplified (for instance, the Mappalili agrarian ritual in the Segeri region that once took forty days is now conducted in a single night), many rituals are now performed only for tourists, and the rice fields that were once given to the bissu community for income have been taken away and sold (Lathief 2004:69, 87–89, 83–85). Few persons seem interested in becoming bissus any more (Lathief 2004:92); for instance, in one region of South Sulawesi the arrival of a young apprentice to the head bissu was greeted with hope, but the apprentice soon had a falling out with the bissu and left.

In general, the distinction between "bissu" as a ritual professional subject position and "waria" as a male transvestite subject position seems to be breaking down in contemporary South Sulawesi (Lathief 2004:47); virtually all persons now sometimes called "bissu" in reality make their living through bridal makeup (a national occupation for warias) and as traditional healers, not through rituals. What ritual function remains for bissus has largely shifted from serving nobility to conducting a wide range of rituals for commoners—from insuring a safe pilgrimage to Mecca to a successful harvest (Graham 2003). It appears that contemporary bissus are being caught up in the same state rhetorics of belonging that are central to waria, gay, and lesbi subjectivities. Good deeds on behalf of "the people" are what gay men, lesbi women, and warias term prestasi and see

as the means by which they can become accepted members of Indonesian society. The bissu subject position, repackaged as adat (in other words, as Bugis "custom" or "tradition," rather than the property of a privileged class of courtly elites), can act as one of the "islands" of local uniqueness that national culture incorporates into its archipelago of diversity. The irony is that once freed from the hallows of the courts (the number of which was limited) and transferred to the populist realm of adat and its virtually unlimited clientele, the possibility exists for there to be more bissus than ever before (traditionally the number of bissus in any region was limited to forty).

Bissus have often been interpreted as a third gender (e.g., Andaya 2000:34–38) because bissu rituals often involve the combining of male-and female-gendered characteristics. Some Bugis believe that "while bissu[s] are human, on their descent to earth they did not divide into man or woman, but remained a perfect combination of both. This combination ensures bissu[s] retain their connection with the spirit world" (Graham 2003:186). However, the "third gender" concept is theoretically inadequate for conceptualizing most transgenderisms, including bissu. For instance, it does not explain why most contemporary bissus are male or why being bissu does not involve continual transvestism. A better parallel is the fact that "nurse" is assumed to be a female occupation in the West. One must usually specify "male nurse" (like one specifies "female bissu"), but this does not mean that "nurse" or "bissu" is a gender. "Bissu" is a profession, not a sexuality, for which a particular reading of Bugis cosmology implies transvestism if the person involved is seen as male-bodied. Unlike being male or female, you have to have a special calling and engage in training (memorizing phrases and rituals, for instance) to become bissu. That one occasionally encounters the phrase "men, women, and bissus" does not imply that "bissu" is a gender on par with "man" and "woman," any more than the English phrase "men, women, and children" implies that "children" is a third gender.

A different situation occurs in the warok-gemblak relationship, which is found in the Ponorogo region of eastern Java. Contemporary persons occupying the warok subject position are male actors in a Javanese drama genre known as reog. According to legend, the reog drama was created in the thirteenth century by Kelono Sewandono, a prince of the Bantarangin kingdom (near Ponorogo). He proposed to a princess from the Doho kingdom (near Kediri in Central Java), Dewi Songgolangit, who said she would marry him if he created a performance different from any that existed before (Wachirianto 1991:3). Thus the defining practice of waroks is intended to enable heterosexuality. Wearing a tiger mask (the singabarong) weighing over one hundred pounds, waroks are identified with bravery,

pride, aggressive masculinity, and mystical knowledge (S. Murray 1992:166; Wilson 1999). However, in the past waroks could be women as well as men. In one story, a man went to a coffee shop on the side of a quiet road near Ponorogo and flirted improperly with the woman running the shop, who just smiled in return. After asking the woman for a light for his cigarette, the woman went to the back of the shop and then reemerged holding a hot coal in her bare hand. The story "shows how waroks in Ponorogo were not only men" (Hardjomartono 1961:16–17).

Like bissu, the warok subject position still exists and is now identified with men. At present, as seems to have been the case in the past, the mystical power waroks possess depends on avoiding sex with women. While most waroks marry later in life (and thereby lose true warok status), while active as waroks they take on younger men between about eight and sixteen years of age (known as gemblaks) as understudies and domestic partners. Historically this was welcomed by the families of gemblaks, as the warok provided gifts (e.g., a cow every year the boy was a gemblak), and the gemblak welcomed the gifts of clothes and schooling given to him the warok, not to mention the chance to participate in reog drama.

