FROM CULTURE TO POLITICS

THE WRITINGS OF FRAMOEDYA A. TOER, 1950-1965

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This Thesis is dedicated to the memory of Margono Djojohadikusumo (1897-1978), whose selfless dedication to Indonesia's cause inspired me, and whose affectionate support for an often wayward granddaughter sustained me, and to Peter, Gayatri and Inou, who have all shared in making it possible for me to write.
Except where otherwise acknowledged
this thesis is the result of my
original research

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The thesis traces the development in the social consciousness of a noted Indonesian prose writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer (b. 1925) from 1950 to 1965. In doing so it analyses his literary writings in the context of the intellectual debates on cultural and political issues in the period.

The thesis argues that while in the early 50s Pramoedya was critical of the cultural values and norms of his society by which the common people (the wong-cilik) were disadvantaged, underlying his early writings is his acceptance of the basic tenant that the elite priyayi (imperfect as they can be) are "superior" to the wong-cilik. It is the priyayi who are depicted to be the ones with idealism and dedication, while the wong-cilik (when they are not depicted as "docile") are the ones who are capable of committing atrocious acts.

His outlook changed as the mood of the intellectual debates in the country slowly become "progressive" after Sukarno's konsepsi in 1957. Despite his status as an award-winning novelist, since the early 1950s Pramoedya had felt increasingly alienated from the views expressed by the literary establishment of the period, the Gelanggang group. After the konsepsi he became closely associated with the opposing literary group, the Lekra.

It was then that Pramoedya began to question the conventional prejudices in his society, particularly on the threat of communism. That led him to finally reject the basic social framework that he had
unconsciously adopted in his early writings. Now he was capable of seeing that the cultural norms as set by the priyayi are not tenable as "virtues". Rather, they are ploys by the elite to keep the wong-cilik (culturally) inferior to them, and thus force the wong-cilik to accept their subservient to the priyayi.

His progressive and radical understanding of his society is depicted well in his best work, *Gadis Pantai*, published in 1962. In it he depicts how members of the wong-cilik can feel resentful about their culturally and politically enforced inferiority to the priyayi. GP implies that conflicts are inherent to society. It portrays the mood of the social and political tensions in the society of the time. These conflicts manifested themselves in the literary debates that surrounded the Cultural Manifesto in 1963 and the two opposing literary conferences of 1964. All of these were "mock battles" (perang kembang) for the crushing of the left in 1965.

In retrospect his life story seems to have been predicted by himself. In 1950, Pramoedya portrayed those who pursued radical change and who questioned the dominant norms in society as doomed. When Pramoedya acted out the life of those characters his own fate reflected with grim irony the stories he himself had composed.
INTRODUCTION

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Analysis of sources in the field of modern Indonesian literature covering the period after Indonesian independence and up to 1967.

The study of modern Indonesian literature is a comparatively recent academic discipline. The field was initiated with a seminal work by a Dutch scholar, Prof. A. Vos, Tengku Iskandar Anwar, Indonesian Era (Tengku and Figures in Modern Indonesian Literature) which was written in Indonesian and published in 1957 (1).

The work was based on the materials that he collected with the aid of Hijjas, a noted Indonesian critic, while Hijjas was a lecturer at the University of Indonesia.

It was later expanded and brought up to date by incorporating literary works produced up to the early 1960s, translated into English and published as Modern Indonesian Literature in 1967 (2). It is an overall overview of the literary situation in Indonesia, incorporating notes and comments on some of the more notable writers and poets of the period. As it was one of the earliest works written by a foreign scholar in Indonesia, in 1967, Hijjas was one of the most noted Indonesian literatures, the work has inevitably become used as a standard text to which others...

N. Djokarta, Padjadjaran, 1952. It was expanded into two volumes in 1957.

S. Jon Hogen, Nijhoff, 1957. Volume 1, which incorporates literary works written since those discussed in the earlier volume, was published in 1975.

INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY
I

INTRODUCTION

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Evaluation of sources in the field of modern Indonesian literature covering the period after Indonesian independence and up to 1965

The study of modern Indonesian literature is a comparatively recent academic discipline. The field was initiated with a seminal work by a Dutch scholar, Prof. A. Teeuw, *Pokok dan Tokoh dalam Keusasteraan Indonesia Baru* (Topics and Figures in Modern Indonesian Literature) which was written in Indonesian and published in 1952 [1]. The work was based on the materials that he collected with the aid of Jassin, a noted Indonesian critic, while Teeuw was a lecturer at the University of Indonesia.

It was later expanded and brought up to date by incorporating literary works produced up to the early 1960s, translated into English and published as *Modern Indonesian Literature* in 1967 [2]. It is a general overview of the literary situation in Indonesia, incorporating notes and comments on some of the more notable writers and poets of the period. As it was one of the earliest works written by a foreign scholar (a Dutch one at that) on modern Indonesian literature, the work has inevitably become used as a standard text to which, others

1. Djakarta, Pembangunan, 1952. It was expanded into two volumes in 1955.

(foreigners and Indonesians alike) refer to in order to make judgments on writers and their work. As a result, Teeuw's approach to literature and his aesthetic judgement were very influential.

It was a scholar of British origin, Prof. A.H. Johns, who first linked up the discussion of Indonesian literature with Indonesian studies in general. In 1959, Johns pointed to the value of Indonesian novels as sources of description and criticism of Indonesian society [3]. In addition, Johns also wrote articles of literary criticism dealing with the work of several noted literary individuals of the period, including the novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer [4] and the poets Chairil Anwar [5] and Sitor Situmorang [6]. Johns' efforts inspired

One response to such an approach is given by H. Aveling in his article, 'Seventeenth Century Bandanese society in fact and fiction: "Tambera" assessed' in Bijdragen, v. 123, 1967, p. 347-365. In this article Aveling argues that Sontani's novel Tambera does not in fact depict the customs of the people of Banda and that the society depicted in the novel is a purely imaginary creation of the author, which distorts the real situation of both past and present Banda society. This demand for a 'factual' depiction of society from a literary piece is a quite unreasonable one. The important information in the novel is Sontani's idealised vision of Indonesian society before the coming of the Europeans.


works by other scholars into the field, including B. Raffel and H. Aveling. These two scholars became known as translators of Indonesian literature into English.

Translation (into the English speaking world) was pioneered by Prof. J.M. Echols as editor of his Indonesian Writings in Translation, published in 1956 [7]. Echols' work was later built on by (to name a few) B. Raffel in the 1960s, who translated modern Indonesian poetry [8], and H. Aveling in the 1970s, who translated many disparate works, including some of the noted works of Pramoedya A. Toer [9]. An Indonesian academic-critic, Boen Sri Oemaryati also translated into English some poems of Chairil Anwar [10]. Her work was published in 1972. The translation was part of her doctoral dissertation presented to the university of Leiden.

In the meantime other Indonesian literary critics and academic scholars steadily produced their own contributions to the field. These included the work of H.B. Jassin, which was collected together in 4 volumes entitled Kesusaatarama Indonesia Modern dalam Kritik dan Esei [11]. His work documents and comments on the literary work from

7. Ithaca, C.M.I.P., 1956


9. See his The Fugitive (Hong kong, Heinemann, 1975) a tr. of P.A. Toer, Perburuan. See also H. Aveling, A Heap of Ashes (Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1975), which contains collected translations of 'Yang Sudah Hilang', 'Bukan Pasar malam', 'Sunyi Senyum di Siang Hidup', 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' and 'Dia Yang Menyerah', all by P.A. Toer.


pre-war days to the late 1950s. His 4 volumes complement Teeuw's. Jassin, as editor of numerous literary journals, presents an 'insider's view' of the literary world in Indonesia. During the early 1950s he was almost alone in his efforts to document and collect literary writings. Being on the editorial board of several influential publishing houses (including Balai Pustaka, Gunung Agung and Nusantara) and journals (including Mimbar Indonesia and Kisah) and being close to Teeuw who was then the professor of Indonesian literature at the University of Indonesia, his views carried a considerable weight among the many enterprising young and unknown writers of the time. His influence on the development of Indonesian literature therefore was considerable and was unmatched by other critics of that time (14).

Although Jassin himself did not write detailed analyses of the works of individual authors (15) his approach to Indonesian literature can be seen reflected in the various works written by his students. His literary approach and methodology was taken up by several

12. From biodata list in H.B. Jassin, 'Sastra Indonesia sebagai warga sastra dunia' his speech at the confering of his honorary doctoral degree at the University of Indonesia, June 1975. (Jakarta, Idayu, 1976 (1975)), 2nd ed p. 23, p. 25.

13. To be discussed in ch 6 of thesis.


15. Teeuw has a patronising view about the doyen of Indonesian literary critics, Jassin. 'He owes this dominant and distinguished position more to his zeal, devotion and industry as a documentator, conservator and stimulator of literature than to the originality, astuteness or brilliancy of his critical work. Jassin has never to my knowledge published any fundamental ideas on literary theory or declaration of principles of criticism of his own. His ideas, as far as they can be inferred from his publications, are rather conventional' (Teeuw, Modern, v. 2, p. 69-70).
and more essays and criticism and less fictional work. His comprehensive analysis of Indonesian literature presented from the 'socialist-realist' point of view in his 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia' was delivered at a public lecture in 1963 [23]. Two more notable works on this topic were his 'Sedjarah dan Kritik Sastra' in 1964 [24] and 'Tentang Novel' in 1965 [25]. In connection with the discussion of 'progressive' Indonesian literature one must also take into account the work of Bakri Siregar from the Lekra [26] group of writers. His Sedjarah Sastra Indonesian Modern had its first volume published in 1964 [27].

In summary, literary debate in the period from 1950 to 1965 was dominated by the 'Teeuw-Jassin' school of literary criticism that used a 'formalist' style and professed a 'universal humanist' approach. Different approaches were offered in the late 50s only in the writings of an outsider, such as English speaking academic Prof. Johns, or in the writings of 'insiders' like Ayip Rosidi, (who continued to write despite a rebuff from Teeuw [28] and who in the 1960s became a literary critic of some standing in the country) or Pramoedya and

23. P.A. Toer 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia', A paper given at a seminar of literature at the Faculty of Letters University of Indonesia, Jan 1963, 68p mimeographed.


25. P.A. Toer, 'Tentang Novel' a paper delivered at the commemoration of one year celebration of Konferensi-nasional Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner (K.S.S.R. or the National Conference of Revolutionary Arts and Literature) given 26 August 1965. 39p, mimeographed.

26. The Lekra group is to be discussed at length in ch 6 and 7.

27. Jakarta, Akademi Sastra dan Bahasa Multatuli, 1964

28. Interview H.B. Jassin, July 1978
Bakri Siregar whose promotion of 'progressive' - 'socialist' literature in the early 60s kindling hostilities into the debate.

Thus in the early 1950s, the dominant, 'correct' and 'legitimate' view on literature was that endorsed by the 'Teeuw-Jassin' school. Aspiring writers were wise to heed this view if they wished for critical acclaim. It was during such an early and 'barren' period in the history of literary criticism of Indonesian literature that Pramoedya Ananta Toer (b. 1925) has made a name for himself as a writer of some standing. He won a literary award in 1950 with his novel *Perburuan* (Pursuit) \(^{29}\) and received further recognition (though with the mixed reviews) for his novel *Keluarga Gerilya* (KG) (The Family of a guerilla fighter) \(^{30}\). Although the critics' responses to KG were divided, Pramoedya continued to win awards and further notices. In 1952 he won the B.M.K.N. (Badan Musyawarah Kebudajaan Nasional, National Cultural Council) award for his short stories collected in his *Tjerita Dari Blora* (TDB) (Stories from Blora, Blora being the author's home town) \(^{31}\). In 1953 he was invited to visit Holland by *Sticusa* (Stichting A Culturele Samenwerking or The Dutch Foundation for Cultural Cooperation).

By this stage he had become without doubt one of Indonesia's outstanding writers. At the same time, criticism challenging his position and questioning the quality of his writings and the credibility of his art was being mounted. Of particular importance was the criticism by Balfas in the journal *Kisah* and in a public

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31. Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1952
32. To be discussed in ch 6 of thesis
literary seminar at the University of Indonesia in December 1956 [32].

It was barely two months later, in February 1957, that Pramoedya wrote his first 'political' essay in support of the President’s speech known as konsepsi presiden published in the communist daily Harian Rakyat and in the Communist Party's theoretical organ Bintang Merah. Pramoedya also used the opportunity to say that in his view the Communist party of Indonesia, the PKI was the only party that still remained true to the goal of the Indonesian revolution [33]. This dramatic gesture was Pramoedya's earliest public step down a road which would take him and his writing into new areas. This is confirmed by the fact that he became estranged from the Jassin group and became closely associated with Lekra. He was alleged (at least by Jassin's group) to have ceased writing 'literature' and to have resorted to writing 'essays', 'political propaganda essays' at that.

By early 1960s the debate had been transformed from a literary debate between a 'formalist' - 'universal humanist' group and the socialist realist group of Lekra, into a political debate between the non-communist writers and writers who were indifferent to the communist stance. Pramoedya came to be the leader of the attack on the 'Teeuw-Jassin' school and the 'universal humanist' ideal it advocated. He was enmeshed in the very center of the cultural and political web that was woven out of the clash of 'personalities', and of 'political' and 'literary or cultural' issues before it was torn apart by the reaction of 1965 against the communists and those who were seen to have sympathised with the Communist cause.

33. See ch 7
THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Pramoedya was one of the non-political figures who paid for his entanglement with 'politics'. Furthermore, as a noted literary figure he was accused of submerging his literary talents for political purposes. To understand his literary career it is therefore necessary to delineate the course of his social and political views throughout the period.

The thesis primarily tries to explore the relation between the real world and the fictional world of the author. It hopes to disentangle the complex structure of mediation between Pramoedya and his creative world delineating the social, cultural and political forces to which he belongs.

It is by assessing his responses to the norms of his time - whether he is against or for those norms - that we can assess the significance of a period and the atmosphere and the mood of the people living in that period.

Thus Pramoedya's writings are seen not only to mirror the author's perception of himself and his world \[34\], but also to record the dialectical relation between creative expression and the social values, which reflects his position in society \[35\].

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35. Alan Swingewood in the course of relating revolutionary movements (or the threat of revolution) to the novel form, and has critically evaluated the literary theories expressed by L. Goldmann, and G. Lukacs, arguing that 'Literature is not a passive reflection of determinate interests - class, race environment - or merely the personal biography of the writer. Rather literature emerges as both an interrogation and a questioning of reality, the complex response of specific men, who live out their lives within specific social groups, to the dominating human, social and political problems of their time' A. Swingewood, The Novel and Revolution (London, MacMillan, 1975), p. 14.
There is of course no simple one to one relation between the real world and the fictional world of the writer. But despite of the complex structure of mediation between the writer and his creative work, the writer can not be disengaged from the social, cultural and political forces to which he belongs.

In this way, through the works of one literary figure, written (with few exceptions) from 1950-1965, the thesis hopes to supplement the historical, political, anthropological and cultural works written on the period.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis pursues two schemes simultaneously: thematic and chronological. The rationale behind this is that, as time passes, the themes depicted in the writings of Pramoedya change. At the same time some themes persist, but the ways those themes are presented change. This process can only be detected if one follows various themes through in a chronological way. Furthermore one would not be aware of new themes unless again one looked at the writings in a chronological way. In the first instance in chapter 2, a brief outline of the life of Pramoedya is given. The sources are his own accounts of his life.

The thesis itself is divided in two. The first section, Part B, chapters 3, 4 and 5, looks closely at the selected texts, giving detailed descriptions of them as well as interpretive analyses. Chapter 3 deals with a story written in 1950 about the Revolution.
This is the basis of Pramoedya's early views about the impact of political ideologies, historical event, social mobility and cultural breakdown on the individuals and on family relationships.

Chapter 4 looks at the 'world' and social milieu from which Pramoedya had come, which are depicted in his writings, 'Yang Sudah Hilang', 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' and 'Sunat', all set in Blora. His accounts of a narrator's childhood in Blora during the colonial era can be seen as his analyses of the social background of his family. This analyses is contrasted then with another depiction of a family in his novel Bukan Pasar Malam which is set in the post-independence period. The contrasting of past cultural grandeur with the harsh economic reality of the post revolutionary period conveys vividly the author's feelings about the post war period, of the early 50s.

The families depicted in the stories discussed in chapter 4 were privileged families. The author's perceptions of those families are now contrasted in Chapter 5 with his perception of the disadvantaged members of society. The stories discussed in Chapter 5 are set in both Blora and Jakarta. Those set in Blora are from the colonial era, while those set in Jakarta are contemporary. The earliest 'Jakarta' story was written while Pramoedya was in prison. By comparing that story, a later one written in 1955, and those stories set in Blora, Chapter 5 traces the gradual sharpening of Pramoedya's social outlook. His outlook moved from the culturally preconditioned views of semi-autobiographical stories like 'Yang Sudah Hilang', 'Sunat' and 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' to the socially 'progressive' outlook of the works written in the mid 1950s.
This gradual sharpening of Pramoedya's social awareness was not only a product of the harsh economic reality which he experienced, but also resulted from the literary polemics he was exposed to at the time. These polemics on his writings and the conflicting literary approaches which inspired them are discussed in the second main part of the thesis, Part C, comprising chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Chapter 6 covers the period 1950-1956. It discusses the relation of reality to authorship and the influence of literary polemics on Pramoedya's writing. In this connection it discusses two short stories which discuss the sense of urban alienation and cultural estrangement in the mid 50s to be read in relation to his literary essays from the period.

Chapter 7, which covers the period 1957-1962, discusses the works in which Pramoedya questioned conventional wisdom on such matters as anti-communist prejudice, literary practice, the Chinese minority and 'feudal' historical writings.

Chapter 8 covers the most controversial and tense period in Pramoedya's writing career: the period 1963-1965. It delineates where Pramoedya stood in the midst of raging literary and political debates of the period. The chapter also sets out how the literary debates are in fact a reflection of particular political debates that culminated in the 1965 clash of the anti and pro-communist forces. Chapter 9 discusses two works which display Pramoedya's new idealism well. They are the ultimate examples of his literary ability to date. One work was published in 1962. _Gadis Pantai_ is an example of Pramoedya's 'progressive' idealism. The other one, _Bumi Manusia_, is an example of
his 'conservative' idealism. Although it was researched and prepared in the late 50s to early 60s, it was only written in 1975 and published in 1980.

Unfortunately the spelling used in the thesis is rather inconsistent. While titles of books published up to 1972 are spelled in the old way, some of the earlier stories in the course of writing the thesis came to be spelled in the new way.

The Sources Used

This thesis is not an attempt to make a comprehensive analysis of all Pramoedya's works. What it tries to do is to analyse the relation between his particular literary standpoint and his modes of expression. But in analysing particular facts in details, the thesis attempts from time to time to give a 'structure' on the texts discussed. These modes are examined in terms of their taste and themes rather than their writing style or form. Throughout, the relationship between his literature and the political and cultural debates of the corresponding period is explored. This is in order to trace how a man bound to his cultural traditions and norms developed into a modern man bound by the politics and social forces of his time.

The analyses of Pramoedya's works are organised chronologically and themselves they do not differentiate the works by their form, short stories as against novels. Furthermore because of some technical and obvious political difficulties, the thesis does not look at the works which Pramoedya has written about his three periods of imprisonment. For this reason his two volumes, Mereka Yang
Dilumpuhkan published in 1951 about his years in Dutch prison from 1947 to 1949, his several short stories about the months he spent during his confinement in 1960 in Cipinang and his writings on his imprisonment from 1965-1979 are not included in this thesis. These works are of a different genre to his other creative fictional writings and his literary essays and deserve a special approach. The same is also true for his latest works Bumi Manusia, Anak Semua Bangsa, Jejak Langkah and Rumah Kaca, two of which have been published so far. Bumi Manusia is included in the thesis only to illustrate the fruits of the labours which Pramoedya had started during the period 1955-1965, the period covered in the thesis, when he embarked on private research into the development of nationalist and progressive thinking during the colonial period.

The thesis therefore can be seen as being organised around the way Pramoedya's standpoint developed in the period 1957-1965: his movement towards a commitment to progressive writing. Its theme is how men make history and yet at the same time become history's victims—a theme illustrated by Pramoedya's writings and his own life. It is in order to see how his progressive commitment developed that it looks at his earlier writings.
Pramoedya Ananta Toer was born on the 6 February 1925 in Blora, the eldest child of a nationalistic school teacher. Parts of his childhood experiences are depicted in his collection of short stories, *Tjerita Dari Blora* (TDB) [1]. His father was the eldest son of a religious teacher, or naib, while his mother was the middle daughter of a religious head or penghulu from Rembang [2]. His mother was a pupil of his father when he was teaching in a Dutch government primary school H.I.S. or Holandsch-Indische School. When they were married, she was 18 and her husband was 32 years of age. After his marriage the father left the government school to teach in a private nationalistic school Boedi Oetomo in Blora. To do that he gave up the salary he received as a government teacher of F200 for F18 as the principal of the native school.

At four years old in 1929, Pramoedya entered the school in which his father was the director. By his own acknowledgement, Pramoedya was not too bright as a pupil. He had to repeat years twice during the first three grades of his primary schooling. It was during this period that his father took special time coaching him after school in the afternoons. Thus his father talked to him about nature, about nationalism, traditional folk stories, about oppressions, human suffering and Dutch greediness. It was also his father who introduced

1. Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1952
2. All information on his family and his childhood are based on the bio-data list which he compiled in 1959 for A. Teeuw. mimeographed copy.
him to the beauty of gamelan music. In Pramoedya’s short story 'Yang Sudah Hilang' (‘YSH’) (the first story in his Tjerita Dari Blora) [3] it is depicted how the narrator’s mother tutors him about such things as the study of the local flora and fauna, the names of the stars and the concept of nationalism and cultural identity.

It was when Pramoedya was in his fifth grade at primary school that he became aware of the conflict between his two parents. As he observed it, the conflict was due to economic difficulties. The family conflicts are depicted in his story 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' ['KLD'] [4]. In this situation Pramoedya decided to side with his mother, causing the disapproval of his father. During this time Pramoedya mentions in his own autobiograpical list that his father did not talk to either his wife or any of his children [5].

In 1940, Pramoedya entered a technical school to learn radio mechanics in Surabaya. While taking the course he also worked as a peddler selling bottled soya sauce and shirts. He finished the course in 18 months and returned to Blora. During the Japanese occupation it was left to him to support the family, consisting of his sick mother and eight younger siblings. He was peddling tobacco and had to go on

3. 'YSH' in TDB, p. 15-44. The story is discussed in ch. 4.

4. 'KLD' in TDB, p. 89-113. The story is discussed in ch. 4.

5. In his latest novel, Bumi Manusia (Jakarta, Hasta Mitra, 1980), he depicts well the cold and hostility in the household of Nyai Ontosoroh, in which the husband does not talk to any other members in the household. The story mentions that Nyai Ontosoroh learnt to read and write from her husband. This novel is discussed in ch. 9.
a bike each day to Tjepu through the forest which was at that time full of disruptions due to fights for the control of the oil pipes. It was during this period that he had to look after his sick mother at nights while his father went out on gambling sprees [6]. In May 1942, his mother died [7].

In June 1942 Pramoedya left Blora to live in Jakarta. He entered the nationalist Taman Siswa secondary school Taman Dewasa. At the same time he was working for a Japanese press agency Domei as a typist. He sent 1/3 of his salary to his younger sister in Blora who now had to look after the rest of the family. In August of 1943, the school Taman Dewasa was disbanded by Japanese order. In the next year, in February 1944, he was selected from the Staffs at Domei to attend a special stenography course at parliament house. There he met with Yamin, whom he helped type his manuscript on Dipanegara. He also met Hatta. He finished the course in March 1945. He then briefly became a student at a local Islamic university, studying philosophy, sociology and psychology [8].

During the school break from June onward he went travelling in Central and East Java. He was in a village in Ngadiluwih near Kediri in East Java at the end of August 1945 when he heard from the

6. A glimpse of this strained atmosphere is hinted in 'YSH' and explicitly mentioned in 'KLD'.

7. That was also the time Pramoedya has set for the death of the mother of the family Sumo in 'Dia Yang Menyerah' ('DYM'), in TDB p. 265-340. The story is discussed in ch. 3.

8. One of the characters in his earliest novels Krandji Bekasi Djatuh (KBD) (Jakarta, The Free Voice of Indonesia, 1947) and Ditepi Kali Bekasi (DKB) (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1957 (1950)), the freedom fighter Surip, has a similar educational background. Another one, Farid, attended Taman Dewasa
disbanded Peta regiment of the declaration of independence. It was also then that he heard the tales surrounding the earlier Peta rebellion [9].

From here he went to Surabaya, then Jakarta. He arrived back in September 1945 and watched how the capital city which was almost dead during the Japanese occupation had come to life again. In October he joined with the Civil Defence group Badan Keamanan Rakyat which was stationed in Cikampek and formed the unit of Banteng Teruna, which later became the core of Siliwangi division, the elite corps of the Armed forces. He enlisted as a second class soldier and was quickly promoted to sergeant major [10].

By the middle of the next year, 1946, he became a Press officer with a rank of a second class lieutenant. He headed a unit of 60 soldiers, looking after among others, Klender, Bekasi, Tjakung, Krandji, Lemah Abang, Krawang and the headquarter at Tjikampek [11]. At the fall of Krandji-Bekasi to enemy hands, he had a disagreement with the head of the staff regiment due to the report that Pramoedya had sent to the Army headquarters in Jogya about the fall. Because of

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9. The declaration of independence and the aftermath of the Peta rebellion are the bases of his award winning novel Perburuan, (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1955 (1950)) 2nd ed.

10. Thus Pramoedya's career in fact parallels that of Surip in KBD and DKB, and not of Farid, the hero of the story, as Teeuw has alleged in his Modern Indonesian Literature (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1967) p. 168. In the novel Surip is a corrupt administrative officer. Later when Pramoedya resigned from the army he was also charged with corruption, a charge which he ignored, since in actual fact it was he who had not been paid for the last 7 months.

11. These places are all mentioned in his DKB and KBD. Thus these two novels can be seen as a priceless non military documents about the time and places which had formed a crucial part during the struggle of independence.
the report a drastic mutation took place in the regiment. During this period he also worked as a military reporter for the daily _Merdeka_ in Jakarta. As a result of the _Linggardjati_ agreement he witnessed physical clashes between the people's defence army (who formed part of the armed forces) and the irregular forces, _Lasjkar Rakyat_, People's forces. He also survived a train accident near Purwoketo in Central Java. This is the basis of one of his best short stories 'Kemelut' in his collected short stories about the revolution in _Pertjikan Revolusi PR_ [12]. When the rationalisation among the armed forces was enforced by Hatta government, he resigned from the army on the 1st of January 1947.

He left Tjikampek to live in Jakarta without being able to secure the salary owed him for the last 7 months. He was also charged with corruption which he ignored. He then joined the publishing section of 'The Voice of Free Indonesia'. In April 1947, his boss was arrested because of an allegation that he was involved in the underground resistance. His _Krandji Bekasi Djatuh_ was published by 'The Voice of Free ...'. It was also then that he began to get to know H.B. Jassin. In July of that year, in connection with the First Dutch "Military Action" against the Republic, Pramoedya was arrested and tortured at a railway station by the Dutch Marines, who comprised full blooded Europeans, Eurasians and Ambonese. Pramoedya carried an incriminating letter and some printed matter that were used as proof that he had been working for the resistance. His experiences became the basis of his short story 'Gado-gado' [13]. He was held prisoner


13. In _PR_, p. 11-79. The story was completed in April 1949.
without proper trial in Bukit Duri and later on the island of Edam in the bay of Jakarta [14]. It was during his prison years in Bukit Duri that he wrote Perburuan and Keluarga Gerilya[15] and several other short stories, one of them 'Djongos dan Babu'[16]. Probably because during his period of confinement he was forced to associate with the 'undesirable' members in society (criminals, murderers, petty cheats, ex-spies, deserters, Europeans, Eurasians, Arabs, Chinese, etc) in close quarters, that he became interested in the plight of the underdogs. Social misfits and maladjusted characters figured importantly in his writings. He was helped by Prof. G.J. Resink with regards to the publication of his works and writing materials. He was released on 1 December 1949.

On 15 January 1950, after receiving an award for his novel Perburuan he married the girl who he got to know while in prison, Arfah Ilyas. She worked for the Red Cross and was a frequent visitor to Bukit Duri prison. He then worked for the government publication of Balai Pustaka as an editor in the modern literature section. In May of that year he had to leave his job in order to go back to Blora to visit his sick father, who died while he was there. His visit home with his wife for the first time after the war is the basis of his

14. His prison experiences are the bases of his short stories collected in his Mereka Yang Dilumpuhkan (Djakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1951) 2 vols.


novel Bukan Pasar Malam[17]. On the death of his father he resumed the responsibility of caring for his younger siblings. This caused constant rifts with his wife. Thus by the end of 1951 he left his low paying job at Balai Pustaka and established his own literary agency ‘Duta’. One of his major works which was published by his own agent is his Gulat di Jakarta[18].

In June 1953 he went to Holland as a guest of Sticusa (Stichting voor Culturele Samenwerking or Dutch foundation for Cultural cooperation). He stayed there until December of that year, cutting his visit short by one year. It was then that he had first-hand experience of living in a capitalistic society. His critical views about the life in the West and Western thinking are depicted in the various short stories and essays written during this period[19]. It was while he was in Holland that he completed his novel Midah Si Manis Bergigi Emas [20]. The novel was set in Jakarta. It was also while he was in Holland that he won a literary award from B.M.K.N. (Badan Kesenian Musyawarah Nasional) for his collected short stories Tjerita Dari Blora.

On his return from Holland in January 1954, he found out because of the new regulations issued by the Ministry of Education he could no longer afford to run his agency Duta, as the government aid which he was counting on to help his publishing agency was terminated due to the new regulation. It was in the middle of this year that he was

17. Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1959 (1951), 2nd ed. This novel is discussed in ch. 4.

18. Djakarta, Duta, 1953.


chased out of his own home by his wife because he had been unable to provide for her. All he had with him, so he said in his autobiographical sketch, was his own writing equipment. But by early next year he had remarried, this time to the niece of the nationalist leader, Husni Thamrin, Maimunah Thamrin. It was in 1955 that he started to compile materials for his Encyclopedia for Indonesian literature.

He went to China as a guest of the Chinese Literary Body to commemorate Lu Sun in October 1956. It was there he began to understand the importance of the role of the common people in building a strong nation. It was also while he was there that he began to be sceptical of the value of western liberal-economic development. It was in February of the next year in 1957 that Pramoedya wrote his first (political) essay 'Djembatan Gantung dan Konsepsi Presiden' in Harian Rakyat in support of the President's introduction of 'guided democracy' [21]. In March of that year, together with Henk Ngantung and Kotot Sukardi, both members of Lekra, Pramoedya led a group of artists and writers to the President's Palace to pledge their support for the President's 'konsepsi'. In December of 1957 he was appointed as an adviser to the Department of Labour and Public Works (Petera).

In June 1958, after his visit to the rebellious areas in West Sumatra during the P.R.R.I. rebellion to show support for central government he received a certificate of thanks from Nasution. In the next month he organised a discussion group Simpat Sembilan with a group of writers, journalists, and students. In September 1958 he went as

head of the Indonesian delegation to Asian-African writers conference in Tashkent. Among the other Indonesians were Utuy Sontani and the poet Dodong Djilapradja. From there he went to visit Turkmenia and then Moscow. He also visited Siberia on his way to Peking. He stopped at Rangoon on his way back to Jakarta.

In January 1959 he attended the first national congress of Lekra and he was appointed as vice chairman of its literary section Lembaga Sastra Indonesia of which Bakri Siregar was chairman. At this time he was also nominated by the Ministry of Education and the P.K.I. to become a member of the Dewan Perantjjang Nasional, The National Planning Body.

In March 1960 he published his work on the Chinese minority, Hoa Kiau di Indonesia for which he was detained in prison for 9 months, only being released in 1961. From 1960-1965 he was a member of the central committee of the Indonesian branch of the World Peace Organisation. From 1958 to 1965 he served as the member of the working committee for organising the Asian African Writers conference. He edited Lentera, the literary section of the Sunday edition of the daily Bintang Timur from 1961-1964.

From the time of his close association with Lekra he spent more time writing essays and literary criticism than on creative writing. He had decided in 1955 that he would spend the next 10 years doing library research to gather materials for his next monumental creative works. Thus he prepared and collected works for his Encyclopedia.


He also wrote numerous essays on the sources of progressive writings produced during the colonial period, for example on the works of Marco and Tirto A disuryo. His essays were published in Lentera and some of those sources are compiled together in one of his longest papers entitled 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia' in which he set out the arguments for 'socialist realism' as a literary approach. This was first delivered at a literary seminar held at the University of Indonesia January 1963[24].

During the period 1955-1965 he wrote one novel Sekali Peristiwa di Banten Selatan [25] which was published in 1959, and he wrote part of a bigger novel Gadia Pantai which was serialised in Bintang Timur in 1962 [26]. He also wrote two other long literary essays 'Sedjarah dan Kritik Sastra' in 1964, and 'Tentang Novel' in 1965 [27]. After the September coup in 1965, the year in which he was planning to resume his creative writing he was detained first in Salemba, then Tanggerang then the island of Nusakambangan, before he was transported on a ship to the island of Buru. He stayed there until his release in December 1979. During those times he wrote 4 novels Bumi Manusia, Anak semua Bangsa, Jejak Langkah and Ruman Katja. The first two novels were published in 1980.

24. This paper is to be discussed in ch.7.
27. These two essays are to be discussed in ch.8.
OLD IDEALISM:

PRIYAYI CULTURAL NORMS AS VIRTUE

III

POLITICAL IDEALISM AS THREAT AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL AS VIRTUE

Some notes on 'Dia Yang Menyerah' ('She Who Yields')

Introduction

The work is interesting as a reflection of the social and political concepts that were prevalent during the revolution. It conveys the social and economic dislocation experienced by the population of the small nondescript town of Blora. The town was during the colonial period a 'forgotten' town except for the retired civil servants who preferred to live there precisely because of its low cost of living \(^1\). But with the coming of the Japanese even this small town was not exempt from being transformed by the various political events that take place in history.

The political upheaval and social transformation that shook the various inhabitants of that small town since the coming of the Japanese changed the emphasis of life in the town from 'peace and order' to 'change and anarchy'. The story does this by describing how 'politics' comes to colour the minds of the people. Through the interactions between the characters' perceptions of their political world and the author's own portrayal of those characters, the political atmosphere of the period is summarised in the dichotomy between the meaning of 'politics' as an expression of 'ideology' and the meaning of 'politics' as an expression of opportunistic 'action'.

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'Politics' is not seen in a favourable light. In fact, it is seen as a disruptive element. The characters who are actively involved in the politics of the time meet their deaths violently. A further undesirable trait of 'politics' is indicated by the limitation of the description of politics to simple jargon and rhetoric.

Description of the Story

The story describes the hardships a family (centered around the figure Sri) experience during the rapid political changes that beset Blora from the Japanese occupation to the end of the revolutionary period. The family of Sri is highly respected in this small provincial town.

The heroine, Sri, is a resilient character who yields to the various pressures imposed on her being. She personifies a particular Javanese stance of 'nrima' - of accepting whatever happens to her without rebelling against the onslaught of hostile forces [2]. In her 'acceptance' lies her strength. Thus the title 'She Who Yields' refers to a person who yields to fate and is therefore pasrah (resigned) to whatever is offered to her in life. With such a characteristic Javanese trait, the heroine who comes from a privileged class survives the turbulent years.

At the onset of the Japanese occupation, Sri and her brothers and sisters are left motherless. With the change in the local political scenery, Sri's father Pak Sumo once again takes to politics having had

been disillusioned by it in the colonial period. Hence Pak Sumo is reminiscent of the father in 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' (KLD) [3]. Pak Sumo is so busy with his community activities that he neglects the welfare of his children, again a trait reminiscent of the father in Bukan Pasar Malam [4].

There are six children under Pak Sumo's care: Is, Sri, Diah, Hutomo, Kariadi and Husni. The two elder sons volunteered for Burma after the death of their mother and are believed to have died there. It is after receiving that news that the father's enthusiastic support for the Japanese ebbs. Pak Sumo's political activities are revived when the new Republic is established.

Is, who is two years older than Sri (who was eleven when their mother died), is now the eldest and hence she is supposed to be the person who takes care of the welfare of her younger siblings. Instead she refused to remain at home to enable Sri to finish her schooling which was only two months short of completion. Is herself finished her primary education even before the arrival of the Japanese. With the argument that the family needs extra income, Is takes an office job after having secured herself a typing certificate. Thus Sri is left to take care of her younger siblings alone.

While Sri personifies the stay-at-home female, a Javanese one who pasrah and nrima, Is is the personification of a 'modern' and 'liberated' office worker, and of a 'pemudi revolusioner' ('revolutionary-progressive girl'). In accordance to her progressive

3. Discussed in ch. 4
4. Discussed in ch. 4
life style is joins up with Pesindo, the communist led youth group. She leaves the shelter of her family home for the youth hostel. She is known to be fond of humming the Internationale.

When the communists are in full control of Blora, their neighbour Tukidjan who used to be with the Republican police force informs on Pak Sumo who is a known nationalist figure in the area. As a result, Pak Sumo is taken away by the authorities and is believed to die in prison when it is burnt down when the communists are forced to leave town. But while the communists are still in control, all kinds of atrocities are mentioned in connection with their rule. Another well known informer of the period is Sakidin, who owns a bullock car as well as a cow, and earns 15 rupiah for one load [5]. He becomes the communists propagandist. He terrorises people who are known to have differing political beliefs. It is Sakidin who informs Sri that only the reds are human beings. The rest are nothing but chickens, fit to be sacrificed at the banquets held at the red headquarters [6].

Is visits her home once, looking very stylish in her cavalry uniform with her riding boots and red scarves, riding a Sumba horse [7]. She also tries to enlighten her younger siblings with the multitudes of progressive thinkings and the song the Internationale. She teaches her younger sisters that in the country run by the reds, men and women have equal rights. The feudal aristocracy discriminate women against men, their men have nothing to do but gambling and

5. 'DYM', p. 293
6. ibid, p. 294
7. ibid, p. 296
womanising {8}.

Diah then asks Is about the purpose of this 'mass murder' or 'pedjagalan' ('butchering') that currently is taking place in Blora. Is explains that the butchering is only for 'chickens' who can only think about their own interests. Diah asks further why dalang Dimin and kyai Nursewan were killed. To that Is explains that the dalang was killed because his wayang had taken too many precious time away from production. As for the kyai he only imparted opium to the people {9}.

It was then that the family tells Is about their father. They beg her to release him, but Is leaves the house in a hurry. The next time she visits home she gives Sri some jewelery and tells her to use them to supplement their housekeeping money. But Sri and Diah refuse. They bury the jewelery in their back yard and return it to the authorities when the republican government is fully restored.

But before the communists are chased out of town by the Siliwangi forces, Is comes home again with her commandant to recruit her two sisters for the red army. At that Diah rebukes her and a heated interchange takes place between these sisters in which Diah blames Is for what has happened to their father, and for now planning to harm the rest of the her family. Is tells her that she has no respect for a 'chance occurence' such as a family bond. Those who are unwilling to make ways for the interest of the majority should become the 'chickens', Is warns Diah. To Is, only bonds that are made for common

8. ibid, p. 298
9. ibid, p. 299
interests are to be valued \{10\}.

Quickly Sri mediates between the two and apologised for Diah, pointing out that her younger sister is only a school kid who is ignorant about politics. She persuades Is to exempt Diah from joining arguing that Diah is needed to take care of the rest of the family. So Sri, once again sacrifices herself to protect her family and joins the red army.

In no time, the Siliwangi are in control and the reds are hunted down by the local community. Sakidin is one of the casualties: he is butchered by the neighbours in the backyard of the Sumo's family house, witnessed by Diah and the rest of the family. Meanwhile Sri is able to get away from the red troops as they are under heavy attack by the Hisbullah (the Moslem controlled) troops, some distance away from Blora. With a broken arm, she returns home. But Is seems to have disappeared.

Before long, the Dutch take control of the town. Their neighbour, Tukidjan quickly joined up with the guerilla forces outside the town, so his sister Sarmini (who sought refuge at the Sumo's house during the down fall of the communists \{11\} tells the family. At this time Sutjipto, one of their elder brothers arrives home. He survived the Burmese ordeal as he was taken prisoner by the British. He then joins up with the Dutch occupational forces. The rest of the family beg Sutjipto to leave them alone, which insults him. But in no time their neighbours threw some petrol bombs which put the family house

10. \textit{ibid}, p. 300

11. \textit{ibid}, p. 333
and Sutjipto's army truck alight. None of their neighbours come to help, and Sutjipto disappears.

The story concludes with Sri telling her younger sisters and brothers to 'let things be' [12]. They must make themselves 'inconspicuous' to their surrounding by making themselves 'anonymous' [13]. Thus even after the Dutch have been defeated and the republic has achieved its full independence, Sri and her younger siblings refused to be involved in the various local political scenes [14].

Analysis

The highly complex political unrest that besieges this small non-descript town of Blora are summarised by the author by the uncomplicated way the heroine of the story, Sri, strives for her own and her family's survival through her 'yielding with time'. This is a stark contrast to the order of those days where, since the arrival of the Japanese, the norm in that town was 'change and anarchy'. This state of affairs is symbolised by the lowering of quality in the education of the school children. They are ordered 'to weed the grass in the school yard' or 'to cook for the romusha' (forced labourers) who will die within a week [15].

12. ibid, p. 340
13. ibid, loc cit 'Kita harus bisa menghilangkan diri kita sendiri' (literally 'make oneself disappear' (become unnoticeable)).
14. ibid, loc cit
15. 'Dia Yang Menyerah' (DYM) p. 266.
The rapid changes of the governments, Japanese, Republican, Dutch, and back to the Republican mean a disruption in continuity in the educational methods and the curriculum adopted by the schools. Furthermore school children who are normally expected to remain at school, like Sri and her elder sister Is, terminate their education for non-academic reasons. Sri has to stop school in order to care for her younger siblings. Is stops in order to earn money.

She works as a typist at an office. Amidst all the chaos Is blossoms at the centre of change, looking stylish on her horse, while Sri holds herself aloof from the world outside her home, maintaining her own pace and tranquility.

