

Reminiscing Yankee Architecture through Some Case Studies in Indonesia

Nabilla Yananggita Putri, Rizka Fadila Muhammad, Nadya Agyanata, Ranti Shevadita, Putu Ayu P. Agustiananda

Department of Architecture, Universitas Islam Indonesia

Email: 18512054@students.uui.ac.id

ABSTRACT: *Indonesian architecture is influenced by cultural, historical and geographical diversity in Indonesia. The attackers, invaders, and traders brought cultural changes that greatly adhered to the style and technique of building construction. This research aims to analyze the development of early independence architecture especially on the existence of Yankee style including the characteristic, philosophical aspect, and the designer's influence on the building. It focused on identifying three cases of yankee architecture which are Apotek Sputnik Semarang, Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia, and Oesman Soegianto's House. The method used is descriptive with a comparative study approach. The result shows the comparison on the shape and the designer's influence of the three case studies. Moreover, the unique appearance represented on yankee architecture is a celebration of the new era of being an independent nation.*

Keywords: Indonesian architecture, early independence architecture, yankee architecture, yankee characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

For the people of Indonesia, the 1950s represented a time when things were relatively calm and relaxed. This period was a respite from the chaos of life ravaged since the arrival of Japan, physical revolution against the Netherlands and the Allies, to diplomacy that ended in the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. Entering this period, the Indonesian people were first confronted with a tabula rasa, a vast horizon waiting to be sailed as a sovereign nation. There is a desire to 'fill independence' with whatever is deemed relevant, appropriate and necessary.

During the Dutch colonial era, architecture courses were actually taught as part of civil engineering education. However, after October 1950, the first architecture school was established at the Bandung Institute of Technology which was formerly called Bandoeng Technische Hogeschool (1923). The discipline of architecture began with 20 students with 3 Dutch instructors, basically the instructor imitating the education system from his native place at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. Architecture education leads to the mastery of building design expertise, with the focus on limited parameters, namely function, climate, construction, and building materials.

Since the conflict in West Irian in 1955 all teachers from the Netherlands were repatriated to their countries, except V.R. van Romondt who humbly insisted on living and leading an architectural school until 1962. During his leadership, architectural education remained enriching by giving aesthetic aspects, west to the land of Indonesia. Around the early 1910s, several works by Dutch architects such as Jakarta Kota Station, Savoy Homann Hotel and Villa Isola in Bandung had given a new cultural and historical view into a design consideration. Van Romondt's ambition is to create a new "Indonesian Architecture", which is rooted in traditional principles with a modern twist to meet the needs of contemporary society. In other word "Indonesian Architecture" is the application of the ideas of

functionalism, rationalism, and simplicity of modern design, but very much inspired by traditional architectural principles.

This 'transition' period was interesting because the architectural profession in Indonesia seemed to be reintroduced to the public. A service that was mostly enjoyed only by foreign institutions or by the colonial elite, now can be enjoyed by ordinary people. As in various places on earth, Indonesia is watching and absorbing various cultural and technological developments from other parts of the world. Various fresh forms were introduced to add to the existing vocabulary form and architectural construction. The building is not only conceived as a sturdy, static, and elegant composition but also played as it is light, agile, and cheerful.

Buildings are often more climate calculated. Teritisan is a necessity to build in Indonesia, but the form is no longer the same. Although limited to the availability of building materials, especially those made by factories, as well as technical limitations, the art of design does not necessarily give up. The shield roof no longer dominates. Window protective fins are more creative and shaped. The courage of the form expression at this time led to the birth of a new architectural style in Indonesia, namely Yankee (Jengki) style. The term "Yankee" refers to a unique and anti-mainstream form.

Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s were encouraged by the dynamics of national politics which each plays a role in discussing what is meant as national identity, how the role of historical aspect in spreading the national identity, and what can be used as national identity. Entering the 1960s, public discourse was directed at how art and art were directed at an ideal, which was outside and greater than itself.

With the aim to know more about the development of architecture in the early independence era, this research was conducted by comparing three cases of the buildings which developed in around the 1950s.

Problem Formulation

1. What is the philosophy behind the appearance of yankee style around the 1950s?
2. How far is the influence of its designer/owner towards shaping the form of yankee?
3. How does yankee style contribute to the development of architecture in early independence?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of Indonesia's independence architecture began after the declaration of Indonesia independence and the restoration of the Dutch government in 1945. The aim is to shape a new national character. After Indonesian independence, Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, insisted on eliminating every form related to colonialism.

