

## Not I. Am I ?

Jim Supangkat

The Curator

The curatorial title of this exhibition, "Not I. Am I?", consists of two sentences that stand separately. "Not I" ("Not me")<sup>1</sup> represents a denial that implies a firm position of the self while encircled by a crowd. This is a defensive statement that highlights the phenomenon of the self as an exception amidst the crowd. Synonymous to the statement is the expression of "except me" that is the antonym of "me too".

The phrase Not I in the title of this exhibition I take from Samuel Beckett's play titling the same. The play has only one character, which is a housewife talking with herself in the middle of a supermarket jungle. The exclusive focus is on the movements of the character's mouth producing highly rapid speeches. The absurdity of the housewife's life lies in the clash between the conditions of being alienated and being surrounded by some morality inherent to techno-industrial norms of the modern world. In the middle of these two paradoxical conditions the statement 'Not I' has no space and becomes absurd. To whom is it to be spoken?

Contradictory to the firm statement "Not I", the phrase 'Am I?' reflects doubts. As a common idiom, 'Am I?' is used to deny compliments for the sake of politeness. But the unspoken "Am I?" is an existential question in one's dialog with oneself. Here, 'Am I?' is putting into question an already positive statement such as "Am I really (a moralist)?" or "Am I (a nationalist)?"

As an existential question, "Am I?" significantly relates to the statement "Not I". **The combination of these two phrases alludes to the polyphonic question of "who am I", which is a question during the process of self identification as one looks both inward and outward simultaneously.** This polyphonic question shows how the position of individuality is not always opposite to that of collectivity. In other words, the position of "I" in the "who am I" question is not only unfixed but even shaky. Sometimes the "I" is outside, looking in; sometimes it is inside, looking out.

The fourteen artists in this exhibition, **Entang Wiharso, Astari Rasjid, Nyoman Nuarta, Lucia Hartini, Ugo Untoro, Mella Jaarsma, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Firman Ichsan, Dyanto, Altje Uilly, Handiwirman, Pande Ketut Taman, Laksmi Shitaresmi and Arin Dwi Hartanto**, are very much acquainted with the question "who am I?". In general, their works tend to dig out personal problems. But upon closer examination, these works show various signs and expressions that imply blurred boundaries between the personal and the communal and even social issues. Whether these artists are aware or not, the personal problems represented in their works constitute self-identification process always in re-configuration. The positions of "I's" in their works are variable and are not, in fact, always opposite to community and society.

Their works are different from opinionated ones showing fixed and clear-cut positions of the "I", whether as the "I" who opposes society or the heroic "I" who advocates the people. More specifically speaking, the works of these fourteen artists do not imply the **auratic** tendency, different from works that place "the I" at fixed, clear-cut, and final positions.

This is despite the predominance of auratic works in the development of our art. The public and critics have so far retained the conviction that the excellence of artworks lies in their capacity to reveal the individuality and originality of the artists or their personalities (the exaggerated Indonesian term for it is "*jatidiri*" that simply means, more or less, identity). This myth, taken for granted, places an artist's individuality at a supreme position in observing and inferring reality. So it is deemed necessary for an artist to have an **aura** (signs of a prophet).

Basic to the auratic conviction of art is renaissance thinking which believes that enlightenment (the move from darkness to light) rests on the liberation of the individual from the bondage of traditions and norms (which dull people's minds). This auratic art believes in the sovereignty of the thinking mind. The renaissance thinking that gives prominence to progress - promoted in Indonesia by St. Takdir Alisyahbana in the 1930's - provides most of the foundation of modern thinking. That is why the art that holds on to such thinking is known as **modern art**.

Both the modern thinking known as **modernism** (thoughts that rest upon modernity as an idealism) and the exploration of modern art are in the realm of ideas, a realm having no direct connections with proofs and verification. Realities in this realm of ideas are the realities of aspirations to be materialized. Hence this thinking always implies (absolute) inevitability.