In this story, Sri alone is aloof from the turbulent world. The other characters are more like Is. Political idealists like Pak Sumo, and political opportunists like Tukidjan and Sakidin, or men of action like the ex-romusha Sutjipto, are responding to the change imposed on their daily life. They relentlessly go ahead to carve a piece of life for themselves from the transient world while Sri persists upon 'self-annulment'. It is Sri who, at the end of the story (not Pak Sumo, Is, Tukidjan, Sakidin or Sutjipto), advises her surviving younger siblings, that they have to regard themselves as not existing, 'kita anggap saja diri kita ini tak ada' [16].

As for the rest of these assertive people, whether they are nationalists (personified by Pak Sumo) or communists (Is), idealists (Pak Sumo and Is), opportunists (Tukidjan and Sakidin) or foreign lackeys (Sutjipto), they do not survive the period.

16. 'DYM', p. 340
(The exception is Tukidjan, who may well have survived the revolution since he is last known to be with the guerillas [17]) In fact the lives of these people, unlike Sri's end in a violent way.

Interestingly, in spite of all this violence, only one specific incident is depicted in detail: the killing of Sakidin at the backyard of the family Sumo's house by the neighbours and witnessed by Diah and the younger members of the family [18]. Sakidin was the town's communist propagandist who walks the streets with his gong making announcements about the next mass-butchering to be held on behalf of the Reds [19]. More importantly he is depicted by the author as a man who owns a bullock cart and a cow and earns 15 rupiah per load he carries. His bullock cart shows that he is a propertied wong cilik (common man). Since he has no salaried income, he is not a priyayi. The 'deaths' of the others, or Pak Sumo, Is and Sutjipto are discreetly ambiguous. The readers are not told for sure that the marked foot found by Diah at the prison in which her father was kept prisoner, is that of Pak Sumo [20]. The possibilities are given in the narrative that the foot may belong to someone else, or that the father (minus the foot) could well have been removed to the next town, or that he was never even kept in that prison. Is and Sutjipto simply 'disappear'.

17. ibid, p. 333. Tukidjan's sister, Sarmini informed Sri and Diah about his fate
18. ibid, p. 316-317
19. ibid p. 293. The enemies of the Reds mentioned are the PNI, Masyumi, Hisbullah and NU
20. ibid, p. 321
The Framework

The conflicts and tensions in the story which cause the violent endings (implied and actual) for some of the participants are set out in three ways by the author.

The Political Conflict

One form of conflict depicted by the author is that of a personal nature between personalities and neighbours which in this story is manifest as conflicts between people with differing political leanings. Thus we constantly have the Sumo family and the Tukidjan family who live next door at opposite sides in politics or the bureaucratic structure. Tukidjan was in the republican police force while Pak Sumo was a civilian political activist. Then inspite of Is being with the communists, Tukidjan informed on Is' father in order to protect his own neck when the communists were in control of the town. This also denotes that while Is is an ideologue, Tukidjan is merely an opportunist. Soon after he is back with the guerilla forces, while the Sumo's family house is burnt down at the time when Sutjipto, who was with the Dutch forces, visits the family. 'Political association' is perceived by the author, in the case of Tukidjan, as a means of protecting one's self-interest and securing one's own survival, in the case of Sri as the reason for the destructions of members of her family.
The Cultural Conflict

The second type of conflict depicted in the story is a cultural one. This one is manifested through tensions between the two leading female protagonists: Sri, who personifies the Javanese trait of strength and resilience in 'yielding to time' and Is, who personifies a 'modern' person: a female office worker who can type, and who is engrossed with the latests and more progressive political concepts. The strain is between what is extolled in the traditions against what is valued in modernism.

The cultural conflict is also depicted along the conflict between someone who is selfless and someone who is selfish. The person with virtues is she, who sacrifices herself for the interests of her family and who complies with what the tradition has prescribed for her. The person who has strayed from the bond of culture is she who is selfish: who promotes her own self-interest, relentlessly without regard to her cultural traditions. This person, Is, adopts 'new' progressive ideas to enable her to escape the yoke of the various duties that would encumber her should she assume her traditional roles.

It is beside the point that the delineation of Is is nothing more than a 'caricature' of a female commie with 'riding boots and red scarf who hums the Internationale' [21]. Her importance in the story is that she symbolises the 'modernist, progressive, revolutionary' elements that existed in the community at that time. The fact that Is is delineated as such maybe a reflection of a true situation of that time, when political activists did behave like caricatures. Or it may

21. ibid, p. 296
well be that the author (and through him the local community at Blora) refuses to accord people like Is deeper human attributes and would prefer to see them as sub-humans.

But it is crucial to understand why an assertive and enterprising person like Is should lose over her sister who is bland and passive. Even during the period of 'chaos' an attempt made by Is to control her life is perceived in a critical light by the author in comparison to the responses adopted by Sri of yielding to time. Emulating what is extolled by his cultural traditions, to Pramoedya a person who gracefully accepts his fate, nrima [22] is stronger than someone who continually busily tries to outwit fate. Is' adaptability to her new environment is perceived by the author as a sign of her defective or incomplete personality.

At this point in Pramoedya's writing career, he champions a person who is bound by her cultural tradition and by her family commitments over someone who undermined the importance of traditions and family ties. Furthermore the conflict between these two sisters can also be seen as a conflict between politically involved individuals and a-political people, in which the latter group are to be the survivors. The politically involved characters are seen as having 'strayed' from the mould of their civilised, well ordered ad cultured world. Those who dare venture outside it will be met with unexpected and unpleasant consequences.

22. nrima literally means 'to accept with thanks' or 'to accept gladly without any resentment'. For discussion of this concept see S de Yong, Salah Satu Sikap Hidup Orang Jawa (Jogjakarta, Yaysan Kanisius, 1976) p. 19-20
The Class Conflict

The third conflict is a social one expressed along 'class' lines, Sri and Pak Sumo against Sakidin and Tukidjan. Is, in the meantime, has left her parents' house to live in a youth hostel. In this way she is seen as 'dropping-out' from her social origins, and chooses to become one of a crowd of youngsters from all walks of life. In fact they were mainly youths who have some education and hence have some social privileges. But the significance of her dropping out is that it symbolises one of her crimes: she forfeits her natural family ties for man-made ones, for a feeling of affinity with like minded persons.

Pak Sumo family embrace the priyayi values {23}. Sakidin (as pointed out earlier) is of peasant stock. Members of Tukidjan's family are that from the archtypical neighbouring family that figures many times in Pramoedya's short stories that are set in Blora - the landless peasant who turns robber baron who turns police informant whose son becomes a guerilla fighter who becomes mad {24}.

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23. The Sumo family is the archotypical family in Pramoedya's stories set in Blora, being the family of the narrator. The father in those stories, 'Yang Sudah Hilang', 'Dia Yang Menyerah', 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' (all from TDB) and in his novel Bukan Pasar Malam (BPM) is a nationalist school teacher who is politically involved during the colonial period right up to the revolution. See also an account of B. Hatley's interview with a sister of Pramoedya in which she regards her family as priyayi and her neighbours as ordinary kampung people (villagers, peasant, wong cilik). B. Hatley, 'Blora Revisited' in Indonesia, no 30, October, 1980, p.8

24. See 'Inem' in TDB, p. 61-62 on the social background of Inem's father. He was a robber baron, gambler, turned police inspector. In 'Hidup Yang Tak Diharapkan' in TDB, the father of Kadjan, the confused freedom fighter, was a robber baron.
While the class conflicts are mentioned in a rather sketchy manner, they are there and are depicted as of a violent nature. They are related to the various political associations embraced by the people and to their social and cultural origins.

The nationalists are the priyayi, while the communists are 'drop-out' priyayi, personified by Is, propertied wong cilik, represented by Sakidin, and people of 'obscured' social origins, (the offspring of criminals, and criminals turned police informants) represented by Tukidjan. All of them are usurping the traditional status quo in various ways.

The reference to the social background of the characters are often only slight, but the author displays a remarkable consistency in his association of 'violent' events with particular characters from certain social backgrounds. The detailed depiction of violent death is only associated with the deaths of people other than priyayi bureaucrats. Such depictions occur consistently in Pramoedya's early writings on the revolution [25].

The Symbolism: The covert and overt class conflicts.

Pramoedya has woven a story in which physical violence occurs as society is torn by multi-faceted dissension. As Pramoedya perceives the situation, the dissension starts when the cultural norms that bind together members of a priyayi family as one unit, are disintegrating. This family in turn can be seen as Pramoedya's symbol for members of a privileged elite class. Thus the disintegration of

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25. See Keluarga Gerilya, also his short story 'Dendam' in Subuh (Jakarta, Pembangunan, 1954 (1950)) 3rd ed. The violent death in this story which took place in public is that of an unknown haji.
this family unit reflects not so much the disintegration of the society as a whole, but merely the disintegration of a particular class. The underlying moral in the story is that when the priyayi class is torn by dissension this signifies an ill omen: it signifies the impending destruction of the social structure by violent means.

But before Pramoedya reaches that conclusion, he carefully depicts the social processes that befall the elite class through the events that occur in the priyayi family of Pak Sumo. The disintegration of this family, and the seriousness of the break-up of the unit are depicted in several ways.

The First Stage: The Break-up of the Family Unit

First it is depicted through the figure of the father who neglected the welfare of his children at the price of pursuing his own interest in community works. The grave implication of his action is signified by the fact that one of his children, the eldest daughter in the family followed his lead. She too neglected her younger siblings in order to pursue her own interest. To make matters worse, she, unlike her father, left her family home out of her own free will to reside in a youth hostel. She actually, publicly announced to the outside world that she preferred the companions of like-minded people over that of her own blood relatives.

The complex nature of this family break-up is further indicated when the daughter is to choose a political alliance which is different from that chosen by her father. But to indicate that it is her choice that is wrong and not that of her father, the figure is depicted
in an unfavourable light in contrast to her equally politicised father. She stoops so low that she inveigles her own younger sister into joining her regiment when that regiment is already in a state of disarray. Such an unprecedented act of disloyalty in an elite prestigious family like that of Pak Sumo family could only happen, the author perceives, because Is has joined up with the communist forces. The gravity of her act of refusing her subordinate position to her father is symbolised by the act that she is a communist.

This break-up is manifold, the author argues. It is not just a matter of father and daughter breaking away from each other, or just a matter of one member professing a different political allegiance from the other. The grave nature of this dissension is accentuated by another member of the family joining the common enemy of both his nationalist father and his communist sister. In the one family, nationalists confronted communists, Indonesians confront the Dutch and their lackeys, and traditionalists (personified by Sri) confront the modernists (personified by Is).

The Second Stage: The break-up of the social order

At the same time Pramoedya is aware of the dynamic forces of history. This multifaceted disintegration of an elite family is itself indicative that the old social structure is unfunctionable. In addition, the collapse of the system's viability is demonstrated by how unsavoury people from outside the family unit (ex-criminals with unsavoury social backgrounds or un-couth wong cilik, symbolised by
Sakidin) capitalise from the sufferings endured by this priyayi family. Tukidjan (Sumo's neighbour) informs on Sumo to the communists in order to save himself, inspite of the fact that Is is also in the communist camp and he might be expected to protect the family of his nominal comrade. But the opposite happens.

The Sumo family remains the symbol of the virtuous priyayi class despite the uncommendable behaviour of Is, but not so the Tukidjan family. The enormity of Tukidjan's uncivilised conduct is indicated by his insistence on dragging the sick Pak Sumo to meet with the bupati. His opportunistic stance is accentuated further in contrast to Is, while Is disappears, when the Reds are defeated, Tukidjan is known to be with the guerilla forces. The difference in behaviour of the two youngsters has a class basis. It is Tukidjan, the son of a robber, who betrays Sumo who is a priyayi, and not the other way around. Is may have caused suffering within her own family, but she is not depicted as causing the suffering of her neighbour.

This class based conflict between this priyayi family and the outside world (represented by the neighbours) is dramatised when Sutjipto (the Dutch collaborator) comes to visit the family, and their home is burnt down. None of their neighbours come to help. This burning expresses overt conflict along political lines (nationalist against Dutch agent) and covert conflict along class lines (wong cilik against priyayi) [26]. It also symbolises the final destruction of the priyayi privileges and material comforts of pre-revolutionary days.

26. See fn 23 above on Hatley's interview, confirming this class antagonist attitude between the Sumo's (Pramoedya's) family and their neighbour.
This is reminiscent of the way European writers of the 1920s saw the Great War as having destroyed the old values but not as having built anything. In Pramoedya's case, he senses that the revolution has caused the destruction of the priyayi world \(^{27}\), a destruction symbolised by the loss of the family home.

**Conclusion**

In the overall construction of the story, the actual physical violence (as against events which are alluded to) is directed at the wong cilik, who actually suffer bodily harm. The priyayi are depicted as losing their material and spiritual anchorage, symbolised by their family home. Furthermore, while the dissension within the family is along cultural-political lines, the dissension between the family and society crystalises along class-political lines between the priyayi and the wong cilik.

Pramoedya describes the revolution as an impersonal historical force that causes inevitable catastrophes such as the burning down of properties and senseless mass murders. He also observes how people try to ride this historical wave to further their ends, wong cilik as opportunists and priyayi as ideologues. But no matter what their

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27. His views on the revolution changed over time. This can be seen by comparing his works *Kerandji Bokasi Djatuh* (Jakarta, Voice of Free Press, 1947), *DYM* and *BPM*. By the time Pramoedya wrote 'DYM' and *BPM* in the 1950s, his retrospective view of the revolution had changed to a negative one, from the point of view of the priyayi class. The priyayi in his stories found their material possessions depleted and their social status eroded.
motives, those who seek to use history are consumed by it. She who survives is 'Dia Yang Menyerah' (she who yields) who nrima (accepts fate) without trying to take advantage of the wave and thereby upholds the traditional Javanese model of virtue.

'*Kemadian Lahirlah Dia* ("Finally He Was Born")
and *Munafiq Tugas Bela* (24 Nights (Sacrifice))

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the individual's sense of identity and the process of conceptualization of that identity. It does so by dealing with the individual's awareness of his place and position in the world (be it family, religious, social, cultural or political). Through the narrative the tension between the individual and the family on one hand and the tension between the family and society on the other becomes transparent. This is evidenced through a reading of four of Pramoedya's semi-autobiographical stories that deal with his past and his life in his hometown Borneo.

In reading these works we are of course aware that they are not a 'realistic' depiction of Pramoedya's own life. Yet when they are read in relation to each other and what we know about the author's own life, they do provide us with a coherent set of pictures about an individual growing up in that town. His family relationships are clearly defined, as is the involvement of his father with local social and political activities.
INTRODUCTION

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This chapter has two main parts and a final discussion. Part A contains a detailed analysis of three stories set in colonial times, 'Yang Sudah Hilang' ('YSH')\(^1\), 'Sunat'\(^2\) and 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia' ('KLD') \(^3\). Part B analyses one novel set in contemporary time, Bukan Pasar Malam (BPM)\(^4\). The final discussion takes up two themes which run through these stories: the place of the individual in society and the perils of nonconformity.

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3. 'KLD' in TDB, p. 87-113.

A. GROWING UP IN COLONIAL TIMES: 'YANG SUDAH HILANG', 'SUNAT' and 'KEMUDIAN LAHIRLAH DIA'

A.1 'Yang Sudah Hilang': A Loss of familial companionship

Synopsis of the Story

The story opens up with a description of one geographical feature of Blora, its river Lusi. While as a geographical feature it is a permanent part of this small provincial town, the condition of the river itself is changeable. In summer the bottom of the river 'mencongak-congak menjenguk langit' ('is straining its neck to take a glance at the sky') \{5\}. During the rainy season, 'the river destroys its own banks'. 'So in this life' the narrator comments 'A strong current, now and then, can drag the body and the destiny of a man. Without the man being aware of that current, he has lost parts of his life' \{6\}.

The next episode brings the reader to the front yard of the narrator's house (He narrates the story as if he were a pre-school age child). A detailed description of his relationship with his mother follows. In it the child is depicted as being distressed by the sight of the gloomy bamboo in front of the house. To him, the sound of the wind in the bamboo is like a person crying. His mother assures him that the bamboo are in fact singing, and proves it by singing the various traditional songs with her own beautiful voice.

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5. 'YSH' p. 16.

6. ibid, loc cit
The accounts that follow describe on one level the child's relationship with the other adults in the house, the two servants (Nyi Kin and her replacement), and the child's father. On another level the narrator describes the mother's relationship to those adults in the house, her two servants and her husband. Those accounts are depicted through the intermediation of the child, in which the child is the link between the mother and the servants, and the mother and the father.

The final part of the story depicts the mother's relationship to her own father, and to her mother's second husband. By this stage, the child has grown older and hence like the other adults mentioned in the story, is a separate person from the mother. The story ends with a description of the echoing in the narrator's head of the advice the child received from his mother and father. 'Like the river Lusi that will line the town of Blora forever and ever, so those voices that are stored and are engraving his memory will forever flow to the sea that has no bounds. No one will ever know when the sea is to be drained of water and its waves will cease to roar. Vanished. All have vanished from the bounds of the senses' [7]. With that statement, the story ends.

Framework of the Story

This story can be seen as a semi-autobiographical account of the author's life during his pre-school years. The fragments of his life that are recounted, all directly or indirectly involved his mother.

7. ibid., p. 44
For this reason, the story is in fact not about the child as such, but about his mother.

As the child recounts his pre-school years, he describes a household which his mother dominates. Since her husband is a school teacher it is a priyayi household [8]. The household is wealthy (as shown by the high wages paid to the servants) [9] and secular (mentioned by the usage of firecrackers during the moslem new year celebration, a practice which is disapproved by strictly religious moslems) [10].


9. Nyi Kin is paid as much as 80 cents per month, with food and lodging free. These are quite a substantial earnings for a wong cilik. A landless labourer, Siman, in Pramoedya's story, 'Pelarian Yang Tak Dicari' (to be discussed in ch. 5) receives as much as 76 cents per month working 7 days a week as a farm hand. He has to supplement his earnings with another job as a night watchman or sell sand during the dry season. He has a wife and two children to support. In another story 'Inem' (also to be discussed in ch. 5), the mother earns 212 cents per month making batik head dress, but she has to support her numerous children and a gambler of a husband.

10. 'YSH' p. 40. This is one of several occasions in the story at which the mother expresses her disapproval of her husband's secular habits.
In spite of the secular life style of the family, the mother is depicted as a pious, highly principled and religious lady. She disapproves of stealing, however petty, and of telling untruthful stories of magic to children \(^{11}\), and is deeply distressed by her husband's habit of being absent from home \(^{12}\). She disapproves (for example) of her lazy stepfather who sent his wife (her mother) out to work \(^{13}\). She herself, as the wife of a school teacher, is relieved of the need to earn a living. Thus the mother is a true affluent middle class woman, with some education. Her education is shown by the way she imparts knowledge about nationalism and her own school years \(^{14}\) and prefers that historical tales rather than myths are told to her children. Her own father is a wealthy man, as is shown by his ability to undertake the pilgrimage not once but twice before he died \(^{15}\).

The Mother and Her Child

The incidents in which the child is involved directly are all related to the theme of growing alienation of the mother from her world. The most vivid part of this development for the child is his own growing alienation from his mother. Initially, the mother is a comforting figure who comforts the child with her singing. At the same time the account also describes how the child's perception of

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11. ibid., p. 24-25. This is one of the disagreements the mother has with her servants.

12. ibid., p. 28-29. During her husband's absence, the mother reads the Koran deep into the night.

13. ibid., p. 42-43. The mother's step-father only visits the home when in need of money.

14. ibid., p. 41-42

15. ibid., p. 40
things around him, even at this early age, is different from that of
the mother. This is again stressed when in a later account the child
tells his mother of the coin he had dreamt he had in his hand. He
opens up his fist in front of the mother only to find out that the
coin in his dream is non-existent \(^{16}\). The child cries but the
mother laughingly gives him a real coin to soothe his disappointment.
Yet the child is still not fully satisfied 'masih ada setengah dari
kekecewaan dalam dada' (there is still half of a disappointment inside
his chest') \(^{17}\). Unsympathetic, the mother then orders him to ask
the servant Nyi Kin to help him with his bath. The child dawdles, and
his mother tells him firmly to go away and hurry with the task.

The Mother and Her Servants

The later stages of this growing apart of mother and child are
intermediated by the servants, who gradually take the place of the
mother as the adults with whom the child is most intimate. First the
child talks about Nyi Kin, whose beauty has been ruined by syphilis
which she got from her husband. Because of that she left him, and she
hates all men. She has lost one eyeball, when she walks she has to
drag one of her legs. She is fond of the child and spends half of her
monthly payment of 80 cents to buy sweets for the child. She likes to
tell him legendary tales about their local hero, the late bupati who
is thought by the common people to be endowed with supernatural
powers. She also talks to him about the supernatural power of the
various animals and stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana \(^{18}\).

\(^{16}\) ibid., p. 17
\(^{17}\) ibid., loc. cit.
various animals and stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana {18}. The mother on the other hand only tells the child stories about heroic events that took place in the middle east {19}. Nyi Kin is later fired by the mother for stealing some spices from the kitchen.

It is when the new servant comes to work with them, and the child is somewhat older and a new baby has arrived in the family that the child sleeps apart from his mother and with the servant. Thus he wakes up in the morning as early as the servant. During those early morning hours, by the kitchen fire, looking up the hole in the ceiling, the child can see all kinds of faces in the smoke. He talks about them as monsters and devils to his mother, which makes her angry with the new servant. She forbids the servant to talk about 'horror' stories to the child. The servant denies that she ever talked about them with him. But later, a figure does come down from the hole and chase the servant around the fire several times before the figure climbs up the ceiling and disappears through the hole. The child is not sure whether that figure is a real one or only a product of his vivid imagination. From fear of being rebuked by his mother he restrains himself from informing her about the event. But he does know for sure that the servant has handed in her resignation that same morning without telling the mother her reason, even though the mother asks her. It is only years later that the child finds the courage to tell the mother about the episode. The mother reminds the child of the pet monkey that was kept by the neighbour and was killed later.

18. ibid. p. 20. This is an inaccurate account. It would be highly improbable that an illiterate servant would know about the Mahabharata or Ramayana. What the author probably had in mind are the stories from the wayang lakon which are based on the Indian epics the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

19. 'YSH', p. 19
because it had become too wild to handle. But the child is sure that their neighbour only acquired that pet years after the episode in the kitchen. Thus by this stage the child has shared an event with another adult (that new servant) which his mother does not share at all. This marks the growing distancing of the child from his mother.

A feeling of sadness permeates the whole narration. While it is evident in the story how close the child is to his mother, he retains a feeling of uncertainty about her. Except for the earliest event where he recounts the scene about the weeping bamboo, the mother is always seen from a distance, aloof and highly principled. She only appears real when the child begins to tell about the two servants. The mother becomes real as the exact opposite of his two servants. She is whatever her two servants are not. At the same time the child, as he grows older, also grows apart from his mother and spends more time with the servants and less with her.

The Mother and Her Husband

The child perceives that the mother has never been close to her husband. Initially, the child experiences the same indifference directly, and it distresses him. The first time the father is mentioned in the story is on his departure from home for his work as a school teacher in a non-government school. The child cries wanting to come with him [20]. In a later episode the child cries unceasingly right through until next morning when his father does not return that night. Then the focus switches to the mother, as the child comes to

20. ibid., p. 27
understand the distance separating his parents. In one scene, the mother recites the Koran deep into the night whenever the father is absent from home for nights on end [21]. Another episode describes the disagreement the mother has with the father regarding the usage of firecrackers to celebrate the Moslem New Year. The father only ceases to buy them when one of his nephews is injured by the crackers. The alienation between the parents finally becomes starkly vivid when the mother, to the child's horror, threatens to take all her children with her to live with her father in Rembang without taking the children's father [22].

The Mother and Her Parents

The subsequent events in the story are narrated by a now older child. As the child gains experience, he comes to see his mother is alienated not only from her present family, but also from her own past. The final link with her past is shattered when her father (to whom she had threatened to take her children) dies [23]. The child sees his mother wither with sadness at this loss. She almost loses all her composure, even after her husband tells her that 'dying is the duty of all men' [24]. After that event the child also notices that she seems to accept whatever comes to her with the outlook 'menyerah

21. _ibid._, p. 28-29
22. _ibid._, p. 32-33
23. _ibid._, p. 40
24. _ibid._, loc. cit
pada waktu' ('to yield with the times') [25]. She now spends more time with her children, who by now have grown older and somewhat apart from her. She talks to them during their long walks about nature, the stars and nationalism, as well as about her childhood, her school years and the various places she has been to [26]. She also ceases to care whenever her husband goes away for long hours from home.

The depth of the mother's despair at the death of her father can be understood from the subsequent description of her mother. This maternal grandmother of the child supports herself by hawking vegetables around the various priyayi houses. She and her husband live at the outskirts of town. This husband, who is her second husband and hence the step-father of the child's mother, is considered by the local community and by the child's mother to be a no-hoper. He only appears at the house when he is in need of some money. The mother tells the child that the reason for her step-father's continual failure in his undertakings is the fact that he had committed a crime in the past [27]. The child himself knows of the local community superstition that those who have illegitimate offspring will have misfortune for the rest of their lives [28]. Whatever crimes the child's step grandfather had committed in the past, this is a stark contrast to the highly moralistic and principled mother. In lifestyle and ethics the mother is completely alienated from her own mother and her mother's new husband.

25. This is a Javanese trait of nrima. For this specifically cultural induced attitude see S. de Jong, Salah Satu Sikap Hidup Orang Jawa (Jogjakarta, Yayasan Kanisius, 1976) p. 19-20, p. 91. See also C. Geertz, The Religion of Java (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1976 (1960)) p. 240-241.
26. 'YSH', p. 41-42.
27. ibid., p. 43
28. ibid., p. 42
For these reasons, the child notices that his mother's religion and the little affection she receives from her husband and children are not a sufficient bulwark against a sense of abandonment, emptiness and loneliness. With her father dead, her estrangement from her own mother and her step-father, make the mother appear an increasingly tragic and lonely figure, alienated from and abandoned by the people around her.

To end the story, the narrator reports the final advice he received from his parents. In line with her principled approach to life, his mother warns him never to profit from the effort of another person, even if the fruits of that effort are freely offered to him [29]. The father on the other hand tells him that he can do whatever he likes with whatever possessions belong to him, including his own body and his own life [30].

At this point, the child himself comes to be aware that, as he matured, he has inherited his mother's alienation. Until now, his mother has been the dominating feature in his life. But as he becomes aware of how alone his mother is, he loses touch with her forever. He had taken her presence for granted, just as the people of Blora take the existence of the river Lusi for granted. But before he could get to know her fully, she has gone from his life. This development harks back to the opening scene of the story with its symbolic description

29. ibid. loc.cit
30. ibid., p. 43-44.
of the river destroying its own embankments. As the narrator himself becomes estranged from his family and from the people of Blora, he comes to understand what abandonment meant to the person who had been closest to him, his mother. Furthermore what is left to him now is only the resounding echoes of the various words of wisdom he heard from his parents, like the river Lusi that forever marks the town of Blora those words of wisdom mark the narrator's life.
A.2 'Sunat': Futility in the attainment of piety.

This story is a simple descriptive narrative. It is about a boy's (the narrator's) own experience of his circumcision ceremony. It depicts the pomp and airs surrounding the ceremony. The story discusses honestly the child's physical experience of the circumcision and his failure to experience a religious transformation through the ceremony.

The Religious connotations of the ceremony

As the narrator points out, circumcision is a formal religious ceremony which officially and publicly makes a child into an adolescent {31}. The ceremony is required as a matter of adat (custom) for boys who are brought up in the Moslem religion. A circumcised person is perceived by himself and to be perceived by others as being more pious and devout, and as having more rights than uncircumcised boys to enter heaven {32}. Furthermore, after the ceremony the person can see himself as becoming a real Javanese man {33}.

31. 'Sunat', p. 77, 82. For a social anthropoligical account of growing up from childhood to adolescent in South Central Java region see Koentjaraningrat 'The Javanese ...' p. 97-99. See also C. Geertz, Religion p. 51-53. On the social and economic aspects of the ceremony see ibid, p. 61-67.

32. 'Sunat', p. 79-80.

33. ibid., p. 79.
The Social connotations of the ceremony

The narrator, writing now as a social recorder, mentions the other children who are circumcised together with him. In addition to seven year old younger brother, there is another cousin who is 10, one of his father's adopted sons, who is 16, and two other poor children who live on the outskirts of the town. All go to the same ceremony, with all expenses paid by the father [34]. Another adopted son, who is 18 and already married to their servant and with a child by her, refuses to be circumcised in the same ceremony as he claims that his own father will give the ceremony himself [35]. The narrator notices that this adopted son of his father is absent during his ceremony [36].

As the narrator's father is a school headmaster, he has been able to organise the circumcision to take place at the school building, itself the day after the end-of-school-year celebration. The preceding evening's school celebration is also something of an occasion. The narrator's own teacher has composed a play staged by the pupils at the school entitled 'Kambing Hilang' ('The Lost Goat').

34. ibid., p. 81.

35. ibid., loc cit. People tend to feel great shame if the cost of the ceremony of their children's circumcision is born not by themselves (as the rightful fathers). The same applies to the children. They take exceptional pride their own father's ability to finance the ceremony.

36. ibid., p. 83.
There is gamelan music as well as country-and-western and keroncong to entertain the guests [37]. The children who are to be circumcised are seated on a special platform.

The narrator mentions that in his village, the circumcision ceremony is regarded as a public holiday together with births, weddings, funerals, and the New Year’s Day celebration [38]. Even without invitation, people who hear about the circumcision ceremony will come and attend to give their blessing as well as to assist in the ceremony with money or with other means.

For the auspicious day, the narrator’s sisters all wear new clothes especially provided for the ceremony. His mother wears a new parang rusak kain [39], with an embroidered kebaya that has a kutu baru (bodice) and a green selendang or shawl. His father wears his official school teacher’s costume, a parang rusak kain with a tightly buttoned badju tutup shirt, and he wears no slippers [40]. The children who are to be circumcised wear a new kain and an Indonesian

37. ibid., p. 82. See also C. Geertz, Religion, p. 51 in which he mentions a shadow play, a gamelan orchestra, a western-type orchestra and a traveling drama or dance troupe as the kinds of entertainment given during such occasion.

38. 'Sunat', p. 82. See also C. Geertz, Religion, p. 78-76 for the ritual ceremonies of births, weddings, circumcisions and funerals. Circumcisions and marriage ceremonies are considered as the coming of age ceremony: circumcision for boys and marriage for girls, see C. Geertz, ibid., p. 51.

39. The parang rusak style is traditionally reserved for members of the privileged class, i.e. the priyayi. In olden times only the aristocracy were allowed to wear a kain with such style, see L.W. C. van den Berg, De Inlandse rangen en titels op Java en Madeira (Batavia, Land’s Drukkerij, 1887). See also S. Scherer, Harmony, p. 114-119.

40. Teachers, native medical doctors, and other native technical officers, unlike native administrative officials like wedana (district chiefs) were considered to be 'low' priyayi, and up to the early decades of this century were not allowed to wear any foot coverings during formal occasions. See S. Scherer, ibid., loc cit.
headdress or peci {41}.

The physical meaning of the ceremony

The narrator then describes at some length his physical experience and the procedure of the circumcision. After the ceremony is over and they are back in their own home, the narrator's mother asks him whether he feels himself to be more worthy. The narrator then realises that in fact he feels no different from yesterday, nor does he feel any more religious. His mother suggests to him that maybe he has not been praying adequately and properly, which he denies. She then promises that he may be able to feel more pious after he has taken the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In reply, the narrator asks why his father has not gone on a pilgrimage himself. She answers that he is too poor. Thus the narrator knows that although he wants to be rich, he cannot afford the expense of a boat trip for his pilgrimage in the foreseeable future, and hence his hopes of becoming a pious man are still-born. Before long he and his younger brother will have become indistinguishable from the rest of the village children, from whom poverty has stripped whatever possessions they once had {42}.

41. 'Sunat', p. 82-83.

42. 'ibid, p. 86.
The Symbolism in the Story

As the story is narrated it is obvious that the religious meaning of the ceremony only plays a minute importance in the overall meaning of the whole ritual. The narrator describes at length and with some details the pomp and glamour of the ritual ceremony, describing as he does the economic and social significance of the ceremony. Through this the high status and the prestige the narrator's parents command among the local community is depicted.

The economic affluence of the family is displayed by the ability of the father to sponsor six children for the occasion. In celebrating the ceremony three types of musical entertainments that were used, gamelan, keroncong and 'country and western' music, catering for traditional high culture, traditional popular and popular western tastes. The secular life style of the family may be inferred, by the fact that no arabic or religious music is used to entertain the guests.

The narrator himself, young as he is, has noticed how the ceremony is in fact more of a public declaration by the parents that they have been able to perform their obligation to their children well, in that they provide them with an 'easier access to go to heaven'. The pomp of the ceremony is also to distinguish them and their children from the common people in the area. Yet, as the narrator fails to feel religiously purified by the ceremony and furthermore as he realises that like his father, he probably can't afford to go on a pilgrimage, before long he and his younger brother have become indistinguishable from the rest of the children in the
The special description of the circumcision ceremony by Pramoedya can be seen as his way of elaborating on the life style of the *priyayi* family mentioned earlier in 'YSH'. Through this the family's secular outlook towards religion becomes evident. The family adopts the ritual because it is expected of them by the community. They adopt it to ensure the children will be seen to be endowed with certain social privileges rather than because the family itself believes that the ritual will sanctify either themselves or their children. The ceremony is, as the narrator has aptly observed, an expression of one's social obligation and not an expression of religious commitment. But despite the strict adherence by the parents to the ritual expected by society, after the ceremony the children do not look different to the ordinary village kids.
A.3 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia': A Father's Frustration.

The Framework of the Story

The Historical background

The story is set in the economic depression of the 1930's, which also was characterised by the resurgence of nationalist movements. Some of the nationalist activities in this period were centred around mass education through 'irregular' schools founded by nationalist teachers in order to combat illiteracy. It was to curb nationalist activities of this type that the Colonial Government later issued the 'Wild School Regulation' which closed down many non-government pro-nationalist schools. Another form of nationalist expression in this period was the swadesi ('self-sufficiency') movement inspired by Gandhi's Swadesh movement in India. One by-product of this movement was the growth of the local textile industries and various other cottage industries, boosting the morale of small native entrepreneurs.

The story mentions all these in passing and captures well the enthusiastic and hopeful atmosphere of the period by depicting the idealism and activities of the father of the narrator. It is about this father's aspirations and disappointments, and how he takes to gambling when ordered to cease political activities by the Colonial

43. The 'Wild School Regulation' was passed in 1932, when Pramoedya was seven years of age. For the effect of this regulation on the Indonesian Nationalist Movement see J. Ingleson, Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934 (K.L., A.S.A.A., 1979) p. 204-207.
Government. Although at the beginning of the story the father has considerable influence as a political activist and as the principal of the nationalist school, so that even the ndoro wedana (the district head) is in awe of him, eventually the power of the colonial government proves even greater, and the father has to obey its rulings. If the central figure in 'YSH' is the narrator's mother, in this story it is his father.

The Father Figure

The father's individuality, foibles and social status are delineated through descriptions of his various activities. He is a respected and dedicated school teacher with a strong commitment to the nationalist cause, who spent his savings to finance the various educational ventures he has undertaken, such as the publication of reading materials to combat illiteracy.

At the same time, he supports and educates the many cousins and nephews living in the house \[44\]. Before the 'Wild School Regulation' is enforced, the house and the figure of the father are perceived by the narrator as the centre of nationalist activities in the small town of Blora. When the father's political activities are curbed as the result of the regulation, he takes to gambling \[45\].

44. 'KLD' p. 89. For this type of priyayi household with numerous dependents, known as 'Gono-gini', see M. Djojohadikusumo, Herinneringeu vit Tijdperken (Jakarta, Indira, 1969) p. 80.

45. 'KLD' p. 106. For priyayi, gambling is regarded as a tolerable foible. In the wayang, Yudhistira lost his kingdom to the Kurawas through a gambling game. The gambling habit of the priyayi during the colonial era has caused considerable concern to the enlightened nationalist leaders see H. Sutherland, The Making, p. 24.
The Father and His Wife

Unlike the mother in 'Yang Sudah Hilang', who is disturbed by her husband's continual absences from home, the mother in this story is depicted as very understanding. Up to a certain point, she tolerates her husband's gambling. But when he has been absent from home for four consecutive nights \(^{46}\), she sends the narrator with a strongly worded letter \(^{47}\) to search for his father. On another occasion she forbids her husband and his gambling friends to play their card games in the house where all her children (except the narrator) were born, and in which she now lives. Yet she still takes the trouble to prepare a pudding and send it to their other house, in which the husband and his friends decide to play. Thus the relationship between the two parents is depicted by the narrator as being good and full of understanding.

\(^{46}\) 'KLD', p. 107 Compare this to the father of Hardo in Perburuan who takes pleasure in playing for three consecutive nights without ceasing (Perburuan, p. 53). Or compare this to the father of the narrator in BPM who is known to be able to gamble for 5 nights in a stretch.

\(^{47}\) 'KLD', p. 108. The usage of a messanger or a letter to trigger an action is a common trait in Pramoedya's writings. See for exampled his novel Perburuan where a messanger is used to start the action of the story to take place. In BPM (to be discussed below) a letter is used, to initiate the action. But in 'KLD', the letter is used as the climax of the story is reached towards the concluding part of the story.
The Father and the Birth of another Son

But in spite of all this warmth in the family and in spite of the father's high idealism and his unceasing altruistic public efforts, by the end of the story he emerges as a lonely and desolate figure. He has taken to gambling because he has been ordered by the colonial government to cease his activities and the local community has been too scared to support his efforts. He is even alienated from his new-born child, whose arrival he did not witness. The mother tells her husband that the new-born child can expect nothing from his father, just as the child can expect nothing from its era. In spite of that, the child will grow from his own efforts [48].

The cessation of political activity by the father is marked by privatisation within and outside the family. The father assumes increased family responsibilities with the arrival of the new baby. The narrator mentions that the arrival of the younger brother also marks the end of the swadesh movement, the campaign against illiteracy, and the various cooperative native endeavours. These activities are replaced with gambling, cockfights, burglaries and murders [49]. The number of men recruited into the police force is increased considerably.

48. 'KLD', p. 112

49. ibid., loc. cit.
The Symbolism of the Story

The narrator perceptively sums up the political nuances of the period when at the beginning of the story he explains that he used to confuse the word police (polisi) with politics. A persistent feature of the early nationalist movement was the recruitment of native men to the police force to spy on their fellows who were active in the nationalist movement [50]. Further, in this story the father’s political activities are seen as sowing the seeds of Indonesian independence, and hence are depicted in association with the birth of a new member of the family. Although the father experiences a setback, the general feeling is that it is temporary and is preparing the ground for a better period to come. The ending of the story is mostly negative. But it can also be seen to be positive, in that it finishes with the coming of another child, the arrival of a new era.

Thus the story describes two perceptions of the same period, with one view in a dialectic relation to the other. The 1930s is the period of economic depression. At the same time it is during that period that nationalist activity reaches its peak in politics and education. Furthermore that period is associated with a life style that revolves around political idealism and optimism supported by specific economic action among the priyayi in the form of preference for locally made products rather than western imported goods.

50. On the Political Intelligence Service as part of the task in the Police force (formed in 1916) to report on the nationalist movements see H. Sutherland, The Making, p. 92-93, and J. Ingleson, Road, p. 38-39, p. 68.
Despite the economic depression, the period is perceived to have been a bright spot, in which the spiritual lives of both the priyayi (through their political activities) and the wong cilik (who benefitted economically from the swadesh habit of the priyayi) were high. The ending of that era is seen by the narrator as the coming of a dark age in which gambling and murder became the order of the day. To accentuate the spiritual and ethical corruption of the period, the narrator mentions the increased strength in the police force. The strengthening of the force is to curtail political activity, as much as to control homicides.

To illuminate the nature of the dark ages, the father is depicted as going into a state of spiritual eclipse and of moral deprivation by becoming addicted to gambling. But a ray of redemption is perceived to emanate from the family. The family as a whole can yet be saved although the head of the family has become disillusioned with his life. This hope comes in the form of the new born baby. Through this new born child the disintegrating family comes together and rebuild their hopes for a bright future. Thus the father's setback is synchronised with the potential bright prospects of the child for his future. One person's setback is another person's new beginning.

In depicting the frustration (in political terms) that befalls the narrator's priyayi family, this account is a complement to the earlier accounts in 'YSH' and 'Sunat'. In them, the same priyayi families are depicted as being economically, socially and culturally privileged. Pramoedya has summed up rather well the milieu of a typical nationalist family living in the provinces during the colonial
In strong contrast to the wong cilik, these nationalist priyayi, whether from the professional class of school teachers, doctors and lawyers, working for the colonial administration as bureaucrats, are privileged members of the Indonesian community. Yet despite their privileges, the nationalist priyayi had experienced a strong feeling of deprivation and frustration in that during the colonial era they could not express their political consciousness. They were forbidden to translate their idealism into their political activities. Unconsciously, Pramoedya has depicted the sources of the progressive force that later completely rejected the return of Dutch rule in Indonesia during the revolutionary period.

Pramoedya uses the aspirations and frustrations of one particular priyayi family as a reflection of the aspirations and frustrations of many nationalist priyayi of the period. This story shows how Pramoedya identifies individual private lives with that of the country. The family situation and the individual situation of the father are seen singly and together as a barometer of the state of the nation.
B. THE BLEAK PRESENT: A READING OF BUKAN PASAR MALAM

Bukan Pasar Malam: The Futility of Duty

This novel can be seen as a biographical account of the narrator's father [51]. It takes further the depiction of the father in 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia', describing the father's political and professional career as a teacher through the revolutionary period until his death from tuberculosis in the middle of 1950.

Two frameworks can be observed in the account, one of which can be seen as dialectically opposed to the other. One framework concerns the father's legacies and the other the son's responsibilities. What had been the father's glory has now become the son's burden.

The Synopsis of the Novel

The account opens with a letter which the narrator receives from his father celebrating the former's release from prison. The letter expresses the father's affection for his son [52], which makes the narrator feel rather guilty. The father's letter is in answer to an earlier letter which the narrator sent while he was still in prison. In that letter, the narrator rebuked his father for neglecting to look after the welfare of one of the narrator's younger sisters who is ill.