The period after the proclamation was the time of the emergence of the Indonesian architects. Depending on their training and expertise they may be divided into two groups. The first group mostly comes from the former of Dutch company, namely Susilo, Suhamir, and Silaban. Their work reflects on their roof which is mostly inspired by Dutch classical and rationalism. The second group mostly comes from the first architecture school in Bandung. They included Suhartono (son of Susilo), Hasan Purbo, and Achman Noeman. They had a more contemporary outlook and oriented to the Modern Movement.

According to (Tjahjono, G, 2002), the style in early independence mostly influenced by modernism architecture because the political situation at that time influenced the mindset of the people towards modern architectural theories and concepts. It is also correspondence with Soekarno's leadership, "modernity" was given by symbolic interests that referred to national unity and strength. Modern, revolutionary, and heroic in architecture lead us to a massive development program.

Corresponding with the concept of modernity, there are a lot of philosophies and values applied in the early independence's building design. Soekarno has a big role in the development of early independent architecture which started with the development of Monumen Nasional (Monas). This is where the two Indonesian architects have a big role, they are Sudarsono and Silaban, who has won the contest about Monas construction. The idea of putting the flame on top was the symbol of the ideals of the Indonesian people to reach the stars in the sky.

Approaching the Asean Games IV in 1962, Indonesia had the opportunity to host the event. Large-scale development is carried out intuitively to prepare for the ASEAN Games IV to run well. The two main buildings that will be used to support the Asean Games are Stadium Gelora Bung Karno and Hotel Indonesia. These two building designs were influenced by modern architecture. Hotel Indonesia not only carries the value of traditional Indonesian tradition or culture but also answers the needs of modern spaces. This is connected to traditional artworks that are integrated with modern building systems.

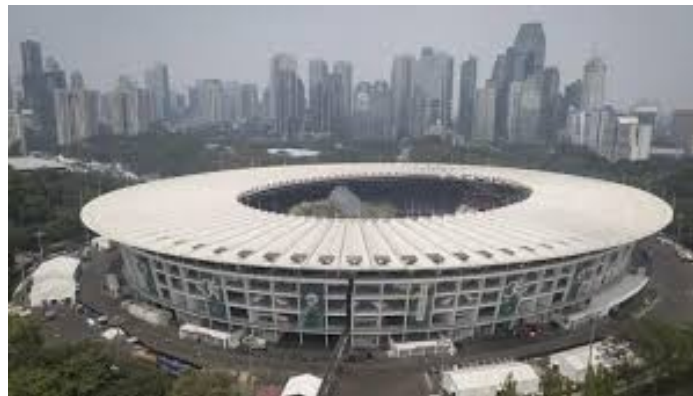


Figure 1. Gelora Bung Karno



Figure 2. Hotel Indonesia in the mid-1960s

The modernism mindset is what drives the formation of a new style which is very different from the colonial-style that is called Jengki style (Roesmanto, 2004). The word of Jengki comes from the word 'Yankee'. Quoted from Sukada (2004), the term was imported from America and had a negative connotation, namely soldiers who fought for unification in the civil war in America. Another source, Widayat (2006), said that its origin is estimated from the scene in the *cowboy* film when the position of its legs forming tilted horses which became an inspiration to give birth to Yankee-style architecture. Look at the trend in the 70s, the term 'Jengki' is usually used to describe the unique or anti-mainstream things such

as Jengki pants, Jengki mebel, etc. Regardless of the actual meaning of the term, Jengki has become a new identity that can separate itself from colonialism.

