Chapter 15

Epilogue

What can be learned from an examination of the architecture produced by the Dutch in Indonesia? Does it tell us anything about Indonesia? Does it reflect the Netherlands? Does it show a different aspect of the Dutch from the one apparent in Europe, and how far does this lead to an insight into the nature of the colonial condition? These are some of the questions that should be asked.

In regard to whether Dutch architecture in any way leads us to understand Indonesia, the answer is, 'seldom'. For most of the colonial period, especially the first two centuries, as was suggested in Parts I and II of this thesis, the emphasis was on various kinds of expediency: defensive, commercial, authoritarian. Still less does the borrowed neoclassical grandeur of the nineteenth century reveal anything of Indonesia. In the twentieth century, by and large, the same lack of local influence is apparent.

The exceptions are three. The first is to be found in the use of local skills and materials, and to some extent form, in the country houses of the eighteenth century and the plantation estates of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second is apparent in the evidence of response to climate: the colonnaded, galleried and verandahed offices and houses of the turn of the century until after the First World War are notable examples of that. The third and most important is the work of Maclaine Pont and Karsten. Unlike the former two, this exception is not based on physical response alone, although material factors were always kept in mind by both architects, but far more on cultural understanding. Then the question arises as to whether they were inevitable products of their times or uniquely talented exceptions to the social patterns. The answer to this question is also multiple: on the one hand, they were typical products of the philosophical and political climate in the Netherlands of the years of their education early in the twentieth century. On the other, both men were considered to be individualists standing outside the official main stream even though there were some within it who admired and emulated them.

To the second question, whether architecture in the Indies reflects the Netherlands, the answer is positive but many-sided. On the obvious level, the stylistic trends of Netherlands cites are reflected in much of the surviving early architecture, from

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1. These estates, the grandest of which were in Sumatra, although there were many in Java, merit a detailed study, and would be closely linked with the development of the Indies agricultural export trade and the commercial and maritime history of the Southeast Asia region.
the Calvinistic warehouses and churches of the earlier years to the Berlagian commercial structures and *gezellig* domestic architecture of the later. On the other hand, the signs of international trends such as the popularity of Art Deco and the pursuit of *zakelijkheid* also reflect the Netherlands in so far as they reveal how deeply involved Dutch architects were with, indeed were often the initiators of, the important international movements in twentieth-century architecture.

In another sense the Dutch architecture of the Indies tells us something about Dutch society: the extent to which humanistic and socialist views determined Netherlands political and social planning and execution affected Dutch policies in the Indies. This is to be seen most clearly in the impetus to urban-planning reform and public housing improvement in the first three decades of the twentieth century given by the Ethical Policy and its deeper philosophical underpinnings of such interest to the Socialists, the Hegelians and the Theosophists, among the most important. This conscientious tendency forms a strong contrast with the mostly exploitative, although occasionally paternalistic, attitudes of previous periods, when commercial interests dominated Dutch planning for the Indies and when there was a lack of interest in the country for its own sake.

Yet another aspect of Dutch society revealed in an examination of the architecture is the comparative restraint and modesty of the Dutch, whose economic dominance in the seventeenth century produced no grandiose palaces on the scale of Versailles or Schönbrunn but rather an evenly-distributed bourgeois elegance and economic egalitarianism. With the exception of the neoclassical public buildings of the nineteenth century, and even these are relatively unpretentious, their buildings in Indonesia do not shout of magnificence or imperial might. Nor do they, it can be added, speak of great patrons of architecture or displayers of material wealth.

The answer to the question whether a different aspect of the Dutch from their European characteristics is to be found in their Indies architecture is harder to reach. Certainly the lack of attention to urban development and housing standards that were typical of the early centuries were very different from the urban controls that were exercised in the Netherlands from a very early period. This can be explained in the light of the temporary commitment made to the Indies by most Dutchers; once they were regarding it as a permanent homeland their sense of urban responsibility emerged. This is not to gainsay the psychological cleavage of colonial society so perceptively analysed by Karsten and Maclaine Pont.

