CHAPTER III

From Balinese to Indonesian Poetry from the colonial and national revolution periods

Poetry has always been the dominant genre in the Indonesian literary tradition, and this is also true of Indonesian literature originating from Bali. Besides being relatively easily to publish, poetry is also a forceful form of writing which can express almost every level of feeling in an aesthetic way. As already outlined in the previous chapter, during the colonial and national revolution periods, poetry was the most common literary form used by Balinese writers – this remains true to the present (Hunter 1998; Putra 1994, 2004). *Syair* and *pantun*, although old poetic structures by Malay standards, were new to Balinese writers in the 1920s (Sutedja-Liem 2003:143). Their language medium, Malay, was clearly more egalitarian than the hierarchical levels of speech used in Balinese, and by using it many new concepts could be considered (Vickers 1996:6; Schulte Nordholt 2000:103).

Another new aspect of the use of *syair* and *pantun* during the 1920s was that they appeared in the modern Malay language publications, *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana*, which added a new dimension to Balinese literary tradition. At the turn of the twentieth century, Balinese writers only dealt with modernity in indigenous literary genres such as *gaguritan*, *kidung*, and *kakawin* with the outside world only occasionally mentioned. By the 1920s, access to these new literary forms and to printed periodicals had created significant pathways towards comprehending modernity and negotiating identity ‘far beyond earlier boundaries’ (Creese 2007:754). These new perceptions of modernity and identity found expression in various genres but

poetry has always remained the primary mode. What follows is an examination of how poetry from the colonial and national revolution periods represents Balinese notions of modernity and identity. It also explores how shifts in identity construction took place from one period to the other and to what extent the social and political situations influenced such change.

Early poetry and the debate over traditional identity

Poetry in the Indonesian language first emerged in Bali in the second half of the 1920s, at the height of a debate over traditional identity between *jaba* (lower caste) and *triwangsa* (upper-caste) people through the medium of *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana*. The *jaba* group, who took a progressive stance against the caste system, supported *Surya Kanta*. *Bali Adnjana*, by contrast, became the mouthpiece of the *triwangsa* and was dedicated to maintaining existing Balinese culture, including the caste system (Vickers 1989:152; Picard 1999b). Before the mid-1920s, Balinese intellectuals from all caste groups had in fact achieved a degree of unity in their mutual efforts towards modernity, but they later split again, along caste lines (Putra Agung 2001:101-4). Colonial caste policy that granted privileges to *triwangsa* contributed to the disharmonious relationship between the two groups.

Surya Kanta often complained about the arrogance of *triwangsa*, who wanted respect from *jaba* in social relationships, but did not return it. This disappointment in everyday relations led them to reject the caste system and propose its eradication, while at the same time praising instead the importance of the status and titles provided by modern education. Contributors to *Surya Kanta* were outward looking and often proudly referred to education in Europe and Japan. For them, academic titles were more relevant than caste titles, as the following quote from an article based on the minutes of a meeting of *Surya Kanta* suggests:

We of the *jaba* caste don't need to seek out (and should not expect) the titles Ida, Dewa, Gusti. *Jabas*, let us always give priority to good character

[*budi*], and try our hardest to pursue titles such as Mr, Dr, Ir, and Professor, because it is character and intelligence which can uplift us.¹

Articles published in *Bali Adnjana*, by contrast, rejected the propositions regarding education put forward by *Surya Kanta*. An article in *Bali Adnjana* in August 1926 argued that it was completely wrong for the Balinese to imitate Japan and America, because the Balinese live on a small island with a tiny population.² Another article in *Bali Adnjana* emphasized that Balinese youth had forgotten 'the knowledge of their ancestors', and suggested that they had lost the essence of *kebalian* (being Balinese) because they tended to speak Malay and Dutch to their Balinese friends to display that they were educated people.³ *Bali Adnjana* was not necessarily anti-modern, but wanted to counter the ways in which *Surya Kanta* belittled the caste system and spread hostility between castes. In an article entitled 'Percakapan' (Dialogue), published in 1926, *Bali Adnjana* warned:

if these *sudra* [lower caste people or *jaba*] continually cause offence to *triwangsa* people, [if] the seed of animosity grows in the mind of *jaba* people who are easily influenced and are provoked to challenge *triwangsa*, it will only cause conflict.⁴

The debate between these two publications extended to political issues. *Bali Adnjana* saw *Surya Kanta's* idea of giving lower and upper-caste people the same status as a move to create a classless as well as casteless society (*sama rata sama rasa*) in the communist sense. In a

¹ 'Kita kaum *jaba* tidak perlu mencari (jangan berharap) gelaran Ida, Dewa, Gusti. Marilah kita kaum *jaba* selalu mengutamakan budi, dan marilah berusaha sekuat-kuat kita, kejarlah gelaran Mr, Dr, Ir, dan Prof karena budi dan kepandaian itulah yang dapat meningkatkan kita kaum *jaba*', *Surya Kanta* 2 (1926):60-3. An editorial note to the article 'Angan-angan', *Surya Kanta* 2 (1926):17-8, makes a similar point. 'Ir' (insinyur) is equivalent to 'Engineer' a title equivalent to the English M.Sc. used in the Netherlands and Germany.

² 'Resident Bali Lombok', *Bali Adnjana* 10-8-1926:1-2.

³ 'Percakapan A dan B', *Bali Adnjana* 20-8-1926:2-4.

⁴ '[...] kalau terus menerus si *sudra* itu menyakitkan hati si *triwangsa* dan benih kebencian itu hingga menjalar di otaknya kaum *sudra* yang masih gampang diabui dan diasut itu lalu terus menentang kaum *triwangsa*, tentulah barangkali juga akan terjadi keributan', *Bali Adnjana* 10-12-1926:5.

further criticism, the editor of *Bali Adnjana*, Tjakra Tenaja mocked the abbreviation of *Surya Kanta*, 'SK', claiming that it stood for 'Sarang Komunis' or a 'lair of communists' (Picard 1999b:47). *Bali Adnjana* urged Balinese society to be aware of the 'Red Peril' that would put the very foundations of Balinese culture and religion at risk.⁵

The debate between *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana* ended in the late 1920s after both newspapers closed due to financial difficulties and colonial repression. Despite this, the issue has still not been resolved, and caste inequality continues to dominate public discourse into the twenty-first century.

Much of the subject matter of the early Balinese poems is a product of the debate between *Bali Adnjana* and *Surya Kanta*. Almost all early Indonesian poetry by Balinese writers promotes the aims and ideological position of the newspaper in which it was published. The single poem in *Bali Adnjana*, *Selamat Tahun Baru untuk Bali Adnjana* (Happy New Year to *Bali Adnjana*) by Gd. P. Kertanadi, expresses *Bali Adnjana's* ideal of guiding Balinese people to embrace the future era. The fact that the poem was printed on the journal's front page on 1 January 1925, in its first edition of the year, suggests that the newspaper endorsed the poem as a statement of its mission.