Throughout the Twentieth Century, modern thinking believes that modernity (the state of being modern) is the only target to accomplish in life. The aspired modern world is a homogenous world with modern patterns of life, standards and values that are homogenous as well. Progress - being verified by linear historicism - provides the foundation since it is deemed necessarily connected with the dignity and well-being of the humankind.

In modern thinking, the individual that is positioned outside collectivity (society), set free from the bondage of traditions and communal norms, is central to the realization of modernity that has the capacity to explore reality (nature). The brain provides an important instrument for an individual to initially conceive reality and then control it. With such capacity in hands, the individual is in a significant position to conquer nature (through discoveries and innovations) and epitomize progress.

With that belief as the basis, the comprehension of reality is defined by the absolute relation between the individual and the reality. **The individual conceiving the reality has the fixed and autonomous position while significance that develops out of representations (observations of what is real) and comprehension (conceptualization) effects from the correspondence between concepts and objects that are also autonomous, owing nothing to any other factor beyond the reciprocal connection between concepts and objects.** In the development of modern art, such conviction reflects in the tradition that necessarily dictates the search for essence (truth) and absolute significance in the practice of art.

It is just the belief in individuality that is not found among the fourteen artists taking part in this exhibition. Instead, their works even suggest the demystification of the belief in individuality aura. Owing to radical developments in the modern world, their works (that show the traces of **post-auratic** art) are no longer in the shadows of the idealism of modern world and modernism.

They are artists who record today's conditions in which modern thinking and modernization can no longer be seen as ideas promising welfare. These artists are living an era in which the modern world already proves ugly and pock-marked. This modern world is far from being a homogeneously advanced world, a far cry from a world free from wars and violence; instead, it is a world that is promoting power and control, domination and economic disparity, a modern world being eaten up

by anxiety over the retaliation of nature exhaustively exploited the whole century.

The movement within this ugly, pock-marked world is no longer that of modernization but the globalizing of a condition that is heavily influenced by communication revolution, the development of techno-industrial production system, and a multinational economy. In such condition (known as **post-modern condition**), the mass production technology and system that is most predominant, as Walter Benjamin remarks, influence - to the extent of controlling - human's perception and sensibility in understanding almost everything.<sup>2</sup> Within such setting, attempts at understanding reality are encircled by images, signs, which do not produce values at all but, instead, maintain the continuity of commodity production in an economic system no longer controllable. Consequently, the reality as we understand it, as Jean Baudrillard has remarked, is no longer the true reality but a hyper-real one (an image of reality as controlled by a regime of techno-industrial signs).<sup>3</sup>

This condition brought by the wave of globalization does not only influence human's perception and behavior but also human's sensing (*sensory*). Behind this condition, a force of very powerful influences, as Michel Foucault puts it, is the philosophical hermeneutics (techno-industrial principles justified by science, norms, and philosophy) that operate as modern bio-politics.<sup>4</sup>

The condition has made the position of the individual in the working process of these fourteen artists no longer central. **This is to say that the position of an individual - more appropriately termed "I" or "the self" - becomes ex-centric or is bereft of any fixed center since the signification field of "I" is inevitably always being re-configured. Even the relation between the self and self identification is fleeting.**

A radical change of perception is needed to read out the meanings of these fourteen artists' works - and also other artists' presented in exhibitions labeled as **contemporary art**.<sup>5</sup> "Identity", originality, greatness, "mastership" in creating the language of art, and with them the goal of finding fixed, permanent, essential, absolute and eternal meanings (that modern art cherishes) are no longer relevant to discuss. The meanings of their works are not absolute and are not even fixed since they are no longer subjects to any autonomous correspondence between the representations that are present in their works (to signify **objects**) on the one hand and the conclusions (**concepts**). **In their works, meanings are as most open as they are dependent on the context of the "reading" of them and who the reader is, given the shaky nature of the relation between the concepts and the objects in the signification process. The relation between concepts and objects - as is that between the self and self-identification - is continuously being re-configured owing to other fields of signification not directly connected with the correspondence between concepts and objects.**

The radical change in conditions is reflected in the working process of **Entang Wiharso**. During the last three years Entang's works offer expressions that allude to restlessness springing from social and political changes in Indonesia in 1998. Entang lived abroad in the USA when these changes took place. He was terrorized when watching the reports on television under a program entitled Land of Violence. Entang saw how those reports immediately influenced Americans and created an image of Indonesia with the impression of wreckage.

