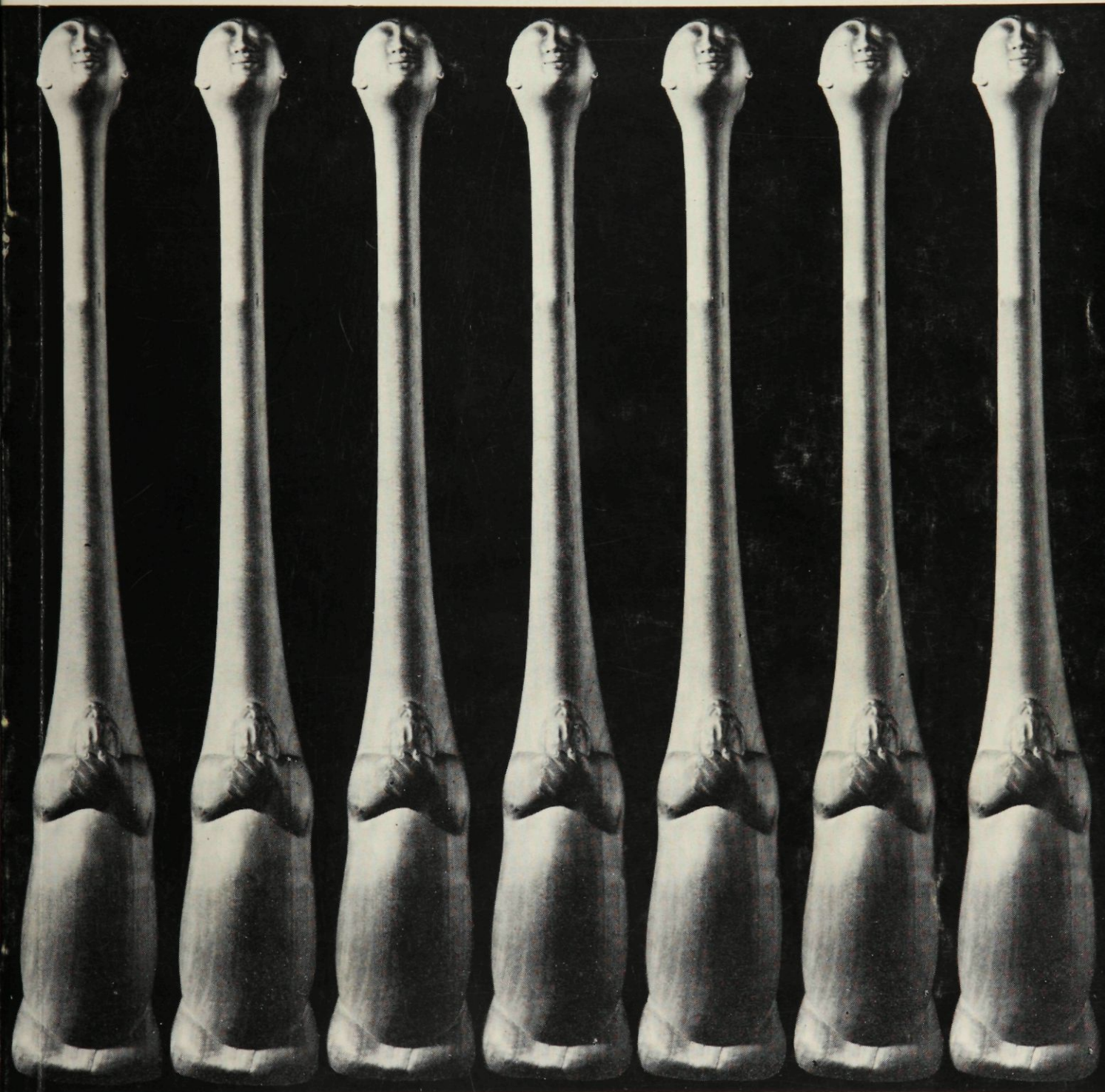


# westerly



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**SPECIAL ISSUE: INDONESIA**



# westerly

a quarterly review

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University of Western Australia Press

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### Cover Illustration

A multiple photograph, from an original photograph by Fritz Kos, of Dewi Seri, the Balinese rice goddess, in a contemporary *togog* (Balinese wood carving) reinterpretation by Madé Trongking. The goddess' virtue, virginity and fertility-bestowing life force are represented in a somewhat distant facial serenity, set off from the body trunk by an extraordinary elongation of the neck. Below this the neck merges imperceptibly into the upper trunk enclosed in truncated arms that dramatically emphasise outstretched hands touching each other in part obeisance, partly offering a symbolic fruit of fertility. The whole *togog*, whilst contemporary in its simplification of line and detail, is nonetheless cast in the traditional phallic elongation of almost all Balinese rice goddesses.

Madé Trongking lives at the small village of Sumampan in the Sukawati parish of the Gianjar District of South Central Bali. Though probably the finest woodcarver of the last decade, he lives in relative poverty punctuated by periods of relative extravagance and largesse when he has had a success in the gaming-cock arena, or has sold a *togog* for a handsome price. His primary life interest is preening his fighting cocks and participating in the tense *melées* of cock-fight combats in the village and market town arenas. His second interest is his three wives, who care for his half-acre of wet ricefield, and during the agricultural slack, patiently 'polish' his *togogs* with bits of glass. Woodcarving, which he enjoys but considers hard work, is largely a stand-by to help extricate himself from webs of debt incurred in the cock-fighting arena.

—M.A.J.

The cover-decoration of *Westerly* No. 1 of 1966 consisted of a photographic enlargement of a head from Aubrey Beardsley's drawing "The Peacock Skirt", the colour-scheme being that of the original *Yellow Book*. The reproduction was intended not only to decorate the issue, but to mark the recent full-scale retrospective exhibition of Beardsley's work at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and to point to his central position as heir to the Pre-Raphaelites and precursor of the Vorticists.

—T.H.G.

# westerly

Editorial: John Barnes, Peter Cowan, Tom Gibbons, Patrick Hutchings.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE INVITATION EXTENDED to me by the Editorial Board of *Westerly*, to serve as guest editor for an issue devoted entirely to modern Indonesian literature, struck me as exciting, although the undertaking appeared somewhat hazardous. Academic instruction in the languages, literatures and arts of our Asian neighbours has hardly begun in Western Australia: at best we may say that this is in pre-natal gestation, for though it is not yet acknowledged and established as an independent corpus in the body academic, there are manifest signs that it is alive and kicking.

This venture is thus intended to introduce something of the recent literature of our nearest neighbour, Indonesia, to that small but important part of the public that concerns itself with literary developments and journals. Certain special features of the composition of this issue should be noted. First, it dwells upon those areas of modern Indonesian literature in which the greatest advances have been made, namely poetry and the short story. That is not to say that the novel, novella or essays are not to be found. They are all there, but thus far they have made a lesser impact. For readers who may wish to know more of the Indonesian novel, one or two, such as Mochtar Lubis' *Twilight in Djakarta* have been ably rendered into English (by Clair Holt) but it is unfortunate that Achdiat Mihardja's *Atheist* is not yet available in English translation, for this is unquestionably one of the finest novels yet written by an Indonesian. Perhaps we may not have long to wait for this, for Mr. Mihardja is now a Senior Lecturer in Indonesian and Malay Studies at the Australian National University, where resources for skilled translation from Indonesian to English are perhaps better than anywhere else with the exception of Cornell University.

To return to our present project, I must at once point out that this is not the first occasion upon which modern Indonesian literature has been presented to the Australian public in English translation. If I am not mistaken, *Meanjin* was a pioneer in including an occasional Indonesian short story of which Professor A. H. Johns was the translator and annotator. However, *Westerly* is the first Australian literary journal that has given the courtesy and hospitality of its imprimatur to an entire issue devoted to Indonesian literature.

The selection of materials for inclusion in an issue of this kind is a product of several factors, each sufficiently important to deserve brief mention. The poems in Part II have been translated by lecturers, tutors and students of the University of Western Australia who participated in an intensive twelve weeks' course in the Indonesian and Malay language, held from April to June, 1965. The premise with which the course was conducted was that adult language learners, given sufficient motivation and study material, could within a relatively short time break through the barrier of unfamiliarity and acquire a basis for conversation, comprehending Indonesian broadcasts and reading Indonesian newspapers. A final test of the experiment was an exercise in translating a number of recent poems, and in this the class acquitted itself with signal, if unexpected, distinction. The idea of this special issue gradually grew around these workshop translations, and the interest of the students and others in

making a closer acquaintance with a literature whose freshness and freakish brilliance contrast so strangely with its adolescent 'discovery' of style and forms that we—purged by Joyce, Gide and Brecht—now consider somewhat rococo, sentimental and passé.

But before proceeding to the poetry and short stories, something must be said about the language itself. This is admirably done in Section I by Professor Johns and Drs.\* Soebardi each dealing with a different aspect of the transformation of Malay into Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian national language.

In the final section, the *tjerpén* or short story is presented to readers through three examples of the writing of Indonesia's finest workman in this art, Pramudya Ananta Tur.† These are introduced by Drs. Soebardi and are translated by his students at the Australian National University.

Any anthology is arbitrary in its selection of materials for inclusion (and, *coute-que-coute*, exclusion) and is therefore an inevitable butt of critical ire. In this case we are exposing ourselves not only to this, but, because of the brevity imposed by the journal's customary habit of format and space, to even sharper criticism. This we anticipate and allow for—hoping thereby to have drawn some of its sting before it strikes. We are more concerned, however, that the issue as a whole might strike some readers as a worthwhile literary *hors d'oeuvre*.

I wish to thank Professor Allan Edwards and Mr. John O'Brien for their encouragement in contemplating and supporting this project.

M.A.J.

\* Abbreviation of *Doctorandus*, a Dutch and Indonesian academic title, approximately equivalent to our Master's degree.

† As we go to press news has reached us of the detention and uncertain fate of Pramudya as a consequence of the September 30th incident and its aftermath.

# A NATIONAL LANGUAGE

## BAHASA INDONESIA AS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE

by A. H. Johns

THE ISLANDS OF INDONESIA are a treasure trove for the linguist. The various migrations of peoples from continental South-East Asia in ancient times, and the separation of the various island communities by the sea, has resulted in a remarkably rich and complex pattern of linguistic development.

The estimate usually given for the number of languages spoken in Indonesia, as opposed to dialects, is between two and three hundred. However, just as the majority of languages of Western Europe, such as Russian, French, German and Swedish, no matter how divergent they appear, belong to the same Indo-European linguistic family, so the majority of languages of Indonesia, despite wide differences, belong to what linguists call the Western or Indonesian branch of the Malayo-Polynesian family. This family, which must be one of the most widespread in the world, extends from Madagascar in the West, Formosa in the North, Easter Island in the East and New Zealand in the South. Several of the Indonesian languages have rich and ancient literatures that are still extant. Javanese is usually pointed to as a prime example of a resplendent Indonesian literature, which reached its apogee in the tenth century A.D., in the Old Javanese version of the Indian epic, the Ramayana. Yet we should be cautious in our judgment. There are no Javanese literary works extant prior to 991 A.D. The Ramayana, however, is obviously of a highly developed and sophisticated literary tradition. There is only one explanation; a great deal has been lost.

It is reasonably certain that Javanese is not the only language of which a great deal has been lost. Although the oldest Malay literature extant is written in the Arabic script, and thus dates from no earlier than the 17th century, the doubling of the letters indicated by the *tashdid* sign in a way corresponding to letter doubling in the Javanese script, indicates quite clearly the existence of an older tradition of Malay writing, of which, alas, none remains, except for a few inscriptions. However, it is unthinkable that in a Malay Kingdom of the mighty Ciriwijaya (South Sumatra), where, as I-Tsing tells us, in the eighth century there were over a thousand Buddhist monks, and which was thus an important centre of learning, the art of literature should not have flourished.

That Old Malay, as well as Old Javanese, has a considerable prestige value, is clear from the existence of an inscription in Old Malay from Central Java. At all events it is clear that though Javanese is the only regional language with an extant glorious past, it is not the only Indonesian language to have had such a past. This early use and stature of Malay is of tremendous importance for the development of Bahasa Indonesia 1,500 years later. It is worth while commenting at greater length on the historical evolution of Malay towards Bahasa Indonesia.

Factors relating to the spread of a language are in every case quite incidental to the language itself. English is a world language today, not by virtue of any special feature, but as the result of the historical accident of the migration of English speaking peoples to America, Canada and Australia, and the development of the British Empire. Thus Malay must have become the leading language of the Indonesian world as early as the seventh century, both because Criwijaya was a commercial maritime empire, and because its political authority covered a wide area, including Malaya and extending from Java to Cambodia. Javanese during this period, being the language of the inland agrarian based kingdom of Mataram, would have had little chance to make its influence felt in the same way.

It is a characteristic of Indonesian history that the shifting of the centres of political power had little effect on the continuity of the cultural pattern, and the dominance of the East Javanese Kingdom of Madjapahit in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was not of sufficient duration or intensity to enable Javanese to replace Malay. Indeed the rapid development of Tumasek (modern Singapore) and then of Malacca following the decline of Criwijaya, ensured the continuity of the traditional function of Malay as a major cultural and commercial language in the archipelago (as Europeans discovered it to be on their arrival in the Eastern seas).

Nothing could be more misleading than to imagine this language as a mere language of the bazaars, a kind of pidgin. To do so would be to underestimate gravely the organisational level of the kingdoms in question, and the complexity of their administration.

In Criwijaya and Malacca, Malay must have been the language of business regulation, of merchant and craft guild organisation, of city government, of state bureaucracy and administration, and an adequate language in the fields of currency and banking, military and naval organisation, commercial regulations and law. A port and city state of the magnitude of Malacca, with its extensive imperium was not to be administered by a language of the bazaars.

It was during the Malacca period that Malay became the cultural language of Islam, the language through which Islam was preached and taught throughout the archipelago. This was the case even in Java, to the extent that the earliest extant Islamic documents in Javanese show clearly the influence of Malay structure.

A brief example in translation will illustrate the subtlety and complexity of the thought that seventeenth century Malay could communicate with accuracy and lucidity.

This grade of Unity is the first determination which results from the grade of non-determination, and may be characterised as unifying and dividing, because it is a manifestation of Being, and Being combines absoluteness and determinancy and distinguishes them as well, thereby comprising whatever is concealed in all Predispositions and Relations.

This is obviously no language of the bazaar. Unfortunately European pedantry has quite effectively emasculated Peninsula Malay—by disregarding if not condemning any use of the language that did not conform to the classical norm of the sixteenth century Sedjarah Melaju. The Malay Annals remember

that the early centuries of European contact with Malaya corresponded to the period of the rise of the Academic to ensure the preservation of correct speech in the European countries. The attitude has persisted fairly widely up to the present day, with the result that the style of Malay of the Malacca court has been regarded as the norm for Malay, by divine right as it were, and deviations from this norm, are considered lacking in interest. Thus an eminent British authority can refer to the style of Malay in which the extract I cited above was written as a travesty of the natural idiom and lucidity of classical Malay. As Teeuw comments, one would with more justice say that the author was creating a new aspect of the language, which fulfilled a definite social need. Likewise Europeans have popularised the notion that Malay is an "easy" language, presumably because it indicates time relationships in a way quite different from languages of the Indo-European family; whereas standard colloquial Malay, if one excepts the question of tones, presents more structural and morphological problems to the English speaking student than does colloquial Chinese—the complications introduced by the use of characters for the writing of Chinese being quite extraneous to the language itself.

Thus, when in 1928 a group of young Indonesians formally accepted Malay as the basis for Bahasa Indonesia, the national language they vowed to create, their choice was the only possible one, practically and historically; but they faced many difficulties and much prejudice, a prejudice which still persists among many British Malay Civil Service savants of Malay language and culture.

The Indonesians of 1928 then had to struggle both against prejudice towards Malay, and natural interest of the Dutch in making their language the effective link between the various parts of Indonesia with each other and the outside world. They also had to struggle against the aesthetic school, who preferred on aesthetic grounds a language such as Javanese—without realising that the Javanese language could not become a national language and remain in the form they admired without a corresponding expansion of the area of Javanese culture. There were also the pedants who were ready to denounce any attempt to make Malay into the language of a modern urban society.

The promoters of Bahasa Indonesia started with this ideal; to take traditional Malay, develop it consciously and deliberately into a language of the modern world, and win for it acceptance as the National Language of Indonesia for every linguistic group within the archipelago. A language of the modern world must be able to express every idea of the modern world: it must be adequate for science, the arts, law, commerce and administration.

One of the most important single steps in the development of Bahasa Indonesia was the foundation of the literary periodical, *Pudjangga Baru* in 1933. It offered scope for the publication of short stories, poems and essays, and served as a forum for the lively discussion of the basis and content of the new Indonesian national culture which the founders of the periodical hoped to develop. By using Bahasa Indonesia as a medium, often encountering great difficulty, they struggled to develop it. The only way of developing a language after all is to use it!

The Japanese occupation gave a great boost to the development of Bahasa Indonesia. The use of Dutch was forbidden, and it was replaced by the

use of Bahasa Indonesia alongside Japanese. It was during the Japanese occupation moreover that the seeds were laid for the remarkable efflorescence of a new Indonesian literature in the period immediately following the declaration of Independence. Writers such as Achdiat Karta Mihardja, Pramudya Ananta Tur, Idrus and Chairil Anwar had, by 1949, established its integrity and origin. It is a truly National Language, in every respect a language, and a genuine expression of the Indonesian national spirit. The enormous spread of education throughout Indonesia will ensure its further development and fertility.

Today, in Indonesia, its adaptability and sensivity are taken for granted, and it is difficult to recall the days of the thirties when a great deal of courage was required to use it as a medium for the discussion of abstract principles. Perhaps the greatest demonstration of the success of its pioneers is to be seen in two facts: Indonesia does not need provision for the permissive use of a foreign language in any area of modern life, neither has it, for all its linguistic diversity, ever encountered the problems associated with the rivalry of linguistic groups such as have disturbed India.

\* An earlier text of this article appeared in a publication of the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAHASA INDONESIA AS A LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION IN ARTS AND SCIENCES

by Soebardi

### 1. *Introduction.*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALAY into Bahasa Indonesia, which occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, cannot be separated from the development of Indonesian society from that of a colony to that of an independent country. An important and decisive factor in this development was the spirit of nationalism, which had as its ideals the establishment of an independent state with its own national language, Bahasa Indonesia.<sup>1</sup>

This ideal was realised at the end of the Second World War with the proclamation of Indonesian independence on August 17th, 1945. It was formulated clearly in the provisional constitution, as it is in the present one: Bahasa Indonesia is the official language of the state.<sup>2</sup> This official recognition has meant that Bahasa Indonesia is the only official language used in legislation, in Parliament and Regional Assemblies, in communications concerning trade and economics, in newspapers and other mass-communication media, at all levels of education and as a medium of expression in the arts and sciences generally.

This paper will discuss the development of Bahasa Indonesia as a language of instruction and as a medium of expression in the arts and sciences from the following viewpoints:

1. The efforts which have been made to develop Bahasa Indonesia into an adequate language of instruction at all levels of education, and as a scientific medium of communication.
2. The difficulties involved and what has been done to solve them.

3. Problems of linguistic change which arise in the development of Bahasa Indonesia as a language of instruction and as a medium of scientific communication.

## 2. Language policy during the pre-war period.

Before discussing these problems I think it necessary to review briefly the language policy adopted by the Dutch Colonial Government during the pre-war period. This is relevant to our further discussion, because the Dutch policy had important implications for the later development of Bahasa Indonesia as the official national language.

The Dutch Colonial Government before the second world war adopted a discriminatory language policy. In the three-year and five-year Primary Schools the language of instruction was the regional vernacular. In Java, it was Javanese or Sundanese, in Bali the Balinese language and in Sumatra, Minangkabau, Batak, Achehnese or Malay. As a result, primary school leavers did not acquire the ability to read even the most elementary books on the arts and sciences, all of which were written in Dutch. It is true that at that time the main purpose of rural primary school education was to prepare village boys and girls for manual labour, for which only an elementary knowledge of reading and simple arithmetic was required.

Along with the rural Primary Schools, the Dutch Government established a seven-year Primary School in each capital city of a *Kabupaten* (regency); in the latter, Dutch was the official language of instruction. This was then followed by the establishment of Dutch-oriented High Schools and a few Faculties with Dutch as the language of instruction. The main goal of this policy, pioneered by Dr. G. J. Nieuwenhuis, was to maintain Dutch interests in Indonesia. Nieuwenhuis wrote: "The dissemination of language and culture is the most direct way of economic expansion. Every Dutch book will help to popularise Dutch merchandise and create a demand for it. It will provide the Dutch with easier employment. If one million educated Indonesians are gradually taught to speak and understand our language, then Dutch books, Dutch industry and Dutch thinking will remain influential and Dutch merchandise will long remain in demand until Indonesia becomes an autonomous nation."<sup>3</sup>

In this belief Dr. Nieuwenhuis proposed giving the Indonesians greater opportunity for learning Dutch. He even went further, proposing to make Dutch the common language of Indonesia. "If we are to promote the unity of the Netherlands East Indies, we should start with the upper class, the intellectual élite, and we should make Dutch, which represents an international culture, a common language". It was obvious that Nieuwenhuis' unrealistic proposal could not be successfully carried out, for he clearly had a deep anxiety about what seemed to be the promising future of the Malay language in Indonesia. This we can observe in his statement: "Any effort to make the Malay language a *lingua franca*, will only make the spread of Dutch difficult. It will hinder the introduction to Indonesia of an international culture and also disrupt the continuation of our interests. "This," he said "would be harmful to the Netherlands East Indies as well as to the Netherlands."<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, efforts to spread the Dutch language among the intellectual élite were successful, and the Dutch-speaking group expanded. A knowledge of Dutch accorded both prestige and power. It was also the key to a knowledge of Western culture.

At the same time a great need was felt within this intellectual group itself for a common language, which would serve as a binding force for groups in all regions, a binding force for the whole nation.

### 3. *The rôle of schools and other institutions in the development of Bahasa Indonesia.*

Before the second world war the schools did not play a significant rôle in the efforts to make Malay the national language of Indonesia, particularly as Dutch remained the language of instruction in all Westernized public schools. Almost all scientific books were written in Dutch. Malay was taught only as an ordinary unit at the three-year and five-year Primary Schools, Normal Schools and as an elective subject in Junior and Senior High Schools and at Civil Service Schools.

A significant contribution to the development of Malay before the war was, however, made by certain private institutions impelled by the nationalist ideal and spirit. Mention must here be made of the role played by *Taman Siswa* in the development of Malay as a language of instruction. From 1916 on, K. H. Dewantara, the founder of *Taman Siswa*, had been outspoken in his view that Malay should become the common language of the whole archipelago. To promote this, he argued, Malay should be the language of instruction in all schools. He therefore rejected the adoption of Dutch as a language of instruction and instead introduced Malay in all *Taman Siswa* schools. Other private schools followed the example of *Taman Siswa*.<sup>5</sup>

Another institution which made an important contribution to the development of Bahasa Indonesia was the Balai Pustaka. The main function of the Balai Pustaka was to provide the people with popular literature in Malay. Indeed the Balai Pustaka gave a strong incentive to Indonesian writers to write novels and poetry in Malay. When the second world war began, Balai Pustaka had published about 2,000 different works, originals by Indonesian authors as well as translations of Western works. In the years immediately before the war about 300,000 Balai Pustaka publications were sold annually in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Translations ranged from James Oliver Curwood's *Kazan*, Hector Malot's *Sans Famille* and Dutch children's books, to the works of such authors as Tolstoy, Kipling, Dickens, Shakespeare and Dumas Père. Translations of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* gained great popularity. Balai Pustaka also published a bi-weekly journal *Pandji Pustaka* (The Literary Banner), which had a wide circulation among Indonesian readers. *Pandji Pustaka* was published for the first time in 1919 as a monthly, then called *Seri Pustaka*, with 3,000 subscribers. In 1923 the name was changed to *Pandji Pustaka*, and it became a bi-weekly with about 7,000 subscribers. At present Balai Pustaka plays an important role in the publication of text-books and scientific works.

A quarterly journal *Pudjangga Baru* (The New Poet) also made a valuable

contribution to the development of Bahasa Indonesia before the war. It was founded by three prominent figures among the young Indonesian writers, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Amir Hamzah and Armijn Pane. The new journal aimed to give leadership to the new dynamic spirit driving for the formation of a new culture, unified and Indonesian. *Pudjangga Baru's* important contribution to the development of Bahasa Indonesia was to show the great potentiality of Bahasa Indonesia as a medium of literary expression. *Pudjangga Baru* also proved its real desire to develop and foster Bahasa Indonesia, by holding a Bahasa Indonesia Congress in June, 1938, at which a motion was adopted to establish an Institute for Bahasa Indonesia. Unfortunately, this decision could not be realized at that time. It was only during the Japanese occupation that a Committee of Bahasa Indonesia and an Office for Bahasa Indonesia were established. One of the projects carried out by this Committee was the preparation of a dictionary of scientific terms, which, because of the circumstances could not be published until after the war. This dictionary, containing authoritative lists of scientific terms and words in Bahasa Indonesia, was very useful, especially at this stage, when Bahasa Indonesia had been officially recognized as a language of instruction and as a medium of expression in the arts and sciences. There was no substantial difficulty at that time in making this dictionary a normative one, as Bahasa Indonesia had been developed and extended by the intellectual group and the innovations were therefore accepted by other Indonesians. Only gradually was there a reverse process whereby the language of the common man began to affect the new national language. This can be seen from the influence of Djakartan Malay on Bahasa Indonesia.