The poem *Selamat Tahun Baru untuk Bali Adnjana* is interesting for both its form and content. It is a *syair*, so the poem has a clear rhyme scheme with the same final sound, a-a-a-a, in each stanza and its style is acrostic, in that the initial letters of the stanzas (and their component lines) when read in sequence downwards form the expression 'Bali Adnjana'.⁶ This title contains 11 characters, equal to the number of stanzas that form the *syair*. As an example, the first four verses quoted below begin each line with the letters B, A, L and I respectively, to form the word 'Bali'.

⁵ 'Agama dan adat Bali terancam bahaya merah', *Bali Adnjana* 10-2-1929:2-5. See also Robinson 1995:34.

⁶ The full version of this poem is included in Appendix B.

Bali Adnjana taman jauhari	<i>Bali Adnjana</i> is a garden of
Buat pengerah putra dan putri	diamonds
Bersinar bagaikan matahari	For mobilizing men and women
Bagi suluh BALI negeri	Shining like the sun
	As a torch for the land of BALI

Akan penerang di tempat gelap	It will brighten dark places
Akan pembangun si tidur lelap	It will wake those who sleep
Anak negeri masih terlelap	deeply
Agar jangan selalu disulap	Children of the nation who are
	still sound asleep
	So they will not always be
	tricked

Lara rakyat telah diperhatikan	The people's suffering has been
Laki perempuan tak	observed
disingkirkan	Men and women are not to be
Lalim penindas disapukan	pushed aside
Laksana bola dapat sepakan	The cruel oppressor is swept
	away
	The way a ball can be kicked
	away

Inilah pertama pembela kita	This is our first defender
Isinya penuh dengan mestika	Its contents are precious stones
Ikhtiar jujur tidak terkata	Its honesty needs no explanation
Ikatan AGAMA hendak direka	We intend to achieve unity in
	RELIGION

This poem announces the existence of *Bali Adnjana* and its goal of bringing enlightenment to people living throughout the island of Bali. The poet uses two similes, 'sun' and 'torch', to explain how *Bali Adnjana* will light 'the darkness' and wake up those who are 'still asleep' which can be interpreted respectively as symbols of 'backwardness' and 'laziness'. What *Bali Adnjana* intends to do is to uplift those people from these states so that they will not become unnecessary victims of acts of trickery or deception ('*Agar jangan selalu disulap*'). A further

goal of *Bali Adnjana*, as stated in the third verse, is to protect suffering people from the possibility of exploitation and oppression. The poem also declares that *Bali Adnjana* helps people with great honesty, and always encourages them to refer to religious teachings for guidance. It is clear that the enlightenment and religious teachings that *Bali Adnjana* is referring to are those based on Hinduism.

From the sixth to the tenth verses the poem elaborates the importance of religious teachings by saying that *Bali Adnjana* has printed many books including the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics and is selling them at affordable prices. Related to the importance of traditional literature, *Bali Adnjana* regularly advertised two things: one was the availability of new books on traditional literature for the public to purchase; the other was the promotion of a lending library located next to the editorial office of the newspaper. According to the poem, traditional literary texts like the Ramayana and Mahabharata are full of advice, which is regarded as medicine for curing feelings of uncertainty or confusion and for blocking evil desires. The poem then praises the role and services provided by *Bali Adnjana*. The eleventh and last verse of the poem contains feelings of gratefulness and apology. Such expressions of humility are common in traditional literature, written in the opening verse if the concluding verse was used to state the date when the writing was finished.

Amin tak putus kami ucapkan	We will say Amen without end
Akhirulalam kami serukan	In conclusion we will proclaim
Agihan madah salah onggonan	Parts of the verses are filled with mistakes
Abang dan adik sudi maafkan	Brothers and sisters will agree to forgive

The ideas of *Bali Adnjana* for enlightening the people of Bali stated in this poem are similar to the dreams of its opponent, *Surya Kanta*. The difference is that while for *Bali Adnjana* progress must be in accordance with religious teachings and traditional values, *Surya Kanta* proposed advancement based on Western values and modern knowledge as will be shown in the poems analysed below.

Contesting traditional status

Subjects that promote a form of modernity quite different from *Bali Adnjana's* dominate poems published in *Surya Kanta*. The 17 poems listed in Table 2 are primarily addressed to lower-caste people. Poets urge this group to achieve the highest level of education that they can, because status from modern education is more relevant to the modern era than that bestowed by the caste system. As the poems were written at the height of the conflict between *jaba* and *triwangsa*, they not only reflected but also intensified the tension between the two groups. They are blatantly polemical in nature, even in their titles. Many of the contributors to *Surya Kanta* and later to *Djatajoe* used their initials, rather than their full names, and cannot be identified.

Table 2. Poems published in *Surya Kanta* between 1925 and 1927

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
1	Assalamualaikum (Peace be with you)	1925	WD	Greetings and introducing the mission of <i>Surya Kanta</i>
2	Ilmu (Knowledge)	1925	AWD	The importance of knowledge as a source of happiness
3	Tachyul (Superstitions)*	1926	MAR	Modernity versus superstition and caste
4	O! Zaman (Oh! These times)	1926	M.T.	A call to support <i>Surya Kanta</i> in improving the fate of <i>jaba</i> and promoting <i>budi</i>
5	SK (Surya Kanta)*	1926	Soekarsa	Promotion of the SK newspaper
6	Hiduplah SK (Long live SK)	1926	MAR	Propaganda for SK; knowledge of progress
7	Rukunlah Surya Kanta (Be harmonious, Surya Kanta)	1926	WL	Balinese religion

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
8	Kemanusiaan (Mankind)	1926	A. Kobar	The importance of education
9	Sadarlah (Be aware)	1926	Md.	A call to pray for a long life for <i>Surya Kanta</i> and to discard uncivilized <i>adat</i>
10	Berlanggananlah surat bulanan SK (Please subscribe to the monthly SK)	1926	KK	Promotion for the SK newspaper and the importance of <i>budi</i>
11	Cermin (Mirror)	1926	MDr	? (incomplete)
12	Darma (Duty)*	1926	Sinar	Comparison between caste and <i>budi</i>
13	Ilmu padi harus dituntut (We must strive for knowledge with humility)*	1926	L	The importance of knowledge and being humble
14	Surya Kanta bersinar (Surya Kanta is shining)	1926	WT	The importance of <i>budi</i> as opposed of caste
15	Syair SK (Poem of SK)	1926	M. Gama	The importance of Western knowledge
16	Setia pada SK (Loyal to SK)*	1927	Soekarsa	Call for lower caste groups to unite; the importance of Western education
17	Kiasan (Lesson)	1927	A. Kobar	Moral advice

*Acrostic poem

A typical example of a *Surya Kanta* poem, in terms of form and content, is *Setia pada SK* (Loyal to *Surya Kanta*, 1927) written by Soekarsa. This *syair* comprises 11 verses, each of which either encourages public support for the organization or outlines a different aspect of its goals, such as the importance of good character (*budi*), of Western education (*onderwijs*) or of a positive attitude towards the modern era. The poet,

Soekarsa, was one of the most productive contributors to *Surya Kanta*. Besides this poem, he also published a two-stanza *syair* entitled *SK* (1926) and several articles emphasizing that if Balinese were to cope with the inevitable onset of the modern era, education would play a vital role.