Finding himself terrorized, Entang was not able to define any fixed position for him to take. At first he felt he was facing the cruelty of the media in judging the Third World, a fact that the American-Palestinian sociologist, Edward Said, uncovered. Entang got angry and this was the first position of his "I". However, he, so he told me, could not escape the influence of the media and he rebuked and even condemned his own country and nation. At this point his position shifted as his "I" took some distance from his society and culture. "But people kept seeing me as an Indonesian and they

always looked at me suspiciously. Entang felt pressurized and tried to defend himself by denying the severe cruelty shown in those reports. His "I" underwent re-positioning but it is in a very shaky state. When the pressure got most intense, his denial became personal. He came to the statement of "except me" and again his "I" takes a new position. Entang was home in Indonesia by the end of 2000 to face a different "post-modern condition" here. Just like in America, once again he was face to face with the power of the media and he witnessed again the capacity of the media to develop public images and opinions. Being absorbed by the public opinion developed by the mass media, he came to believe that the culture of violence did exist as he had formerly learnt from American television reports. And this violence, so the media had it, refers to shifting social behaviors.

Entang felt tensions and it was really hard for him to take a particular position. On the one hand, he suspected the signification of the media just as he had the American media. On the other hand, he intuitively sensed that the political reform in his home country was bringing forth changes in social behaviors.

Then, came the time when he felt a radical shift in his own positioning. This happened when he was carried away by the violent behavior of the crowd on a city bus. He suddenly became part of the people. The statement "Not I" that once filled his head gave way to the question "Am I?" He was surprised. "Why! I came to take part in all the cursing and my behavior turned violent", he said. Suppose the "amok" crowd on the bus was facing a pickpocket, and as the media often remark such crowd has the very drive to beat the thief to death, he would well be involved in it. Entang imagined his uncontrollable fists were very near to bloodshed and death.

With that as the background, we have the explanation why Entang offers representations marked by overlapping. His works present personal experiences, traditional symbols, and sublimation of the condition of being terrorized, regrets, techno-industrial symbols and political opinions. Considering the meanings, I think Entang's most significant representations are those that show the interaction that develops between the conditions brought by globalization and the collectivity that remains strong in our society. Both the behavior harnessed by the regime of techno-industrial signs (the behavior that is influenced by violence as offered by ads and super-hero films in Entang's representation) and the collectivity in our society evolve in the "nether world" that is known as the collective subconscious in the Jungian psychological theory.

According to Jungian psychology, Entang's expressions show the transmutation of energy that transforms the aggressive pressure from within into expressive idioms that, despite the shock they cause, may bring enlightenment as they loose the terrorizing dimension. It is just this transmutation of energy that does not take place in society. As a result, that energy behind the aggressive pressures from within goes flooding as violent behavior and even amocks.<sup>6</sup>

Why doesn't violent behavior spread wide in advanced countries where people's behaviors are also influenced by the techno-industrial sign regime? One may find the answer in the works of **Dyanto, Ugo Untoro, Handiwirman, and Pande Ketut Taman** who regard the aggressive social behaviors now conspicuous as cultural absurdity. To get the meanings of their works, which also show the continuous re-configuration of the field of signification, it is necessary to consider the prominent presence of freedom as both an issue and reality - immediately connected with the fundamental idea of the socio-political reform of May 1998, namely a radical change in the circumstances controlled by a repressive power.

Both as an issue and reality, it turns out that freedom does not bring forth awareness and statements regarding individual freedom hitherto seen fundamental in the concept of freedom. This phenomenon

shows how the concept of freedom that already becomes the label of the ongoing socio-political reform is not really comprehended.