How far these tendencies are in fact determined by the colonial situation itself is also hard to establish. Certainly the early division of residential areas according to race is a colonial characteristic - though not restricted to the colonial setting, as United States
towns reveal - although by the twentieth century this restriction was abolished. The different standards of buildings for schools - until the twentieth century indigenous schools were not carefully planned, indeed scarcely existed - and shopping complexes come to mind as examples of colonial discrimination, similarly for hospitals and for general municipal services like water, sewerage, street paving and lighting and public planting. The wide gap between what was provided for the Dutch and what they felt obliged to provide for the Indonesians was quite different from the situation in the Netherlands, and thus can be seen as colonial fall-out. This left its mark on the structure of Indonesian cities and is a legacy that the rapid growth of cities today precludes eliminating. The enlightened attempts by the urban planners of the 1920's and 1930's, inspired by the ideas and standards of Karsten, were cut short by the double limitations of the growing conservatism in the Netherlands and the bite of the Depression.

Architecture is said to be a true mirror of the life and social behaviour of a period. If that is true, we should be able to read from its present features the driving forces of our own times. There is conflicting evidence, however... What is happening to tradition: What stand will finally be taken by responsible educators: These questions seem to touch at the very roots of our civilisation... Good origonal architecture depends just as much on an understanding public as on its creators.

This sounds like a paraphrase of Karsten and Maclaine Pont in the early 1920's. In fact it is Gropius in 1949, and serves to underline the persistence and importance to thoughtful members of society of another of Maclaine Pont's ideas, that architecture is the most social of all the arts. If the architecture of the Dutch in twentieth-century Indonesia reveals only a limited amount about Indonesia and a great deal about the dominance of Dutch ideas, whether suitable or not for the country, it does in fact offer a true mirror of the life and social behaviour of a colonial era.

Whether or not the invading power, as Maclaine Pont described it in his account of Javanese architecture, learned from the colonised people, is another question. There was certainly a broadening of Dutch cultural interests deriving from the Indies experience, but no evidence of deep modifications to Dutch culture or society in the Netherlands. In terms of what was learned in the colony itself, one must admit that with the remarkable exception of Karsten and Maclaine Pont, it was not a great deal, that is to say, beyond the scope of technical achievements such as irrigation and tropical agricultural development. Certainly the signs were visible in the 1920's, with the foundation of the Java Institute and the expansion of scholarly research, that a society might have developed that participated in at least a dualistic culture. Whether or not any truly distinctive Indies civilisation would have emerged given time, renewed economic

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prosperity and a return of Ethical Policy or some similar motivation, is difficult to say, but on the evidence, unlikely.

The greatest hope for the cultural syncretism so desired by Maclaine Pont and Karsten lies in the possibility that the Indonesians will so absorb and modify the European-colonial influences, as they have in the past integrated so many others, that the results will in the end be achieved, as Maclaine Pont predicted, not by the colonisers but the former colonised. The greater likelihood, however, is that the economic colonisation of the developed world will do more to eliminate the culture of the developing than political colonisation ever achieved.

The final question that should be asked is what the body of Dutch architecture in Indonesia contributes to the evolution of architecture itself. To this one should first say that on merely stylistic grounds the contributions of the neoclassical pendopo-influenced villa and the more exuberant flowerings of Art Deco in the hands of Aalbers and Schoemaker are worthy of inclusion in their own right, though neither is strictly speaking an original creation. For fantasy one should not forget Antonisse's extravagant applications of local architectural traditions to avant-garde trends for the transient wonders of the Pasar Gambir.

There is no doubt about the place deserved in the Pantheon by Maclaine Pont and Karsten. Prophets of the social condition of the twentieth century, they understood that no culture exists in a vacuum, that the world is increasingly one world where influences pass and cross to eliminate discrete borders. They grasped that this is inevitable but perceived that balance between the collective and the individual must be maintained, and that only by the preservation of the distinctive elements in a culture can man's sense of identity be maintained.
Appendix A

Indonesian Architecture

It is not possible in an appendix such as this to give a comprehensive account of
the history and variety of Indonesian architecture. It covers a period of at least thirteen
centuries, if one does not include the fourth-century fragments with epigraphy relating to
kingdoms of the time, and a large range of types - from the monumental to the humblest
vernacular, from the sacred to the secular - and styles - from the stone-age houses of
Nias to the princely *pendopos* of Java - that merit a dedicated book.

For the purpose of this thesis, where the relevance of indigenous architecture
chiefly relates to the understanding of it reached by Maclaine Pont and Karsten, it seems
useful to mention the buildings that gave them evidence that there was a continuous
architectural tradition on which they might draw in their efforts to create a suitable new
architecture for the present and future of Indonesia.