Setia pada SK articulates the ideas of *Surya Kanta* in a propagandist style that the text emphasizes constantly by the use of exhortations such as *teruskanlah* (please continue), *sokonglah* (please support), *haruslah ingat* (it must be remembered) and *kami berseru* (we beseech). Although published two years after the poem *Selamat Tahun Baru untuk Bali Adnjana*, this poem is both acrostic and of exactly the same length, and is thus open to interpretation as a direct repudiation of *Bali Adnjana's* principles, while clearly stating those of *Surya Kanta*. The opening stanza of the poem *Setia pada SK* addresses the *jaba* group to remind them of the importance of unity and progress.⁷

<i>Surya Kanta</i> datang berperi	<i>Surya Kanta</i> urges you now in poetry
Sepakat Jaba menyatukan diri	For all <i>jaba</i> are now fully agreed
Satunya bangsa selalu dicari	Being united as one nation is always the goal
Sebab hendak memajukan diri	As they always want to improve themselves

The word '*bangsa*' (nation) is frequently used in poetry published in *Surya Kanta*, in *Djatajoe* in the 1930s and in poems by non-Balinese Indonesians from the 1920s. A good example is the poem by Mohammad Jamin, a Jakarta-based Sumatran poet, entitled *Bahasa, bangsa* (Language, nation), first published in *Jong Sumatra* (Young Sumatra), in February 1921. It uses the sonnet form and is regarded by some as 'the first expression of a modern Indonesian literature' for its 'unconventional form as well as its original content' (Teeuw 1967:10-1). The use of *bangsa* in this poem clearly refers to Sumatra, not Indonesia, as the expression '*Dimana Sumatra, disitu bangsa*'⁸

⁷ The full version of this poem is included in Appendix B.

⁸ 'Wherever Sumatra is, there is my nation.' The translation is taken from Teeuw 1967:257.

makes explicit. Similarly, the expression '*satunya bangsa*' (being united as one nation) in Soekarsa's poem refers specifically to lower-caste Balinese people. Mohammad Jamin's and Soekarsa's poems are typical examples of Indonesian literature from the colonial period that display more concern with regional than with national identity.

Soekarsa's poem *Setia pada SK* also shows a clear orientation towards the modern era, reflecting the modernist vision of both *Surya Kanta* and the writer. He makes a sharp contrast between the past as 'backward' and the present as 'modern'.

Dahulu lain dengan sekarang	The past and present are different
Dalam SK [<i>Surya Kanta</i>] ada dikarang	It is stated in <i>Surya Kanta</i>
Dahulu kolot modern sekarang	The past is backward, the present is modern
Demikianlah kenang-kenangan orang	That's what people always remember
Aliran zaman turut selalu	Follow the current of this era
Adat kuno zaman dahulu	Disdain old customs and traditions
Arus dipilih mana yang perlu	Choose only what is needed
Adat yang baik teguhkan selalu	Good customs should be retained

The clear message of the poem is contained in the line 'follow the current of this era'. It expresses a critical stance towards Balinese customary practices that do not necessarily remain relevant. Although it articulates the need to select and maintain some positive elements of traditional culture, it is more interested in embracing modernity than in refining the old customs. This idea is reinforced in the poem *Sadarlah!* by a poet known only by the initials Md., which urges readers to 'throw away bad and uncivilized customs' (*Singkirkan adat buruk biadab*). One of the major 'old customs' that *Surya Kanta* wanted to 'throw away' was the caste system.

Just as the poem *Setia pada SK* urges *jaba* to embrace modern education by using the Dutch word *onderwijs*,⁹ M. Gama's poem *Syair SK* (SK poem, 1926) advises *jaba* people to pursue Western knowledge (*Kepandaian Barat harus dikejar*). This is a most progressive idea by the standards prevailing among Balinese intellectuals in the 1920s. Gama lived in Lombok and his poem and other articles published by contributors to *Surya Kanta* from that island indicate that Lombok too shared the desire to pursue progress. Western Lombok was colonized by the Karangasem kingdom in the early eighteenth century and thus for cultural and literal purposes the contributors from Lombok were in one sense the 'colonized' linking into the 'metropolis' of Bali itself. *Syair SK*, like other poems in *Surya Kanta*, is only concerned with the interests of *jaba*. It urges *jaba* to use modern education in order to raise their status to a level equal to that enjoyed by upper-caste people and people of other nations.

The idea of aspiring to *budi*, or 'good character', is also important for *Surya Kanta*. *Surya Kanta* believed that status should be definable by moral standing, not by birth. In M.T.'s poem *O! Zaman* (Oh! These times, 1926), this idea is expressed when the poet says: 'Tingkatan budi tingkatan kasta' (the level of character defines caste). The poem *Ilmu padi harus dituntut* (We must strive for knowledge with humility, 1926) in which the poet states that true nobility is not defined by skin, but radiates from *budi*, reinforces this idea. This is another illustration of *Surya Kanta*'s clear standpoint of rejecting ascribed status in favour of achieved status. For *Surya Kanta* writers, being modern meant being educated and equal, and it seems that they understood that the education advocated by colonial modernity was one of the best solutions to *jaba* problems, in sharp contrast with 'the knowledge of the ancestors' proposed by *Bali Adnjana*.

Although they differ in theme and orientation, the poems in *Bali Adnjana* and those in *Surya Kanta* share some similar Islamic expressions. The poem *Selamat Tahun Baru untuk Bali Adnjana* contains the words *Allah*, *amin* and *akhirulalam*. The first poem in the first edition of *Surya Kanta* was entitled *Assalamualaikum* (Peace be with you), an Islamic greeting. Other terms such as *Insya Allah* (God

⁹ *Kejar onderwijs buat aman* (Pursue education for peace).

willing) and *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to God) also appear in most of the other poems. This is not the case in the poetry from the national revolution period onwards.

The frequent use of Islamic expressions in poems by Balinese poets is not just because those words are part of the Malay vocabulary, but relates as well to a Balinese perception of modernity in the context of religion. In the eyes of 1920s Balinese intellectuals, Islam appeared to be a modern religion. Articles in *Surya Kanta* often made references to Islam and Islamic organizations, and leaders who were active in conveying religious values to their adherents. These articles asserted that Balinese Hindus needed to imitate the enthusiasm of Islam, in order to develop the Hindu religion and improve Balinese knowledge of Hinduism.¹⁰ In addition, there were many Javanese Muslim teachers working in Bali in the 1920s which led to the adoption of Javanese-style education, in that schools remained closed during the Muslim month of fasting while staying open during Hindu holidays (Sutedja-Liem 2003:86). Various Islamic ethnic groups including Arabs, Bugis, Javanese and Balinese Muslims lived in the regions of North Bali and Lombok, where the periodicals were distributed. All these factors enabled Balinese writers to be familiar with Islamic expressions used in formal education and social relations and so they entered their writings naturally. While the use of Islamic expressions in the poems aims at conveying a particular sense of modernity, it also reflects, to some extent, ambivalence in Balinese opinion about the idea of establishing Hinduism as their regional identity marker.