#### 4. *The development of Bahasa Indonesia after the second world war.*<sup>7</sup>

After the recognition of Bahasa Indonesia as the official language of the state, the most pressing problem was how to provide schools at all levels with text-books and literature written in Bahasa Indonesia. As mentioned above almost all existing school text-books were written in Dutch. Consequently all efforts were directed to the replacement of Dutch text-books by translations and by writing new text-books in Bahasa Indonesia. It was indeed difficult for the teachers and in particular for the Office of Education to solve these problems successfully within a relatively brief time span.

There was a period when many schoolteachers had to write or translate the text-books they needed. A teacher in mathematics, for instance, had to translate a text-book on mathematics from Dutch into Indonesian and efforts had to be made to distribute his translation to the whole class. It was of course rather hard to publish all these translations at the same time.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in writing or translating these text-books accuracy became a secondary consideration. The main concern was how to complete the job as quickly as possible to meet the needs of pupils and students. Only in this way has the shortage of text-books in Bahasa Indonesia been gradually overcome. After ten years of hard work, all necessary text-books at primary and secondary school levels were written and available in Bahasa Indonesia. At university level great efforts have been made to trans-

late foreign text-books into Bahasa Indonesia. This job has been successfully accomplished in the field of the social sciences. However, in the field of technology and the physical sciences university students have still, for part of their studies, to resort to English or Dutch sources.

During the fifteen years since independence, Bahasa Indonesia has—despite the doubts expressed by foreigners and even some Indonesians—proved its capacity and vitality as an instrument of expression in the arts and sciences and as an efficient language of instruction. In the fulfilment of these functions, Bahasa Indonesia has been subject to rapid change in morphology, syntax and vocabulary.

##### *5. Difficulties still to be overcome.*

Before discussing some problems of linguistic change in the vocabulary of Bahasa Indonesia, it is perhaps necessary to stress the difficulties which have still to be overcome. These are of two main types: technical and linguistic. By technical problems, I mean problems related to the mass production of text-books to meet the needs of all educational levels, for there were about ten million students at the sub-tertiary level by the end of 1960. To meet this difficulty, the Ministry of Basic Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences set aside a special fund to help with the publication of text-books and scientific works. A shortage of qualified translators and lack of funds are two factors that have hampered the progress of translation. The linguistic problems are mainly concerned with the creation of new words for new concepts and ideas in Bahasa Indonesia. It was thought that the best way of solving this problem is by borrowing words of technical terms from foreign languages. Before discussing this borrowing process, it is worth discussing the basic characteristics of Bahasa Indonesia.

##### *6. Characteristics of Bahasa Indonesia.*

Bahasa Indonesia, as Professor Johns has indicated, is genetically related to the Malayo-Polynesian language-family, which is spread over a very extensive area from Madagascar in the West, to Formosa in the far North, to Easter Island in the East and to New Zealand in the South. Among the members of this large language-family, Bahasa Indonesia occupies a very distinctive position, because of its function as a national language. Structurally, Bahasa Indonesia is quite different from Indo-European languages. In its morphology, affixation is a very productive process using a limited number of prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Affixation and composition are also very important morphological processes. Furthermore, the language does not have conjugations or declensions. Gender, number and case are not grammatical categories. In the formation of compounds and phrases, the rule of Head followed by Attribute is predominant. (Head is a word in a word group which functions grammatically in the same way as the entire group.) Word order and phrase order are very important in syntax, perhaps because of the absence of conjugations and declensions. Transposition and transformation are also important features of the language.

In the course of its historic development, the vocabulary of Bahasa Indonesia

has been enriched by many words and concepts of foreign origin. Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Tamil and Portuguese influenced the Indonesian vocabulary extensively in the past. Later the influence of Dutch and English became more significant. Everything seems to indicate that in the near future English will become the most influential foreign language in Indonesia, particularly in the field of scientific and technological terminology. Mention should also be made of the fact that English is the first foreign language taught at all schools above the primary level.

Borrowing of new words from the regional languages also occurs, mainly from Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Minangkabau, Batak, Buginese and Macassarese. Speakers of these languages constitute the majority of Indonesians. Modern concepts and ideas, however, have come into Bahasa Indonesia through Dutch and English, or even through Latin and Greek. Words such as: *tehnik, telpon, djurnalis, bank, sirkel* and *radar*, are all borrowed words from Dutch and English, the pronunciation of which has been adjusted to the Indonesian phonetic system. There are different opinions among Indonesian linguists on ways of borrowing foreign words and selecting words which belong to the same root. In everyday practice the borrowing of words occurs involuntarily, without special consideration being given to words which belong to the same root. For example the following Dutch words: *organisatie* and *organiseren*, the first a noun and the second a verb, have been adopted into Bahasa Indonesia as: *organisasi* (substantive) and *mengorganisir, diorganisir* (verbs), and there are many other such word-pairs in Dutch ending in *-tie* and *-eren* (*eer*) which have come into Bahasa Indonesia.<sup>8</sup> Takdir Alisjahbana, now Professor of Malay Studies at Kuala Lumpur, considers that such a process of borrowing was careless and complicated the development of Bahasa Indonesia. He prefers the selection of only one form, the substantive. From the pair: *rationalisatie* and *rationaliseren*, the substantive form: *rationalisatie* should be borrowed and made the base of other derivatives, as: *rasionalisasi* (substantive), *merasionalisasi, dirasionalisasi* (verbal derivatives).

Takdir's principle is good as long as it can be consistently applied. It is, however, not always easy to maintain consistency in the application of a rule in language borrowing. The Committee on Technical Terms at the Institute of Language and Culture adopted the rule that the *isch* ending of Dutch adjectives borrowed into Bahasa Indonesia should be changed into *-ik*.<sup>9</sup> Thus the word *hygroskopisch*—*higroskopik, isentropisch*—*isentropik, isometrisch*—*isometrik*. However, inconsistency occurs in the borrowing of the following words: *analytisch, komisch, synodisch, tropisch* and *dynamisch*. These words are not changed into: *analitik, komik, tropik, dinamik*, but remain as they are, with the *isch* or *is* ending.<sup>10</sup>

It is usual for a new language rule in a speech-community to deviate from the established rule. In the beginning this deviation is regarded as a mistake or an error, but it gradually becomes a rule accepted by the majority of people in the speech-community.

Borrowing many words from the same root also happened in the past when Malay was borrowing words from Arabic. Words like: *ilmu, alim, ulama, maklum, muallim, taklim*, are living Indonesian words originating from Arabic. These words are Arabic derivatives with the common root consisting of the

radicals: *a.l.m.* The word *ilmu* is morphologically a verbal noun, but *alim* is an active participle, which means *the one who knows, the knower*. *Ulama* is the broken plural form of *alim*. *Maklum* is a passive participle meaning *the known one*. *Muallim* is an active participle of the derived verb form II, meaning *the one who teaches, a teacher*. *Taklim* is a verbal noun of the derived verb *allama* mentioned above.

We may summarise these facts as follows: (1) Some Arabic words or derivatives, which have the same root, have been adopted by the Indonesian language without undergoing any selection. (2) These words have changed in pronunciation according to the phonological system of Bahasa Indonesia.

(3) These words have changed their meaning and function. For example: the passive meaning of the word *maklum* in Arabic is completely dropped in Bahasa Indonesia. The word is used as an intransitive base with an active meaning. The passive is formed by adding the prefix *di* combined with the suffix—*i*. Indonesian speakers are not aware of the plural form of the word *ulama*. To indicate plurality the word *alim* is joined to *ulama* in the compound: *alim-ulama*. Very often to indicate plurality a pluralizer *para* is also added to the compound which becomes *para alim ulama* (religious scholars).

This kind of borrowing process, which Takdir Alisjahbana considered careless and confusing, is still a common phenomenon not only in the Indonesian language, but also in Javanese and other regional languages.

Another kind of borrowing process is loan translation. As an illustration, let me take some words from religious terminology: God: *Tuhan*, Godless: *durhaka-Tuhan* (literally: sinful to God), Godlessness: *ke-durhaka Tuhanan*. The word for Pantheism is: *aliran bersarwa-Tuhan* (literally, a doctrine of all-God).<sup>11</sup> In economics the term *long-term project* is translated *rentjana djangka pandjang*. The word *nilai*: value, forms the base of the following compounds: *ajaran nilai*: theory of value; *nilai beli*: purchase value; *nilai buku*: book-value.<sup>12</sup> In linguistics we have the following terms: *kamus*: lexicon; *ahli perkamusan*: lexicologist; *pengarang kamus*: lexicographer; *ilmu perkamusan*: lexicography; *menurut kamus*: lexical. In medical science, we find technical terms based on the word *mata*. *Mata*: oculo (eye); *ilmu pengobatan mata*: ophthalmology; *radang mata*: ophthalmia; *bidji mata*: eye-ball; *bilik mata*: camera couli; *kelopak mata*: eye-lid; *radang pinggir kelopak mata*: inflammation of the eye-lids (blepharitis); *saraf-mata*: optic nerve; *mata dekat*: myopia (near sightedness); *mata-malam*: nyctalopia (night blindness); *lekuk mata*: eye socket (the bony cavity containing the eye); *bulu mata*: eye lashes; *inti-mata*: the aqueous humor; *air tjutji mata*: collyrium; *air mata*: tear (lacrimae).<sup>13</sup>

A combination of a negative particle *tak* with the prefix *ber* is a productive substitute for the English prefixes: *in—*, *un—*, *non—* or the suffix *less*. For instance: *tak ber-batas*: infinite; *tak-berwewenang*: unqualified; *tak berpartai*: non-party; *tak berbunji*: toneless. A combination of the negative particle *tak* with *dapat di* is used as a substitute for: *un—*, *in—* prefixes combined with the suffix—*able*. *Tak dapat diganti*: irreplaceable; *tak dapat dipadamkan*: inextinguishable; *tak dapat ditukar*: inconvertible; *tak dapat diukur*: immeasurable.<sup>14</sup>

With these examples I hope I have been able to show how new terms are created by translations of loanwords. This method is in some ways rather

complicated and less efficient than the first method. It happens frequently that a term which consists of one word in English, has to be translated in Indonesian by more than one word. The word democracy is rendered by the words: *kedaulatan rakyat*; archeology: *ilmu purbakala*; Parliament: *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (literally, House of People's Representatives). There is a growing tendency to create new words or technical terms by the second method.

#### 7. *What efforts have been made to solve the problems of technical terms?*

I have mentioned that during the Japanese occupation a move was made toward solving these problems by writing a dictionary of technical terms. This work was resumed by the Indonesian Government with the establishment of an Institute of Language and Culture in the University of Indonesia, at Jakarta, and a Language Office in the Ministry of Basic Education. The Institute of Language and Culture consists of two sections. First, a Section in charge of Technical Terms, secondly, a Section on Indonesian Languages.

The main function of the Committee for Technical Terms is to write dictionaries of technical terms in Bahasa Indonesia, borrowed from foreign languages (such as Dutch, English, Greek, Latin or Arabic). The Committee consists of Sections each of which is responsible for one branch of science. Members of each section, hold regular meetings to discuss problems related to the creation of scientific terminologies and to make decisions on new technical terms submitted by members of the section. The decisions of each section are published regularly by the Institute of Language and Culture as supplements of the Journal *Bahasa dan Budaya* (Language and Culture) founded in 1952. The Committee has done much over the past ten years in deciding on new terms and in affirming those already existing.

The Language Section is mainly concerned with the compilation of a comprehensive dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia, with the publication of language journals and the translation of scientific works from foreign languages into Bahasa Indonesia. An authoritative dictionary, written by the well known lexicographer, Mr. Poerwadarminta,<sup>15</sup> has been published by the Language Section.

#### 8. *Conclusions.*

I have outlined briefly some external factors which are important in the development of Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia has developed more rapidly during the last seventeen years and its effort to become a vehicle of expression adequate in all spheres of knowledge has placed tremendous pressure on its users to supply the necessary terms. Borrowing of words from foreign languages is only one way to solve this problem. There are other important means of enriching the Indonesian vocabulary, such as analogical creation, composition and derivation, which require separate consideration. No proper study has yet been made of the problems of change in lexical meaning and syntax in Bahasa Indonesia. A wide field of study awaits further exploration.<sup>16</sup>

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- <sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Muhammad Yamin *Pembahasan Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia*, p.93.
- <sup>3</sup> See S. Takdir Alisjahbana, *Dari Perdjuangan dan Pertumbuhan Bahasa Indonesia*, P. T. Pustaka Rakjat, Djakarta, 1957, p.26.
- <sup>4</sup> S. Takdir Alisjahbana, *op. cit.*, p.17.
- <sup>5</sup> For details of K. H. Dewantara's opinion on the important role of Malay as a common language of the whole Archipelago, see his article in *Praeadviezen Koloniaal Onderwijs Congres*, 's Gravenhage, 1916.
- <sup>6</sup> A. Teeuw, *Voltooid Voorspel*, p.77 and *Pokok dan Tokoh I*, 1959, 5th Ed., pp.60-61.
- <sup>7</sup> For a review of the language policy in Indonesia after the second world war, see Slamet Muljana, *Politik Bahasa Nasional*, Djambatan, Djakarta, 1959.
- <sup>8</sup> See S. Takdir Alisjahbana, *Dari Perdjuangan dan Pertumbuhan Bahasa Indonesia*, pp.96-97.
- <sup>9</sup> See *Lampiran Bahasa dan Budaya*, Tahun V, No. 3, 1957.
- <sup>10</sup> See *Lampiran Bahasa dan Budaya*, Istilah No. 10, 1953 and Istilah No. 12, 1953.
- <sup>11</sup> See *Lampiran Bahasa dan Budaya*, Tahun IX, No. 1-2, 1961, pp.24-26.
- <sup>12</sup> See *Lampiran Bahasa dan Budaya*, Tahun IV, No. 3, 1956, pp.4-6.
- <sup>13</sup> See Dr. Ahmad Ramali, *Kamus Kedokteran Djambatan*, Djakarta 1960, p.172.
- <sup>14</sup> See B. S. Anwar, *Kamus Istilah Teknik* Penerbit Buku Teknik, H. Stam 1952, p.365.
- <sup>15</sup> W. J. S. Purwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* 3rd Ed., Dinas Penerbitan Balai Pustaka, Djakarta, 1961.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. E. H. Sturtevant, "Linguistic Change" (Chapter V and Chapter VI). G. E. Stechert & Co., New York, 1942.

## PART II. POETRY

### *Introduction*

THIS SECTION PRESENTS EXAMPLES of the work of one of Indonesia's most outstanding living poets, Sitor Situmorang, together with a critical evaluation of his work by Professor A. H. Johns. Other poems here are by Chairil Anwar who, though often called the poet laureate of the Indonesian Revolution, in no sense resembles Russia's Mayakovsky. Asien, though less known, is a not unimportant poet of the revolutionary period. Trisno Soemardjo, Tias and Ali Nazola are younger poets whose work is all but unknown outside Indonesia.

### *Brief biographical notes on the poets*

Chairil Anwar was born in Medan, the Capital of North Sumatra, in 1922. After primary schooling he attended a Dutch secondary school where he gained a familiarity with European literature; he did not, however, complete his studies there. His earliest poems were published shortly after the Japanese landed at Medan in 1942. During the next seven years before his death in 1949 he filled the literary scene with an unprecedented flow of poems which struck the imagination of both intellectuals and ordinary people with their freshness, urgency and what might be called their "high compression ratio". He was much influenced by contemporary European and American writing; among his numerous translations are Andre Gide's *Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue* and Steinbeck's *Raid*. He is generally regarded as the pioneer or leader of the literary movement known as the *Angkatan 45* (The 1945 Generation). His poems in this collection have been translated by John Kleinig, Peter Lucich and Walter Taus, all three of whom are staff members of the University of Western Australia.

Asien is the pseudonym of Muhamed Djunasien. Born in Djakarta (then Batavia) in 1920, he was educated at a Dutch commercial college. He started work in 1937 as a clerk at the head office of the K.P.M., the Royal Dutch East Indies shipping line. After the Proclamation of Independence in 1945 he was employed for varying periods at the Ministry of Information, at a shoe factory and at the Ministry of Economic Affairs. He has described his main interests as "seeking variety in life and the opium of the cinema". The poem here translated by Miss Robin Andison, a Tutor in French at the University of Western Australia, was first published in *Gema Tanah Air*, an anthology of Indonesian prose and poetry of the period 1942-48.

Trisno Soemardjo is a young Catholic poet some of whose work appeared originally in the Jogjakarta literary journal *Basis*. Ali Nazola and Tias are Young South Sumatran poets: their poems in this collection were first published in the literary supplement of the Palembang daily newspaper *Fikiran Rakjat*. Tias's poem is deliberately experimental; Nazola's *Wet Monsoon* is more conventional, mixing a deep sincerity of purpose with an almost childish naïve exuberance.

M.A.J.

# HOUSING

by Asien

A frangipani, yellowing heart, spreads shade,  
with gold-clad calyx, fanning outward—  
a butterfly plays hide and seek,  
insects file in procession,  
a bumblebee sings, drunk with incense—  
a flower scatters seven fragrances . . .  
to the four winds.

and

day by day  
a new neat row of houses rises, while  
old ones are cleared away, flattened;  
chaperoned in loneliness.

so, shrouding  
the wooden gravestone, unbending buried,  
a last useless prayer,  
and a basil flower, patiently closing round  
earthworms who come, demanding  
their key money: "Damn you to hell".

(Translated by Robin Andison)

# AWAKENING

by Usmar Ismail

The day is young as a babe's first cry  
Reflecting the smooth surface of a morning bay.  
Silence shrouds the world in its dim light,  
The wind ceases in the hem of night.  
Blue sky and clouds pass away  
Soil moistened by a touch of rain spray—  
The first beam has caressed the earth:  
Clay rolled up in time passed.

In our blood is scarcity and dearth.  
The sky, burning, unveiled a night of distress—

It surges to the bone  
And the world awakes and murmurs in wond'rous tone.  
My soul in its humility mute  
No strength revealed whilst yet in subsoil depth;

Bloom, find strength and multiply  
Until the heart, flooded with awareness of breath,  
Shouts, sings, despairs in silence.  
God, this awakening is long in wait!

(Translated by M. A. Jaspan)

# RECORD OF 1946

by Chairil Anwar

My hands may once claim for a rest  
Reflections on water vanished in undefinable shape.

My loved song ceased to caress  
Then with my own hands my tomb I engrave.  
We, the chased wild dogs, see only part of the act.  
We don't know Romeo and Juliet kissing in their graves or in bed.

A leader came, hundreds of thousands drawn  
Both in a list, both got their places.  
And no fever of being pursued  
When rifles hung in a store, only dusty remembrance—then no more.

We grapple for an existence or leave it to babes still  
unborn.

But be on guard, look forward and sharpen your pen,  
Write on this fire-caught page, the dry throat needs a sip!

(Translated by Peter Lucich)

# INA MIA

by Chairil Anwar

Lying in the morning's embrace  
—a moment past daybreak—  
Ina Mia sought  
a fond dream  
Ina Mia touching  
only the skin of hope  
Ina Mia  
sighing deeply at the edge of a precipice  
desire  
newly liberated, is blown  
between pockets of leaves veiling  
the mist of an old, lost love  
Sensing a momentary shudder  
Ina Mia presses her palm into the green grass  
breeze wreathed  
—the last that fanned her—  
Turning  
she saw a soldier quickening his pace at the curve

(Translated by John Kleinig)

# MIDNIGHT RETURN

by Chairil Anwar

Now, late at night—a friendly, sweet smile  
out of days long past, beckons as before.  
A signal to halt this now and let mind play . . .  
And yet, a hint of sadness there.

Others, my friends and family, await the morning,  
But I from afternoon await the night  
That attracts and yet repels me.  
Thus my senses, drugged in celestial perfume.

Oh lover, dearest heart  
My love will wax as common foibles wane.

I meet so many whom I do not know  
Yet others there I recognize  
My loving heart is drawn to all  
Yet rarely does the world respond.

Disillusioned, I withdraw my soul  
Whilst crowing cock to howling dog replies  
Though homeward bent—my heart is with you still  
Hoping other men can share love's bitter ecstasy.

(Translated by Walter Tauss)

# A VOICE FROM ABROAD

by Tias

In a night of *taqbir*,\* presently  
there will be no sound but the echo of his song  
a song of love and dejection  
of life and strife;

at dawn the song is lost  
close both eyes awhile  
from abroad I send this rover's tale

(Translated by M. A. Jaspan)

\* repetitive recitation of *Allahu Akhbar*—Allah is great.

## WET MONSOON

by Ali S. Nazola

When the wet monsoon comes  
Wetting the earth, soaking the soil  
Farmers go out glad of heart  
Offering prayer, finding new hope.

When the wet comes in  
Wading through paddy fields, wading through swiddens,  
Terrace bunds and bridges are alive all day  
With the full laughter of girls hemmed in by boys.

The wet monsoon is stillness for the heart—  
May the harvest this year be fulsome.  
The loved girl shall be married: let her wedding be gay  
and the paddy bounteous, each panicle filled.

When the wet monsoon comes  
flooding paddy fields and banana groves  
The village is calm, mother Sarina feels soothed.  
So fall rain, fall urgently!

Stave off disaster!  
may God grant this prayer.  
So fall rain, fall  
and wet this earth.  
Pound our thatched roof—this rhythm we await.

(Translated by M. A. Jaspan)

## STANZAS AT NOON

by W. S. Rendra

Time floats on a pond  
like a frog in the sun.  
And amidst the duckweed  
misfortune dogs me.  
With a vengeful hand  
it reaches for my throat.  
I stand up and kick him.

Time fallen  
fainting into the pond  
tortured by the sun.  
And on the pond's floor  
lazy misfortune  
stretches out  
soaking its body.  
Yet all the while  
its lustful eyes  
glare at me.  
I stare back and spit at him.

The thick black hair of misfortune,  
I tug out with my hand  
and dash its dark grey head  
to pieces on a rock.

(Translated by Leila Petterson)

# FOR AN OLD MAN SICK IN BED

by Trisno Sumardjo

As the light grows dim and the heart cold  
I think about this world, and myself . . .  
Regretting hours that cannot return, opportunities lost.  
For now this past directs me to the next world.

Why am I presently consumed in a flame of vital truths  
When all at once sun, moon and stars shine bright  
A million hearts stay closed to a million others  
And the face adopts the actor's mask of death?

Worldly things grow vague and  
All that remains to me is divine truth  
My serenity in old age is of a consciousness  
That I am close to inner truth.

Beauty comes of regret, memories, hopes.  
I commune with myself singing, not weeping or wailing.  
In the past loneliness was often unhappiness  
Now I quietly smile, leaving no trace on the human world.

Here, for the last time, life gently shines.  
Each friend's face appears softly, as through mist,  
Peering from the walls of my room, from my bedclothes and  
the pages of my books and  
The unfinished manuscripts that lie beside me.

Farewell to you, my world, crowded and confused!  
I remain with truth; depart you now!  
Off with you! Go wander and search for truth and  
beauty in the womb of time.

For that is all that remains for the noble and the dead.  
All else are but disguised images of oneself  
Too much preoccupation with this world  
Will always hold man back.  
Now you have gone—only a spirit remains.

(Translated by Mary Hodgkin)

# A POET BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: THE WORK OF SITOR SITUMORANG

by A. H. JOHNS

ALTHOUGH IN THE WESTERN world Indonesia is known principally as a political problem, there is a gradually growing realisation that it has a cultural personality; and that—alone of the nations physically occupied for a period of their history—it has a fully developed and accepted national language, an established modern literature and its own definite style in painting, sculpture and the theatre.

It seems in the nature of things that such cultural developments should be taken up in a minor way by well intentioned visitors; and modern Indonesian literature is no exception. Patronage has extended so far that it has even received a mention in the columns of the *Times Literary Supplement*. From one standpoint, this all to the good; from another it is disturbing. For such patrons too often write with inadequate knowledge, and thus to the lay public ill-informed generalisation passes for discerning comment. Indonesian literary history is neatly parcelled into the pre-war Pudjangga Baru (New Poet) era, and the post-war Generation of '45. Writers are given labels. Amir Hamzah, for example, is always described as a religious poet, bringing to life for the last time, the diction and style of traditional Malay; Chairil Anwar always figures as a frenetic revolutionary poet who wrote by impulse. These generalisations are dispensed *ad nauseam* and elaborated without examination. In consequence, they appear so time-honoured and respectable that they impede fresh thought and deter re-analysis.

Modern Indonesian poetry then remains very much an unknown world, as much—if the truth be told—in Indonesia as elsewhere. Fundamental questions to which a whole range of possible answers need consideration and comparison are not even asked. Despite the verbiage proffered by the patrons, we still lack a definitive study of the work of any Indonesian writer: an account of his background, the sources of his inspiration, his indebtedness to his predecessors, his relations with his contemporaries whether as a poet, personality or thinker; his influence upon them, theirs upon him. We are equally in the dark concerning the aesthetics of modern Indonesian writing; we know next to nothing of the dynamics of Indonesian prosody, or what it is in the genius of the language which determines variety of pace and rhythm, influences mood, or suggests force, vitality, gentleness or despair. We still need to ask by what criteria the language of poetry may be distinguished from that of prose, from whence it derives dimension, and its potential for over-tones.

It is this lack of discrimination and analysis which has led to the stereotyped picture both of the history of Indonesian poetry, and of the personalities and styles of Indonesian poets. In fact, the literary attitudes manifested in the pre-war Pudjangga Baru, are not an undifferentiated web; the Generation of '45 would in the great majority of cases be better described as the generation of '42; Amir Hamzah, apart from his very early work, was not a traditionalist;

far from being a religious poet in the conventional sense of the word, doubt is as important an element in his work as faith; and—this apart—the tremendous development in maturity and depth in his work during four brief years of poetic activity renders it nothing short of astonishing that his work has been subsumed under a single label. Similarly to describe Chairil Anwar as a revolutionary poet is to misunderstand both the man and his poetry. He discovered, or stumbled upon a concept of poetry foreign to Indonesia, which appealed to him; he applied it rigorously with a cool intellectual passion for precision in the use of language. The results were extraordinary, and created new horizons for the Indonesian language; but this was a by-product; the content of the poems is Chairil's scrutiny of himself, not the defeat of the Dutch, the Japanese occupation or the subsequent Indonesian revolution. For all his importance he was but one poet out of many; and although he has had imitators, yet the best of his contemporaries such as Asrul Sani and Sitor Situmorang never lost their own identity and style through succumbing to his influence; in fact they followed paths quite different from his in their presentation of the predicaments of post-Independence Indonesian man—different paths in the pursuit of different solutions appropriate to their differing personalities and temperaments.