Since sexual asceticism is key to warok power, waroks usually insist that they do not have sex with gemblaks; one contemporary warok claimed "with gemblaks the most that can happen is a bit of harmless kissing and cuddling" (Wilson 1999:7; Hardjomartono 1961:17, 24). However, it is well known that other sexual activities can take place between waroks and gemblaks, before the gemblak comes of age, marries heterosexually, and stops being a gemblak, or the warok retires from the stage to marry heterosexually. It appears that during some historical periods "the people of Ponorogo allowed these same-gender relations without any reaction," but gemblaks may have become social outcasts upon reaching adulthood (Hardjomartono 1961:24). Waroks have come under attack from the Dutch colonial period (when reog performances were outlawed), to the beginning of Soeharto’s New Order in the 1960s (when, like bissus, waroks were labeled communist sympathizers and mystics), to the contemporary period, in which a desire for sanitized "tradition" has led to gemblaks being largely replaced in reog dances by young women.4

## BEYOND THE INDIGENOUS: ETHNOLOCALITY AND ETPS

Bissus and waroks are the kinds of ethnographic objects Westerners like to discover.5 Seeming to fit well-established assumptions about culture, tradition, and locality, they appear indigenous, which is assumed to mean "different from the West." Gay and lesbi Indonesians seem tainted by

comparison. This underlies three common Western responses to my research on gay and lesbi Indonesians: (1) "Aren’t homosexuals more tolerated in traditional Indonesian culture?" (2) "Here in the West we think in binarisms; they can teach us about fluidity," and (3) "Aren’t gay and lesbi Indonesians mostly Westernized, rich cosmopolitans, not really part of any Indonesian culture?" These responses partake of deeply embedded tropes concerning difference, authenticity, and sexuality that took form through the colonial encounter. For instance, the idea that "Western culture" is trapped in the dualism of two genders while "elsewhere" there are three or five genders says more about Western fantasies of multiculturalism than it does about non-Western gender regimes. Such tropes act as implicit theories of indigenity in gender and sexuality studies: "the researcher’s theoretical perspectives remain embedded in apparently straightforward reports from the field. In effect, the absence of theory becomes the submersion of theory" (Weston 1993:344).

In what appears to be an already globalized world, it is crucial to ask why the category of the "indigenous" is so attractive in the study of non-Western sexualities. While it is obvious that bissus and waroks deserve respect and support, justifying the recognition of sexual and gendered diversity because it is "indigenous" carries two risks. The first is that if one justifies tolerance of bissus or waroks because they are "indigenous" to "Bugis culture" or "Javanese culture," then what is to be done when there are "indigenous cultures" that do not contain such diversity, or are hostile to it? In southern Sulawesi the Makassarese are an ethnic group so closely intertwined with the Bugis that many persons in the region call themselves "Bugis-Makassar" (e.g., Abdullah 1985). Yet in "Makassarese culture" it is said that should a waria pass under the threshold of one’s home, forty days and forty nights of bad luck will follow. If one valorizes bissus (most of whom are warias) in "Bugis culture" based on a discourse of indigenity, there remains no Archimedean point for challenging the denigration of warias in "Makassarese culture" except for a universalizing notion of "human rights," which is precisely the kind of concept "the indigenous" relativizes into nonexistence. The second danger is that the concept of "the indigenous" leaves us with no way to conceptualize self-evidently modern subject positions: they appear as impositions. If indigenity is the lens used to examine non-Western sexualities, gay and lesbi remain outside the scope of analysis.

Two theoretical steps are needed to transcend conceptions of indigenity as they apply to sexual subjectivities. The first, which is applicable to social inquiry more generally, is a critique of what I term "ethnolocality." The second step is to use the concept of ethnolocality to reconceptualize so-called indigenous or traditional homosexualities. Both for analytical precision and to ironize the empiricism prevalent in many discourses of

indigenity, I will refer to these as "ethnolocalized homosexual and transvestite professional subject positions," or ETPs for short.

"Ethnolocality" is a concept that links people to place, but in doing so it links them to time as well: the concept plays a central role in the fetishizing of "tradition" that makes it seem necessary for the gay and lesbi subject positions to display historicity. Ethnolocality, which I discuss in more depth elsewhere (Boellstorff 2002), appears to have originated in the colonial encounter, where it was shaped by fears that people living in the archipelago might identify with broader spatial scales like Islam or nationalism. It occupied a middle ground between the "racial dualism" of colonizer versus colonized (Van Doorn 1983) and the myriad localities of the village (Breman 1982). People living in the archipelago would, in theory, be permitted no other forms of spatial imagination. This colonial project of localization is the "sovereign exception" that "traces a threshold" between inside and outside (Agamben 1998:19).

Following Indonesian independence, the spatial scale of ethnolocality lived on through legal, political, and cultural structures that were retained by the postcolonial nation-state. This is exemplified above all in the "archipelago concept," illustrated by Jakarta’s Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park—with its pavilions representing local culture arrayed around an artificial lake with a miniature set of islands representing the Indonesian archipelago—that has captured the imagination of many scholars (e.g., Pemberton 1994; Rutherford 1996; Spyer 1996). Ethnicity and locality are drawn together so as to presuppose each other, and this conjunction becomes the linchpin of state rule (and thus the presumptive ground for "ethnic" or "regional" resistance to state rule). It has become a "doxa"—an apparent isomorphism between a discourse and the world that discourse claims to describe (Bourdieu 1977:164). Anthropological inquiry in Indonesia and elsewhere draws upon this spatial scale: ethnolocality dovetails with dominant conceptions of "the field" that produce anthropology’s subject of study (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). For instance, the Leiden school of anthropology historically delimited Indonesia as a "field of ethnological study" in a purely comparative vein: this field was not the "field" in which one did fieldwork (Josselin de Jong 1977).