Social concern as a reflection of regional identity

Progress and the importance of education, *Surya Kanta's* dominant poetic themes, were still major concerns in the poetry published in *Djatajoe* in the 1930s. However, *Djatajoe* had a different and more complex approach to these themes. Unlike the high optimism for a bright future that characterized the poetry published in *Surya Kanta*, *Djatajoe* adopted a pessimistic tone on the topics of education and

¹⁰ R.M. 1925.

progress. It focused more on social problems such as the experience of backwardness, poverty and hopelessness that Balinese people had to confront in the name of progress. The picture of Bali and the Balinese presented in the poetry of the 1930s is a generally gloomy one. Women's issues, absent in poems from the 1920s, began to appear in the poetry of the 1930s (see Table 3).

Table 3. Poems in *Djatajoe* between 1936-1939

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
1	Harta (Wealth)	n.d.	K. Kandia	Material orientation
2	Ke taman BDL (Going to BDL park)	1936	Ktut Gde Maroete	Promotion of Bali Darma Laksana's park; symbol of education resources
3	Arjuna	1937	M. Oke	Portrait of Arjuna as a hero
4	BDL (Bali Darma Laksana)	1937	K. Maroete	Propaganda for Bali Darma Laksana
5	Karena berpahala (Because it will bring merit)	1937	K. Kandia	The importance of being good to others
6	Ke arah nan maha kuasa (Toward the supreme God)	1937	Ida Bagus Tugar	Dedication to the supreme God (Iswara)
7	Kenangan (Memory)	1937	IG Ng Sidemen	Memory of love
8	Kodrat cinta (The destiny of love)	1937	IG Ng Sidemen	Love
9	O putriku (Oh, My sisters)	1937	Ni Wayan Sami	Encouraging women to pursue progress
10	Pitua dengan contoh harus bersama- sama (Advice and examples should come together)	1937	I Gde Geria	Propaganda for Bali Darma Laksana's activities

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
11	Syair seruan <i>Djatajoe</i> (<i>Djatajoe's</i> appeal)	1937	I G Ng Sidemen	A call for people of different castes to unite
12	Wahai kama (Oh, desire)	1937	K. Kandia	The positive and negative impact of desire
13	Ya dharma (Oh, duty)	1937	K. Kandia	The value of good attitudes
14	Di tepi samudra (At the edge of the ocean)	1938	Kedasih/Nj P. Mudelare	Reflection on life and the Supreme God
15	Hiduplah Badala (Long live Bali Darma Laksana)*	1938	Kt Djeloen	The importance of knowledge and <i>budi</i>
16	O Ibuku (Oh, my mother)	1938	I Gusti Putu Matharam	The burden of Bali being a tourist destination
17	Och Ratna (Oh, Ratna)	1938	M. Oke	The fame of Bali and the impact of progress
18	Oh Bali (Oh, Bali)	1938	P. Windia	Contrasts Balinese poverty and the island's fertility
19	Seruan (An appeal)	1938	Ni Tjatri	The importance of education for women
20	Kampungku (My village)	1939	Nj Merati	Longing for the island of Bali
21	Di rantau (Away from home)	1939	Mara Ati	Concern about the backwardness of Balinese
22	Dilamun maha yogi tanah Bali (On a daydream with Yogi in the land of Bali)	1939	Tone Indara	Propaganda for the Bali Darma Laksana movement
23	Tuhan dan manusia (God and humans)	1939	IMA	The greatness of God

* Acrostic poem

In the 1930s, the issue of caste is no longer central. The only poem that deals with it is *Syair seruan Djatajoe* (Djatajoe's appeal, 1935), written by I Gusti Ngurah Sidemen. As its title suggests, this poem uses the *syair* form. Although written by a *triwangsa* poet, the poem displays respect for all caste groups, and urges them to unite and help each other to achieve social dignity.¹¹ The fading of caste difference and inequality as a poetic theme might be a result of Balinese intellectuals developing a growing sense of social responsibility and increased sensitivity to the various hardships faced by the community because of its backwardness and the worldwide depression of the 1930s.

A first indication of the disheartened state of Bali and the Balinese in the poems of the 1930s can be gained from the frequent use of interjections such as 'oh' or 'och' (oh!) in both the title and body of the poems. The meaning of this interjection depends greatly on its context and it can be used to express a sense of either joy or sadness. However, in Balinese poems, *oh* and *och* are always meant to convey sadness or social concern. Examples of this are the poems *Oh Bali* (Oh, Bali) by P. Windia, *Och, Ratna* (Oh, Ratna) by M. Oke, *O putriku* (Oh, my sisters) by Ni Wayan Sami, and *Oh, Ibuku* (Oh, my mother) by I Gusti Putu Matharam. This style was also used in poems by other Indonesian writers who appeared in Jakarta's magazine *Poedjangga Baroe* – a source of influence for Balinese poets.

Most of the prominent Pujangga Baru poets were profoundly influenced by the Dutch *Beweging van Tachtig* (Eighties Movement), a late flourishing of nineteenth-century European Romanticism (Foulcher 1977:42), so it follows that the Balinese poetic style of the 1930s received a partial, if indirect European influence. However, whereas in poems of the Pujangga Baru group, the interjection 'oh' is often used to denote either joy, sadness, romanticism or powerlessness, in *Djatajoe* poems it generally reinforces a bleak image of Bali and the Balinese. The great economic depression that started in late 1929 affected Bali, as part of the Dutch East Indies (Schulte Nordholt 1996:286-8) and probably contributed to the cheerless imagery of 1930s Balinese poetry.

In presenting these negative images of Bali, its poets appear to

¹¹ The full version of this poem is included in Appendix B.

draw on a pattern that contrasts the idea of Bali as a beautiful tourist destination with the anxiety this caused to the Balinese people. From the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, there was a colonial government initiative to promote Bali as a destination for tourists (Vickers 1989; Picard 1996). While Balinese people supported this venture by participating, for example, in providing the cultural entertainment required by visitors, at the same time they complained about the unrepaired road damage caused by transporting them around (Hitchcock and Putra 2007:17). There were also complaints related to moral and cultural issues voiced by leaders of the Balinese women's organization Putri Bali Sadar who urged authorities to prevent tourists from taking photos of bare-breasted women and to stop the use of such photos on tourism postcards (Putra 2007:33-7). Tourism, from its earliest days, became something of a double-edged sword for the Balinese people.