Sitor Situmorang particularly deserves close study for he is a highly gifted intellectual, a poet and dramatist, who has written widely on Indonesian literature, culture and the theatre in addition to his poetry; he is also the author of some of the best Indonesian short stories yet written. And his recent shift of orientation from the attitude to poetry and art described as Universal Humanism, guiding star of the so-called 'Generation of '45', to a view of art which imposes upon the artist a direct responsibility for the furtherings of specific social and political policies, renders his work all the more interesting.

He is a Batak, and was born on the island of Samosir in 1923. Details of his early education are not clear, but like Chairil Anwar, he seems to have begun his literary activity shortly after the Japanese occupation, when he began work as a freelance journalist and literary critic. He first came into prominence in 1949 as an essayist, writing on the meaningfulness and validity of the term 'Generation of '45'. Our principal concern here, however, is with his work as a poet. He has published four collections of verse: *Surat Kertas Hidjau* (Notes on Green Paper) 1953, *Dalam Sadjak* (In Verse), date unknown, *Wadjah tak Bernama* (A Nameless Face) 1955, and *Zaman Baru* (New Era) 1962.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately—leaving *Zaman Baru* out of consideration—it is difficult to determine the order in which the poems in these collections were written, for they were printed at various times and places in a variety of periodicals before Sitor selected them for publication in these volumes. There is thus no guarantee that all the poems appearing in *Surat Kertas Hidjau* were written before those in *Dalam Sadjak* or *Wadjah tak Bernama*, or that those in the later volumes were written after those in the earlier. Further, these volumes are not exhaustive of his oeuvre, and files of various literary periodicals now defunct or suspended may still yield quite a harvest of important work. With these reservations however it is possible to outline certain phases and themes in his collection of poetry; phases and themes which—aside from any question of relative poetic merit—establish Sitor as an important writer for the under-

standing of modern Indonesia. Chairil Anwar is a spokesman for no-one but himself, the same holds for Amir Hamzah; Sitor on the other hand is a striking representative of Indonesia between two worlds: his sense of belonging to a region, his own Batakland, has gone; that of participation in Indonesia as a geo-cultural identity is not yet mature. For Sitor was brought up in a closely knit Batak Christian community, in which traditional custom served as a complete guide to life; where everyone knew everyone else, shared the same social interests, habits and values. And he has had to essay the bridge sharper than a razor, finer than a hair which leads out of this village microcosmos into the mental and moral world of the twentieth century intellectual. In essaying this bridge, represented in part by his visits between 1950-52, to Holland, Paris and Italy, the system of faith and morals in which he was brought up has become meaningless and his Batak homeland spiritually remote; and Paris has so captivated him that he is adrift between two cultures, knowing that one does not belong to him, and uncertain of the meaning of the other. Here is material out of which poetry may be made—different from that used by Chairil Anwar, but profoundly rich and important.

His poems of gradually increasing doubt and loss of faith are particularly moving, and in expression, regretful and pining. They are strikingly reminiscent of the mood of Thomas Hardy's "The Oxen": when Hardy recalls the legend he had heard as a boy, that at midnight on Christmas Eve, the oxen kneel, and concludes:

If someone said on Christmas Eve  
"Come; see the oxen kneel,  
In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know"  
I should go with him in the gloom  
Hoping it might be so.

There is a similar melancholy music in Sitor's "Kolam Berenang" (The Swimming Pool), a beautifully constructed sonnet; and the anguish is heightened by a suggestion of ambiguity although the tone of the poem excludes the ambiguity. In the octet, the scene is set as he lies beside the swimming pool with a boy, imagining that amid the reflections in the water are the countenances of those who have passed on.

The sextet presents the kernel of his thought:

Lalu si-anak bertanja sendiri  
Apa kelangit orang pergi  
Kalau sudah mati nanti  
  
Dan karena tahu pasti  
Aku mengangguk sepi  
Si-anak lantas mengerti

Then the child himself asks  
Whether people pass to the sky  
Later, when they die

And because of certain knowledge  
I nod bleakly  
The child at once understands.<sup>2</sup>

Equally moving and similar in tone is 'Ziarah Dalam Geredja Gunung' (A Visit to A Mountain Church):

Dimana aku berada kau ada  
Bajangan satu-satunja, demikian kurasa,  
Benarkah kau ada disunji begini  
Dikedinginan ruang geredja—sendiri?

Dari luar sampai keruangan ini  
Siut burung jang memudja pagi.  
Djika aku ada disini, hanjalah aku sendiri  
Serta dingin udara tak dipanasi mata hari.

Amen.

Wherever I am, there you are  
My one and only shadow, so I thought.  
Yet are You really here in this silence  
Alone in the cold nave of this church?

From without there penetrates the nave  
The song of birds at morning worship.  
When I am here I am alone  
With the chill air unwarmed by the sun.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

Only God is my constant companion, as inseparable as my shadow always watching over me—or so I thought; this is the sense of the first two lines. And Sitor makes a pilgrimage to this mountain church hoping to restore his faith. He discovers there only emptiness: outside is the song of birds at morning worship, worship of life; but within, where the warmth of the sun cannot penetrate, his only companion is the cold. So to the death of faith, he adds: Amen.

However, of the poems of doubt, loss of faith and anguish of guilt at abandoning traditional morality, by far the greatest is "Cathedral de Chartres".<sup>4</sup> It is not a long poem, consisting of eight four line stanzas and a concluding octet. Yet despite its small compass, somehow theme and imagery fuse together and great chords begin to sound and resound. Sitor has defiled Holy Week with adultery, has cut himself off from the grace of the redeeming risen Christ, and the joy of Easter. There is the same anguish of regret as in the preceding two poems, but the total effect is heightened. This is partly due to the setting, and the symbolic nature of the title—the great Cathedral of Chartres standing for the Kingdom of God, the community of Christian fellowship in which he has been brought up and from which he is now excluded. It creates its impact by the skilful placing of contrasts, between sin, loss, despair on the one hand, as against the purity of snow, the hope and freshness of

spring, the mystery of redemption, on the other; and the diction of the poem is superbly orchestrated, creating a majesty of utterance hardly equalled elsewhere in Indonesian poetry.

The first two stanzas express compactly all Sitor's aching longing:

Akan bitjarakah Ia dimalam sepi  
Kala saldju djatuh dan burung putih-putih  
Sekali-sekali ingin menjerah hati  
Dalam lindungan sembahjang bersih

Ah, Tuhan, tak bisa kita lagi bertemu  
Dalam doa bersama kumpulan umat

Will He speak to me in the silent night  
When the snow is falling and the birds all flaked with white?  
Sometimes, still, I long to yield  
To find comfort in the purity of prayer

Alas, Lord, never again can we meet  
In prayer together with your holy people.<sup>5</sup>

This is one of the few poems in Bahasa Indonesia to communicate and evoke a sense of place, with all the associations and values of a European and Christian culture: it establishes Sitor as an outstanding poet with a potential for greatness.

Loss of faith is followed by a loss of that sense of guilt that is so striking an element in "Cathedral de Chartres"; and in the next group of poems to be discussed, Sitor uses sex to fill the emotional vacuum left by his loss of orientation. "La Ronde II"<sup>6</sup> for example is a heavily sensuous appreciation of the female anatomy, filled with tenderness, but marred by lack of balance and compensation. For sex is virtually his new object of worship, to which he appeals for release from the gnawing emptiness of daily life. In "La Ronde III" he addresses his mistress:

Kau dewiku, penghibur malam hampa  
Segala perbuatan siang kang sia-sia  
Kebosanan abadi djadilah lupa  
Dan badan hantjur nikmat terasa

You are my goddess comforter of the empty night  
And all the useless deeds of day.  
Everlasting boredom becomes oblivion  
As the body melts in an ecstasy of delight.<sup>7</sup>

This radical sentimentality, this unrestrained expression of sheer hedonism, or of a mind that has lost its moorings, is unable to cope any longer with the pressures of circumstance. The latter is probably a fairer judgment of Sitor's character. This public self-abandonment results from a strain of weakness in his personality, but even so he rarely abandons completely that moral sense which informs virtually all Indonesian writing. Indeed, even in this group of poems a sense of guilt, of moral inadequacy remains; and "La Ronde 1"<sup>8</sup>

concludes with a couplet strikingly in contrast with the sultry passion of the body of the poem:

Meninggi musim hingga ke subuh  
Djendela dibuka melihat saldju djatuh

As the season marches on to the dawn  
The opened window surveys falling snow

—the whiteness of the snow and the clean cold bite of the winter air—as in “Cathedral de Chartres” symbolizing the world of innocence and grace.

Almost as poignant as the poems of loss of faith, and highlighting Sitor’s attempt to find escape and solace in the embrace of a woman, are those of loss of home. The most moving expression of this theme is in ‘Si anak hilang’ (The Lost Son).<sup>9</sup> It is ballad-like in style, and superficially (it is written in quatrains) traditional in appearance. Yet in spirit and economy of diction it is completely modern. The ship bearing the lost child homeward appears across lake Samosir as a speck on the horizon. The village is astir with excitement, the mother rushes to the landing stage to greet him, yet:

Si-anak hilang kini kembali  
Tak seorang dikenalnja lagi  
Berapa kali panen sudah  
Apa sadja telah terdjadi

Seluruh desa bertanja tanja  
Sudah beranak sudah berapa  
Si-anak hilang berdiam sadja  
Ia lebih hendak bertanja

The lost son has now returned  
But recognizes no-one  
How many harvests have passed  
What has been happening

All the villagers ask and ask  
Have you children, and how many.  
The lost son remains silent  
He would prefer to be the questioner

For to all the conventional, routine questions, stock in trade of village relationships, he can no longer give an answer.

Instead:

. . . mengenang lupa  
Dingin Eropa, musim kotanja

. . . recalling what is forgotten  
The cold in Europe, the season of its cities.

And when all are asleep:

Dipantai pasir berdesir gelombang  
Tahu si-anak tiada pulang.

The waves rippling on the sandy shore  
Know that the lost son has not returned

This theme of loss of home strikes a chord among more than one Indonesian writer. And one of the more outstanding recent novels by Nasjah Djamin is called *Hilanglah si Anak Hilang — Lost is the Lost Son*.<sup>10</sup>

Yet the loss of a home does not cure him of homesickness any more than the loss of faith unburdens him of problems of conscience. And "M.S. Bali" is a poem of homesickness, presenting a picture of the life of the sailor on a cargo boat: the stale stench of warehouses, the monotony of the sea, the merciless heat of the sun; the malarial mosquitoes infesting the coastal waters, the restless boredom of the evenings, and the longing for the time when:

Sendja pudar akan beralih keemasan  
Di pagi bening, dilaut penghabisan

The dim twilight will change to the gold  
Of a clear morning on the final sea

And yet before it comes:

Sebelumnja, mari, menebas hutan, lumpur,  
Berlagu rindu tanah Leluhur . . .  
A singsing so,\* a singsing so, a singsing so . . .

Until then, let us clear the forest, mud,  
Singing our longing for the land of our ancestors . . .<sup>11</sup>  
A singsing so, a singsing so, a singsing so . . .

A strain of sadness runs through much of Sitor's verse, often expressed in terms of intimations of mortality. One of the finest of these poems is 'Lapangan Pagi' (A Field at Morning). It is beautifully restrained, developed so gradually, that the art is not manifest until the final couplet.

It opens:

Didepan penginapan banjak tjemara  
Ada bunga dan ada lapangan sunji  
Di belakang djalan turun ke kali  
Di belakang sekali djalan besar kekota.

My lodging looks out on many pine-trees,  
There are flowers and a deserted field;  
Behind it a road leads down to the stream  
Away behind, the main road to the city<sup>12</sup>

The statement is matter of fact, the rhythm irregular. Only gradually does it become clear that the perception of scenery and objects is that of a waking consciousness which perceives the pine trees, the flowers, the playing-fields, and notes automatically the road leading to the river, the road leading to the city and the morning clouds about the hills. Yet the rhythm of ideas in the poem is strong: the empty scene to be filled with the noise and uproar of children playing, and the return to emptiness paralleled by the poet's emergence from unconsciousness to a limited period of sensation framed by the

uniformly green hills as far as the eye can see, and the loss of this perception in sleep.

The clock strikes one, emphasizing the silence of the now brightly lit room. The children have vanished; the day is more than half past; life has run more than half its course. And it is this which gives such force to the final couplet:

Aku menggigil. Disudut tak kuduga  
Ada dingin malam tersisa.

I shiver. I had not realised that in the corner  
there remained vestiges of the chill of night.

Night, symbolizing mortality, had never been absent and is now advancing to reclaim him.

Another poem of the same type is "Pagi" (Morning), the morning after the party, of which the sole relics are puddles of spilt wine, like blood, with the red of the morning putrescent within them.

Menggapai sinar pagi di ruang dadaku,  
Aku jang memandang hari di ufuk naik,  
menembus hati setadjam peluru,  
kesedaran 'kan mati ditulang berisik.

The rays of morning stir within my breast  
As I gaze at the spreading horizon of a new day,  
And there penetrates my heart with the sharpness of a bullet  
The awareness I must die whispering in my bones.<sup>13</sup>

This is not the only poem where Sitor meditates on the mystery of time and the certainty of death. These questions too he tried to evade by taking refuge in a woman's arms.

Tiada kekal tiada fana kali ini  
Hanja kekinian saat beradu  
Bernama perempuan

This time there is no past or present  
Only the immediacy of one moment fused to the next  
Called Woman.<sup>14</sup>

for when he thinks about it, time terrifies him, and in the poem "Djam" (The Clock) the counting of the clock re-echoes, rebounding against the foundation of his consciousness, and creates within him the sensation of a rising tide of emptiness.<sup>15</sup> In 'Anak dan Waktu' (A Child and Time) he envies the child who for a moment is puzzled by the clock and its ceaseless counting of the hours.

Tapi si-Anak tak hendak bertanja  
Sibuk kembali bermain-main  
Lupa sudah ia kepingin,  
Tahu hal djam serta tafsirnja

But the child has no desire to ask  
And busies himself again with play  
Forgetting that he had wanted  
To understand time and its meaning.<sup>16</sup>

It is quite a shock to pass from this poetry to that represented by *Zaman Baru* (New Era) published in 1962. It represents his transfer of loyalty referred to earlier from Universal Humanism to *l'art engagé*. Gone is the romanticism and introspection characteristic of his former poems, and in their place we find the stridency of "Tanah Tumpah Darah" (Fatherland):

—Membangun dalam damai:—  
Dengarlah seruan berabad-abad  
seperti panggilan burung jang  
membangun sarangnja  
—Merdeka, bebas dan sedjahtera!  
Impian dari Rakjat.

—Reconstruct in peace!  
Hark to the call of the centuries  
like the call of the bird  
building its nest  
—Freedom, Liberty and Security  
Aspirations of the people.<sup>17</sup>

Another of his more recent works written according to the same criteria, which won a certain notoriety, is the poem written on the death of Lumumba.

Algodjo putih telah beraksi  
menghabiskan njawa pedjuang  
Di Konggo sana  
Komplotan lama diulang!  
Mati pahlawan hitam  
Untuk Afrika Merdeka  
Asia Merdeka, Dunia Merdeka  
Dibunuh dalam perangkap.

The White executioner has shown his mettle  
Destroying the life of a warrior;  
There in the Congo  
the same old conspiracy succeeds again.  
The Black Warrior has died for  
a free Africa  
A free Asia, a free world,  
Murdered in captivity.<sup>18</sup>

Such is a selection of themes occurring in Sitor's poetry. It cannot claim to represent the whole man, and I cannot claim to understand fully everything he has written. Yet it does give some picture of his poetic standing and personality. He is popularly described as the successor of Chairil Anwar. Apart from the fact that he was a year younger than Chairil, and produced most of his poetry after Chairil's death, I do not think that it is correct to

give him this kind of placing in the narrative of Indonesian poetry. He was a very different quality of person from Chairil, his poetry could never be confused with that of Chairil, and the well-springs of his writing are quite different. Chairil for example never sought solace in sex. It was an experience—nothing more; he did not linger over it, he indulged in no sentimentality. In "Puntjak", the most erotic of his poems, he can dismiss the encounter as having got him nowhere.<sup>19</sup> Never does he display the weakness of Sitor; and we could never imagine him making a pilgrimage to a mountain church in an attempt to regain a lost or ebbing faith. Faith in himself was Chairil's all, no matter what the cost.

Formally, there is a corresponding contrast between the style of the two writers, although this too is attributable to a difference of mood. There is a virility and tautness in Chairil's lines, a polished brilliance and fastidiousness which distinguishes them from those of Sitor—qualities Chairil shared with Amir Hamzah. Even more important Sitor is far more steeped in the traditional verse forms, diction and moods of his Batak homeland than ever Chairil was, and this has resulted in a natural preference for the more traditional forms, which Chairil used hardly ever, if at all. Yet let there be no mistake, Sitor is not writing in the style of Yamin or even Sanusi Pane. He is writing modern verse, but using principally traditional forms—as an Australian poet of the calibre of Alec Hope still does. In fact, Sitor, looking back, has bypassed Chairil in his search for form where he felt it was needed; and having rediscovered the traditional forms of Malay verse, has transmuted them into an effective medium for modern poetry. This rôle is usually attributed to Amir Hamzah; yet this popular view is not completely defensible; for if we exclude Amir's very early poems, it is clear that some of his most effective poetry is written either in free verse, or in forms of his own devising.

Sitor is an important Indonesian poet, and perhaps a great one. But so far his range has been limited; the melancholy music of his verse tends to pall; he lacks intellectual vitality, capacity for self-detachment, or any kind of irony at his own expense. In all this he shows himself inferior to Chairil who as a poet is far more detached, far more concerned with intellectual and verbal precision than Sitor. Yet we remain faced with a problem: why is Sitor's latest work artistically unsuccessful? The tragedy of Lumumba and the Congo for example lies on the conscience of all mankind. It merits great poetry, yet Sitor's stridencies are not worthy of it.

Pramudya Ananta Tur has drawn a distinction between writing in which political factors are determinant on a superficial level, and that profound sense of commitment that embraces the whole of life and imbues every sentence without the need to be vociferous—a type of commitment that is like the act of breathing to a living man, who feels no necessity to proclaim the fact that he breathes. And this is precisely the problem. Sitor's latest poetry is superficial, it is vociferous, it does set out to proclaim that he breathes.<sup>20</sup>

What then has gone wrong? Is Sitor the sychophant many would have us believe, ready to cash in on the tide of popular sentiment, or is there another explanation for the extraordinary failure of this talent?

Earlier I referred to Sitor's lack of stamina, of his inability to bear his res-

possibilities as poet and spokesman of his generation. The trauma of his visit to Europe, his loss of religious faith, his loss of the sense of belonging to his Batak community, a loss which has only intensified his longing to belong, has subjected his personality to strains beyond its capacity. Perhaps the answer is as Teeuw puts it, that he is no longer a Batak, but his Indonesian consciousness is not yet sufficient to fill the vacuum, and this is the cause of his loss of nerve.

This question of the idea of Indonesia as a concept and focus of cultural loyalty is central to Indonesia as a nation, and is precisely what President Soekarno has been trying to develop through the creation of a national ideology calculated to appeal to the instincts of the various regional systems of loyalties and to integrate them into a larger whole. Sitor, in my view, has hurled himself desperately towards this new psychological mooring like a man caught in a tropical downpour seeking shelter in an uncompleted house which lacks among other facilities, a roof. For a common Indonesian set of values is still nascent; the framework is well-established, but the structure still requires flesh and blood.

Perhaps this is the reason why the most striking Indonesian poets to date have found their strength as human beings in the context of what used to be called Universal Humanism. This collapse of Sitor only serves to highlight a quality common to such differing individuals as Amir Hamzah and Chairil Anwar: a profound courage and personal consistency. When Amir Hamzah gave up his commoner Javanese sweetheart and returned to Sumatra to marry a princess, he stopped writing; he did not write verse to his royal bride; Chairil never wavered in his devotion to poetry as his guiding star. He drained life to the dregs, and accepted the bitterness without complaint. Even death he faced with an unflinching stoic courage.

Amir and Chairil were both outsiders vis à vis their regional cultures but were strong enough not to require the mediation of a national consciousness before they could speak in the anguished accents of modern man without sacrificing the integrity of their poetic vision.

Sitor lacks this strength, and is therefore the lesser man and the lesser poet. But his personal tragedy should be understood in its proper light as that of a man between two worlds and as an illustration of the tremendous psychological and social changes in process in Indonesia today, processes which President Soekarno has regarded as his most challenging task to modulate and synthesize. It should remind us that despite the temptation to interpret present events in Indonesia as a conflict between communism and anti-communism, the energies and uncertainties at home in contemporary Indonesia are too complex and profound to be explained away by a simple dichotomy.

## FOOTNOTES

\* 'A singsing so' is the chorus of a well known Batak song.

<sup>1</sup> *Surat Kertas Hidjau* (Pustaka Rakjat, Djakarta) 1953, abbreviated here as SKH, *Wadjah tak bernama* (Pembangunan, Djakarta) 1955, abbreviated here as WTB. *Dalam Sadjak* (Van Hoeve, Bandung) no date, abbreviated here as DS. *Zaman Baru* (Zaman Baru, Djakarta) 1962, abbreviated here as ZB.

<sup>2</sup> WTB, 17.

<sup>3</sup> WTB, 19.

<sup>4</sup> SKH, 16, 17.

<sup>5</sup> This rendering is somewhat free; the music and succinctness of the original are difficult to recapture.

<sup>6</sup> WTB, 4.

<sup>7</sup> WTB, 5.

<sup>8</sup> WTB, 3.

<sup>9</sup> DS, 3, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Nasjah Djamin, *Hilanglah si anak hilang*, Nusantara, Djakarta 1963.

<sup>11</sup> WTB, 13.

<sup>12</sup> WTB, 18.

<sup>13</sup> WTB, 14.

<sup>14</sup> SKH, 5.

<sup>15</sup> WTB, 22.

<sup>16</sup> WTB, 23.

<sup>17</sup> ZB, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Made available from Mr. Achdiat's private collection. Documentation not currently available.

<sup>19</sup> Chairil Anwar *Kerikil Tadjam dan Jang Terampas dan Jang Putus* Pustaka Rakjat, Djakarta, 1949, p.50.