Following the collapse of Soeharto’s New Order, some scholars have critiqued "Indonesian studies" for reifying Indonesia as a unit of analysis (Philpott 2000). As far as anthropology is concerned, it seems that the danger is not going far enough—not taking Indonesia seriously as a unit of ethnographic analysis, no more or less problematic than any other spatial scale. It is certainly insufficient to assume that persons within the nation-state of Indonesia see themselves as "Indonesian" in all circumstances. However, it is equally problematic to fall back on ethnolocality as the default mode of representation for culture, naturalizing a spatial

scale that was not just a result of colonialism, but "the very form of colonial rule" (Mamdani 1996:185).

This possibility is of particular import in the current historical moment, when the future of Indonesia is under debate. This is because ethnographic arguments against the cultural reality of the nation-state bear a disconcerting resemblance to colonial ethnology’s refusal to grant people living in the archipelago the possibility of identifying in terms of spatial scales beyond that of ethnolocality itself. Anthropologists of the region can therefore find themselves complicit with social movements predicated on ethnic absolutism (Gilroy 1993a). While the state is often an oppressive and violent force, at issue is that persons within the nation-state of Indonesia identify in terms of spatial scales beyond ethnolocality, and understanding their "culture" requires taking all of these spatial scales into account, without assuming that any one spatial scale has ontological priority. For instance, chronological priority does not necessarily mean ontological priority: a subjectivity shaped by "global" forces (like Islam) may be experienced as more foundational than one shaped by "local" forces (see Gibson 2000:53). Additionally, showing the necessity of the foreign object or discourse to social life should call ethnolocality itself into question.

It goes without saying that there will be differences between different islands and ethnic groups, just as there is always difference between households or neighborhoods. At issue is the critical analytical moment when the ethnographer determines the boundaries of "the field," deciding at what point the threshold from similitude to difference has been crossed. This is a culturally located act, and in the context of this act, this heuristic compromise, it seems methodologically sound to take into account our interlocutors’ senses of inhabiting subject positions with translocal spatial scales. James Siegel names this compromise when he says, "I want to stress how various Java is. Whatever claims I make about it should be understood to refer to [the city of] Solo alone, relieving me of the tiresome duty to qualify my statements in every instance" (1986:11). Although Siegel is certainly correct in pointing out Java’s diversity, the problem of spatial scale is one of not only overreaching but underreaching. It appears unlikely that Indonesians in Solo, even if ethnically Javanese—living in a city where one main cruising area for gay men is known as Manhattan—"refer to Solo alone" in their own cultural worlds. What Siegel points out is the ethnographer’s tiresome duty of looking not only for solid data but also for a methodological and theoretical construction of the field site pitched as closely as possible to the cultural geographies of those whose lives the ethnographer seeks to interpret.

For Indonesian studies, "writing culture" has tended to mean "writing ethnolocality": in the implicit "I was there" move establishing ethnographic

authority, "there" has indexed an ethnolocalized spatial scale (Rabinow 1986:244). Ethnolocality makes an ethnographic approach to Indonesia appear to overgeneralize by definition—how could we speak ethnographically of "Indonesians"? What about Aceh, troubled by insurgency and natural disaster, or the highland peoples of Sulawesi, or any group "distant" from the physical site where the ethnographer conducts research? This way of thinking elides how all ethnographic work is based upon discerning broadly held cultural logics from intensive work with a limited number of interlocutors and then qualifying one’s claims accordingly. No ethnographers ever speak to all persons within the spatial scale that they use to conceptualize their work, be that "Torajan," "Acehnese," or a subregion. To critique ethnolocality is not to deliver an apologia for the nation, nor is it to deny the importance of the conceptual work ethnolocality performs in contemporary Indonesian life. It is, instead, to write against the foreclosure of debate, to open a space from which to imagine new geographies of identification, to equip oneself to respond better to an already globalized world.

The concept of ethnolocality permits a more precise definition of subject positions like bissu and warok. I have called these "indigenous" homosexualities and transgenderisms, but a more accurate (and appropriately playful) term is "ethnolocalized homosexual and transvestite professional" subject positions (ETPs). Bissu and warok illustrate features of ETPs throughout Indonesia: they are found only among some ethnic groups; are linked to ritual or performance; and are usually for men, for part of the life span, and do not absolve the persons who take them up from "heterosexual" marriage. It is a misnomer to speak of ETPs as "sexualities" since they are above all professions (usually involving sexual asceticism), not categories of selfhood organized around sexual desire.

When beginning my fieldwork I supposed many gay and lesbi Indonesians would have originally identified themselves in terms of an ETP, since they are so prominent in the Indonesianist literature on homosexuality. This led to the corollary hypothesis that as a result of such identifications, I would find differing gay and lesbi subject positions based upon the ETPs prevalent in any one area. I was mistaken. In only two cases have I known someone who saw themselves both in terms of an ETP and as gay or waria; most of my interlocutors were not aware of ETPs even if they existed among their ethnic group. Often it is only through the scholarship of Western academics that gay and lesbi Indonesians know of ETPs at all (Petkovic 1999). I have occasionally heard gay men or warias talk about how society should accept them because bissus or waroks have existed "for hundreds of years." This is not surprising given that "the narrative continuity of history and identity" remains a crucial way to claim authenticity.

What stands out is how rarely such claims are made: after all, these Indonesians see themselves not as bissus or waroks but as gay or lesbi. This lack of a link to conceptions of indigenity demands theorization—more than just "globalization" is at work. One reason there has been so little scholarship on gay and lesbi Indonesians is that if we view the archipelago through an ethnolocalized lens, they (and many other aspects of contemporary Indonesian cultures) are rendered invisible.