The negative impact of tourism had already become a matter of public discussion in the 1920s, although it did not become a theme for poets. This is probably because the use of such material did not comply with the editorial policies of *Surya Kanta* and the eponymous organization controlling it, which banned its members from criticizing government policy.¹² By the 1930s, however, poets had generally begun to display more concern and criticism about social issues such as the helplessness of the populace in facing economic hardship. They were bold enough to discuss the problems inflicted on Bali and its inhabitants by developments related to tourism, while diplomatically refraining from displaying any anti-Western feeling. *Och Ratna* by Oke and *Oh Bali* by P. Windia are good examples.

In *Och Ratna* (1938), Ratna – meaning jewel, pearl or the name of flower – is the name given to Bali as a tourist destination. The poem describes Bali as a beautiful young woman whose fame has spread to America, Europe, Japan, Africa and other places. She attracts many visitors who come to Bali to relieve their tiredness, even though it is extremely expensive for them. This is the first Balinese poem in Indonesian from the colonial period that refers directly to the

¹² This prohibition is stated in 'Statuten SK', article 4, *Surya Kanta* 1 (1925):16 and 'Huishoudelijk-Reglement Surya Kanta', *Surya Kanta* 2 (1926):114-7.

continents and major countries of the world, indicating the open-minded outlook of the poet.¹³ Without directly blaming the colonial government or the visitors, the poem explicitly describes the anxiety and inability to cope that Balinese people feel towards the social and cultural changes and the modernity that outsiders have brought with them,¹⁴ as the stanzas below suggest.¹⁵

Och, och Ratna, Ibuku, barulah tampak cacatmu	Oh, Oh Ratna, my Mother, only now can I see all is not well
Diribaanmu gelisah, beribu-ribu putra dan putrimu	Your heart is worried because thousands of your sons and daughters
Sakit mata menentang cahaya natuur dan dunia sekitarmu	Are dazzled by the light of nature and the world around you
<i>Djatajoe</i> putra bungsu, terbang kian kemari mencari jamu	<i>Djatajoe</i> , the younger son, flies everywhere in search of medicinal herbs
Ke hadapan Sang Hyang Akasa, ia menunggalkan hati	To the Lord of the Heaven, he prays with all his heart
Bermohon tirta kamandalu yang amat sakti	Asking for some powerful holy water
Sebagai simbol tiada lain dari Sang Hyang Saraswati	As the symbol of Sang Hyang Saraswati
Itulah obat termanjur telah pasti	That is the only efficacious medicine

¹³ In traditional Balinese literature there is at least one poem, *Kakawin atlas bumi* (World atlas poem), written in the early 1900s by Cokorda Denpasar, that deals with cities and places around the world. For a comprehensive analysis of *Kakawin atlas bumi* and other related works from the point of view of modernity, see Creese 2007.

¹⁴ The complexities of this subject were examined more deeply, and from a variety of approaches, by Balinese poets in the 1980s and 1990s (see Chapter IV) and by Balinese prose writers from the 1960s onwards (see Chapter VII).

¹⁵ The full version of the poem is included in Appendix B.

The image of the Balinese suffering from eye diseases implies that they lack a clear vision of the current reality. This sickness, as the poet states, is only curable by the holy water of Saraswati, the goddess who symbolizes the importance of knowledge and education for the Balinese. Akasa and Saraswati are the names of Hindu gods and the use of these names and of other specifically Hindu expressions here and in many other poems indicates that Balinese intellectuals were developing a growing consciousness of their own religion. As with the poems in *Surya Kanta*, *Och Ratna* asserts that only education can equip the Balinese for progress into the so-called modern era. In addition to that, the poem reflects a growing move to reify Balinese religion and culture that started poetically with the *Bali Adnjana* poem, *Selamat Tahun Baru Bali Adnjana*.

Oh Bali, by Windia, published in *Djatajoe* in 1938, provides another example of the paradox of Balinese living on an island of remarkable beauty and fertility while remaining ignorant and poor, despite their endless hard work. The following verses express this paradox and the writer's concerns:

Oh Bali
Oh, Bali pulau yang molek
Letakmu tidak pula jelek
Tanahmu terberita subur
Perihal alam pun masyur

Oh Bali
Oh, Bali, beautiful island
Your location is ideal
Your land is fertile
You are famous

Hidup marhaenmu sederhana
Makan, berpakaian sederhana
Tetapi ta' terbilang kaya
Sebab kurang daya upaya

Your peasants live simply
They eat and dress simply
But indeed they are not rich
As they lack power and
knowledge

Ia bekerja bukan untukmu
Bagi kapitalis sudah tentu
Hanya ada satu yang nyata
Perut gembung itu dicipta

They do not work for you
But really for the capitalist
Only one thing is certain
Creating his bloated stomach

The use of the word '*marhaen*' in Windia's poem is interesting. Sukarno invented this term during the late 1920s to refer to the class of poverty-stricken peasantry who equate to the Marxist 'proletariat'. It became an important part of Sukarno's political vocabulary during his presidency (1945-1966). During the late colonial and national revolution periods the word *marhaen* appeared frequently in Indonesian poems, including some written in Bali.¹⁶ This gives an indication of the close relationship between the arts and politics and the early impact of nationalist ideas on Balinese intellectuals. The New Order government discouraged the use of the word as part of its program to purge traces of communism from Indonesian life, but since its fall in 1998, the word *marhaen* has been widely used again in the political arena as Sukarno's popularity revives. One clear example of this is the re-establishment of the political party Partai Nasional Indonesia Marhaenisme (PNI Marhaenisme, Indonesian Nationalist Party of Marhaenism) lead by Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, one of Sukarno's daughters.

The poem *Oh Bali* uses the socialist realism style. Foulcher (1993:28) defines socialist realism, as later espoused by Lekra, to be an approach to literary writing that aims to expose 'the social contradictions that dispossessed the poor and the powerless in society, and to point towards their resolution in a socialist society of the future'. The early appearance of this style is not surprising, as the concepts of Marxism, communism and socialism had been introduced to Bali in the 1920s and these ideas became one of the topics debated between *Surya Kanta* and *Bali Adnjana*. *Djatagoe's* contributors also occasionally discussed socialism. In the 1937 article 'Sosialisme dan haluan sosial bagi kita' (Socialism and the social direction for us) in *Djatagoe*, for example, Maroete discusses socialism in Bali.¹⁷ In this article, he first glosses Karl Marx's theories, emphasizing the gap between workers and employers, and then goes on to describe his own notion of how

¹⁶ See for example Sanusi Pane's poem *Marhaen* and Tutul Singgalang's poem *Marhaen Indonesia* (An Indonesian peasant). Both poems are discussed in an article by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1938).

¹⁷ This article was published in *Djatagoe* (February 1937):183-5. This is the second of two related articles, the first of which was published in *Djatagoe* (January) 1937. I am unable to locate the first article because the January 1937 issue can not be found.

socialism could be adapted to Balinese conditions. Because many people in Bali were living and suffering in conditions of poverty, he urges Balinese to co-operate to assist those in need. Maroete's concept of socialism was not concerned with class antagonism between industrial workers and employers, which was barely relevant to the Balinese situation, but simply with ways of giving moral and material support to the poor.