Both Karsten and Maclaine Pont distinguished between on the one hand, the
Hindu-Javanese tradition, that had produced, under Indian influence that seems to have
affected Sumatra and Java from as early as the second century A.D., the great temple
complexes of Central Java, and on the other, the autochthonous culture that absorbed
this foreign enrichment. They analysed the structure and symbolism of such Hindu-
Javanese monuments as the great late-eighth- early ninth-century Buddhist temple of
Borobudur (*Figure 120*), with its sophisticated embodiment of the Hindu-Buddhist
cosmogony in a complex architectural expression of the mandala in both section
*Figure 121* and plan. Like the eighth-century Hindu temples of the Dieng Plateau
*Plate 443* and the ninth-century Hindu Siva temple *Figure 122* in *Candi* Loro
Jonggrang at Prambanan, it is a stone structure with terraces ascending from a stone
plinth, rhythmically layered in profile and plan and often richly carved in relief as well as
decorated with standing sculptures. The temples of the thirteenth and fourteenth
centuries in East Java often repeated the forms in brick, as does *Candi* Singosari
*Plate 444*, to name one example.

Although these structures do not overtly derive from specific Indian models, the
architectural techniques are similar, based on trabeation, and so are the materials. What
interested Maclaine Pont and Karsten was less the style of these buildings themselves
than the subjects of the bas reliefs they were so richly decorated with. There are many
scenes from the life of the Buddha in the carvings of Borobudur, and from the Hindu
Ramayana epic in those at Prambanan. The architectural settings depicted in the stories do
not resemble the temples themselves, but clearly derive instead from the extant buildings
known to the sculptors and not the precepts in Indian architectural manuals.
Many images of buildings occur in the carvings, and it is the precedents occurring in such double-roofed pavilions as one depicted on *Candi* Panataran <Plate 445> that seem to suggest indigenous origins for the traditional Indonesian mosque building <Plate 447>. Terra cotta models dug up from the Trawulan soil <Plate 446> offered Majapahit versions of the small pavilions in bas reliefs such as the Panataran one <Plate 448> that in turn suggested a prototype for the traditional *limasan* constructions found in *kraton* complexes as well as the related square-ground-plan *joglo* type. <Figure 123>. Tensile construction is apparent in another Panataran example <Plate 449> as well as in a fifteenth-century carving from *Candi* Sukuh in Central Java <Plate 451>. They could both be prototypes for the tensile beam construction such as that in the eighteenth-century *Bangsal* Nyai Setomi in the *Kraton* Surakarta Hadinigrat <Plate 450>. The same Sukuh relief shows, at the top left, a five-layer roof that is clearly an antecedent for the great mosque of 1690 in Banten <Plate 452> and for the roofs of one, three, five, seven, nine and eleven layers so dramatically grouped in the major temple complex of Bali at Besakih <Plate 453>.

If these buildings were older than the Indian influences that undoubtedly enriched the Indonesian tradition, what are the other possible sources for them? The speculative answer to this question is two-fold. The first explanation is available in the vernacular styles that flourish in such variety throughout the islands of Indonesia. Their relevant common characteristic is the tensile nature of their construction rising from the use of bamboo as chief component. From the inherent qualities of bamboo spring the tensile exploitations and the counter-balancing end-structures responsible for the vernacular examples discussed in the course of the analyses of Karsten and Maclaine Pont and illustrated in Plates 315, 317, 320, 322, 323, 250, 264, and 373.

The second possible explanation requires looking for the ultimate origin of the Malay peoples, of whom many of the Indonesian peoples form a part. Like the Thai, some of the Burmese, the Cambodians and the Vietnamese, Malay and Indonesian peoples are thought to have come originally from China. It is possible, therefore, that not only overtly Chinese buildings of the present, such as a temple in Semarang <Figure 124>, but also the tensile roofs common to Sumatra and Java in vernacular and palace architecture as well as in mosques had their origins in such Chinese examples as the village architecture photographed in China by the late Sidney D. Gamble in the 1920's <Figures 125, 126 & 127>. The structural parallels are undeniable, but the Indonesian buildings are instantly recognisable as different. This could mean that although the principles of indigenous architecture derived in distant times from the same place as the people, cultural processes in the archipelago over the centuries have forged them into something distinctively Indonesian.
Certainly the layout of the Javanese kraton had reached a degree of sophistication and symbolism by the time the present great palace complexes of Central Java were laid out in the eighteenth century that their builders were clearly drawing on long-established traditions. Evidence of palace structure is available in the fourteenth-century poem by the Majapahit court poet, Prapanca, the Nagarakrtagama.\textsuperscript{1} An analysis of the ground-plans\textsuperscript{2} of present-day palaces with their sequence of siti ingil, pendopo, pringgitan and dalem shows layouts that relate to some of the features apparent in the ruins of such complexes as the ninth-century Ratu Boko palace near Prambanan, the Majapahit capital in Trawulan and the Banten palace in West Java. The idea of a site sanctified by the presence of the ruler, who is approached from a lower to a higher level through a series of gates on different axes, seems to be present in all, and there is evidence that the courtyard and pavilion elements were present from the earliest times. The presence of water and meditation places is also a common thread, as is the theme of the kraton-as-mountain-as-cosmos. Evidence of such areas is visible in Ratu Boko, in Trawulan (at Candi Tikus), at the Suniaragi grotto of the Kasepuhan kraton in Cirebon and in the water palace, Taman Sari, in the present kraton at Yogyakarta.