Jengki has its own characteristic and unique form. There are the form character of Jengki style that extracted from Totok Roesmanto, Imam Prakoso dan Budi Sukada opinion:

1. Tilted wall
The wall was tilted into shaped like a pentagon which shows an anti-geometry characteristic that usually appears on the colonial building
2. Gable roof, both symmetrical and asymmetrical with a 35-degree slope
The roof does not meet and does not have spoilers. The upright area between the two sloping roof planes is engineered into a ventilation hole.
3. Roof planks with triangle ornament/bargeboard
4. Rooster with a variety of model
Used as ventilation holes for air changes, and also as a medium for expressing new aesthetics.
5. Verandah as an entrance
6. Asymmetric form
Asymmetric form in the architectural elements such as door, window, and jamb

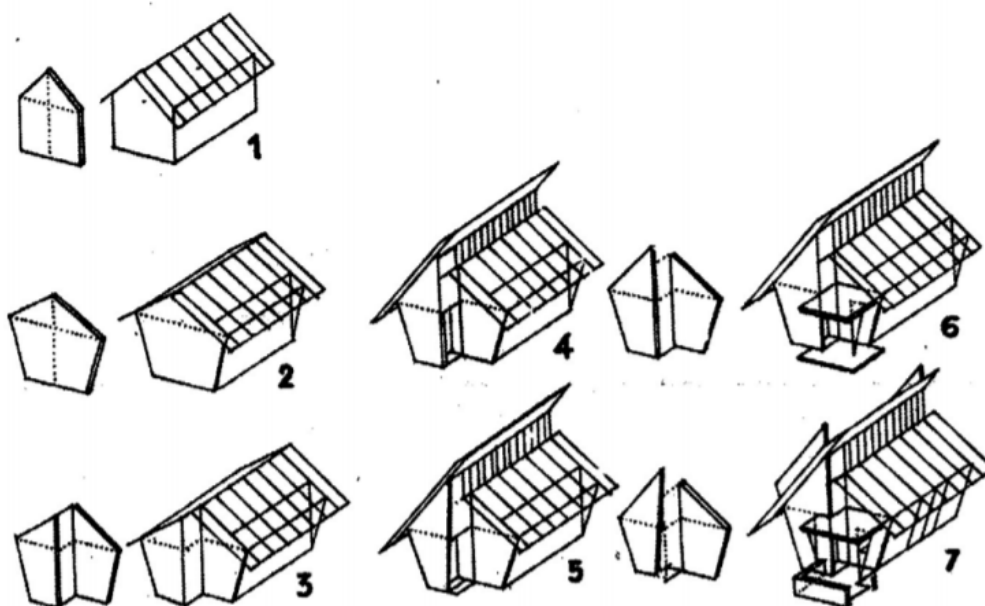


Figure 3. Totok Roesmanto's sketch, rumah kampung that develops into a variety of Jengki style

Yankee classified it as a heritage building. The local government of Jakarta in Perda DKI No. 9 1999 Architectural Landmarks article 8, has designated Yankee house in Pakubuwono VI Street Jakarta as a B-class heritage site, referring to its historical events, site period, quality, and rarity. Therefore the owner cannot intentionally demolish the building or modify the facade, roof, paint, ornamental features of the building. As long as the principal of the original building still applied, the changes and improvements are still possible. Even though Yankee has its own unique characteristic and resembles the new identity of Indonesia, it has a very short lifetime. As a result, Yankee's presence becomes extinct, and only understood by several people.

RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research paper is qualitative with the aims to answer some certain problems or phenomena descriptively. The research was conducted in March until July 2020. The data for this research are collected by gathering the materials from reliable literature sources such as books, articles, etc. The data that have been collected then analyzed using a case study approach, that is an in depth study of the problem that has been formulated in a comparative way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Apotek Sputnik Semarang

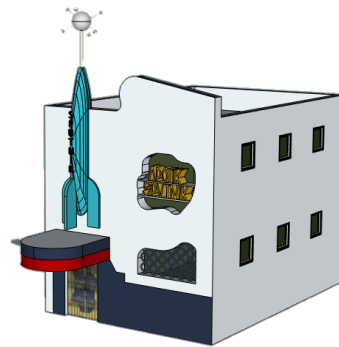
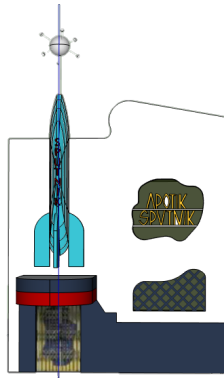


Figure 4. Front elevation of *Apotek Sputnik* **Figure 5.** Axonometry of *Apotek Sputnik*

Apotek Sputnik located in Semarang was a renovation project in 1958. It was designed by **Oei Tjong An** graduated from Ecole des Beaux Arts, Geneva in Swiss (1939 - 1945) taking advertisement design as his major. He is an artist, an automotive enthusiast and an organizer. His works vary from architecture until exhibition and interior which was used to being known as unique, expressive and different. First debut of Oei Tjong An on architecture was started by designing a project for some booths on *Pasar Malam Amal Semarang* in 1949 on the field located on *Ki Mangunsarkoro* street.



