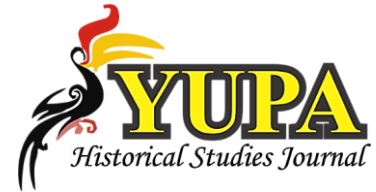


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## The Concept of Love of Country in 19th-Century Painting

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**Abstract** Love for the country does not only focus on the physical resistance carried out at that time but can also take other forms. In this case, painting artists realized their love for their homeland through visual aspects. This research explores the forms of the concept of love for the country in Indonesian painting, especially in the 19th century. This research uses the historical method with five stages: topic selection, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The result of this research is that paintings in the 19th century illustrate the concept of patriotism as seen from the objects depicted. The object of the painting is not only fixated on the role and power of the colonial nation but also gives the impression that the Indonesian nation also has a role. This can be seen from some of Raden Saleh's paintings such as *Daendels' potert*, the painting *Between Life and Death*, and the painting of Prince Diponegoro's arrest, which gives the meaning that Indonesians also played a role in historical events that occurred at that time.

**Keywords:** Love of Country, Painting, Raden Saleh

**Abstrak** Cinta tanah air tidak hanya berfokus pada perlawanan fisik yang dilakukan pada masa itu akan tetapi juga dapat berupa bentuk lain. Dalam hal ini para seniman seni lukis mewujudkan rasa cinta tanah airnya melalui aspek visual. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi bentuk-bentuk konsep cinta tanah air dalam seni lukis Indonesia utamanya pada abad ke 19. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode sejarah dengan lima tahap yaitu pemilihan topik, heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah seni lukis pada abad 19 menggambarkan konsep cinta tanah air yang dilihat dari objek yang dilukiskan. Objek lukisan tidak hanya terpaku pada peran dan kekuasaan bangsa kolonial, namun juga memberikan kesan bahwa bangsa Indonesia juga memiliki peran. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari beberapa lukisan milik Raden Saleh seperti *potert Daendels*, lukisan *between life and death*, dan lukisan penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro yang memberikan makna bahwa bangsa Indonesia juga berperan dalam peristiwa sejarah yang terjadi pada masa itu.

**Kata kunci :** Cinta Tanah Air, Seni Lukis, Raden Saleh



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## **INTRODUCTION**

History and patriotism are two things that are inseparable from each other. This is closely related to the role of history, which provides an overview of the nation's history that can nurture and shape the love of the nation's homeland for its successors. Studying history also impacts how one can take lessons from the past to build a better future. This research explores the expression of patriotism and love for one's homeland in the paintings of 19th-century artists. Through the analysis of visual artworks, this research aims to understand how artists of the period expressed patriotism and love for the country. This research focuses on identifying motifs, symbols and themes that reflect the spirit of nationalism in 19th-century paintings.

Love for the country is a sentiment and a set of behaviours that show pride, loyalty, and high appreciation for the nation's language, culture, economy, and politics (Suyadi, 2013). In this context, patriotism refers to pride and attachment to the state and nation. Patriotism can be demonstrated through a strong sense of national pride. This research focuses on how Indonesians express and view their country and society from an Indonesian perspective.

In the history material in this research, patriotism focuses on how Indonesians express their homeland from an Indonesian perspective. This is closely related to the geopolitics of the Indonesian nation itself. Geopolitics and patriotism have political and emotional connections that influence an individual's perspective and experience of their country. Geopolitics focuses on politics, geography, and global interactions. At the same time, patriotism refers to pride and loyalty to one's birthplace or residence. This is in line with the elements of geopolitics, which discuss borders with neighboring countries, natural resources, and international relations (Dodds, 2007; Flint, 2021; Stoddard, 2015).

The existence of classical geopolitics shaped by the Dutch through their paintings provides outsiders with a geographical and socio-cultural picture of the Indonesian situation. However, this only focuses on the European perspective and shows beautiful things. Then, as a form of patriotism, Indonesian artists began to challenge this and provide a new perspective. This is shown through paintings that depict Indonesia's fundamental social, cultural, natural, and economic conditions from the perspective of Indonesians, such as Raden Saleh's painting of the capture of Diponegoro, Daendels' portrait, and the painting *Between Life and Death*. The concept of Western perspective is considered irrelevant due to the concealment and discrimination in the paintings.