52. B.P.M., p. 5-6
with tuberculosis {53}.

Now, six months after his father's letter, he receives another letter from his uncle informing him of his father's illness and requesting that he come to Blora for a visit. The narrator is in a quandary. He feels guilty about his earlier rudeness to his father. He has no money to pay for the trip, and has difficulty borrowing any {54}. Moreover, he has only just begun a new job in the government publishing house Balai Pustaka {55}. He is also newly married and thus has the responsibility of caring for his new wife as well.

The narrator has only been working for several days when the letter from his uncle arrives. The narrator has some problems in securing permission to leave his job. He also has difficulties in raising the loan to finance the trip. The first chapter of the novel describes how he has to cycle all over the city to get the loan. As he passes the President's Palace, with irony he expresses his envy at the practical benefits the president of the nation can expect from of

53. B.P.M., p. 26-27. S.a. fn 47 above. The portrayal of a father who neglected the welfare of his children can be seen again depicted by Pramoedya in the figure of Pak Sumo in 'Dia Yang Menyerah' (DYM) (She Who Yields) discussed in ch. 3.

54. In real life, when Pramoedya was summoned home to visit his sick father, he also experienced difficulties in obtaining the money to finance his trip. Among the friends he asked for help was H.B. Jassin. The fact that Jassin was unable to help him at that stage caused Pramoedya considerable distress. For a long time he felt that Jassin had refused to help him. This is mentioned in his hostile letter to Jassin in 1963. The letter is discussed in ch. 8 of the thesis.

55. In real life, Pramoedya had only been working for 3 days with this Government Publishing Office when he has to beg for a special leave to visit his sick father. See his biographical data list, p. 4, See also ch. 1 of this thesis.
his position. But for the narrator, in order to visit his sick father, the narrator has to forfeit his own commitments to his newly acquired job. By taking leave so soon from his work he runs the risk of losing his job.

Interwoven into the story are descriptions of the arguments the narrator has with his wife, starting from the time they leave the railway station in Jakarta. In the train the wife threatens that she may come back by herself if he remains too long in Blora [56].

Furthermore in the train the narrator realises the feeling of acute estrangement he has towards his newly wed wife. He no longer finds her eyes attractive. He cannot communicate with her on the beauty of the geographical terrains of his region. Because she came from a different part of Java with more spectacular terrain than that they can see together from the train, the wife is rather unappreciative at the excitement of the narrator in seeing the sceneries again after a long absence.

Having stayed for some days in Blora, the wife again raises the issue of their returning home again. This compells the narrator to tell his father that they may have to go back to Jakarta very soon. The father begs them to stay for another week [57]. But the father's health deteriorates even further.

56. BPM, p. 12
57. ibid. p. 59
In one of their long walks away from the family home and hence from other relatives, the wife once again points to their dwindling financial resources and tells the narrator that they ought to go back to Jakarta \(^{58}\). But he refuses to do so.

After a week passes and there is still no improvement in his condition, the father is taken back from hospital to his family home. It is there, in his own room, that the father hallucinates and talks about his 'vision' to his children \(^{59}\). In his delirium he talks about 99 cobs of corn shot from the East \(^{60}\).

It was because of his strong devotion to the nationalist cause that the father decided not to follow his father's profession and become a religious teacher. He is the son of an ulama, but he does not want to become a naib nor a penghulu \(^{61}\). He tells his son that it has been indeed hard to follow through that commitment as a nationalist. Soon after this confession he dies.

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58. ibid., p. 84-85.


60. BPM, p. 88-91. The 99 cobs are the symbol, according to Aveling, of the various islands in the Indonesian Archipelago. Aveling, 'The Father's', ibid

61. BPM, p. 90. A penghulu and a naib are advisers on religious laws. For their social position in relation to the priyayi secular community see H. Sutherland, The Making, p. 27-28. See also fn 8 above
The Framework of the Story

Although a minor theme of the novel is the problems the narrator experiences in dealing with his wife and improving communications with her, the major theme is the responsibilities he acquires on the trip home for the welfare of his younger siblings and the care of the family house. These responsibilities are brought home in the course of this trip home, which can be seen as a journey of rediscovery. In the course of it, the narrator starts to notice how things have changed. At the same time he gets to know more about his father - not by getting closer to him, but through third persons. This broadened knowledge about his father is provided by a neighbour, through a fellow teacher who happens to be a dukun (soothsayer), through the narrator's younger sister, through a Chinese gambling friend of the father and through another political friend of the father.

The Father's Legacies

The first of these accounts of the father is provided by a neighbour the morning after the narrator's arrival in Blora. This neighbour is a goat slaughterer 62 who addresses the narrator using the word 'gus' 63. He remarks on the state of the narrator's family home. The house, which the neighbour helped to build, is now twenty-five years old.

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62. A 'goat slaughterer' is a trades man, hence a member of the wong cilik: 'the common man', and not a priyayi.

63. The usage of the term 'gus' by the goat slaughterer towards the narrator who is younger than him, indicates further the low social status of the goat slaughterer in comparison to the narrator.
In comparison with other houses in the neighbourhood it is still in good condition [64]. Still, the neighbour remarks, it is time some repairs were made. He tells the narrator that if the house falls into ruin, so will its inhabitants [65]. The narrator is worried by the price of timber, cement and nails, but nods reluctantly. The neighbour's account of the house indicates the economic and social affluence of the narrator's father in the colonial period, and (by comparison) his decreased social standing in an independent Indonesia.

The high social and economic status of the father in the former period is further elaborated by the significance of the well. The narrator inspects it and notices it is in bad need of repair. He remembers that, because water is scarce in the area, it is the adat (customary law) that anyone who owns or can afford to build a well is expected by the community automatically to share the well with the public. This social duty is expected from the affluent, if they do not want to be alienated from the community [66]. So that evening, when he visits his father in hospital, he tells him that he has decided to repair both the house and the well. Out of this commitment the cost must be borne by him alone, as the eldest working male member

64. This signifies that the house was built with expensive and good quality materials and that in turn indicates the high social status and the economic affluence of the narrator's parents during the colonial era. On the importance of the family house as indicator of one’s social standing see Koentjaraningrat, 'Tjelapor ...' p. 142.

65. BPM, p. 43-45.

66. ibid., p. 46.
in the family. Because of the father's selfless community works, the father has left no money to his son, nor social privileges. All he has inherited are obligations.

The next account of the father is given by the dukun next morning. The narrator's uncle takes him to see the sooth sayer to solicit his help in curing his father. This man, who lives on the outskirts of town [67], happens to be an ex school teacher. In fact, he confesses to the narrator that it was his father that had brought him into the area as a teacher for the first time. He admires the father's dedication as a teacher. He also knows of the father's double dealings with the Dutch. During the Dutch occupation, they continued to work under the Dutch as teachers and were paid by them. But at the same time the father worked for the underground republican resistance. The dukun asserts that everyone in the guerilla movement knew of the father's strong patriotism [68].

The man particularly expresses his admiration of the father for persisting in teaching for 30 years. He himself gave it up after 18 years, although he is much younger than the narrator's father. He is not surprised that in the end the father fell ill with tuberculosis. He himself had to retire from teaching after a heart attack. The life of a school teacher is hard. This especially applies to secondary

67. It seems that Pramoedya is fond of depicting people with 'dubious' social status as residing at the outskirts of town. So the sooth sayer - teacher in BPM lives at the outskirts of town (BPM, p. 50). The 'poor children' in 'Sunat' discussed earlier in this chapter also live at the outskirts of town ('Sunat' p. 81). The maternal grandmother of the narrator in 'YSH', who is married to a 'no-hoper' sate seller, lives at the outskirts of town ('YSH' p. 42).

68. BPM, p. 53. This view is confirmed by another political friend of the father, ibid, p. 106.
school teachers, such as the narrator’s father was in the later stages of his career.

The dukun, an ex school teacher, laments that not many people are willing to become school teachers. From among 50 pupils he had, only three wanted to become teachers. This was in spite of the fact that he challenged them by pointing out that they would not like it if they became military generals and found out that their children had to be taught by the sons of sate sellers.

At the end of their conversation the dukun confesses that he has failed to establish communication with the divine power. He attributes this to the narrator’s father having a stronger inner power than himself. The father’s superiority even to one supposedly endowed with a magical power to cure is thus established. The narrator’s uncle, however, regards this as an ominous sign.

The sister tells about his father’s arrest by the Communists, about how their father decided to continue to work under the Dutch while at the same time helping the republican cause, and how their neighbour Sumi spread the word that their father is a traitor.

The sister also tells her brother of their efforts to survive economically during the war, and how their neighbours secured credit from them and then refused to pay back what they owed. She complains that in spite of the father’s public-spirited work, the public always seemed to be overjoyed to see the family bankrupt financially.

69. Ibid, p. 55-56. The teacher as a member of the priyayi also expresses his social prejudice against the ability of the offspring of non priyayi class (i.e. sate sellers - wong cilik) to educate the offspring of the priyayi.
In reply, the narrator reminds his sister that the family should not rely on the community in time of trouble. They must stand on their own feet. He reminds her that in a small place like Blora people tend to be jealous of prominent people and of families which keep on top of things, and they consequently derive a perverse enjoyment from seeing such people and their families ruined \(^{70}\).

The sister also complains that although the father worked so hard for the Republican cause in the past, there is no place for him in the sanitorium. She has been told that the place is only available to rich traders or high government officials. In order to devote himself fully to teaching, their father had given up many opportunities for social and political advancement. He refused nomination to the regional parliament, and refused a bureaucratic position as coordinator with the regional office of education \(^{71}\). If only he had accepted that job, the sister laments.

Besides ensuring the upkeep of the well, the cost of which will only be born by him alone, the narrator advises his younger sister, during their conversation together depicted in the third account above, always to rely on their own resources and never expect the neighbours to help them in time of distress. He specifically advises her to stay aloof from their local neighbours. The narrator says:

'Kita bangunkan keluarga baru, adiku - dengan tenaga kita sendiri, untuk kita sendiri. Biarlah kita jadi pulau

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70. **ibid., p. 64.** A similar view on their neighbours is expressed by the various members of the Pak Sumo family in 'DYM', discussed in ch. 3.

71. This implies how virtuous their father had been. If he had wanted to, he could have become a highly prominent man in the area as high administrative official.
adikku, kita jatuh dengan tidak berteriak. Bila pulau kita
terendam samudera, kita terendam samudera, kita akan
terendam sendirian ...

'We'll build a new family sis - with our own efforts, for us
alone. Let us be an isolated island without screaming any
declaration when our island is taken by the ocean, we all
sink together, alone ...

As he says to his sister, they have to build a new family with their
own resources and for their own benefits. They should perceive
themselves as an isolated island in the middle of an ocean. When the
island is covered by the ocean then they will sink alone. The
narrator's view clearly perceives the local community as a hostile
force that should be avoided and that no help can be counted to come
from them. Although his own personal feeling regarding the neighbours
is a total rejection towards them, on the other hand, because of the
father's former commitment with regard to the well, it is now left to
the narrator to find the cost to finance the maintenance and repair of
that well. In order to respect his father, and the prestige the
father used to have in relation to the local community, the narrator
has to a certain extent modified his own feeling of aversion towards
the local people.

During the funeral ceremony more tales about his father are heard
by the narrator. They are mostly from his father's gambling friends.
A Chinese friend tells him how sorry he is to lose a gambling partner
who used to tell him stories from the Babad Tanah Jawi [73]. Another

72. ibid., p. 65.

73. BPM, p. 96. This implies that the father is well read in the
traditional literary sources. It also shows that he is well
educated and a cultured man.
fat friend mentions how the father could gamble for five days without eating or drinking or going to the bathroom {74}. 'Like a dongeng (myth),' another friend adds. The Chinese friend then asks why a man has to be born singly and to die alone. Why can't men live together and die together? Why can't the world be like a night carnival? {75}

Then another old friend who used to work as a police spy {76} for the former colonial government tells a funny story about the deceased father. It concerns the way the father used to elude those who were following him by going to the cemetery of an evening.

The final view of the father comes through one of his political friends, who visits the house after the funeral. He has worked closely with the father during the guerilla years.

According to him, the father died from disappointment with the achievement of independence. If he had lived in a big city, the friend continues, the father would probably have been able to develop his individuality. He could have become a prominent man and perhaps even a minister {77}. But being a devotee of Ranggawarsito {78}, this friend explains, he did not want to be one of those who are scrambling for high positions. With this, the story ends.

74. ibid., p. 97. See also fn. 46 above. The father in 'KLD' gambles for 4 nights without stopping ('KLD' p. 107).

75. BPM, p. 99.

76. ibid., p. 101-111. See also fn 50 above.

77. ibid., p. 107. For the importance of Ranggawarsita’s ideas on the perceptions of many nationalist leaders during the colonial era see B.R.O’ Anderson, ‘A time of Darkness ... ’ p. 219-248.

78. This substantiates the view expressed by the sister of the narrator mentioned earlier in a third account as set out above. If the father had wanted to, he can attain a prominent position in society, ibid., p. 72-73, p. 107.
The Son's Responsibilities

From the very start of the novel, through the exchanges of letters between the father and son described at the opening of the novel, the narration is an account of the conflict of interests and obligations between the father as head of the family, and the son as the eldest member among the children. The son has rebuked his father strongly for having neglected the welfare of some of his children, the younger siblings of the narrator. Before the matter of the apparent lack of duty of the father can be clarified the father is taken ill, which causes considerable distress to the narrator.

While the narrator feels some remorse regarding his own insensitivity towards his father, at the same time he feels unjustly burdened by having to beg for special leave from the job that he only recently obtained. His humiliation is accentuated further by having to search half the city for a friend who is willing to lend him some money. As well as having to overcome these obstacles, he must depress his feelings of resentment towards those around him, his superiors at work and his friends who decline to assist him with money. This is not for his own benefit, (except to clear his own guilty conscience concerning his father) but in order to undertake a rather futile exercise, to see a man off in his journey to death. In order to do this the narrator has to go into debt, (for the repayment of which he will be responsible).

To make matters worse, his dying father is leaving him no capital increment as his legacy. Instead the narrator will only receive added responsibilities on top of his own commitment as a newly wedded
husband. Having only just started his own household, he is to be saddled with the upkeep of a decrepit family house and of a well. The benefits from the last item will certainly not flow to him. Furthermore the remarks made by the neighbour regarding the state of the family house puts an added burden on the narrator. Coming from a person of low social class, they make the narrator feel ashamed at his inability to correct the situation immediately.

Furthermore, because of the father's reputation for great spiritual strength the narrator is unable to seek spiritual help on behalf of the father from the local sooth-sayer, since the sooth-sayer's strength is less than that of the father himself. Thus the father must endure the pain alone. On top of that despite the numerous public services the father has performed in the past, he has been denied a place at the sanatorium in his illness. His social status is not prestigious enough to enable him to receive special treatment, and he is not rich enough to buy it. While the son has to take over the father's duties he witnesses that his father's past work certainly did not help him to receive a better treatment for his illness. Ironically, the only person who actually expresses condolence is a man of Chinese extraction who is a gambling friend of the father. It is he who remarks that a dead person must always depart alone, and can't go together in a group like visitors to the night carnival. His Chineseness and his gambling habit denote the man's 'unfavourable' reputation. Thus for all his high reputation and prestige, the only person who is actually depicted as missing the father is a man of 'ill' repute, his Chinese gambling companion. To bring matters to their nadir the political companion of the father
(politics having been centre of his existence) asserts that he died a disappointed man, unfulfilled in his life.

This is the most negative view that Pramoedya expresses in all his works written in the early 1950s. Furthermore since the work depicts the decrepit condition of a family (a priyayi family at that) after the end of the revolution, to a certain extent it can be seen as expressing the author's own disappointment about the consequences of the revolution for his family and the priyayi class in general. Life is indeed not a night carnival.
THE INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND SOCIETY

In all these four stories, the father dominates the narrator's mind. Since 'Yang Sudah Hilang' is about the pre-school experiences of the narrator, it is natural that the mother dominates the narrative. The father is mentioned through his absence being noted. But even in his absence his influence on the family is felt: the child cries uncontrollably, and the mother recites the Koran deep into the night. The story makes no mention of the mother affecting her children or her husband in a similar way.

In the other stories, the mother has only a peripheral affect on the family in general or on any of her children in particular. Even in 'YSH', his nurses soon come to have a great influence over his perceptions of life. The mother's influence over her husband is also quite insubstantial. Her disapproval of the use of fire crackers during the New Year celebrations has no effect on her husband. He only ceases buying them when one of his sons is injured by their use. In 'KLD', the mother's distress at her husband's continual absence from home while gambling has no influence on his behaviour. Neither in that story nor in its sequel, BPM, is the father dissuaded from gambling by his wife's disapproval, although he is away from home for up to four days and nights on gambling binges. All in all, the father's personality is depicted as a very strong one over which the wife has little influence. The strong contrast between their senses of individuality is emphasised at the conclusion of 'YSH' when the narrator's father tells him he can do whatever he likes with what legally belongs to him, including his own life and his own body. His
mother contradicts this by sternly warning him not to take the benefit from things which he did not obtain by his own efforts [79].

It is not that the mother is not portrayed as an admirable person. At various points in the four stories she is depicted as religiously pious, highly principled, loving and full of understanding, and firm and stern with her children. But, she plays a secondary role in the stories, just as she is portrayed as secondary in family decision-making. This is an interesting contrast to the traditional strong position of women in South East Asian countries – a tradition which is consistent with anthropological evidence about what are in fact typical relationships in Javanese families [80].

Since these stories are so clearly based on close observation of actual family relationships in Blora, some explanation of this contrast between typical reality and that portrayed in the stories is called for.

One explanation could be that in these four stories, the narrator's family is 'middle class' in a western sense. The economic status of the family derives solely from the father's income. As befits her middle class status, the mother is exempted from earning

79. 'YSH' p. 43-44. discussed in this chapter above.

her living outside the house {81}. She devotes her time to rearing her children in a disciplined and methodical manner {82}. Since she makes no contribution to the economic welfare of the family, she is perceived subconsciously by the narrator as no more than an appendix to her husband. This dependent status, however, is seen as better than that of the mother's mother in 'YSH', who has to supplement the family income by hawking vegetables around the town {83}.

In the same story, the elevated social status the mother derives through being the wife of a school teacher is shown to affect the stories she tells her child. The mother tells stories based on historical fact and originating in the Middle East. On the other hand, Nyi Kin, the narrator's beloved nurse, tells stories about the

81. A similar view about her mother is expressed by another Indonesian writer N.H. Dini in one of her semi-autobiographical novels. It is only because of the economic hardship the family experienced during the Japanese period that the mother (who is a priyayi lady) is compelled to earn a living by making dried cookies and doing batik. At the beginning she resists this, but later she feels proud of the fact that she still can earn a living by remaining at home. She regards herself to be more fortunate than another lady friend who is forced to sell second hand clothing at the side walk, at the front of a shop. See N.H. Dini Padang Ilalang di Belakang Rumah (Jakarta, Pustaka Jaya, 1979) p. 13-30; see especially p. 14-15, p. 30.

82. C. Geertz has recorded various priyayi's views about child rearing. The priyayi look down at the haphazard and unmethodical habit of the wong cilik in bringing up their children. C. Geertz, Religion, p. 236.

83. In 'YSH' the mother's father is a religious teacher. As the wife of a religious teacher, the mother's mother is accorded a similar social status. But when she is divorced from him, and later marries a sate seller, she becomes a wong cilik. On top of that she has to supplement her husband's income by hawking vegetables. Her daughter on the other hand (the mother of the narrator of 'YSH') as the wife of a school teacher is exempted from earning a living - a sign of high social status.
animal kingdom and other stories connected with local legends and myths. This presents the mother as different both in terms of her education and her class-cultural orientation. She tells stories about 'real' people, while the servant concentrates on magic and supernatural powers.

The economic affluence and the social prestige which the family derives from the father's position as principal of a nationalist school are prominent themes in all four stories. His position is attested to by the large number of adopted children who are dependent on him and living in his house [84]. Throughout, his political career in the nationalist movement increases his social prestige in the community, from the colonial period through to his death in an independent Indonesia. Yet despite the virtue and status which derive from his middle class status, the father is depicted as having weaknesses. In particular, he is portrayed as addicted to gambling, a foible which is traditionally seen as almost appropriate to a member of the priyayi. Yet on the basis of this respected figure, Pramoedya has portrayed a man who is essentially unfulfilled.

84. See fn 44 above in 'gono-gini' in a priyayi household.
THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE FATHER: THE NON CONFORMIST

The father's individuality becomes most evident at the end of BPM. At this late point in his life the father confesses to his son that he made a conscious decision to become a school teacher rather than following his father and becoming a religious teacher. He thus violated his father's expectation that his son would follow in his footsteps \(\text{[85]}\). This confession demonstrates that he has not simply accepted fate. The father is a man who takes matters into his own hands to change them if he considers it necessary. He chose a secular life rather than a religious one because he wanted to lead people to have a nationalist consciousness, and so to imbue them with patriotic feelings toward their nation \(\text{[86]}\). As a result, he is depicted as a purely secular person. In 'YSH' he is fond of using firecrackers to celebrate the Moslem New Year. In 'Sunat' the performance staged to celebrate the circumcision is not a wayang performance (which would be traditional for such a ceremony) but a modern school stage drama. Even his fondness for gambling indicates his secular attachment to

\(\text{[85]}\). Thus the narrator's father has transgressed his prescribed social status. This is one element that is strongly suggestive of the nature of his individuality. On the social mobility among the priyayi, between the lower to the upper, see H. Sutherland, The Making p. 56-66. From someone from a santri background, such as the narrator's father, it is even harder to 'break in' into the priyayi circle. For the relation of penghulu and naib to the priyayi circle and the widening gap between the priyayi and the santri from late 19 century, see H. Sutherland, The Making, p. 27-28. See also fn 8 above.

\(\text{[86]}\). Again this is another example of the father's individuality. By wanting to be among the priyayi secular nationalists, he is distancing himself from the santri political association. For the 'strained' relationship between members of the priyayi association Boedi Oetomo with the moslem based, Sarekat Islam which has members from among the wong cilik, see H. Sutherland, The Making, p. 61-66.
life and disregard for proper conduct.

The father is not depicted as a dogmatic nationalist. True to his professionalism as a teacher, and conscious of the importance of education for the modernisation of his people, he 'collaborated' with the Dutch occupation forces in Blora by continuing to teach. But he also worked in the underground resistance for the republican forces, while with his salary he was able to help many other Indonesians. To do this he had to defy popular prejudice against collaborators. This defiance is another instance of his individualistic streak.

The figure of the father is firmly established as a priyayi figure. As a school teacher he is educated, as a nationalist he is an idealist, as a father to his adopted children he is compassionate to the needy, as an educator he leads the community to enlightenment, and as a gambler he is human - just as Arjuna, the wayang hero, is human through being a womaniser. He is probably the only character in Pramoedya's stories who is depicted with a detailed coverage of his good and bad sides, extending from his strengths and weaknesses in general to his responsibility for his family's welfare in particular.

All these various facets of the father's personality must, however, be gathered from various stories, with Bukan Pasar Malam offering the most complete picture.

Yet these strong beliefs and firm convictions do not sustain him to the end. He dies a broken man, confessing to his son how hard it has been to be a nationalist. The son thus comes to see his father as unfulfilled. Despite a loving wife (in 'KLD') and tolerant children
(in Bukan Pasar Malam), he is alienated from the members of his family and, desolate in his frustration, has had to seek refuge in gambling. His desolation and sense of being alone is the same as that felt by the mother in 'YSH' and by the narrator of that story who laments his lost childhood. This impression is reinforced by the testimony of the political friend of the father, who tells the narrator after his father's death that his father died as a result of disappointment with the results of independence. He thus died, as it were, in the midst of the political battlefield.

The mother reciting the Quran deep into the night is contrasted with the father gambling that same night. In another episode, this time in 'Kolahari Lahirah Ulu', the mother regards the father's gambling as a 'social disease' which will affect the other members of the household—especially his children—if who let it get out of hand. In 'Tang Sibak Malam', the narrator mentions his mother's disapproval of her stepfather, which reflects community condemnation. These failures are attributed not to his lesions but to a taboo not be committed in the area.

Sekar' intends that the true significance of the community's attitude towards religion and religious perception. It is not in performing particular rites and especially by spending money on them. Something became more prized and so it were, buy a place to pray. But the narrator notices that before long he and his brother became indistinguishable from the other children in the village, including...
THE NARRATOR AS A SOCIAL RECORDER: Recapturing His Ties to His Family

A feature of all these four stories is that it is not the personalities of the narrators that are emphasised, but their roles as social recorders. In fact, the narrators seldom express their personal views - not enough in any case to delineate their individuality. They are simply recounting events as uninvolved participants. Even in 'Sunat', in which the subject is the narrator's own circumcision ceremony, it is the social setting and the religious attitudes of the family and local community that are paramount in the work. In particular, the narrator depicts the family's social milieu clearly.

The mother reciting the Koran deep into the night is contrasted with the father gambling that same night. In another episode, this time in 'Kemudian Lahirlah Dia', the mother regards the father's gambling as a 'social disease' which will defile the other members of his household - especially his children - if she lets him play at home. In 'Yang Sudah Hilang', the narrator mentions his mother's disapproval of her stepfather, which reflects community condemnation. His failures are attributed not to his laziness but to a taboo act he committed in the past.

'Sunat' centres around the true significance of the community's attitudes towards religion and religious ceremonies. It is as if by performing particular rites, and especially by spending money on them, one can become more pious and, as it were, buy a place in heaven. But the narrator notices that before long he and his brother become indistinguishable from the other children in the village, including
those who are poor and can never envisage a better future. He sees that the true purpose of the rite is not to make the participants more pious or even to mark their passage into adulthood (thus the mention of a participant who is married and a father, and thus clearly already an adult). Rather, it is to publicise the social status of the child and his parents. This is evidenced by the pomp inherent in the ceremony. It is also of importance that the ceremony has been sponsored by the child's own father, rather than some other rich relative or prominent member of society. Thus the mother tells the narrator to thank God that his father has perceived his duty as a father appropriately according to the adat.

Social attitudes also confer burdens on descendents. The community believes that a house which is in bad repair will, if left unattended, bring the inhabitants to ruin. This means that the narrator inherits the obligation to repair the house, even though he himself does not intend to reside in it. In addition, he has inherited from his father other community obligations (such as the repair of the well), a sick sister, various dependent younger siblings, and the prestigious social status and fame of the father, but not the economic affluence which the family used to enjoy in the colonial era. All this invokes a combination of longing for the past and despair about the present. In the end, social ties are a restrictive and burdensome rather than a support. The moral is brought out most clearly in the futility of the father's life. Religion, family, and social and political life did not give meaning to his existence, nor did they liberate his soul from the sufferings of the world. The clearest message comes with Bukan Pasar Malam. It
expresses change made after the revolution, the social prestige of the
family has been eroded, and their material affluence has been
depleted. What the narrator has inherited from his father is how his
father's life has been futile and that life is indeed not a 'night
carnival'. Life is burdened by numerous obligations which the
narrator must meet with regard to his own family and to his society.
THE SOCIETY: INDIVIDUALS AS OUTCASTS

'Inem', 'Pelarian yang Tak Dicari', 'Yang Menyewakan Diri', 'Djongos + Babu', 'Ikan-ikan yang Terdampar' and 'Mahluk Dibelakang Rumah'

A. BLORA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

We will look at three short stories from Tjerita Dari Blora (TDB) which was published in 1952. 'Inem' was completed in Jakarta in March 1950 [1]. 'Pelarian yang Tak Dicari' ('PYTD') ('An Unplanned Escapade') was written in Jakarta in May 1950 [2] and 'Yang Menyewakan Diri' ('YMD') ('The Hireling') was also written in Jakarta in September 1951 [3].

The three stories are about people who, besides being poor, become socially discredited, either because of their disreputable family (social) background, or because of their own 'stupid' conduct. Whether or not it is their own doing, they are depicted by Pramoedya as people whose options for their lives have been taken away from themselves. The underlying source of their disadvantage is economic.

2. 'HYTD' in ibid, p. 117-144.
3. 'YMD' in ibid, p. 47-58.
'Inem' describes a girl who was married when 8 years old to the son of a rich cattle trader by her impoverished parents. Inem's father is the infamous local robber chief, who is a gambler and who used to be a policeman but was fired because he accepted a bribe [4]. Her mother is a hard working woman who earns her living doing batik headdresses for which she receives 1/2 cent for every two pieces she completes. On average she can finish from 8 to 11 pieces a day. The poorer women usually have chose to do headdresses rather than sarongs, as one can complete the batik of a headdress quicker than a sarong [5].

Earlier, Inem used to work as a domestic help in the narrator's parents' house. After the failure of her marriage due to the young age of both the bride and the groom, she returns to live in her parents' house. She begs her former employer to take her back. But her former mistress refuses to take her back because as a divorcee, Inem constitutes a moral threat to the male youngsters in the household. As a respectable priyayi lady she has to maintain strict moral standards with regard to the youngsters in her care. Sorry as she is for Inem, she cannot allow herself to make special concessions which deviate from the acceptable social norms. Earlier, the mistress expressed her disapproval of child marriage to Inem's mother. Inem's mother answered that because they were economically deprived they

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4. 'Inem', p. 62.
5. ibid, p. 61-62
could not afford to refuse such a good marriage proposal. As a result of that attempt to achieve a better life for Inem and her own parents, Inem is back with her parents, no longer a virgin, but with no husband. In the small provincial traditional town of Blora during the colonial period, such a girl, without the protection of a husband, or her parents or brothers is considered to be 'freely' available. Because Inem's former mistress refuses to take her back, Inem is stranded in her parents' home, the subject of the anger of the male members in her family. At the same time she is made to slave long hours to pay back the debt the family incurred for the wedding festivities.

**Analysis**

The story depicts how the attempt of Inem's family to achieve social and economic upward mobility fails. The price of the attempt was the sacrifice of the child's physical beauty in order to satisfy the lust of a male. The child's physical body is the economic asset which her parents used to alleviate their stricken condition. But with the failure of Inem's marriage means the body of the young child has become a burden to the family. That body constitutes another mouth to feed.

Pramoedya wrote this story as if in answer to the advice the child narrator in 'YSH' has received from his father. In that story the school-teacher father (hence a priyayi); advises his son that he can always do whatever he likes with his own property, including his own body and his own life [6]. The situation of Inem is in fact the
exact opposite of that. Her rights over her own body and her own life seem to have been forfeited by her own parents. In order to make Inem such a good marriage bargain for her parents, she has been taught since she was very little to be very obedient, hard working, soft spoken and in other ways to emulate the priyayi values of civilised behaviour \(^7\). Yet while she conforms to all the priyayi cultured values as a marriageable girl, when her marriage fails it is those same norms that deny her any self-respect. With this story Pramoedya describes how a girl from the common class, who emulates the norms of the 'better' class, is destroyed by them. Inem's placidness is her own downfall.

She had a chance once, to forfeit the fate that is prescribed for her and for women of her class, that is to become the wife of a wealthier man, by refusing her parents' plan. She could have insisted then on continuing to support herself as a domestic servant. But it is due to her own docile nature and the preconditioning of her environment she relinquished her right to control her life to her parents. That led her to allow her parents to decide on her future which in turn led her to the unbearable situation she endures now. As a portrayal of a female character, Inem's disposition, condition and situation are the exact opposite as that of Is in 'DYM'. Inem is the daughter of a wong cilik and Is a priyayi. For a priyayi the right to control one's body is merely a matter of course, as the father in 'YSH' asserts. But in the case of a wong cilik this right has to be forfeited to one's parents, or to whoever else occupies a

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6. 'YSH' in TDB, p. 43-44
7. 'Inem', p. 61
superior position.

A.2 'Pelarian Yang Tak Ditjari'

Synopsis

In the next story 'Pelarian ...', Pramoedya describes the fate of a married woman who has a quarrel with her husband about their lack of money. After she is hit twice by her husband she leaves him and her two children, (one ill at the time) to live in another town. She supports herself by becoming a prostitute. This woman, Siti, is depicted as stupid, equal in her stupidity to her husband Siman, who is a landless peasant. Siman earns his living as a farm hand and by selling sand which he obtains from the river during the dry season. Although he is a hard worker, he remains poor. Siti on the other hand, having left her home town and her family, is able to enjoy unprecedented luxury by renting her body to satisfy men's lust. Unfortunately because of the nature of her profession she is taken ill and is no longer able to bring income to herself or to the landlady from whom she rents her room. She is kicked out of the place and is sent to a hospital. While she was in the profession she seems not to have understood why people considered her profession to be a disgrace. When she is lying in the hospital in the public ward (the free one with the lowest rank, designed especially to cater for people...

8. 'PYTD', p. 120
like her) she can not see why the nurses treat her badly, as if she were a criminal. She feels uncomfortable about their treatment, but she later gets used to it, and regards it as a minor irritant.

While she is recuperating in the hospital she meets with an old neighbour. For some reason she feels self-conscious towards this neighbour, and omits to tell the neighbour the truth about her past life. Instead she tells her that she has been working as a servant in the next town. The neighbour is so relieved to hear Siti's story that she helps Siti to go back to her village and rejoin her husband. Despite the opposition of Siti's mother-in-law and the religious leaders in the village, Siti goes back to caring for her family as before.

Analysis

What is predominant in this story is the lack of guilt and remorse in the part of Siti. Despite what people think of her, and despite her stupidity, she is able to do what she wants with her own life and her own body. Although society disapproves of the profession which she took up, she is free from the bounds of morality embraced by the so-called 'civilised people'. Hence she can't understand why people disapprove of her and treat her like a criminal. Because she is 'unaccepted' by priyayi values, unlike Inem who was, Siti is free from being stricken by a guilty conscience and enjoys her life as a prostitute [9]. She only gives it up for health reasons. Another extraordinary episode in the story is that she returns to her family.

9. 'PYTD', p. 131-132
Her escapade in another town is only a minor deviation from her destiny, which is to be the wife of Siman.

In this story Pramoedya seems to be saying that peasant women need not always have to conform to the norms prescribed by the better classes, the priyayi. If, as in the case of Siti, she has no desire or need to become one of the better class of people, (economically as well as socially) she still retains control over the rights to her body. True she supported herself by renting out her body for a fee, but it was on her own terms. As far as she herself is concerned, her 'honour', as she defines it, has never been tainted.

A.3 'Yang Menyewakan Diri'

Synopsis

In 'Yang menyewakan ...' it is a man, Kek Leman, who has rents himself out for immoral services for a fee. In his case it is in order to commit a murder on behalf of a priyayi. In his case, though, he is conscience-stricken about his task, so that although he is in need of the money, he bungles the job. His victim survives. This is because Kek Leman has only used a hammer, instead of his famous axe. The explanation for his choice of weapon is that he could not bring himself to 'taint' his beloved tool with which he has been able to earn his living as an honourable man {10}. Kek Leman owns no land and is known among the community as a lazy person. As he sees it there is

10. 'YMD', p. 48
no sense in working hard as he has no land to till and he regards it as silly to exhaust himself for the small amount he receives for performing odd jobs for other people in the village. One son Leman works as an itinerant farm worker and as a night watchman.

Analysis

The story tells how the narrator's mother expresses prejudice against this Leman family blaming their poverty on their own laziness. When she is at home the daughter, Siah, tends to sleep until noon, and at 10 o'clock in the morning Kek and Nek Leman are still seen hanging around in the house doing nothing. The mother of the narrator has clearly forbidden him to hang around that family, an order which he ignores. Not only does the child sometimes get to drink a little of their left-over coffee, but Kek Leman, or one of his sons, is fond of making hand-made toys for the child to play with. When later the child is sent to school by his parents in order to put a stop to his relationship with the Leman family, Kek Leman waits for the child to come out from school with a newly made kite in his hand.

The family Leman is so poor that the daughter Siah has to leave the village to earn her living in Palembang. She works there as a broker, procuring men for enlistment as bonded labourers for plantations in Sumatra. Hence she profits from another man's sweat, the very act which the mother of the narrator in 'YSH' disapproved of [11]. The eldest son Nyamidin also has moved elsewhere. No one knows

11. 'YSH', p. 43
where he is. The narrator of the story, who is still a child, asks Kek Leman whether Nyamidin is not happy there to be with them. Leman explains that 'as long he has money, he will be happy anywhere. Not so if he has no money or if money is difficult to get' [12].

It was because money is so scarce that Kek Leman is compelled to take up a dirty job: to kill someone for a 10 guilder fee [13]. Although the victim survives, for his action Leman is imprisoned for 7 months. While he is away in prison his wife is known to visit houses in the village begging for food or money. When Kek Leman finally is released he becomes a recluse and hardly ventures outside his home. He earns his living making basketry and is seen to sell his products at the market once a week. During selamatan, he sits by himself, and after the feast he goes home quietly by himself. Even when at times the narrator passes the Leman's house and sees him doing his basketry work, the old man continues with his task without even a glance at him. The narrator can see how white his hair has become, 'not one single black hair can be seen'.

Because of their deprived economic situation a family like Leman's lives outside the norms prescribed by society. Furthermore, because they continually live at a subsistence level, their enthusiasm for work has been lost. Kek Leman sees no point in working hard at tasks which will only bring a pittance. His wife does not even bother to seek employment. The daughter Siah does the same and hence sleeps till noon, whenever she is living with her parents. Even when Siah

12. 'YMD', p. 52
13. ibid, p. 53
has a job, it is to get money from another person's labour. Her brother's choice of employment, as a soldier and a potential killer of his countrymen, is a worse occupation than the sister's.

It can be argued that it is unclear whether it is because of their deprived economic situation that they have lost any desire to work hard, or whether it is because they were lazy in the first place that they are condemned to live in a subsistence level. But whatever the initial cause the story does show clearly that even if they were willing to work hard, the kind of jobs that are available to them are limited. The elder son Leman is only an itinerant agricultural worker who supplements his meagre income by working as night watchman. Because of old age, the father does the odd jobs for the local people, jobs which they themselves refuse to do. He takes up the night watchman duty only when his son is unable to do it.

Furthermore, the only thing for which Kek Leman is famous in the locality is his sharp axe, which he sharpens every day \(^\text{14}\). It is this that leads a priyayi gentleman to employ him to carry out a killing on his behalf. As Pramoedya sees it, the jobs available to them are dishonourable ones. Only those who are hard pushed economically would ever take them. Because of their low social status, they end up with low status jobs, like being an itinerant worker, which in turns denies them the opportunity to lead a decent life.

\[\text{14. ibid, p. 48}\]
Their life has been doomed from the beginning. Whatever they venture to take up is bound to fail. This seems to exemplify popular belief held by the community in Blora and recorded by the child-narrator in 'YSH'. Once a person has committed a 'sin' in the past, none of his future undertakings can reach fruition \[15\].

Interestingly though, although Pramoedya seems unable to contradict that popular belief, he ends this story in a rather positive way. After his imprisonment Kek Leman becomes a hard and conscientious worker even if his job is still low paying and of low status and will lead him to live at a subsistence level to his end. Also there is still a place available for him in the community of Blora. He is still invited into the selamatan. But while before the locals disapproved of him because of his and his family's lazy habits, and maintained their distance from him, now it is Kek Leman himself who wants to keep the distance from the local community.

CONCLUSION: THE PAST

In these three stories about the peasants of Blora, it seems that Pramoedya appears to be drawn to his characters because of the kind of crime, or sin or reputation that attached to them, rather than because they have either lost or won the 'battle' of their lives. In fact the way the author describes their lives, it is as if there is no battle for them to combat, no disagreement to solve, nor are there any social

\[15\] ibid, p. 42-43
or psychological tensions in the characters or in their relation to society.

In retrospect, individuals and society in Blora in Pramoedya's mind to have been in an idyllic state of lethargy. Inem, Leman and to a certain extent Siti (when she is living with her own people) have no energy left in them to do anything to improve their lives outside the tasks and roles that have been allotted to them by society. On the other hand though, because they demand nothing for themselves from society, nor want to change existing arrangements, a place can always be found for them. Although Inem has become a burden to her parents after her divorce, it is expected by society that her parents should care for her until another man can be found to be her husband, as none of the respectable priyayi household can take her as a domestic servant. In a similar way Leman is seen to fit back into his old world without trouble, no one troubles him nor he them.

In the case of Siti, her escapade is only an insignificant deviation from her regular routine. She returns to live with her husband, as if nothing of interest or of significance had happened to her during the interregnum. Yet as a married woman and a mother, she had committed a mortal sin of prostitution. All in all the trait which they share is their close proximity to sin or moral degradation. Siti and Leman have committed the sin, and Inem is a 'potential' sinner.

In summary, Pramoedya perceives the wong cilik of Blora under colonial rule to be placid and docile. Even when conditions are bad for them they continue to accept whatever is allotted to them. They
give no sign of resistance or anger, while at the same time they seem to be sapped of will and energy.

This is a complete contrast to his depiction of the various priyayi characters in Blora during colonial times. Despite their foibles and character weaknesses they are bound by duty to serve or to reform society. They work hard and are full of idealism. Many of them are frustrated in realising their idealism, as we have seen in chapter 4. Other stories from TDB dealing with the contemporary priyayi of Blora, 'Anak Haram' ('AH') ('The Cursed Child') and in 'Yang Hitam' (YH) ('Darkness') [16], describe two youths who are angry at their world. Thus, to Pramoedya, duty, idealism, action, anger and frustration are the prerogative of the priyayi.

Pramoedya's wong cilik have several traits that differentiate them strikingly from the priyayi. One of those traits is that their future is sealed by 'fate'. Thus those who emulate priyayi values and seek to enter the priyayi class are destroyed. This happens whether they conform, as in the case of Inem, or whether they assert themselves, as in the case of Kadjan from 'Hidup yang tak Diharapkan' [17]. Some wong cilik who do not conform to priyayi values like Siti and her husband Siman are free people and able to enjoy life.

16. 'A.H.', in TDB, p. 227-262. First written when Pramoedya was still in prison, June 1949, and revised in August 1950. 'YH', ibid, p. 343-368 is the last story in TDB, completed August 1950.