Whereas Maroete's article did not intend to invoke anti-capitalist sentiment, *Oh Bali* deliberately tries to arouse antagonism between the peasant and capitalist classes. Although expressing differing attitudes towards capitalism, both the poem and the article – and other articles quoted below – reject scholarly accounts that described Bali and the Balinese as being 'wasteful of food' or having 'plenty of rice' during the 1930s (Schulte Nordholt 1994:115).

Articles published in *Djatajoe* frequently discussed the economic and personal hardships that the Balinese underwent in the 1930s. A.A. Gde Poetra's article (1939) 'Sosial problem masa ini' (Today's social problems) states that economic conditions in Bali had been very poor and consequently many parents were unable to send their children to school, particularly if this involved travel to Java. In an earlier article, 'Menengok ke zaman yang datang' (Looking towards the future), Minderawan (1938) describes how Balinese people were lagging economically far behind the rest of Indonesia. Outsiders monopolized or dominated almost all the important sectors of the Balinese economy, such as drink factories and businesses exporting goods and livestock. Only 1% of Balinese people were involved in those business sectors (Minderawan 1938:371), meaning that most of the population were either peasants or labourers. In the 1990s, the issue of the marginalization of the Balinese people resurfaced, despite the boom in tourism. While Bali was a Dutch colony in the 1930s, by the 1990s it had become a colony of Jakarta (Aditjondro 1995).

Poems related to gender issues

There are two interrelated advances in the development of poetry in the 1930s that are worthy of note. These are the beginnings of female

participation in writing and the frequent discussion of gender issues. Although gender was absent from poems in *Surya Kanta*, it gained considerable attention as a theme for writers in *Djatajoe*, to the extent that matters relating to women in the areas of education, domestic affairs and caste were repeatedly discussed in newspaper articles. A strong gender perspective informed *Surya Kanta's* play *Kesetiaan perempuan*, although its major theme was caste conflict (see Chapters V and VI), but the complete absence of female writers or activists in the 1920s may be the major reason for the neglect of gender issues and female identity in that decade.

Educational opportunities for girls only became available in the 1920s, leaving them at a disadvantage compared to boys. In general, the rate of literacy on Bali and Lombok according to the 1920 census as quoted by Lyn Parker (2000:59) was very low. The percentage of male literacy was 8.01%, while for females it was virtually non-existent, at 0.35%. The census also recorded the number of students at the end of December, which shows 6.78% of boys and only 0.25% of girls attending school (Parker 2000:59). The lack of numbers of women receiving education in the early decades of the twentieth century was not because of limited access to schools or economic constraints but rather, the failure of Balinese parents to grasp the significance of education for women. Unlike boys, who had a possibility of gaining clerical work, it was assumed that girls were destined to undertake household duties, thus education for them was pointless.

This attitude towards keeping women away from formal education did not go unchallenged. A primary school teacher, Made Pasek, through an interesting short story in the Balinese language that appeared in school textbooks in 1916, for example, indirectly criticized the backwardness of parents who had discouraged their girls from going to school. The story, titled *Ayam mepalu* (The chicken fights its reflection in the mirror), portrays a teenage girl who bravely argues with her mother on the importance of education. She tells her mother that she wants to study not for status or rank but to become a knowledgeable person. Thus, she is aware of what she needs to know.¹⁸

¹⁸ The short story *Ayam mepalu* is reproduced in Putra (2000b), together with other stories by Made Pasek and another writer from the 1910s.

One point of the story that refers back to its title is that people should not be as foolish as chickens who see their reflection in a mirror as a threat. Its clear message is that women should be encouraged to get education. The concept of providing education for women developed significantly among educated Balinese in the following years.

In 1923, an organization called Shanti (Peace), who published a newspaper *Shanti Adnjana*, established a school for girls (Sekolah Perempuan Shanti) in Singaraja. The Dutch colonial government assisted the school with building and writing materials (Parker 2000:53). This school only operated for three years as Shanti split because of conflict between its two leaders, the *triwangsa* IGP Tjakratenaya and the *jaba* Ketut Nasa. While IGP Tjakratenaya continued to publish *Shanti Adnjana* under the new name *Bali Adnjana*, Ketut Nasa and his *jaba* colleagues started *Surya Kanta*. The two periodicals published a small number of articles dealing with women's issues, but their main concerns lay elsewhere.

Concern about encouraging women to become educated and discussing women's issues became more prevalent in the 1930s through *Djatajoe*. The upsurge of interest that writers of the 1930s showed in bringing gender issues to public attention is closely associated with the emergence of women's movements in Bali and particularly with the establishment of Putri Bali Sadar in 1938. Most of the Balinese women who established this organization had received a modern education at Dutch schools in East Java in the early 1930s and had worked as teachers on returning home (Parker 2000:54-6; Putra 2007).

As the sister organization of Bali Darma Laksana, Putri Bali Sadar paid special attention to the condition of Balinese women, the first time that a women's organization had involved itself in this area. Activists from Putri Bali Sadar contributed several articles and poems to *Djatajoe* that were sympathetic to its general content.¹⁹ Although they were relatively few in number, their writings gave a strong sense of the difficulties facing early Balinese feminists. They encouraged women to stand up and pursue progress, ideas

¹⁹ A number of articles written by women published in *Djatajoe* have been reproduced and discussed in Putra 2007.

expressed in Ni Wayan Sami's poem *O putriku* (Oh, my sisters, 1937) and Ni Tjatri's *Seruan* (An appeal, 1938). As well as writing, Balinese women undertook community projects such as providing various extra-curricular literacy courses for women, and raising funds to pay for these activities.

O putriku encourages all women – whether young or of mature age – to engage actively in serving their motherland and to leave behind any inclinations to laziness, as expressed in its opening section.²⁰

O putriku	Oh, my sisters
O, putriku, kaum bangsaku	O my sisters, people of my nation
Marilah kita beramai-ramai!	Let us get together joyfully!
Turut mengabdikan	Join in serving
Ibu Pertiwi	Our Motherland
O, kakakku, O, adikku!	O, my older sisters, my younger sisters!
Gerakkan badan yang lemah	Bring your weak, exhausted
lunglai	bodies back to life
O, putriku, sejawat bangsaku	O, my sisters, my friends
Lepaskan sifat bermalas-malas!	Give up your tendency to take it easy!

This poem is interesting because it does not use the *syair* form, but instead is modern poetry in the Pujangga Baru style. Using a more free verse form allows the poet to articulate her ideas with a better flow. It seems that she does not want to restrict herself by fulfilling the rhyming conventions demanded in *syair*, but instead prefers to use a form that gives better expression to the explosion of her ideas. The frequent use of the exclamation marks indicates that for the poet the content is more important than the form. The poem's content gives spirited encouragement to women and girls to engage in self-improvement and to help to develop the 'motherland' – Bali. Before

²⁰ The full version of the poem *O putriku* is printed in Appendix B.

publishing this poem, Sami (under the name Ni Loeh Sami) had published an article in *Djatajoe* that urged women to progress, like the poem. Describing Balinese women as staying at home with the 'doors and windows closed' and giving themselves no opportunity to experience 'the era of progress', she demanded that the doors be opened for them 'so that within a short time our motherland will be flooded with educated girls who can stand equal to men' (Sami 1936:138).