The archaeological research needed in order to reach an understanding of these areas is challenging and extensive, and it will be many years before definitive evidence of the exact structure and function of any of these ancient sites is available, even in Java, where much more work has been done than has so far been the case in Sumatra, Bali and Sulawesi, all of which offer rich material for the epigrapher, the archaeologist, the historian and the art historian. Indeed, even the existing palaces have many lacunae in their histories, and much work will be necessary before any clear picture will emerge of this fascinating and complex civilisation.

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\textsuperscript{1} It was this poem that gave Maclaine Pont his basis for explorations in Trawulan.

\textsuperscript{2} The most comprehensive study of a kraton is by Timothy Earl Behrend, 'Kraton and Cosmos in Traditional Java', M.A. thesis for the University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1983.
Appendix B

Town Planning

The combination of overcrowding, economic limitations and haphazard growth makes an all-too-familiar urban pattern. In the Indies there were certain factors beyond simple increase in city population that made the problem more acute.

An early cause sprang in fact from a well-intentioned Dutch effort to avoid interfering with indigenous living patterns in the cities. This was the decision, when the Decentralisation law of 1903 came into effect and created municipal bodies in the major cities of the Indies from 1905,¹ to exclude urban kampungs from municipal control.² Non-Indonesians were (and still are) precluded from buying land in Indonesia, but speculation in unregulated kampung land occurred among the indigenous population and the resulting overcrowding was so intense that health standards were seriously threatened. It was a vicious circle, since the sale of land inevitably led to the squandering of cash and a growing dependence on money-lenders who charged very high rates of interest.

Another important factor in urban deterioration was the disruption of traditional building and repair customs by the regulations introduced to control rat-breeding in the decades when plague was threatening the Indies between 1920 and 1939. The banning of bamboo, which was suspected of offering concealed places for rat-breeding, meant that wood had to be used. This, instead of being cheap and widely available like bamboo, was expensive and often had to be imported from other districts. The skills necessary to erect bamboo structures were common to most villagers; those for wood construction were not, so carpenters had to be hired. The labour organisation of gotong royong [mutual help] and the quick erection of houses from standardised components (made in the off-work periods in the agricultural cycle, transported to central markets and readily available) were disrupted by the changes in supplies and techniques. The switch to a cash-based economy from one where goods and services were bartered was another step leading the villager into the hands of the money-lender. The longer-term effects of these alterations were the destruction of the social fabric, the decay of existing dwellings, the decline in the building of new ones, and an exacerbation of the very overcrowding that intensified the spread of plague.

The need to assert municipal control over kampungs and their rural equivalents was apparent but it took over a decade for practical measures to be taken to try to arrest,

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¹ See chapter 3, note 37.
² Whether this decision was in fact disinterested or whether it was an avoidance of a clearly difficult problem is a moot point.
let alone reverse, the deterioration. Articles appeared as early as 1918, when Mr. de Jongh wrote a paper for the eighth Decentralisation Congress describing the urgency of the situation and an editorial in Locale Belangen the following year reported that there were many kampungs in Semarang where twelve to nineteen people lived in one- to two-room dwellings in which not only plague but also tuberculosis was common, and that the death-rate in that city was sixty per thousand compared with twelve per thousand in the Netherlands.

By the early 1920's several groups were trying to improve the situation. Some kampung renewals were funded by municipal governments, as in Medan in 1922-3, some were aided by improved mortgage and loan banks, which were set up from 1919, the first being in Batavia. Others were undertaken by companies providing housing for their employees, or by private speculating builders, and some were built by subsidised housing associations such as the N.V. Volksbasisvesting Association in Semarang, for which Karsten did a great deal of work. It was not just a question of improving housing, but of the whole urban fabric, including roads, sewerage, water supply, building-line controls and density control.