17. In TDB, p. 147-178. Kadjan is a freedom fighter who has gone astray through being a political opportunist. Coming from a wong cilik background, his characterisation is a stark contrast to the political activist Is in "Dia yang Menyerah", discussed in Ch. 3 of this thesis.
Although Pramoedya perceives the wong cilik as having different values from the priyayi, in essence he does not regard them as inferior beings. They are rather rough and without culture (as in the case of Kek Leman) and lazy as well, but basically they are still imbued with sensitivity. However it is different from that of the priyayi.
B. CONTEMPORARY JAKARTA

We now look at how Pramoedya depicts the social outcasts of contemporary Jakarta society. To do this section we will look at how those outcasts are depicted in the short stories collected in Pramoedya's *Tjerita Dari Djakarta* (TDD) published in 1957 [18]. The stories are 'Djongos + Babu' ('The Manservant + The Maid') written in prison in 1948 [19], 'Ikan-ikan yang Terdampar' ('Stranded Fish') written in Jakarta, July 1950 [20], and finally 'Machluk Dibelakang Ruman' ('Creatures at the Rear of the House') which was written in Jakarta in 1955 [21].

B.1 'Djongos + Babu'

Synopsis

'Djongos + Babu' describes two domestic servants, Sobi and his sister Inah who want to renew their bondage to Dutch masters after the collapse of Japanese rule. The two are the illegitimate son and daughter of Rodinah, who was also a domestic servant, and who was known to her European employers as Poppy. It is due to Poppy's 'enterprising' efforts as mistress to her various European employers, two of whom must have fathered her children, that the family own a

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18. TDD (Djakarta, Grafica, 1957)
19. In TDD, p. 7-18
20. ibid, p. 21-43
21. ibid, p. 119-125
brick house with two radios and a phonogram. However, because of her inbred slave mentality (one ancestor was a sergeant in the colonial army, another a non-commissioned soldier, and the rest domestic servants like her), she made no attempt to unyoke herself from bondage to foreign masters and become a free woman. Sobi and Inah adopt the same stance. They look forward to the return of Dutch power over Indonesia and are seeking suitable Dutch employers that will make them into white persons.

Analysis

They are, as the narrator points out, servants from the 'bottom rung', 'dari derjat penghabisan' [22]. The narrator observes how some servants know something about politics, some know about trade, some others know how to strike a good bargain through diplomacy and some come to learn how to use guns. But Sobi and Inah are so set in their ways as servants, that they ignore those other options that could be used to better their social status. While other Indonesians of similar undesirable social background (like Saaman and his brothers in Keluarga Gerilya) have used their skill at using guns to become patriots [23], Sobi and Inah persevere in their bondage as servants to foreign masters.

22. 'Djongos ...', p. 11

23. Saaman, the hero of Keluarga Gerilya (Bukittinggi, Nusantara, 1962 (1950) 3rd edition) and his brothers are the sons of Paidjan, who used to serve with the colonial army, and Aminah, a beautiful and infamous mistress to many army men.
The narrator points out that these two servants perceive themselves to be physically and racially superior to their countrymen, because of their part European stock. Inah is proud of her fair skin and blue eyes. She feels that her neighbours all deserve to live in poverty, since they have brown skins and flat noses [24].

Inah is rather jealous of her brother, since he had found himself a mistress who will soon take him as her lover. If it were not for his skin disease, she remarks to him, it would only be a matter of time before he became white. Sobi assures her confidently that all the spots on him will surely disappear once he becomes Dutch. Only Indonesians suffer from such a disease, he tells his sister [25]. Furthermore to make his sister happy and in order not to leave her behind, while he himself is upwardly mobile, Sobi has found her an unmarried Dutchman whom he knew when working with a trading company in town. Knowing her sister's fussiness in choosing employers, Sobi had chosen this Dutchman specially because he has blue eyes, owns a car and has no wife.

Although Inah feels rather excited about the prospect that she too eventually will become Dutch, she still feels unsure. She points out to Sobi that unlike him she can't sing the popular tune 'You always in My Heart' besides, both of them in actual fact are illiterate and can't even speak Dutch [26]. Well, Inah can always sing the jali-jali (27), Sobi tries to cheer her. But both know how

24. 'Djongos ... ', p. 17.
25. ibid, p. 14
26. ibid, p. 16
27. ibid, p. 16, jali-jali, popular folk song
the Dutch disliked this kind of music. Luckily, Inah is a woman. Sobi assures her 'As long as a woman is pretty, everything will come easily for her'. As a final advice he also reminds his sister that once she becomes a Dutch person she should never feel shy about walking around naked, to getting herself drunk or to swearing 'godf erdom' ('god verdoemd', 'God be damned') (28).

As this piece was written in 1948, it is not surprising that Pramoedya has brought into his story his priyayi cultural and social prejudices towards the common people. In this early stage, we tend to see them as having simple 'ridiculous' minds. In this story, the author emphasises the ridiculous way in which people like Sobi and Inah tend to believe in the superiority of the whites. Their simple line of thinking displays how belief in the importance of racially based physical characteristics found a fertile soil in the minds of some Indonesians.

What we must bear in mind is that such thoughts, though embraced in this story, by two servants, were by no means the prerogative of the servant class. Some of the better classes were also enslaved by such a ridiculous perception (29). As this story was only published in 1957, (after Pramoedya had become sufficiently aware that he wanted to write on behalf of the common people), we must assume that it was

28. ibid, p. 17

29. As late as 1978, a 'pop' writer Yudhistira Ardi Noegraha (b. 1954) in criticising the elder generation of writers accused them of a desire 'to become Dutchmen' (kemlondo and kebule-bule-an). They display their sense of inferiority caused by their bondage to the Westerners. Yudhistira A. Noegaraha, 'Pengarang2 Tua kehabisan Darah' ('The old generation of writers are drained of Blood') in Sinar Harapan 20 May 1978.
in order to bring home to us how ridiculous such people are that Pramoedya cast his two figures as the lowest members of society, domestic servants, and not to show how ridiculous domestic servants tend to be. This argument will be substantiated when we consider his short story 'Machluk Dibelakang ...' which he wrote in 1955, and in which he portrays domestic servants in a favourable light.

But whether Sobi and Inah are servants and hence they think in such a way, or whether they have strange ideas and therefore become nothing but domestic servants, is not relevant to our discussion. But it seems that Sobi and Inah are intended to personify those Indonesians who tend to formulate their views of inferiority on outwards physical appearance, with traits associated with whites being superior to traits commonly identified with the Indonesians.

Thus white skin, blue eyes, popular English songs, the habit of unclothing oneself in public, getting oneself drunk and swearing at the god almighty are signs of superior physical and mental disposition, and are signs of civilised and sophisticated behaviour and of economic affluence. These are in contrast to brown skin, flat nose, skin disease, and the fondness for jali-jali music.

It was to eradicate such feelings of inferiority which enslaved many Indonesians that from 1957 the Indonesian government led by Sukarno and abetted by cultural leaders like Ki Hadjar Dewantara (the founder of Taman Siswa) began to promote a 'Kebudayaan Nasional' \[30\] to boost Indonesian National Identity. This was to make Indonesians

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more aware of their national heritage and proud of their own cultural origins and physical disposition.

Another point which is interesting about the portrayal of Sobi and Inah is their family history. They are depicted as belonging to generations of 'slaves' or those with slave mentality. We have noticed many times how Pramoedya tends to give those characters who belong to the scum of society (those who he despises as well as those with whom he has sympathy) progenitors who were connected in one way or another with the Dutch armed forces [31].

It seems that Pramoedya at this early stage was unable to perceive and so to create characters who are separate personae from their parents - and are responsible for their own actions. Pramoedya tends to explain the negative traits in his characters by their family origins rather than on the characters' own bad motivations. The families have been associated one way or another with shady undertakings in the past and this determines the characters' role.

31. Sobi's ancestors included those despicable soldiers of the colonial army. The hero of Keluarga Gerilya, as we have seen, has a father who was a corporal in the colonial army. The 'confused' guerilla fighter Kadjan, in 'Hidup Yang Tak Diharapkan' has a father who had been a police agent during the colonial period. So was Inem's father. Achyat, who had to be sent to a children's prison for misbehaving in the story 'Anak Haram' ('AH') ('The Cursed Child'), has a father who worked for the Dutch intelligence service during the revolution. Thus Pramoedya tends to use a family's connection with the colonial army to delineate one of his characters' unfavourable traits. In the case of the characters with whom Pramoedya is sympathetic, like Achyat in 'AH', such a family background is used to indicate one of his characters' handicaps in society.
B.2 'Ikan-ikan yang terdampar'

The social outcasts depicted in 'Ikan-ikan ...' are of a better social class but not more reputable than the servants Sobi and Inah who longed to become white. Idulfitri and his friend Namun are vagabonds and support themselves by theft - initially petty theft, then stealing vehicles, and finally armed robbery. It is Fitri who has the gun and master-minds most of their crimes, and Namun stays with him like a leech. They were together as soldiers during the revolutionary period, and Fitri had also been imprisoned by the Dutch. Beside their past that binds them together, they also maintain a liaison with the same girl Djirah.

In their own words, they have been 'badjingan tulen' ('real scoundrels') in the last six months. As Fitri rationalises their situation to Namun, before they were scoundrels on behalf of their country and the country's idealism, now they are scoundrels for their own sake [32].

At the time of the story, Fitri has not eaten since the previous night and it takes him 11 hours existing in a hungry state before he can think of where to get some money to enable them to survive a while longer [33]. Since early six o'clock that morning the two have been walking aimlessly in the vicinity of the president's palace.

32. 'Ikan-ikan ...', p. 26
33. ibid, p. 21
They hang around the Decca park cinema looking at the posters of bare-legged women. Fitri thinks to himself, how can he or any men appreciate 'art' including such art as goes with bare legs, if their stomachs are empty? [34]. At that point Namun proceeds to educate Fitri about what he has read in the papers recently. The nationalists have been chased out from China. The communists are the winners there as well as in Eastern Europe. From reading the papers Namun has come to believe that all the hungry people in the world will eventually become the winners. Those who only care about their own stomachs will be chased away from the lands on which they have grazed so far [35]. He and Fitri will strip them off from their properties one by one, so he and Fitri will eventually become the kings in those fields [36].

Fitri reminds Namun that they who also belong to these hungry masses have yet to enter green pastures. So far they have not tried to enter it. Even worse, they have not even tried to form an association with other like-minded people. They are slow and behind the times [37]. At that point, they are standing in front of the ticket booth which is shut. Through eyes red from lack of sleep (Namun admits to Fitri) Namun stares hard at Fitri, saying that tomorrow or the day after, a group from this brigade of hungry masses, will attack this ticket stall [38].

34. ibid, p. 25-26
35. ibid, p. 29
36. ibid, p. 30
37. ibid, loc cit
38. ibid, p. 31
That reminds Fitri of his past. Fitri's mother harboured high hopes for him, hoping that he could become an office secretary or komis. His father wanted him to become a wedana (district head). He by now should have been a military policeman. As soon as he was released from Dutch prison, he reported at military headquarters inquiring about his old position. Instead he was interrogated for hours. After waiting for almost two months, he was told by an old acquaintance that the army cannot take Fitri back because he is considered a communist [39]. Fitri has now become conscious that he is a communist without even knowing when he started to be one or how he came to be accused of being one. Had he become a military policeman, Fitri soliloquises to Namun, he would arrest all the scoundrels in Jakarta including Namun.

They now have arrived in the park where many of the prostitutes are taking a rest. Both Namun and Fitri follow suit and try to take a nap. Having observed these women lying on the lawn of the public park not far from the palace, Fitri mutters to himself that they, he and his friend, like those women are 'like fish aground at the sandbanks after the flood has receded'. Namun disagrees, they are women and Namun and Fitri are men. No, says Fitri, the difference between the two of them and the women is that 'those women survive today by destroying their options for tomorrow', while Namun and Fitri are different, 'they survive today by robbing the options others have for their morrow' ('kita memungkinkan hidup hari ini dengan merampas kemungkinan hidup orang lain dilusa hari') [40].

39. ibid, p. 32
40. ibid, p. 38
Fitri then confesses to Namun about his dream of wanting to become a politician, and a member of parliament and a government minister. Then he will build a new life for the hungry masses 'Aku bangunkan nasib baru untuk kacum yang lapar' [41].

But Namun reminds Fitri that he is nothing but a 'borjuis gagal' (failed bourgeois);. To that Fitri answers 'Orang harus hidup dengan kehidupan borjuis dan baru kemudian orang tak pernah bicara tentang keburukan borjuis' (people have to lead the life of the bourgeoisie then they will no longer talk about the defects of that class) [42].

After their naps at the end of the day, Fitri tells Namun to sell his wallet to the 'tukang loak' ('junk salesman') so that they can get some money to eat. Reluctantly Namun does so, selling the most precious thing in his possession, a leather wallet which is a work of art, expertly made by a master craftsman in the trade. Thus the handicraft is exchanged for food for a hungry stomach. At that point Fitri has devised a plan for the evening: they will rob the hawker who passes their place of lodging each night. Then they will both go to visit Djirah together.

The story ends with this paragraph:

'...Dan karena tak ada kehebatan yang nampak pada dua orang kelaparan yang sedang makan sate, maka cerita inipun berakhirlah. Tetapi achir yang sesungguhnya sebenarnya bukan terletak pada jatuhnya malam dan jatuhnya kurban baru, tetapi pada kesungguhan mereka untuk terusmenerus menghamburkan tenaga dan kesanggupan mereka ...'

41. ibid, p. 37

42. ibid, p. 39
upon those two hungry men who are eating sate, with this, the story ends. But the real ending doesn’t hinge upon the arrival of a night and the fall of a new victim, instead it hinges upon their dedication for continuously wasting their energy and ability ...' {43}

The real end of the story lies, the author observes, with the seriousness by which those characters are wasting their resources and their ability.

Analysis

As we can see, the story is about men who, devoid of social status and regular occupation therefore have no regular income. Thus Fitri and Namun are outcastes in their own society which only obtained its full recognisable independence six months earlier. Having led a 'noble life' earlier as 'freedom fighters' they now lead the life of scoundrels.

Worse still, they are behind the times as they have failed to make common cause with other people with similar predicaments, who are as hungry as they are (as Fitri reminds Namun). In this story Pramoedya is able to depict for the first time how his underdogs also have their own hopes for the future, in contrast to what their families have aspired for them. The story also elaborates on the way these hopeless men are coping and manipulating their time and energy at efforts and goals which are far removed from their original plan about their lives.

43. ibid, p. 43
One thing that makes this story particularly intriguing is the early date of its authorship, which is claimed to be July 1950, only seven months after Pramoedya's release from prison, one month after his return from Blora. Another interesting point about it is that the work displays the author's consciousness of the interrelationship between external events (the Communist victory in China) and the ideas germinating among particular groups in Indonesian society.

Furthermore Pramoedya also contrasts his two men with another type of social outcast, the prostitutes. By comparing these two groups, Pramoedya highlights the exploitative and hard nature of the lives in Jakarta.

These two scoundrels survive by robbing other people's possessions. Most of the people, like the hawker who they plan to rob that evening, are as disadvantaged as they are. The prostitutes can be seen to symbolise the people who had to surrender part of themselves in order to survive a little longer - though eventually they too will be destroyed. But all of them - the scoundrel, or the prostitutes and the other hungry people of Jakarta - will eventually be destroyed one by one by the hard living conditions. The rule of the game is that one group exploits others who are less fortunate and less strong than themselves.

Through one of the characters, Pramoedya has hints at the basic weakness of these hungry people. They haven't realised the benefit of making common cause with people with similar predicaments in order to survive. Instead each tries to survive the best he can by destroying either himself or other people. This is why Fitri and Namun are men
who are behind their times. They were behind their times, the author warns because even though they were as hungry as the prostitutes, they were not conscious yet they all belong in the same category. Their mode of survival differs but through them being indifferent to the plight of others, each is destroying the other.

Besides making social commentary Pramoedya through the characters remarks on several topical political issues. One is the fact that someone can be denied his old job back by being accused of being a communist. Furthermore it is significant that Pramoedya has chosen as his under-dog character someone who has been so accused. At the same time, Pramoedya also synchronises the discontent experienced by these two ex-freedom fighters turned scoundrels with the victory of the communists in China. His two characters have hailed the victory as symbolising that a new and better world is coming. The victory signifies that the hungry masses will finally enter the battle field and win their battle.

But social and political ones are not the only issues the author tackles through his characters. Pramoedya also makes a point to remark on the cultural condition of the contemporary society in Indonesia. He compares the intrusion of vulgar 'pop' art from western countries (represented by the bare-legged movie stars displayed in the posters in front of the cinema) with the high quality of traditional handicraft represented by Namun's leather wallet. The relation of culture and art to economics and human survival is nicely depicted.
In the first instance, the point is made that even a (debased) popular work of art about naked flesh cannot give pleasure to people with hungry stomachs. Alternatively, even people with hungry stomachs, the vagabonds, cannot lower themselves to such a degrading position as to be able to extract pleasure from watching posters about naked flesh. Even 'pop' art is not 'food' for hungry people.

In the second instance Pramoedya has presented the alternative to the first, by saying that possession of a beautiful work of art is wasted on someone who is hungry. The true work of art (the handcrafted wallet), has to be given away only for a few rupiahs - enough for one meagre meal.

CONCLUSION: THE PRESENT

In 1948, in 'Djongos + Babu', Pramoedya perceived the domestic servants who work for European masters with disgust. In 1950, Pramoedya has begun to see that some of the ex-freedom fighters are unable to realise their aspirations in the independent country which they have helped to establish. During this period Pramoedya tended to regard the failure of the common people to lead a decent life as due to their 'common' social origin and their 'unfavourable' social-cultural milieu. However, in his description of the vagabonds in 'Ikan-ikan ...' he realises that it is possible for people from the better classes to become outcasts in a new state, despite the fact that those people have had a hand in establishing that state.
C. TOWARDS A NEW LOOK AT SOCIETY

'C Machluk Dibelakang Rumah'

By December 1955 when 'Machluk Dibelakang Rumah' was completed, Pramoedya was able to describe the domestic servants with some depth and in a more sympathetic light. While in 'Djongos ...', Pramoedya has noticed the domestic servants have several gradations of servitude, with his characters Sobi and Inah, as the lowest and vilest of them all, in 'Machluk ...' the quality of the servants depends less on the quality of their service which they offer their masters, and more on the quality of their masters.

Thus the narrator of the story observes that those who work for the Chinese families look clean and have the same facial expression as their employers. Those who work for the Europans are very obedient and those who work for the Jakarta priyayi look unkempt from over work and are under-nourished [44]. One servant who works for a particular priyayi is known to have worn the same dress all the time she worked in that place. She works for 12 hours a day in return for one meal and some left overs. Another servant receives no wages, but in return she is sent to school. But because she has a pleasant face, her mistress feels threatened by her and decides to fire her. Her mistress argues that education won't ensure a better, brighter future.

Pramoedya through the narrator remarks that many of those employers were themselves domestic servants when they first arrived in the capital city [45]. They have forgotten their own plight, and in

44. 'Machluk...', p. 119
45. ibid, p. 121
fact they are the employers who abuse their servants most. Other employers, who were already part of the priyayi class before they moved from the regions, insist that their life style should be maintained at all costs by refusing to do any menial tasks. They are able to do that by exploiting their servants.

In observing those priyayi employers, Pramoedya also notices the difference between them and other people from different social classes. The clever peasants who can control their harvests have been able to improve on their wealth. So have the traders and merchants who have come to live in the city. They are improving their social and economic status and can live like kings. Even the urban workers have begun to be aware of their potential force and have consolidated themselves into a group which one should take account of. Only the priyayi are left behind by time. They insist on living in pre-war grandeur which is supported by the slavery of their servants.

This is the first time that Pramoedya depicts the priyayi in an unfavourable light. Furthermore, by doing so he brings to the fore the fact that the priyayi life style is only able to be sustained by exploiting the less fortunate. At the same time, as Pramoedya shifts his sympathy away from the priyayi to the servant class and in doing so challenges the validity of the harmonious image of 'gusti-kawula' social contract extolled in the Javanese tradition {46}, he also perceives the contemporary social scene, in which the servants are the disadvantaged members in society. In a 'positive' sense, with all the

exploitation which the narrator of the story describes, he does mention one 'success' story. One servant is able to become a free person as a factory worker. Her social status has not improved much. But her condition as a domestic servant was nothing more than slavery, whereas as a factory worker she enjoys living as a free, human being. Furthermore, the narrator has noticed that her new found freedom has enabled her to meet up with a better class of men. He sees her walking with an educated looking man who owns a Raleigh bicycle, a symbol of material affluence for urban workers.

Concluding his story, Pramoedya through the narrator comes to realise, that the servants are an inevitable part of his Eastern 'civilised and cultured' society so often depicted in the propaganda of artists and politicians {47}. One tends to forget, (as he did), how much of an exaggeration is the portrayal of polite mores, courtesies and cultured behaviours that are identified with the priyayi. People tend to accept such a depiction unconditionally, and by doing that they forget that those servants who have different mores and ethics than the priyayi are in fact also part of the civilised human race {48}.

With this story we find several significant sharpenings in Pramoedya's understanding of society. One is in his understanding of the forces of social mobility, in that some of his masters were in the past servants themselves. Two is that he is now able to see that the privileges the priyayi have continued to enjoy in the present day are due to exploitation. Third, he is also able to see the domestic

47. 'Machluk ... ', p. 125
48. ibid, loc cit
servants as unhomogeneous, differing not in their inherent basic traits as servants but simply in their masters.

By relating the servants to their masters, Pramoedya is able to see the unharmonious basis of the 'gusti-kawula' social order - the exact opposite to the image projected in the Javanese literary traditions. Fifthly, by observing those servants continually, he can see that servants are also part of a civilisation. The narrator can no longer ignore their existence.

While at this stage Pramoedya through the narrator still concedes that the servants have different mores and a different culture to the priyayi, he now can accept that neither the mores nor the culture of the priyayi are that commendable. At the same time he is now able to see that the servants' values are not degrading. Furthermore, and most importantly, while he disapproves of the exploitative nature of his society, Pramoedya is not yet in a desperate state of mind at this time in that he is able to bring himself to describe one success story among all those sufferings. This indicates to us that he still strongly believes that with appropriate reforms his society can be transformed into a benevolent one.

With that in mind we shall look at how Pramoedya sought to formulate the reforms he deemed necessary to improve his society, to improve his own creativity as a writer and to improve his commitment to being a writer whose primary role was to serve society. For that we shall look at the literary-cultural debates throughout this period, and relate them to the political debates that are developed in the same period of time, 1950-1965. From this we shall see how his literary writings developed or changed as he himself was changed by his contemporary world.
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will look at the relationship between Pramoedya's view of his society and contemporary events in literary and political debates. For this purpose we will use his creative works as well as his critical essays. The purpose will be to try to understand how his stance as a writer and as a person was influenced by the cultural and political events of the time.

PART C

THE INTRUSION OF IDEOLOGY

PRAMOEDYA'S SEARCH FOR A NEW IDEALISM
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter and the next we will look at the relationship between Pramoedya's view of his society and contemporary trends in literary and political debates. For this purpose we will use his creative works as well as his critical essays. The purpose will be to try to understand how his stance as a writer and as a person was influenced by the cultural and political events of the time.

A The Literary Groups: Gelanggang and Lekra

A group of writers, associated with Gelanggang, the literary and cultural section of the journal Siasat, issued a statement which is known as 'Surat Kepertjajaan Gelanggang' (Gelanggang Testimonial of Beliefs) dating from 18 February 1950 but was only published in the journal on the 22nd of October 1955.

Surat kepertjajaan Gelanggang


Ke-Indonesiaan kami tidak semata-mata karena kulit kami jang sawo-matang, rambut kami jang hitam atau tulang pelipis kami jang mendjorok kekapan, tetapi lebih banjak oleh apa jang diutarkan oleh wudjud pernjataan hati dan pikiran kami.

Kami tidak akan memberikan suatu kata-ikatan untuk kebudajaan Indonesia. Kalau kami berbitjara tentang kebudajaan Indonesia, kami tidak ingat kepada melaplap hasil
kebudajaan lama sampai berkilat dan untuk dibanggakan, tetapi kami memikirkan suatu penghidupan kebudajaan baru yang sehat.

Kebudajaan Indonesia ditetapkan oleh kesatuan berbagai-bagai rangsang suara yang disebabkan suara2 yang dilontarkan dari segala sudut dunia dan yang kemudian dilontarkan kembali dalam bentuk suara sendiri.

Kami akan menentang segala usaha2 yang mempersempit dan menghalangi tidak betulnya pemeriksaan ukuran-nilai.

Revolusi bagi kami ialah penempatan nilai2 baru atas nilai2 usang yang harus dihantjurkan. Demikian kami berpendapat bahwa revolusi ditanah-air kami sendiri belum selesai.

Dalam penemuan kami, kami mungkin tidak selalu asli; yang pokok ditemui ialah manusia. Dalam tjara, membahas dan menelaahlah kami membawa sifat sendiri.

Penghargaan kami terhadap keadaan keliling (masjarakat) adalah penghargaan orang2 yang mengetahui adanja saling-pengaruh antara masjarakat dan seniman.

Djakarta, 18 Pebr. 1950

The Gelanggang Testimonial of Beliefs

We are the true heirs of world culture and we must perpetuate this culture in our own way. We have risen from the masses, and the viewpoint of the masses is for us a medley from which healthy new worlds can be fashioned.

Our national character as Indonesians does not merely derive from our dark brown skins, our black hair or our protruding foreheads, but rather from what we emphasise in the expression of our feelings and thoughts. We are not going to give one word to sum up the culture of Indonesia. When we discuss Indonesian culture, we do not intend to polish up the products of the old culture until they shine, so that we can boast about them. But we intend to give birth to a sound new culture, Indonesian culture is determined by the combination of all sorts of stimulating voices which are caused by voices hurled from all corners of the world, to be hurled back later in the form of our own voice. We shall oppose all attempts to improperly restrict or obstruct our examination of standards.

For us, revolution is the substitution of new standards for the outmoded ones which must be demolished. Thus we hold that the revolution in our own country is not yet finished.
In our findings we may not always be original; the important thing for us to find is man. In our approach to research, criticism and analysis we bring our own characteristics to bear.

Our estimation of our environment (society) is the estimation of people who are are aware of the reciprocal influences of society and the artist.

Jakarta, 18 February 1950 {1}

Being the recipients of world culture, the writers state they will promote the universal nature of humanity and not specific cultural trends limited to one nation {2}. Their stance is known as 'humanisme universel' {3}. At the start of their statement they declare that 'they are born of the masses' and that to them their understanding of "the people" (rakyat) is that they come from a mixture 'from which healthy new worlds can be created'. Thus they insisted that the rakyat is not limited to a particular social class. They regarded themselves to have come from the mass groups of people in general - Kalangan orang banyak.

The people who are known to be associated with this group came out of 'Gelanggang Seniman Merdeka' which was established in 1947 under the leadership among others Chairil Anwar, Asrul Sani and Rivai Apin. Other writers and artists who were known to be closely

1. Eng. tr from Boen Oemarwati, 'Development of Modern Indonesian Literature' in H. Soebadio, ed Dynamics of Indonesian History (Amsterdam, North Holland, 1978), appendix 1, p. 337

2. Jassin reaffirmed this line of thinking in his speech of acceptance for his Doctor Honoris Causa at The University of Indonesia 14 June 1970, entitled 'Sastra Indonesia sebagai warga sastra Dunia' (Indonesian literature as a member of world literature') (Jakarta, Idayu, 1976)

3. The name was coined by Jassin. See his statement in his article 'Humanisme Universel' dated 15 Dec, 1950 in Aoh K. Hadimadja Beberapa Paham Angkatan '45 (Jakarta, Tinta Mas, 1952) p. 102-107 also in Jassin, Kesusastraan Indonesia Modern dalam Kritik dan Esei v. 2 (Jakarta, Gunung Agung, 1967) 2nd ed, p. 30-33.
associated with this group, were for example the painters Henk Ngantung, the writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the poet Sitor Situmorang.

Critics like Jassin [4] and Aoh K. Hadimadja [5] saw the group as bringing a new trend into the Indonesian literature and defined them as the Angkatan '45, the 1945 generation of writers, those who established themselves during the revolutionary period. While they saw that the poet Chairil Anwar as the 'pioneer' of this Angkatan '45 [6], the writers Idrus and Pramoedya were also honoured as bringing a new style to Indonesian prose writing. A strong critic of this Gelanggang group who disagreed with their definition of Angkatan '45 was A.S. Dharta [7]. He attacked Jassin's criterion with the argument that 'Angkatan '45 sudah mampus!' 'The '45 Generation have died'.

In response to this stand-point Pramoedya wrote an article in 1952 entitled 'Tentang Angkatan' in which he defended the Gelanggang definition of angkatan. As he perceives an angkatan as being established through a common vision shared among the writers who lived and grew up in a similar environment [8]. Thus, unlike Jassin,

5. Aoh K. Hadimadja, Beberapa
7. A.S. Dharta, writer, poet and critic, co-founder of Lekra (Lembaga kebadayaan Rakyat) see below text. He uses the name Klara Akustia, Kelana Asmar, Yogaswara, Baimara Putra, and Rodji (A. Rosidi, Ikhtisar Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia (Bandung, Binatjpta, 1969), p. 189
Pramoedya grouped the writers not by time period but by a particular stance and vision. In this sense it is possible for him to accept the possibility of several angkatan existing within one period of literary development. In direct answer to Dharta, he says that the death of any angkatan will only be a matter of time. But as long as an angkatan is still contributing to society it has the right to exist. 'For sure it is always a new angkatan who will become victorious' [9].

In summary, Dharta's attack questioned the relation of these writers to foreign rulers thus relating the writers to the world outside their literary world. Pramoedya's response is solely within the context of the literary world as such, without dwelling on the writers' private stance, outside their creative world.

Although the 'Surat Kepertjajaan ...' was dated 18 of February 1950, and claimed it was upholding the spirit of the poet Chairil Anwar who had died in 1949, the statement itself was not published until October 1950, some two months after Lekra, (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat or the Institute of People's Culture) was established on 17th August 1950. Lekra was established at the instigation of Aidit, M.S. Ashar, A.S. Dharta and Nyoto [10].

At the beginning the central body of Lekra consisted of Dharta, M.S. Ashar and Herman Arjuno as its first, second and third secretary and the painter Henk Ngantung, the critic Yoebar Ayoeb and Aidit's

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9. ibid, p. 112. See also his 'Angkatan dan Dunianya' in Duta Susaana, 10 Jan 1953, V 2 no 7, p. 9 - 10.

10. Laporan Kebudayaan Rakyat I, (Jakarta, Lekra, 1959) p. 13. Arief Budiman argued that Lekra was established as a reaction to 'Surat kepertjajaan Gelanggang' (A. Budiman, 'Kekuatan Politik dalam Kesusasteraan Indonesia' in Kejakan dan Perdjuangan (Jakarta, Gunung Mulia, 1972, p. 159). As we noted the 'Surat' was made public only in October after Lekra was established in August.
second deputy Nyoto, as members of the central committee \{11\}. It is believed that during the initial stage Jassin and another writer who was later closely associated with the Gelanggang group, Achdiat Kartamihardja were invited to join, but both declined \{12\}. The organs for Lekra are the weekly Zaman Baru and Republik and the daily Harian Rakyat. It is also accepted that Nyoto had helped draft and set out the rules and regulations of Lekra which are set out in Mukadimah Paraturan Dasar Lekra \{13\}.

At this early stage of Lekra's history under the leadership of Dharta, the official program was to promote Kebudayaan Demokrasi Rakyat \(\text{A People's Democratic Culture}\) with the slogan 'Seni untuk Rakyat' and 'Ilmu untuk Rakyat' ('Arts for the People' and 'Science for the People') \{14\}. An example of this stance is Dharta's attack on Jassin, 'Kepada Seniman Universil' \{15\}. A better one is that of Yoebar Ayoeb in which he argues for the importance of the people (Rakyat) for cultural development in his 'Suatu konsekwensi' \{16\}.

\textbf{11.} For the history of the establishment of Lekra see Lekra Menyambut Kongres Kebudayaan, Bandung 6-11 October 1951, p. 1-3.


\textbf{14.} Lekra Menyambut, p. 45-47 for its Konsepsi Kebudayaan Rakyat.

\textbf{15.} Reprinted in Lekra Menyambut, p. 3-10.

\textbf{16.} Yoebar Ayoeb, 'Suatu konsekwensi' in Lekra Menyambut, p. 6-11
B Pramoedya on Literary Creativity

In his essay 'Kesusasteraan dan Perdjuangan' ('Literature and Struggle') written in April 1952, Pramoedya argues that great literary works are created out of human suffering and men's struggles to survive. He cites the works of Victor Hugo, Jose Rizal, Zola, Tolstoy and Gogol [17].

In July 1952, Pramoedya in his essay 'Kesusasteraan sebagai Alat' ('Literature as a Tool') [18] argues that literature is nothing but a tool which people use to achieve desired ends [19]. He realises that once a work has been written, it is beyond the writer's control how the work is to be used or interpreted. He expresses his concern for the exploitation of literature by others. To avoid it, he argues, the writer must always know the exact purpose of his writing. Such awareness or consciousness is necessary if the work is not to be exploited by others to express their point of view [20]. Inspite of this, literature used purely as the tool of the author is not necessarily better than literature exploited to achieve some social goal, such as 'serving the people' [21]. Both have their merits and demerits. The first has the ability to preserve honest creativity, while the second has the power to purge the potential for decadence which constitute a danger to communal relationships [22].

17. P.A. Toer, 'Kesusasteraan dan Perdjuangan' in Pewarta Djakarta, V. 2. 20 April 1952, p. 10
18. Indonesia, v. 3 no. 7, July 1952, p. 7-12
19. ibid, p. 7
20. ibid, p. 8
21. On this Pramoedya actually cited the injunction of Mao Tse Tung that 'Literature and art should serve the people ...' ibid, p. 11
22. ibid, loc cit
At this stage, when Pramoedya was still regarded by other Indonesian writers to be closely associated with the 'universal humanist' group, he was already appreciative of literature that 'serves the people'. In fact in another article written in August, 1952 entitled 'Definisi dan Keindahan dalam Kesusasteraan' ('Definition and Aesthetic Taste in Literature') he rejects the values of creating literature only for the sake of 'beauty'. 'Justice, humanity, culture and idealism are more crucial to men than beauty'. Thus he already rejects the 'formalist' literary approach and criticism that concentrates only on the aesthetic balance of the forms and structures of a literary piece. It is human sufferings and men's struggles that provoke him to write, combined with his own desire to counter the inequalities he finds in his world. But he was at this stage not yet engaged solely in 'serving the masses'.

As soon as Pramoedya had expressed his opposition to a 'formalist' approach to literary criticism, a critic, Balfas, used this very method to attack Pramoedya's literary credibility. In his article written in December 1952, entitled 'Apa Sebab Kurang Roman' ('Why are there not enough novellas') Balfas criticised

23. Indonesia v. 3 no. 8, Aug 1952, p. 14-17
24. ibid, p. 14
Pramoedya's *Keluarga Gerilya* and Mochtar Lubis' *Djalan Tak Ada Udjung* \(^27\) as examples of 'weak' novels, ascribing the defects of the novels to the writers' lack of skill in controlling their material.

Enraged with Balfas' 'formalist' argument as well as with other critics who applied that approach, in March 1953 Pramoedya wrote a rebuttal to this in 'Offensif Kesusasteraan 1953' in which he also singles out Jassin as the instigator of the 'formalist' approach \(^28\). This article signals the strained relation Pramoedya already had at this stage with other writers and critics who belonged to the *Gelanggang* group.

At the same time, Boeyoeng Saleh, a literary critic associated with *Lekra* published an article in the July issue of *Indonesia* entitled 'Kearah Seni Berisi: Sekitar soal "tendens"' ('Towards Meaningful Arts: the case of "tendency" ini literature') \(^29\) which presents the theoretical framework of *Lekra*’s approach to literary criticism. While he puts more credence on the content and purpose of the work than its form, he concedes that a good work is one which has both good purpose and form \(^30\).

The best example of *Lekra’s* 'social realist' approach to literary criticism can be seen in Yoebar Ayoeb's evaluation of recent literary works in his *Realisme Kita Dewasa Ini* ('Our Realism at Present')

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30. Hence Boeyoeng Saleh’s approach is in fact in agreement with the hollistic, totality approach argued by R. Wellek and A. Warren in their *Theory of Literature* (London, J. Cape, 1949).
[31] published in the daily Harian Rakyat from December 1955 to February 1956. He discusses both past and contemporary works, from Marah Rusli's Siti Nurbaya to Mochtar Lubis', Djalan Tak Ada Udjing and Balfas' Lingkaran2 Retak, as well as the works of Pramoedya, Utuy, A.S. Dharta and Bakri Siregar. (The last two writers belonged to Lekra). Yoebar does not use the term 'socialist' as a criterion for evaluation when he refers to 'realism' he is referring to contemporary Indonesian reality.

On the other hand, Bakri Siregar in his explanation of Lekra's literary approach in his 'Tjatatan Realisme Sosialis' ('Notes on Socialist Realism') [32] published in May to June 1956, discusses the contemporary literature in Indonesia in the light of a socialist doctrine. This became Lekra's official approach: works were to be evaluated in terms of whether they project a desire for 'socialist' society rather whether they depict the reality of contemporary Indonesian society, which was far from being a socialist one.

31. in Harian Rakyat (HR) 31 Dec 1955 - 4 Febr. 1956. A critical view of this article is in Merdeka, 6 Oct, 1956. This article mentioned another Lekra critic, Samanjaya, who disapproved of Yoebar Ayoeb's method.

C Debates on the 'Crisis' in Indonesian literature

Meanwhile, in a literary discussion organised by Sticusa (Stichting Voor Culturele Samenwerking or Dutch Foundation for Cultural Cooperation) in Amsterdam in July 1953, (which Pramoedya himself attended {33}) it was suggested by Dutch critics that there was a 'crisis' in Indonesian literature with respect to the quality and quantity of work being produced {34}. A Marxist scholar Prof. Wertheim offered another interpretation of the current situation of modern Indonesian literature. He regretted that many Indonesian writers like Idrus, Achdiat and Utuy Tatang Sontani had adopted western pessimism in their evaluation of Indonesian society. Indonesians, he said, have no right to be pessimistic. They have a bright future. He accused those writers who were writing in the pessimistic style are in fact not writing about the reality of their own community. If such pessimism were to continue to be projected then one would be able to argue that modern Indonesian literature had failed. Such a failure would be a sign that the Indonesian revolution had failed the Indonesian people. He hoped that the writers would abandon this pessimism and would try to express the joy and optimism of their people in their own community {35}.

33. For Pramoedya’s report of this discussion see his 'Mentjari Sebab-sebab kemunduran Kesusasteraan Indonesia Modern Dewasa ini' in Mimbar Indonesia, 18 July 1953, p. 22-23, 25. Also in Gelanggang Siasat, 19 July 1953, p. 17.

34. See also Teeuw’s summary of this discussion in his, Modern Indonesian Literature, v. 1, (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1967), p. 139-140.

The issue whether there is a crisis in Indonesian literature was raised again in Indonesia by Soedjatmoko. In the July/August 1954 issue of Konfrontasi he argued that the dearth of 'good' novels since independence meant that there was a crisis in the quality and quantity of Indonesian literature. In this, in the introduction to an article titled 'Mengapa Konfrontasi?' ('Why confrontation?') [36] he alleged that there was a crisis in Indonesian literature. This view caused a furore among writers and critics in Indonesia.

A good debate developed between him and Boeyoeng Saleh. Soedjatmoko (a member of the P.S.I. and one of the editors of Siasat) explained further the criteria he used to evaluate a 'successful' work and a 'failure' in his 'Surat Terbuka' September 1954 [37]. Disagreeing with Soedjatmoko, Boeyoeng explained what he thought had led to the belief that a 'crisis' existed, in his article 'Latarbelakang Kesedjarahan Krisis di Indonesia' ('The historical background of the crisis in Indonesia') [38]. Looking at the issue from a historical perspective, Boeyoeng pointed to social, economic and political factors which had prompted people to profess such negative views. He argued that the Indonesian revolution had failed to realise its political goal because of the acceptance of the compromise of the Round Table Conference [39]. Culturally it had also


39. For general account on the issues discussed and adopted in the Round Table Conference in the Hague 27 December 1949 see Daha, History, p. 140-142.
failed to develop its own traits due to the syncretism of feudal provincial cultural norms with the urban bourgeois taste. He argued that to alleviate the 'crisis' the country should be developed economically both at the urban and the village level and industrially as well as agriculturally. To strengthen the cultural basis of the country he advocated that it adopt an ideology that concerned itself with the common people, the 'rakyat'. Boeyoeng Saleh's argument emphasised the influence of 'non' literary factors on people's conceptualisation on literary matters.

He is not the only Lekra critic who reacted strongly against the views of Soedjatmoko. A.S. Dharta argued that the reason why some works were praised and others were derided was the different criteria used to measure literature. In his article written in September 1954, 'Usaha2 untuk tinggikan kesenian kita: daja kritis dan kegiatan kaum buruh/tani' ('Measures to raise the level of our arts: critical evaluation and the works of workers/ peasants') 40 he noted that many of the creative expressions that had come from the peasants and the workers had tended to become 'frozen'. They had not had proper channels to express their creativity nor had they received adequate encouragement. Those who dared to try had been discouraged, using as criteria, the aesthetic criteria of the bourgeoisie.

These two were not the only critics who disagreed strongly with Sudjatmoko. Supported by statistics and a long bibliographical list, the custodian of modern Indonesian literature, Jassin, refuted Soedjatmoko's allegation that there was a crisis in a paper given in a

literary symposium at University Indonesia in December 1954, entitled 'Kesusasteraan Indonesia Modern tak ada Krisis' ('There is no Crisis in Modern Indonesian literature') {41}.

Another young writer Ayip Rosidi satirises this debate in his short story 'Kritik Kesusasteraan di Republik Antah Berantah' {42}. In it he depicts how a civil servant schemes to gain politically against his counterparts in another ministry when the issue of a 'cultural crisis' is first raised. Young as Ayip was then, he was perceptive enough to realise the importance of politics to literature and arts and to the debates about standards and quality. Thus while Jassin concentrated solely on the quantity and quality of the literary works produced so far, the young Rosidi was able to see the wider implications.