Ni Tjatri's *Seruan* is a *syair* with 18 verses, one of the longest poems in *Djatajoe*; this allowed her enough space to elaborate and emphasize her messages. The first half of the poem opposes gender discrimination, saying that God created women and men in a state of equality. The second part encourages educated women to help illiterate women to become literate – at least to the extent that they can read, write and count.²¹ In the same year, 1938, Ni Tjatri published an article titled 'Putri Bali' (Balinese girls) in *Djatajoe*, which contained similar messages to her poetry. In both poetry and prose, she encouraged educated women to help young girls and women to become literate as she restates in her article:

Finally, I appeal to all of us, girls and mothers alike, especially those who have some expertise and experience, please organize and reinforce unity, and besides that do not forget to give enlightenment and education in whatever way as long as the aim is to improve the spiritual and physical nature of the sisters and mothers of our nation.²²

It is undeniable that during the 1930s, women's issues and gender equality were among the dominant topics in the Balinese media. There were discussions about them in both prose and poetry. There are close textual connections between these two genres. Often the same idea, for example about the importance of women pursuing education and progress, was articulated in both forms, which suggests that creative

²¹ 'Mereka ingin tahu membaca / Berhitung, menulis dan yang lain juga' (They want to know how to read / Count, write and everything else).

²² 'Pada akhirnya saya pun berseru-seru kepada bangsaku putri-putri, kaum ibu sekalian, lebih-lebih yang mempunyai sedikit kepandaian dan pengalaman, adakanlah dan perkuatkanlah persatuan, dan disamping itu jangan lupa memberikan penerangan dan pendidikan secara apa saja, asal maksudnya untuk memperbaiki rohani dan jasmani kaum putri dan ibu bangsa kita.' (*Djatajoe* (25-2-1938):203-4.)

writing played as important a role as journalism in attracting the public's attention to women's issues and gender equality. In other words, poetry had become an important choice of genre for discussing social concerns.

This increased participation of women activists and writers in speaking about the need for women to be educated was striking when contrasted with previous decades. Women writers were very sharp and straightforward when discussing women's issues and the right of women to respect as human beings. Writers like I Gusti Ayu Rapeg, Wayan Sami and Ni Tjatri, leaders of Putri Bali Sadar, were continuously showing their commitment to this struggle and became the defenders of women against those who humiliated their dignity. With some influences from Western feminist thought, for example, they urged the colonial government to speed up the plan to rectify the marriage law that would eventually end the practice of polygamy (Rapeg 1937). Balinese women proved that they were not simply restricted to the domestic sphere as commonly understood, by stating their opinions in the media. In summary, Balinese women writers of the 1930s actively struggled for and constructed their female identity.

Shifting from regional to national identities

There is a significant shift in theme, form and style in Balinese poetry between the colonial and national revolution periods. Caste status, the importance of education and the conflict between traditional and modern values, the concepts that had dominated poetry from the colonial period, found themselves displaced by ideas of revolution, populist struggle, nationalism and anti-colonialism as shown by the works in Table 4. This new engagement with outward looking, externally driven political ideologies gained its inspiration from the hyperactive nature of the war against the Dutch and the early years of independence. Adopting these new themes meant that Balinese poets were now seeing themselves as Indonesians, interested in national issues and behaving like the Indonesian people as a whole, rather than speaking from the inward-looking Balinese perspective they had previously occupied.

Table 4. Selected poems of the 1950s and 1960s

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
1	Rakyat dan pemimpin (The people and the leaders)	n.d.	Nyoman Bawa	Immoral leadership
2	Cerita tentang burung (A story about birds)	1952	Made Kirtya	Revolution, orphans and poverty
3	Dharmaku (My duty)	1952	Windhya Wirawan	The people's struggle
4	Aku dan kakak (Me and my brother)	1953	Ketut Putu	The powerlessness of gods
5	Sajak di hari Nyepi (On New Year's Day)	1953	KP (Ketut Putu?)	Negative images of gods
6	Ayo... !!! (Come on... !!!)	1953	Arief Hidayat	Revolution, Sukarno's spirit
7	Marhaen (The proletariat)	1953	I.D. Gema	Criticism of careless leaders
8	Nasib rakyat (The fate of the people)	1953	Ngurah Bagus	The fate of lower class people
9	Pengakuan (Confession)	1954	P. Shanty	Personal sadness, suffering
10	Pemilihan umum (General election)	1955	Wayan Yarsa	Exhortation to choose good leaders for Indonesia
11	Suara rakyat, sampah kering (The voice of the people, dry rubbish)	1955	Djelantik	The people's suffering
12	Sajak untuk Bung Karno (Poem for Bung Karno)	1960	Nyoman Bawa	The revolution and Sukarno
13	Kemerdekaan-kebebasan (Independence - freedom)	1960	Anijah	The revolution

No.	Title	Year	Author	Theme(s)
14	Usdek dan Manipol (Usdek and Manipol)	1960	I Wayan Rugeg Nataran	Sukarno's political manifesto
15	Suara-suara hidup (Living voices)	1964	Gde Mangku	The people's solidarity
16	Kerja (Work)	1964	Gde Mangku	The people's struggle
17	Pasir putih (White sand)	1964	Gde Mangku	The people's struggle
18	Bali (Bali)	1964	Oka Sukanta	Propaganda for the Communist Party
19	Pahlawan petani (The farmer as hero)	1965	Kt Suwidja	A farmer's struggle
20	Anak marhaen (Children of the proletariat)	1966	Ngurah Parsua	Marhaenism, revolution and Sukarno
21	Catatan 23 April 1965 (A note on 23 April 1965)	1966	I.B. Pudja	Anti-imperialism
22	Revolusi (Revolution)	1966	Raka Santeri	Revolution and Sukarno
23	Bicara (Speak out)	1967	Nyoman Bawa	Revolution and moral decline
24	Catatan buat anakku Sari (A note for my daughter Sari)	1969	Raka Santeri	Pancasila and criticism of the Old Order
25	Laut (The sea)	1969	IGB Arthanegara	Pancasila and anti- colonialism

Despite this array of new ideas, poets from the national revolution period retained a didactic, propagandist style reminiscent of poetry from the colonial period. This style continued to suit the new themes, and the intentions of writers wanting to use their art as a vehicle for social and political commentary. Although most poets were by now using modern poetic forms, the influence of the *syair* was occasionally still apparent. Whatever form was used, the content of poetry from this period was clearly intended to be revolutionary and nationalist. However, although Balinese poets shared the same general socio-political direction, this did not mean that they had a common idea of what constituted revolution and national identity. This is particularly true of the 1960s, when Balinese writers and artists divided into separate groups according to political orientation.