<sup>20</sup> See A. H. Johns 'Pramudya Ananta Tur, The Writer as Outsider: an Indonesian Example' *Meanjin*, 1963, Vol. 4, p.361.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN CARVING AND PAINTING

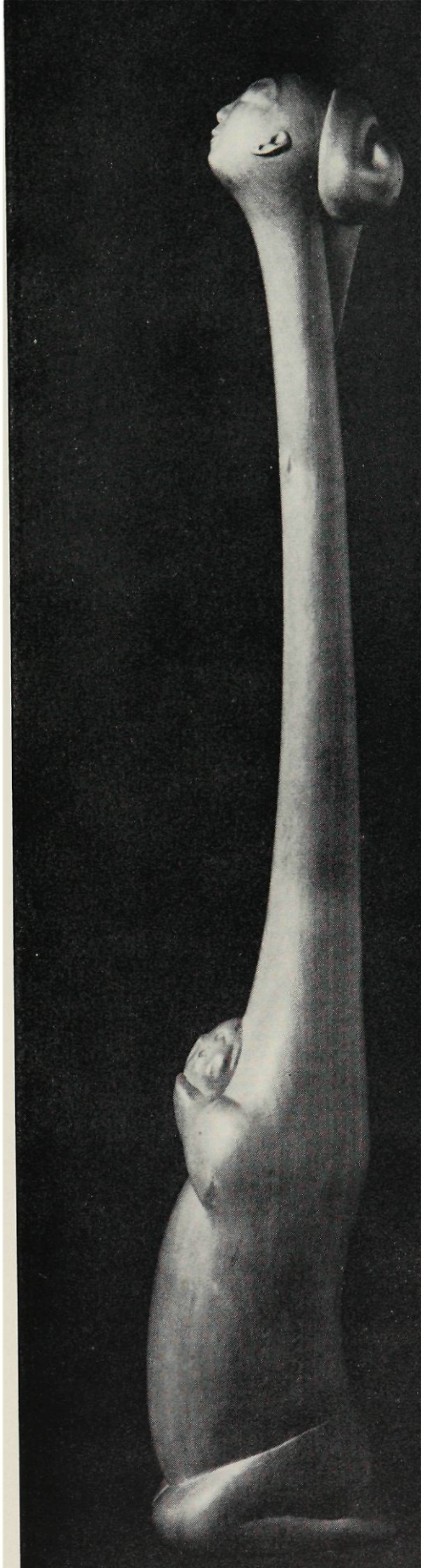
Notes on the Plates by M. A. JASPAN

1. *A different interpretation of Dewi Seri, also by Madé Trongking (see cover and descriptive note). Whilst the essential Balinese genre of body elongation, ritual kneeling and manual homage are present, the togog as a whole has greater plasticity and there is an attempt by the artist to capture his notion of aesthetic perfection of the female form. Here Dewi Seri holds an egg as a fertility symbol, but the whole body line, bending gently forward and sideward, suggests greater humility and softness than in the artist's cover togog.*
2. *A profile of Madé Trongking's togog shown on the front cover. Despite the characteristic elongation of neck and the inverse truncation of arms and legs, it is here clearly evident that the fertility goddess is set in a kneeling posture of ritual homage.*
3. *This togog, by an unknown Balinese artist, represents a fisherman's myth generically akin to the Old Testament Jonah. The two fishermen, having capsized and been swallowed by a large fish, are starkly set in lean, naked postures of pre-Hindu ritual thanksgiving.*
4. *A togog by Madé Trongking which again represents a traditional folktale of South Central Bali. The embrace of mother and daughter signifies a prodigal reunification and emotional reacceptance after the rites of expiatory purification have released the repentant daughter from a state of ritual profanity.*
5. *A water colour by Harijati, a leading artist of the Seniman Indonesia Muda (Young Indonesian Artists) atelier in Bangiredjo Taman, Jogjakarta. The subject is Timar, a student artist of the school, in which scholars and teachers led a common existence sharing artists' materials, food, domestic chores and endless discussion about and evaluation of their own and other artists' work.*

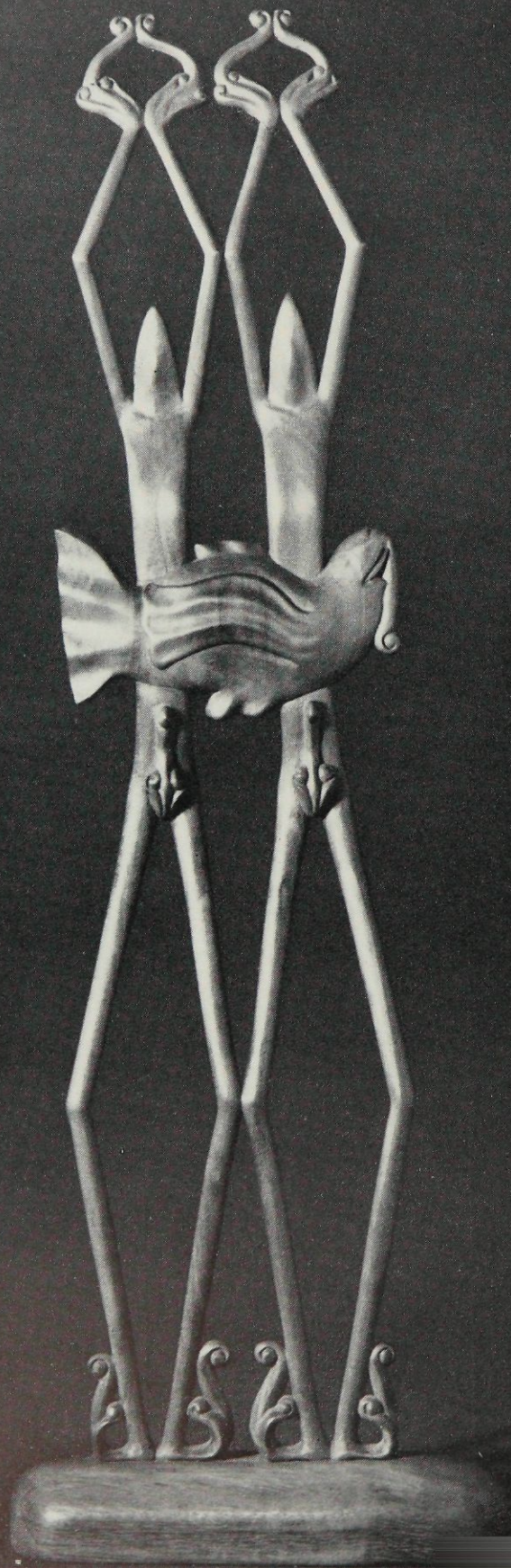
**Photography by Fritz Kos.**

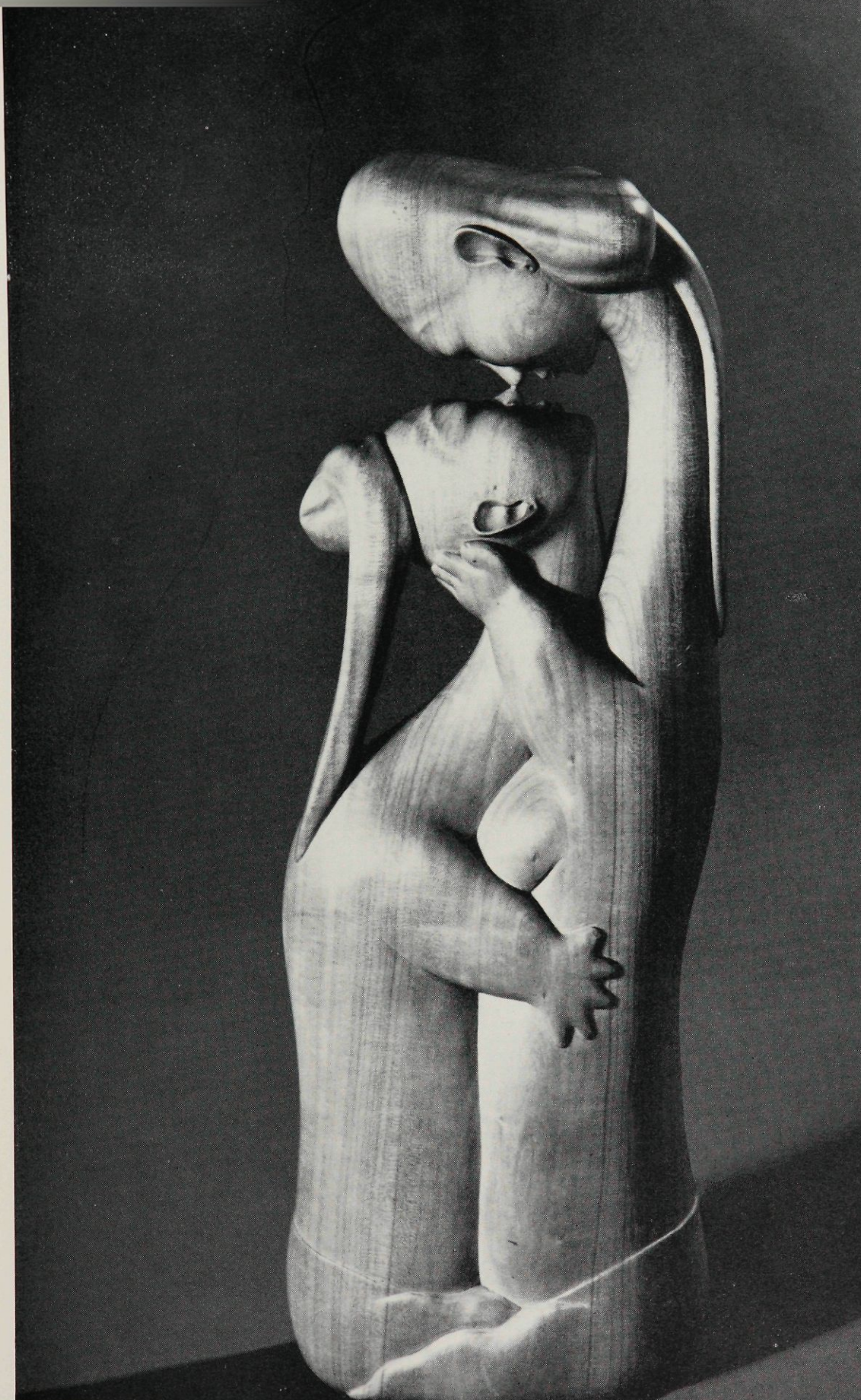


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*Portrait of  
a young man  
1921*

# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT STORIES OF PRAMUDYA ANANTA TUR

by Soebardi

**P**RAMUDYA ANANTA TUR was born at Blora, a small town in the northern part of Central Java, in 1925. During the Indonesian revolution, between 1945 and 1949, Pramudya became a war-reporter, but in 1947 he was captured by the Dutch and held by them for 29 months. His life in captivity had a great influence on his subsequent novels and short stories. Also a distinguished essayist and critic, he has undoubtedly been one of the most productive of the young post-war writers and perhaps the most prolific writer of Indonesian prose.

His two best novels in my view, are *Keluarga Gerilja* ("A Guerrilla Family") and *Perburuan* ("Pursuit"), both of which were first published in 1950. In the first Pramudya depicts, with acuteness and depth, the interwoven lives of human beings who undergo much suffering and bitterness in the course of great historical changes, together with the more personal conflict and consequent bitterness between a father and his sons which often occurs to a marked degree during such periods. At the time of the Revolution, the father remains loyal to the Dutch, while the sons give their allegiance to the Republic. During the guerilla warfare the father is killed by his own sons, one of whom is later captured and executed.

The action of *Perburuan*, which was awarded the first prize of the Balai Pustaka (National Literary Institute) for 1949, takes place around Blora at the time of its occupation by the Japanese. By means of his powerfully developed characters, Pramudya describes the struggle of the members of the *Pembela Tanah Air* (Defenders of the Fatherland) against the Japanese.

Two other well-known novels by Pramudya appeared in 1961: *Mereka Jang Dilumpuhkan* ("Those who Are Paralyzed"), and *Bukan Pasar Malam* ("Not a Night Fair"). Perhaps his best-known collection of short stories is *Tjerita dari Blora* ("Stories from Blora"), published in 1952. "Dia jang Menjerah" ("The One Who Surrendered") is perhaps the most famous story in this collection; translations of which have been published in several languages. Two short stories from this collection, "Hadiah Kawin" ("The Wedding Present") and "Jang Hitam" ("The Darkness"), are published in English for the first time in this issue of *Westerly*. Both stories are studies in depth of aspects of the human mind confronted by hostile or challenging surroundings. They are not, in my opinion, inferior to "Dia jang Menjerah".

# INTRODUCTION TO THE TJERPEN

by M. A. Jaspán

MODERN INDONESIAN AND MALAY literature has perhaps been more notable for its poetry than its prose. There were few full-length novels prior to the Independence Revolution of 1945-49, though the Dutch Colonial Government did much to spur the growth of literary expression by offering prizes and an exceptionally wide readership—through large and low priced printings—for a colonial territory at that period. Whilst there have been few outstanding novels, or novelists, Indonesian prose writers have found their most successful métier in the short story—*tjerita pendek*, popularly abbreviated into *tjerpén*, which is now an accepted neologism.

The most prolific *tjerpén* writer is Pramudya Ananta Tur, three of whose stories are included in this collection. Other *tjerpén* writers of note are Sitor Situmorang and Achdiat Karta Mihardja. Most newspapers, both national and regional, carry a short story each day, and perhaps two or three in a week-end edition. *Alfatihah*, the last *tjerpén* in the collection here, was first published in the South Sumatran daily newspaper *Fikiran Rakjat*. Many of these bear a closer resemblance to the *feuilleton* than to the Anglo-Saxon or Russian short story. The chief mentors or model-makers for Indonesian short story writers were Hemingway, Chekhov and Dostoyevsky.

The growing preoccupation of Indonesian writers with the *tjerpén* reflected itself in the publication from 1953 to 1957 of *Kisah*, a monthly literary journal concerned primarily with the *tjerpén*. Other journals such as *Sastra*, *Siasat* and *Budaja* have continued to publish short stories and critiques of them. The most important analytical study of the *tjerpén* thus far is Ajip Rossidi's *Tjerita Pendek Indonesia* (The Indonesian Short Story), published in Djakarta in 1959. Important studies of the *tjerpén* by non-Indonesian writers have been made by Echols, Johns, Parnickel and Teeuw. The most complete bibliographic references in English, to both *tjerpén* writers and their literary critics, is to be found in A. H. Johns' essay 'Genesis of a Modern Literature'.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the foremost *tjerpén* writers were associated with *Lekra*,<sup>2</sup> the largest association of artists and writers from 1950 to 1965. This organisation was officially disbanded after the events following the outbreak of violent conflict between the army leadership and the Communist Party in October, 1966. The fate of many leading *Lekra* writers, such as Pramudya Anarta Tur, remains uncertain as this issue goes to press.

This organisation, which had a generally left-wing political orientation, was concerned with creating forms of artistic expression intelligible to ordinary people, and combining this with critical or socialist realism and romantic revolutionism. *Lekra* was opposed to artistic individualism devoid of a sense of social obligation and involvement, the expression of which it saw in those who accepted the notion of *l'art pour l'art*.

1. Published in *Indonesia* (edited by R. McVey), Yale University and HRAF Press, New Haven, 1963.

2. Abbreviation of *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakjat* (Institute of People's Culture).

# THE REWARD OF MARRIAGE

by Pramudya Ananta Tur

## 1.

**T**HAT LEBARAN<sup>1</sup> worried me greatly. I was forced to think at length about how I would be able to get money quickly. Lebaran always brings guests who require, and want to give, forgiveness. But what is the connection between forgiving each other and cakes—that is what I did not understand at all.

The thoughts which came thronging were perhaps what made my eyes refuse to close. Before—four hours ago—I had drawn the bed-curtain. And beside me—my wife is already far away, in a world of dreams, a secret universe! And I? I am still blinking my eyes, unable to sleep.

Lebaran!

It was Lebaran which disturbed my thoughts. Finally, it was as follows: I came to this decision—I would force myself to go to sleep. And to put myself to sleep this is the easiest way: I had to tell myself a story. So then I made one up for myself. This is the story.

He felt that he was the toy of society. And in this world no-one was mistaken as to why he was called Soleiman. Soleiman knew a little about himself. He knew his weakness—he did not possess the strength to oppose the wishes of his society. In every direction he felt cheated and swindled by people. His merchandise, with its small capital and lack of reserve stock, was in disorder. All this forced him to carry the responsibility of pitying himself.

Finally, he stopped being a realist and vowed to become a big businessman—perhaps later a millionaire—which allowed him to soar to the seventh heaven. At times too he blamed himself and the society which toyed with him. But he was not able to do anything. He felt he did not have the strength to face all this.

Then it happened as follows:

He saw the system of government, the systems of politics, religion, morality—as having already become stagnant, lifeless rules and obligations, no longer alive as in the age of their coming into existence, in the time when they were still in a state of growth. And he felt that he was held in a tight grip by these obligatory virtues and by the supporters of these regulations and the regulations themselves. He saw the supporters of these regulations as liars, cheats and business sharks. He didn't need to prove the truth or otherwise, because he only wanted ease. Whatever is easy will prolong life, said his theory about life's survival. But from time to time he was startled by his small knowledge of himself. Such a little—and he did not have any energy to oppose all that.

Finally, he became a writer. And it was he himself who called himself a writer. Who would dare to deny it?—this was always the challenge within his

own mind. Free men choose the work they like. A man is free to give himself a name in his heart, in his mind. Yes, even if he calls himself king, doctor or master of law or something else as crazy as that. And there is absolutely no policeman who can control the contents of people's minds or hearts. Indeed, he doubted if the angel of God could know what was contained within the feelings and thoughts of men.

Those who have had a short story published in a magazine just once can be called writers. Sometimes they choose a more glorious name than that: literary men! They adorn themselves with beautiful names, just as a man who is love-sick knots a necktie around the collar of his shirt: "We are pioneers seeking new values of life! We are the pioneers of a generation which speaks frankly."

And he himself had already covered volumes of note-books. Yes, even though not one of the manuscripts had yet been published.

In our small town men did not have the opportunity to develop their own personalities. And *he* did not know how to publish the manuscripts which piled up. His writings stagnated in the cupboard. His life was still in disorder and was made more so by his writing. How could it be otherwise? He used a large part of his time to escape from the society which continually spied on him to make him its victim—he wrote continuously, wrote and wrote. And to fill his stomach he sold junk—or, to give it a somewhat better name, he became a dealer in second-hand goods—just so that he wouldn't die of hunger.

And the story continues as follows:

Because he clearly saw the shortcomings of society and human relations, he thought: for myself, I can choose what is better, more beautiful and more useful than what the majority of people have chosen. And he felt satisfied and proud of this opinion.

And not only that! He felt that he was better than the people around him. Yes, that opinion of his raised his standing in his own eyes. And there was not a policeman or an angel of the Divine police-force who had the right to hinder or seize him because of his personal opinions.

When he met a girl, a lady—especially if she was beautiful and attractive to him—his heart immediately cried out like a fighter facing a wrestling match:

"This is the man who must be your husband! He realises the rottenness of society. Other people are only buffaloes and empty barrels. Here is the man that you ought to choose as a partner. He knows how to evade the rottenness of society. Follow him. Follow his footsteps."

And when he met a married woman, and because he only paid attention to the beautiful ones—so, when he met a beautiful married woman, immediately his heart cried out mockingly:

"Gosh!—what is your husband? Just an ordinary man, beautiful?—a blind man! A stiff lifeless man, wrapped up in the rottenness of society. And he is not even conscious of that any more—that is his madness. A man made like stone in the grip of a stiff morality and a static religion and a stagnant government. Just choose me, you will be forever happy. Certainly! Soleiman can guarantee it! You will certainly be happy."

And because he thought too much about society and about men, his former happiness, the happiness of a man who had enthusiasm for life, changed into the happiness of opposing public opinion. Among his associates, he always pointed out the stagnation and defects of this society.

The young men and women of our small town—whose inhabitants are not so intelligent because they are cut off from regional and world literature—admired Soleiman. And if these young men and women were members of parliament, certainly a new motion would be broadcast all over the country: “We stand behind Soleiman although he cannot be a shield because of his thinness and flat buttocks.” And indeed Soleiman had great creative power. And because he didn’t often read good books, whether from the east or from the west, and because he read his own heart and mind much, many of his products were indeed original.

His opinions about society and mankind made Soleiman become boastful, arrogant and proud. He had a low opinion of society and human beings. He put no value on buffaloes and empty barrels, but because he was still afraid of dying of hunger, he was still forced to associate with them in the small society of our town. And in this association, his attitude was always sweet and genial—not because of his own inclination but because his stomach made this necessary.

And he suffered because of all this.

Sometimes when he was by himself and was reminded how he had to lower himself in his associations only because he was afraid to die of starvation, and if it occurred to him that he still needed society and mankind, he felt himself degraded as a worm that would be better off trodden by a maid’s foot or, more appropriately, drenched with soapy water which had been used for laundry, rather than keep on living, crawling around and afraid to be struck by the light of the sun.

The introduction to this story about Soleiman is finished and now we come to the real story. But because a story is not very attractive if it has no variation, so this story too has its variation. And because the course of human life is too flat if not enlivened with a love song with a lively tune and words, so the story too is given a small interval of love. Only a small one. Too many people would be bored with it.

The interval is as follows:

The world would be a cold place if it contained only men or only women. So, there are men in this world and also women on the earth. And so, it was not Soleiman alone who was born because of the desire of his two parents. No! Tidjah too was brought into this world where there were already many people—the world which contained this Soleiman.

From childhood Tidjah had never left our little town. Just like the man Soleiman. And she too was born into the world without any right of choice. She existed, and she was a woman. This was already the decree of her fate which was later to play an important role in her life. And she too didn’t know why she had to be born into the society which contained Soleiman. Soleiman, who was a man. Soleiman, who was thin with flat buttocks.

And when she was born too she didn't know that in her world there was Soleiman, who was not a woman like her but a man—a man like her father whose desire played a part in making her. Yes, she didn't know anything when she was born. But she was born just the same into this world.

She too was a baby at first. Gradually she grew big, becoming a virgin who, according to her own feeling, was beautiful. She knew very well that she was a virgin, although she didn't know at all that in the hearts of the young men who paid attention to her, there were doubts about her virginity.

Unlike Soleiman, who had flat buttocks, she had big buttocks, full and broad. Her breasts were full and big—the sign of a worldly woman, some people said. But she herself had never heard about this sign. What she knew was that she was a woman, beautiful in her own opinion, and convinced that on one astounding occasion she would have to be kissed by a young man. And who this young man would be she did not know. However, she was satisfied with the situation. And as to where she would receive this kiss, she couldn't really be certain.

Like other grown-up young girls, she too quietly awaited the coming of the kiss on her cheek—because her parents had told her that kissing was always on the cheek. Yes, with a great hope, full and silent. Silent. Because although she was the outcome of desire of her two parents, she knew that if she told her hope to them, they would certainly be angry and scold and beat her. And her mother would shout:

“Shameless girl! Doesn't know herself! Doesn't know her place! A girl like that shouldn't have been born!”

And all the neighbours would hear and feel pleased. Then the news would leap from place to place and travel all over the city.

Yes, she could imagine what would happen if she told this hope to them. It would be better for her to keep her mouth shut.

Then the war broke out.

Wars always break down the restrictions of sex—for a short time or for longer. And during the war she had the opportunity to move around our small town freely. And with the great silent hope of getting a kiss, hidden in the bottom of her heart. She did not really know where she hid that hope. But she felt the hope—felt it strongly. And sometimes it grew bigger, as large as a basket. And sometimes it grew smaller, only as big as a grain of sand.

All this time she had not been successful in obtaining what she desired. She was still too small to arouse a man's passion. And she was still timid and wild too.

Then the revolution followed. All restrictions went completely by the board. And she was able to get a warm kiss from one T.N.I. sergeant. In the beginning she shivered when she was kissed by Mahlani, but because she had already decided it before, she received both the kiss and the embrace.

Except for the two of them, there was no one who witnessed that meeting between flesh and flesh. Mahlani often came to Tidjah's parents' house, and her two parents welcomed him gladly. And although they also knew that their child was often kissed by the young man when they were alone, they never

enquired about the matter. And they never forbade it—people said it wasn't proper.

And Tidjah too never told anyone about it. People said it wasn't proper. But the event repeated itself again and again, and again. She still didn't tell anyone at all about it.

When she was on her own, especially when evening had come and she had difficulty in shutting her eyes, certainly she would picture Mahlani in her mind. But she did not picture Mahlani as a T.N.I. sergeant, Mahlani who wore a green uniform and a stripe. And she did not picture Mahlani with heavy shoes tanned like iron, with a *pitji*<sup>2</sup> worn on the slope and armed with a Japanese gun which had no bullets! No. This was the picture: Mahlani without his stripe, unarmed and without a uniform. Mahlani completely naked. And in her picture she was full of admiration for the muscles of the body of her attractive beloved. And usually she fell asleep, without taking the young man with her into her dreams.

Man's attention is never concentrated on one thing alone. So Tidjah also pictured other young men in her mind. Not Mahlani alone. And she never told of this matter to anyone. People said it wasn't good. However, it was Mahlani who was most often depicted. Oddly—and Tidjah herself never realised this—she never pictured a woman's body, especially not her own mother's.

Rôles always change hands in the world's story. And on one occasion Mahlani, the muscles of whose body she had always admired as she pictured him in her head, did not come back from the battlefield. The news reached her and other ears in our small town: when Mahlani had been hit on the jaw by a bullet and fallen sprawling at the mouth of a ravine, he was seized by the enemy. He had been dragged along and then thrown into a ravine.

Mahlani would never come back.

Supposing that that young man could be found and given back to her, she would no longer marvel at the muscles of his body. For some people, death is a frightening peculiarity. And Tidjah, despite the fact that all her hope of being kissed again was quite useless, sometimes even protracted the extent of her hope.

Such was the interlude in this story.

## 2.

In this story Tidjah has to marry Soleiman. The tale demands it. Because of this it would be very wrong if the marriage were not preceded by silent and mystical meetings, with boiling desire and something whose name sounds more beautiful than desire, that is love. Love, yes, love, which, in fact, is also passion. So these mystical meetings also have to be described.

Their story is as follows:

It is a very bad thing if people think that a rôle will remain eternally in only one hand. A rôle is a slippery thing. Not only does it change from man to man but also from group to group, from people to people, from country to country, from one period to another. And at one time it was the Dutch who

played a rôle in our small town. The T.N.I.<sup>3</sup> were chased from the city. The Dutch occupied it.

And because Soleiman considered himself a true Republican, he exiled himself to a remote part of the city to avoid co-operating with the Dutch. There are times in the life of a human being when comradeship is evil.

Tidjah also considered herself a pure Republican. Because of this she often went to the remote places where the young Republican civilians hid themselves. And she became acquainted with Soleiman too. For a long time she had known Soleiman's name—Soleiman, our city's famous writer. This acquaintance made her proud. If only she hadn't been ashamed she would have liked to shout:

“Soleiman must become my husband. Must! Must!”

Indeed, it is nothing new that our acquaintance with someone comes into being not all at once but gradually. And after Tidjah knew Soleiman's name, and knew the person, then she knew his inner heart. Later the conversations that followed this acquaintance made an impression on the young girl: Soleiman was the most perceptive and cleverest young man in the whole world. Perhaps also in the whole creation. And if she hadn't been ashamed, she would have liked to praise the young man in front of her parents so that they could quickly adopt him as their son-in-law. But truly the feeling of shame is the most slippery betrayer of the desires of mankind.

Only now and then did Tidjah mention Soleiman's name in front of her parents. And in an indirect way, the young girl forced interludes in the conversation about the greatness of Soleiman. Out of these conversations she hoped for a reaction from them. But her mother and father were not psychologists and neither was she. Her two parents were more drawn to matters of the kitchen.

In front of the young man himself, Tidjah became all at once silent, loyal, obedient and submissive. She paid attention to what Soleiman said. She never argued. Soleiman's voice was a god's voice, a voice of the greatest hope. And if she argued she would bring punishment on herself. And if she had realised her wish, she would certainly have heard her own voice speaking like this:

“Soleiman, I am the most beautiful young woman in this city. I am a young girl with big buttocks. Take me. Do whatever you like with me.”

But because she was unaware of her own condition, she just became respectful, submissive and attentive. And she became like that willingly and with happiness of heart.