## **METHOD**

This research uses the historical method with five stages, namely topic selection, source collection (heuristics), verification (source criticism), interpretation and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). In collecting sources, the author researched primary and secondary sources

both offline and online. The primary sources in this article are paintings obtained on the Rijksmuseum website, then reinforced with secondary and tertiary sources in the form of books and several journals on 19th-century paintings and literature on the country's love. Then, source criticism is carried out by criticising the validity of the source by seeing whether the painting matches the year of the painting. Then, the sources that have been criticised are interpreted into a single unit by adhering to intersubjectivity. The last stage is historiography, where the author writes the entire interpretation into an article that the public can read.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Painting in the 19th Century**

The 19th century is an essential period in the history of painting, characterised by various artistic movements and developments. A critical movement during this period was the emergence of "mooi indie" paintings in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) (Utari, 2020; Utari & Wijaya, 2023; Wirajati, 2023). These paintings represent the encounter between Western artistic techniques and aesthetics with the idea of a beautiful Dutch East Indies landscape. The existence of these paintings is a tool to analyse the era's social, cultural and societal conditions.

In 1830, most of Java was controlled by the Dutch, which resulted in the development of painting objects painted by painters. Before the 19th century, paintings generally only focused on port areas that were the centre of trade and government. However, since the 19th century, it has expanded to inland areas, portraits, and infrastructure built by the government (Huda, 2015; Protschky, 2011; Ricklefs, 2008). Not only painting beauty like *mooi indie*, but painters also painted portraits of government officials and infrastructure as a form of legitimising power.

For example, in the 19th century, many painters represented Dutch power with paintings of the postwar and the Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg (Protschky, 2011). These two painting objects became a legitimisation of the power possessed by the governor-general who was in power then. In addition, these two objects became a form of modern and advanced infrastructure brought to Indonesia by the Dutch East Indies government.

The Botanical Garden in Buitenzorg is one of the tangible forms of legitimising Dutch power in Indonesia. In this place, there is a governor's office/palace painters often depict. The palace collapsed in 1834 when a significant earthquake struck Buitenzorg. Willem Troost's (II) painting, 1834 - 1836, depicts how Buitenzorg Palace mainly was damaged. The palace was attractive to the official elite, who wanted to be portrayed with the palace in the background. Most depictions of people in the palace are of well-dressed people who are synonymous with rich people or officials (Protschky, 2011).



Figure 1. Front View of Buitenzorg Palace during the Earthquake of 10 October 1834, Willem Troost (II), 1834 – 1836 (Troost (II), 1834-1836.)

In the context of political power, Buitenzorg Palace also had a relationship with obedience and legitimacy. As the centre of Dutch colonial political and administrative power, the palace symbolised colonial domination and control in Indonesia (Protschky, 2011). This is reinforced by the governor-generals who wanted to be portrayed against the backdrop of Buitenzorg Palace. For example, the portrait of Jean Chrétien Baud, who served as governor-general from 1833-1835, is shown.



Figure 2. Portrait of Jean Chrétien Baud, Governor-General ad interim of the Dutch East Indies, Raden Sarief Bastaman Saleh, 1837 (Saleh, 1837)

The claim of portrait painting interspersed with a building or land was inspired by the customs of the English in the 18th and 19th centuries. Land claims in England were visually represented through paintings of their colonies, showing the landscapes and territories they had conquered (John, E., 2011; Tobin, 2011). The Netherlands in this case did not have the tradition of land and rural aristocracy as in England (Jardine, 2008). Therefore, the Dutch government, also influenced by this culture, began characterising itself by what it had in its colonies. In the case of Indonesia, however, it was common for governors-general to ask painters to depict them with

government-owned infrastructure. This was a manifestation of the absolute power of the Dutch over the government.

In addition to Buitenzorg Palace, another place that is also the painting object is the postweg or postal highway built during the Daendels period. This highway was built to fulfil transport needs to support military interests and economic exploitation (Hartatik, 2016; Hermawan, 2020; Usman & Husin, 2022). The Postweg is often painted because it is considered the face of the development progress in the Dutch East Indies. Many painters were commissioned to travel and paint various scenes on the postweg. For example, the painter Abraham Salm often painted various scenes around the postweg. One is the painting *Gezicht op een Waterval en landweg in Preanger op Java*, painted in 1869. This painting depicts the postweg in Preanger and the view of the waterfall and surrounding hills.



**Figure 3.** A view of waterfalls and country roads in Preanger, Java, Johan Conrad Greive, after Abraham Salm, 1869 (Salm, 1869)

The importance of postweg was also illustrated by Raden Saleh in his 1838 portrait of Herman Willem Daendels. In this painting, Daendels is depicted holding binoculars with the postweg construction site at the back (Nirwana, 2019; Protschky, 2011). In addition, this painting also shows Daendels pointing to a map describing an area where the postweg was built, namely Mega Mendong 1810. Daendels' painting illustrates that postweg was considered necessary as a claim for the governors-general to legitimise power.

### **Love of the Motherland**

Geopolitics provides a visual way of looking at the world through maps, tables and photographs. Essentially, geopolitical writers focus on the global stage as a starting point for analysis. This interest in the "god's eye view of the world" is often of great interest to people outside the country (Dodds, 2007:5). This statement is closely related to the existence of painting in Indonesia in the 19th century. Indonesia was called *mooi indie* or *Molek Hindia*, which the

government deliberately gave to describe the condition of Indonesia at that time. This was interesting because Indonesia was considered an exotic and beautiful country for Europeans.