The improvement of existing built-up areas was less rewarding as a forum for town-planning ideas than the creation of new ones. Maclaine Pont's work in 1914 for the East Java Steamtram Company shows a strong grasp of Beaux Arts ideas. His plan is based on the radial model, has generous green areas and carefully controlled cross-views or 'percées' and evidently has a lot in common with the street layout to Berlage's 1915 extension plan for Amsterdam South.

This is even more apparent in the 1915 plan for two of the three areas of Semarang planned by Karsten. One sees the same concern for open spaces and curving roads to produce interesting street-scapes. One sees also, in these plans and in that for Kawarasan of 1937-38, the attempt to divert major traffic along routes that avoided residential areas.

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3. Self-interest certainly entered into the Dutch decision to improve the kampung situation: plague is no respecter of race or social position, although naturally, well-built houses where rat control is possible are less prone to flea infestation.


7. The layout for the third area, in the lower left of the plan, was dictated to a large extent by the lines of the steeply rising hills in that place.
Kawarasan, an area in Magelang for which Karsten drew up detailed plans and also did housing plans, is a fine example of basic planning. It has a central recreation area <Figure 134> reachable by a short walk from all the dwellings. It combines houses with strong visual references to desa types <Figure 135> with others that draw on modest Functionalist principles <Figure 136>. In all cases careful attention is paid to building-lines, to variety of profile within the street-scape, to the detailing of ventilation and shading <Figure 137> and to the problems of drainage <Plate 43>.

Town planning included civic improvements as well as housing and planning reform. One of the most publicised projects was the attempt to make urban sense of the vast central square of Jakarta, the Koningsplein. From 1918 the municipality had attempted to find a suitable plan for this important space onto which faced the Governor-General's palace, many important company headquarters, the major Protestant church (the Willemsoerk) and the museum. The area is so large that no sense of enclosure is possible, and the plans submitted all tried to divide it into meaningful sections. Difficulties were increased by a railway line cutting across the south-east corner.

The 1918 plan as amended by Karsten, with large areas of park and sports facilities, was approved by Berlage during his 1923 visit, but by 1937 still no action had been taken. Then another plan was made by Fermont-Cuypers, and it and the municipal-Karsten plan <Figure 132> were exhibited side-by-side, together with maquettes, in that year. Several well-known architects were asked to comment on the plans and a report of their opinions was published in November and December. Still nothing was done, and the square, now called Medan Merdeka (Freedom Square), is still an unresolved and somewhat graceless space where a sprawling and ugly annual fair - the debased descendant of the innovative Pasar Gambir - sounds a honky-tonk note across the street from some of Jakarta's most important buildings.

Like the subject of Indonesian architecture, that of town planning and the work and ideas of Karsten alone, let alone of Macliffe Pont, Abikoesno, Soesilo, Plate, De Jongh, Hogervorst, Ruckert, Heida, Hendriks, Thijssse, Nix and De Nooy, to name just some of the people involved in Indies planning, deserves a detailed study and is far beyond the scope of an appendix. The challenges of the urban scene in that tropical, colonial setting were stiff, and the energy poured into dealing with them was remarkable even if the results were not always lasting. Macliffe Pont's ideas for Darmo and

8. Locale Techniek Vol.6, no.5, pp.135-143; & no.6, p.147 & pp.159-63, 1937. Among the architects who commented were Blankenberg, Voorneman, Deppe, and Jiskoot.

9. Urban planning in Indonesia today seems to be rushing headlong down the worst paths of the western example; a disregard for traffic problems, the inadequacy of infrastructure for the growing density of office populations in city centres, the discrepant use of electricity to provide air-conditioning for office buildings erected in styles defying the climate and a disregard for the human dimension in the heedless proliferation of high-rise buildings are ingredients in almost certain urban disaster.
Semarang were interesting and merit further research. There is no doubt, however, that Karsten was the star of the cast, and it is likely that a thorough investigation, which will entail trying to find lost plans in several towns, particularly Semarang, will reveal that he was considerably before his time in much of his executed public housing and town-planning ideas and that his influence was still important in the better post-war planning, such as in the excellently-planned post-World War II garden suburb of Kebayoran Baru just outside Central Jakarta. According to Professor Jacques Thijss, he and Soesilo, who is the chief planner named for the Kebayoran development, discussed the planning before the war, and Thijss said that he had received advice from Karsten. As has been mentioned already, Karsten’s ideas have recently been studied by university planners both in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Whether or not his ideas may eventually help to modify the current tendency in Indonesia to clone the cities of the west regardless of climate, infrastructure, economics or culture remains to be seen.