The debates about literary quality and the aesthetic criteria to be used continued for another two years. One group, associated with Gelanggang, tended to set out their point of view in a formalistic style concentrated on forms and structures while critics from the Lekra group, like Boeyoeng Saleh, Dharta and Bakri Siregar, used factors outside literary texts, to elaborate on the significance of particular pieces. Probably they themselves were aware of the fact that because their approach to literature differed from the Gelanggang group, their judgements would be questioned. But instead of setting out their arguments in a more skilful and systematic manner, they


42. In his, Sebuah Rumah Buat Hari Tua (Jakarta, Gunung Agung, 1968 (1955))
tended to concentrate on questioning the motivation or stance of the creators of the works. Those who professed a different point of view, whether it was on politics, culture or social issues, would automatically be derided.

The critics from Lekra tended to use their political stance to guide them as to the criteria to use in formulating literary judgments. As Lekra's own preamble states, creative works of any worth are those which benefit the masses. Other works which fail to depict the interest of the masses were automatically labelled as trash. They hid behind the marxist political ideology although their understanding of Marxism was often meagre. Since they lacked educational training (due to their disadvantaged social origins rather than any innate inability) and hence lacked skill in presenting their arguments in a systematic manner, they were disadvantaged in the literary debates of that period. A critic, Gajus Siagian, in his evaluation of the state of literary criticism to date, in his paper 'Essay dan Kritik Sastra Indonesia Dewasa Ini' [43] given at the 1956 literary symposium, expressed his regret that the works of Lekra's writers and critics are not widely publicised outside their own media organs. This is due to public prejudice against them, Gajus asserted. In actual fact, he continued, their writings are often very sharp. Their sharpness is due to their reactions against those unfounded prejudices [44]. The common view was that the Lekra approach was 'unsound', 'unscholarly', 'erratic' or 'dogmatic' [45].

44. Ibid, p. 18.
45. See for example the subjective (personal) view expressed by Teeuw, (Teeuw, Modern, v. 1, p. 138).
This view often ignored the reasons for their outlook. In the early '50s, when the Indonesian intellectual circle was tiny, those who had some western education, however little, tended to be associated with Gelanggang. Jassin went to H.B.S., Achdiat went to A.M.S. and Soedjatmoko himself received his education in the prestigious Gymnasium and continued to the medical faculty. Takdir Alisyahbana is a graduate of the law faculty. They were prominent members of the Gelanggang. At the same time, those prominent in Lekra were from opposite poles. Dharta is a self-educated man. Boeyoeng Saleh attended the native school system, as did Pramoedya and Utuy Tatang Sontani. (The last two only became closely associated with Lekra after 1955.) Bakri Siregar with his teachers' college training at H.I.K. (Hollands Inlandse Kweekschool— a training school for non-European teachers) is probably the only noted Lekra critic who had an education comparable with Gelanggang spokesmen such as Jassin, although the H.I.K. was occupationally oriented. (The H.B.S., which Jassin attended, was academically oriented.)

In a country where in 1961, only 55,837 of the people had received a tertiary education and a little over 12 1/2 millions had a three year primary education over 97 millions of total population, it was easy for those with some education (especially those who

46. H.B.S. Hoogere Burger School, Dutch Secondary school for Dutch and selected natives with equal status to Europeans. A.M.S. Algemene Middelbare School, General Government Senior High School for natives. For Jassin's educational background see his speech 'Sastra Indonesia Sebagai ...' p. 23. Achdiat's educational background was obtained from an interview with him, Canberra, November 1980.

have enjoyed the privileged western education however meagre it had been) to think with assurance that their values and their criteria were the 'correct' ones. Because of their training some were able to look methodically at the form and structure of the work and limit their approach to the texts alone. They forgot that literary works are also products of men who belong to a particular society at a particular period of history. Hence it is valid to look at texts in relation to society.

Since they were better educated they were also skilled at presenting their arguments. They had the fortune not to need to hide behind political dogma to 'legitimise' their arguments. This is one of the main motivations. Being, in the main, unskilled at debate, their opponents were driven to seek the protection of Lekra in order to legitimise their views. Many also hoped that dogma would systematise their creative thoughts. This process is particularly evident in the movement into Lekra circles of Pramoedya.

In this same literary symposium in December 1956, Balfas, using an unsystematised 'formalistic' argument attacked the quality of the creative works of Pramoedya in his paper 'Menudju Kepada Kedewasaan dalam Prosa Indonesia' ('Towards a maturity in Indonesian Prose') [48]. On this occasion he also used Sontani's works as examples of shoddy literature. He argued that because writers like Pramoedya and Utuy were praised too early in the course of the development of modern Indonesian literature, their works have set a 'low' standard for the subsequent writers. In this paper, Balfas

criticises Pramoedya's novel *Perburuan* as being unstructured, with a contrived ending and unconvincing characters. His comments enraged Pramoedya no end. Although the exchange is not directly documented, all accounts of the meeting refer to Pramoedya's fierce reaction. For example, an account of this symposium which is reported in *Gelanggang* [49] is very critical of the views expressed by Balfas. The report mentions that Nugroho Notosusanto, one of the organisers of the symposium, concluded that Balfas's paper was a failure [50]. But at the same time the report expresses its disappointment at the personal and emotional way Pramoedya conducted his rebuttal of Balfas. A similar view is expressed by Lie Tie Gwan in his 'Simposion Sastra 1956' [51]. While he disagrees with Balfas's method of attacking Sontani's and Pramoedya's works (on the grounds that Balfas did not take the time to evaluate all their works thoroughly) Lie is upset at the emotional way Pramoedya answered his critics. He expresses the hope that this kind of literary debate will be abandoned.

**expressions of**

This symposium, despite the many supports for Pramoedya, seems to have triggered final parting between Pramoedya and the *Gelanggang*, which occurred soon after. In the meantime political events and historical change had intervened in Pramoedya's life and further prompted him to change his stance. But before we discuss that let us look carefully at his personal life and his attempts to communicate with his readers and critics in his creative writings and essay

50. ibid, p. 25.
written in particularly in 1956.

D. His creative works and essays:

D.1 'Kecapi'

This short story was first published in February 1956 in the journal *Kisah* [52], another medium closely associated with the Gelanggang group of writers. The story is about a man who has left his wife and grown-up children and his village for another younger and prettier woman. He comes to live with her in the city. He earns his living in the city busking on the streets singing Sundanese folk songs accompanied by his *kecapi*, a traditional Sundanese musical instrument.

In the meantime his new wife has grown old, ugly and fat and childless. It is only with his songs that the man is able to express his 'true' inner feelings for 'beauty', for the loss of his soul through his own infatuation to 'beauty' and for his longing for the place of his birth.

In his 'formalistic' review of this story, Balfas in his 'Sorotan tentang "Ketjapi"' [53] accuses the story for being too sentimental. Pramoedya was unable to distance himself from his character the busker, and so expresses his own personal views and frustrations through his character. Consequently there is no logical development in the characterisation.

52. *Kisah*, V 4, no 2, Febr., 1956 p. 4-5. the story is also in his *Tjerita Dari Djakarta, TDD* (Jakarta, Gapura, 1957) p. 140-147

53. In *Kisah*, ibid, p. 3
In saying that, Balfas himself forgot that, as a short story, 'Ketjapi' has limited scope for delineating the psychological disposition of its character. In any case, as the preceding study of Pramoedya's literary expression shows, the psychological make-up and individuality of his characters was not his concern. He is more concerned with placing the individual in his social environment - in how he comes to be incongruous in his world. To Pramoedya it is a person's social and cultural orientation that alienates him from his environment, rather than his odd psychological disposition.

The account of the story 'Kecapi' is presented through the eyes of the narrator who is affected by the suffering of this busker. He is depicted through the point of view of an involved observer. Although the account of the man may appear superficial, the story brings to us the type of figures of displaced urban dwellers who are culturally alienated as well as (like many of Pramoedya's characters) socially disadvantaged. This type of person was ignored by the more prestigious Indonesian writers at the time, with the possible exception of a new writer, S.M. Ardan [54].

Thus Balfas repeatedly missed the 'inner' message in the work of Pramoedya, and instead insisted that the writer must suit the critic's taste by changing his style of writing and concentrating on depicting certain traits, i.e. the psychological disposition of characters.

54. See for example Ardan's short stories, in his collected works, Terang Bulan, Terang Dikali (Djakarta, Pustaka Djaya, 1974 (1957)) 2nd ed. The title of the book comes from a sentence of a popular folk song from Djakarta. But although Ardan's people are economically and socially disadvantaged, they are not displaced people. They live in the same area from birth to adulthood among families and friends.
Furthermore, instead of limiting his criticism to the piece at hand, Balfas unfortunately has ended his comment with a patronising remark, saying he is very pessimistic that he will ever see any improvement in Pramoedya's writing skills if Pramoedya continues to express his own personal attitudes in his writings.

Pramoedya may not have been able to convince Balfas (or other readers) of the character as a believable flesh and blood person. But if one sees the character as one part of a society that is currently undergoing change, one can begin to appreciate how this person is frustrated in his attempt to fit in his new environment. Further, Pramoedya, in the course of depicting the kind of frustration the singer feels, points out how the singer is culturally alienated from the people around him. This problem which is not readily appreciated by others who have always lived within one cultural mould. Yet it is important for newcomers forced into the city as a result of the process of urbanisation. An individual's attachment to the symbols of his cultural heritage is one way he can define his own identity in a strange world. In this story it is Sundanese folk songs which provide this attachment. Yet the message of these songs is important only to the person concerned. To others those songs and that attachment appeared trite, and nothing but cheap sentiment.

Pramoedya does try to bring this cultural alienation into his story. He notes the words of the songs. The sound of the musical instrument completes the picture symbolising the singer's frustrations at reconciling adoption to a new place and his longing for his village. Maybe if Pramoedya had used the violin to convey this sense
of frustration and had written about a struggling writer trying to make a living in Jakarta or Amsterdam, he may have had a different response from Balfas. It was just as in the story: the beauty of Sundanese songs and music, sung and played by the busker, falls on the deaf ears of unappreciative city dwellers who are probably more familiar with western musical scales. The inner message of the story received a similar response from the 'cosmopolitan' urban literary critic Balfas.

We now look at a story in which Pramoedya elaborates further this sense of cultural alienation. Living in a changing modern world, Indonesians are not only faced with problems that involve their cultural adaptability, but (more crucially) they are faced with problems that concern their economic survival that are also crucial to the maintenance of their social status and prestige. In this story Pramoedya has chosen as the center of his narration, not a social outcast, but more from his own social class, a struggling writer, a character he can't help but be most familiar with.

D.2 'Sunyi Senyap Disiang Hidup'

Written in 1956 'Sunyi Senyap disiang Hidup' ('Desolation at Life's Noon') [55] is one of his finest stories. This work does in fact demonstrate Pramoedya's mastery for the finer arts of writing but it achieved prominence not because of this but because the work touches several central preoccupations in the mind of an observer living in a modern society. The work reveals the alienation the

narrator of the story feels towards his society. It explores the universal problem of choosing between working for idealism and working for economic security. As in many of his other stories about life in the capital city, Pramoedya describes the economic hardship a struggling writer like himself faces living in a big impersonal city like Djakarta. The narrator of the story, who is a fairly successful writer, complains about money, the low fees he receives and the high taxes he pays the government. He is tempted to give up writing in order to improve his economic status. But he values his own 'freedom' so he turns down an offer to become a director of a business firm which would give him a generous salary, a house and a car. At the same time he questions himself as to the purpose of him being a writer. He still can't forget how one critic called him 'a sentimental writer' and another an asocial one. Obviously Pramoedya is avert ing to his relationship to critics like Balfas.

The writer in the story longs to abandon the capital city with its modern materialistic living for the countryside ... if only he had 10,000 rupiah in his pocket. Then he could live among the forest workers and write a novel about them. But he realises that such a thought is unrealistic: where in any case would he get the 10,000 rupiah? He is ashamed of his preoccupation with personal problems. He could have chosen to write on hundreds of themes about the city; about urban living and urban suffering which could produce a great novel. Recently there was a big fire causing ten thousand urban dwellers to lose their homes, yet he, as a writer, was not in the least interested about their sufferings. He did not even attempt to visit the area to try to understand their world, their screams and
moans. He is too preoccupied with his own problems.

He realises he could not just leave the city without any money to support a country life style. He notes the absurdity of his plan to romanticise the forest workers. In the city itself he feels a stranger to the urban workers - unfamiliar, if not uninterested, in their plight. However he is quite envious of the farmer who tills the fields opposite his lodging at the outskirt of town. This farmer can earn as much per week as he, a writer, gets for a short story in which he has to expose his life of suffering to the world. Yet he would not consider for one minute changing his occupation by giving up writing to till the land. The story itself does not suggest that in returning to the country he would adopt the rural peasant life and occupation. The writer feels trapped in his situation.

It is a crucial point that the alienation this modern man feels about his current environment is thoroughly cultural and not political, inspite of the intense economic obsession in his personal problems. Culturally he is no longer part of the regional world he came from: culturally he is not yet absorbed into the purely monetary capitalistic urban existence which he is struggling to adapt to. The author's sensitivity towards his world at this time expressed by the writer-character in the story, focuses the readers' attention on the problem of urban acculturisation, rather than on the problem of social adjustment. although the narrator clearly expresses his sense of social alienation, he is not part of either the urban elite or urban proletariat.
The character in the story, conveys a sense of cultural frustration instead in his inability to adjust to the tempo and pulses of impersonal urban living rather than a sense of political anomie. He neither realises that his problems are not unique to him alone, nor expresses anger by desiring to change the system. In a class sense he exists separately from the other economically disadvantaged people: blue collar urban workers as well as rural workers. He exists alone. This becomes clear by the end of the story where he refers to a specifically cultural and not political alienation.

At the end of the story, the narrator bemoans the cultural tension between the East and the West, the modern and the traditional, the foreign and the native in his society.

'Bila benar pengarang adalah tjermin masarakatnja, maka kebalauan dijwaku ini adalah tjermin daripada kebalauan masarakatku: tingkat pertama daripada explosi pertjampuran antara Timur dan Barat, dimana diminta taraf Barat, tetapi wariana Timur belum lagi mengidjinkan. Timur jang terusmenerus memberikan konsesi, sedang Barat bertahan mina daerah didalam diri, didalam dijwa, sedang dijwa ini sendiri tak tahu Barat itu. Achirnja jang kuketahui hanjalah bahwa diri ini kemudian hanjalah tempat terluang untuk menjadi medanperang tiada habis-habisnja, explosi demi explosi.'

'If indeed the writer is a mirror for his society, so the conflicts in my mind are also the conflicts of my society: the first stage is the explosion of the mixing of East and West, where the Western standard is being demanded but the eastern heritage is not yet willing to give its consent. The East constantly gives its concessions while the West persistently demands a territory inside the body - even inside the soul of the individual - although this very soul is ignorant of what West is. In the end, I begin to notice how this self has become a vacant land to be used as a battle field, without any respite between one explosion and another [56].'

56. 'Sunyi Senyap' p. 268
At the outset of the story the narrator expresses clearly his resentment of his economic situation. He notices with strong resentment that despite belonging to a 'better' class in society, economically he finds it difficult to manage and to maintain his privileged life-style as a writer and member of the elites.

In real life, Pramoedya did feel strongly about this. This can be seen in another short story written and published about the same time in August 1956, entitled 'Djalan yang amat Pandjang' ('A Very Long Road') {57}. In this story Pramoedya compares the economic situation of a writer with that of a medical practitioner. The latter, as part of his routine, writes prescriptions. For every one he writes, he will get half the honorarium a writer receives after days spent agonising over a piece of paper.

Pramoedya was one of the writers in this period who most vocally constantly bemoaned the writers' economic situation in his writings. In an essay written two years earlier 'Hidup dan Kerdja Sastrawan Indonesia Modern' (The Life and the Occupation of Modern Indonesian Writers) {58} Pramoedya describes the low economic rewards a writer receives as a member of the literati. He points out that because a writer's profession is not technical, but a creative one, it ought to be respected as such and be rewarded commensurate with that status.

In another article, written in 1957 after his return from his trip to China, entitled 'Keadaan Sosial para Pengarang' (The social Condition of Fellow Writers') {59}, Pramoedya compares the economic

58. In Seni v 1 no. 1, Jan 1955, p. 22-36. It was originally given at a literary symposium at the University of Indonesia, Dec 1954. Reported in Gelanggang Siasat, 23 Jan 1955, p. 22-23.
59. In Siasat, 20 Feb, 1957, p. 25, p. 28
condition of the writers in Indonesia with that of the Socialist Countries where writers receive a salary from the State. Pramoedya praises the way Socialist States endow their creative writers with generous economic rewards and excellent social services for their families. In publishing the article, the editor of Siasat in which the article was published, pointed out that Pramoedya had ignored one crucial point - writers in socialist countries do not have 'freedom of expression', a right that exists in the free world.

Interestingly, the narrator of 'Suni Senyap ... also discusses this point about 'freedom' that is his own freedom. He has turned down an offer to become a director of a business firm because he wanted to work only for himself, and for his own creative ends.

The writer's 'freedom' to write and protect his own creativity, was also one of the main topics of debate during the period 1956-1958. Wiratmo Soekito, another critic from the Gelanggang group in 1958 in his 'Krisis Kemerdekaan dalam Sastra Indonesia' 60 bemoaned the fact that some writers had sacrificed their creative talent by working as translators in foreign embassies in order to obtain better economic conditions. This he alleged, was detrimental to the quality of the literature created in the country.

In an answer to that allegation, and to another one about the tendency among Indonesian writers not to express themselves 'freely' Ayip Rosidi wrote a strong rebuttal in that same year, entitled 'Tak ada Krisis Kemerdekaan dalam Sastra dan Sastrawan Indonesia' ('There is no crisis in the freedom of the writers and in the Indonesian

60. In Star Weekly, 22 Febr., 1958, p. 11
literature'). He listed some of the works produced so far. He argued that the short stories of Trisno Yuwono, Utuy Tatang Sontani, Aarul Sani, Dodong Djiwapradja, or Subagyo Sastrowardoyo (to name but a few) depict the injustices in society without fear of repercussion. He also pointed out that some writers also work in factories, others work as teachers or as editors, and some work as translators in foreign embassies. So, he argued, just because Pramoedya and Achdiat work with those embassies this by itself does not proof that they have squandered their creativity.

Thus what is raised by the narrator of 'Sunyi Senyap' about 'freedom' was obviously one topical issue that was being debated at that time. It is interesting that the narrator associates his freedom of creative expression with economic freedom. Thus Pramoedya is aware of the importance of a writer's economic security for his creativity. At this point though, he has not raised the connection between free expression and a particular political situation. Rather, he emphasises economic issues and how they affect the social status of the writer - a status which is endangered if the writer can not maintain his life style. Furthermore, the narrator feels no affinity with other economically disadvantaged people in the city. He feels culturally alienated in the urban environment - but nor does he feel any affinity with the peasants in the countryside. He is unable to reconcile within himself the various elements of society that bring about his sense of alienation and make him conscious of his disadvantaged position, despite the fact that he is a writer of some reputation. At the end of his account, the narrator attributes the

61. In Star Weekly, 14 March 1958, p. 6
source of his frustrations to elements outside his society rather than within it. Thus, he alleges, the source of his difficulties is his inability to mediate the cultural tension between East and West.

Thus even after six years of independence, the narrator still senses the influence of an outside power - that is, the West - upon his ordinary daily life. But this Western impingement is seen here as a cultural intrusion rather than as a political one. This perception was, however, to change as Pramoedya became politically involved.

D.3 His Essays

It is clear from Pramoedya's creative writings in Tjerita Dari Blora and Tjerita Dari Djakarta, that he feels deeply about the plight of the socially disadvantaged members in society. It is also obvious from scanning the works of other creative writers (who don't belong in Lekra) up to 1955 that Pramoedya, next to Sontani, is one of the few writers who took it on himself to try to describe the lives and thoughts of people from this social class.

Thus it is no surprise that Pramoedya felt pleased when he observed by 1956 that more writers were beginning to write about the common people.

Early in January 1956, Pramoedya has noted that the writings of the period reflected the theme of the common people, the rakyat. In his essay 'Tendenai Kerakyatan dalam Kesusaasteraan Indonesia Terbaru' ('The Tendency towards a proletarian literature in the lastest
Indonesian literature') (62), he is pleased to note that more and more writers are writing about the common people. In particular, he praises the works of S.M. Ardan and Ayip Rosidi. Inspite of the populist content of those stories, however, he notes that the writers have yet to grasp the essence of the common people. The people's history and social and psychological background have yet to be explored. In Pram's view, these authors are only tourists who observe and describe the world of the common people, but are not part of the world itself. This type of literature about the common people will be successful eventually, Pram argues, not for ideological reasons, but because the writers themselves will abandon their touristic position. Also, he looks toward the emergence of writers born in that world, thus bridging the gap between the peasants and the rest of the community. Then the peasantry will have been equalised with the rest in a sociological sense.

During this stage of Pram's literary career (early 1956), he is clearly ruling out ideology as an element which can make proletarian literature successful. Instead his prescriptions for a successful proletarian literature involve a process of acculturisation by writers as well as by the common people. But when he refers to a possible future ideal society when everyone has become equal with everyone else he is clearly referring to a sociological process. But at this point, Pramoedya hoped to achieve this through cultural or social accommodation rather than through the reform of political institutions.

Ardan's response, in his 'Kota dan Desa dan Penamaan-penamaan' ('The City and the Village and their Labels') {63}, published in April 1956, was to disagree with Pramoedya's contention that Indonesian literature had a populist tendency. In particular, he insists that he himself writes for the sake of art and humanity. Since he is most familiar with those disadvantaged urban dwellers, himself being one, he has chosen to write about them. He had chosen so not because they are urban, nor because they belong to a lower socio-economic group, but because they are human beings.

He clearly does not want to be labelled as a writer who champions the urban proletariat. Hence his detailed account of his motivation, in which he professes with zeal the 'humanisme universil' of Gelanggang.

Thus even though Pramoedya seems to have felt that he shared a common chord with Ardan - and so praised Ardan's works - Ardan insisted on differentiating himself from Pramoedya. This indicates the extent to which Pramoedya was alienated from the general stream of views commonly associated with the Gelanggang group.

This is resonant of the feeling of alienation expressed by the writer-narrator in 'Sunyi Senyap ...' from other fellow-writers in the city. Whether this echoed Pramoedya's own sense of alienation we will never know for sure. However, earlier in March 1956, Pramoedya gave a talk entitled 'Kesusastraan Bitjara' ('A Literature Expresses') {64}, in which he asserted that the purpose of literature in general and his

63. In Gelanggang Siasat, 4 April 1956, p. 24
64. In Sebaran B.M.K.N. (Badan Musyawarat Kebudayaan Nasional (or the National Body for Cultural Affairs) no 4, 15 March 1956
creative works specifically are to communicate with the public. He confessed that because he felt alienated in his own community, he had the urge to communicate with the public through his writings in order to establish a strong bond with the community which has supported him through his life [65].

A good work, Pramoedya continues, is that which can invoke the readers' consciousness. It is a crime, he asserts, to remain silent when injustices are committed before our eyes. Similarly, it is a crime, to only talk about the President's paralised pet while at the same time, masses of people in the isolated corners of the country are beset with hunger. The first step in our struggle for freedom, he continues is to communicate. That is the central purpose of a writer, he states [66].

Pramoedya also mentioned how much he agreed with Sartre's statement about the duty of a writer, while asserting his disagreement with Henry Miller's approach to writing. But at this stage Pramoedya also made it a point to say that to him a good literary piece is still one that is 'universal' in its essence, in that it should be capable of being appreciated by readers from all over the world [67]. He cites his short story 'Kemana' ('Wither') [68] as an example of such a piece.

65. ibid, p. 1
66. ibid, p. 2
67. ibid, loc. cit
68. In his collected works, Percikan Revolusi (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1957 (1950)) 2nd ed, p. 81-86
As if he intended this talk as his answer to Balfas's review of his work 'Kecapi', he asserted that a writer must communicate with his readers about his conscience. Therefore, unlike a journalist, a writer should not be an objective observer. In fact the subjective views of the writer are his potential contribution to his society {69}.

It is clear from his talk above that despite his appreciation for the 'universal' appeals of a good literary piece, as a writer he stands at the opposite pole of those who preach a 'formalist' approach to literature like Balfas. It is also clear that Pramoedya's main concern with his creations was to invoke the consciousness of his readers about the injustices prevalent in society, rather than to try to become an 'uninvolved' writer, daring to depict society in an 'objective' manner.

Although his idealism seems to have been shared by many writers who belonged to the Gelanggang group (at least Achdiat and Alisyahbana professed that they also wrote in order to influence the consciousness of the people {70}), Pramoedya seems to have felt alienated from that

69. In his 'Kesusaasteraan Bitjara', p. 3

70. For Alisyahbana's view on the role of the writer in society see his 'Kesusaasteraan di Zaman Pembangunan Bangsa' ('Literature in the Era of Nation Building') (1938), reprinted in his Perjuangan Tanggung Jawab dalam Kesusaasteraan (Djakarta, Pustaka Jaya, 1977) p. 49-67. In this he mentions that 'a writer should not stand by the side of a river ... ... he must stand in the middle of the current and in the middle of the waves, he must participate in deciding which way the river should flow' (ibid p. 64). Achdiat, in an article he wrote in 1949, expressed his contempt for those who practise 'art for art's sake'. To him it is the writer's responsibility to liberate the soul of his people. It is an essential part to the economic, social and political liberation of the country. See Keith Foulcher 'A Survey of events surrounding 'Manikebu', Bijdragen tot de Taal - Land- en Volkenkunde, v. 125, p. 4, 1969 p. 433. Achdiat is a friend of A.S. Dharta, and was invited to join Lekra during its inception, see fn 26 above.
group. This may well be because his works were often used as examples to be ridiculed as works that had not reached a certain 'desired' standard, by critics using the formalistic style of literary criticism.

At this stage, Pramoedya was still trying to reconcile himself with those who were very pessimistic about the quality of his work produced so far. He said why he thought such views to be inappropriate while at the same time offering some ideas on how to solve the 'undesirable' situation.

In his essay of June 1956 'Meninggalkan Negativisme' ('Abandon Negativism') {71} he argues that the prevalent negative attitude about the quality of Indonesian literature is very harmful at this very early stage of development, when people are in need of more understanding. So far the critics have only referred to the defects of the works they have reviewed. None of them have shown how to overcome the problems or suggested how writers can benefit from the resources of the people {72}.

Pramoedya suggests (as if echoing the wish of the character in 'Sunyi Senyap ...' who wanted economic support to finance his plan to live in the country) that the government support and sponsor writers so that those who want to can undertake research in the countryside, to enable them to study the life styles of different communities. Furthermore, let some of them come and live among the armed forces, or the police force, to see how the task of maintaining order and

71. In Mimbar Indonesia, 9 June 1956, p. 15, 26
72. ibid, p. 15
combatting crimes is put into practice. Or send some to see how people are clearing the forests in the transmigration settlements. Let some live among the ethnic communities in the isolated parts of the country.

This suggestion echoes ideas expressed in Ting Ling's article 'Hidup dan Penulisan Kreatif' which Pramoedya had translated into Indonesian earlier [73]. In that article Tingling has suggested that writers learn about life by living among the people, talking to them and learning from their struggles. At the same time the writers can create new ideas and destroy antiquated ones. Thus the writers can help build a better world [74].

Pramoedya's suggestions that writers come and live among other communities with different life styles came in the early 60s to form part of Lekra's program. Lekra suggested that its writers conduct a turba (turun kebawah turn downwards) and in which they would live among the common people and study them [75].

But by September 1956, Pramoedya must have felt strongly that his role as a writer and his contributions to the development of Indonesian literature had been both misunderstood and undermined by his critics and fellow writers [76]. This prompted him to write a

73. 'Life and creative writings' in Indonesia, v. 7, no. 3, March 1956, p. 102-110
74. ibid, p. 104-105, 110
75. This is discussed in ch.8
self-effacing essay explaining the force behind his writings. In 'Lahirnya sebuah Tjerita Pendek' (The Birth of a Short Story') [77] he explained the character of his writing. Here, referring to the alleged weakness of his technical skills as a writer, Pramoedya admits that he is a 'primitive' writer who writes immediately as inspiration comes into his head. He puts into writing the images he has in his mind, without intellectually analysing his subjects or making a carefully planned plot beforehand. To him writing and literary creativity is a mystical experience [78].

In a sense, it is precisely because Pramoedya is such a 'primitive' writer and his views are very personal that his writings are such good social documents. They show what a modern person living in a newly formed state like Indonesia thought of his environment not by passively recording it but by responding to it in a creative manner.

76. It is interesting to note that similar issues have arisen in the equally recent development of Australian Literature. Geoffrey Dutton, a prominent Australian poet, writer and literary critic who is also an academic, has recently accused the Australian academic-literary establishment of undermining the confidence of both Australian writers and their readers by denying the existence of Australian literature. These academic-critics are saying that if Australian literature (as distinct from English literature) does exist, it would not be any good any way (G. Dutton, 'The Credibility of Australian Literature', public lecture A.N.U., 31 May 1978, reported in The Canberra Times, 3 June 1978).

77. In Kisah, v 4, no 9, Sept 1956, p. 21-24

78. Graham Greene, the English novelist, describes a similar sensation in his writing experience. 'In writing ... one is using the conscious without being conscious of it ... driving blindly, trusting the horse to lead you. A good writer is always a victim of an obsession. I don't want to discover what my obsessions are, let them be unconscious' (Interview with Louise Denny, in The Australian, Sat March 25, 1978).
In October of that year Pramoedya was the guest of the Chinese Government. Together with Sitor Situmorang, he was invited to attend the 20th commemorative ceremony on the death of Lu Shun. In December, after his return from China, Pramoedya found himself the object of yet again another 'formalistic' criticism from none other than Balfas at a literary symposium (mentioned earlier) held at the University of Indonesia.

It seems that in order to spell out once again his views degrading the 'formalistic' approach to literature and to answer Balfas' attack against the credibility of his writings, Pramoedya in that same month wrote his 'Kearah Sastra yang Revolusioner' ('Towards a Revolutionary Literature') [79]. In that Pram argues with no qualms that it is not so much the quality but the purpose of the literature that should be examined. He argues for the creation of a literature which will be influential in changing the social perceptions of his people in his community. To him, a writer makes his contribution in his profession not by pontificating from his throne, writing novels and literary criticism, but by trying to remedy the social injustices of his society. He now sees the role of literature as changing people's perceptions about their society and helping them find solutions to injustice.

VII

QUESTIONING CONVENTIONAL PREJUDICES:

THE INFLUENCE OF "PROGRESSIVE" POLITICAL TRENDS, 1957-1962

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

In 1955 Indonesia held its first general election out of which emerged four important political parties, P.N.I. (Partai Nasionalis Indonesia), P.K.I. (Partai Komunis Indonesia), N.U. (Nahdatul Ulama, the traditionalist Moslem party) and Masyumi (Madjelis Sjuro Muslimin Indonesia, the modernist Moslem party). The P.S.I. (Partai Sosialis Indonesia) which up to then had always played an important role in elite politics, failed to gain any substantial support from the people. It held only 5 seats in the new parliament, a substantial reduction from 14 seats which it used to have in the old parliament. P.N.I. together with Masyumi held 57 seats each, N.U. 45 and P.K.I. held 39 seats [1]. But in 1957, in the provincial elections which were held in June-August, P.K.I. was able to increase its votes considerably, so much so that other parties started to see the need for establishing a united front against the Communists [2].

The turning point in the political debates of the 1950s can be put at Sukarno's speech, known as his konsepsi presiden, given on the night of the 21st February 1957 [3]. He advocated the abandonment of imported parliamentary democracy, replacing it with his Indonesian

2. Dahm, ibid, p. 180-182
In this speech he announced his intention to form a Kabinet Gotong Royong (Mutual Assistance Cabinet) which would include, according to his vision, 'all members of the family at the table, all members of the family at the eating table and at the work bench' [5]. The thrust of his proposal was the inclusion in government, for the first time since Indonesia had received de jure independence, of the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.). However, other parties refused to work together in a cabinet in which the P.K.I. was to participate [6]. In fact the Communist Party was unable to secure a place in the cabinet throughout the period of 'guided democracy'. Aidit, the party's chairman and Lukman, his first deputy secretary, only managed to secure ministerial positions without portfolio, even as late as 6 March 1962 [7]. But non-party ministers known to be sympathetic to the P.K.I. had been included in the cabinet by 1957 in the Kabinet Karya [8].


At the same time the government in Jakarta was beset with regional unrest in Sumatra and Celebes. In March 1957, one month after his konsepsi, Sukarno placed the nation under the State of Emergency Act which gave the armed forces almost unlimited authority in the country.

The State of Emergency Act was enforced from 1957-1963. The act enabled the Armed Forces to gain access to the political and economic spheres in a legitimate manner. An ever increasing number of military personnel were employed - not only to curb the dissensions in the outer islands, that of the P.R.R.I., (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia), and Permesta (Perjuangan Semeata) (or Common Struggle) or the Darul Islam rebellions [9], but also to manage and run the state enterprises that the government had acquired by nationalising foreign companies from December 1957 [10]. Although the outer island rebellions were virtually defeated by 1961 other military campaigns still continued. The West Irian campaign, which started in 1957, only ended in 1963, and was then replaced by another campaign, the 'Crush Malaysia' campaign which started that same year. Thus throughout this period the military forces were of increasing importance, holding key economic as well as key political positions. A new elite was forming in society.

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At the same time the country's political institutions were also undergoing some drastic changes. On the 5th of July 1958, Sukarno declared the return of the 1945 Constitution. Then on 2 June 1959 he dissolved the Constitutional Assembly. The modernist Moslem Party, Masyumi and the Socialist Party of Indonesia, P.S.I., were banned in August 1960. Hatta, who had resigned from his vice presidency in December 1956, was put under 'protective custody' in his home in Jakarta from 1960.

In that same year, Sukarno established the National Front (Front Nasional) to mobilize all political parties and other organizations like the armed forces [11]. This can be seen as Sukarno's attempt to curb the domination of the armed forces in the previous 'National Front for the Liberation of West Irian' [12]. In August 1960, the President appointed Aidit and Aidit's second deputy Nyoto to the executive body of the National Front [13]. By the end of 1960 political dominance was shared between Sukarno, the army and the Communist Party [14]. It was then that Sukarno began to propagate his Nasakom concept (Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis) that proposed to embrace the nationalists, religious groups, and the Communists in one harmonious body. In January 1962 Syahrir, the leader of the banned P.S.I., was taken to Madiun for protective custody.

13. Legge, ibid, p 324
14. Legge, ibid, p. 319
From this brief account one can see how the period beginning with the konsepai presiden in 1957 to the establishment of Front Nasional in 1960, was a period full of fierce ideological debates in which some political actors were winning and some others were losing. In the literary world the heat of the period, 1950-1957, can already be anticipated in the ways the artists and writers wrote creatively in the early 1950s where they expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration with contemporary society. The political polarisation in the period 1957-1960 is reflected in the ways the artists and writers organised themselves into various literary bodies, in the hope of either protecting their interests or instigating drastic reforms.

PRAMOEDYA'S RESPONSES

A. Questioning 'Anti-Communist' Prejudices

In February 1957, after Sukarno declared his konsepai, Pramoedya wrote his first formal 'political' essay, in the issue of Bintang Merah, the official theoretical journal of the P.K.I., dated 24 February 1957. In this essay 'Djembatan Gantung dan Konsepsi President' ('The Suspension Bridge and the President's conception') (15) he expressed his support for the konsepai. But more significantly, because of the official nature of the journal, the essay can be seen as a formal and public declaration by the writer of

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his views on the Communist Party and its role in Indonesian history.

In this essay, Pramoedya admits that his own antagonisms towards communism during the revolutionary period and while he was imprisoned were formulated not through any observations of the real world itself, but were formed solely from books written by westerners [16]. He has now come to realise, that in actual fact, since independence, the only party that did not betray the goals of the revolution was the Communist Party. It is the Communist Party, he continues, that represents the workers, the peasants, the proletarians and those without a definite status. These workers and peasants, Pramoedya points out, are the ones who provide us with food, clothing and housing, and who since independence have been forgotten. Aware of the potentially explosive nature of his statement, he concedes that his statement would lead people to say that he is a member of the Communist Party but he denies this is so [17].

It is easy to see the essay as nothing but a formal support of P.K.I. ideology. However, we must see it in relation to both the occasion on which the essay was written and to the subsequent development of Pramoedya's writings. Firstly, the essay was written

17. loc. cit. In an interview in 1977 a journalist for Tempo asked Pramoedya about the allegation that he had given 'wind to the sails' ('angin') of the P.K.I.. It is up to the accusers to interpret the case, Pramoedya answered. So far that allegation has not been proved in court, he said. He then went on to claim that his role in Lekra had been essentially passive. But he admitted that in his impatience to remedy the disappointing result of the Indonesian revolution he had used words in his critical writings which were 'rough' ('kasar'). Interview with Salim Said in Tempo, 31 Dec. 1977, p. 11.
to congratulate the president for the timeliness of his konsepsi. To Pramoedya, the president's konsepsi is a suspension bridge that will link their current situation with the ideal one of the future. The bridge has to be a suspended one, because, Pramoedya argues, the break between the future and the current situation is a deep one. The konsepsi represents to him a promise of a future world which is to be drastically different from their current world at that time.

Sukarno's konsepsi also represents to Pramoedya, a decisive break with an anomic and purposeless world. Having been a literary figure without known political affiliations, Pramoedya was able to make a dramatic gesture by being one of the first public figures to endorse the new course. Since the P.K.I. was the first political party to endorse the konsepsi, it was probably seen as appropriate in Pramoedya's mind that support for the konsepsi appeared in the cultural section of the official ideological journal of that party. The writer made his stance more dramatic by using this opportunity to denounce what he now saw as a theoretical and sterile set of anti-communist prejudices. The essence of the essay lies in this gesture and its timing, and not in its endorsement of aspects of P.K.I. political ideology. This is shown by the fact that his analyses of society are not always necessarily Marxist and indeed his later views are often incongruous if viewed in the light of the Communist Party doctrine. In this light, the essay is significant because it gives us insight into what 'politics' means to

18. 'Djembatan Gantung ...', p. 69, p. 73.

19. For example in his exposition of his version of 'Socialist Realism' in his paper 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia' in January 1963 in contrast to that of Aidit's 'Revolutionary Realism' set out at Konferensi Nasional Seni Sastra Revolusioner in 1964. See ch. 8
many Indonesians. Politics is more of a gesture of 'progressive revolutionary' stance rather than Marxist substance. It is politics by association rather than by ideology \(^\text{20}\). Pramoedya himself portrays the process well in 'Dia Yang Menyerah' when he relates how his characters became enmeshed in the various political upheavals that beset Blora during the revolution \(^\text{21}\). As far as Pramoedya himself is concerned in his role as a creative writer, this essay expresses his 'revolutionary' \(^\text{22}\) and uncompromising break with his past cultural existence in his affiliation with the 'universal humanist' artists and writers of the Gelanggang group. From now on he became closely associated with the Lekra group, the cultural body that received the patronage of the P.K.I.

It was soon after the President's konsepsi and Pramoedya's public stance of his political association that he, together with the painter Henk Ngantung and film director Kotot Sukardi \(^\text{23}\), led a delegation of 67 artists and writers to seek an audience with the President to express their full support for the konsepsi. In that same month, March 1957, Pramoedya gave a talk to his fellow artists and writers at the Bandung branch of Lekra where he reminded his audience that they were patro


21. See chapter 3.

22. As Pramoedya was known not to have a close affiliation with any political parties prior to this statement, and besides he was known to be close to the Gelanggang group, this statement is indeed a 'Revolutionary' action.

23. Bio data list supplied by Pramoedya: see ch. 2.
must bear the responsibility for the formation of the Indonesian national character [24]. The stress of their art should be put on the meaning of the word 'Indonesia'. He pointed out that because of the artists's desire to be cosmopolitan, the development of the native arts and regional activity had suffered. But under the konsepsi presiden, he argued, the 'nativist' [25] artists could gain the support of their representatives in the Dewan Nasional (or National Council) [26] who could promote the talents of the artists. His talk suggests that one of the changes he envisaged that would be brought about by the konsepsi was the encouragement of Indonesian folk culture by curbing western imports. It also shows that in Pramoedya's mind the only way native arts could flourish was if they were patronised and promoted by the government of the day.

It was with that in mind that in December 1957, Pramoedya accepted a position as advisory member of the Badan Musyawarah Golongan Funksionil (Functionary group) at the Ministry of Petera (Perkembangan Tenaga Rakyat or Development of the People's Labour) [27]. By July 1958, Pramoedya began to organise a study club Simpat.


25. 'nativist': Those artists and writers whose creative imaginations derived from their own traditional and folk culture.


27. All information is obtained from Pramoedya's own bio data list see also ch. 2.
Sembilan, a discussion group which had as its members, students, writers, journalists etc. Together with Benny Tjung he often led the various discussion groups of Lekra. From 7th September 1958 to the 31st of that month, he travelled throughout Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union.

Lekra's Cultural Statement of 1958

In February 1958, Lekra had issued a statement evaluating the development of Indonesian literature. On the whole it is a balanced if a somewhat superficial report. It gives due credit to the literary works produced during the colonial period. Although it recognises that the works only reflect the struggles of the Indonesian intellectuals at that time, the report still regards those literary works as having contributed positively to the development of the Indonesian identity in its struggles for independence. Furthermore at this stage, under the guidance of Dharta, Lekra does not dismiss the works published by Balai Pustaka and makes no mention of works published outside this official government publisher. Nor does the statement condemn the Pujangga Baru writers.

It also looks without hostility at the writers who produced during the Japanese period, acknowledging that the works did reflect a struggle against injustices and an awareness that the white western powers are no longer insuperable. The report also regards writers of the revolutionary period in a favourable light. It considers that their works also reflect the thoughts and aspirations of the common people.

28. 'Perkembangan Sastra Indonesia' in Nusantara, 3 Febr., 1958; retyped as a ms in 3p. held in Badan Dokumentasi H.B. Jassin.
people. It also concedes that Chairil Anwar initiated a new style in literature with his individualism. But the report has some misgivings about the works. It deprecates the emphasis expressed by the works as 'they propagate "universalism" without understanding the direction in which a society develops whether towards idealism or absurdity, alienation or elitism'. As for the work in the '50s, the report is very critical. It regrets the attitude taken by the so called '45 generation of writers who dabble in 'cosmopolitanism' and distancing themselves from their own society and their struggles. It was to challenge that environment that Lekra was established the report ends.