### 3.

In this story Soleiman has been too much neglected. So the story returns to the above-mentioned young man in his self-imposed exile. It was as follows:

Like other young civilians who exiled themselves, Soleiman too lived in misery, in greater disorder than before the Dutch attack. And it was enough for him to show his suffering to this Tidjah, to attract sympathy. Yes, he told about it with long speeches, sometimes interspersed with philosophical ideas. And Tidjah understood it. Between the two of them there was already understanding. However, there was not yet any direct relationship between the two of them.

Tidjah wanted to make Soleiman like her by giving him gifts which would enable the young man to forget his suffering. A suffering that was not genuine. Because once that suffering was expressed, it was not suffering any more. It was only imaginary. Thus Tidjah found an outlet for her republican feeling, though she worked for the Dutch. And like other people who also work for the Dutch but wanted to feel responsible, she too adopted the device: in my heart I am still a Republican.

The wages she received were used for buying food, cigarettes and clothes. For the young man Soleiman, with the flat buttocks. And quietly these things were given as a love bribe. But she herself didn't realise that this was a love bribe. If she had known and realised this she would have expected the young man to curse her. Indeed blindness sometimes makes people happy.

She had heard much about people who made use of love bribes. Especially if one was old and the other was young. But what she herself was doing she didn't know.

On the other hand, Soleiman knew that these things were nothing but the bribery of love. But sometimes the course of this life is good if it is travelled blindly. For a long time Soleiman had wanted to get married. Yes, just like other young men and women when black hair begins to grow in their armpits. But he didn't have any possessions to attract the heart of a young girl. He had only his cleverness at talking. And he knew the ability to talk was valuable capital. With this skill it was easy for people to cheat. And if he wasn't clever at talking, blows would be rained upon a person who tried to cheat. And he had only the designation "writer", no more than that.

Often he thought:

"Only a young girl who is also drunk with words will be willing to become my wife." He included Tidjah in that category. However, he still carried this high opinion in his mind:

"How happy will be the woman who becomes my wife."

And because at the time of the Dutch occupation many people lived in disorder—I mean those who felt that they were true Republicans—Soleiman saw the situation around him with a joyful heart. He got his enthusiasm back again. And his heart cried out with great cheerfulness:

"You're finished now. I have no rivals any more."

And when, on one occasion, Tidjah came to him bringing a love bribe he spoke in a gentle voice—the most gentle in his whole life—thus:

"Tidjah, why do you always put yourself out, thinking about me?"

And Tidjah, who for a long time had suspected that she would hear words like that, repeated the answer which she had long learnt carefully by heart:

"Well, Mas Soleiman, is that not a woman's duty?"

An answer like that made Soleiman think—thoughts which he himself made more beautiful.

How happy my heart would be if I were able to marry her. She knows about the duty of mankind. Is it not a fact that not all young girls know about this?"

And at that moment Tidjah was silent, thinking:

"Now is the time. He must ask me to become his wife." This thought made her tremble somewhat. Then the silence was broken by the wistful voice of Soleiman, who felt he no longer had any competitors.

"Indeed it is difficult for a poor man to repay people's kindness."

He was silent, turning things over in his mind.

"Tidjah, what would you say if I asked you to marry me?"

And, as is the case with a hen who keeps her distance if brought to a cock even though she is actually willing, Tidjah answered with a pretext which came into her mind before she thought about it.

"What can you hope for from me, Mas Soleiman? I have nothing. My parents are poor."

Then came a statement to which she gave hesitant emphasis:

"And I am ugly too. Not like many other young girls. And I am also stupid. Not your equal in intelligence. What can you hope for from me?"

And like other young men when they are coaxing, Soleiman's hands moved hesitantly to hold Tidjah's—a woman's. And Tidjah—because she was afraid in case the man Soleiman withdrew his words—didn't protest at being held like that. She drew a deep breath to overcome the thumping of her heart. But the heart had its own law and duty. So it continued to beat quickly.

This is the eternal story, classic, changing from body to body, from heart-beat to heartbeat. No rule can forbid it. It has its own season. It has its own history.

And like other young men, who are afraid and ashamed to mention the word *desire* in front of the young woman they hope for, the man Soleiman said in a voice full of music:

"Little Tidjah, you have to know how great my love for you is."

And he knew that if suddenly Tidjah was not made of attractive flesh he would all of a sudden cease to coax and flatter her. But those words were not enough. He added to the statement with a pride which was somewhat pompous:

"The moment I met you, I fell in love with you."

And because such flattery is always insufficient, although a big lie, and not yet enough to please a woman if she is not yet dead, Tidjah asked to be coaxed and flattered more with statements even more beautiful, more musical, and more long-winded:

"What is it that prompts your heart to love me, who am so worthless?"

But in her heart she remained convinced and sure of her beauty.

Because Soleiman was frightened in case Tidjah drew away and he would not be able to marry, he quickly continued his coaxing:

"Yes, little Tidjah. This human life is short. And it is our duty to use it as well as possible. I know that it is you who are the choice of my heart. I know that you will become a faithful wife who knows her duty."

Quite suddenly Tidjah realised that later she would become a faithful wife who knew her duty. Her heart beat more quickly—as if there was a war-drum

inside it. But such short flatteries were not enough and not explicit enough to drug her. She asked to be flattered more seriously, more lengthily and more melodiously:

"How can you know this, Mas Soleiman?"

And immediately Soleiman, who was frightened of not getting married, answered:

"I know this from your eyes, my Tidjah. Do you hear? From your eyes. And the eyes are a mirror of the human soul, my little one."

Tidjah was radiant with happiness because she knew that in her eyes it could be read that she would become a faithful wife who knew her duty. And she preferred to believe this nonsense than not to. She wanted to embrace the man Soleiman closely, so that the two bodies became one, not separate any longer. But she was a woman. He was a man. And between the two there was public morality.

But:

The love between a man and a woman is not new in this world. Because of this the interval in the story about their love will probably be too boring. So it is better to finish it off here. And other people can continue it according to their individual fancies.

Afterwards the story is interspersed with other matters to complete its many-coloured aspect.

The following interlude is like this:

In the war in Indonesia, the Dutch, who had been victorious on the battle-field, finally surrendered on the conference-table. Little by little they withdrew their troops. And the people who had exiled themselves came down to the cities again with cries of victory:

"We loyally supported the Republic."

And there were also clearer, fiercer shouts:

"I devoted my body and soul for that struggle."

And in shouting thus they did not need to know what had already been done for the Republic. They came down to the cities bearing a great hope in their breasts:

"We have a right to a soft chair<sup>4</sup> and a high salary!"

Then they claimed respect—demanded a happy life as the price of the difficult time they had had during the period of their self-exile. This was their logic. A new struggle which was no less fierce followed: the fight for seats! There were those who got soft seats. There were those who got hard ones. There were those who only got the remnants, because the seat was pulled this way and that when they were occupying it. Indeed there were also some who received blows from the legs of the chair.

While the wild struggle to snatch a seat continued fiercely, Soleiman quietly dreamt of a bed. He was already accustomed to not occupying a seat in whatever government there was, and so he paid no attention to this fierce struggle. At that time, he only directed his attention to bed. Bed! With not even one leg missing! For him a bed was the essential condition of holy and unholy love,

although the two were the same in essence—the breath of nature which blew in him as a human creature.

Now—in this story—Soleiman's star began to rise.

On one occasion he met with an old friend who had just come from the big city. This friend could tell many things about books and about publishers. His coming was just like the descent of a 250-watt lamp to lighten the darkness of Soleiman's room. From their conversations, Soleiman was forced to understand where he had to send his manuscripts. And he quietly followed the advice of his friend.

On one happy day, he got a letter from the secretary of the editor of a big publishing firm. The letter said:

"We have received your manuscript. And if you need money, you can make a request for an advance from the royalties of your work, at most 5,000 rupiah."

He read the letter with complete confidence in himself. I have worked hard and as well as I can, and I have the right to enjoy the fruits of that work. In short, suddenly he had money. Suddenly his dreams of obtaining a bed were fulfilled. And he would be able to marry Tidjah promptly. Tidjah herself would not refuse that request. Marry! Yes, marry!

In his diary Soleiman placed a sign with green ink which flowed from a Parker fountain-pen:

"This day is the closing day of all the past history of my life. Now I become a new man with new responsibilities. And automatically from this moment on is the beginning of my history on this earth."

And truly Soleiman became a new man with a new history on this earth. He never imagined Tidjah in a state of complete nakedness. No. That was not necessary any more. Tidjah had already become his possession now. He also did not need to give and take the bribes of love with his wife, although by this he did not need to suffer a loss. Certainly, he did not lose anything. And now he knew all his speeches all that time were quite empty. And also his advice and little explanations about the politics of the country. And he himself was sure that his voice which formerly he used as a love bribe would raise his standing in his own view and in Tidjah's. And what he had been doing all that time was not mistaken.

All Soleiman's nonsense did indeed attract Tidjah to him. And the less Tidjah understood the pompous, soaring voice, the more she believed in him. And in her heart she sang the song of her life's victory:

"Soleiman is the cleverest young man in the world. And it is I who later will have him. It is I who will become his wife."

And without speaking, she believed that Soleiman was a man who realised his duty as a man, as a human being, as a husband—a human being who knew the law of reason, who knew the rottenness and evil of society.

These speeches to a lesser or greater extent began to influence her spirit. Tidjah turned into a new person. Tidjah too began to suspect society and its content. Sometimes too she also suspected herself. And this made her uneasy.

But now the two are already married. A religious leader legitimized the union. Love bribes do not have a place any more in their lives. Tidjah got

what she had wanted all the time. Soleiman no longer needed to be secretly afraid that he might never be able to marry all his life. Both people had already changed. Tidjah who formerly liked to go around the whole of our little town—Blora—now became a real stay-at-home. She just stayed shut up at home and tidied up the household. And Soleiman suddenly became fatherly in his relationships with his friends. He often advised them about matters concerning married relations. And young men who wanted to marry listened to all this full of attention and admiration. Without its being realised, the marriage of Soleiman and Tidjah became an ideal marriage for them.

There was no place now for offering each other love bribes. And then the problems of everyday living filled their life. The honeymoon made Soleiman become thinner and his buttocks flatter than ever. And financial problems hung every second in front of his eyes, making his eyelids sink inwards. Often—against his will—he asked himself:

“Can you give housekeeping money to your wife ceaselessly—ceaselessly until you are grandparents? Perhaps sixty years? Perhaps seventy or more? Can you undertake this?”

And Soleiman who had just got his enthusiasm for living back again and was joyfully opposing public opinion, now felt gloomy at facing the problem of the housekeeping money which he would have to supply for as long as seventy years.

“This is the reward of marriage,” he whispered for the first time in his life.

From that day, that whisper would hiss repeatedly when he absolutely did not possess even one half cent in his pocket to buy cigarettes.

Sometimes too he reproached himself:

“This is the reward if you wish to get married and your wish is granted. You get a wife but you yourself suffer a loss.”

And this regret made him become more of a dreamer than ever. His practicalness, which he had got from the world of trade, now disappeared. Earlier indeed he had already become a dreamer because of the harsh realities of the war. Now he was more so—more so. Often he mused deeply. Finally he came to the opinion that he was no different from other things in this world, living, or not living. He extolled his own suffering. He praised his flat and hollow pocket! And he thanked himself for getting a reward of marriage which had not been expected. He became habitually silent. But a way out could not be seen.

To be silent, dreaming, can sometimes become intolerable for a person who still possesses the remnants of energy to work, still possesses some desire to progress, and still has a little aspiration to obtain something better than what he already has in life. Thus, Soleiman buried himself in his work.

Day and night he wrote and wrote. And because his works were considered by the public to have a high value, because of the sprinkling of original thoughts, he always obtained success. And this success would indeed have been less refreshing if it had not come riding a horse. And this horse was money. So besides success, Soleiman was able to obtain money. And because he had already become an artist, he felt too that he had a right to bring forward his opinions on literature.

Once he said to a friend who, without realising it, had become his pupil in writing:

"Don't you believe in artists who take as their motto "art for art's sake", because at very least, with art they hope for money. If not, they hope for fame. Do you know what the content of fame is? Empty—zero. Just like gold and jewels. Men love it. And they fight to possess it—to become its chosen one."

Because Soleiman was already famous, other people had to hear his boasting. He did not like to be interrupted in the middle of it. He continued:

"Do you know what reason they have for taking as their motto "art for art's sake"? They are artists who do not obtain a market in society."

And his pupils who had also seen Soleiman's name in books and magazines supported that statement. And when he had gained their attention on belief he quickly continued:

"Every piece of writing should be a mirror of society. It should embody social aspects. And because mankind is a creature which loves wisdom it is also desirable that a composition should contain human wisdom of an exalted order."

When he was occupied in talking and there was no one disturbing him he felt as light as a feather in the sky. But afterwards when his companions in conversation were gone he felt that everything he had said was not his conviction but only a slogan of his own which he had just invented. And finally he felt that he was committing a wrong in behaving like that and in his own words:

"This is more an abuse than a sin. It is really more stupidity than wrongdoing."

But he felt happier when he compared himself with what he heard about other people, such as a story of some person too much absorbed in his own importance and interests: about his office, about his studio, about his business and so on. Conversation like that stifled creative power—it was boring—and made a man become like stone within his own society.

But the account of this is not important and had better be cut off and finished here.

#### 4.

What has not yet been told is how Soleiman and Tidjah lived during their honeymoon and marriage. Now the time has come to give it a place.

The story is as follows:

Writing much made Soleiman obtain still more money. But it also had its repercussions on his body. His cheeks became hollower and often his father-in-law, who was proud of him, used to say:

"Don't pursue money too much. Look, your cheeks are getting more and more hollow like a man who has lost his marrow."

Soleiman was the sort of person who likes to give a great deal of advice but does not deign to receive the advice of anyone else. So he just smiled quietly agreeing in principle only.

"Take care of your body. Playing sport is very important for young people."

He continued to smile. Later the advice had not the authority to live on in his mind. He remained the Soleiman of before who every day wrestled with his ideas.

Now Soleiman had achieved a firm position in the world of literature like a nail in a board. From the big cities came letters of introduction. From the critics came words of encouragement, spurring him on to write more. But not so that his quality would diminish, they said. Sometimes letters came asking him to explain how to write well. At first he received letters like this with a pleasure that approached pride. And he replied willingly. But gradually his desire to write to them disappeared. And on one less happy occasion he received a startling letter from a publishing firm which was a client of his. And the letter expressed itself as follows:

"If you would heed our advice, don't write too much. If you do, the value of your work will decline. On the other hand, fill the treasurehouse of your mind by wide reading, because only by reading will your creative power, which you have used until exhaustion in the past, arise again.

We have great hopes. And we will await a new composition from you of a far higher order than before."

At first Soleiman could not control himself, and cursed:

"He advises me so that my wife and I will die of hunger. Is he the only one who has a stomach to fill? He just doesn't know his place."

His face was clouded as he cursed. And to give emphasis to his cursing he went to find his wife and spat out his resentment.

"They can only give advice. Nothing else. Just give money if you like. They certainly don't like."

## 5.

The two people were at the time sitting on the edge of the bed. And his wife, who didn't know what had annoyed her husband, said:

"Why, Mas?"<sup>5</sup>

"Why?" shouted Soleiman.

And because he was not yet able to set up his own household, he still put up at the house of his parents-in-law. And because he was still under the roof of their house, his shout came only softly from his mouth:

"They advise me not to write so much. The value will decline, they say. What I don't understand is why other people want to interfere in the concerns of our stomachs. It is insolent, isn't it? Yes, people like that are really insolent. They want to snatch away our rice."

Suddenly Soleiman fell silent.

When his wife asked why he was silent, a picture grew clearer inside Soleiman's head: he gave too much advice to other people. And just now he had had the opportunity of experiencing the bitterness of unexpected advice. Let alone carrying it out, agreeing with it was trying enough. Especially if it was long-winded advice. Suddenly he smiled. He realised it now.

"Why do you suddenly smile?"

And the fibres of Soleiman's face which had been taut with anger slowly but surely began to relax. He said:

"I vow not to give any more advice."

At this time, because she felt she had authority over a certain percentage of Soleiman, Tidjah didn't always have to listen to Soleiman's statements. She said earnestly and full of hope:

"They, the people of the big city, know more about everything than us. Especially about writing. You had better follow their advice. It's true isn't it, that you don't have to pay for advice?"

"What?" snarled Soleiman fiercely. And because he was still under the roof of his parent's-in-law's house, his snarl was almost inaudible to his wife. And his firmness did not show clearly. And if anything appeared it was not a heroic attitude. No! Quite the opposite: a timid one.

In a whisper he continued:

"Yes, Tidjah, it is because advice doesn't have to be paid for that it is so sickening to receive it."

"I think they gave their advice with good intentions. They also bear part of the risk in publishing your books. You had better follow their advice. Is it not better to have knowledge than not?" said Tidjah sweetly.

And Soleiman really lost his control now.

Excitedly:

"And our rice? Our stomachs?"

Tidjah tried to calm her husband's feelings. But not a single word came out of her mouth.

"Tidjah! You too want to give me advice?"

But his excitement quickly died down. Suddenly he saw his father-in-law pass in front of the bedroom door. He bowed his head with a gentle expression. Quietly he got up and walked to the door, and pushed it to. Quickly he went back to his wife. He prolonged his irritation in a careful and regular voice:

"You too want to peddle advice now?"

And Tidjah who had already calculated in her head that there would be great hope later if her husband became more learned than at present, said decisively:

"You *must* follow their advice."

"*Must* doesn't mean anything to me."

"You're too stubborn."

"You too are stubborn."

But Tidjah was more capable than Soleiman, who had lost a certain proportion of his practical ability. She embraced her husband and kissed him while whispering quickly:

"Listen to their advice. I don't force you to. I ask you. Listen to their advice. It is I, your wife, who asks. Not them."

And Soleiman was like an unbaked cream-puff in Tidjah's embrace. His thoughts were put to flight by the kiss and embrace. His heart was gone too. He himself disappeared, and only the breath of nature ran amok, raging and storming in his breast. So he locked the door.

In the atmosphere of the room, fenced in by those walls, trembled a hurried and exhausted voice of a man between precipitate breaths—

“Yes, yes. Yes. I must follow that advice.”

Now Soleiman did not write much any more. Every hour of the day, he was seen holding a book. Books on literature! Even in the evenings, when without realising it he fell limply asleep, he sometimes still grasped a book in his hand. And from this work he realised, or could guess, that in Djakarta a new trend had arisen—a trend towards frankness.

At first he admired the above-mentioned current. But this admiration could play in his brain for only a couple of hours. Then, all of a sudden, it disappeared—disappeared just like that.

This was the reason:

He had read about that trend at two o'clock in the afternoon. He was reading on the bed—tired after writing. Then Tidjah came and sat beside him. And he was compelled to lock the door. At that time he felt fortunate—and vowed no more to become an adherent of the trend towards frankness. Because he hadn't yet sworn to do so, he was allowed to lock the door even in the afternoon.

After the door was open again, he felt how lucky he would be if he didn't read these books. Books which invited the reader to be dragged into movements started by other people. His wife only laughed coquettishly when she heard her husband's babbling—yes, just laughed, a laugh which aroused a desire in Soleiman's breast to go back and lock the door again.

And Tidjah said in a gentle voice:

“Isn't the meaning of study something other than being dragged into the movements of other people? Isn't study just to know what has happened outside our circle?”

And because of Tidjah's coquettish laugh—a laugh which aroused his desire—Soleiman gave an answer:

“Yes, it is indeed that.”

Because of Soleiman's fear of not finding a place of refuge when the breath of nature began to blow and rampage in him, he continually gave in and gave in again to his wife. He too felt this. And he also cursed himself who succeeded in getting married only to become defeated by his wife, defeated by another man's child. But he was not able to resist. Sometimes, reproach towards himself arose. Sometimes he would have preferred to be a worm which would be better to be trodden on by the foot of a maid or drowned in the washing-suds, rather than always to give in: the feeling he had when still a bachelor. But he still needed a wife. He still needed a place of refuge when the breath of nature began to blow.

Once he became downhearted and said to himself:

“This is the result of wanting to marry!”

Suddenly his gloom disappeared. Disappeared because he himself laughed at it. Then he said aloud, through his mouth and lips:

“This is the reward of marriage! This is the reward of marriage!”

And when his wife appeared at the threshold and asked:

"Why, darling?"

He quickly added:

"You are really sweet, Tidjah."

And Tidjah smiled—a smile which always aroused him to lock the door of the room. But when Tidjah immediately went away, he said half-laughing to himself:

"God, this is what my life is like now. Yes, like this. And for decades longer. Perhaps seventy or eighty years if she doesn't die quickly."

## 6.

The reward of marriage does not just end here. There is a sequel to the story. And all this increased the afflictions of Soleiman's life in this world. His story is as follows:

During the one and half months of his marriage, Soleiman's head was always itchy. Sometimes the lice from his head fell onto his neck and shirt. Indeed once one of his friends took one of the creatures between his fingers and said:

"Your head is lousy."

Soleiman was unable to hide his embarrassment. And the head-lice embarrassed him just like the evil lice that went about in his coat. Also just like the itch-disease which made itchy the sockets between his fingers. For days together he was pursued by this feeling of embarrassment. And he also felt anxiety in case his name, which was beginning to shine in the little town, would be destroyed by the news of the lice which went about in his shirt.

And on one occasion, full of scheming, he blamed his wife's head with the accusation:

"Your lice have spread to my head."

And Tidjah only smiled, because she had become convinced during that time that in her smile was found her victory. Or rather: in her smile was man's defeat. Indeed it is usual in this world, if there is one who wins, there will also be someone who loses. This she knew well. On this occasion he asked inquiringly:

"What would you think if I became shaven?"

Because they were just married they liked to go for walks together to show themselves off to the whole city. Tidjah was proud to possess Soleiman, Soleiman was proud to possess Tidjah. Not only this: they would each be prouder still if their possession were more beautiful or stronger in appearance. On grounds that came into being without any planning, Tidjah not only felt that she owned a part of Soleiman but also that she owned all the hair of her husband.

"What would people say if I was walking beside a shaven man?"

And in her heart she pictured Soleiman already bald and walking beside her. And people who saw them smiled with pleasure at seeing a new sight without having to buy a ticket. In her mind Tidjah felt let down to think of her husband no longer handsome. And before Soleiman said anything she had already said:

"Don't."

Then she smiled. And every time she smiled her husband gave in. After that—for months—he became the carrier of a nest of lice in his head. Wherever he went the nest and occupants were taken. And he would have been able to tell very well about how miserable it was to scratch his scalp which felt itchy every second, while the lice were never affected by the scratching. And as usual when he was feeling that he was the most unfortunate creature in the world, he cried out to himself. Then he smiled to himself.

On one occasion, this time a good one, a new history began in the life of Soleiman and his wife. His wife said:

“Mas Soleiman—why do you never pray?”

Soleiman was very startled. He exclaimed—and as usual because he was still sheltered by the roof of his parents-in-law’s house, he exclaimed softly and cautiously:

“Pray? I? I have to pray?”

Once more to make her husband give in, Tidjah smiled sweetly. But this time the man called Soleiman could not be defeated with just a smile. He really rebelled. And he made a speech:

“What is the use of praying? If a man is insolent, although he prays eighty-one times a day he just remains insolent. And if he is a scoundrel, he will remain a scoundrel until he is white-headed. Praying. Praying. What is the use? Every man has individual components for his soul. And if his soul is corrupt it will remain corrupt, even though God himself comes to mend it.”

And his skilful string of words caused Tidjah to lose her own wits. She had lost her fortress. She couldn’t defend herself. And she had not supposed that Soleiman could change and become angry and dominating. She tried to think. She tried to give an even sharper answer. But she could only be sullen. And before she could express what was in her mind, Soleiman opened the second act of his speech.

“I don’t want to trifle with the fine hopes that are promised. No! No! I say Soleiman remains Soleiman, although he is born forty-one times.”

His breath was short for a moment. Finally his speech arrived at its moral:

“And if you dare—once more—to try to force me to pray—” he didn’t continue.

In his mind he imagined thousands of girls. All beautiful. Before he was married Soleiman didn’t know where to look for the beauty of a woman. But after he possessed Tidjah with the legitimization of the headman every woman to him had a beautiful face—and desirable flesh. And he still had the right to love them. He had capital now—he was already known everywhere. And these girls—according to himself—admired only him. And he himself, according to him, had the right to have his love returned by them.

Quickly he continued his closing speech:

“I will leave this house forever.”

Tidjah looked down. She was defeated now. She was afraid of becoming a divorcee. And she also calculated in her heart: Women are more numerous than men now. This knowledge showed the influence of the newspapers. She was uneasy. And the only thing she could do was this: to be quiet, and hope that everything would clear up.

"Supposing you want me to go . . .," now Soleiman changed his speech to the subject of the affairs of the household: "You can repeat that statement of yours. Only once—and—enough for me."

Tidjah didn't put forward any defence. She was still silent. And her head was bowed.

"The world is still wide for me."

Tidjah remained bowed down, a nest of lice in her head. On the other hand, Soleiman lifted up his nest of head-lice with a challenging look. She didn't know why he was angry. But she felt that he was angry.

"There are still many women in the world," he said again. "And if you want me to go . . .," he was silent and looked down sourly.

His mother-in-law came and sat down in a chair in front of Soleiman. After much gossiping, her lips, old as her body, making her voice tremulous, moved:

"At the wedding celebration, my child, you promised to pay the dowry within half a year of the marriage. Now there are three months left."

"I still remember. I remember quite well."

Then his mother-in-law, whose lips were as old as her body, went away. And Soleiman said to encourage himself:

"Yes, I remember. Remember very well. I still have energy. I am still a man as yesterday." He smiled sourly.

Tidjah grew more and more frightened of losing her husband.

She said hesitantly:

"What do you still remember, Mas?"

"That because of this marriage I incurred a debt. And that that debt has to be paid by me in three months. That I still have in mind to become shaven, that there are still many girls to be had."