## COURTS AND TRAVELERS

Outside of ETPs, what little documentation of homosexuality exists appears primarily in Javanese courtly texts. Some examples come from the Serat Centhini, an epic poem of which the oldest known manuscript dates to 1616 and the longest version was completed in the early nineteenth century. Providing "detailed descriptions of sodomy, fellatio, mutual masturbation, multiple-partner intercourse, and transvestism," this text shows "that male homosexuality at least was an unproblematic, everyday part of a highly varied traditional Javanese sexual culture" (Anderson 1990:278), at least among elites. Anderson’s analysis of a scene in which a nobleman anally penetrates two male heroes and is then himself penetrated by one of them shows how within the text’s logic a man can be "a skilled professional in every aspect of sexual intercourse between males, without ever losing his control or manhood" (282). Some texts written during the reign of Pakubuwana II in the early eighteenth century decry male homosexuality. Often framed in terms of Islamic prohibition, these texts address homosexuality at court, for instance, the same-gender affairs of Urawan, brother-in-law of Pakubuwana II, which drew the Dutch East India company’s attention (Ricklefs 1998:69, 110, 183–185). Male sodomy was condemned and even punished in these contexts when it interfered with the reproduction of royal families (Ricklefs 1998:222). Sexual relationships between women appear less frequently in these courtly texts, but there are discussions of sex between royal concubines in the Javanese courts during the nineteenth and preindependence twentieth centuries (Blackwood and Wieringa 1999:41–42, 44; Gayatri 1996:90; S. Wieringa 2000:451).

Courtly texts rarely concerned themselves with the world outside the royal residence. What is known of homosexuality among commoners prior to independence comes mostly from merchants, missionaries, ethnologists, and colonial officials. These travelers wrote more frequently on transgenderism, probably because it was more visible to outsiders. Most colonial references to "pederasty," "sodomy," and "homosexuality" (after that term was coined in the 1860s) are actually to ETPs or the

archipelago-wide male transvestite subjectivity banci (waria), not homosexuality per se. One finds primarily fleeting and dismissive reference to "native" homosexualities. The Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie, for example,

stated matter-of-factly in 1919 that in the Indonesian archipelago "paederastie is widespread. The Balinese, under the name menjelit, indulge in this perversion in a major fashion…. in Atjeh, the sedatis, children between the ages of nine and twelve, who probably hail from the island of Nias, make a business out of participating in this vice publicly [like the gandroengs in Bali]…. On Madoera, pederasty occurs in public, without shame, and it is also practiced as a profession on Java." (Gouda 1995:181)

Colonial ethnologists like George Alexander Wilken and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje wrote in similar terms of "immorality of the worst kind," though "discussion assumed a calmer tone by the end of the colonial period" (Anderson 1990:277–278). One such calmer scholar was Hendrik Chabot, who also provides a rare glimpse of female-to-male transgenderism. In his research village near Makassar in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Chabot found "a woman … who did not feel at ease with those of her own sex. She wore her hair like a woman, but her sarong like a man…. She carried burdens on a yoke on her shoulders the way a man does, and she would go alone to markets and on roads. Her kin accepted these transgressions of the sex-role prohibitions without further ado" (1996:190–191). There are also brief accounts of women dressing as men whether or not they engaged in sex with other women (S. Wieringa 1999a:216); in Java these women were reportedly called wandu, a word now synonymous with waria and used outside Java. The following narrative provides rare documentation of late colonial female non-normative gender and sexuality:

Last Saturday [February 11, 1939] two women went to the village headman of Alahan Panjang [a highland village about fifteen miles east of Padang in West Sumatra] and asked to be married to each other. Of course this request got a very, very strong rejection. Two women asking to be married to each other! Soon thereafter a mass of people had surrounded the office of the village headman. It’s understandable that those people wanted to know as well what the decision would be, and how things had ended up like this.

One of the women, Rakit, lived near Alahan Panjang. She had been a widow for eight years and had never married again, and her actions had never been any cause for suspicion. But she was a close friend of a young woman named Tinur, the child of an Islamic scholar in the village. They had been friends for eight years. The young Tinur didn’t want to be married to a man; in fact she didn’t like men. With no warning she had asked to be married to the widow

Rakit. Her parents did not want to grant this request, because Tinur was a woman. Since she was small she’d always been a woman. She’d gone to school as a woman. Up to the present people knew that Tinur’s way of speaking was that of a woman. Apparently she didn’t want to accept the decision of her parents, and had gone directly to the village headman and asked to be married to Rakit. When she arrived she’d cut her hair short, like that of a man.

What was the style of the connection of these two?

They explained they’d already been together as husband and wife as long as they’d been friends. When they were together, the masculine character of the young Tinur was like that of a male duck.

Of course the village headman couldn’t just accept this explanation. Right away he telephoned the doctor of Solok [a small town a few miles west of Alahan Panjang] to ask for some clarification about this abnormality. The doctor himself thought all this strange. For that reason, the two women where sent by the village headman to the doctor to be inspected further.6

Tinur seems similar to tombois, currently found not only (like Tinur) in contemporary West Sumatra but throughout Indonesia. That both Tinur and her lover Rakit were "sent to be inspected" implies that Rakit was seen as a woman with incorrect desires; this appears to be the first documentation of cewek (effeminate lesbi) subjectivity outside courtly texts. Intriguingly, the story centers on an attempt to gain official recognition for a same-gender relationship through marriage. Issues of marriage, particularly "love" versus "arranged" marriages, will prove central to the dynamics of belonging for contemporary gay and lesbi Indonesians.

## THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the mid-1970s, Ulrich Kratz discovered in the National Library of Jakarta the three-hundred-page memoir of "Sucipto," a Javanese man who lived during the final decades of Dutch colonialism.7 This is the only autobiographical narrative to my knowledge by a person from the archipelago with a homosexual or transgendered subjectivity before 1980, when the first mass media article by a gay man appeared. The text was radically edited and published in 1992 by the historian Amin Budiman under the title Jalan Hidupku (Path of My Life); it was originally titled Jalan Sempurna (The "Perfect" or "Completed" Path).8 Few inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies produced autobiographies, even among the small educated class (Budiman 1992:x), making the existence of Sucipto’s text all the more remarkable. The Perfect Path reflects a genre of late colonial literature that framed modern society and modern personhood in parallel terms (Rodgers 1995:7; C. Watson 2000). It is unfortunate that no other memoirs or secondary

sources from the 1910s and 1920s currently exist to corroborate and clarify The Perfect Path. The Perfect Path does not provide a direct prehistory to gay and lesbi subject positions: certainly no gay or lesbi Indonesians knew of this text before its publication in 1992. Yet there are clear resonances between Sucipto’s world and the contemporary gay world.

Sucipto was born in 1910 and lived in eastern Java. In his writings he never used gay or any other term, even when discussing the existence of a community of like-hearted men in some of the cities where he lived. The memoir covers the years 1919 to 1927, but its pivotal event takes place less than ten pages into the narrative, in 1919, when Sucipto is attending primary school in Sitobondo on the north coast of East Java. Walking past the town square on the way to school, Sucipto meets a boy about fifteen years old. After a series of long stares and forced smiles—including a moment when, "because it had already been willed by God," Sucipto drops his handkerchief and the gallant older boy retrieves it for him—they speak briefly. The boy asks Sucipto if they could be friends, and Sucipto struggles with unaccustomed feelings of desire for another man.

Wondering about the boy he has just met, Sucipto cannot focus on school that day. The teacher explains there will be a celebration at the town square to observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Dutch coronation and encourages the students to attend. During the festivities that night a storm comes up and Sucipto hides from the downpour with other onlookers on a verandah where a stage play had been performed. The lights go out and it is pitch black as Sucipto gropes through the crowd. Suddenly there is a hand upon his shoulder: "Watching the show?" It is the boy Sucipto had met earlier that day. Sucipto implores him not to get too close because he is soaking wet, and the friend suggests they return to his house so Sucipto can borrow dry clothes. Sucipto agrees and they make their way to the boy’s house, which is empty because his parents are on vacation. They lie down together on a bed in a darkened room, illuminated only by moonlight streaming through an open window. Their mutual lust becomes increasingly apparent until Sucipto asks the boy if he has ever slept with a woman. "Not even once," the boy replies:

"Listen. I want to tell you a story. Now you have become my friend. Before, when I lived in Kediri9 and was only as big as you are now, there was a Javanese man who fell in love with me. He worked as a doctor. At that point, just like you, I didn’t understand. I was of the opinion that only a woman could fulfill a man’s desire. After I became acquainted with this doctor, he spoke to me of many things. Finally he told me that desire could be fulfilled by a man with a man. We fell in love with each other; then after a time he moved away. After he left, I did as he had…. It’s the same way with my friends; many of them do this same thing …"

"How is it done?" I asked, smiling.

He didn’t answer with a single word, but kissed my cheek while his hand caressed my body. At that point I couldn’t hold in my desire any longer; I forgot myself and returned his kiss. "This is what I’ve been waiting for," I said in my heart. He grasped my thigh and then slowly took hold of my sarong, until his hand found my ——— [ellipsis in original]."

"Apparently you like me, yeah?," he said while smiling.

At that point I couldn’t explain any longer how strong was my desire …

"You are now my sweetheart" he said; his body trembled as he climbed on top of me. In that way, he satisfied his desire on top of my chest … Then he fulfilled my desire by using his hand. "Is this what the feeling is like?," I said in my heart … Then he held my hand and said: … "let us make a promise to each other. You will not forget me. And I will not forget you. The moon that shines upon us is our witness." (Budiman 1992:12–19)

This scene offers clues concerning male homosexual subjectivities in the late colonial period. First, the older boy who becomes Sucipto’s lover was initiated into the practice of same-gender love in the early 1910s by a "Javanese doctor" who apparently claimed to be sexually interested only in men. There is clearly a history to this unlexicalized subject position, at least in Java. Second, the earlier lover of Sucipto’s boyfriend was a physician, a powerful symbol of modernity in Indonesian literature. This hints at the possibility that educated people who lived in the archipelago encountered notions of homosexual subjectivity from the Western sexological and psychiatric literatures that were beginning to circulate through the colonial world. Third, the physician and the boyfriend belong to a community of men with similar interests—"it’s the same way with my friends"—and they assume they will find such men elsewhere in Java. Fourth, while sexual desire is clearly a powerful factor in Sucipto’s life, love (not desire in isolation) drives the narrative: the boyfriend and his earlier Javanese doctor had fallen in love, and the romance between Sucipto and his boyfriend begins with an oath of remembrance—witnessed like oaths of marriage, but here by the moon. Fifth, Sucipto holds the colonial presence at arm’s length. It provides a background for the narrative—sometimes explicitly, as in the celebration of the queen’s coronation anniversary—but Sucipto never identifies with (or against) nationalism and never mentions the nationalist movement. Additionally, Sucipto does not feel any sense of sin or remorse; indeed, references to God’s role in Sucipto’s homosexuality appear throughout his narrative:

Life is following habits. If someone is used to eating, without food he’ll become hungry … If someone’s used to using a woman, he’ll feel less happy or a lack of desire if he uses a man … I feel happy with men … For that reason I’ve got to habituate myself to it, because that’s the best thing for me … In this way God is indeed a generous being towards His creatures. For all bad things on this

earth He has provided weapons to turn them into something good (Budiman 1992:26).

After several months Sucipto’s lover leaves Sitobondo, and soon Sucipto runs away from home because of family conflicts unrelated to his sexuality. Making his way to Surabaya, Sucipto lives as a homeless youth; many of the parks and other places where he spends his time are the same as those used by gay men eighty years later. He has a sexual relationship with a Dutchman; when that ends he becomes a prostitute and decides to spend time only with certain groups of people:

I carried out my promise to myself. I didn’t socialize at all with boys who liked women. I continued my habit of strolling about at night [looking for sex work] without end, adding more and more friends with the same intentions as I. But not all of my friends who liked to "search around" were really like me. There were some who did it just for the money. If they succeeded in getting some, they used it to get a woman. I didn’t really spend much time with them … Besides that, there were lots of boys who were really and truly interested in men, but their behavior was exactly like that of a woman. I also didn’t like hanging out with them, because their disposition was too visible to other people (Budiman 1992:140).

Sucipto divides his homosocial world into (1) men who like women, (2) men who like men (and sometimes have sex with men for money), (3) men who have sex with other men for money but really like women, and (4) men who like men (and sometimes have sex with men for money) but act like women. One might anachronistically term the first and third categories as heterosexual or normal, the second as gay, and the fourth as waria. However, Sucipto’s concept of male homosexuality does not appear to imply a female counterpart. This is only one of several apparent differences between Sucipto’s subject position and that of contemporary gay men. There appear to be no linguistic, sartorial, or gestural practices associated with men "of the same intentions" as Sucipto. He writes of a broadly shared assumption that such men will not marry women. This diverges from the understandings of most contemporary gay men, suggesting that the marriage imperative is not simply "traditional." Above all, he betrays no sense of an archipelago-wide or global community. Not only is there no mention of men "of the same intentions" elsewhere in the Indies, but Sucipto first reacts with bewilderment when a Dutchman, "of a different race" than he, evinces sexual interest in men. If, as a thought experiment, Western gay sexuality were held constant, the change from Sucipto’s sexuality to contemporary gay sexuality could be interpreted as one of divergence, not convergence, with the West.

## THE DUTCH LAST GASP

In his introduction to The Perfect Path, Budiman claimed that in the 1930s "for the first time in several Indonesian cities a large number of gay people started to make themselves visible" (1992:x). I do not know the evidence upon which Budiman based this claim; Sucipto’s narrative ends in 1927. While the persons Budiman describes as "making themselves visible" certainly did not identify as gay (if Sucipto’s memoir is any guide, they did not have lexicalized sexual subject positions at all), it may be that by the second and third decades of the twentieth century men who desired sex and romance with other men began creating informal groups in the metropolises of the colony. A new relationship to the West was in the making as well. By this time the Indies had experienced significant advances in transportation technology—in particular the emergence of steam shipping following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869—as well as the final consolidation of Dutch rule. These changes facilitated a growing population of Western men and women unaffiliated with the colonial government. While some of these Western women probably had sex with each other or women from the archipelago, our primary documentation at present concerns Western men who settled in the Indies in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in Bali, had sex with each other or men from the archipelago, and sometimes saw themselves as homosexual. To my knowledge there are no recognized links between these male homosexual Westerners and the emergence of the gay and lesbi subject positions in the 1970s and 1980s. I have never heard gay or lesbi Indonesians indicate any knowledge of this prewar expatriate community. It is of interest not necessarily as a progenitor but because it shows how sexuality and state power articulate in the formation of nonnormative sexual subject positions.

Our knowledge of this community comes primarily from a sinister turn of events. In 1938, toward the end of Dutch rule, the colonial government at the instigation of the final viceroy of the Netherlands initiated an archipelago-wide crackdown on colonial "pederasts." The crackdown is reputed to have begun in Bandung, when an Indonesian student claimed to have been raped by his European teacher (Bijkerk 1988:70). One of the first victims of the crackdown appears to have been Fievez de Malines. This colonial official from West Java was fired from his post but then arrested later in Makassar as he was departing the Indies, charged with sex with someone under the age of consent, and sentenced to a year and a half in prison (Bijkerk 1988:70–71). Also arrested at this time was Assistant Resident Coolhaas, a member of the colony’s new parliament, the Volksraad (Budiman 1992:x). While some officials disagreed with the crackdown (for instance, H. J. van Mook, who subsequently became the

last lieutenant governor-general of the Netherlands East Indies), it received broad government support and seems to have been most intense on Bali (Gouda 1995:181–182; Rhodius and Darling 1980:43–45). In Batavia (Jakarta), police apparently rounded up street youths and paraded them before lineups of European men; if the youths pointed to any of the men, indicating a claim that the men had had sexual relations with them, the men were arrested (Bijkerk 1988:71). The "native" men involved were usually assumed not to be homosexual (Simons 1939:5579). The crackdown continued into the following year, involving many wellknown expatriates such as Roelof Goris and Herman Noosten. Budiman claims that "in Surabaya the police got pretty good results. This need not surprise us since from the 1920s there were lots of gay Dutchmen in this city" (1992:xi).10