While "what freedom is" are always debatable, the fundamental understanding of freedom is inseparable from the belief in the individual ethics in renaissance thinking (also known as post-enlightenment Western thinking) that provides one among the bases in the development of modern society (as I stated earlier in this paper). The individual ethics does not only tackle individual rights but also individual responsibility based on some awareness that does not need to be regulated by traditional and religious norms. Although the belief in the position of a central individual already fades away, individual ethics serves as defense against the domination of the techno-industrial sign regime.

The development of our modern society does not know the ethics. This ethics, nicknamed as individualism, is refused since it is deemed potential to destroy gregarious cooperation known as *gotong royong*<sup>7</sup> without which the commitment to togetherness would be impossible to achieve. This fact has caused freedom as the icon of socio-political reform to be celebrated not by recognizing basic human rights of individuals (even in promoting human rights) but by reinforcing collectivity in the form of "group aspirations".

Inevitably, the promoted collectivity leads to the prominence given to the identity of the collectivity, ranging from ethnic identity, religious identity, through political group identity (one of **Pande Ketut Taman**'s works represents this collectivity by depicting "logocentric" faces that are childish and interchangeable). The celebration of freedom by way of collective aspirations gets ever farther away from the concept of freedom and has turned into conflicts of groups sharing the celebration of the removal of what once was the predominant repressive control.

The spirit of collectivity expressed through freedom is not always formal. In reality, collectivity may all of a sudden come into being in the street, at market places, public space, or wherever. This informal collectivity may refer to one of the tendencies towards the celebration of freedom by reinforcing collectivity. This tendency shows up in the aggressive collective behavior with its theatrical, possessive, and abrasive natures. Such behavior is evident in conflicts between ethnic groups, political hostility, clashes between political groups, mass fighting, street robbery and road blackmailing, up to the burning to death of not only captured high caliber robbers but also one with starving children getting caught stealing a chicken.

On the political stage, such behavior manifests as megalomaniac conduct that loves loftiness and exaggerations as means to show off force and power. By simply pronouncing two little words: "people's claim", a politician or whoever may already feel that he or she has implemented the concept of democracy and so has to be considered. This behavior, which has even spread widely among the ordinary people, worries **Handiwirman**. He however does not make works protesting or criticizing the phenomenon. In his creative world **Handiwirman** deconstructs the fact by taking up overlooked petty, insignificant things to be significant issues of his representations. In this little world he regains sensibility lost in megalomaniac behavior.

In the streets, at market places and public venues the aggressive collective behavior features up wildness. **Ugo Untoro** marks this cultural absurdity in his works. Some time ago he began his series of paintings around the theme of dogs. He set out his series of paintings by expressing his personal experience. One of those paintings represents a dog-headed human making love with a regular human. There is an accompanying text that reads, in English in the original, "You think, I'm a dog?" He picks up again the theme of this love story in another work where he depicts once more a half-dog

human lazily sleeping with the gesture of a dog. The face of this half-dog being suggests that in his/its "dogness" he/it must be a friendly and faithful family dog. The accompanying text, this time in Indonesian, reads "*Aku patah hati*" ("My heart's broken").<sup>8</sup>

Two of his works shown in this exhibition form the continuation of his series of dog paintings. In these works he does not reposition his "I" (in facing other people who regard him as a dog) but alters the signification field of "the self" from personal to communal. The dogs no longer wear the faces of tame and friendly "family dogs" but those of the wolves, instead. He depicts these wolfish-dog-humans with uplifted heads, howling in hunger, thoroughly on the alert. The "I's" manifested in the wolfish-dog-humans in these works represent social realities.

Ugo searches for the "gene" of savagery in the violent behavior that is manifesting itself in this country. The implied signification is that just like a wolf after sniffing the smell of blood, mass savagery rises after the bitter taste of fear. Out in the streets, mass savagery goes rampant in rapes against women, raids, mass fights and beating to death while the victims are severely terrorized. On the political stage, this savagery is not overtly present but it is just in this field that anxiety and fears are engineered by way of producing terrors. Bombs and the force of the mass provide the most popular instruments of terrors. In the mass media, terror is being peddled as a commodity sold not only to the general people but also to political powers. Behind this violent behavior is a drive that is not at all democratic, namely the aspiration to rule in a totalitarian way.