Tidjah's fear became greater and greater. She held Soleiman's arm, she said coaxingly:

"I am expecting a baby now, Mas."

"You?" shouted Soleiman.

The man called Soleiman stood up. He pulled Tidjah. And he took the woman who had become his wife into their room. He locked the door very carefully.

Then Tidjah was kissed. And finally her husband whispered:

"I still love you, Tidjah. Still."

Tidjah was still frightened of losing her husband. She embraced him tightly. She whispered again:

"What do you think our child will be?"

And because Soleiman had also read the news item about the excess of women, he answered immediately:

"I hope it's a boy."

"Yes, a boy like his father."

## 7.

As time passed Tidjah's pregnancy advanced. And with the growth of her body she seemed to become habitually angry. She began to have the cravings of a pregnant woman. She lost her appetite. She always said that her stomach

was not well. For a little while she would feel healthy if she ate acid food. She had never imagined that pregnant women felt so miserable. Her body always felt uneasy—she had to force it to sleep, force it to walk, force it to sit up. And she was never anything but angry—never anything but angry. Usually without reason. Often she showed hatred towards Soleiman.

In the world of women, Soleiman was still blind. Because of this it was not his fault if he thought haughtily:

“I have worked myself to death seeking a livelihood. But what I get is nothing but anger. This too is the reward of marriage.”

The anger of the woman Tidjah really had a great influence on the man Soleiman. He too became habitually angry. He could not bear to stay in the house. He often went around the city. He sought out his old friends. In that way he could get a little consolation. They always asked only one thing:

“What are you writing now, Mas Soleiman?”

And with an authoritative statement he answered, only as much as he had to:

“Just something.”

But if formerly he had often encouraged his friends to marry a woman like Tidjah, now he never touched on matters concerning marriage. Indeed, he said once:

“Bachelors had better stay bachelors.”

Remaining a bachelor was not yet an accepted thing in the small towns. Because of this, information like that was, for most inhabitants of a small town, a new thing. And it was not surprising if people asked:

“Why, Mas?”

He didn't answer. He didn't want to reveal the secrets of his own marriage.

In his relations with his friends, his irritation and clouded outlook were shinningly obvious to them. Every family felt that it was getting a visit from an exalted guest if Soleiman arrived. And now Soleiman went from house to house quite a bit. Because of this, the news quickly spread that the writing-man Soleiman was clearly down-and-out and had lost all his energy.

Once one of his friends said:

“You are really irritable now. And your quickness is gone, you can't see it now that it is buried under your bad temper.”

That friend was a very experienced man. It is not surprising if he went on as follows:

“Perhaps your wife is pregnant.”

Soleiman was unusually surprised on hearing that statement. He asked:

“Is it usually like this?”

“Like what, Mas?”

“If his wife is pregnant, a husband is always bad-tempered?”

“That was my own experience when my first child was being born. And perhaps you are like that too. I was only guessing.”

Soleiman thought and thought. There was one fact that couldn't be denied: that friend was indeed a man with much experience of married life. Then he thought of Tidjah's statement that she was pregnant.

“Yes, perhaps it is like that,” and finally Soleiman revealed the secret of his household.

The friend smiled understandingly.

“Because of that a wife is always bad-tempered. And she is not willing to

be checked any more. That is the reason, Mas Soleiman, that if a wife is with child her husband must forgive all her sourness."

"Yes—yes. Yes—yes." The man Soleiman's head nodded like a pigeon courting his female.

"And usually, as the village elders say, if a wife hates her husband very much it can be supposed that the child will be a boy."

And Soleiman's understanding now increased. He quickly jumped onto his bicycle seat. He went home. He met Tidjah, who was sewing baby clothes for the child yet unborn.

When she saw Soleiman, Tidjah's expression immediately clouded. Without saying a word she put her sewing into the basket and herself went to lie down with the child she was bearing.

Soleiman's happiness was altogether gone when he saw his wife's behaviour. The new information which he had wanted to tell her stuck in his throat.

In the afternoon, the two had already shut the door, and locked it too. On the neighbours' wireless Batak songs were still being sung. On the bed Soleiman was acutely aware of how strongly the breath of nature was blowing in his breast. And he was also aware that his wife was demonstrating in a general strike and boycott towards him.

He was beginning to be maddened by the raging of the breath of nature. And the woman called Tidjah rebelled against the breath of nature which wanted a way out. Then a soft but sharp snarl was heard.

"If it's like this, I will find another girl." A snarl as weak as a sheep's breath.

He wanted to run amok shouting, to give rein to his desire to be angry. But there were those two accursed parents-in-law. And also because of this roof he had lost part of his freedom to shout:

"What do I care? As you like." whispered Tidjah daringly.

And Soleiman's anger changed to astonishment now.

He attacked with the authority of a man and a husband.

"There are still many women in the world, Tidjah."

"I will not prevent you. In a little while my child will be born. My own child. That is enough for me, if I have a child. You can go now. You can go wherever you like."

"Is that true, Tidjah?"

"Go for ever, and I will not feel the loss."

Soleiman was silent. In his head there was a high shout:

"A child! A child!" And then something else was heard:

"And that child is also your child, Soleiman. You are the father. Not someone else."

The light of the room which was never dimmed by day or night made him see the awning of the bed curtains clearly. Then he leant his body over and facing Tidjah whispered:

"My child is also your child, Tidjah. And your child is also my child. Tidjah! Tidjah! Perhaps you still doubt my love for you."

And Tidjah heard that whispering without moving. And when Soleiman put his hand on her body she snarled in a whisper:

"Don't come near me."

And like an automaton Soleiman turned his back on his wife, facing the wall and feeling the frustration of his own heart. He grumbled to himself:

"What is in her stomach is my child. My own child."

Then he consoled himself with beautiful sentences which aroused his own admiration:

"Let it be. It is my own child. And I have to do the best possible for him—him, my own child. I am willing to sacrifice for him because he is my own child."

And such sentences soothed him so that he fell asleep. The word "child" made him grow more diligent in writing now. When he received money, he immediately bought things in preparation. The being which he would call his child had to be received with all honour. And Tidjah received these things with joy—a joy which remained buried in her breast.

## 8.

Tidjah's pregnancy grew more advanced. Since she was four months pregnant, husband and wife didn't go out walking so often. And Tidjah's bad temper increased with the size of her stomach. At this time the itchiness in Soleiman's head spread more and more, like itch-disease in the armpit.

"Perhaps there are already five hundred lice nesting in my head," he thought on one occasion when he had opportunity to meditate on the fate of his scalp—a clouded occasion.

Then, without asking permission from Tidjah, who had rights over all his hair, he took up the *pitji* which he had never worn all that time. And quietly he went to the barber:

"Cut it!" he ordered firmly.

"Cut what, sir?"

"Shave it!"

And the barber looked at Soleiman's face through his mirror—

"Shave it?" he said unbelievably.

"Shave it, I said."

"Shave it smooth?"

"Shave it smooth. Shave it completely."

When Soleiman said "Yes" the scissors snapped for the first time. After one cut of hair fell, a general clean-up began. The nest of lice and the lice themselves went through a full-scale attack. Soleiman cried aloud in his heart. I win. I will not be affected by itchiness any more.

Ten minutes later the head of the man Soleiman—the black head with its thick and healthy hair—changed its colour to green. A green that attracted attention like a field of grass after rain in the beginning of the season.

The man got to learn of his new hair-cut in the mirror. He laughed confusedly. Gone was his old pride. Like a peacock who has lost his feathers. Then he rubbed his scalp. He laughed happily now—all of a sudden. Finally his laugh rolled freely. He stood up, paid and left. On the way he whispered to himself, who had now become bald:

"Now I know why many people wear their hair short after marriage."

Perhaps indeed it has become a universal joke that people should obtain something but also lose something they had. Soleiman knew well about the jokes of this world. He could control the general order of his scalp but he had lost a certain proportion of his good looks. But he didn't much care. With

the step of a hero, victorious in war, he entered the house. When Tidjah saw that her husband had become bald she was not angry. She didn't blame him for the violation of her authority over the field of black hair on her husband's head. She was not disappointed because her husband had lost some of his good looks. She smiled a little. And the two parents-in-law laughed a little. Then Soleiman was able to take his bald head wherever he wanted to go.

The story of Soleiman's bald head, finishes here. There is no place for the history of people's baldness in this world, nor is there any in this story. Later other matters will come crowding, to round off this story.

## 9.

On one occasion which he had never hoped for, Soleiman got a letter from a publishing firm that was a customer of his. It said kindly and informally:

"If you have free time, we hope you will be able to come to Djakarta. We are prepared to bear the cost of the journey. Our long-standing wish will be fulfilled if we are able to meet each other. We will talk with you a great deal, especially about the publication of your new manuscripts. I am sure we could, couldn't we? Moreover, we members of the editorial staff just want to have the opportunity to talk with you. It is fair to say that your name is no longer unknown here, especially after your last published book."

He showed this letter to his wife. And Tidjah smiled proudly, full of hope. She said:

"You will go, won't you?"

Soleiman was uncertain.

"You must go. You must comply with their request."

Soleiman had not yet given his answer.

To complete the story, Soleiman had to go to Djakarta. Indeed it had become general opinion in small towns that it is not right for a man to call himself a true citizen of Indonesia if he has not visited Djakarta.

"Perhaps it is better that I go."

The two parents-in-law joined in the conversation. And they showed how old they both were in their garrulous speech:

"May you be safe in your journey and may all your ambitions be attained."

Three days later Tidjah's husband left. The people of the household accompanied him to the station. When the train left, all hands were waving. Gradually the train disappeared from sight. And when they got into the old dog-cart, Tidjah shed some tears.

"You!" joked her mother. "He's just gone away and you're already weeping for him."

Tidjah didn't want to vex her mother's heart. She was silent as she wiped her tears.

"If he goes to the big city he will have the opportunity of getting to know important people," she said in a maternal way. "And this will be very good for him. You won't be separated for long, Tidjah. There's no need for you to weep."

But as for Tidjah herself, from the moment Soleiman was taken away by the train a realization arose within her: she loved her husband Soleiman—loved him truly. And because of that realization she felt regret at having so often dis-

appointed him. She promised never again to disappoint the man she loved. And she would begin this very day.

So it is better to abandon this story of domestic relations, which are exactly the same everywhere. And now the story has come to the episode set aside for Soleiman, and follows his journey.

## 10.

In brief, because his baldness was now a thing of the past Soleiman firmly climbed the steps of the building of the publishing firm he had set out for. At first the employee who welcomed him said, in a flat voice:

"Whom do you wish to see, sir?"

"The Director."

"Your name?" said the employee as he held out a visiting card to be completed.

Soleiman didn't answer. He just wrote his name in large clear letters. The employee read the name with wide eyes.

"Mr. Soleiman, the writer?"

Tidjah's husband nodded proudly. He knew now that he was already known. A conversation took place. Its content was simple: the employee admired him. And he liked to be admired by people. But he didn't need this small employee, this receptionist for visitors. He went to the Director's room. He was immediately introduced to the employees, chiefly to the members of the editorial staff. Conversation about his fame, the products of his pen, about the progress of writing at the time and about trifles too, was bandied from mouth to mouth. And to conclude this first meeting he received royalties which exceeded his expectations.

With full confidence, he left the building. His first objective was the shopping centre. The first thing which occupied his attention was the needs of his child who was not yet born, and secondly presents for his wife and his brother-in-law, his two parents-in-law and for himself too. And from the publishing firm itself, because he had said that in another month his wife would give him his first child, he received a presentation—a complete baby outfit which was quietly delivered to his hotel.

He packed these things in a wooden box—big and heavy—more than a metre square. He put part of the baby clothes into a suitcase. His heart was restless. He would often open the suitcase. And he took the baby jackets out again and again and inspected them with admiration. He wanted to go home as quickly as possible.

"My child will certainly be a boy," he said to convince himself.

He repeatedly spoke in that way—just to make certain his hope this his child would really be a boy.

He often admired the fine wide blanket which was for his wife.

"Tidjah, you will be happy with this blanket. It is fine, soft, warm, wide and a light blue colour, too."

He was happy when he looked at the pale blue colour. He thought it was clean and smart. He also bought a fine sarong for his wife. And a prayer veil was not omitted. He couldn't forget that Tidjah was a pious girl. And although that piety had once annoyed him because he had been told to pray, he couldn't forget that Tidjah was his wife who would be the mother of his

unborn child. And Tidjah couldn't be disturbed in the fulfilment of the commands of her religion. Indeed as far as possible—although he was really unwilling to pray—he would make an effort so that his wife could be content and serene in her religious duties.

In our little town at Blora the price of food is not very high. That was the reason Soleiman wasn't compelled to supply very much money for the daily, weekly or monthly expenses.

That was also the reason he was not reluctant to buy a lot of things. But Djakarta was a different matter. He thought that the price of food there must have reached the peak of expensiveness in Indonesia. He wanted to go home as quickly as possible.

He bought white silk for his mother-in-law's and Tidjah's prayer cloaks. For his father-in-law who was addicted to smoking, he bought an imported lighter which had no comparison in the city for beauty and expensiveness.

In the big city of Djakarta he was also introduced, by the publishing firm, to several artists who had already made a name. He stayed a month in Djakarta. But in the big city there were no eyes which readily admired him. Not like in the small town! However, there was a girl employee of the publisher's office who was so attracted to him that she became desperately infatuated. And they formed an association. A strong association. The girl because she liked him. He—because she was a woman. And he was tempted by this woman, too. It seemed he didn't want to go back to his small town. He wanted to leave his wife who was not modern. Then he would live with this beautiful girl, making a new history in Djakarta. But he kept remembering: Tidjah's pregnancy had come to the time of its completion and a new creature would be born.

"Tidjah has already suffered for a month because of me," he said to convince himself, so that he wouldn't be fascinated any longer. "And the child of this pregnancy is my own child. My child and also her child. And in a society which is so corrupt—for he still regarded society as corrupt—this child which is nothing other than myself must not be dragged into corruption."

But the blowing of the breath of nature was felt on every span of earth as long as he was still on his two feet and as long as there are two different kinds of human bodies. So the outcome was, Soleiman used very often to chat with the girl from the publishers in the garden of his hotel. Sometimes he forgot Tidjah. Often an urge arose not to go back to Blora. Not infrequently his thoughts were motivated by his desire to possess a new woman—the girl who looked up to him.

In this story, the man Soleiman and this woman rowed far to the middle of nature's ocean. And one small part from the whole of his new association it is important to tell here. It is as follows:

One evening, when the moon was radiant and when the two beings were sitting on a bench in the hotel restaurant, the girl said:

"If we have a child later on, I hope he will be a writer too."

And the girl's words reminded Soleiman of his unborn child. Tidjah sprang to his mind. He also imagined his boy child who had not yet been born, crying and whining as he asked to be given a ride on a bicycle. Suddenly, he refound the old path, which he had travelled for such a long time:

"Tomorrow I will go home," he said definitely.

And the girl, who was scared that Soleiman wouldn't marry her, asked nervously:

"When will you come back again, darling?"

"I will not come back again," said Soleiman very certainly.

"If that is so, I will pack my things up this evening."

Soleiman didn't respond. He was silent.

"Will you leave me like this?" said the girl in an attempt to get him to agree to what she wished.

"As far as I know, I never promised you anything. Moreover, I never did any harm to you. Nor to your property. If you feel that you have lost something, that loss was only because you surrendered it to me voluntarily and because I was willing to receive it. Let us break off this relationship here."

And the girl realised that she would not be able to marry Soleiman. She wept—wept for her own wish which would not be granted, wept for the breath of nature which was raging in her breast and would not find a way out. And Soleiman felt tears drop on his hand. But he didn't say anything. A picture of Tidjah and his child rose and fell in his mind now.

The next day he set out on the first train to Blora. He didn't forget to take with him the box which was as big as a metre square and the suitcase containing his own clothes and books. At the station, he found the girl who had come to see him off. And this woman said:

"Although I know you have a wife and that you will also have a child, whenever you wish I will be ready to join you to help you achieve your greater aspirations."

And although on that occasion Soleiman felt like a folk-play actor, in the end he still behaved no differently from one and answered:

"We see our life as running its course in a jungle, and we do not know of a way to meet again because of the denseness of the foliage. I already have a wife. And if I dared to betray her, I would also dare to betray you, if you became my wife later."

The train left.

The story of this hot new love is really too short. But indeed long stories cannot always be had in this world. Short stories are exceedingly many, and they too have a right to be told. So this addition to the story about this love which came to nothing ends here. And no-one will lose because of it—because this is only a story for myself—its author.

## 11.

Now the story about marriage's rewards comes to an end. It is as follows:

When he had arrived at the house, Soleiman entered it with an authoritative air. And he ordered the coolie with the same authoritative air. And he put the things that he had brought with him into the front room. The room was full of people. He craned forward, his head among the heads of the crowd. And he saw Tidjah sleeping beside the child which he had been waiting for all this time. He was not able to control himself. He shouted energetically to gain attention:

"Tidjah! I have come!"

People looked around and stared at him. But the one he called was silent. And in her stead people whispered faintly:

"Tidjah fell when she was sweeping the back-yard."

He didn't hear the information which was conveyed to him. He bellowed to right and left. Tidjah slept undisturbed. And the boy-child, who was still red also slept calmly. An eternal stillness. Both their souls had already flown. A disastrous birth.

All energy lost, the man held on to the edge of the bed. His body slowly slumped down from his standing position. He knelt beside his wife and child. No voice was heard . . .

It was only my own sigh that could be heard. Then I cried:

"How can I find it in my heart to kill these creatures of my story who ought to have a happy life in this world?"

When my cry had gone, to be swallowed up by the night, a sprinkling of thought came:

"You must dare to tell stories about the shattering of hope. People must dare to feel other people's suffering. Contentment? Contentment is a sign that death has begun to touch the human soul."

I turned myself around. I embraced my wife. She was woken by the embrace.

"Tidjah shouldn't really die. Neither can her child." I sighed, regretting the story I had made for myself. "They should have lived in happiness. Yes, why did I kill Tidjah and her child who were waiting for Soleiman to come home from Djakarta."

"You are delirious," my wife accused me.

From outside our room my mother-in-law could be heard reciting the "glorification of God.":

"*Allahu akbar—Allahu akbar—Allahu akbar walillahil hamd.*"<sup>6</sup>

And indeed the next day was Lebaran.

I fell asleep again.

(Translated by Ann Kumar)

1. A Muslim feast to celebrate the end of Ramadhan, the month of fasting.
2. An Indonesian fez-like cap, which is the formal national headgear (ed.).
3. *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, the Indonesian National Army, formed during the Revolution (ed.).
4. A high position.
5. A Javanese word here expressing both familiarity and respect.
6. God is great. God is great.  
God is great. And praise to God!

# CAGED

by Pramudya Ananta Tur

**B**UKIT DURI! It was a few months before the Dutch launched their first military offensive against the Republic that I first heard this name. To be sure, I had stayed in Djakarta during the Japanese occupation in World War II, but I never heard that name then. Or the name might have reached my ears imperceptibly; if so it went in one ear and out the other.

One day I had a call from a friend who had just been released from Glodok Prison. He was the first who told me about the prisons of Djakarta. Bukit Duri Prison was one of them. So Bukit Duri must have been a familiar name. He also told me that any release of inmates from Bukit Duri Prison would not take place before 1951. His story impressed me. That was why the name of Bukit Duri had stuck in my memory ever since. I could not help it. I had just left the 'interior'<sup>1</sup> after having been demobilized. And those who had held arms—arms which were levelled at the organs of the Dutch administration in Indonesia—were always haunted by the idea of imprisonment in one form or another.

Another friend of mine had just come out of Bukit Duri Prison. After I met him, the idea that had grown upon me (that prisoners in Bukit Duri could not possibly be released before 1951) disappeared. This friend told me that in Bukit Duri one had to sleep on a bare concrete bunk. If one was strong enough to endure such treatment for a month, one could endure anything. If not, one would fall victim to rheumatism and beriberi. This friend also told me that, before being made an inmate (and this agreed with his own experience), one used to be suspended in mid-air by one's hands for forty-eight hours. Sometimes one was also electrified until one pleaded guilty to every accusation.

The news about large-scale raids, which coincided with the Dutch military offensive, called up before my mind many images of prisons. In point of fact the idea of myself turning up in a prison had never occurred to me. Neither could I imagine what prison life would be like. Many stories had indeed been written on life in prisons, but they could not make me understand it any better.

A girl friend who had been in Bukit Duri Prison told me that ghosts haunted the place whenever the night was pitch-dark. They were restless souls of those who had committed suicide in prison. She also said that Bukit Duri was a special prison as, before the war, it housed 'lifers' only.

I once went for a bicycle ride to the suburb where Bukit Duri Prison was situated. From my bicycle I saw the prison—walls of concrete, painted green with patches of black tar; colours which reminded me of the Japanese occupation. My heart was in my mouth when I looked at the horrible building. Imagine myself doing time there until 1951! But at that time, the idea was just a caprice of my fantasy, and I did not give it a second thought.

But one fateful day I did enter the greyish-green block of buildings which was known as Bukit Duri Prison, and stayed there for two and a half years.

I still remember how my knees trembled when I crossed the threshold, and how my blood curdled when I came face to face with gleaming black soldiers—a gleam the origin of which I could not trace. I still remember how my eyes were glued to the iron bars, the iron doors, and the red tiled roofs of the buildings within the enclosure. And I also remember the faces of the other prisoners who tried to get a glimpse of the newcomer from behind the iron bars.

Indeed, I had never thought that I would have to experience, in person, the stories I had heard. What filled me with dread for the first time was this: The NEFIS<sup>2</sup> lieutenant had written "Bukit Duri" on the pass. It meant that I was to be sent to Bukit Duri Prison, a name which had been on my mind the last few days. For how long I was to stay there, the pass did not say. I was to lose my freedom. That was beyond doubt. But for how long? This question kept me worrying.

When I got off the troop carrier, I was led to a massive door. Like the walls, the door was painted greyish green. I saw facial expressions of a kind I had never seen before: those of mercenaries who lived by killing, and guarding, prisoners. In all, I passed three doors before I came to the narrow inner court of the prison. Hundreds of uniformed persons were queuing up for their meals. P.R.P. soldiers<sup>3</sup> I guessed. My guess might not be as wild as it looked, since the name P.R.P. had been on everybody's lips lately. I also speculated whether they were going to torture me.

I saw those soldiers only momentarily as I was taken into the block. It had a passageway one and a half yards wide, lined by rows of black numbered doors. While going through the passageway I did not have the faintest notion of what was behind those doors. At a turn of the corridor I was ordered to stop. Before my eyes, I saw a room with a concrete bunk in it. Only then did I realize that this was a cell. I was ordered to step in. The door slammed shut. I was all by myself. Then it flashed upon me that I was imprisoned!

I looked round. Concrete! Wherever I turned my eyes, I saw nothing but concrete! Only the ceiling was made of timber. The bars in the window and the door were made of iron. Through the skylight a little, a very little, bit of sky was visible. I sank to the floor. My God! The door barred the road to freedom.

If you were a caged animal which had been frank and free before, you would beat the bars of your cage until you got hurt and exhausted, until in the end you grew sullen because you lost hope. But if you are a human being who is deprived of his freedom and shut up for the first time, you lose your head. You are silent because you are at a loss what to do.

Slowly I rose from the floor and crawled to the concrete bunk to sleep. Ideas, a great many ideas which I can no longer remember now, coursed through my head. I only remember that my awareness of being an Indonesian grew because of my imprisonment. It was this awareness which in the end pervaded all my thoughts. It pushed all other thoughts to the background. It gave food to the sentiment which hoped for the fall of the Dutch empire. If I think of my frenzied feeling at that time, I feel ashamed. But we have to take into account that strange feelings, queer ideas which are totally devoid of logic, will come up when one is deprived of one's freedom for the first time.

I lay on the bench for an hour, fancying that units of the Republican armed forces had successfully penetrated into Djakarta and beaten the Dutch. Alas, at the time the onrushing Dutch armour had wedged and rent the Republican forces apart. I was sensitive to every sound. When the siren of a railway workshop nearby sounded a break period, I hoped against hope that the Republican air force might make a raid. Let this prison be pulverized, let me die among the debris of the prison walls, if only the Republican air force would strike! Then the whine of the siren died away. Aircraft droned overhead. My heart beat faster. Might they be planes of the Republican air force? I waited and waited in suspense. But nothing happened. It was only some time afterward that I found out that the siren belonged to the railway workshop, and that the planes flying overhead were Dutch. Rambling thoughts whirled in my head. I could not possibly be in a prison, I thought. It was inconceivable. Why should I be imprisoned? It was an impossible idea.

Later on, the sound of human voices filtered into my cell. Some of the voices were singing the refrain of a battle song. I jumped up and listened. If that was a battle song, this could not be a prison, I reasoned. The song swelled, and was loudest when the singers were in front of my cell. I wondered whether they were P.R.P. soldiers, and whether I would be turned over to them. These thoughts rather irritated me, but I calmed down. Come what may, I will face up to the situation, I told myself.

I lay down again on the concrete bunk. My eyes were turned toward the door. I then saw that the door had a spy-hole—two inches square. Slowly I shut my eyes. I tried to compose myself. But I was hungry, and this fact defeated my intention. I felt a gnawing at my stomach. I shivered as if I were suffering from a malaria attack. The concrete bunk felt cold. I had to put up with it. Gradually the cold concrete grew hot, its heat piercing into the flesh of my back. Every now and then I changed my position. Still I could not get to sleep. I tried to forget everything. I also tried to ignore the heat which was starting to burn my flesh. But my efforts were in vain. Then and there it dawned on me that sleep is one of nature's great blessings. Sleep makes a man into a child, a new-born child, again—a spiritually pure and untainted, though passive, human being. Yet again and again I failed to fall asleep.