The most famous target was the German painter Walter Spies (1895–1942), who began living permanently on Bali in 1927 and became a major force in the artistic life of the island. Margaret Mead termed the affair a "veritable witch hunt" and spoke at Spies’s trial in support of Spies’s "continuing light involvement with Balinese male youth": "she argued that Spies was seeking a ‘repudiation of the kind of dominance and submission, authority and dependence, which he associated with European culture.’ [Mead claimed that] on Bali homosexuality was not a matter for moral condemnation, simply a pastime for young unmarried men" (Vickers 1989:106).11 At this point K’Tut Tantri (alias Manx, alias Surabaya Sue)—the British woman whose exploits during the independence struggle made her a controversial figure (Lindsey 1997)—owned a hotel of questionable repute in southern Bali and was a friend of Spies. During the crackdown "Manx" tried to protect Spies and her other homosexual friends, even as the tourist industry suffered. In fact "[i]t was probably only because Manx was not homosexual, and had the support of a number of aristocratic guests, that she herself was not jailed or banished from Bali, given establishment claims that ‘Manx’s Place’ was a brothel" (Lindsey 1997:92). The script for K’Tut Tantri’s never-produced autobiographical film contains an unintentionally humorous adaptation of these events:

SPIES: K’Tut, the Dutch are looking for me! …

K’TUT: But what on earth have you done?

SPIES: They’re rounding up homosexuals. No one is exempt….

K’TUT: Where will you go?

SPIES: To the Western part of the Island…. I may be safe there till this all dies down.

K’TUT: I’ll drive you.

SPIES: No. K’Tut. You must not be seen with me. It’s too dangerous.

K’TUT: Then Wayan will drive you. You are too good a friend of Bali to be allowed to suffer at the hands of the Dutch.

In spite of Mead’s and Tantri’s efforts, Spies was convicted and "imprisoned from 31 December 1938 to 1 September 1939 on charges of having had homosexual relations with minors" (Lindsay 1997:64). It is said that Spies’s Balinese lover sang to the accompaniment of a gamelan orchestra outside the walls of Spies’s prison. What little additional information exists concerning "native" reactions to the crackdown comes from the testimony of Europeans:

Rudolf Bonnet [mentioned in a letter] that the Dutch police had also treated the Balinese in an unduly harsh manner, who "do not understand any of this. They look like frail, frightened birds: after all, a homosexual relationship is nothing special to them!" As the American anthropologist Jane Belo reported in February, 1939, sexuality between men did not constitute a violation of Balinese adat: to be salah mekoerenan (wrongly married) entailed men’s relations with animals, with young girls who had not yet reached maturity, or with higher-caste women. As a result, Belo wrote, the Balinese thought that "the whole ‘white caste’ had gone stark raving mad." (Gouda 1995:181–182)

The state of homosexual subjectivity in the Indies during this period is an area in which further research is needed, not least because at this point homophile movements existed in many Western metropoles. It seems Spies and his European compatriots understood themselves as "homosexual" as that concept was typically used in Western sexology, and they may have communicated this concept in some fashion to the men from the archipelago they befriended and loved. In 1940 Spies was rearrested, this time as an ethnic German when Germany invaded the Netherlands at the beginning of World War II. He died in 1942 when his prison ship was sunk near Sri Lanka; on the same boat was Hans Overbeck, the never-married German literary scholar of Malay who lived in Surabaya and whose servant, and possibly lover, was none other than Sucipto.12 The very existence of the Dutch crackdown suggests that homosexuality was visible enough to catch the eye of the colonial apparatus at a time when the colony’s future was increasingly in doubt. Even though reproduction and thus miscegenation was not a possibility, sex between men seems to have become seen as threatening the racial hierarchy upon which colonial authority rested. Before giving way to the postcolonial polity it shapes to this day, the colonial "administrative state" (Benda 1966, Anderson 1990:94–96) framed sex between men as the product of global connection and a threat to social order.

## HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE YOUNG INDONESIA, 1945–1980

Documents relating to sex between men or between women from the late 1940s to the 1970s are scarce, and little archival work has been undertaken to explore how the early postcolonial state regarded homosexuality. While the European presence in Indonesia during the early postcolonial period was minimal and decreased further with the conflict over the absorption of Irian Jaya into Indonesia in the 1950s, some European men spent time in venues like parks, where they formed sexual and affective relationships with Indonesians. A waria from Makassar born in the 1930s recalled that by 1959 "there were already lots of homo men; I already knew lots of homo men from the Japanese [World War II] and Dutch times, and lots of lesbi women too, both those who were hunter [tomboi] and lines [cewek]." Andre, a lower-class Javanese man, recalls this time fondly:

A: I first came to Surabaya in 1948. Actually the difference was not that great, except that we weren’t as visible as nowadays. There weren’t any people brave enough to have long hair or an earring or wear effeminate clothing. There wasn’t anyone at all like that…. At that point I hung out with my friends at Taman Imbong Macang [a park in Surabaya]. There were Dutch men there too … some of them from Ambon [in the Moluccas] or Manado [in North Sulawesi]…. So I would go there with my [Javanese] lover. This was around 1950…. Every night I’d go out…. Every night and I never got bored for fifteen years. Until 1965.