Figure 6 - 9. Details of *Apotek Sputnik* showing its intriguing furniture

The *Apotek Sputnik* approach to determine certain features related to yankee style is a lot affected by the background of its designer who is an artist. Thus the form of the building could have appeared from the designer's own thoughts, preferension, and experiment. This kind of approach is used in many other yankee style buildings for instance in Oesman Soegianto's house that the building represented his experience of doing sea voyage.

Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia

The building is the first design of fresh graduate architect **Harjono Sigit** after studying at school of architecture ITB in 1964. His study was exactly influenced by modernism concerns where form should be followed by function or form follows fiasco, where at the day the function is a garage but at the night it can turn out to be a food stall. An establishment of industrialized material such as concrete and iron was also affecting how he shapes his design. On the other hand, his lecture still reminded him about the importance of contextual architecture especially in tropical regions.

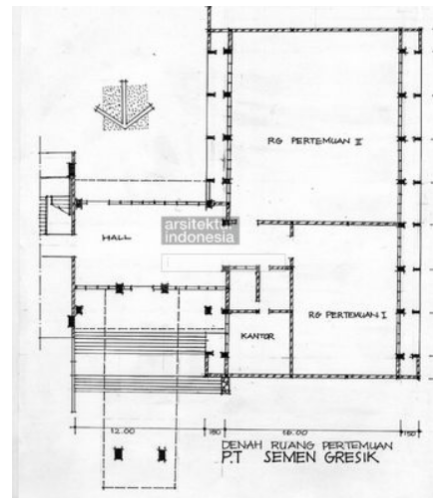


Figure 10 & 11. Portrait & Plan view of *Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia* (left to right)

As a fresh graduate he implemented directly what he had studied by designing *Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia* is located in Gresik, East Java. Some features of the building indicate that it was trying to introduce the more theoretical-explained of yankee architecture.



Figure 12 - 14. Perspectives of *Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia*

Oesman Soegianto's House

Built in 1960 by an *aannemer* (contractor) named Drajat, the villa located in Malang, East Java and belonged to **Oesman Soegianto** when firstly built. Oesman Soegianto, a Chinese-Indonesian war veteran, sailed from Makassar to East Java in the 1930s which this experience is indicated on some decorative elements on the villa for his memorable sea voyage. He became a successful merchant in Malang after his fights and campaigns against the Japanese and Dutch during the 1940s.



Figure 15. Picture of Oesman Soegianto’s house

From his sailing journey, Oesman got inspiration for his home. Some symbols are featured on the house such as a maritime-themed iron grille with a fish and a sailing ship and a stanchion shaped like a lambda holding up the canopy in the front veranda. The building itself is originally an Indische style featuring many contemporary parts such as faux portholes, oblique cutaway windows, and typical Indische-period rock cladding. Similar features are also found in the interior of living areas.

These are yankee characters represented on the building. The case studies emphasized the influence of yankee architecture as an expression of freedom in the early independence era with two different approaches caused by the educational background of its designer.

Table 1. Comparison Study of the Building

	<i>Apotek Sputnik</i>	<i>Gedung PPS PT. Semen Indonesia</i>	<i>Oesman Soegianto's House</i>
Form	A box with intriguing accessories from its miniature until the opening shape	Two box of mass that hanging on a wide span concrete arch	Indische style building

Opening	Fluid form combining iron with its concrete structure with contrast color	Series of square windows	Oblique cutaway window
Roof	Flat roof	Flat roof with addition of supporting structure	Intersecting gable roof
Facade	Unique rocket miniature exactly placed above the entrance as a visual notion and iron-made writing of 'apotik sputnik'	Unique form also as shading devices restrained from direct impact to the room thus there always exist a corridor in between	Maritime-themed white iron grille with a fish and a sailing ship. Also the pillars in the shape of the Greek letter λ (lambda) on the terrace
Furniture	Designed by its designer having a harmonious impression with its building elements such as floor, ceiling, and openings	-	-
Building material	Customized shape iron until fluid-made concrete	Concrete which is easily formed for certain purpose	Iron, concrete for asymmetric column and other parts, rock cladding as found many in Indische period
Interior	Contrast color many elements such as door, cupboard, and table	-	Featured contemporer character

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the results that have been explained, it can be concluded that the philosophy behind the unique appearance of yankee architecture in the early independence era is the tribute to the new era of freedom which is independent. The design of the building is mostly indicated by the owner or designer's insight. Thus the building in this era is not based on the market demand but more about the personal taste or vision of the designer. Therefore the result is more like an artwork.