The Reorganisation of Lekra

But, in August 1958, Lekra underwent a drastic reorganisation at the first conference of its Central Committee. A.S. Dharta was replaced by Yoebar Ayoeb as Lekra's General Secretary. Dharta also resigned his membership to the editorial board of Zaman Baru, one of the cultural journals of Lekra [29]. It was under the leadership of Yoebar Ayoeb that Lekra adopted a systematic political stance. At the First National Congress of Lekra at Solo, 22-28 January 1959, Nyoto, a member of the Central Committee of P.K.I. in his speech 'Revolusi adalah Kembang Api' ('Revolution is Fireworks') said that 'Politics without culture can still be maintained, but culture which is devoid of politics is not possible ... ... For that reason, in all situations, at all times, politics must be the guide of all our

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activities: Politik adalah Panglima 'Politics in Command' [30]. It was at this congress in January 1959 that Pramoedya became a member of Lekra Central Committee [31].

Soon after, Nyoto's suggestion of Politik adalah Panglima in that congress in Solo, was adopted as Lekra's official stand at the Second Conference of Central Committee, on 31st August 1960 [32]. This stand, Politik adalah Panglima superseded Lekra's slogan of the early '50s, Kebudayaan Demokrasi Rakyat ( 'A People's Democratic Culture' ). This indicates the official change of emphasis of this cultural body and the direction the group was going, pushing the more culturally orientated artists and writers to the back by putting the limelight on the more politically vocal members. It is in the light of the official change of line of Lekra that Pramoedya's strong criticisms of his opponents must be seen. By 1961, Pramoedya became the editor of Lentera, the Literary section of the leftist daily Bintang Timur [33].

30. ibid. p. 56-57.

31. ibid. p. 85.


B. Questioning Literary Prejudices

B.1 His Essay 'Sastra Indonesia Masa Lalu dan Hari Depan'

At the end of 1958, Pramoedya issued his evaluation of the culture and the modern Indonesian literature entitled 'Sastra Indonesia Masa Lalu dan Hari Depan' {34}. On the whole it agrees with the above statement made by Lekra in February 1958. But Pramoedya gave a more detailed exposition of his argument. The crucial difference is that he discusses the works which were published outside the colonial government publisher Balai Pustaka. Furthermore, Pramoedya, like the Lekra's report of '58 acknowledges, but in a stronger tone, that the works published up to 1945 are 'revolutionary' in their nature {35}. He cites the works of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, Mas Marco and Semaun's Hikayat Kadirun {36}, besides Marah Rusli's Siti Nurbaya. He points out that Indonesian literature was created together with the awakening of social and political consciousness among the people. The Indonesian literature was fighting along side the nationalist movement at that time. He also acknowledges the contributions made by Takdir Alisyahbana, and Amir Hamsah, both of whom were exponents of Pujangga Baru {37}.

34. HR, 31 Dec 1958, retyped as a ms in 6 p. held in Badan Dokumentasi H. B. Jassin.


35. ibid., p. 1.

37. ibid., p. 3.
Pramoedya's view about the works produced during independence is well balanced. Chairil is given due acknowledgement. The works of Asrul Sani are praised. He also gives Idrus credit. But more importantly he praises Jassin's contribution to literary criticism, especially Jassin's concern for emphasising the nationalist content of the works he reviews as well as putting forward the cause of the struggle of Indonesian independence [38].

Pramoedya is strongly antagonistic towards the view that there is a stylistic 'crisis' in Indonesian literature that Pramoedya is strongly antagonistic. He asserts that such a negative view is a deliberate political manoeuvre. His criticism of recent writing is of content, rather than form. He feels that works produced since 1953 have not tackled crucial topics in development such as the problem of emancipation of the peasants. The writers have therefore shown themselves to be people who are clearly alienated from their community.

As for the future, Pramoedya believes that if literature is to be developed, the writers must learn from the struggles of the past that gave us the Sumpah Pemuda (The Youth Declaration), the Pujangga Baru, the national language, and struggles against the Dutch etc. And, he points out, in the course of the historical progress, the social classes which are in power will eventually be toppled by the rakyat (common people). The writers therefore must place themselves among the people, put themselves in their situation, and translate their thoughts into simple words tackling the problems of justice and

38. ibid., p. 4.
prosperity for all. They must argue on behalf of the peasants and the workers. The Indonesian literature must take sides, on the side of the Indonesian people. 'We must be clear in our stance for meeting the year 1959, that we must be on the side of the people (rakyat) and literature as a medium of expression must connect the individual to his community', he ends his article.

Pramoedya's clear statement about where the writers should stand in their profession and his unqualified position that Indonesian literature can never be uninvolved and therefore must take sides should come as no surprise, since this attitude is merely a restatement and a clarification of the view he expressed in December 1956 after his return trip from China in his essay 'Kearah Sastra yang Revolusioner' [39]. But in his 1958 statement, hence made exactly two years after 'Kearah Sastra ...' he spells out which side and what cause he will promote in his writings: that of the common people. Pramoedya had always been concerned with the plight of the common people, but earlier he never identified them as a group of people who are struggling against the rest of society. By this stage he recognises them as opposed to the 'establishment'.

Thus Pramoedya's perception of society has somewhat sharpened. He sees society as consisting of hostile forces that will destroy one another to ensure the victory of one group over another. He no longer sees the forces of society reconciling themselves to work in harmony for their common survival. However, at this stage, his opinion of

39. Star Weekly (SW) 29 Dec 1956, p. 6-7 discussed in ch. 6.
Indonesian literature and of fellow writers who don't subscribe to his stance is one of tolerance. His views at this point are somewhat different from those (for example) of Bakri Siregar, a critic from Lekra. In particular, Pramoedya's view of Jassin's approach and methodology differs from that of Bakri. While not in complete agreement with Jassin he was, in 1958, quite sympathetic to him. This is despite the fact that Pramoedya in 1953 (for example) had been quite annoyed with Jassin, as is shown by his article 'Offensif Kesusaasteraan 1953' [40]. At the same time Bakri was a strong critic of Jassin, as shown in his review of Jassin's Kesusaasteraan Indonesia Modern.... in Zaman Baru. July and August 1957 [41].

We will never know for sure how much influence Bakri had upon Pramoedya's later views regarding the writers from Gelanggang. At least one can say that Bakri Siregar was one of the Indonesian critics who had good relations with Pramoedya [42]. This can be seen in Bakri's evaluation (published in Lentera, Bintang Timur in 1964) [43] of John's criticism of the works of Pramoedya. In it, Bakri approves of Pramoedya's decision in 1957 to side (in Bakri's view) with the communist cause.


42. Information supplied by an informant who had worked as Pramoedya's research assistant when Pramoedya was editor to Lentera. The relationship between Bakri and Pramoedya in Buru, though, was not cordial, as far as I can gather.

Having established the fact that the critics associated with Lekra and the Communist Party were quite sympathetic towards Pramoedya, we will now look at his works, essays and creative writings, written after he was appointed a member of Lekra's central committee and head of Lekra's Literature Institute. This will allow us to evaluate the extent to which he promoted the causes that are seen as 'giving winds to the whims' of the Communist Party.

His Novel Sekali Peristiwa di Banten Selatan

It has been pointed out in the earlier chapters, that Pramoedya has always been concerned with the plight and sufferings of the disadvantaged members in society. For that reason his concern for the underdog was not shaped by his close association with Lekra. However, he came to express this concern in a different way as his understanding of the dynamism of society underwent a transformation which came through his close association with Lekra. But the ways his concepts of Indonesian literature changed because of his association with Lekra are yet to be delineated.

With this in mind we will look briefly at his first novel published after he was appointed as a member of the central committee of Lekra. His novel Sekali Peristiwa di Banten Selatan (An Event at the South of Banten) [44] was published in 1959 under the auspices of the Department of Petera [45].

44. Information from opposite page of title page of Sekali Peristiwa
In the introduction to the novel, the author mentioned that the work was the result of his trip at the end of 1957 to the Banten area where he met among others with a village head, and with a former supervisor who had worked as a forced labourer building the road from the mining town Tjikotok to Pelabuhan Ratu, on the southern part of West Java. Pramoedya also met with some workers from the mines. The area, Pramoedya had observed, is sparsely populated but with rich mineral deposits and other natural resources. What impressed him was the 'gotong royong' (the mutual assistance) spirit among the community when they have to undertake a particular project. It was only two months after Pramoedya left the area that he heard how the community was disarrayed as a result of Darul Islam (terrorism). The novel was completed by the middle of 1958. The novel therefore is set in a contemporary situation. But despite the fact that the work expresses the topical political and social propaganda of the period, that is the 'gotong royong' idealism, the novel is far from being a revolutionary work. It is conventional in that the depiction of the social relationships and the mores it preaches conforms to the fashions of the time.

Ranta, a plantation worker, struggles against the oppression of the exploitative landowner Musa. Musa became a rich landowner by stealing the lands belonging to those who were sent to perform forced labour during the Japanese period. He also works as a plantation supervisor in a privately owned rubber estate. In that capacity he harasses Ranta and some other workers to get them to steal some rubber seeds for him. Not only did Musa refuse to pay them for the seeds he also reported them to the police or threatened to report them to the
police if they complained about that. By making them commit the crime of stealing, Musa put them under his power. Furthermore Musa (together with the village head) is one of the leading members of the terrorist gang Darul Islam. The portrayal of his bad traits does not end here. He has a mistress, and he is in the habit of hitting her in the face when they have an argument, yet she is very loyal to him. She is depicted as a woman of virtue. She is educated, a graduate of a girl's school. Towards the end of the story she offers to teach the villagers to be literate.

With the help of the local military commandant, and the civil defence of OKD (Organisasi Keamanan Desa, The Village Security Organisation) and the cooperation of the village people, the oppression of Musa is curbed. It is proved without doubt that he is a member of the Darul Islam. With him imprisoned, the village is later besieged by the terrorists. Again with the cooperation of the whole village, and most importantly by arming them with weapons, the military and the OKD are able to chase the terrorists away. The story thus shows that through cooperation a great obstacle to the harmony of the village can be defeated.

Besides preaching the virtue of 'gotong royong', there are some interesting epigrams expressed by Ranta. Once he tries to convince his fellow villagers that to believe that the right will always win is not enough, since the problem is when will the right ever win? He argues further that 'kebenaran tidak datang dari langit, dia mesti diperjuangkan untuk menjadi benar', ('The truth does not come from the sky, it must be fought to be correct') [46]. Another point, as if in

46. Sekali Peristiwa ..., p. 68.
answer to the two disadvantaged characters in Jakarta in the story 'Ikan-ikan ...', [47] Ranta tells his friends that they should be united and together defend their own interests. Otherwise the stronger will always beat the weaker and eventually the rest will be exploited by the strongest of them. Through a process of elimination the diversified weak people will destroy themselves [48].

All in all, despite Ranta's words of wisdom, the leading person who is in charge of the situation and in control of the security of the village is still the commandant of the military corps. But one important outcome of this event is that, having beaten the terrorists, the villagers are allowed to keep the arms they managed to get from those terrorists. At the end of the novel, when Ranta, now an elected village head, asks the opinion of the villagers on what their plans should be for developing the village, the ex-mistress of Musa chides Ranta for not soliciting the women's opinions. Their opinions should be solicited since they are equal to the men, she advises Ranta.

The novel reads rather clumsily. The narration is unlike the narrative style of a novel. Rather, it comprises a series of dialogues put one after the other and reads like a stage play. In fact the stage adaptation made by Dhalia and published by Lekra in that same year reads more naturally than the novel version [49]. Furthermore the portrayal of the characters is probably Pramoedya's

47. Discussed in ch. 5.
48. Sekali Peristiwa ..., p. 69.
worst ever. The depiction of Musa as an exploiter, a swindler
and a heartless husband, as well as a wealthy, uncouth landowner is
worse than Pramoedya's depiction of the village head in Perburuan
[50]. Another instance of Pramoedya's lack of care in the execution
of this novel is the contrived explanation by Ranta to Musa's mistress
on Ranta's bondage to her husband [51]. These faults make the novel a
struggle to read.

It is unfortunate that this work which is Pramoedya's first major
imaginative work written after his close public association with
Lekra, is so shoddily written, allowing formalist critics to attack
him and accuse him of selling his art for his 'politics'. When we
look closely at the story line, it is clear that the work, although a
political one, is far from being a 'revolutionary' one or
anti-establishment. In fact the novel can be seen as a public
relation exercise on behalf of the army. It is hinted clearly that
when the villagers are cooperating with the army the results are
beneficial to them. At that time, the army was only beginning to
enlarge its involvement in civil administration, starting from
regional centers down to the smallest villages [52]. The work
therefore should be seen as supporting the armed forces rather than as
opposing them, and certainly not as propagating the line of a
particular party.

50. See Perburuan, ch.1 and 3
51. Sekali Peristiwa ..., p. 73-74.
52. M. Caldwell and E. Utrecht jt. auth., Indonesia, An Alternative
History (Sydney, Alternative Publishing Co-operative 1979),
p. 122-126.
On the other hand, if one reads closely between the lines there are three crucial ideas that were also being pursued by the Communist party at that time. The most fundamental of all is the concept of arming the peasantry with weapons. In this novel it is suggested, and the suggestion is adopted, that the villagers should be given arms to defend themselves and to work alongside the army against the attacks from the terrorists Darul Islam. To build up the fifth force by arming the peasantry as a civil defence corps was a part of the program of the Communist party which was strongly opposed by the armed forces throughout Sukarno period [53].

Another interesting concept advocated through Ranta, the hero in the novel, is about 'kebenaran' or 'truthfulness and righteousness'. In answer to the passivity and complacency of the oppressed peasantry, who believe that eventually righteousness will triumph, and hence they only need to wait for the time to arrive for that event to take place, Ranta says to his fellow villagers: 'Sure, righteousness will eventually win, but when?'. It is more important, Ranta argues, for the villagers to take matters into their own hands. They must fight to ensure that whatever they think as right should be made right ('dia mesti diperjuangkan untuk jadi benar').

The complication of this view is that they must fight even if what the villagers want to do, to protect their interests is not in agreement with the views of those in authority and those with power. Thus against someone like the swindler Musa, the peasants must fight

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to make things right. In this sense Ranta's advice can be seen as being 'revolutionary'. He is encouraging the people to take action promoting their own interests even though the established situations are not conducive to them.

But we must remember that Pramoedya has portrayed the commandant and his men as working for the interests of the villagers against the terrorists. Furthermore, Pramoedya has allocated the real control in the situation to this military commandant and not to Ranta. The situation as devised by Pramoedya is developed in such a way that the villagers' survival depends on the commandant. At the same time - the commandant, the most efficient person in the village, does not mind delegating the duty of defending the village with the villagers themselves. Thus the commandant is depicted not as an authoritarian figure, but as a benevolent one.

One can say then, that Pramoedya really is expressing the line advocated by Sukarno. He promotes the cause of the army a little, while at the same time promoting the line of the Communist Party just enough to check the balance. Being cynical one can say that Pramoedya is simply putting his money 'two bob each way'. His 'progressive' ideas in his support for the armed forces make the novel attractive to the revolutionary stance adopted by the Communist Party. But we must remember that in this novel Pramoedya is not advocating ideas which are contrary to the party's stance. By 1957 Aidit had made it the party's policy to work together with the State (which comprised, amongst others, the armed forces) and its national bourgeoisie [54].

C. Questioning 'Anti-Chinese' Prejudices

Hoa Kiau di Indonesia

The next work to be discussed here is the first major non-fiction Pramoedya work A wrote after he became closely associated with Lekra. This is his controversial work on the Chinese minority in Indonesia, entitled Hoa Kiau di Indonesia, published in 1960 {55}. Because of this work Pramoedya was imprisoned in 1960 for nine months.

The Hoa Kiau di Indonesia was based on a series of articles he wrote from November 1959 for the Sunday weekly 'Bintang Minggu' in response to the P.P. no. 10 (Peraturan Presiden, Presidential Regulation) issued on the 16th of November 1959. According to this, aliens (those who are not Indonesian citizens) were banned from engaging in retail trade and were required to transfer their business transactions to Indonesian nationals by the 1st of January 1960 {56}.

Earlier, during the onset of the regional unrest and the debates which led to 'Guided Democracy', a political pressure group known as the 'Assaat Movement', strongly backed by the Moslem Modernist party Masyumi and supported by the P.S.I., demanded that the government should intervene to protect the interests of the weaker native

55. Toer, Hoa Kiau di Indonesia (Djakarta, Bintang Press, 1960)

entrepreneurs [57]. This was seen as an attempt to counter the Chinese domination of local trade. It was with this movement in mind that in May 1959 Rachmat Mulyomiseno, of Nahdatul Ulama (the traditional Moslem party) who was then the Minister for Trade, proposed a bill that banned aliens from engaging in trade outside the capitals of regencies, and provinces [58].

The minister's proposal was later promulgated as P.P. no. 10. The decree was supported by the Moslem parties Nahdatul Ulama (N.U.) and Partai Sarikat Islam Indonesia (P.S.I.I.) and the the P.N.I. The P.K.I. was the only party that rejected the ban and argued for the rights of the Chinese aliens to retain their People's Republic of China citizenships and to remain living in Indonesia [59].

It was during this political debate on the Chinese minority that Pramoedya wrote his articles for 'Bintang Minggu'. For publication in book form in March 1960, those articles were compiled, edited and further research was done by one of Pramoedya's research assistants, Hidayat Wikantasasmita, and by Benny Tjhung from Lekra [60].

The term 'Hoa Kiau' in Pramoedya's usage refers specifically to PRC's citizens living in Indonesia [61]. In his analyses of their

57. Leo Suryadinata, ibid, p. 183-184.

58. Leo Suryadinata, Indigenous Indonesians ..., p. 185, Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese ...', p. 84.


60. P.A. Toer, Hoa Kiau..., preface 'perkenalan'.

61. ibid, p. 18.
social and historical background, before the arrival of Dutch colonialism, through the colonial period and independence, Pramoedya does not differentiate these 'aliens' as 'totok' (full blooded, Chinese oriented, and foreign born) and 'peranakan' (Indies or Indonesian oriented and born in Indonesia) [62]. In this sense Pramoedya in fact perceived the Chinese minority in a similar manner to the way that most non-Chinese native born Indonesians would perceive them: as one homogenous alien group. On the other hand, the ethnic-Chinese Indonesians, at least a substantial proportion of them, differentiate the Chinese minority into two distinct groups, the 'totok' and 'peranakan'.

For example the recent study made by a Chinese Indonesian, Leo Suryadinata draws specifically on this difference [63]. It is the 'totok', his study points out, who persistently, from the colonial period to independence, maintained their political and cultural allegiance to China. The 'peranakan's view of their relationship towards Indonesia has been transformed with time. In the colonial period some oriented themselves to China, others to the Dutch, but some more to the Indies [64]. The 'peranakan' in the independent Indonesia were more involved in the political situation of the country through their political body Baperki (Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia, or Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship). But even within this body, opinions about their role

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63. Leo Suryadinata, Indigenous Indonesians ... ch. 2, ch. 3.

64. ibid, p. 63-64.
and position in the Indonesian community varied. Some advocated 'assimilation' while others were for 'integration' with the Indonesians [65].

Leo's study also shows that the 'totok' maintain their distance from the rest of the Indonesian people. In the colonial era as 'aliens' they were not subject to the colonial law. Unlike other Chinese who had opted to become Dutch subjects, the 'totok' were under the protection of the Chinese consul [66]. Their culture, education and language were oriented to China. Since they were prevented from owning land or engaging in farming and their educational training was not in the western system, the only occupation open to them was in trade and commerce. It was the 'totok' who dominated the economic sector during the colonial period [67], a domination they easily retained after the independence of the country. This domination was resented by the 'peranakan'.

The above study was made primarily to understand the Chinese position in Indonesia and to contrast the Indonesians' view of the Chinese with the Chinese's view of themselves and of the Indonesians. Pramoedya's work on the Chinese minority is somewhat different. His

65. ibid., p. 64-65, p. 91, p. 93. The assimilationist went on to established LPKB (Lembaga Pembinaan Kesatuan Bangsa or the Body for the Unity of Nation Building). The LPKB disapproved of the left wing orientation of Baperki.

66. ibid., p. 67-68. Only the peranakan Chinese that is Chinese born in the Indies and live in the Indies have dual nationality (ibid., p. 67). At the same time the current China government of the time still recognise the 1911 treaty with the Dutch government by which it agreed that 'those Indies-born Chinese who are currently residing in the Indies are subject to Dutch law' (ibid., p. 68).

67. ibid., p. 116.
work concentrates mainly on defending the rights of the 'hoa kiau' or 'alien' Chinese who are living in Indonesia. He argues, among other things, that it is the right of the 'hoa kiau' to retain their PRC citizenship, passively or actively [68]. It should not be considered a crime, Pramoedya argues, to be a citizen of PRC and to choose to continue living in Indonesia. It is unjust to bar them from their livelihood simply because they are citizens of a foreign country.

The main enemy of the Indonesians, Pramoedya continues, are not these 'hoa kiau' and their foreign owned capital, but the large foreign western imperialists and industrialists, the British, the American and the Dutch and their local allies: the 'national bourgeoisie' and the 'compradore capitalists' [69]. In this way his argument can be seen as aligned with the standpoint of some factions in the P.K.I. and the section of Baperki led by Siau Giok Tjhan, (an ex-editor of the daily Harian Rakyat) [70]. Furthermore, as we have seen above, Pramoedya's social analysis, and the jargon he used, was very similar to P.K.I. analysis of Indonesian society at the time. In particular, 'borjuasi nasional' and 'compradore capitalists' are considered to be the classes in society which the party should

68. Toer, Hoa Kiu, p. 54.
69. ibid., p. 55-58. For his attacks on the national bourgeoisie see p. 56. For similar attacks on the compradores to foreign (Western) big capital see p. 59. As Pramoedya says 'Who will control the economy under our Guided Economy system? If it is going to be the national bourgeoisie then it is only a matter of us getting out from a duck pen to a chicken coop'. (ibid., p. 55)
strive to eliminate {71}, in its advance towards socialism.

There is some confusion on this point, both on the part of Pramoedya and the P.K.I. itself. Although clearly stated in 1957 that the party had no choice but to work with the 'national bourgeoisie', theoretically such a stance is inconsistent with working towards a socialist state. Pramoedya's novel of 1959, Sekali Peristiwa reflects this harmonious stance towards the national bourgeoisie and the power of the armed forces.

But by 1960, in this work on the Chinese minority Pramoedya specifically states who the enemies of the Indonesian people are, and the national bourgeoisie is among those enemies. This ambivalent attitude on the part of Pramoedya can be seen as an accurate reflection of ambivalence in the P.K.I.'s attitude to this 'borjuasi nasional'.

Furthermore, in his work Pramoedya ignores the achievements and privileges some notable 'peranakan' leaders enjoyed during the colonial era: for example, the privileges of the millionaire pro-Dutch Volksraad member H.H. Kan {72}, privileges which contributed to native nationalist resentment of the Chinese in general. When Pramoedya elaborated in detail the oppression which the 'totok' and 'peranakan' had to endure in the colonial era, he ignores

71. This is the view advanced by Lukman, The First Deputy of P.K.I.. R. Mortimer, Indonesian Communism ..., p. 144-145. The P.K.I.'s official policy as advanced by its chairman, Aidit, though, was ambivalent about the 'national bourgeoisie'. It maintained that this class is weak and hence does not constitute an immediate threat to the establishment of a socialist state and can be won over to the side of the proletariat (Mortimer, ibid, p. 145).

72. Leo Suryadinata, Indigenous Indonesians ... p. 87-93.
the fact that native born Indonesians suffered more, as unlike the Chinese they were clearly defined as the colonial subjects of the Dutch. On the other hand, the Indies-born Chinese were wooed by the Colonial government to ally with the Dutch rather than with the Chinese government by providing them with Dutch Chinese schools and by involving more peranakan Chinese in municipal councils or the Volksraad [73].

The reasons Pramoedya has given for defending alien Chinese with PRC's citizenship are humanitarian ones. He also says he wishes to express his sense of affinity with the 'oppressed' people from whatever country. Finally, he himself has some Chinese blood in him [74]. Whatever the subjective and personal reasons behind his defence, it is clear that by expressing it at that particular time, when the political debate on the Chinese minority was polarised between the P.K.I. and the rest of the political parties, Pramoedya can be seen to be aligning himself politically with the P.K.I. and against the P.N.I.. Furthermore his views were in fact not always in agreement with other Chinese views on themselves, especially if those Chinese were anti communist [75]. That and Pramoedya's close association with Lekra, accentuated the fact that his defence of the

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73. Leo Suryadinata, Indigenous Indonesians, p. 63.
74. Toer, Hoa Kiau, p. 37.
75. Leo Suryadinata, Indigenous Indonesians p. 87-96. On the split in Baperki in which those who disagreed with the left wing stance of Baperki went to form LPKB. See also fn 51 above. See also, C.A. Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity in Indonesia' in Mackie ed The Chinese in Indonesia, p. 50-61, on the schism between Siau Giok Tjhan, (the chairman of Baperki) and his vice-chairman, Yap Thiam Hien (who is a staunch anti-Communist).
Chinese must be seen as a defence of only a particular limited group, the group which was also defended by the P.K.I. It is in this work, rather than in his earlier article 'Djembatang Gantung ...' that Pramoedya seems to have most clearly embraced the social and political views of the P.K.I. Pramoedya's Hoa Kiau was banned soon after it was published and he himself was detained for nine months.

D. Abandoning Feudal Historicism

D.1 Panggil Aku Kartini Sadja

Pramoedya's next major work in this period was a social and historical study of Indonesia's foremost feminist and early nationalist thinker, Kartini. This work entitled Panggil Aku Kartini Sadja (Call me simply Kartini) \(^{76}\) was based on research which Pramoedya had undertaken between 1956 and 1961 \(^{77}\). The title of the book comes from Kartini's parting words to one of her pen-friends, Stella Zeehandelaar, in her letter 25 May 1899 \(^{78}\). The work was published in 1962 in 2 volumes, with two further volumes intended. Like his work on the Chinese minority, the work on Kartini created a stir in the intellectual circles - in this case, because of his unconventional approach towards Kartini's social background.


77. ibid., p. xv.

Pramoedya pursues some unexplored lines on this emancipator. In his work, Kartini is seen more as a victim of the 'ethical' policy of the Dutch colonial government and less as a victim of her own feudal environment. The latter was the opinion advanced by Kartini's 'patron', the colonial minister of education and religious affairs, Abendanon, who collected and edited her letters for the first time in 1911 as Door Duisternis tot Licht [79]. At the same time Pramoedya also brought to the fore that Kartini's progressive ideas were due more to her own responses towards the hierarchical and discriminatory customs that come with her feudal environment and less from the interchange of ideas which she received from her progressive European friends. This latter view was advanced by an American anthropologist, H. Geertz in her introduction to an English edition of Kartini's letters, Letters of a Javanese Princess [80].

79. As editor, Abendanon only selected particular letters for inclusion in his Door Duisternis ... obscuring the fact that it was due to his coaching that Kartini at the end declined to take up the scholarship which would enable her to study in Holland. The study of Dr H Bouman on Kartini in his Meer Licht over Kartini (Amsterdam, H.J. Paris, 1954) unearthed other letters of Kartini that had not been included in Door Duisternis. Later Siti Soemandari Soeroto in her Kartini; Sebuah Biografi (Jakarta, Gunung Agung, 1977) points out Abendanon's role in Kartini's decision to forego her study in Holland, based on some documents she obtained from the archives in Semarang. This argument is also put in an unsigned article (by Pramoedya?) in Lentera, B.T., 26 April 1964.

80. In A.L. Symmers, tr, Letters of a Javanese Princess, (N.Y., Norton, 1964 (1920)), p. 13-17. Mrs. Ovink-Soer, one of the European ladies who taught Kartini some handicrafts, was an ardent socialist and feminist (ibid. p. 13). Another pen-friend, Mrs Stella Zeehandelaar was also a radical feminist. Mr and Mrs van Kol are another couple who shared Kartini's idealism. Van Kol was a member of the Dutch parliament and the head of the Dutch Social Democratic party SDAP (ibid, p. 16).
Furthermore due to Abendanon's editing on Kartini's letters, one crucial fact about Kartini's family background was suppressed. She was not the daughter of the primary wife of the regent of Japara, but of the regent's second wife. This wife, Ngasirah, was an ordinary village woman, the daughter of a religious teacher kyai haji Modirono \[81\]. It was the regent's first wife who was often mentioned in Kartini's letter, who came from the aristocratic family from Madura. Abendanon's editorial hand was at pains to hide the fact that Kartini's father, Sosroningrat, the regent of Japara had two wives \[82\].

It was Armijn Pane in his 'Kata Pembimbing' or his introduction to his translation of Door Duisternis into Indonesian as Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang in its 3rd edition of 1951 who made public the fact that Kartini was the daughter of the second wife of the regent \[83\]. This same information was later omitted from his introduction of the 5th edition of his translation in 1963 \[84\]. In the meantime H. Geertz mentioned the fact in her introduction to Letters of a Javanese princess which she wrote in 1963 \[85\]. But it was Pramoedya who elaborated at length on this fact. He pointed out the feudal nature of the arrangements of a regent's household. Minor wives who are commoners would have their own quarters outside the main building (but

81. S. Soeroto, Kartini, p. 13-14. According to Pramoedya Ngasirah was the daughter of an overseer of a sugar factory in Mayong (Toer, Panggil Aku v. 1, p. 37, p. 50).

82. Abendanon, Door Duisternis, Introduction, p. xxi.


still within the regent's compound). Such a situation would, in the case of Kartini, have nurtured her displeasure for differential treatments as well as awaken her progressive sense for equality [86].

Abendanon's careful selections of Kartini's letters covered up the possible tensions in Kartini's parents' household which could be a contributing factor to Kartini's progressive mind. Moreover in his role as editor, Abendanon downplayed Kartini's progressive attitudes and glamorised her noble background, suggesting that it was a precondition for her noble mind.

As recently as 1979 this very line was still being pursued by a young female journalist Toeti Adhitama, in her commemorative piece on Kartini entitled 'Noblesse Oblige' [87]. That very title and her presentation of some of Kartini's progressive ideas dwell upon the inference that 'nobility breeds noble minds'. Toeti exaggerates out of proportion a sentence in one of Kartini's letters to Mrs. Ovink-Soer in 1900 in which Kartini says '... It is not proper that we should continue to be dumb. Nobility breeds duty' [88]. Adhitama's presentation dwells on the fact that Kartini's strong commitment in educating her people come about because she happened to be a member of the privileged nobility. Adhitama ignores that even Kartini herself belittled the fact that she was highly born. There are only two types of nobility that are important to her, so Kartini wrote to Stella

86. Toer, Panggil Aku, mass 1, p. 50-55.
88. Abendanon, Door Daistermis, p. 27-49. The particular passage is in p. 47.
Zeehandelaar, the nobility of mind and the nobility of soul [89]. Pramoedya's treatment on Kartini stressed upon her noble mind and soul and downplays her noble origins.

In this sense Pramoedya's evaluation of Kartini's role in Indonesian society is progressive. He depicts Kartini as a figure who not only had the interest of the people in mind, but who actually had come from the people. Unfortunately while he is advancing a novel idea which is counter to the popular public view of Kartini, Pramoedya does not at the same time ensure that the small details on Kartini's family history are correct. This is in particular true with regard to the family background of Kartini's mother Ngasirah. According to Pramoedya she was the daughter of an overseer at a sugar factory [90]. Furthermore Pramoedya also infers that Ngasirah could well have been banished from the regent's compound completely since she did not bear any more children after Kartini. He advances this as one of the reasons why Kartini had never mentioned her real mother in any of her letters, forgetting the fact that Abendanon had not included all of Kartini's letters written either to himself or to Kartini's many other pen-friends. In actual fact Kartini had four other younger siblings [91].


90. see fn 67 above.

At the same time Pramoedya makes strong allegations regarding Abendanon’s role and influence over Kartini’s decision to abandon her plan to study in Holland. On the evidence as presented in the two volumes of Kartini, Pramoedya’s views are merely inferences without sufficient documentation. Still the line of enquiry that he has pursued regarding the relationship of Kartini’s father with Kartini, the way he influenced Kartini to accept the marriage proposal from the regent of Rembang and Abendanon’s interference in Kartini’s proposed study overseas initiated substantial research which has thrown more light on these matters. S. Soeroto’s work in Kartini which is well documented, confirms Pramoedya’s portrayal of Kartini as the tragic victim of Dutch colonial policy. Siti Soemandari’s study shows well how Abendanon impeded rather than abetted Kartini in realising her goals \[92\]. Kartini’s failure to pursue her plan for going overseas to continue her study, as Soeroto’s documentation point out, was not due to her yielding to the pressure imposed upon her by her feudal family, but was due more to the pressure and opposition of the Dutch colonial government in Jakarta and Semarang \[93\]. Pramoedya’s (then) unsubstantiated suspicions concerning the devious way the colonial officials manipulated Kartini has become credible as a result of Soemandari Soeroto’s careful study. In this way Pramoedya has, to a certain extent, been proved right. The failures that befell many Indonesian leaders in course of their struggles for their nation are not so much due to failures latent in their native social-cultural

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92. ibid, p. 327-337. The arguments presented by her in ch. 8 - ch 9, are also documented throughout, see p. 241-348.

93. ibid., p. 317-319, p. 329-335.
orientation, but more due to the fact that these native leaders as colonised subjects were denied the power even to govern their own lives.

D.2 Other Noted Essays

Kartini and the Chinese minority in Indonesia were not the only victims of historical circumstances whose cases Pramoedya undertook to present to the public. In 1962 Pramoedya in fact wrote numerous articles about various other historical victims. He began to write first on Multatuli in a series of articles for the daily Bintang Timur in February 1962 [94]. This was followed by an article on Dr Abdul Rivai, the first native doctor who received his medical degree from Holland. This article, published in May 1962 in Bintang Timur is part of his series entitled 'Dari Abdullah Munsaji sampai Abdul Moeis' which he started in May and completed in October [95]. It is in this series that he also talks about the works and contributions of the first native journalist Tirto Adisoruyo, the co-founder of Sarikat Dagang Islam, the precursor to the first indigenous political party during the colonial era, the Sarikat Islam [96]. At the same time he wrote on the contribution of Semaun and mas Marco: the two being advanced.

95. P.A.Toer 'Dari Abdullah Munsaji sampai Abdul Moeis' on Dr Abdul Rivai in Lentera, BT, 13 May - 25 May, 1 June, 22 June 1962.
96. On Tirto Adisoruyo, in Toer, ibid, Lentera BT, 13 July - 21 Sept. 1962. Pramoedya's latest novel Bumi Manusia is based on this figure, see B. Saleh (S.I. Poeradisastra), "Roman Pram Tentang R.M. Minke Tirtoadisoerjo", in Zaman, 28 Sept. 1980, p.52. The novel is discussed in ch. 9.
as examples of 'socialist' writers {97}.

In evaluating Multatuli's Max Havelaar, Tirto Adisuryo's Nyai Permana and mas Marco's Rasa Mardika (The Feeling of Freedom), Pramoedya has chosen to discuss the progressive content of their writings. It was with this in mind that he also dealt with the writings of Kartini. Through these writings Pramoedya set out to show in historical perspective the tradition of progressive Indonesian writings which was outside the Balai Pustaka, the official colonial publisher of native works. For example, he shows how Abdul Moeis' creation Salah Asuhan (Wrong Upbringing) {98} was drained of its progressive message by the Balai Pustaka editors. Thus an ex-political activist from Sarikat Islam ended up becoming a 'moderate' writer for the colonial government. Hence to understand the development of progressive writings in Indonesian literature, Pramoedya argues, one must look at the works produced outside the Balai Pustaka.

In tracing the course of progressive writings in Indonesian literature, Pramoedya at the same time relates the writings to the development of national consciousness among the Indonesians. In this way he relates the development in Indonesian literature to the development of the nationalist movement in Indonesia. He therefore connects the literature of the country with the historical development of the nation {99}.


98. See P.A. Toer 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia' discussed in ch. 8.

99. Thus see also his essays on the establishment of Eddy Oetomo in 1908, in his 'Permulaan Dari Suatu Awal' in BT, 15 May 1962 - 29 May 1962 in 10 parts. Pramoedya here reaffirms his views expressed in 1958 in 'Sastã Indonesia/Masa Lalu dan Hari Depan'.
The culmination of these articles and of his research on the development of nationalist consciousness from the end of 19th century to the first two decades of 20th century, is articulated in a systematic manner in a paper written by December 1962 which was presented at a literary seminar at the University of Indonesia in January 1963. It is entitled 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia'. The paper will be discussed further in chapter 8.

These historical writings, and the essays on literary criticism with which they were interspersed, preceded his best work ever: the unfinished novel Gadis Pantai, serialised in Bintang Timur from July to October 1962. This will be discussed in chapter 9 together with his other novel Bumi Manusia which he wrote in Buru in 1975 and published after his release in 1980. In this way, with those works mentioned above, Pramoedya confirmed and put into practice the views he expressed in 1958 in his 'Sastra Indonesia Masa Lalu dan Hari Depan'.
INTRODUCTION

From 1957 onwards, Pramoedya's thoughts on literature came more and more to reflect the political debates of the time. In this he was not alone. As the prominent Indonesian critic, Ayip Rosidi, observes in his overview of developments in Indonesian literature, literary debates until 1965 were inspired by the political differences professed by the critics and writers concerned. This can be seen for example in the debates about the '1945 generation of writers', in the debates between the 'universal humanist' and the 'social realist' writers and critics [1] and in the discussion of whether or not there was a crisis of literature in Indonesia [2]. While Ayip considers the literary debates were influenced by political motivations 'even as early as the mid 1950s, another young critic, Arif Budiman, argues that those debates only became political after 1963 [3].

Towards the end of 1957, a critic with the Gelanggang Group, Harijadi S. Hartowardjo, in his article 'Tantangan bagi Sastrawan' [4], asked his readers whether it was necessary for them to establish a


literary group for 'free' artists (seniman merdeka) in order to defend themselves against Lekra [5]. For political reasons, Harijadi argues, it is necessary, but not for artistic or cultural reasons. It is more important that the artists and writers are able to express themselves freely as individuals outside organisational bodies.

But the schism between the various approaches to Indonesian literature becomes increasingly sharpened by the late 50s as more and more non-communist writers, fearing persecution from the Lekra critics who advocate 'social realism', began to form literary groups with political affiliation in order to balance Lekra's close association with the ever more powerful communist party P.K.I.. Thus in 1959, the Lembaga Kesenian Nasional, L.K.N. (The Nationalist Cultural Body) led by the poet Sitor Situmorang, was established with close affiliation to the political party P.N.I.. Similarly, the moslem writers also formed their own group in Lesbumi (Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslimin Indonesia, or the Indonesian Muslim Body for Culture and Arts) led by the playwrights and movie directors Usmar Ismail and Asrul Sani. The group was associated with the legitimate moslem party of the time Nahdatul Ulama, or N.U. [6].

Thus in the literary scene we have an example at work of Sukarno's political trilogy Nasakom (Nasional, Agama, Komunis) [7] but not working together harmoniously as the president envisaged. Lekra

5. ibid., p. 24.
7. On the place of Sukarno's Nasakom in the overall history of Indonesia in the late 50s to early 60s see B. Dahm, History of Indonesia in the twentieth century, (London, Pall Mall, 1971) p. 192-194.
in coalition with LKN attacked the writers from Lesbumi and whoever else was naive enough or daring enough to profess ideas outside the bounds prescribed by Lekra for good literature. In this atmosphere the moslem writer Hamka, one of the venerated writers championed by Jassin and his 'universal humanist' group, was subject to periodic attacks in Lentera, the literary section, edited by Pramoedya, of the Sunday edition of the daily Bintang Timur [8].

Thus the debates between the 'formalist' school who put emphasis on 'forms and structures' and who were accused of imposing on others their 'bourgeoise' tastes and the '(social) realist' school [9] and who were accused of selling their arts for politics, had become debates that could not be separated from the political lines professed by the artists and writers. Even the non-Lekra writers had now adopted their own brand of 'Politik adalah Panglima' or 'Politics in Command' [10].

   p. 41-42.

9. K. Foulcher, in his 'A Survey... ' expresses a somewhat different view. He asserts that the debates in the 50s were never clearly between the 'formalists' and the 'realists'. Foulcher, 'A Survey ...'. p. 433.

10. See also Ayip Rosidi on his examination of the period in his 'Masalah Angkatan dan Periodisasi Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia' in his collected works: Masalah Angkatan ... (Jakarta, Pustaka Jaya, 1973 (1970)) 2nd ed., p. 24. Yahaya Ismail, Pertumbuhan 80-81 and see also 'Kesusastraan dan Politik' in Zaman, v 2 no 6, 2-8 Nov 80, p. 48-49; for a retrospective view of the period.
A Prologue to the 1963 literary conflict:
The Rise of 'Socialist realism' as a Literary Theory

A.1 The Setting

Earlier in the 50s, the exponents of the 'formalist' school who propagated their ideas in Gelanggang had come to believe that they were, in the light of their educational background and their familiarity with Western thought (however meagre), the 'legitimate' and established literary thinkers of the country. It was their thoughts and ideas and tastes that, to their mind, should be the basis of the literary and cultural standards of the country. It was partly in reaction to this view that some writers established another group Lekra, which viewed the 'formalist' approach to arts and literature as elitism, their aims for literature were to serve the interests of the majority of the people, 'the masses'. The creative methodology they advocated, known as 'social realism' is a legitimate as a counter approach to 'formalist' views on Arts and Literature \(^1\). However, they only received support from the communist camp. A critic Gajus Siagian who later joined the L.K.N. group, as far back as 1956 had noted this \(^2\). Another young critic Arief Budiman, who belonged to the

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2. In his paper 'Essay dan Kritik Sastra Indonesia Dewasa Ini' given in the 1956 literary symposium. This paper is discussed in chapter 6.
Generation '66 (and an opponent to Lekra) \cite{13} also believed that from 1951-1961, Lekra has failed to influence the literary debates to support its stance \cite{14}.