A peel of laughter broke out. I rose. Suddenly the spy-hole opened with a bang. I jumped to my feet as if the head of a bamboo spear had pricked me. I felt drawn to the window. Was I dreaming? The face of a former brother-in-arms appeared before the spy-hole.

"You here?" he asked in a low voice in which there was no trace of surprise at all.

"Is it you, Rusli?" I asked in turn.

"I have been here for two months already," he said.

"Two months? Quite a long time. Which is your room?"

"It is a cell!"

"A cell?"

It was brought home to me again that I was in prison. How mad had been my way of thinking!

But what about Rusli? Had he become a member of the Pasundan army?

At least, I saw he was clad in green. I had known him as a model soldier. Under the rationalization plan<sup>4</sup> of the Republic, he was demobilized. He then moved to Djakarta to get away from hunger. There he had to lie low.

I still remember his demobilization. He sold everything he had, until nothing was left but the trousers and the undershirt he had on. In those trousers and in the undershirt he went to Djakarta. I recall him walking wearily on the muddy alley to the station. It was December 1946. The end of the year was drawing near, and the new year was within sight. He had a bundle wrapped in a mat under his left arm. I did not know what the bundle consisted of. Perhaps one or two litres of rice for his parents in Djakarta. We sat on the railway tracks and had a talk. He talked about the people who relied on him for support—his brothers and sisters who could barely scrape a living in Djakarta; his father, a cobbler, who hardly ventured out of his house to ply his trade, now that affrays and shootings were the order of the day. The subject changed abruptly when he took a crumpled piece of paper out of his pocket and showed it to me. "Look," he said, "what I have got for my one and a half years' military service."

I smoothed out the piece of paper. It was his discharge. It contained a few lines. In part, it ran as follows: "Discharged from military service. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia express their thanks for services rendered". These lines were followed by a magnificent signature. I had hardly finished reading when he said: "That is all I have got for my pains as a combatant." He stretched out his legs to me. They showed two long scars. "Bullets," he said. He snatched the paper from my fingers. His eyes were burning. Deliberately he tore up the paper and scattered the pieces on the ground near his feet. Might he have become a P.R.P. soldier?

I asked: "Have you become a P.R.P. soldier?"

"A P.R.P. soldier? Why should I?"

"Your uniform . . ."

"He laughed, but did not give a direct answer. He explained: "This is a prison, not a barracks. The people here are prisoners, mere prisoners."

"Why have you been thrown into prison, Rusli?"

"Why?" he echoed. But he did not give an answer. For a moment he looked tense.

Then my memory supplied the answer:

When Rusli had succeeded in slipping through the screen of Dutch troops which guarded Djakarta, he set up as a bicycle repairer by the roadside. I could see this very clearly in my mind's eye. So he must have been caught there. Once I had him repair my bicycle. While at work on my bicycle, he said: "What is the use of mending tyres? I should be more useful as a combatant at a time like this." I saw disappointment reflected in his eyes, and I did not dare to carry on the subject. So I asked: "Are you married, Rusli?" He stopped his work for a while. He looked up at me, rolled his eyes, and then lowered his head to resume his work. But he did not give an answer.

"What kind of people are kept prisoner here?"

"All kinds: fighters for Indonesia's independence, thieves, robbers—all kinds."

"What about you?"

"I don't know. I have never been interrogated since my detention. Maybe I am detained because I have been a Republican combatant, but I don't know exactly why."

"And how long have you been here?"

"Two months." I sighed.

He kept silent. Then I asked: "Are you married?"

He did not answer, but a stern look came over his face, a look which stopped me from repeating the question. Neither of us said another word.

I looked at my bare bunk again. Could I stand sleeping on it for two months? I realized that I had to undergo the things my friends had gone through. I calmed down and resigned myself to my fate, whatever might befall me. Gone was my bitterness.

"Why aren't you locked up as I am, Rusli?"

"Newcomers are usually locked up for half a week or a full week. But this rule has now been changed. Since the Dutch launched their military offensive, we are all locked up."

"Why are there so many people outside?"

"We are taking our rations."

I understood. Slowly I returned to my bench and lay down. Rusli closed the spyhole and went away . . .

I had dozed off for a little while, and woke up when the spy-hole banged open. An offensive face appeared. A pointed nose jutted into the hole, and a shrill voice snapped: "Hey, you're a spy, aren't you?"

"No, I am not", I answered nervously.

"Then, why have you been brought here?"

"How the deuce do I know?"

"Watch your words! Don't tell lies! If you turn out to be a spy, you will be shot in the morning."

At that moment I could not contain myself. I did not care what might happen and cried out: "Suit yourself. Kill me now!"

But the man did not draw his gun. He closed the spy-hole. His menacing voice came deliberately from behind the door: "Mind your words!"

A dead silence fell. I lay down again. I can still remember vividly that I smiled scornfully then, and muttered to myself: "Men!" People like him were quite capable of killing other people for a few hundred rupiahs. I still cannot imagine how someone can lend himself to killing a fellow human being for just a few hundred rupiahs. It seems that, just as a mechanic repairs with a clear conscience an engine which has broken down, and with an equally clear conscience uses his earnings to support his family, people of this kind as cheerfully do in fellow human beings, who eat like them, drink like them, dream of a happy family like them. The question for which there was no ready answer, cropped up again: Why do things take the course they do, and not otherwise? Why, indeed!

I tried to answer this question for a long time, but again and again I failed. I clenched my fists and beat the wall. My fists hurt, but the answer kept eluding me. I tried to stop thinking, but I could not. The elusive answer

tantalized me. So I beat the thick wall again. At last my fists hurt so much that the acute sensation of pain numbed my thinking.

Once more I heard noises outside. The other inmates were entering their cells. When they were inside, the cell doors were locked. The voices faded into murmurs, and gradually died down. Now and then, I heard people talk, sing or laugh. I did not detect any sadness, or anything resembling bewilderment in the voices. Apparently, they were at peace with the world, and had let things take their course.

The spy-hole banged open again. A face, ugly as if it had been ravaged by leprosy, appeared before the hole. A rasping voice said: "Do you smoke?"

"I do," I replied, in spite of myself, and got up.

Two packs of cigarettes, a box of matches and a cake of soap changed hands through the spy-hole. Apparently, it was the day when things were doled out to the prisoners. I was glad to get these things. Strangely enough, as soon as I started smoking, the cobwebs in my head faded. Unwittingly I started to sing. I felt relieved and grew quiet. I began to think that there was nothing to worry about. It dawned on me that my problems would not be solved by fretting. So I fell into a quiet sleep.

That afternoon I got an airing, like the other prisoners. The airing took two hours. That was the time for us to take a bath, go to the toilet, or have our meals. It was still strange for me to go to a bathroom without a towel or a toothbrush, and to take a bath stark naked in the presence of so many people. The feeling of discomfort turned up again the moment I had to fetch my food, and there was no plate for me. I had to wait until an inmate had finished his meal, so that I could borrow his plate.

We lined up for the afternoon roll call. No one dared to make the slightest noise. Then the prison governor made his appearance to inspect us. He was a tall, sturdy, sourfaced Negro. A large pipe, endlessly giving forth puffs of smoke, was embedded in his mouth. With his left hand he swirled a bamboo cane. This cane hypnotized us. If the cane swirled (by a turn of the sturdy Negro's hand) and crashed on someone's head it was sure to break in two, while the owner of the head would be stunned.

The Negro was followed by his guards, armed to the teeth. It was these guards who always occupied the minds of the Republican combatants; they were Indonesians, too. Just like the Republican combatants, they had brains which could be used for thinking. Just like the Republican combatants, they were armed. So far, they were like the Republican combatants, and there was no difference between them at all. The difference, if difference there were, lay in the fact that they were tools of the Dutch who were hostile to our people, while the Republican combatants fought for the Republic which the Dutch sought to destroy. They belonged to opposing parties which fought each other. And many of them died, hit by bullets which were made in foreign countries. It was the flesh of Indonesians which was riddled by these bullets; it was the Indonesians who had to die.

The Negro reviewed the row, and then went away without causing the cane to land on anyone's head. His guards followed him, like chickens after a mother hen.

The doors of the cells were locked again. The inmates could only lie on their concrete bunks and let their imaginations run riot.

Sometimes they thought of the future: Was there any possibility of their leaving this prison? The question had to remain unanswered. Only hope, a tiny flicker of hope buoyed them up. Some hope certainly remained, though that hope was not worth a farthing.

Sometimes it dawned on them that they could not pass the prison guards. The chunks of flesh, which were their bodies, had already been the targets of leaden bullets. Such a big risk had to be considered maturely. For the time being, it was no use contemplating a breakout. So they remained stretched on their benches. When their brains were tired of traversing the universe, they sighed, screamed or sang.

The solitude of a prison gradually engulfed their hearts. When they felt forlorn, millions of desires might churn in their heads. They hardly felt them coming. They indulged in daydreams until the hordes of mosquitoes brought them back to earth. And it was those mosquitoes which made them realize how slowly night went by. Midnight and the small hours crawled past. It was only when dawn was in the offing that the obstinate eyes would yield to sleep.

(Translated by Soh Liantji)

1. The generic name for the inland countryside which was controlled by the revolutionary Republic of Indonesia.
2. The intelligence service of the Dutch armed forces.
3. P.R.P. = Pasukan Republik Pasundan, army of the Dutch-sponsored Sunda State in West Java.
4. A plan intended to put the Republican armed forces on an efficient footing.

# DARKNESS

by Pramudya Ananta Tur

**A**MERICA, EVEN RUSSIA, AND especially the new nations that have just been freed from Western colonization, even nations that were aggressors during the World War have become tattered — all shouted:

“Democracy, Democracy,”

And like the echo of the politician’s voice, which re-echoed through the radio — for he could only know radio — with a voice again full of spirit, the voice of his own heart:

“Democracy! Democracy!”

In order to beautify a word which sounded so nice, it was followed by a flowery voice:

“—— and even children —— whether considered legal or illegal —— have the right to a good upbringing ——.”

“Ah,” he sighed.

But because the sigh of mankind could be said to be unable ever to achieve any purpose, he fell silent. But that sigh came again naturally:

“Ah.”

He looked around him with a careful movement of his neck. But he did not see anything. Unintentionally, he had surrendered both his eyes to the Dutch bullet. Brightness had long been dead. Rays of light had long been dead. Only his hearing made him conscious of himself:

“You are still alive! Yes, you!”

Sometimes he smiled —— smiled because of his frustration over the bitterness of life, and he whispered to himself:

“Yes, how wonderful democracy is. How wonderful national freedom is. How wonderful. But I do not possess any right in this democratic and free country. Even to look at something, I no longer have the right. Where is that right? Where?”

And because he really felt the suffering and because that agony twisted itself round his life whenever he remembered his self-esteem and the importance of his life, he gradually felt content to live in that agony. And he smiled—a bitter smile.

He changed his sitting position. The wheels of his invalid chair rubbed against their axles. He sighed again. Sighed again. Sighed again. Whenever he was not asleep, he had to sit on the wheelchair. For a long time now he had been unable to walk. After his eyes had been pierced by the bullet, and he fell to the ground and could not see anything again, his legs were cut by a sword—and broken off—both of them.

“And I no longer have the right to walk, not even a distance of one metre.”

But he felt that he was more fortunate than the rest of the invalids. His parents were wealthy. And he did not care where the wealth came from. His parents possessed a radio with twelve valves. After he had come down from the mountain to live in his native town, Blora, he realised that the inhabitants' interests had changed from what they used to be. Now—since Indonesia had become an independent nation—people liked to talk about radios, cameras, and especially bicycles. And he alone—Kirno— still had his attention rivetted on democracy, the nation, and his own suffering.

Human beings are really miserly creatures in this world. He did not want to lose his pleasant memories. That was why he had always commemorated Proclamation Day. In the past, Proclamation Day was celebrated merrily together. And to celebrate this he had lost his eyes and legs. Then pick-pockets almost forgot to pinch. But later on when the people suffered from hunger all the time, government and nation were altogether futile. Then people remembered their personal needs. And the pick-pockets came back to pinch things belonging to his friends and to others. Those whose job it was to shout, came back to shout in order to live. But while they could move freely, seeking fulfilment for their individual needs, Kirno had already been robbed of his power to see and to walk. He could only regret and sigh, and hear the buzzing sound and echo from the radio.

He breathed in the cold morning air. Then he shouted:

"Tini, Tini."

But Tini did not answer him.

"Perhaps she has left for the square," he whispered softly.

Yes, an hour ago almost the whole household had gone to the square to attend the festivity—celebrating the anniversary of the Proclamation.

He beat his hands against the table ledge of the wheel-chair. Then he exclaimed:

"Mangun, Mangun."

He heard footsteps approaching. But he could not picture how Mangun, his servant looked. This servant had been working for his parents even before he came back from the forest—from the house of the guerrilla village chief.

And he heard his answer.

"Tune the radio to Djakarta," he said.

He heard the electric switch being turned on. He also heard the big radio beginning to drone. He asked:

"Did mother go, too?"

"Yes, master. Your mother's duty is to receive guests at the Regency."

"Father too?"

"He went to the Recency."

"And my younger sisters?"

"They all left for school in the early morning. They said that there would be a procession."

Djakarta began to broadcast light western music.

"Is it really on the Djakarta wave-length?"

The servant answered him. Then he left. And Kirno listened to that western music with a discontented feeling. He did not like music. He directed his eyes in every direction with a careful movement of his neck. But all was dark—dark and black. Not even a thread of light could he see. And he had been in this condition for more than a year.

Then the broadcast from Djakarta began to change. A mass-meeting began to drone from the radio which he had never seen. He heard cries from the throats of the thousands of people:

“Freedom! Freedom!”

He lowered his head slowly until it reached the table of the wheel-chair. It stayed there. Later, he heard the voice of Karno.<sup>1</sup> He sighed. Once. Twice. And he also heard the shout of:

“People! Nation! Liberty! Prosperity! Freedom! Democracy!” Suddenly Kirno lifted up his head. He drew a quick breath. Then came his loud and sudden shout:

“The same old thing! The same old thing! When is it going to change? When is all this going to change?”

Because of the shout, the servant approached quickly, asking in an apologetic tone:

“What is it, Master? Did you call for something?”

Kirno grumbled. Now his voice became subdued—a voice half-crying:

“The Government has its own income. The people have their own incomes. Everyone has his own income and expenditure . . .”

“Why master?” the servant was heard to ask.

His voice became loud and fierce:

“Nothing at all. Go away. Switch off the radio.”

At once the sound of the radio went off. Kirno again lowered his head slowly until it rested on the table of the wheel-chair, and there his head remained . . .

At that very moment, Blora Square was full of students, spectators, people who wanted to enjoy seeing others shouting in the stadium, and people who had come to cheer at the end of the speeches. Flags were flying. Beads of perspiration fell in the midday heat. Dresses and clothes rustled everywhere in the square, wrapping the spectators and the cheerers. On that day the ice-cream sellers earned more than on any other day. Workmen did not need to go to work and students did not need to go to school. Farmers put off their ploughing. And all went smoothly.

At that very moment, the same thing was taking place in the Merdeka Square<sup>2</sup> too. The only difference was that there the pick-pockets had a market and young men were free to find their partners. Police, jailers and soldiers had jobs of which they could be proud.

At that very instant, those who lived too far away from the town—on the mountain plateau and in the interior where there was no railway-line—continued to weed the fields of rice and catch-crops in the hope of obtaining a successful harvest. And the peasant boys went on herding their cattle and looking for grass.

Once again Kirno sighed. He now wanted to hear Javanese music. He lifted up his head and leant it against the armrest of the wheel-chair. He called for Mangun. He ordered:

"Tune in to some Javanese music."

The radio began to drone again. With western music. But there was no Javanese music. The speeches had concluded.

"There is no Javanese music, master," said the servant.

"O, . . . what do I really want?"

Then he fell silent and in his silence the radio continued yelling away with western music. Slowly Mangun turned the tuning knob. Later he heard Mangun's old voice:

"Master, I have said several times that I am already old. And I know very well, master, that in this world there is not a single person who knows exactly what he wants."

Kirno agreed with a yielding voice. He asked:

"Why is it that, in my opinion, all these people have become mad?"

"Why? Because you are living in isolation from their society. Yes, because of that you can draw yourself aside and watch them."

"Where did you learn all these expressions?"

"From my own heart. From my own head."

"Is that true?"

"If a man lives in isolation, master, he can only talk to himself. And sometimes—not always—he becomes his own teacher." The servant's voice stopped. Again the melodious old voice was heard apologising: "Well, I have to go to the garden now, master."

"Don't," Kirno forbade him. "There is no one whom I can ask to talk to me now. All of them have gone out. Hey, Mangun—do you want to be a servant always?"

"I never chose this life of mine, master. Whatever comes to me I accept—even though it may be rubbish. Excuse me."

"Perhaps you have experienced bitterness in your life," sighed Kirno.

"I think indeed many people have suffered from bitterness while living in this world. And that bitterness makes me hate festivity. Now go away."

Then he heard Mangun's footsteps going away. And his mind turned to those of his friends who had become invalids before he himself became one. And there were among them those who had lost their eyes. And there were also some who had lost parts of their bodies. There were some who became insane and who loitered along the streets shouting about battles—and they were not considered invalids at all. And they were laughed at and watched by many people who jeered at them merrily.

"If their parents were not as wealthy as mine," he whispered, "what would they be in their own country which is now independent?" Then he continued thinking to himself: "And even if they don't want to be anything, due to lack of opportunity caused by their injuries, they will resign themselves to their fate." Suddenly he could not control the shouting in his head, and cruel

words came from his mouth. "But what is the use of resignation in this world of modern communication? What is the use of being resigned to a bullet? And what is the use of being resigned to a palace which costs fifty thousand rupiahs per month to maintain?"

He banged his hand against the table of the wheel-chair. All his nerves tensed. He controlled the anger which was struggling in him. And he heard meantime the buzzing light western music on the radio. Now he soothed the struggle in his chest. And his attention was attracted by a new song being played on the radio—Lili Marlene. Yes, he had also heard this song being sung by Dutch soldiers holidaying from patrol duty at the edge of the forest. He listened to the song until it ended, until the last syllable had faded. He heard the roaring laughter of his happiness. Then he bent down and heard the grenade being thrown and exploding. Later he sprayed bullets from his tommy-gun at them, and with an immense feeling of victory he went back to the depot.

All these memories had died. From the door a child was heard shouting: "Mas Kirno, Mas."<sup>3</sup>

Kirno directed his ears towards the sound. He smiled artificially. He answered:

"Tini, my sister, is that you?"

Tini's small footsteps approached. Her happy voice was heard:

"Mas I feel very happy after joining in the procession, eating at school and singing. And we also sang the National Anthem."

Kirno smiled slowly and refreshingly. His hand was groping and searching for support. And when his hand could feel the shoulder of his little sister, he drew her close and, caressing her cheek, said softly:

"You are still small my sister!" And these words remained unspoken: "You do not know anything of the world." And then aloud: "But there are so many people who are as childish as you are, Tini!"

He became silent. His sister was heard laughing. And her laughter grew more and more distant . . .

## 2

He also heard his little sister shouting happily:

"Sister Ati is here."

He also heard the voice which he used to admire—the voice which had always roused his passion.

"Tini, you are a big girl now, eh?"

Kirno turned his eyes in the direction of the voice. But as usual he could see nothing. And even though he was satisfied, it was a forced satisfaction. His eyes were pierced by bullets and so were his legs. Who would be willing to surrender his two eyes and legs to become defective forever? Once again he lowered his head, until at length it rested on the table of the wheel-chair. There his head remained. He heard again:

"Did you join the procession just now, Tini?" The voice which used to arouse his heart—but now it was like any other voice.

"Of course, sister, of course. And I sang the National Anthem and the Independence Day song. And the whole school got drinks and cakes," the voice of his little sister said.

"Great fun, eh? Where is your mother?"

"My mother is at the Regency—receiving guests," Tini answered.

"Your father?"

"Also there receiving guests."

"Mas! Where is Mas Kirno?"

"He is inside, sister. But, but, but, Mas No,<sup>4</sup> now—."

And Kirno heaved a deep sigh as though he would envelop all the sufferings of the world and its contents. But Tini's voice kept on pounding in his ears:

"He can't walk. He is crippled."

"Crippled?" exclaimed the young lady, astonished.

"Yes, sister, and since then he has always sat in his wheel-chair. If he wants to go anywhere, I push the wheel-chair."

"Oh—," a disappointed and bitter voice.

"And also Mas No is blind now."

"Blind?" whispered the young lady.

Slowly Kirno lifted his head, straightened his body, and leant against the back of the wheel-chair, his forehead wrinkled. He whispered to himself:

"Ati! That was all.

"It is sad, isn't it, sister?" Tini resumed.

He did not hear Ati answering. And he thought:

"And now I—I only live to receive sympathy from others."

He reflected how free he used to be in using his legs and eyes, even in the days of colonialism. Yes, even at a time when people didn't shout about democracy and freedom. And for democracy and independence he had lost his right to walk and see. Yes, even though democracy guaranteed individual freedom. Once again he sighed. Once again. And again.

The voice which he used to adore was heard:

"Take me to Mas No."

He heard the footsteps of someone wearing slippers and the footsteps of a child approaching. Kirno bowed his head hurriedly. He bent his body. And his head rested on the table—he had no strength. He heard Ati's call in front of him:

"Mas No."

He also felt hands embracing him. He also heard the sobbing of the young girl he used to love before—before the Dutch occupied his town, and before he withdrew himself with his soldiers into the Mantingan jungle. He also heard laboured breathing. Then he lifted up his head again. He whispered:

"My Ati. You have come at last."

Now he heard the perplexed voice:

"Mas No, why have you become like this?"

Kirno did not answer. Only his heavy breathing was heard. Then slowly and heavily Kirno said:

"Ati, my friends have died one after another and they have been forgotten by others. And I am also dead now, being forgotten by others. Isn't that the way of the world since the end of the war, Ati? The war has ended and every individual who is still alive can obtain a position for himself in the society which he himself has formed. Isn't that the way of the world after a war, Ati?"

He did not hear his Ati answering. He resumed:

"You are free to go anywhere, because you still possess that right. As for myself, Ati—I have lost my right as an ordinary human being. My Ati, can you appreciate my situation now that I no longer have a place in the country which I fought for? Can you feel it? But I am not complaining to you Ati—I only feel lonely living like this—And sometimes, Ati, sometimes unconsciously, the feeling in my heart and the thoughts in my mind come out." He became silent for a while.

"Are you still as beautiful as you used to be, Ati?"

He heard Ati replying. A sighing reply only.

"You don't want to reply, but I understand why. Yes, Ati . . . I may no longer hope to marry you, and you can no longer hope to marry me. Isn't that so? Isn't that so?"

His Ati answered with an even deeper sigh.

"Did I hear you sighing again, Ati? I heard you sighing."

"Mas Kirno," Ati interrupted, "I don't know what to think when I see you like this."

Kirno smiled. He smiled slowly:

"Ati, sometimes people only see things to forget what is likely to happen. In this you are like other people and like me. It seems that thousands of things can happen to a person."

For a while they stopped talking. Then it was heard:

"Ati could you turn on the radio, please?"

The sound of the radio playing western music was heard.

"Oh, the same old song. The same old one. Please look for another station."

The drone of the radio shifted to another station. And an exuberant speech was heard. The speech was interrupted by Kirno's voice:

"A speech. Don't people get fed up with giving speeches every day?"

"Why Mas?" his Ati asked with a confused voice.

"That speech—Hmm, I feel like smashing the radio—it only talks nonsense. Please find some Javanese music, Ati."

And Ati looked for a new station. Then some Javanese music was heard.

"Yes, that soft voice. A combination of softness and surrender . . . a song which no longer emphasizes the hurrying age—I prefer this to western music."

"Why are you so changed these days, Mas?"

"It's not that I want to be changed. Isn't it true that in my present life, Ati, there is nothing which I can look for? Isn't it true that for me there is nothing at all?"

"You never used to speak as you do now, Mas No."

Kirno was heard laughing. Then he said:

"Yes, that was before. Then I could embrace you. Then I could kiss you when I wanted to. Then I still felt powerful and I thought that a person's fate was determined by his own will. But that time has gone, Ati."

Little Tini was heard singing in her bright clear voice. And Kirno heard her voice approaching.

"Tini," he called out.

"I am here Mas—what can I do for you?"

"Tini please sing *Kupu-Kupu*<sup>5</sup> for me. Switch off the radio first."

The radio was switched off. Tini's clear singing was heard. And the two grown-up people listened to it intently. The song stopped, and then Kirno said:

"I used to be like you before, Tini."

And Tini cried—she howled.

"Why are you crying? Why are you crying?" he asked.

"No, no. I am not like you when you were small!" protested Tini in her childish cry.

"And why do you have to cry then?" he asked meekly.

"Because, because, because I do not want to be crippled. I don't want to be blind," cried Tini through her tears.

"Of course not. Of course not, Tini." He cheered up his sister.

"You won't be crippled and blind like I am. And in this whole world no one should be crippled and blind, Tini. Only I am. Only I. You don't have to cry. No, that's not necessary, Tini. In the future you will be a beautiful and sensible woman. And you will still be able to romp and play with your friends."

Tini stopped crying, leaving only her sobbing to fill the silence.

"Do you still want to sing Tini?" His Ati was heard asking.

"I don't want to sing any more," Tini answered in a broken-hearted voice.

"Then sing for sister Ati, won't you, Tini?"

Only Tini's sobbing was heard. Ati repeated her request:

"Sing *Gadjah-Gadjah*<sup>6</sup> for me. You learned it at school, didn't you?"

"Yes," Tini answered her.

Then Tini sang *Gadjah-Gadjah* through her sobbing. Kirno smiled and admired the voice . . . his own voice when he was a child. And even Tini's body also resembled his when he was little. The child's clear voice pierced the silence between Kirno and Ati. And now and then through that clear voice a guileless sobbing was heard.