The works of **Ugo** show how the "I" in his representations may vary and have no definite substance. In contrast, in auratic art the individual is taken as a substance. This substance underlines the difference between the individual and anything beyond it that has no definite substance. As a result, the field of individual signification in auratic art represents explorative searching for individual essence associated with the essence of life. In Ugo's works, which show the marks of post-auratic art, the individual or "the self" undergoes **de-substantialization** as the self can move easily from one field of signification to another.

In the works of Astari Rasjid, the de-substantialization of the individual self is radical. She is a painter who has been representing her own self in her works since 1994. That is why her works are taken as showing the inclination towards self portraits. In the development of modern art, self portrait is already a tradition of itself, shared by virtually all prominent artists, the Indonesians as well. The goal is the discovery of the "identity" or individual's essence by representing the face of the individual. But as long as Astari's works are concerned, self portraits are to be exempted from the pursuits of "the identity".

Self portraits in Astari Rasjid's works have very many fields of signification. "The self" in her self portraits may appear as a human, a woman in a given local context, a woman in the universal context, and "the I" in a historical exploration of the self. The signification of "the self" does not always adopt the position of "outward looking in" with "the self" as the observational object. "The self" in Astari's works (especially those around gender issues) is often reflective while alluding to social conditions in particular. The varied signification processes in the representations of "the I" imply the de-substantialization of "the self".

Two works of hers that this exhibition presents show the drive towards discovering the history of the self - representing two developments in the past time of her life. However, these two works do not seem to merely represent memories associated with the historical search of her self. The representations in these works enter other fields of signification as well. For instance, one of the works brings forth the problem of women. These plural signification fields of the works relate with

another phenomenon of the post-auratic art, namely the working of **de-code**. The history of the self in both works of Astari experiences de-coding in the sense of losing its specific scope (**code**).

This process of decoding can be more radical. This is apparent in Astari's tendency to represent herself in self portraits as a traditional Javanese woman. Although she repetitiously works on this theme, re-positioning is there in nearly every new work she does. The continuous re-configuration of the fields of signification makes Javanese tradition in Astari's representations go through de-coding. Javanese tradition comes to read as "tradition" in general, which is everywhere and in every era.

The de-coding of Javanese tradition owes partly to Astari's tendency to take up gender issues. Of the various problems that come up in today's life, the problem of women is among the very few issues that can still be regarded universal. This phenomenon is reflected in her work entitled "T-Time" that takes up gender issues (this work was shown in the exhibition *Membaca Frida Kahlo* at Nadi Gallery). The title reads "Tea Time" that refers to a feudalistic tradition of the English society. But in my own reading (considering signs and clues I found in the work) the "T" in the title just refers to "Time" and reinforces it. The point is that tradition (Javanese tradition in Astari's representation) does not recognize time of the "Space and Time" concept. In other words, the issue of tradition (the tradition to always position women as the subordinate of men) goes through space and time and is there in any era.

Such signification, implying that tradition goes beyond the boundaries of time and is there in any interval of time throughout the human history, including the modern era of traditions, radically deconstructs one of the premises of modernism, which is the necessary discontinuity between tradition and modernity. This signification does not miss. Post-modern conditions show various "manifestations of tradition" (its natures of predominance and bonding) that are even more rigid than those traditions recognized today.

The history of the self does not always relate with the search for self reality as it does in Astari's works. In this exhibition, the works of **Mella Jaarsma**, **Laksmi Shitaresmi**, **Firman Ichsan**, **Altje Uly**, and **Nindityo Adipurnomo** adopt the history of the self as the perspective in the search of hidden realities. The representations of the history of the self in Nindityo Adipurnomo's, Mella Jaarsma's and Altje Uly's may read as statements that show the domination of bio politics that causes us to be unable to "control" our own bodies. The works of Mella Jaarsma and Altje Uly represent quite clearly the colonization over women's bodies by various **texts** prepared on the basis of moral principles, religious rules and even scientific studies. Altje Uly's work entitled "Inside-Outside" shows that human bodies are no longer the citadels for "the I" that has a soul and a spirit. The body under domination merely turns to be a slight borderline separating the outer and the inner realities.