In the early 1950s the P.K.I. was the only party that took an interest in 'spreading and developing' ('meluas dan meninggi'), the arts and culture to the majority, the illiterate masses of Indonesia. Another Marxist based party, the socialist P.S.I. was too busy struggling for supremacy with the other elitist party the nationalist party P.N.I. to concern itself with the world outside its immediate realm of middle class, westernised intellectuals. This was in spite of the fact that the P.S.I. through noted writers like Alisyahbana and Achdiat and critics like Sudjatmoko, (all known members of the party, with considerable influence and credibility) and through Gelanggang, had considerable influence on cultural-literary thinking in the country. It was left to the P.K.I. to actually be responsive and take an interest in socially disadvantaged writers and artists, expressing concern for their roles and their need to find a niche in society. It was the P.K.I. which organised 'conscientious' writers and artists into a 'purposeful' existence but one which (understandably) was an existence dictated by that party's programs. Hence it became easy for them to become, consciously or unconsciously, the spokesmen of the party's policies - a role which injured their credibility as 'bonafide' artists.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[13.] The term 'Generation '66' is coined by Jassin, see his Angkatan '66: Prosa dan Puisi (Djakarta, Gunung Agung, 1968), p. 1-22.
  \item[14.] A. Budiman is also one of the signatories of Manifesto Kebudajaan discussed below in this chapter.
  \item[15.] A. Budiman, 'Kekuatan Politik ...' p. 162.
\end{itemize}
In the first half of the 50s, the critics from the Gelanggang retained the position of pundits in the field with no trouble. They dictated the criteria for determining what modern Indonesian literature should be. The works they praised were those which evoked a sense of 'cosmopolitanism' that tend to be worked out around the themes of 'pseudo-existentialism' and 'nihilism' which were in vogue in western Europe at that time and which the Gelanggang has dubbed as 'universal humanism'. Such literary trends can be seen in the writings of Iwan Simatupang \(^{15}\) and Sitor Situmorang \(^{16}\) and even in some of the writings of Pramoedya and Utuy Tatang Sontani \(^{17}\).

Such philosophical dilemmas were natural to discussion in Europe where many countries, after having been decimated by the war, either had lost or were losing their former colonies (and with them both their imperial role and considerable revenue). However, such philosophical debates sounded and looked incongruous in a developing country like Indonesia which had after long struggles only recently achieved its independence. This nihilist and negative view towards life was unnatural for Indonesians who could at long last look forward to the prospect of controlling and contributing to the development of their country. To express doubt about the ability of the Indonesians to run their country well and to run their own life purposefully was anachronistic for a people who had just been liberated from the yoke

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15. On Iwan Simatupang and his works, see A. Teeuw, Modern Indonesian Literature, v. 2 (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1979, p. 156-190). See also A. Rosidi's evaluation in Rosidi, Ikhtisar p. 144-145.


of colonialism. Yet, the works that were most praised by the Gelanggang critics were those that express the despair and frustration of a handful of privileged alienated urban intellectuals. Pramoedya's 'Sunyi senyap..' written in 1956, belongs in this category {18}.

By contrast the works propagated by the Lekra writers and critics tend to have a strong local flavour. They included the works of Sontani and Pramoedya, who in the early 50s were not yet identified with the Lekra group. This type of writing (for example, Pramoedya's Perburuan) tended to emulate rather than question the cultural values expounded in the local folk traditions. Indonesia's recent colonial past led many 'westernised' Indonesians to see these local cultural elements as being 'primitive', 'provincial', 'inferior' and 'out-moded' in comparison to western cultural elements. The writings and speeches of Alisyahbana, during the colonial era and in the early 50s are typical of such a perception {19}.

The symbolism and metaphors derived from traditional cultural elements and from the local experiences utilised in the works of Pramoedya, Utuy and Ayip Rosidi {20} lost their literary impact for the 'urbane' critics of Gelanggang, who had become estranged from their own folk and mass traditions.

18. This is discussed in ch 6 of this thesis.

19. See the cultural debates conducted between Takdir, Dr Purbatjara, Dr. Sutomo and Ki Hadjar Dewantara in Polemik Kebudajaan, ed by Achdiat K. Mihardja ed (Jakarta, Pustaka Jaya, 1977 (1948)) 3rd ed. See also Takdir's collected essays in his Perjuangan, Tanggung Jawab dalam Kesusasteraan (Jakarta, Pustaka Jaya (1977)).

20. For example see Ayip Rosidi Ditengah Keluarga (Jakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1961 (1956)) and his Perjalanan Pengantin (Jakarta, 1958).
Because of their disadvantaged social origins, many of the writers who were patronised by Lekra, had received insufficient literary appreciation. They 'lacked' a general education [21] and their command of foreign languages was minimal in comparison to the writers from Gelanggang. One can imagine the hurdles which the Lekra writers had to pass in order to gain acceptance 'in the tribe'. Even the most verbal among them such as the poet Dharta, the critic Boeyoeng Saleh and the writer and political activist Nyoto, have yet to receive acknowledgement from unbiased critics. But because of Lekra's well known and close public association with the communist party it was easy for the established critics from Gelanggang to deride Lekra's approach to literature and arts as political propaganda. It was only when noted writers like Utuy, Pramoedya and the poet Sitor Situmorang began to express sympathies with the idealism propounded by Lekra, that the 'social realist' line in Indonesian literature receive some recognition from its opponents as a force to be reckoned with.

It was in that atmosphere, with the Gelanggang group reigning supreme in the literary and cultural scene and the Lekra writers trying to assert themselves that the debate 'crisis' in Indonesian

21. A.S. Dharta, a Lekra Sundanese poet received his education at Taman Dewasa, while Achdiat, from Gelanggang attended A.M.S. (Algemene Middelbare School, General Senior Secondary School for natives). Bakri Siregar attended H.I.K. Hollands inlandse Kweekschool (Training school for non-European Teachers) while Sudjatmoko from Gelanggang attended the Lyceum, the Gymnasium College preparatory for University for Europeans and equalised European students. Within the Dutch academic hierarchy, the Lyceum was the top secondary level of education, followed by H.B.S., then A.M.S. Graduates from all these schools could continue to the University. However, during the colonial period graduates from H.I.K. had to take further preparatory studies at one or the other of the "academic" secondary schools.
literature occurred. The view that there was a crisis was propounded by the leading cultural exponents in the country like Sudjatmoko, Alisyahbana and Balfas [22]. In the light of his leadership of the anti-tekra forces in the 1960's it is significant that during this furore, which dragged on from 1953-1957, Jassin strongly refuted the allegation of a crisis and defended the quality and quantity of the literary works produced so far. Hence his view at this time was contrary to that of his colleagues in Gelanggang.

In general though Jassin has always been closely identified with the Gelanggang group. He had an especially close working relation with Balfas. Both were on the editorial board of Kisah which was published from 1953-1957 and later of Sastra which ran from 1961-1964. By 1964 Balfas had emigrated overseas and so had other writers like Idrus, Alisyahbana and Achdiat. All this time Jassin remained in Indonesia and maintained a close working relationship with Wiratmo Sukito and Trisno Sumardjo. These three, unlike Achdiat or Alisyahbana, were not known as members of particular political parties, but they were known as staunch anti-communists. They were also receptive to western cultural ideas [23].

'Humanist universal' views were propagated first in the Gelanggang, then Kisah and later Sastra. To counter these the journal Zaman Baru and later, in the 60s, the literary section Lentera of

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22. See ch 6 of this thesis.

23. Trisno Sumardjo for example has translated as many as seven of Shakespeare's plays into Indonesian (Teeuw, Modern Indonesian Literature, V.1, The Hague, Nijhoff 1967) p. 199. W. Sukito, a Catholic is well read in Western philosophy and culture (Teeuw, ibid, p. 139).
Bintang Timur advocated a 'realistic' approach to literature. Unfortunately for the 'literary acceptability' of the alternative, the more politically naive Lekra activists, in particular Pramoedya, used the term 'socialist realism' to describe their alternative. In this they were averring to Sukarno's political slogans of the time, amongst which was a call for 'Indonesian Socialism'. However, the use of this term left them open to the allegation that their interests were not literary but political, and that the politics were those of the P.K.I..

Ironically, the term 'socialist realism' was not used by the more politically sophisticated leftists. With the exception of Bakri Siregar, most other Lekra critics (such as Boeyoeng Saleh, A.S. Dharta and Yoebar Ayoeb) did not use the term, although they too evaluated literary works by seeing whether the works took the 'progressive' side in the people's struggles. The chairman of the P.K.I. himself, D.N. Aidit, finally in his address 'Dengan Sastra dan Seni yang Berkepribadian Nasional mengabdi Buruh, Tani dan Pradjurit' given in August 1964 at the national conference for revolutionary arts and culture, K.S.S.R. (Konfernas Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner), advocated the use of the less specific term 'revolutionary realism'.

24. See Bakri Siregar 'Tjatatan Realisme Sosialis' in Pendorong V4, no 884, 890, 899, 18 May, 1 June and 9 June 1956. Also his Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia Modern (Jakarta, Akademi Sastra dan Bahasa Multatuli, 1964) v. 1.


should always side with the new, emerging forces in society, before the society itself becomes a socialist one, during a socialist state and even after the socialist state has become a communist one' [27].

Because of these political overtones, by 1960 the literary debate over 'formalism' versus 'realism' was polarised into two opposing political camps, Lekra and non-Lekra. The LKN was seen as nothing but an appendix to Lekra [28] and Leabumi as another front of the 'humanist universal' group, whose members were accused of being sympathetic to the P.S.I., or Masyumi, the two parties which had been banned as regarded as being 'contrev' ('contra-revolutionary'). By 1963, when the West Irian campaign had ended (but soon to be replaced by the 'crush Malaysia' campaign), the position of the P.K.I. and through it Lekra as a dominant force seemed to be assured [29]. Lekra's attacks on its opponents were stepped up to convey malice and the warning of an impending physical conflict. The first of such series of verbal attacks can be seen in 1962 in Pramoedya's 'Yang Harus di Babat dan Harus di Bangun' ('Those to be hacked and those to be cultivated') published in Lentera in which he listed who and what

27. ibid, p. 60


were the opponents of Lekra [30].

At the beginning of 1963, Lekra launched a strong attack on the literary credibility of the journal Sastra which in December 1962 had conferred its literary awards on, among others, two literary figures who had a close association with Lekra. These two, the writer Virga Belan and the poet Poppy Hutagalung, together with a third winner, the novelist Moetinggo Boesyte, publicly declined to accept their prizes. In setting out their reasons in letters published in Lentera [31], they expressed their own dislike of works favoured by the Sastra group. With this, an open war was declared between the 'universal humanist' group of Sastra and the 'Social Realists' of Lekra.

A.2 Pramoedya's 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia'

In January 1963 at a literary seminar at the University of Indonesia Pramoedya presented a paper entitled 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia' [32] in which he set out the 'socialist realist' approach to Indonesian literature.

30. P.A.T. 'Yang Harus di Babat dan Harus di Bangun' in 4 parts in Lentera BT, 10 Aug-12 Oct, 1962. In it he listed Takdir Aliyahbana, Achdiat and Iwan Simatupang among those to be 'hacked' and the 'universal humanism' concept to be eliminated as it works against the ethos of Indonesian revolution. Arief Budiman also mentions that earlier in 1961, Pramoedya came to Jassin and tried forcefully to persuade him to change his stance and support the Lekra's line (A. Budiman, 'Kekuatan politik ... ', p. 163.

31. '"Hadiah Sastra/Jassin' th 1962 dapat tolakan' in Lentera, BT, 10 Feb, 1963. See also the account mentioned by A. Budiman in his 'Kekuatan Politik ... ', p. 164-166. Virga Belan's in ibid, loc. cit. Poppy Hutagalung's, in Lentera, BT 24 Feb 1963.

32. PAMter 'Realisme Sosialis dan Sastra Indonesia', was written Nov-Dec 1962, was presented at a seminar at the Faculty of Arts, University of Indonesia, 26 Jan 1963. In this same seminar Nugroho Notoausanto (who later became the keeper for the historical sources of the armed forces) also presented his views on Indonesian literature, quoted in Ayip, Mas'alalah Angkatan, p. 22.
Objectively, Pramoedya makes a clear contribution to the sources available for the study of modern Indonesian literature. By putting forward sources which up to then had been ignored by the established academic-critics, Pramoedya also presents a reevaluation of the state and history of modern Indonesian literature.

The bulk of the paper is a compilation of the various articles he wrote earlier for Lentera, for example his essays on Multatuli {33}, Tirto A\'disuryo {34} and the contributions of Chinese-Indonesian writers {35}. The criterion he uses to delineate good and bad literature is the progressive nature of the work. This is therefore a pioneering approach {36}, as this particular theme had been ignored in the past, especially with regards to works written during the colonial period.

In Pramoedya's reevaluation of modern Indonesian literary sources, the modern literary tradition in Indonesia originated not with the works published by the colonial publishing house Balai


36. An informant who had worked closely with Pramoedya as his research assistant mentioned how during this period of Pramoedya's close tie with Lekra, 1959-1965, he was to a certain extent influenced greatly by Bakri Siregar's aproach to Indonesian literature. But Bakri's own work on Indonesian literature in which he also brought to the fore the works of progressive writings of Marco and others was only published in 1964 in his, Sedjarah Sastra ... see fn. 24.
The next period in his list is what he calls 'Sastra Gatra' ('Embryonic Literature'). Tirto Ardisuryo's Nyai Permana and Haji Moekti's Hikayat Siti Mariah belong to this group. Both works were published as continuing stories in the journal Medan Priyayi in 1912. The journal was edited by Tirto Ardisuryo [40].

37. A. Rosidi, Ikhtisar, p. 16-19

38. For example as set out by Jassin in his Kesusastraan Indonesia Modern dalam Kritik dan Esei, (Jakarta, Gunung Agung, 1967 (1954)) 4th ed, or as set out by A. Teeuw, in his Modern ... See also the periodisation as set out by Noegroho Notosusanto which he presented in this same seminar 26 Jan 1963 mentioned in fn. 32 above.

39. See also A. Rosidi, Ikhtisar, p. 9, 17-18. In general Ayip does not dispute the historical literary approach as set out by Teeuw, Jassin or N. Notosusanto (see fn. 32 and 38 above), but Ayip is one of the few noted literary critics from outside Lekra who does recognise the importance of these 'progressive' writings for Indonesian literature. Thus in his Ikhtisar he mentions the works of R.G. Francis, Haji Moekti and Tirto Ardisuryo, although he admits that more research is still to be done to evaluate these writings properly. He urges that a research to be undertaken on these neglected sources. See his, 'Perlu Peningkatan Penelitian Sastra Indonesia' in his Mas'alah Angkatan ... p. 130-133. The piece was written in March 1972.

40. Pramoedya's most recent novel Bumi Manusia, written in Buru and published in 1980, is based on this historical figure, (see ch 9 of this thesis).
In 'Realisme Sosialis ...' Pramoedya defines the works by Tirto and Haji Moeki as 'sastra sosialis' although clearly neither Tirto/Adisuryo nor Haji Moeki, in spite of their progressive ideas, were themselves socialists. The earliest genuine works written by die-hard socialists are the works written by Mas Marco Kartodikromo (who later died in exile in Digul) and Semaun (who was exiled to reside overseas). Marco started his literary career in 1914 with Mata Gelap and Resia Kraton, while Semaun's Hikayat Kadirun was only published in 1924 [41].

The 1920s saw the 'formalist' publications of the colonial publishing house Balai Pustaka. The works were bland and supportive of the 'ethical' policy of the colonial government. One exception is the work of an ex-Sarikat Islam activist Abdul Mais, Salah Asuhan. Pramoedya argues that Salah Asuhan is a good example of how the colonial publishing house de-politicised a literary piece. The criticisms the author must have had, having been an activist who had worked to curtail colonialism were downplayed by Balai Pustaka editors. Any criticism is muted and is expressed in terms of resentment of the intention of western cultural elements on native habits [42]. The political questions are buried away under cultural issues.

Parallel to the Balai Pustaka works are the nationalist writings of political leaders like Yamin and Hatta. By the period of the 30s, the works published in the journal Pujangga Baru come to be prominent.

42. ibid p. 25-26
While they are not against the policy of the colonial government at the same time they do not support it, unlike the works of Balai Pustaka.

The next period, covering the Japanese occupation and the period immediately after that, is labelled the period of 'burdjuis patriotik'. Some of the works of Pramoedya produced in this period, and Idrus' 'Surabaya' belonged to this group. The final period is that of 'burdjuis dekaden'. Idrus' Perempuan dan Ketegangan and the works of Sontani in his collected short stories Orang-orang Sial are examples of the works produced in this era. They deal with alienated eccentric urban individuals, some of whom are intellectuals.

With this paper, Pramoedya articulates an alternative approach to judging what works of literature are to be condemned and what are to be praised. He divides them in two, those which are classed as 'socialist realism' and those which are classed as 'bourgeois realism' or 'capitalist realism'. The socialist realist writings express 'proletar humanism' while the 'capitalist realists' express 'bourgeois humanism' which in essence is for fascism and capitalism. Those works are against the interest of the people [43], he argues.

Pramoedya condemns the latter works as they tend to dwell on 'irrelevant themes' revolving around the private inner concerns of individuals, indulging their hang-ups about their feelings of alienation. The works also elaborate on the characters' eccentric life-style, ones that only lead to decadence and to human degradation...

43. ibid, p. 5-7; p. 51-56
More importantly the works of 'bourgeois realism' do not challenge the prevalent social system even though the system is a repressive one. On the other hand, 'socialist realist' writings do challenge the system and present a possible alternative, the 'socialist system'. Thus 'socialist realist' writings by their nature must be militant and revolutionary.

To end his paper, Pramoedya praises the programs of Lekra, in especially its decision to adopt the program of turba (turun kebawah, literally means 'to go down') by sending writers and artists to the provinces to live among the peasants, farm workers, fishermen and others from the lower social strata. As writers and artists become familiar with that world their social conscience will be increased.

Pramoedya also praises the adoption by Lekra of the slogan 'Politik adalah Panglima' for application to the arts and literature. Such a stance is important as guidance of writers and artists. In connection with this writers should try to invent easy slogans for the masses to remember in the style of the slogan invented by Marco in the colonial period, 'Sama Rasa Sama Rata' ('Equality for All')

44. ibid, p. 6; p. 14-15; p. 52-53.

45. In 1958 in a speech in front of the student body in Padang Pramoedya was saying that 'Seniman adalah insinjur Djiwa' (reported in HR, 21 June 1958). Ironically, he adopted Stalin's terminology that writers are 'engineers of the human soul'.

46. Toer, 'Realisme Sosialis', p. 32. Pramoedya has also attempted to use Marco's phrase as the central theme in his still-in-process social novel Kesempatan jang Kesakian, parts of which were published in Zaman Baru, no 5, Aug. 1956, p. 13-18 and in Lentera, BT, 11 April 1965.
A.3 'Realisme Sosialis...' and Pramoedya's Political Consciousness

This paper can be seen as Pramoedya's full endorsement of the various policies that had been adopted by Lekra to date [47]. As Pramoedya served as the vice-chairman of the Lembaga Sastra Indonesia, along with Bakri Siregar who was its chairman, Pramoedya's uncritical endorsements of all the policies and programs advanced by Lekra is not surprising. It was because Lekra made it its policy to promote Kebudayaan Demokrasi Rakyat in the 50s that writings came to light which had been produced outside the established literary circles. These depict facets of the struggle for articulating the concept of 'Indonesian nationalism' under the oppression of the colonial rule. Pramoedya and all those in Lekra who were involved in presenting this type of 'progressive writing' to the Indonesian public made a contribution to the country.

Nevertheless, Pramoedya's dogmatic approach to literature in 'Realisme Sosialis...' flawed his literary standing. This paper makes it appear he has sold his literary commitments for politics. At least Pramoedya has sub-ordinated his literary commitments for political idealism.

As Pramoedya's 'socialist realism' is presented in that paper, Pramoedya does not consider the possibility that other forms of 'realism' could exist as a result of Indonesia's historical development [48]. It is in many of his strongly worded essays in


48. In an interview with Pramoedya Feb 1980, he explained again that to him there is only one realism in literature and art, and that is 'socialist realism'.
Lentera in which he personally attacked the credibility of numerous writers and critics from the opposing camp. But in this paper he goes further, Pramoedya here denies there is space for other 'progressive' writers who may be critical of the existing repressive social system but are not in themselves concerned with promoting either the establishment of a socialist state or supporting the continuance of a socialist government.

Pramoedya's denial of the possibility of an alternative form of 'realism' that can exist with that of 'socialist realism' points to his unyielding stance with regard to the 'realist' approach to literature. According to his argument, the only 'realism' which is valid is that which is dictated by the current socialist dogma. Any types of 'realism' which do not toe the line of the socialist government of the time, or conform to the rulings of the socialist party of the time, should not be allowed to be expressed. This is unfortunate as by then there had been extensive discussion in socialist circles of the consequences of this sort of 'Stalinist' dogmatism. For example, another controversial social realist critic, Georg Lukacs, had argued in 1956:

'It was typical of the sectarian, bureaucratic narrowness of the Stalinist period that, in describing socialist reality, the need for a socialist perspective was continually overstressed. Dogmatisms even went so far as to deny to any but socialist writers the right to point out difficulties or criticize mistakes ... It must be in the interests of Marxism to enter into a close alliance with critical realism' [49]

and Lukacs continues further,

'There has always been a type of literature passionately engaged in day-to-day political issues ... ... But it is disastrous to subsume all literature under this head. Writers must be allowed to find their own point of contact with day-to-day politics, and be allowed to work out, suitable means of dealing with it' [50].

In this connection one must take note of the cautious approach adopted by Aidit in his decision during K.S.S.R. to rename 'socialist realism' as 'revolutionary realism'. As the chairman of P.K.I., he implies, or 'promises' that 'progressive realist' literature are to be accommodated, before the country turns into a socialist state, during socialism or even after the country passes its socialist state into a communist state, provided of course the literature side with the 'progressive' element in the society that of the masses [51]. Thus Aidit cunningly can be seen not to have alienated other progressive writers whose supports can be counted to promote the programs of the P.K.I. even though they are not necessarily working for the establishment of a communist state. The writers who come to mind as belonging in this category of 'progressive' writers are those belonging to the LKN camp.

A.4 Reevaluation of 'Humanisme Universel'

To relate his 'Realisme sosialis ...' to the raging contemporary issues, Pramoedya also used the occasion to warn his audience that 'universal humanism' is nothing but a new version of the so called Dutch ethical policy of the colonial era. This policy had been reintroduced again in Indonesia by the Dutch cultural body Sticusa during the revolutionary period through its influence on the

50. _ibid_, p. 120

51. Aidit, "Dengan Sastra ...", p. 60
Gelanggang writers [52]. This view was supported by Bakri Siregar. His views were expounded in a paper he delivered at the opening of the literary academy, Multatuli, early that January. In this paper, entitled 'Manifesti Neo-kolonialisme di Sastra Indonesia Moderne' [53], Bakri asserts it was the policy of the Dutch government of the time to fragment the Indonesian struggle for independence by separating the Indonesian intellectuals from the mainstream of revolutionary struggle. Through cultural exchanges instigated by Sticussa, the Dutch intellectuals introduced the ideas of 'universal humanism' to dampen whatever 'revolutionary' ideas the Indonesian intellectuals had with regard to their relations with the Dutch [54].

At the national conference of Lembaga Sastra Indonesia, the literary section of Lekra (of which Pramoedya was vice chairman), in Medan from 22-23 March, both Pramoedya and Bakri advocated reform in the teaching of Indonesian literature with regard to the methodology taught, the sources used and the choice of staff. For far too long, the two argued, the teaching of Indonesian literature had been dominated by the 'formalist' school with its 'universal humanist' seal professed by Jassin and his colleagues. They had adopted the academic discipline of none other than a Dutch professor from Leiden, Teeuw [55].

52. Toer, 'Realisme Sosialis ... ' p. 28-30.
53. B. Siregar 'Manifesti neo-kolonialisme' in 4 parts, BT, 4-5 Jan, 7-8 Jan, 1963.
54. Jassin, in an interview with Arif Budiman in 1968, argued that he and other Indonesian writers were fully aware of the Dutch attempts to influence them, and believed that they were able to withstand Dutch cultural imperialism (A. Budiman, 'Kekuatan Politik ...', p. 161).
Bakri also questioned the strange attitude of the Dutch. Why is it, he asked, that the Dutch only took an interest in the teaching of modern Indonesian literature after Indonesia tried to assert itself as an independent country? Throughout the colonial era, modern Indonesian literature as a discipline had always been ignored. Bakri also asked why the concept of 'universal humanism' had come to be a topic for discussion after the independence of the country, as if 'humanism' as an ideal never existed when the country was a colony of the Dutch. Why was the concept was not advanced during the colonial era, when it was important for the Indonesians to be aware that the injustices they endured as subjects of another country were not unique to them alone and those injustices could have been rectified then in the name of this 'universal humanism'? Bakri goes on to assert that the concept was only sold to the Indonesian intellectuals to separate them from the masses of their own people. With 'universal humanism' the Indonesian intellectuals are deceived into believing that they have more in common with the intellectuals of the western capitalist world than with their own illiterate masses.

In July of 1963, Lekra organised in Bali a working committee meeting to discuss the coming conference of Asian and African writers K.P.A.A. (Konperensi Pengarang Asia Afrika) [56] at which the themes of the lectures were to be progressive writings produced in the various Asian and African countries. By this means, Lekra was projecting to the outside world its own 'universal' trait in that it had many things in common with other progressive writers outside Indonesia.

The Literary Conflicts of 1963: The Manifesto Kebudayaan and Pramoedya's Responses

To counter this 'show of force' from Lekra, and in order to reassert its supremacy within the literary circles, the 'universal humanist' group associated with Sastra decided on the 17th August to formulate their literary approach and in particular to reaffirm that their creative urges should be free of 'politics'. Their public statement about their stance is known as Manifesto Kebudayaan (Cultural Manifesto) (which their opponents dubbed as manikebu) and it was published in their journal Sastra in October 1963 [57]. Jassin, Trisno Sumardjo and Wiratmo Sukito were the instigators of the manifesto. Other signatories included the young upcoming poets Goenawan Mohamad and Taufiq Ismail, the essayist Soe Hok Djin (Arief Budiman) and the academic-critic Boen Oemaryati [58]. One notable critic unaligned with any faction who did not sign was Ayip Rosidi.

Their stance was seen as a public declaration of war against Lekra and what Lekra stood for - particularly the extent to which current political creeds should be allowed to interfere with the artist's free expression. When 'politics' is seen as the guiding spirit for every action taken by 'patriotic' Indonesians, the Sastra decision of separating literature from arts is seen as 'contrev' (contra-revolutionary). The Manikebuists are seen as the 'enemy' of the Indonesian people. Pramoedya with the help of some Lekra critics conducted a series of 'psychological terrorism' against those

58. See Sastra, ibid, p. 27, p. 31.
signatories of the manifesto, and against those who expressed sympathy to the stance forwarded by the Sastra group, all published in Lentera [59].

To express his strong antipathy to the manifesto - and against Jassin, whom Pramoedya held to be the instigator, Pramoedya wrote an 'open letter' to Jassin which was published in Lentera [60]. In it he accused Jassin of having abused his position as the head of the department of Indonesian literature at the University of Indonesia, and as the editor of Sastra (In addition, Jassin was on the editorial board of the majority of influential magazines and publishers) Jassin owed his social status to the Indonesian people and to the Indonesian revolution, not to the 'humanisme universil' or to the 'manifesto kebudayaan'. These two are contrary to the Indonesian revolution.

At the end of the year, Pramoedya wrote a long personal letter to Jassin in which he formally terminated whatever relationship was left between them [61]. Pramoedya writes that it has taken him more than 20 years to bring himself to break the tie with his teacher and


mentor, Jassin [62]. He accuses Jassin of not being true to his own ideal of 'universal humanism' [63]. When Pramoedya, as Jassin's disciple, tried to practice this ideal by defending the Chinese minority in his book Hoakiau di Indonesia he was imprisoned and Jassin took no interest in having him released [64]. Pramoedya then expresses his disappointment at the conservative line taken by Jassin and warns his old mentor that for sure soon the two of them must take opposing sides [65].

'The Universal Humanist' group did not take silently the vehement attacks of Lekra. One stern reply to Lekra was written by one of the universal humanist proponents,Wiratmo Sukito, in his 'Politik Konfrontasi Sastra' [66] at the end of the year. At the beginning of the new year, Jassin also confronted Lekra in his 'Masuk tahun keempat (Tahun Konfrontasi)' in the January issue of Sastra [67]. But the Sastra group was on the defensive and in a minority amongst vocal commentators. Being in receipt of official patronage Lekra appeared dominant and increasingly authoritative. This 'confrontationist' approach of the Manifesto supporters and by Lekra was matched in the political world.

62. ibid, p. 4
63. ibid, p. 3, 5, 7
64. ibid, p. 2, 5, 10.
65. ibid, final page, p. 12.
67. in Sastra, v. 4, no 1. 1964, p. 4-6.
From the beginning of 1964, P.K.I. launched, for the first time, its class-based struggle in the country-side. Through its Aksi Sepihak (or Unilateral Action), excess lands owned by rich landowners were to be transferred to landless peasants [68]. But unexpectedly it was during this campaign that the communists lost a considerable amount of their mass support in the countryside. Often the landless agricultural workers sided with their masters. Conflict took place not on the basis of social class but on the basis of political-"'aliran' (commune) allegiance which cut across class lines. The communists found themselves opposed by both the Moslem land owners and the agricultural workers, [69]. Thus while the urban intelligentsia perceived that the 'progressive' policies advanced by the communists and its supporters seemed to have the upper hand in actual fact, in the countryside, the tide had started to turn in the opposite direction of the P.K.I.

In March of 1964, not to be outwitted by Lekra's increasing strength, Jassin and friends organised a nation-wide writers conference known as K.K.P.I. (Konperensi Karyawan Pengarang


R. Mortimer Indonesian Communism, p. 327-328.
None of Lekra writers were invited to join, although Jassin had wanted them to come. Not surprisingly, Lekra stepped up its agitation against the conference and against the 'universal humanists' in general. It dubbed the conference as K.K.P.S.I. and accused the conference of being nothing more than a front to promote the political interests of the defunct political party P.S.I.

In the face of considerable intimidation from Lekra, the conference went ahead. It was heavily financed by the armed forces and received the patronage of Nasution. The then Minister for Information, Ruslan Abdulgani, a member of the P.N.I., gave a talk, although the President had declined an invitation to attend. Less than a month after the conference, after a strong campaign led by Lekra, Sukarno decided to issue a Presidential decree banning the Manikebu movement on 8 May 1964. The journal Sastra also ceased publication, not because it was formally banned by the government, but

70. On policy adopted by K.K.P.I. see Sastra V 4 No 2, April 1964, p. 3; p. 32-33. See also Yahaya Ismail, Pertumbuhanp, p. 82-94.

71. Yahaya Ismail, Pertumbuhan, p. 82, fn 8.

72. P.A. Toer, 'Konferensi Karyawan Pengarang se-Indonesia berwatak Kontra-revolusi' in Lentera BT 5 Jan 1964. For further references on more sources on this see fn 52 above. After the banning of Manikebu by Presidential decree on 8 May 1964, Bakri Siregar wrote his comments in 'Kita Terlalu Tjinta Manipol karena itu kita Gasak Manikebu' in Lentera, BT, 5 April 1964, which was then followed by another article by Pramoedya, see P.A. Toer, 'Kita Menolak Manikebu KK-PSI adalah soal Prinsip dangan segala Konsekvensinja' in Lentera BT 12 April 1964. See also Y. Ismail, Pertumbuhan, p. 88. Also A. Budiman, 'Kekuatan Politik ...', p. 168.


because of 'technical difficulties' [75]. Thus, at least formally the opposition to Lekra had been curbed.

Earlier, in a speech at the anniversary ceremony on the 3rd of May of the literary academy Multatuli, entitled 'Fungsi Akademi Sastra Dewasa ini' ('The Function of a Literary Academy in the contemporary period' [76]) Pramoedya urged that the teaching of modern Indonesian literature should cease for two months in order for reforms to take place. He hoped that within this period the sources and methodology used in teaching the subject could be reformulated by the staff and students alike. In particular, Teeuw's teachings must be eliminated from the curriculum. Soon after, Jassin, and another academic critic, Boen Sri Oemaryati (both of them signatories to the Manifesto) tendered their resignations from their teaching posts at the university [77]. Wiratmo Soekito, another proponent was forced to leave his position with the National Broadcasting Commission, R.R.I. [78].

With the manifesto movement disbanded, with Sastra's publication ceased and with two of the leading 'universal humanist' academics banned from teaching at the university, members of Lekra and members of the communist party itself surprisingly still felt unsure of their supremacy over their opponents. Their writings were intimidatory, warning the urban intelligentsia to support their cause, or else...

Partly to show the 'correctness' of the Lekra and P.K.I. line the

75. W. Sukito, 'Terbitnja kembali majalah "Sastra"' in Sastra v. 6 no. 1, Jan 1968, p. 29.

76. Reported in Lentera BT, 10 May 1964.

77. Y. Ismail, Pertumbuhan, p. 105, A. Budiman 'Kekuatan Politik ...', p. 171-172.

78. A. Budiman, ibid., p. 172.
Committee Central of the P.K.I. organised a conference which received Sukarno’s patronage, called K.S.S.R. or Konferensi-nasional Sastra dan Seni Revolusioner (National Conference for revolutionary arts and literature) which was held from the 28th of August to 2nd of September 1964 [79].

It was in this conference that the chairman of the party, Aidit set out definitively the approach of the communist party to the arts and culture in his speech 'Dengan Sastra dan Seni yang berkepribadian Nasional mengabdi Buruh, Tani dan Pradjurit' [80]. In general Aidits's approach was identical to the one that Lekra had adopted at its first conference in 1959 and again in 1960. For example he urged the use of traditional sources and stressed the importance for the writers of learning from the masses so that they do not become alienated from their own people [81]. The one strong difference is Aidit's insistence (mentioned earlier) on the use of the term 'realisme revolusioner' and 'romantika revolusioner' instead of 'realisme sosialis' or 'romantika sosialis' [82].

Sukarno did agree to attend this conference [83]. His earlier decreee banning manikabu combined with his public support for the K.S.S.R. (contrasting with his refusal to attend the K.K.P.I. earlier) made it clear to everyone, especially the urban intelligentsia of Jakarta, which side the Bearer of the Mandate of the Peoples' Suffering supported.

79. See Y. Ismail, ibid, p. 106
81. Aidit, ibid, p. 57-65.
82. ibid, p. 59
83. Y. Ismail, Pertumbuhan, p. 108.
D. New Directions in Literary Criticism

D.1 'Sedjarah dan Kritik Sastra'

In 'Sedjarah dan Kritik Sastra' which was given at a national seminar on the teaching on literature held from 2-5 September, immediately after K.S.S.R., Pramoedya reemphasises the importance of knowing the history in which the nation is built which in turn is the foundation the nation's literary tradition. Thus the development of Indonesian nationalism should be reflected in its literary tradition, that had been shown on the writings of Tirto Ardisuryo, Marco and Semaun, Pramoedya argues. Yet the sources the Indonesians have for their literary criticism are those that distort the evidence for the struggles for an Indonesian nationalism. The literary criticisms existing so far in this country have concentrated on the works of Balai Pustaka and Pujangga Baru that distorted and often ignored the struggles of Indonesians to formulate their national consciousness and, later, in their struggles for independence {84}.

The type of literary criticism the Indonesians have so far is that of 'bourgeois' literary criticism that concentrates mainly on bringing forward 'bourgeois aesthetic' taste. The criticism ignores and lacks a historical perspective {85}, for the past and present condition as well as for the potential future of society. To avoid


writing this type of literary criticism, Pramoedya argues that literary criticism must always be subordinate to the interest of nation building [86].

For this reason, literary criticism can not be but biased in a political sense. All critics can't help but represent their respective social origin, Pramoedya concedes. To overcome this barrier, the critics therefore must consciously adopt the stance to represent and articulate the desires of the masses. Only the masses hold the objective correct attitude towards arts and literature, he continues. In this point Pramoedya is mainly rephrasing the policy of Lekra in the 50s of Kebudayaan Demokrasi Rakyat.

He then continues to warn his audience of the importance in always reevaluating the current aesthetic values practiced by the critics. For example, he points out, during the colonial era, the publications of Balai Pustaka tend to emulate the 'beauty' of western women as the highest level of aesthetic ideal. It was thought then that only the educated western women are fit to be companion of the native intellectuals. In this respect, Abdul Muis, Salah Asuhan should be seen as an anachronism [87], as the story 'punishes' the hero who has chosen a European woman as his spouse over the woman chosen by the hero's mother. By constant questioning on the current aesthetic standard used one can open new perspectives on the meaning of the literary pieces, Pramoedya says.

86. ibid, loc. cit.
87. P.A. Toer, 'Tentang Sedjarah ...', p. 32
The rest of the paper, is a compilation of his various points that were advanced in his earlier long paper 'Realisme Sosialis ...' and in his numerous articles in Lentera. The new point he raises in the paper is the argument that the study of modern Indonesian literature must be accompanied by the study of the history of literary criticism, which in turn brings to the fore the importance of the historical study of nationalist developments of that country. All of these are important to accord the literary piece its due merit.

D.2 'Tentang Novel'

In 1965, as an elaboration of his paper 'Sedjarah ...' Pramoedya set out his proposals for the teaching of Indonesian literature, in a series of articles published in Lentera from 18 April - 23 May, entitled 'Sekali Lagi Pengadjaran Sastra'. Pramoedya expresses his relief that the Manikebu movement has now been disbanded and that the books written by the manikebuists had been banned as teaching aids at schools [88]. But, he argues, still more effort is needed to discredit the 'universal humanist' stance. It is crucial to publicly demonstrate that the Gelanggang group regard the thoughts of Sartre as more important than the ethos of the Indonesian revolution [89]. The teaching of literature should be conducted in parallel with the teaching of social science subjects, in particular with the teaching of politics and the (state) ideology [90]. It is in this context that the analysis of the rise and fall of Manikebu is to be conducted.

88. Lentera, BT, 18 April 1965
89. Lentera BT, 25 April 1965
90. ibid, 25 April 1965
To renew the study of Indonesian literature, he advises that scholars and researchers tap sources from their traditional folk-culture, thus promoting national identity. They should also for example use popular sources like the myth-prophesies of the king Jayabaya [91]. At the same time the ethos of Asian-African writings should be absorbed, so that unity with Asian and Africans is enhanced [92].

At the same time, he also wrote a short (but stern in tone) article in *Lentera* entitled 'Tahun 1965 Tahun Pembabatan' ('1965 is the Year for hacking the dead wood') [93]. In this article, publishers are the object of his attacks. He urges the revocation of the publishing permits of publishers that continue to publish 'contrev' books.

On 26 August 1965 at a literary seminar commemorating the first anniversary of K.S.S.R. Pramoedya delivered his definitive paper on how to write a progressive novel entitled: 'Tentang Novel' [94]. In that paper Pramoedya argues for the novel as the ideal form to be utilised to express the revolutionary elements of the contradictions existing in society. The dynamism within the revolutionary forces, so Pramoedya points out, can be recorded in the narrative of the novel, because in its narrative style of expression, the novel lies between the old fashioned epic and modern journalism. As such it can embrace

91. ibid, 18 April 1965
92. ibid, 16 May, 1965
94. It is mentioned in the paper that Pramoedya was asked by the secretariat of the central committee of HKI to give a paper at this commemorative ceremony ('Tentang novel' p. 1).
both the traditional and the contemporary in society [95]. In Indonesia, the novels known as roman were written by school teachers. A more recent form, known as novella, are written mostly by journalists or by those who have journalistic inclinations [96].

To create a revolutionary novel, Pramoedya suggests that the novelist must be fully informed and conscious of the range of possibilities in which their characters exist. The writers must adopt the 3 si, situasi, posisi, kondisi, in that the condition, position and situation of the characters must be fully reworked and integrated into the larger society [97].

A writer therefore cannot afford to become an outsider, so Pramoedya warns. He is very much a part of his subject matter though it is within his power to direct and control the theme and the storyline [98]. The idea that a writer is an 'outsider' from his society is a misleading legacy which was conceived in the liberal capitalistic world, and one should dispense with such view under Demokrasi Terpimpin [99].

At the same time, the literary critics must always ask why a writer has chosen this particular person as his hero, and why is this hero is faced by that person as his enemy [100]. Furthermore one may ask why this man wins over that and what are the attributes given to

95. P.A. Toer, 'Tentang Novel', p. 37
96. ibid, p. 8
97. ibid, p. 29-30
98. ibid, p. 32
99. ibid, p. 25
100. ibid, p. 29
the winner and what to the loser and so forth. The critics must also ask for whom the work is written, why is it written, what is its purpose and where the work is leading its readers [101]. In summary, this paper contains Pramoedya's advice on how to compose novels, how to appreciate them. He seeks to impart to his audience the important role the novel can play in propagating revolutionary ideas to the public.

Having set out his theoretical framework on how to write a good novel, Pramoedya was now ready to resume his earlier vocation as a creative writer. But first he wrote (what became his final short essay of the period) in Lentera BT, 26 September 1965 an article, entitled 'Tjatatan 17 September 1965: Generasi Yang takkan Kalah' ('Notes on 17 September 1965: The Unbeatable Generation'). (It praises the writing efforts of an as yet unknown writer who had continually 'harassed' him for advice.) Within a year the unbeatable generation was crushed: the P.K.I. was disbanded, members of Lekra were imprisoned, and Pramoedya was eventually banished to the island of Buru until December 1979.

101. ibid, p. 33
A Progressive Idealism: Gadis Pantai

This unfinished novel is one of Pramoedya's best works surpassing (in my opinion) his classics, Perburuan, Keluarga Gerilya and Bukan Pasar Malam. Although set in the colonial period, Gadis Pantai, published in 1962, reflects the ethos of the early 60's just as earlier works are a reflection of the ethos of the revolution and the period immediately afterwards.

The main character in the story, the Girl from the Coast, like many of Pramoedya's characters, is a displaced person, uprooted at the age of fourteen from the fishing village in which she was born and married to a highborn and deeply religious man who is an official from the nearby town. However, the similarity with Pramoedya's earlier uprooted characters ends here.