Appendix C

Dutch text of unpublished quotations

I. Maclaine Pont letters and unpublished Memoirs excerpts.

1. De woonhuizen lijken mij ook heel aardig toe doch de scheidingsmuren tusschen de aaneengekoppelde woningen . . . vind ik verduveld leelijk. . . Benemen zij ook niet wat van de versche lucht die door de erven stroomen moet, wil men in de galerijtjes wat koelte hebben?


3. . . . hoe gaat het met Karsten? Is er voor de beide ingenieurs wel genoeg werk?

4. Een geluk is intusschen 't feit dat Carsten [sic] hier in Indie is, en dat je dus een vertrouwd en kundig man achterlat om de zaken te behartigen. Laten we hopen dat de oorlogsvrees de menschen weer een beetje loslaat, dat er daardoor weer wat te bouwen is, en Carsten dus iets, liefst veel, te behartigen krijgt.

5. Dat gij met Karsten onaangenaamheden hebt gehad blijkt uit die brief niet. Voorhands schijnt gij dus niet te [?]kermen.

6. Archibald, door U ontboden tot hulp tegen Karsten, noemde deze een schoft.


8. Als Mioe met U de Telemajoe nog op kan, is hij zoo ziek niet! Doch onplezierig werken maakt ziek.

9. Er was al eenige verkilling in onze verstandhouding gekomen. Hij was pro-Duitsch en dat op ostenatieve wijze.
10. Ik heb Karsten op Java nog eens opgezocht bij hem thuis. Hij mij nooit. Ik weet, dat hij een keer buiten mij om Poh Sarang bezocht heeft. Wij groeven heelemaal uit elkaar toen jij zich ging bemoeien met de 'STUWGROEP'.

11. De hemel mag weten hoe hij daar aan kwam.

12. Ik ben toen niet verder op zijn poging tot toenadering ingegaan.

13. Ik had moeten bedenken, dat zijn toestand even abnormaal was als de mijne. Ik bid sedert geregeld voor hem, maar dat verandert de zaak niet. . . . 't Is ellendig, als een vriendschap zoo afloopt.

14. Wat een redenering van de GG. Zoude het door hem gewenschte ambtenaars-broekje den critischen zin en de praktijk bezitten om de studiereis in kwestie met eenige kans op blijvende resultaten voor de bouwkunst der tropen te doen? Dit tegenover iemand van uwe ondervinding en voorafgaande studies?

II. Karsten-Mangkunagaran Palace letters, 1917-1921 exerpts.

Note that Karsten's spelling is idiosyncratic for his time, e.g., in spelling 'bijzonder' as 'bizonder', 'geestelijke' as 'geestelike', 'vrijheid' as 'vryheid' and 'Europeesche' as 'Europeese'.

15. Wij nemen de vryheid er Uwe Hoogheid uitdrukkelyk opmerkzaam op te maken, dat het karakter van een Indische architectuur uit den aard geheel verschillend moet zyn van een Europeesche, door de byzondere eischen die het klimaat stelt, terwyl hier bovendien gewoonlyk zonder bovenverdieping wordt gebouwd; tevens zyn verschillende fraaie Europeesche technieken hier door het ontbreken van materialen of werkkrachten niet uitvoerbaar.

16. . . . van kleur terughoudend, gedempt en nobel: donker doch niet zonder glans. Voor het pendopo-dak, met zyn ingetogen doch zeer vorstelyke monumentaliteit, waarvan een roode kleur in schreeuwende tegenstelling ware, lyken zy aangewezen.

17. . . . doch hier, waar het immers de bedoeling is het karakter van het bestaande gebouw vast te houden en door te zetten, lykt er ons alle reden deze geringere hoogte, die toch nog voldoende is en bevendien meerdere intimiteit geeft, als deel van het oude gebouw over te nemen.
18. Door horizontale lysten, die event. tevens voor ventilatie der dakruimte kunnen dienen, worden de daken verder, zonder verbreking der hoofdvorm, geleed en verrykt.

19. . . het rustig-feestelyke karakter van het interieur.

20. . . de versieringen in de bochten enz. zijn mij echter wat druk, en wat te 'barok' voor en modern-Javaans tijdschrift.