Firman Ichsan explores the history of the self and goes farther on to his immediate living environment. By this approach he comes to find the image of the Indonesian middle class that is so hard to define by means of economic research because of the difficulty in income ranking. Firman Ichsan approaches the issue from the perspective of cosmopolitan culture so heavily influenced by the conditions globalization brings along. This middle class comprises workers - from receptionists to chief directors and through corporation owners - who share the identical "culture" and "cultural space". Together they absorb global information, together do they work at high rise buildings in big cities, and together also will they go to pass the evenings in the café and at night clubs. However these middle-class workers seemingly identical in their appearances are in reality highly heterogeneous because of the differences in their income and educational levels.

The two works of Ichsan in this exhibition represent the presence of those workers with different lucks in the café life. As I read it, there are directors and playboys looking for fun by wasting their

money, the receptionist who lingers on, reluctant to go home to her rented shabby room measuring two to one meters. In his two paintings Firman Ichsan represents the emotions of women desperate for some wider space of life by means of grave colors and emphatic deformation.

The inclination to adopt the history of the self as the perspective in observing realities explains the tendency to take up personal issues as seen in all the works presented at this exhibition. The art discourses that give prominence to social problems will take these works as showing no social concern so that they do not deal with shared values. In fact, in the condition of being dominated by techno-industrial signs there are great obstacles in the search for values from the perspectives that give eminence to social problems. A lot of public opinion versions - signs produced by the media and various myths coming from advertisement presentations and the modern world systems as well - surround this issue. These opinions, signs and myths are the **predominant representations** that often no longer have signification space. In such a condition, personal problems provide little windows left for the search of meanings in reality. These personal problems or issues have some spiritual space that resists the penetration, not to say domination, of techno-industrial signs due to their substantial difference. Techno-industrial signs carry in them the characteristics of materialism since they belong to the development of Western society concentrating on the exploration of the material world - this is the basis for the Western superiority in the production sector.

That spiritual space functions as the "emergency exit" that enables **sublimation** in facing the siege of the techno-industrial signs. In the theory of aesthetics, sublimation represents attempts made by the self to wipe out the traces of being terrorized and cornered and it involves spiritual sensitiveness and awareness. Sublimation *vis a vis* the siege of techno-industrial signs underlies post-modern thinking and the development of contemporary art in dealing with the reality of the **sur-real** that is not material in nature, or, the reality behind realities.

At this exhibition the tendency to feature the *sur-real* reality is observable in **Nyoman Nuarta's** sculpture representing a male executive's "wings" being eaten up by fire and **Lucia Hartini's** painting that represents a disastrous fire extending beyond the television screen. But it is necessary here to give some notes on the tendency of these two artists to wipe out the border line between the reality and the reality behind realities. In the case of the Western society, reality is necessarily material while in the case of Nyoman Nuarta and Lucia Hartini it is not necessarily so.

Nyoman Nuarta's conviction concerning what is real, which bears the influence of the Bali-Hinduism perspective, underlines the disagreement. For Nyoman Nuarta, reality does not merely include the reality in the real, material world (*sekala* in the Balinese language). Reality also consists of what is real in the virtual world (the Balinese call it *niskala*). In the perspective of the Balinese-Hinduism, these dimensions of reality correlate and form different layers of reality. This conviction necessarily underlies all his representations that are marked with sublimation. For Nyoman Nuarta, his representations of the *sur-real* reality are the representations of the real.