In this era of freedom, the designer may influence the shape of the building up to the detail such as the shape of the windows, door, or even the furniture. Somehow the building in this era for instance mentioned in the case study (*Apotek Sputnik*) applied the decorated shed theory by Robert Venturi.

Early independence period is the time where people are more focused on themselves which then reflects a strong unique character that is inspired by the modernist movement. It is originated from modern architecture and then formed a new style called Yankee

(Jengki) style. Therefore the development of architecture in the early independence era is still much influenced by modern architecture.

The treasures that are left from the yankee style building need to be preserved as a part of the architecture journey. Moreover those could be the way of reminiscing that kind of spirit while experiencing the independence. The freedom of designing processes without any attachment to a certain style and giving a touch of our uniqueness is an excellent value to be woken up. Further research still needs to be done since the lack of references related to this topic, yankee architecture.

REFERENCES

- Gunawan, Adeline. 2016. *Jengki: Tafsir terhadap Budaya Barat demi Membangun Identitas Lokal*.
- Gunawan, Wahyu., Rizaldi, Faizal. 2015. *Katalog Pameran Arsip Arsitektur Harjono Sigit*. Surabaya: Kami-Arsitek-Jengki.
- Nugroho, Rifandi. 2018. Harjono Sigit: Generasi Baru Arsitek Jawa Timur. <http://www.arsitekturindonesia.org/museum/> (accessed March 11, 2020)
- Hendro Wibowo, Doni., Wariyan Pribadi, Krisna. 2019. Arsitek Oei Tjong An 1912 - 1982. <https://www.suaramerdeka.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020)
- Craft, Mumu. 2016. Catatan Kuliah : Arsitektur Indonesia Pasca Kemerdekaan. <https://flanel4world.wordpress.com/> (accessed April 22, 2020)
- Khalil, Tariq. 2017. Indonesia's Cool "Yankee" Architecture. <https://indonesiadesign.com/> (accessed July 15, 2020)
- Soepandi, S. 2016. Catatan Kaki: Arsitektur di Awal Indonesia. <https://cungss.wordpress.com/2016/02/06/arsitektur-di-awal-indonesia/> (accessed July 15, 2020)
- Prakoso, I. 2002. *Arsitektur Jengki, Perkembangan Sejarah yang Terlupakan*.
- Prijotomo, Joseft. 1997. *Wacana Arsitektur Jengki, Lokakarya Nasional Pengajaran Sejarah Arsitektur 3*.
- Respati Wikantiyoso dan Pindo Tutuko. 2009. *Kearifan Lokal dalam Perencanaan dan Perancangan Kota : untuk Mewujudkan Arsitektur Kota yang Berkelanjutan*. Malang: Penerbit Grup Konservasi Arsitektur dan Kota. Hal 23.
- Roesmanto, Totok. 2004. "Menjengki Diri". *Harian Suara Merdeka*. 25 Juli 2004.
- Setyabudi, I., Antariksa, N. A. 2011. Tipo-Morfologi Arsitektur Rumah Jengki Di Kota Malang Dan Lawang. *Jurnal Arsitektur Fakultas Teknik Universitas Brawijaya*.
- Sujiman, Panuti, Zoest, Aart Van. 1992. *Serba Serbi Semiotika*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

- Sukada, Budi. 2004. "Langgam Jengki Langgam Khas Indonesia". Disarikan dari Bahan Kuliah Tjahjono, G. 2002. Indonesian Heritage: Arsitektur. *Jakarta: Buku*.
- Widayat, R. 2006. Spirit dari Rumah Gaya Jengki Ulasan tentang Bentuk, Estetika, dan Makna. *Jurnal Dimensi Interior* 14, (2): 80-89.