22. Zeer ben ik benieuwd of de heer Kats zijn betrekkelijk nuchter opvatting over wat wij gewond zijn den Javaans geest te noemen, ook in deze periodiek zal kozen tot uiting te brengen; voor 'al dat gefilozofeen' moet hij niet veel hebben. . . Daarin is hij dan wel weer anders dan onzer Koperberg.

23. . . het toch in hoofdzaak om de huisvesting der miljoenen inheemsen gaat. Het schijnt dat de leiders de betekenis hiervan nog niet begrijpen, en dat een meer stelselmatige propaganda noodig zal zijn om de belangstelling in breder kring te wekken.

24. Hoewel het voor mij natuurlijk interessant is en was Europa terug te zien, de oude vrienden, familie en kennissen te spreken . . . voor 'n overblijk in de Europese problemen en kultuur te verdiepen, heb ik toch geen moment spijt gehad over mijn voornemen mijn leven niet hier doch in Java te volbrengen. De gehele sfeer waarin men hier leeft - niet alleen in Duitsland doch eveneens in Holland en Frankrijk - is dermate overprikkeld en onevenwichtig, de toekomst zo volkomen onzeker, het leven zo gejaagd en onrustig, de stemming is (?)der (?)zoond bij iedereen . . . zo moedeloos, - dat de geheel toestand voor mij weinig aantrekkeliks (?)meer heeft, niettegenstaande de ontegenzeggelijke veelzijdigheid van 't artistieke en intellektuele kulturleven!

III. Karsten diary. exerpts.


26. Het is ongetwijfeld lastig, dat ik geen deel uitmaak van een geformuleerde geestelijke eenheid, van een gelooof of gelovende partij. Type van de laat-Europese volstrekt geïndividualiseerde intellektueel.
27. Te zeeziek en te beroord door de trilling, hier te onrustig, voor overdenking.

De Eenheid der Wereld is als een krachtveld, passief doch gespannen, gericht doch stil. Het actieve van de Godsvoorstelling (Kristendom, Islam, enz.) lijkt mij voor het moderne denken onaanzienelijk.


Ons huwelijk is voor mij altijd geweest een stuk van mijn 'werk', een essentieel element van mijn leven als een - Java-gebonden-Westerling. Het is mij nu wel duidelijk geworden hoezeer Soe, door haar zijn, mij tot het werk heeft geïnspireerd. Zij heeft de gang van mijn leven inderdaad in hoge mate mee bepaald, - bijna zonder enige direkte of bewuste beinvloeding.

29. Ik ben niet - zoals ik wel hoop - van nature intra en extra evenwichtig gemengd, doch bepaald intra, en reeds van student af gefascineerd door enige weinige personen (onder andere [?]Behrchen, later Soe) en [sic] vele objecten (het bouwen, Java, het Indonesische, de stedebouw, de Sociale plicht, enz...); de verhoudingen tot die personen resp. mijn werken zijn daarvoor abnormaal intensief geweest.

30. Elke groep is als zodanig van hoger orde dan de samenstellende delen, ...
Het menselijk individu is dus ondergeschikt aan de eenheid der mensen...

De gedachte der persoonlijke verlossing is dus fout. (Dit 't eerst geformuleerd bij gesprekken met Rien G.M., nu katholiek, in Delft, xi. en xii/30).

31. Het zweeft mij al enige jaren (van circa '28?) als 'ideaal' voor, mij te kunnen vrij maken van alle bouwkundige werk, event. met uitzondering van volkshuisvesting...

en mij geheel te geven aan stedebouwkundig werk. Dit had ik liefst gepaard laten gaan met 't opnemen van een bekwarne jonge bouwkundige kracht, die 't bk. deel van 't bureau zou hebben overgenomen, - zo dat en mijn capaciteiten op dit gebied, en goodwill en waarde van dat deel niet geheel zouden verloren gaan; met als resultaat ook voor mij enig financieel voordeel. Met Schouten was dit onmogelijk; Schijfsma is een misgreep gebroken.

Weliswaar, forceert de malaise bijna en quasi wat mij voorzweefde (maar dan zonder financieel voordeel!), maar tegelijk lopen en de bankinkomsten en de stedebk., zo terug, dat ik 't roer niet krachtig durf omgooien, en zo blijft 't bureau tweeklachtig en te duur; geeigend voor prima bouwkundig werk, - en blijf ik ook bouwkundige opdrachten aanvaarden. Overigens gaat mij bouwerij voor rijke mensenen meer en meer tegenstaan.