Sublimation taking place when the destruction of the self does not go to the extent of effecting terrors leads to other manifestations of artistic expressions. Existentialistic aesthetics theorizes that sublimation does not transform pains to pleasures but transforms pains to pains that do not terrorize.<sup>9</sup> In my opinion, this theory is adoptable for observing the trends of most artists at this exhibition in representing realities in their works. Faced with the surrounding techno-industrial signs, these artists do not seem to resist or alter, or, else, discard those signs. Instead, they just make use of such dominant signs by deconstructing their images and structures. This tendency is quite obvious in the works of **Arin Dwianto** and **Nindityo Adipurnomo**.

Arin Dwianto makes use of physiology drawings he finds in medical journals to represent human



bodies. He admits that such schematic drawings of the human body make it easier for him to modify the structure of the human body in his works. By this he aims at, in his own words, representing "the visual radicalization of the images of the human body".

Nindityo takes up the issue of human body by presenting found objects and ready made objects such as wigs, hair pins, hair nets, bras, and condoms that he refers to as objects attached to the body, or, more specifically, objects attached to certain parts of the human body. An installation of his, which deals with the relation between the body and traditions, deconstructs the images and positions of those objects. This work presents a photograph of a traditional wig for a Javanese lady hanging down from a man's face, not the back of his head. Below this photo he places the traditional wig but made from stone. This work is titled "Not I. Am I?"

i<sup>1</sup>The expression "not me" sounds more appropriate and is indeed in common use, yet the grammatically correct one is "not I" that is not common.

2. In **Illuminations**, Walter Benjamin. Verso, London 1983

4. In **Simulations**, Jean Baudrillard. Semiotext, New York, 1983.

5. In **Michel Foucault's Force and Flight, Towards an Ethic of Thought**. Bernauer W. James. Humanities Press. New Jersey. 1993.

5. The term "contemporary art" can no longer be taken as literally signifying *the art of today*. In art discourses throughout the world, the phrase has come to take a terminological notion. While there are various explanations of contemporary art, one of its basic characteristics in comparison to modern art is its distinctive platform. This is by no means just a matter of different styles. That is why the term "contemporarism" sometimes being heard these days in discussing contemporary art around us is potentially misleading. The reason is that the adoption of "isms" characterizes modern art discourses when it comes to identifying styles (a change in styles based on linear historicism is taken as indicating progress) that no longer have relevance in contemporary art discourses.

6. In the Jungian psychological theory, the collective subconscious contains the drive to rebel, the outbreak of which cannot be fully known. The drive has both the creative and destructive energies at once.

7. In a conversation with me quite recently, Pramudya Ananta Toer launched a cultural testimony. According to him, throughout the development of the Indonesian modern society, since the early Twentieth Century, the individual ethic has been hitherto refused. This ethic is nicknamed as individualism, he said, and is interpreted as having the potential to destroy collectivity and communal cooperation (*kegotong-royongan*). Pramudya sees the eminence given to collectivity as indicating an underdeveloped society; moreover, he observes that this underdevelopment is the basis of the aggressive social behavior as is visible today.

8. Some time in 1940 or so Soedjojono made a sketch of a half-dog human being. The text upon it reads, "It's a pity, we aren't dogs". Soedjojono told me (in 1979) how the sketch expresses strong feelings that then arose; if he were just a dog he would have been able to let out all his sexual desire right away without ever considering any norms whatsoever. He was indeed a humanist. That is why he regarded animalism, that was really there inside him then, improper. That is the reason for him to keep the secret concerning the background of the work (this sketch ever aroused controversies just because of the uncertain background of the making). And Soedjojono never transferred the sketch to the canvas to make a painting. Comparing Ugo's and Soedjojono's half-dog humans, in Ugo's works there is not any concern to discuss humanism that rigidly distinguishes human behavior from its animal counterpart. However Ugo's paintings of half-dog humans, which are based on personal experiences, imply a kind of remorse with just a tinge of humanistic impression over the questions of why people regard and treat others as dogs and why people have indeed the qualities of dogs ("You think I'm a dog?" – a polyphonies question).

9. Edmund Burke's observation (launched in the 1950's).

6

7

8

9