This concept relates to classical geopolitics, a way of thinking considered objective and global. However, it has become a European endeavour to promote a particular political agenda (Flint, 2021). The material used in this study shows Indonesia's natural, social, and cultural conditions to other Europeans. This is an attraction for potential tourists to travel to Indonesia. In addition, classical geopolitics also relates to the classification of the earth and its inhabitants into a hierarchy formed by Europeans. This justifies civilising people through empires, wars, or alliances (Flint, 2021; Haushofer, 1928).

This concept is also supported by Said (2003), where depictions of the East, including Indonesia, tend to portray them as "other" or "exotic" using typical stereotypes. Easterners are often portrayed as mysterious, primitive, passive, and uncivilised. They are also considered objects of research and domination by orientalists, leading to the suppression and dehumanisation of Eastern culture and identity (Said, 2003). This eventually led to the concept of patriotism among Indonesian artists.

Artworks created by Indonesian artists often depict the actual social, cultural and natural conditions from the perspective of the Indonesian people (Burhan, 2008; Pandawangi et al., 2019). Instead of focusing solely on Western concepts of beauty and exoticism, these paintings often depict the tragedies and realities of socio-cultural conditions where social inequality is evident. Indonesian artists express their love for their country by pointing out the exploits of the ruling government, aiming to show what outsiders want to see instead of what is happening in their society.

There are many forms of patriotism that painters in the 19th century portrayed both explicitly and implicitly. One of the most passionate painters was Raden Saleh, whose paintings protested against the conditions of the people oppressed by the Dutch government. For example, the Daendels painting described earlier, in which Raden Saleh depicts that Daendels gave the order to build the postweg. This project was a massive loss for the Indonesian people at that time.

The painting of Prince Diponegoro's arrest intends to oppose the power that oppresses the Indonesian people's struggle and right to independence. This is evident in the visuals and Raden Saleh's intention to depict a different interpretation of Diponegoro's arrest, which Pieneman had painted. Raden Saleh also depicted the capture of Diponegoro, a Javanese prince, from a perspective different from the traditional interpretation of Dutch history. Saleh's painting shows his respect for Diponegoro by depicting him as an angry and defiant figure in the centre of the painting. At the same time, the Dutch officers appear passive and avoid eye contact. In addition, Saleh's painting is more vivid and full of emotion, especially in depicting the grief felt by Diponegoro's followers, compared to Pieneman's painting (Carey, 2004). Raden Saleh's

relationship with the Dutch Crown turned the Diponegoro painting into a proto-nationalist declaration, suggesting that Diponegoro's struggle against foreign colonialism could end Dutch sovereignty in Java (Krauss, 2005).



The Arrest of Diepo Negoro by Lieutenant-General Baron De Kock, Nicolaas Pieneman, c. 1830 - c. 1835  
(Pieneman, 1830-1835.)



The Arrest of Pangeran Diponegoro 1857  
(Kent et al., 2022:46)

The painting "Between Life and Death" reflects Raden Saleh's love for his country. The lion in the painting is a metaphor for the Dutch East Indies government, Europe, or the king. On the other hand, the buffalo (or bull, as some experts say) represents ordinary people, such as farmers, labourers, or Orientals (Fauzie, 2019). Buffaloes are closely related to the lives of Javanese people, who rely on them to plough their rice fields. This painting depicts how the Dutch government controlled the Indonesian people, represented by the buffaloes in the painting. However, the buffaloes are depicted as resisting rather than succumbing to the situation. Raden Saleh shows the ambivalence of perspective in this painting, where the lions and buffaloes are engaged in a fierce battle with no clear winner (Fauzie, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Painting in the 19th century developed from the previous period and was influenced by European painting. In the previous period, around the 17th and 18th centuries, painting objects generally showed the colonised environment, focusing on landscape, topography and coastal paintings. This was because the major cities controlled by the Dutch were generally located in coastal areas and large harbours. However, when Java began to be colonised in the 19th century, the objects of paintings began to vary, not just landscapes. Some paintings developed and brought new nuances by showing love for their homeland through paintings.

Resistance can be in the form of physical attacks against the government and visual aspects that provide an overview of the socio-cultural conditions of the community. This proves that the love for the country is how a painter can represent the existing conditions objectively. This is because, at that time, painters generally depicted Indonesia from what Europeans wanted to see, such as the glamour of the Dutch East Indies. One of the painters who became an example of patriotism and resistance through painting is Raden Saleh, where many of his paintings have meanings related to resistance. Each of his paintings means that the Indonesian people also have a role and presence in moving every historical event. Besides that, each of his paintings indicates that Europeans have oppressed the Indonesian people, especially Javanese, with various policies and evil ways.

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