Andre’s reference to 1965 marks the period when Sukarno, Indonesia’s first president, was toppled from power. Hundreds of thousands of Indonesians died in the ensuing unrest; since Surabaya and its environs were a major scene of this violence, it is not surprising that Andre and his friends stopped going to the parks. As noted earlier, many persons with ETPs, like bissus and waroks, were substantially impacted by this violence. It is also in connection with the events of 1965 that women’s homosexuality entered public discourse in a frightening manner, with the massacre of Indonesian women involved in the women’s Communist Party organization Gerwani. Accusations that Gerwani members had sex with each other played a role in the government campaign to justify discrediting and even murdering these women (S. Wieringa 1999b, 2002). Male homosexuality does not appear to have been targeted, but the turbulence of the transition to Soeharto’s New Order meant that men involved in homosexual activities strongly curtailed their public presence.

After a few years a renewed park life began to emerge: Andre notes that "beginning around 1970 there were already very many [of us]. More

and more people like me. I felt the worries of my life were reduced a little because I had those friends like me to hang around with." Other interlocutors corroborate Andre’s narrative of park socializing with Indonesians and Westerners in the 1950s, severely curtailed in 1965. From the point when park socializing picked up again in the 1970s until the present, there has been a reduced presence of Westerners in parks and other public places of gay life: most contemporary Westerners either go to tourist sites or socialize largely with expatriates. There appears to have been a further shift around 1980, when some people began identifying as waria on an ongoing basis in public (as opposed to more circumscribed contexts like theatrical performances) and some men began using the term gay. The first edition of the All Lavender International Gay Guide in 1971 has a single entry for "Jakarta, Indonesia"—the "Cosy Corner" on 9 Nusantara Street. However, while the terms gay and lesbi were certainly in existence by the early 1970s, at least in the capital, they do not appear to have been in widespread use before the 1980s, and there is little evidence for a sense of nationwide or worldwide homosexual affiliation before that point.

Through a critique of ethnolocality and the concept of ETPs, it is possible to navigate the historical temptations associated with the study of nonnormative genders and sexualities outside the West. The history of the gay and lesbi subject positions does not conform to Western prejudices concerning narrative continuity. Prior to gay and lesbi there is little evidence for archipelago-wide sexual subject positions; their appearance is intertwined with Indonesian nationhood. The assumption that the past stands in a causal relationship to the present does not capture the conjunctural manner in which these subject positions have come into being.

## WARIAS, NATIONAL TRANSVESTITES

So far I have made occasional reference to male transvestites (warias). Since the gay and lesbi subject positions "globalized" to Indonesia in a context where the waria subject position was already well known, the existence of warias has profoundly shaped the gay and lesbi subject positions and indeed accounts for some of the most significant differences between gay men and lesbi women, as discussed at several points later in this book. A brief summary of waria subjectivity will thus help illuminate the gay and lesbi subject positions (see Boellstorff 2004b for a more detailed discussion of warias).

The waria subject position is far better known in contemporary Indonesia than any ETP, or indeed the gay and lesbi subject positions themselves.

Virtually everyone in Indonesia knows what "banci" or "béncong" (derogatory terms for waria) mean. It appears that the waria subject position took form during the mid-nineteenth century in metropolitan areas (the now-common term "banci" does not appear in early nineteenth-century versions of the Javanese chronicle Serat Centhini [Anderson 2001:xiv]). From the beginning it was assumed that warias could be found anywhere in the archipelago, and from the beginning warias were associated not with ritual but with lowbrow entertainment, petty commodity trading, and sex work.

Since the waria subject position is so well known, most warias begin identifying as such while children. You cannot become waria if you are seen to have been born with a vagina: waria subjectivity is an attribute of male bodies. Waria almost never describe themselves as a "third gender" but see themselves as men with women’s souls who therefore dress like women and are attracted to men. They usually have sex only with "real" men and are the only major class of persons beyond the disabled who are not typically pressured to marry heterosexually. Many warias enjoy being anally penetrated by their male partners, but it is clear from interview data as well as HIV/AIDS-related sexual behavior surveys that warias often penetrate their male partners anally (Oetomo 2000). In comparison to the activo/pasivo sexual regime attributed to much of Latin America, where penetrating is conflated with masculinity and being penetrated with femininity (see Kulick 1998: chap. 3), it appears that in Indonesia, bodily presentation is more important than sexual act in determining gender, a state of affairs that may exist across much of Southeast Asia (cf. Manalansan 2003:26).

Before the late 1970s warias dressed as women primarily at night or when on stage, but at present most warias dress as women all day long, and many ingest female hormones (in the form of birth control pills) or inject silicone to give their bodies a more feminine look. They rarely have sex-change operations, due not only to the cost but to the fact that they ultimately see themselves as men. By the early 2000s warias had become increasingly visible in public life, from their common role as beauticians to appearances in television shows. This visibility has not translated directly into acceptance, but it does underscore how these national transvestites contribute to the complex sexual landscape upon which the gay archipelago has taken form.