Anderzijds krijg ik (trek ik 't aan?) telkens meer onbetaald openbaar werk.

IV. Maclaine Pont letters excerpts.

33. Hij is vol moed, zag er frisch en vrolijk uit. Het afscheid om 11.50 was, gelijk gij denken kunt, beroerd. Ik zeide hem dat het misschien de laatste keer was dat we elkaar zaagen maar dat ik hem daarom zeggen wilde, ook namens Mama, dat hij ons volmaakt gelukkig heeft gemaakt en dat wij zeer trotsch op hem zijn. Hij was natuurlijk niet zoo beroerd als ik, en dankte ons voor wat wij voor hem geweest zijn. Ach, het is zoo'n best nobele kranige jongen!

34. Vanmorgen sprak ik nog den Heer Uzerman die zeide dat de colleges der I.T.H.S. in Julij zouden beginnen. Ik maakte hem een compliment dat hij dat zo vlug gedaan gekregen had, wat hij gretig aanvaardde zonder van jou harde werk een woord te zeggen.

35. Hij is te resumeren in Heel mooi noch schandalig duur.

36. ... Henri's werk zeer geroemd wordt. Uit de beschrijving blijkt dat het laboratoriumgebouw zeer groote afmetingen heeft verkregen, hetgeen ook in overeenstemming is met de hooge kosten.

37. ... vry gevolgd Hindoeistisch worden genoemd, niet Hindoe-Javaansch.

38. ... dit dak als oop een lotoskussen geplaatst.

39. ... uit zyn lotosvormigen aanzet als een waar sieraad uit zyn vatting.

40. ... zou een misstand ontstaan indien deze minder belangrijke gebouwen, waarop min verklaring betrekking heeft, meer voyante dakbedekkingen zouden krijgen.

41. ... voor een goede esthetische werking onmisbaar zijn.

42. ... brengt een kransje lichtopeningen, dat de binnenruimte zacht verhuldert, in het felle schaduwstreepje een kartelige aftekenning.

43. ... de schoring der gordingen wellicht iets bewerkelijker.
44. Zonder twijfel had ik in Indië een nieuw kantoor kunnen beginnen: de T.H. had nogal opgang gemaakt, en ettelijken onder het meegenomen personeel droegen erop aan. Id deed het niet, omdat ik nu eenmaal m'n kantoor aan Karsten had overgedaan. Ik wou niet naast hem een nieuw kantoor ophalen.

45. . . . hij een stuk of vier architecten loofde, onder wie Karsten en jij, maar jij in de eerste plaats. Telkens kwam hij op je terug. Zijn lichtbeelden waren gemeen.

46. Hij sprak met veel waardeering over Henri's werk.

47. Toch kon ik op No.2 die aardige zuilen van kalsteenen in het centrum van het front der Technische H.S. onderscheiden. Ook Berlage prees de zeer.

Na afloop sprak ik hem aan en zeide hem dat hij mij als vader van U een der gelukkigste oogblikken van mijn leven had bezorgd door als vakman zoo'n vleijend oordeel over het werk van mijn zoon te uiten. . . welke dankbaarheid men op zijn 73e jaar koestert als de eersten van zijn vak zoo'n oordeel over hem uitspreken in een wetenschappelijke vergadering.


49. Het laatst wat ik er van hoorde, is dat de daken lekten. Is het gelukt dat te verhelpen?

50. Moeel lijkt mij een groot succes voor je en de goedkoope in.[-landsche] woningen te Soerabaya ook, vooral als ze zich dezen westmoessan droog houden. Ik zou zeggen dan ben je er.

V. Karsten-Mangkunagaran letters, 1937-43 exerpts.

51. . . . ben ik om de gedachte gekomen hoe men een Javaanse schouwburg kon bouwen: een ruimte waar de Javana, om de wijze die hem aangenaam is, waar een Javaanse volksmassa gamelan kon horen en wajang kan zien: beschut gezeten, goed ziende, met een 'toneel' niet om Europese doch [?] Javaanser trant. De pendopo zou van zo'n bouw het uitgangspunt moeten zijn.

52. Tegen een behandeling dezer velden op oud-Javaanse wijze, door terugspringende versierde balken-stapelingen, zijn overwegende bezwaren. Het
toepassen van een beschildering, die de illusie van een dg. relief zou pogen te geven
werd, als onwaarachtig, dzz. bepaald ontraden.