The song died. And he heard Ati kissing his sister's cheek.

"How sweet it was," Kirno praised.

"Yes, how sweet it was," Ati added.

"In the singing competition just now, I also sang that song, sister Ati."

"Did you? And what prize did you get?" Ati asked her.

"A slate-pencil and a slate, and a kiss on my right cheek from the teacher."

"How kind your teacher is," Kirno exclaimed.

"Very kind, Mas," Tini exclaimed happily. Her crying had stopped. The tears had disappeared.

Outside, Kirno's parents were heard coming. The people stood still, listening to all the noises and voices that come from outside the house. And at last someone called out:

"Ati, have you been here long?"

Kirno heard both his parents talking to Ati.

"Yes, my child Ati, fate cannot be selected. We cannot choose our fate. That's how the situation is with your boyfriend. Where have you been all this while?"

Ati was heard answering:

"All this time, mother? All this time, I have been at the Rural District."

"And you forgot about your Mas. You never sent any news."

"Oh, how could I send any news, mother?"

"And now your Mas has become a battle victim, Ati."

"Yes."

"And also a victim of love."

"Love, mother?"

"You would not want to be the wife of a defective person, would you, even if he were defective because of the war?"

There was silence. Kirno felt that Tini was hanging on to his shirt. And naturally his hands seized and closed around his little sister. Emptiness was felt in every heart, even in little Tini's heart. And the small girl caressed her brother's ears. And Kirno did not disapprove the caressing. Later he heard his father say to Ati:

"How often I have prayed that God would protect you and your Mas always—and you'd be safe in your fighting. Yes, Ati, every night we've prayed. And very often your mother couldn't sleep at night wishing that your Mas—even though no human being can be protected from a shower of bullets—would continue to be safe until he reached the peak of his ambition." Then he turned to his wife: "Yes mother, we have prayed enough to God, asking for his blessing."

"Yes, Ati, that is true."

"But God can do anything he wishes to His creatures."

"Yes," an empty hollow voice was heard.

Silence again. Then a hard and perplexed voice was heard:

"Well what's the use of so much empty talk? I'm already blind and crippled. And I'll remain blind and crippled for the rest of my life. And that's that!"

"Ati, I hope you will understand your brother's character these days. He is very hot-tempered nowadays. Yes, he constantly loses his temper. Only when he is accompanied by Tini is he friendly, laughs and talks a lot and sometimes tells her stories about the battles he has been through."

"Yes, mother," Ati answered.

"What do you think of your Mas, nowadays?"

"What?" exclaimed Kirno, angrily, "am I a commodity to be weighed and judged in front of others?"

And because of his angry outburst no one dared speak. Every one stayed silent now. At that moment Tini started to sing without being asked. Every listener turned—to hear little Tini's clear voice, which was very loud and innocent. Then:

"Ati," Kirno called his former lover.

"What can I do for you, Mas?"

"It is useless for you to discuss my life. You already know my situation. You already knew up to a point how things are with me these days. It is utterly useless for you to discuss me. Where do you live now, Ati?" he said with a voice growing weaker.

"Semarang, Mas Kirno."

"When did you come?"

"Just now, just now at twelve noon." She remained silent awhile. Then she explained: "I was forced to go to the Rural District first, Mas. You know the situation of my family, don't you? And I did not have a chance to say even a word to you because at that time you were at the guerrilla district."

"At that time I was a useless thing at the house of the chief of the guerrilla district. When you went away, I was already blind, I could no longer walk, Ati. I so much want to sit beside you forever. I so much want to hear your voice always, Ati. But all that reaches me is a voice. Yes, only your voice proved to me that you are still around. A voice—and a bit of feeling. And a little memory. Go away, Ati. Go home. That will be better for me."

And Ati went away. He heard her footsteps sounding fainter and fainter. And he also heard Tini following behind his former lover. Eventually he heard some conversation which was not very clear to him. He sighed. Once again and again. He also heard his parents talking. And then he heard no more.

Slowly he bent his head toward the table of the wheel-chair. As the axles turned, the wheels of his chair emitted a noise which made his heart restless. Then his head reached the table of the wheel-chair—remaining silently there.

Then he heard several feet approaching him. He knew well whose footsteps they were: his mother's, his father's and Tini's. Then:

"How rude you are these days, Kirno!" said his mother. Kirno did not raise his head, which rested on the table of his wheel-chair.

"You drove Ati away, just as you would drive a cat away."

Tini approached him, embraced him and told a lie:

"Mas Kirno, Ati cried as she was leaving. She took pity on you."

"Doesn't a human being have some finer feeling, Kirno?"—his mother's voice. Kirno's body, which was bent, immediately rose up. He said coarsely:

"What use is fine feeling for me? What is the use?"

"Heavens," his mother's voice said, "I did not expect you to be so rude."

The visitor who came to visit, you chased away, as though there were nothing you needed in this world. As if you were the only person in the world. Doesn't Ati still love you?"

"Be quiet," Kirno snarled angrily. "What is the use of love for me? I can only sit on the chair of this invalid cart. Do you hear? . . . only sit for years, perhaps ten long years, until this body becomes stiff with rheumatism and haemorrhoids—and await death's coming."

"How rude you are these days," his mother sighed.

Kirno sniffed.

"Mas, Ati has gone," small Tini's soft voice. "She cried. She told me that she pitied you."

"He-e."

"And she asked me, 'Can you read now, Tini?' and I told her that I could read a little. And she said, 'Then you should always be near your brother and read books to him,' and I said, 'yes'. But Ati went on crying Mas. And she said, 'Tini, you should always be near Mas Kirno. If Mas Kirno needs anything, you should be able to help him.'"

"He-e." Kirno heard his own voice.

"What do you want now, Mas?"

"Your song, Tini," Kirno smiled childishly. "You sing well, Tini. Please sing."

His mother interrupted:

"Every day you want only to listen to your sister's voice, Kirno," The voice became coarser. "Isn't there any higher feeling in you, rather than to punish your sister by ordering her to sing continuously, chasing away whoever comes near you, because they sympathise with you, and snarling at your parents."

"Shut up and get out," snarled Kirno, unforgiving.

"What song would you like Mas," little Tini's voice was heard.

"*Tudjuh belas Agustus empat puluh lima.*"

Then a loud voice was heard penetrating the quietness.

"Seventeenth of August, forty five

That is the Day of our Independence . . ."

Kirno's body became more and more hunched. At length his head rested on the table of the wheel-chair. And Tini's loud voice continued to penetrate the quietness which could drown every living thing. And her song went on piercing the stillness with a constant rhythm. Then the song stopped. She asked:

"Why are you so quiet, Mas?"

Tini heard a little sobbing; it was muffled and hardly audible.

## 5

Tini embraced her brother again, and in her childish voice said:

"Mas, you asked me to sing the song *Seventeenth of August*, '45. But you didn't listen to it. What's more, you even cry, Mas."

Kirno did not lift his head from the table of his chair. He continued to sob softly.

"Why Mas, why?"

Then he answered in a dull and hollow voice—a voice which contained all the suffering of the world and all its contents:

“Repeat the song, Tini,” he said.

His head remained resting on the table. His body remained hunched . . . as it was before. And his eyes, which no longer had balls in them—eyes which had only eyelids left because of the bullets at the Mantingan battle—could not catch even a sliver of light rays. Not a single object could he see. Only his memories remained. The wheel-chair moved a little. He had been sitting on that chair for such a long time, from waking up in the morning to bedtime at nights. And at last Tini was heard again:

“If a person is blind, what does he see?”

“So, you don’t want to sing again, Tini.”

Tini sang again. And now Kirno sat up straight. He began to swing both his crippled legs. And because of this the wheel moved with the axles and made a little noise. Tini’s clear voice penetrated the silence that could drown every living thing. Later the song died again as it had before. At length Tini asked him again:

“What can a blind person see, Mas?”

“What he can see, Tini, is only darkness.”

“As the night, Mas?”

“Yes, as the night. Dark as the night. Black as charcoal. And all he sees is darkness.”

“But you can see the flowers, can’t you, Mas?”

“No, I can’t Tini. I can only see black colour, and nothing else.”

“Can you see mother, Mas?”

“She’s also in darkness.”

“Can you see father, Mas?”

“He’s also in darkness.”

“All are dark, Mas?”

“All are dark, Tini. That’s why you should not be blind as I am. You should always be able to see father and mother. You should be able to see your friends, and you should not be crippled as I am. I can now no longer walk. But you should be able to jump always. Sing again, Tini, sing again.”

“I am tired of singing, Mas.”

“Well, in that case, tell a story, Tini—tell a story.”

“What about, Mas?”

“About the singing competition in your school just now.”

“At first, Mas, the teacher asked, ‘Who can sing the song *Seventeenth of August?*’—and I answered I could. Then I sang the song *Gadjah-Gadjah*, Mas, as Mini did, Mas. I lost. But when I sang the song *Gadjah-Gadjah*, Mas, I won. And I was presented with a slate-pencil and a slate.”

“I heard that you joined in the procession just now.”

“Yes, Mas, we had to stand in a row outside the school. Later, we walked to the square. Most of the pupils were already there. It was crowded. They were all carrying flags. The music never stopped playing in front of the procession. The march-songs they played were very nice, Mas. But I cannot sing them yet. I felt terribly warm in the square. All of us felt warm. Later we cheered when everyone started cheering. I didn’t know why everybody was shouting. But I also joined the shouting. Oh, what fun it was. It was

very enjoyable, Mas. Then everyone clapped their hands. And I joined in clapping my hands. Fire-crackers were let off——.”

“I also heard them from here just now, Tini.”

“Indeed the crackers were very loud, Mas. So loud I corked my ears. And crumpled pieces of paper were scattered everywhere. The cannon was also fired, Mas. It exploded in the air, Mas. The sound was very loud indeed. I almost screamed with fear. We saw the smoke billowing in the sky, until it was carried away by the wind and disappeared behind the white clouds. And the National Anthem was also sung, Mas—the music accompanied by drums, trumpets and other instruments. I liked it, Mas. I liked it very much. I’d like to hear it again. But what is always on the radio is not as good, Mas. Really, it is not as good as ours.”

Suddenly Kirno felt a longing, a loneliness. He didn’t know what he longed for. For a while he coughed a little. But he still didn’t know what he longed for. Perhaps for Ati, his former sweetheart? He shook his head weakly. No. Perhaps for his former pair of eyes, and former pair of legs? He shook his head again, weakly. No. He didn’t know. Except that loneliness raged within him.

Then:

“Mas Kirno—why are you silent?”

Only then did Kirno throw out his hands and embrace his little sister. He petted her. Later, he said lovingly: “You are a sweet child, Tini. Would you like to sing? Tini?” Tini laughed. She wriggled in her brother’s embrace

Then:

“Mas, now it is your turn to sing for me,” Tini requested. “You haven’t sung for a long time, Mas. You’d like to sing *Seventeenth of August*, wouldn’t you?”

Kirno took a deep breath. Then he sang the song which his sister had asked for—slowly, in a deep voice. And in that singing he reflected how proud he was before, when he paraded at Pati on Independence Day. A battalion, fully equipped with weapons but haphazardly dressed, marched out in front of the Residency. But the drama in his head was dead. Later he tried to reminisce about Independence Day in the guerrilla region. But he couldn’t remember anything. At that time he had lost his eyes. He could only tell from the echoing around him. There was a voice which he could recognize as the voice of his guard:

“It’s the seventeenth of August, Sir. Our bomb has succeeded in destroying a bren-carrier.”

His heart beat strongly at that time—following the feeling of victory won by his troops who no longer belonged to him. The guard spoke again:

“On the western battlefield a locomotive, with its three wagons, was derailed.”

Those were the only memories he had of that Independence Day in the guerrilla region.

His slow singing became a moan. Suddenly:

“Why do you cry, Mas?”

Kirno stopped singing. He wiped the tears which slowly slid down his cheeks. He kissed Tini. And Tini remained silent. Then he said:

“I can’t celebrate this day the way you do, Tini. Before I used to feel

happy and drunk whenever our troops marched in the parade. But now I can no longer feel that way . . . I am crippled and blind now." Suddenly, he stopped. His own furious and cruel voice filled his mind. "I don't need anything. I don't even need the Seventeenth of August. Even a thousand seventeenths of August, I don't need them. I only need death—as soon as possible." He was silent.

"Sing again, Mas. Sing again."

"What song, Tini?"

"The song *Gadjah-Gadjah*, Mas."

Kirno's voice once again echoed. His voice was very slow. And that simple regional song revived his memories—the memories of his love for Ati whom he had chased out that very morning. He heard faintly the voice of the girl whom he used to adore. But it was impossible for him to marry her. He didn't want to continue the tie. No. That was impossible. Ati should get a husband who would not disgrace her and her family. He sighed in his singing. Later he went on with the song. Yes, like any other healthy young man he too would like to be married. But he didn't realise that. What he could feel was only the longing for something which he didn't know. He continued singing. His voice was slow and deep. Suddenly he stopped. Tini's voice was heard:

"You are crying again, Mas?"

Quickly he wiped his tears.

"Why are you always crying, Mas?"

He didn't answer—he only embraced and kissed his sister.

"Why are you always crying, Mas?" Tini urged him.

"I don't know, Tini," Kirno answered slowly. "Please call mother. Tini, you will, won't you?"

"Of course, Mas, of course I will. Sister Ati said just now 'You should be at Mas Kirno's side, Tini. Perhaps he may need something.' Of course, Mas. Now?"

Kirno nodded. Then he heard Tini's footsteps, disappearing gradually. He sighed. Once again. Once again, and once again.

"What do you want, Kirno?"

"I want to go away from here, mother."

"How can you go when you are in such a condition? Oh, Kirno, today you have given us a lot of trouble."

"Yes, mother, but I don't intentionally give people trouble. I don't want to be a defective person, under the care of other people. That's why, mother, it's best if I go away from here. Perhaps it would be best if I don't give you any trouble."

He did not hear his mother say anything. He only heard a sigh.

"Perhaps it would be best if I go to an invalid home. Perhaps I shall be happy there. I'll be able to mix with people of my kind—people who have had the same fate as mine, people who suffer as I do because of war. Yes, perhaps I'd be happy living there. And you won't have to trouble yourself for me. And you won't have to listen to my anger. I've never been happy here. I'm sorry that I was sent back to my parents. Actually, when I was carried by the people from the guerrilla region to this place, I should have asked them to throw me into the Mantingan gorge. Yes, perhaps that would

have been better than this miserable arrangement." He kept quiet. He didn't hear his mother's words. Then he continued: "I don't want to poison little Tini with this suffering of mine."

"I know that you suffer, Kirno. I know that. But I don't have the courage to let you be cared for by other people."

"I suffer here because of the many prohibitions you force on me every day. You forbid me to do this, and you forbid me to do that. Oh ——." He kept quiet and drew a really deep breath. He resumed: "—— how happy I was before I was injured. I could go everywhere. And you never forbade me. And no one had the right to forbid me. Oh, how happy I would be if I were not disabled. How happy I would be if I hadn't joined in bearing arms. How happy I would be if I had followed father's example—when the Republic was in power, he joined the Republic; when the Reds came, he joined the Reds; when the Dutch came, he joined the Dutch, and when RIS<sup>8</sup> was in power, he joined the RIS."

"You are talking badly about your father," his mother said guiltily.

"Isn't it true?"

He didn't hear any answer. He remained alert. The longing held him—a longing he didn't recognise or understand. He went on:

"It would be better for me to go away from here, mother."

"Where do you want to go, Mas?" little Tini asked in an anxious voice.

"To the place where I shall meet my kind of people, Tini."

"Where will that be, Mas?"

"In a home for limbless people, Tini, in a home where there are only disabled people."

He heard Tini's voice, half-crying:

"Don't, Mas, don't! Sister Ati told me that I should always be by your side and help you when you need something. Don't. You won't go away, will you? Will you? You won't go away, will you? Sister Ati asked me to read to you. If you go away, Mas, I shan't be able to read to you."

It was deadly quiet.

"Sister Ati told me this morning, Mas, that she would not come here any more, because, Mas, because you didn't like her any more. She said that she would be going back to Semarang tomorrow. If she comes again, Mas, and you are not here, and if she asks me whether I have read to you, Mas ——."

"Tini," Kirno exclaimed.

Tini approached her brother. And Kirno embraced and kissed her. Then the young man said slowly, half-crying:

"Tini, you have many friends. You should play with them. You need no longer sing for me. You need not hear me singing *Gadjah-Gadjah*. You should play with your own friends. It is not necessary for you to read to me."

He heard Tini crying. Her crying sounded sorrowful. And with that cry Kirno wept. Then he consoled her in a voice which was still half-crying:

"Don't cry, Tini. You must not do that. You have lots of friends. Go and play with them. I must go, Tini. Here I have no friends."

"Haven't I always accompanied you, Mas," Tini said between her cries.

"But in the morning you must go to school, Tini. You are not at home in the morning, and I don't have friends."

"That's enough. No. What else will you think of. This is your own parents' house. This is your own house," said his mother.

"This is not my house. This is not my place."

"And where is your place?"

"In the War Wounded Home—where only people who suffer because of the battle live. This is not my place." His hard voice became softer now: "And you, Tini, you must go to school in the morning. And in the afternoon you must play with your friends, not with me."

"No, you can't go away, Mas. You can't."

"I'll come back tomorrow, Tini. Tomorrow I shall not be blind—and not crippled any more. I shall no longer be disabled. Tomorrow you will have a brother who can walk and is no longer blind, and we shall take a walk to the square. And if there is a celebration again on the Seventeenth of August, we shall take a walk and see the horse-racing. You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would, Mas."

"I can go now, can't I?" There was no answer. His voice became hard.

"Ask someone to take me to the Invalid Home, right this moment. This is a sinful house. This is a house of devils and hell. I hate this house."

Kirno's singing was never heard again in that house. Tini and Kirno never again sang together. Once again Tini's parents lived peacefully without being obliged to nurse their limbless and sightless son. Sometimes Tini asked why her brother didn't return. Later she never asked at all.

1. Soekarno. (ed).
2. In Djakarta.
3. An abbreviation of *kamas*, term of address for elder brother.
4. An abbreviation of Kirno, itself an abbreviation of Sukirno. (ed.).
5. "Butterflies", the name of a well known children's song.
6. "Elephant", another children's song.
7. *Seventeenth of August, '45* (the day of the proclamation of Indonesian independence).
8. Abbreviation of *Republik Indonesia Serikat*, The Federal Republic of Indonesia.

# ALFATIHAH

by T. B. Darwin Effendie

A CERTAIN LIFE AFFLICTION, that had entirely exhausted the physical frame, seemed imprinted on his father's face, a face ivory-pale with old age. On beholding me wrapped in sackcloth during the Japanese Occupation, sad tears welled from his sunken eyes. I remember how the Japanese made slaves of my people, forcing many into chain gangs, hungry and thirsty, wracked with pain and disease, thin as rakes, beaten and dehydrated, dragged, trampled, kicked. Many were chafed raw and red, half dead, panting for breath, dried out . . . All this accomplished by Japanese gentlemen with calculated cruelty and precision.

"Win!"

"Yes, dad."

"You'll look after your little brother, won't you?"

I go out fishing in the river with a small hand net, all the time watching out for my skinny little brother asleep in his hanging cradle, gently rocking to and fro. Father and mother were out in the field weeding beneath the hot sun.

Little brother began to cry. He was hungry, as I was, with an empty, colicky stomach.

"Ma . . . Oh, ma!"

"What is it, Win?"

"Little brother's crying."

Mother hastens to the hut. Little brother suckles at her fleshless, anaemic breasts. Exhausted she was and listless, but what else could she do, for a hungry babe must be suckled.

That afternoon father returned from the farm. All there was to eat in those days was half a can of rice mixed with dry cassava—for us, a clerk's children.

It was difficult to get salt; sugar could not even be hoped for. Everything was in a state of crisis and was bitterly felt, with the pain of scabies. We all felt the approach of a catastrophic fate, of death grasping at us. There was no need for money, no use in property. Almost everyone lived biting air and emitting smoke, all week long . . . The Japanese fascists employed the most bestial and cruel tortures, except on those who became their sycophantic agents, who lived like a king of apes who, by ruling barbarously, misuses and destroys his own subjects.

After every harvest the Japanese seized the people's padi. While they wagged their chins, Indonesians withered to death like scorched worms. Yes, while my people huddled together in their huts, outside there remained only broken stubble, growing mouldy in the mud.

"Nippon eat rice; Indonesia eat tree leaves . . . this very, very nice . . ." These words bored into and pierced our bodies and minds, gradually building into a reservoir of feverish vengeance against colonialists, and especially the merciless Japanese of those days.

"Bagero,"<sup>1</sup> said father. And then, "My son . . ."

Father, already so aged, had been cruelly beaten up, dragged along the

earth, kicked and hoofed. He had fallen, face forward, to the ground, his mouth issuing blood, his teeth . . . oh his teeth, every one knocked loose . . .

At that time the Japanese threw me into a creek for daring to shriek out loud and desperately on seeing my weak and frail father fall face to the ground, smeared with blood. Those Japanese gentlemen . . . how they slapped and beat men. Rogues . . . criminals!

It was not my father alone who was so cruelly used by the Japanese. Many people suffered far more than he. I remember how the BPP coolies died on the Ketian field near Tandjung Radja in the Lower Ogan District and in a field at Sungei Pinang between Merandjat and Tandjung Batu . . . Others fell at Mariana near Sungei Gerong, Palembang. Not a few of my people died of torture, never to return, never to see their families again.

Oh the sorrow, yearning, bitterness and sourness—all this was our every day experience during the fascist Japanese occupation.

Fortunately all this bestiality ended at last with the defeat of the Japanese, who were brought to their knees, so that many of their officers committed suicide . . . thus they died . . .

Then the '45 Revolution erupted . . . reaching out to the most isolated colonial outpost in Indonesia. And then the armed struggle, tough and exacting many casualties, but . . . Indonesia Merdeka!<sup>2</sup>

“Win!”

“Yes, dad.”

“Work well, don't set your mind on riches, but don't be lazy either, yes?”

I nodded . . . these were his last trembling words, spoken at the end of May, 1962, when he was already seriously ill. Then, on the first of June, 1962, on Thursday evening<sup>3</sup> he could speak no more. Only a few thin tears expressed his last feelings. All this, and especially the melancholy on his face as I sat beside him, I remember with pain and sadness. Then he closed his eyes for the last time, there in the city outskirts, before I had time to repay the debt I owed him—

Alfatihah<sup>4</sup> . . .

These notes were composed by me on the eve of Idul Fitri<sup>5</sup> in the year of Hejira, 1384.

(Translated by M. A. Jaspán)

1. A coarse Japanese swear word.
2. Freedom.
3. The beginning of the Muslim sabbath.
4. A word expressing innermost Islamic belief; it is the first word of the first chapter of the Koran.
5. The religious feast that terminates the fast month of Ramadhan.

## “THE ADVERTISER” LITERARY COMPETITION, 1968

A literary competition with awards totalling \$4,000 will be conducted by *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia, as one of the early features of the fifth Adelaide Festival of Arts in 1968. It will be the fourth such competition sponsored by the newspaper.

For a book (non-fiction)—one prize only—\$2,000.

For a novel—one prize only—\$2,000.

All must be original unpublished works, and to permit a wide field of entry, the competition is open to residents of Australia, those of Australian birth wherever resident, and residents of any other country provided that, in the latter case, the entry is on an Australian subject or has an Australian background.

Entries will close with “The Advertiser” on November 30, 1967, and results will be announced just before the opening of the Festival in March, 1968.

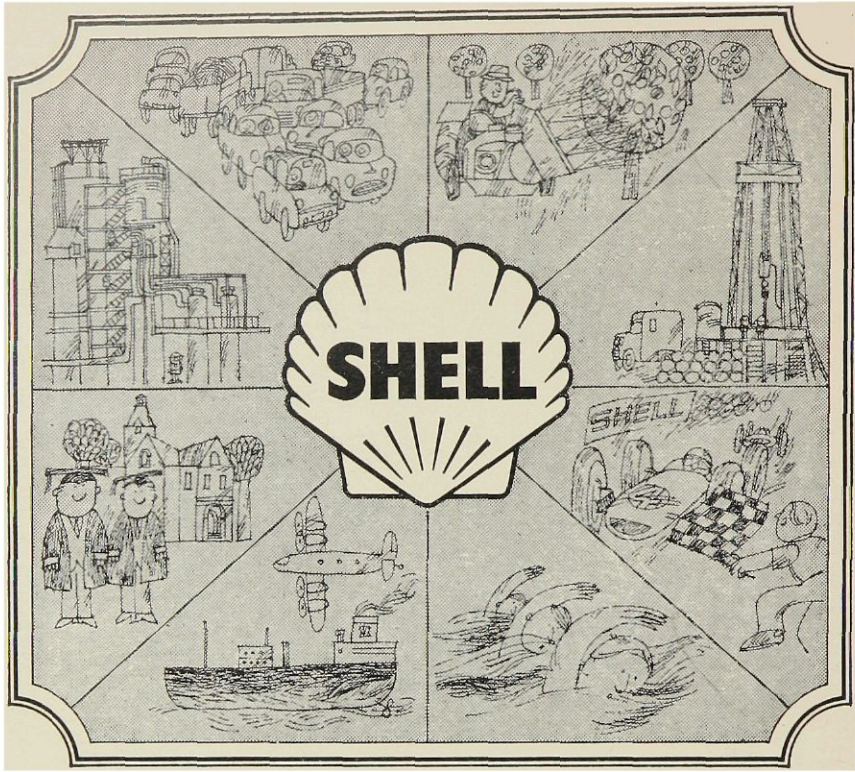
Entry forms and further details are obtainable in Western Australia from the editors of *Westerly*.

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