In the earlier stories, the characters tend to move across regional (village to town: province to capital) and cultural (rural to urban) bounds. If class mobility did occur, it was perceived by Pramoedya as the product of a historical change like the Japanese occupation and not because of the dynamic forces within the society itself. This is not so in Gadis Pantai.
A.1 Description of the Story

In this story, not only has the Girl from the Coast been geographically transplanted from her village into the urban household of her husband with its different economic and cultural life style, but she has also been lifted socially through her marriage. A commoner by birth, she is now entitled to an aristocratic title. Furthermore, unlike Pramoedya's earlier uprooted people who are always ill adjusted in their new environment, unversed in 'the rules of the game', this Girl from the Coast not only learns how the system operates, but she also learns that the system operates because certain members have privileges while others have been persuaded to accept as proper their position of subjugation and servitude.

The girl realises how fragile her position is in the household in which her husband is the sole master and reigns over every other individual in the house. Even though she is the wife of her husband, her social status and privileges are different than his and his immediate family's. To her husband she is no different from his bed or any other of his material possessions. She is also forced to accept that she is not even to be equal to the child she is to bear her husband. On the other hand, she is also not of equal status with her servants, whom she must order and direct. Her trusted old servant enlightens her of her 'real' intrinsic social status. To the servant, 'the mistress is nothing but a commoner who is boarding in the house of a nobleman' [1]. Her sole purpose in life, the old woman tells her, is to serve the master, like the rest of them. She also reminds

1. GP in BT 23d Aug. 1962
her mistress that she should serve her master well, because if she falls from her current position she will fall harder than if she, the servant, falls from hers. How correct her servitude appears to her master depends entirely on his whims. Being born a commoner, she is penalised by having no right to determine what is correct and what is just [2].

The servant then talks about her own past. Having been born a peasant, she and her husband were regarded as adult persons as soon as they were married so they were required to do forced labour by their village head. They were sent to Japara to work on road construction. Her husband was killed there trying to protect her against the beating she received from her overseer when she took time to rest because she was heavy with child. She herself was later imprisoned on behalf of her husband who had injured a Dutch official before being killed.

Later she came to serve in this household through her second husband who was the coachman. The servant assures the Girl from the Coast that to serve in this household is easier than what she has had to endure in the past. The servant reminds her mistress, that she has attained a social status which few people from her peasant background could reach [3].

The Girl becomes extremely disturbed at the differences in rights and privileges that people from different classes are 'fated' to have. She wonders why all men are not born equal. 'That will cause chaos' the servant points out in bewilderment. 'What will happen to charity

2. ibid., loc cit

3. ibid., BT, 18 Aug 1962
and what will happen to compassion?' The servant's comment presumably reflects her comprehension that one man differentiates himself from another through his charitable conduct and noble mind. Men from the nobility are deemed to be virtuous and exemplary in comparison to the common people.

The Girl, who seems to doubt her servant's simple beliefs that only the nobility possess noble minds, contrasts her own beloved father with her husband. She becomes extremely disturbed by the idea that commoners relinquish any right to determine their fate. She asks how it is that a person who is so gentle and refined and who looks as weak as her husband (in contrast to her father) could be the master. 'In the wayang' the servant explains, 'It is the refined who rules the world; the gentle prince defeats the rough ogres'. 'In our village', the girl informs her servant, 'The wayang is forbidden. According to our village elder, who is supposed to know everything, the wayang only tells lies. It distorts reality. To us it is only the ocean which has power over us, not the wayang'. 'But the wayang is our ancestral heritage' the old servant argues, 'we must respect it'. 'Our ancestors have ceased to exist, but the ocean is very much here with us' [4] the girl retorts.

The observations expressed by the two and the explanations each has given the other are sharp and revealing. They expose the inequality which exists in the class structure of master and servant. One espouses the differences in privileges between the two classes, while the other constantly challenges the justifications of such

4. ibid., ET, 20 Aug, 22 Aug. 1962
differences. One of them goes as far as challenging the validity of the philosophy expressed in the wayang, the cultural basis of Javanese society. It is interesting that the author depicts the master and husband as being an educated religious official connected with the mosque, as well as being of noble birth. The author, through his characters, not only criticises the philosophy expounded in the wayang, but also suggests the girl's resentments towards her husband are associated with the world he represents: the feudalistic and religious world.

Later, one evening, the girl expresses her newly acquired wisdom about the social order to her husband when he is testing her on the degree of her servitude and love for him. Aware that she is being tested she conveys artfully her affection for him [5]. She then mentions the various duties which are expected from her because of her common origin compared with her nobly born husband. Her husband is distinctly annoyed at her, not so much for noticing the differences between them as man and wife, but more for noting in a general sense the social differences between the nobility and commoners. He reminds her that they are only mortal beings, and that their respective duties and roles are proscribed by God.

Some time later, the old servant is fired by the master. She is fired because she has dared put the blame for the loss of some housekeeping money on one of the many adopted children who are still related to the master, rather than accusing the mistress of the house,

the Girl from the Coast, of carelessness [6]. The Girl from the Coast becomes aware that if anything goes wrong in the running of the house, it is she, as an outsider and a commoner, who will first be held responsible for the wrong-doing, regardless of whether she was actually involved in the matter or not. She realises too that it is her servant, who has the same social origin as she, who has protected her against the anger of her husband. On the other hand, by siding with her, her servant has transgressed her social role, in her husband's eyes. A good servant must at all costs protect all blemishes which the master class has from the eyes of outsiders - even more from commoners.

Up to this point in the story, due to their common social origin the relationship between the master (represented by the mistress, the Girl from the Coast) and the servant class (represented by her dutiful old servant) is depicted as being fully harmonious. In fact the servant works in unity with her mistress. They feel a close affinity with each other not because of their different social position, but because of their similar social origin. In this way, the author alludes to the merits of sticking with one's own class to guard against oppression by members of other classes. Pramoedya is realistic enough to describe the social consequences of the servant's action in siding with her mistress.

As a mistress and his wife, the master of the house can not simply dismiss her to protect the honour of members of his own family who were accused of stealing. But he can dismiss the servant from the house. This shows that when the crunch comes, those who are in the

6. ibid., BT, 27 Aug-29 Aug 1962
privileged position of being in the master class (regardless of whether they are only there as parvenus) still fare better in comparison to others who belong to the subjugated class. So the old servant is dismissed.

Up to this point, the relationship between master and servant is held in abeyance. The conflict between the two classes, expressed with aggressive individual vehemence, is explored by the author when the girl gets a new servant, Mardinah to replace her old trusted one. This servant is as young and as pretty as her mistress. In the beginning, the Girl from the Coast tries to treat her servant as an equal, and does not rebuke her outright when she sees her sit on the Girl's chair and later on her bed. The servant sneers at her mistress and asserts that she does not dare to rebuke her, because she, the Girl from the Coast, is only the daughter of a fisherman, while Mardinah is the daughter of a government clerk who is a relation to the master. Besides, the servant continues, having been born in the city (unlike the mistress who was born in the village) she is accustomed to sitting on chairs and to sleeping on beds [7].

'What is so distasteful about being born in the village?' the Girl from the Coast asks with a surprise. 'Villagers are lowly people' Mardinah boasts, 'with a status not much more than labourers'. Even though she, Mardinah, is a servant, she was born and bred in town. She is literate while the Girl from the Coast can neither read nor write. Furthermore, Mardinah is a daughter of a retired government clerk, a priyayi, and is related to the master of the house

7. ibid., BT, 30 Aug. 1962
while the Girl from the Coast is only the daughter of a fisherman.

At this, the Girl from the Coast uses her superior position and orders the impertinent servant to leave her room and never come and serve her. She spits in the servant’s face and pushes her out of the room. The servant later has to apologise and be more deferential to her mistress. She begs her mistress to take her back as her personal maid because she finds the work and lowly status attached to the other household duties too much for her to carry.

What is interesting in this episode is the way the author depicts the commoner mistress as a person who is capable of defying her ‘divine’ role of being subservient. The humiliating ridicule she receives from the nobly born servant does not make the Girl from the Coast lose sight of her superior position as the mistress. Indeed, the fisherman’s daughter is able to reciprocate her servant’s rudeness. At the same time Pramoedya also describes how a person born a priyayi (who happens to be a servant) is capable of expressing unrestrained hostility and a patronising attitude towards commoners and any one not born and bred in the city, even though the person to whom she displays her condescension is her mistress. In this way the author suggests that affinity between masters and servants is not tenable whatever the individuals’ cultural and social basis. This depiction of society as described by Pramoedya in this story is certainly far from the harmonious master and servant relationship propagated in the popular wayang stories.

8. ibid., loc cit, 4 Sept 1962
In the next episode, the Girl from the Coast decides to pay a visit to her family down by the coast. It is then she realises how poor and disadvantaged the fishermen's lives are. But what impresses her most is the way those fishermen treat their women folk. They treat them as equals [9]. Although the women share the hardships with their men, they are treated as human beings, unlike the women folk in the household of her husband. In her husband's abode, the Girl from the Coast feels she is nothing more than a piece of furniture. Thus it is back in her parents tattered hut that the Girl from the Coast finds herself as a person.

It is during her stay there that she also discovers the closeknit cooperation among the villagers in times of trouble. This occurs when they have to defend themselves against an outside pirate onslaught. It is later discovered that the aborted piracy was organised by Mardinah and her cohorts in order to wipe the village and the disobedient fishermen for their refusal to pay a levy to the pirates as well as to kill the Girl from the Coast once and for all. Mardinah hopes that with the Girl dead the master will look to her to replace the Girl from the Coast - at least putting her in charge of the household duties and possibly taking her position as his mistress. But due to cooperation and unity among the villagers both the pirates and Mardinah's plan are foiled. Mardinah becomes a prisoner of the villagers and later she is married to the village fool, a wise but eccentric bachelor [10].

9. ibid., 13 Sept - 15 Sept 1962
10. ibid., 6-9 Oct 1962
As for the Girl from the Coast, she goes back to her husband, becomes pregnant by him and gives birth to a baby girl. But soon after she is sent back to her parents. The end of the story comes at the point when the Girl is depicted looking back at her ex-husband’s house for the last time with her heart yearning for her baby girl which she has been forced to abandon. She is inside the coach, and none of her old servants come to bid her farewell. There and then she decides not to return to her village but to go to another nearby town and get herself a job. Thus ends this part of the trilogy.

A.2 Commentary

There are several progressive ideas presented by the author. One is the depiction of how the nobility and their entourage perceived less privileged mortals with disdain. Another is the callousness of the nobility in the habit of taking 'experimental' wives from the common fold before they take up with a wife from the upper classes. This habit, as the story points out, works only because the villagers foster it. They regard it as an honour for the village if one member is related in whatever capacity to the nobility or others with the power to defend their rights in the outside world - in particular, to defend them from the colonial government.

But the most revolutionary of all is the portrayal of the Girl from the Coast. Making the heroine of the story one of the common people was nothing new to Pramoedya since he had written numerous accounts about the plight of such characters from the so called simple folks. But it was new to make his character from that social class a
defiant one, who dared stand up for her rights against the bullying from those of the better classes. Furthermore the malice which is depicted in the inter-relationship between the common people and that of the nobility is also a new phenomenon.

Pramoedya's depiction of this hostility is subtle and far from being an expression of political propaganda. As the Girl from the Coast spits at her servant the vehemence in the Girl's behaviour can be construed to be intended to hint at the vehemence the peasants will express, given the chance, towards their oppressors, those from the privileged classes.

The fact that by 1962 (when Gadis Pantai was serialised) it was possible for a committed writer like Pramoedya to depict a society laden with class conflict and class hatreds shows us the extent to which society had become polarised. By making the heroine who has a humble origin, cease her subservience to the ruling class, and by making her actually question the justification of the privileges that class enjoys, the story reflects the direction in which radical social ideas were expressed at that time. The animosity and hostility between the master and servant depicted by the author reflects the heat of the social atmosphere of the 1960s.

A.3 The Political Situation in the 1960s

The P.K.I., in order to reaffirm its commitment to the class struggle (while deciding to work together with the national bourgeoisie [12]) proposed a share cropping bill to the parliament which was passed in 20 November 1959 and implemented by October 1961 [13]. The P.N.I., which according to the P.K.I.'s class argument, belongs to the 'national bourgeois' class, in order to bring radical actions under its wing, proposed and pushed strongly for a radical land reform law. Such a law was passed on 24 September 1960. But the legislation was only spasmodically implemented. At this time, in order to prevent the P.K.I. from gaining more support for its various radical programs, the P.N.I. was 'more radical' (at least in its sloganeering) than the P.K.I. and its mass bodies [14].

The period following the lifting of the State Emergency Act on 1 May 1963 was soon followed by the confrontation campaign against Malaysia in September of that same year. In December of that year, Aidit, in his report to the Central Committee of P.K.I., urged for a radical land reform right to be made 'the central action for the party's revolutionary offensive' [15]. In response to that, various peasant movements which were affiliated to to the P.K.I. took matters into their own hands in 1964 and began their Aksi Sepihak or Unilateral Action in which they transferred excess lands owned by rich

12. ibid., ch. 3 The Social Order and Its Transformation, p. 144-145; p. 161.
13. On this see ibid, ch 7, p. 282-284.
15. ibid, p. 295-303.
land owners to their own control [16]. For this the P.K.I. was penalised in the countrysides. There was a strong adverse reaction to this Aksi Sepihak, a reaction supported by the P.N.I., and the Moslem N.U. The 'cooperation' between the 'national bourgeoisie' and the P.K.I. ended at this point.

A.4 Cadis Pantai and Indonesian Politics in 1960s

Therefore, taking into consideration the social and political situation during the period 1960-1964, Cadis Pantai not only reflects but also anticipates and suggests the animosity between different social and economic classes to be expressed in the years to come. The conflict, as is hinted in this unfinished novel, was to be between the 'feudal' bureaucratic land owning class and the newly 'conscious' peasantry.

Another important aspect in this novel is the fact that the peasant girl, represented by the Girl from the Coast, despite her common origin and lack of culture and finesse, is able to use the opportunities which she obtains through living in the privileged household of her husband to improve herself. She eventually learns to read and write and she listens to whatever wisdom is imparted to her by her husband. She also listened to her old servant and even to Mardinah to learn about the social norms of the outside world. In fact it is due to Mardinah's rudeness that the Girl from the Coast is provoked to stand up to protect her honour and put Mardinah in her place.

16. ibid, p. 303-314. See also ch 8 of this thesis, which outlines the political and literary discussions which took place in the country during the Aksi Sepihak period.
Furthermore, this unfinished novel stands up high above Pramoedya's works, his novels and short stories, written before and after this, including therefore his most recent novel Bumi Manusia. Gadis Pantai depicts the life style of the administrative feudal class during the colonial era meticulously. The large household with its imposing house, the numerous siblings cared for by and dependent on the master, the numerous servants to carry out the various household chores, the stress on education and religion imposed on the members of the family, their arrogance regarding lesser mortals who happen to be born as commoners - all these characteristics of the milieu of that class are portrayed carefully. This is integrated with the intrigues and jealousies and social tensions of the household.

At the same time Pramoedya is also able to penetrate the mind of his heroine down into her most intimate thoughts. She is portrayed as growing up into maturity, not only in a physical sense from a virgin into a mother, but also from a naive peasant girl into a sophisticated well groomed and manipulative mistress. Unlike his earlier writings, in this novel Pramoedya was able to restrain himself from being overpowered by his heroine. She is not depicted as flawless. Despite the knowledge and status which she acquires, her new situation is not her salvation. Her rights as a human being are still limited and she is dependent on her husband for her survival.

Furthermore the depiction of how her husband relates to her and she to him is portrayed in an uncompromising way and is far from being romantic and sentimental. The calculating and hypocrisy that such an

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17. For a full description on the social milieu of this class during the colonial period see H. Sutherland The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite (K.L., A.S.A.A., 1979), ch. 2, p. 19-30
unequal relationship extracts from its participants is depicted with some insight. Young as she is and 'forced' to be in love once upon a time to her husband, as a human being she refuses to be subjected to him. Her independent manner costs her the privileges which were 'loaned' to her by her husband. This callousness in the social reality of such marriages at that period (between the nobility and the peasants) set during the early years of the 20th century - the period of the awakening of the national consciousness - was depicted by Pramoedya without compromise. In this light it is a 'revolutionary' piece.

It is not hard to awake one's imagination to the fact that at this time of the story, it was a historical fact that Kartini, the daughter of a regent died from childbirth and in a fictional world, a peasant girl, the Girl from the Coast was kicked out from the house of her noble husband. Such a fate could easily have fallen upon someone like Kartini's mother Ngasirah who happened to be a village girl. Was it providence that Kartini's mother had borne three sons while the regent's first wife had failed to bear any, or was Kartini's father simply a benevolent noble, who retained his commoner mistress and treated her and her children in a humanitarian way?

But inspite of all these strong points which make the work a good example of a 'progressive' literature, unfortunately Pramoedya's depiction of the life style of the fishing villages and the villagers themselves is too idealistic and too contrived. Pramoedya once again resorts back to using simple stereotyped casts and environmental situations. The village fool for example is a two dimensional
archetypal character. The whole description of the village and its life style in fact shows how unfamiliar Pramoedya must have been with those surroundings. Inspite of this the work is a fine example of progressive writing. Its radical views are expressed subtly and in fact are secondary to a good narrative.

To see Gadi Pantai in its context among Pramoedya's works, it is helpful to compare this unfinished novel with Pramoedya's latest and highly acclaimed novel Bumi Manusia (BM) \{18\}. This novel was written in 1975 when Pramoedya was still detained in Buru, although the work had been orally conveyed to his fellow detainees from 1972 \{19\}. At the same time, the actual research and background readings for this novel were done (naturally) prior to his detainment in 1965. There is evidence of this (among other places) in his essays: for example in a series of articles written in 1962 \{20\} on the progressive writing in Indonesia in which, for example, Pramoedya discusses the works of Tirto Ardisuryo. It is this Tirto Ardisuryo, who is known in Bumi Manusia as Minke who becomes the hero in this novel and in its sequels Anak Semua Bangsa, Jajak Langkah and Rumah Kaca.


\{19\}. Preface to the unpublished ms. version.

\{20\}. See Pramoedya's various essays on T. Ardisuryo in Lentera, BT, 13 July - 7 Sept. 1962.
B Conservative Idealism: Bumi Manusia

Bumi Manusia is similar in genre and theme to Gadis Pantai. Furthermore the story is set in the same period - that is, during the late 19th and early 20th century. But Bumi Manusia is presented from a diametrical opposing standpoint to that of Gadis Pantai. Gadis Pantai has as its central character a girl who is illiterate and comes from humble origin, the hero of Bumi Manusia is of noble birth, a hero par excellence imbued with noble virtues. As the son of the regent of Blora, he represents the newly emerging western educated Javanese bourgeoisie [21] who are the offspring of traditional Javanese feudal families (one of whom is depicted in Gadis Pantai).

B.1 Brief outline of the Story

As the novel opens, Bumi Manusia's hero, Minke, is in his final year of his secondary education in the Dutch prestigious secondary school H.B.S. (Hoogere burgerschool). The novel first describes his first serious encounter with the Eurasian woman Annelies who he later marries. Apart from describing Tirto Ardisuryo's early years at school, the central theme of this novel is the outstanding achievements of a native woman, Nyai Ontosoroh, Annelies' mother.

The name Ontosoroh originates from the mispronunciation by the locals of the word Buitenzorg, the name of the farm that she runs. Her own name was Sanikem. She was the daughter of a supervisor at a

sugar factory near Surabaya. It was her father who sold her to a Dutch farmer, Herman Mellema. Herman took her as his mistress and in return he would arrange for Sanikem's father to become the pay master at the factory.

Initially Mellema was a good husband to her, who respected and loved her very much. It was through him that she learnt to read and write and became familiar with the literature of the time. She was not only able to read in Dutch but she was also well versed in English and French. But later the Dutchman turned into a monster, who spent his time in a state of drunkenness at the whorehouse nearby, and left the running of the farm in the hands of his mistress, the Nyai. This is not really explained: Mellema's character is not clearly delineated, the only account of his life being that narrated by Nyai Ontosoroh herself. He became so degenerate that he even raped his own daughter, Annelies. When he dies as a result of his hedonist lifestyle, it turned out that he was still married to a Dutch woman in Holland by whom he had a son. This son, Annelies' half brother, challenged the Nyai and her daughter for the ownership of the farm.

B.2 Commentaries

Besides Annelies, the Nyai also has a son from Mellema, Robert. If Annelies is depicted as a very loving and dutiful daughter, Robert is the opposite. He is a philanderer, lazy and disrespectful to his Indonesian mother. In any case both characters are unsatisfactorily depicted. Annelies, for example, in the beginning is seen as a free and uninhibited and cheerful girl, who is a good horse woman, an
efficient worker and a practical and sensible woman and a right hand helper to her mother. By the middle of the novel without sufficient grounding she comes as a melancholy woman, erratic and her love to Minke is expressed in a rather imbalanced way. She depends on her mother for even the smallest of decisions. In contrast to her, the mother, Nyai Ontosoroh comes out as a super-woman, strong and domineering, a match to the highly opinionated smart Minke.

Although the author has spent a great deal of time exploring the characters of these three figures, Minke, Nyai and Annelies, more than he has ever done in his earlier novels, the three characters simply do not ring true. Their depictions are a regression from Pramoedya's portrayal of the heroine of Gadis Pantai and her aristocratic husband. One critic of Bumi Manusia has noticed how the novel has characters in which some are extremely good and virtuous and can be likened to the Pandawa in the wayang while some others are so monstrous and degenerate and can be likened to the Kurawas {22}.

But despite Pramoedya's weak depiction of his main characters, (which in any case should not come as a surprise, as this is one of his literary traits) he is able to convey the lifestyle of this bourgeois class very well. With meticulous detail, Pramoedya depicts not only the external appearances of such a life, with its material comfort and wealth but also the hollowness, coolness and psychological tensions evident in that materialistic world. The hostility between the Nyai and her son is presented with convincing detail. The initial

22. See review by S.I. Poeradjiastra mentioned in fn 18.
apprehension that Minke as a native born Javanese feels when he meets the family for the first time and his meeting with Eurasian girl who talks to him as an equal for the first time ever in his life, is depicted very well by the author. Furthermore Pramoedya has depicted in a clever way the subtle differences in the laws applicable to different groups. Native nobles enjoy certain privileges which are not available to native commoners. Yet the native nobles in turn lack many privileges enjoyed by Eurasians. Finally the Eurasians are second class citizens in comparison to the Europeans.

At the end of the story, Minke marries Annelies. She however is forced to leave her legally married (only) husband, by order of her half brother, in order to come to Europe to be with him. This brother has the law behind him because he is in theory her guardian. Since Annelies is married to a native, her half brother, who is a full blood European, has more power over her than her own husband.

Inspite of its numerous shortcomings in comparison to his earlier, but unfinished novel Gadis Pantai, we can see that Pramoedya has tried to come to grips with the dynamic historical reality which formed the social and political conditions in his country. All his research on Indonesia’s colonial past had this purpose - to enable him to understand the nature of the background from which radical and progressive ideas emerged among his people.
C Conclusion

It has been pointed out earlier that as far back as in 1958, in his article 'Sastra Indonesia Masa Lalu dan Hari Depan' [23], Pramoedya was saying that if Indonesian literature is to be developed, the writers must look, among other things, at the sources of the historical past that have produced the Sumpah Pemuda (The Youth Declaration of 1928), the establishment of the Bahasa Indonesia, and the various peasant uprisings that tried to oust the colonial government. The writers 'wajib menyadari taraf perjuangan masa kuna yang mereka masuki' ('should be aware of the level of strife inherent in the drive of the people in the past'). For his part Pramoedya studied the work of Multatuli, Max Havelaar, and evaluated its impact on Indonesian national consciousness. In a similar way he looked at the writings of Dr Abdul Rivai, and those of Kartini. With regard to Kartini, his studies compelled him to write an autobiography of her, to relate her to the social background from which she came and to elaborate on the contradictions and social tensions in her immediate environment which brought forth her radical and progressive ideas.

His non-fictional work on Kartini is a basis for his later choice of another historical figure, Tirto Adisuryo, as the main character to figure in his creative work Bumi Manusia and its sequels. He had planned as far back as the mid 50s to write a major imaginative work based on a historical figure associated with the development of Indonesian national consciousness. He anticipated then, that it would take him at least 10 years to prepare for his epic, and hence he had

23. See ch. 7 of this thesis.
hoped to write it by 1965.

It will of course take another analysis, maybe another thesis to analyse the symbolism in Bumi Manusia and its sequels and to find out in what ways these works reflect contemporary thought in Indonesia, perceived as they were by a man living in a detention camp of Buru. In any case, at whatever cost to himself, Pramoedya was able to realise parts of his literary plans. His period of detention did not in fact prevent him from creating what he had in mind before 1965.

By setting his novels in the colonial past, as he had himself planned, and as he had himself done with Gadis Pantai, Pramoedya has a medium in which he can, if he wants to, express his 'curbed' progressive thoughts, 'revolutionary' ones at that, through his characters. On the surface, these novels are directed against the Dutch colonial oppression rather than against the 'actual' oppression of the contemporary Indonesian government. Bumi Manusia does not discuss 'class struggle' as much. However, it does emphasise the question of who makes the law and who benefits from it.

During the colonial era, the Indonesian elite, its feudal, administrative officials and their offspring, the western-educated new bourgeoisie, were subjugated, hindered and prevented from realising their potential as human beings. This control on the Indonesian bourgeoisie compelled them to have radical ideas to right the injustices which were imposed against their interests.
This novel, by personalising these events through a historical figure Tirto Adisuryo, makes available to Indonesians a piece of their past history. While an imaginative work of fiction is not history, the actualisation contained in the work is a part of the development of Indonesian historical thought.
PART D

CONCLUSION

In Part D of the thesis, we studied the literary writings of Preseisdy without relating them to contemporary social factors. At this point, Preseisdy came to believe that the people had gained nothing from the revolution, having lost the privileges they used to enjoy during the colonial era.

When Tung Meigong's...
CONCLUSION

In part B of the thesis we looked at the literary writings of Pramoedya without relating them to contemporary social forces. At this point, Pramoedya came to believe that the priyayi had gained nothing from the revolution, having lost the privileges they used to enjoy during the colonial era.

'Dia Yang Menyerah'

In 'Dia Yang Menyerah', the revolution is seen to have created conflict in society and to have made it possible for 'socially undesirable' members of society (the non-priyayi) to gain an advantage over the traditional elite. Another notable point is the author's strong aversion to 'politics' of whatever ideological stream. Those characters in 'DYM', the priyayi and non-priyayi alike, who are involved in politics, are punished by coming to a tragic end. At this point, Pramoedya regarded politics as the force that promotes 'wrong', 'shallow' and 'progressive' ideas among the people, causing dissension among them and undermining their traditional values. Pramoedya thus subconsciously believed that the traditional values of the pre-Japanese period were the 'correct' ones to uphold. For him, the priyayi were imbued with virtue, idealism, and self restraint, in contrast to the vile, callous, opportunistic and vindictive behaviour of the wong-cilik. Furthermore, those from whatever class who can accept their fate gladly (nrima) are commendable, those who refused to comply will end with misfortune.
This social framework is reproduced in his writings that deal specifically with members of the priyayi as well as those that deal with the wong-cilik. Furthermore in 'YSH', 'Sunat' and 'KLD' the narrator expresses a nostalgic longing for the 'glorious past' and its disappearing life style. It is apparent that this is also the author's own outlook on his childhood world. This is substantiated by the fact that those narrators view the social privileges enjoyed by their priyayi family with a nostalgic uncritical mind.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the author glossed over the world of the colonial era. It was no utopia. Sickness, poverty, failure, and hypocrisy did exist. In fact 'YSH' contains a vivid depiction of a mother's alienation while living in comfort with servants to help her run the house, a house which in turn is filled with numerous children and relatives. While the father is depicted as kind, with a high status job as a teacher, affectionate to his children, his long disappearance from home cause much distress to the mother and strains their relationship which in turn creates unease for the narrator.

While the mother is depicted as very religious and has a wealthy father whom she can turn to in time of distress, as time passes, with her father dead, and her children grown, her religion and her husband are not a sufficient bulwark against her experiencing the unpleasantness of life. Worse still she becomes alienated from the other members in her own household, as well as her own mother. The dominant theme of the story is this strong sense of individual alienation. This is probably why critics living in modern alienating
industrialised capitalist societies are drawn to this piece.

In 'Sunat', the author pinpoints the nature of religious orientation among members of the affluent class, the priyayi. Their adherence to religious rituals is based on social commitments rather than on religious convictions. Furthermore their rituals are secular in character and are an expression of a cultural taste that befits their social position. The rituals are adopted to reinforce and make public their dominant position in society. Hence unwittingly even at this early stage Pramoedya shows he understands well the relationship of economics to social privilege.

'KLD', which is set in the colonial era, and Bukan Pasar Malam set in contemporary 1960 have strikingly different views about the priyayi families and their political commitments. In the colonial era, although the father experiences a setback in his political activities and turns to gambling, the mention of the arrival of a new member in the family (the narrator's younger brother) indicates that the author does not necessarily regard that the political efforts of the father as useless. In fact he must have seen it as the foundation for the building of a new and better era.

In BPM, on the other hand, he perceives the surrounding world and contemporary times as bleak. He regards commitments to his own newly wedded wife, and to his own father as burdensome. Heavy economic commitments from the narrator are now required if he is to retain the family's commanding social status in the local community of Blora. At the same time he himself has come to believe that his father's past good works have borne no fruit. Their only result is a decrepit
house, a sick sister with TB, no proper medication or hospital facilities for the father himself, and (worse still) a feeling of futility. By early 1950 Pramoedya strongly believed that the revolution had not produced beneficial results for himself or his family nor (by inference) for the priyayi as a social class.

A simplistic contrast to the above depiction of the priyayi families of Blora is the depiction of the wong-cilik of Blora written in the same period. In these stories, the wong-cilik barely survive at a subsistence level. Yet they are portrayed as contented with their lives. Although they are social outcasts in Blora, they seem to feel themselves to be part of society.

On the other hand, the outcasts of Jakarta are displaced beings, restless, discontent and conscious that they belong nowhere. Still, the wong-cilik of Blora and the underdogs of Jakarta do have in common that they are 'different' from the priyayi, having their own mores and standards.

These stories set in Jakarta show a progressive sharpening of social attitudes by Pramoedya. In 'Djongos + Babu' the vilest characters of all are the domestic servants of the Dutch masters. By 1955, in 'Machluk2 ...' the depiction of domestic servants (this time servants of priyayi) changes. While earlier the servants are accorded a slave mentality, by 1955, they are depicted as an exploited class. Further the priyayi are no longer seen as imbued with unblemished virtues and the repository of 'correct' ethics.
At the same time, as is shown in 'Ikan-ikan ...', Pramoedya also sees that even people who were privileged in the past can find themselves living as vagabonds in the streets of Jakarta. This by itself is not of such profundity, but it is significant that Pramoedya has depicted the situation as involving two ex-freedom fighters. This reinforces our argument that for Pramoedya the revolution had failed to realise the hopes it raised. When ex-freedom fighters can find no respectable place in the country which they had helped to establish, the country is going in the wrong direction.

One point that must be stressed here is that at least in his literary writings up to 1955 (up to when he wrote 'Machluk2 ...') he accepted the social framework as it existed during the colonial era, in which the priyayi (imperfect as they may be) know 'all the answers' and the wong-cilik, (good as they may be with their 'quaint' mores) are placid, child-like and naive. In addition those wong-cilik who refuse to accept their lowly position with respect to the priyayi and who want to make themselves as affluent as the priyayi are seen by Pramoedya as brutal and uncivilised beings.

At the same time, although Pramoedya was critical of the ways many priyayi related to the wong-cilik, and was disturbed that many of the wong-cilik were considerably disadvantaged in comparison to the affluent priyayi, he continued to assume that only the priyayi are endowed with wisdom.

In his writings in the early 50's, unconsciously he saw the priyayi's mores as virtues which the wong-cilik would need to emulate in order to become civilised. It was only with his story ... on the
priyayi servants in 1955 that Pramoedya rejected such a framework. The priyayi are no longer imbued with virtue and are no longer a model for the wong-cilik to conform to. Priyayi norms are no longer the way to remedy the undesirable features of society. The basis of society as he knew it has fallen apart. Conformity to the dominant norms is no longer the answer.

It cannot be the answer if those who are supposed to set those norms are incapable of doing so, being themselves decadent. At least in the story on the Jakarta servants of 1955, the elite were merely new elite, who not long ago were servants themselves. This newly arrived elite are not priyayi, but nor are they wong-cilik. They are normless.

In such a situation a more radical and drastic change is necessary to cure the ills of society. The dichotomy of priyayi and wong-cilik must be replaced with something else. In order to find this other new framework, Pramoedya has to completely discard the old one. His rejection has begun with these stories from Jakarta.

Part C contrasts the influence of 'real life' social forces in Indonesian society with the social forces delineated in his fictional works discussed in Part B. The reality of those social forces are discussed with respect to the ways they are reflected in the outlook of Pramoedya's writing. At the same time the section delineates how Pramoedya tried to conform to and (later) change those forces.
We looked in particular at the literary world in which Pramoedya had established his reputation and in which he tried to blend harmoniously with other writers, critics and the reading public. The relationship of Pramoedya as an award-winning novelist with the established critics from the Gelanggang group was a strained one and far from being harmonious. In fact he increasingly felt alienated from these writers and critics. His critical literary essays point to that, and it is echoed by the alienation expressed by the writer-character in his short story 'Sunyi-senyap'. The alienation of the busker in 'Kecapi' was also cited by the critic Balfas from Gelanggang as nothing more than an extention of Pramoedya's own sense of personal alienation. At this point Pramoedya was frustrated in trying to resolve his own personal problems. In order to please the established literary pundits, he attempted to meet the 'aesthetic standards' prescribed by them, as well as giving explanations for the reasons behind his writings.

The whole episode shows how crucial the influence of literary criticisms and debates can be on the originality and subsequent development of a writer. Although Pramoedya was an award-winning novelist and should have danced to his own music, he tried his best to accommodate the literary whims of his 'universal humanist' critics.

This was to change by 1957. After his return from China in October 1956, after the confrontation with Balfas in a literary seminar at the University of Indonesia in December of that year, and after Sukarno's konsepsi in February 1957, Pramoedya abandoned his attempt to dance to the tune set by the Gelanggang literary
establishment. Thereafter he joined ranks with the 'progressive' forces in the literary world, which in this period comprised the Lekra group of writers. These Lekra writers and critics promoted local talent and praised the nativist characteristics of Indonesian culture, a contrast to Gelanggang's taste for western derivative cultural norms behind the facade of 'universal humanism'.

Lekra, the only substantial alternative group, with its 'social(ist) realist' approach to literature was also the literary group with the closest links with a political party, in this case the P.K.I. Lekra writers insisted that their ideology was in command directing the purpose of their writings. While members of Gelanggang as individuals were no less political than those belonging to Lekra they appeared to submerge their individual ideological orientation so as to keep it apart from their writing. At the same time Gelanggang as a group differentiated itself from the programs of either the Moslem parties, the nationalists or the socialist parties. In this sense it was possible for the Moslem writer Hamka, the Sukarnoist poet Sitor Situmorang and Pramoedya in the early 50s to be part of Gelanggang. The Gelanggang writers were more skilful at making their own political ideology a private matter rather than the concern of the group as a whole.

When the President's konsepsi prompted Pramoedya to air his views publicly in the communist daily Harian Rakyat and the communist party's theoretical journal Bintang Merah, he was seen to have gone to the other side. His decision to tackle controversies head-on was made more dramatic by this controversial action than it would have
been if he had chosen to express his views in other journals or dailies. This action was one of the many ways Pramoedya chose to question conventional prejudices including anti-communism.

It is in that light that, from 1957 onwards, Pramoedya adopted a 'progressive' social outlook. His writings on Kartini compelled the readers to reevaluate their traditional feudal-based outlook on the relation of this female emancipator to her oppressors, the Dutch colonial government. For Pramoedya, Kartini was not so much the victim of her feudal social background as the victim of foreign oppression. Though accused of resorting to writing political propaganda, he did make a substantial progressive contribution to the field of literature, literary criticism and cultural debates in general. His 'socialist realist' approach provided him with new insights into the articulation of the historical development of modern Indonesian literature, as in his 'Socialist Realism...' paper, his paper on history and literary criticism, and his paper on the novel.

His defence of the Chinese minority can be construed to support the P.K.I.'s official programs. But since this work on the controversial Chinese minority, is a journalistic piece rather than a literary one, it cannot be said that in it he sold his literature for politics. Pramoedya's expression of opinion on this issue is no more culpable than those of Mochtar Lubis (who is a renowned novelist as well as being a noted journalist) who expressed strong anti-Chinese feelings in the mid 50s. (This was in articles centered around the corrupt businessman Lie Hok Tay and published in his own daily Indonesia Raya.)
There seems to be a double standard on the question of the political views that are permissible for a writer to express. They are non-political only as long as the views are anti-communist. Ironically as far as Pramoedya's own literary development is concerned, it was during this very period that Pramoedya produced his finest progressive literary work, Gadis Pantai. In this unfinished work, the sinuous relation between political ideology and beautiful literary expression is expressed in a profound yet delicate manner. The work conveys uncannily the social outlook of its period. The delineation of the characters (which always had been Pramoedya's weak point) is meticulously depicted and convincing. His progressive political commitment enhanced the quality of the work and forced him to come to grips with the personalities of his main characters in a psychological as well as social way.

The really damaging part of Pramoedya's literary career was his stand in the literary conflict of 1963 and his strong personal reaction - amounting to a vendetta - against the signatories of the October Manifesto Kebudayaan. Many of the manikebu's supporters were intimidated and some were forced out of their jobs (often on the instigation of Pramoedya himself). It is true that in the past the Gelanggang did not act in such a 'despicable' manner towards its literary opponents. However, we must remember that in the early 50s, the Gelanggang writers and critics were the literary establishment. They controlled editorial boards of the government publishing house Balai Pustaka, and the numerous respectable literary journals, and they dominated the teaching of modern Indonesian literature at the universities. Being the establishment they did not need to silence
their opponents in order to be recognised and accepted. Pramoedya and his group believed they had to 'crush' their opponents and thus obtain control of the authoritative literary media in order to gain the public credibility they had been so long denied.

At the initial stage, Pramoedya had tried to dissuade Jassin from his 'non-political' stance towards literature, (a stance which essentially had come to mean, in the jargon of the day, an anti-'progressive', and anti-communist attitude). When Jassin steadfastly refused Pramoedya's 'invitation' the latter launched strong verbal attacks on Jassin and on the rest of manikebu signatories. Outwardly the war, as it was declared then, was not so much between the Lekra group and the ex-Gelanggang who were now manikebuists, but more between Pramoedya and his Lentera group and those manikebuists.

This personal debate, disguised as literary polemics, manifested the sharpening of dissension between writers who had no aversion to communism (the Lekra and L.K.N. groups) and the anti-communist writers (the manikebuists and Lesbumi). This is substantiated further by the nation-wide literary symposia staged in 1964. One conference was sponsored by the armed forces and received no blessing from the 'Bearer of the Mandate of People's Suffering' while the other conference was organised by the P.K.I. and did receive the 'Great Leader's' blessing.

While the opposing literary groups were busy contesting control of the literary world, the P.K.I. had suffered a set back in the countryside of Java. In its aksi sepihak program the communists and
their sympathisers were confronted and largely repulsed by both the nationalists and Moslem landlords and peasants. In retrospect one can see how those literary debates which were expressed with such verbal malice and the aksi sepihak itself were merely preparatory battles, the perang kembang - the mock battles of a wayang lakon. The real battle only took place in the blood bath of 1965-1966.

Having said that, what can we make of Pramoedya's development as a writer and his contribution to Indonesian literature in general? It is clear that Pramoedya, as a political being played his game and lost (just like Jassin and Mochtar Lubis had played theirs and won). But as far as Pramoedya's literary career is concerned, we can see how his concerns and his involvement in non-literary matters were necessary concerns that had helped him expand and sharpen his understanding of society. At the same time they helped him develop his literary talents by exploring new venues which were considered taboo by other writers.

His increasing feeling of alienation and his disappointment at the results the Indonesian revolution had brought for his own personal life and for others in the early 50s, his strong aversions to the capitalistic world that he had experienced briefly in Holland in 1953, the contrast he observed in China in 1956, and the political confusion that was seen by many Indonesians (among them Sukarno himself) as a stumbling block to the realisation of a desired society - all of these forced Pramoedya to reevaluate his own role as a writer. He sought to
overcome his sense of alienation through active participation with the dominant forces at that time, those behind Sukarno. Sukarno's konsepsi had opened a door for him to take a new path.

In a sense Pramoedya can be seen as a true artist. He seems to have predicted, his own fate when he wrote 'DYM' in 1950. In those days, he disapproved of those who challenged or questioned the traditional social system, and he was repelled by the kind of 'progressive' political ideologies that were popular during the revolution. As a writer, he has condemned those who immersed themselves in politics to a tragic end. However, in 1957 (in his article 'Djembatan Gantung') he asserted that the viewpoint of 'DYM' is incorrect. He henceforth adopted the 'progressive' stance taken by the politically minded characters in that story, and like them he became fated to become a victim of history.

He could not know, just as many of his fellows could not, that the 'progressive' stance which he supported was to cause a backlash. This occurred when the armed forces, the Moslem groups and sizeable nationalist and marxist groups (i.e. from Murba) and the 'silent majority' ceased their support of Sukarno and the P.K.I. Sukarno and many other losers in the 1965 battle, wrongly perceived the political game which was being played. The battle was not a struggle for supremacy between 'progressive' forces in society and 'non-progressve' ones: it was between the communist and anti-communist forces. That had always been the case even in the early 1950's, and was well understood by the founders of the two opposing literary camps, the 'universal humanist' Gelanggang and the
'social realist' Lekra.

It was the later 'progressive' adherents to Lekra who deluded themselves about the true nature of the struggle, and who suffered for many years as a consequence. Pramoedya though never an avowed communist, had in fact recognised the nature of the struggle from 1957 onwards, (as documented in his choice of journal in which he had expressed his support for the konsepsi), but was also deluded about the solidarity of the 'progressive' forces. He paid a high price for his commitment, and thus acted out in his own life the experiences of the characters he had created more than a decade earlier.

From this study of the work and life of Pramoedya we can see how intricate is the dependence between author, his creation, his critics and the general public. Hence for a meaningful appreciation of literature one must also deal with external forces outside the work of literature, that to take account of the author himself, the period he lived in and the society in which he belonged.
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Bijdragen Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde

BT Bintang Timur

HR Harian Rakjat

MI Mimbar Indonesia

SW Star Weekly

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