The poem *Dharmaku* (My duty, 1952), by Windhya Wirawan has an interesting form and content. The style is typical of the poetry of the 1920s with a strict rhyme scheme, but the content and word selection are typical of the 1950s. Terms such as 'farmer', 'labourer' and 'soldier', for example, were uncommon in poetry of the colonial period, but frequently used in poetry from the national revolution period. The intention was to convey an association with proletarian and peasant consciousness, hard work and oppression, and to urge involvement in the revolutionary struggle.

Dharmaku

Bila aku petani
kutulis sejarah
dengan padi
talas dan ubi

Bila aku buruh
kutulis sejarah
dengan peluh
membasahi tubuh

Bila aku prajurit
kutulis sejarah

My duty

If I were a farmer
I'd write history
with rice
taro and yam

If I were a labourer
I'd write history
with sweat
drenching my body

If I were a soldier
I'd write history

dengan darah	with blood
membasahi tanah	drenching the ground

Bila aku pemimpin	If I were a leader
kutulis sejarah	I'd write history
dengan lidah	with a tongue
dibalut tingkah	wrapped in action

Bila aku pujangga	If I were a writer
kutulis sejarah	I'd write history
dengan pena	with a pen
penyedar bangsa	that arouses the nation

Bila aku seniman	If I were an artist
kutulis sejarah	I'd write history
dengan tari lukisan	with dance, painting
patung dan nyanyian	sculpture and song

The use of the first person pronoun '*aku*' (I) in this poem is important in two respects. Firstly, *aku* does not refer to a particular person, people or ethnic group. *Aku* here refers to 'an Indonesian', so the word '*bangsa*' refers to the Indonesian nation. Secondly, it is uncommon to find such familiar pronouns in colonial poems, where the narrative voice is usually that of an organization (such as Surya Kanta or Bali Darma Laksana) and indicates that the poet is speaking as a Balinese and as a member of a specific faction. In *Dharmaku*, although the poet is Balinese and writes from a Balinese perspective – as the word *dharma* is from the Balinese cultural vocabulary – the overall content is also relevant to an Indonesian context.

Dharmaku encourages various classes of people to contribute to maintaining the spirit of revolution and popular struggle. The repeated use of the conditional phrase '*bila aku*' (if I were) as the opening sentence of each verse is an emphatic and effective poetic device. However, in an article in *Bhakti* a contemporary critic, S. Mardi (1952), criticized the form, the use of the conditional phrase and the content of the poem. He claimed that using the *syair* form indicated the poet's attachment to past poetic traditions, and argued

that artists should express their feelings in an original manner and avoid imitating the styles of previous generations. This criticism is understandable because by the 1950s, *syair* no longer had credibility as a modern form. Mardi felt that the use of the phrase 'if I were' reflects a lack of commitment to the spirit of popular struggle expressed in the poem. His precise objection was that the poet should have declared both his class and what kind of service he might have personally contributed. This critic apparently wanted to see the poet give an unambiguous personal commitment to the people's struggle. Some of Mardi's criticism is unwarranted because the poem explicitly expresses messages about the duties of people with different professions and it is noteworthy as a precursor of the propagandist style that became the hallmark of the left-wing writers' group, Lekra, in the early 1960s.

Windhya Wirawan's poem appeared in the early 1950s, when Bali was encountering severe social and economic problems. There were major harvest failures in 1949 and 1950, resulting in high inflation and shortages of necessities, which in turn fuelled criminal activity and theft (Robinson 1995:236). *Bhakti* and *Damai* frequently published editorials and articles about crime, social disturbances, the economic crisis and the moral decline of leadership at both the local and national levels.²³ Such crises showed that the national revolution had not fulfilled its promise of making people's lives happier and more prosperous. The wasteful lives of the leaders were frequently contrasted with tragedies in the lives of ordinary people brought about by this failure of the revolution.

Feeling unhappy with the condition of their oppressed fellow citizens, Balinese poets tried to give these voiceless people a voice, while at the same time launching sharp criticism at ineffectual leaders. Two examples from many poems that share the subject matter of people suffering are poem *Suara rakyat, sampah kering* (The voice of the people, dry rubbish; 1955) by Djelantik and *Nasib rakyat* (The fate of the people, 1953) by Ngurah Bagus. These poems describe the deprivation and suffering of the people, and show distress at the

²³ For example, see *Bhakti*'s editorial 'Sekali lagi keamanan di daerah', *Bhakti* 1-9-1953 and Sila 1953:4-5.

gap between them and their leaders. The former portrays the masses as 'rubbish', lacking a voice, while the latter describes an even more tragic picture in which the populace is suffering and near death because of poverty. *Nasib rakyat* describes the leader, addressed as 'Bapak' (Mister or boss), as closing his eyes and blocking his ears when he encounters the poor.

The wide gap between the leadership and the people is also central to I.D. Gema's poem *Marhaen* (The proletariat, 1953). As in Ngurah Bagus' poem, the leaders are addressed as 'tuan-tuan' (bosses), who are careless towards the people that they are supposed to help. Below is the closing stanza of *Marhaen*, which describes the hungry, waiting in vain for help from their leaders who are celebrating in a lavish manner:

Kini tuan-tuan sudah sama	You bosses are all happy now
senang	
pada ini zaman anggur +	in this time of wine + whisky
whisky	
tambah pula tawa besar	laughing heartily as well
Hanya kami marhaen!	We are only peasants!
pada nunggu tuan-tuan punya	waiting until tomorrow morning
sisa	
sampai esok pagi	for your leftovers

Similarly, in Nyoman Bawa's undated poem *Rakyat dan pemimpin* (The people and the leaders), the leaders are shown drinking beer, having parties in restaurants and associating with loose women. In other poems, mostly published in *Suara Indonesia* between 1957 and 1960, Nyoman Bawa exposed the large number of people who claimed leadership positions after independence despite lacking any connection with the revolutionary struggle.²⁴ The general impact of this was to reinforce the public's disappointment in leaders who lacked legitimacy. The connotations of the term 'leader' changed over

²⁴ More than 50 revolutionary poems by Nyoman Bawa were in his private collection *Album hati* (Album from the heart). This collection was to be published, but the poet died in Denpasar in late 1999 before this could be achieved.

the period under discussion, as 'leaders' in the formal, conventional sense did not come to prominence until the national revolution period. Periodicals essentially fulfilled the role of leading public opinion in colonial times. The use of the word '*marhaen*' also changed over time. Whereas in Windia's 1938 poem *marhaen* depicts a passive victim of capitalist exploitation, in the poems from the national revolution period it refers to people who were brave enough to speak out against leaders who lack their trust.

The freedom of expression that was allowed during the period of the 'liberal democratic republic' (1949-1959) provided writers with a fertile environment for open criticism of their careless and corrupt political leaders. The terms *krisis kepemimpinan* (leadership crisis) and *krisis moral* (moral crisis) were popular in social and political discourse, and the two provided plentiful literary subject matter. However, while leadership was more often referred to in poetry, the *krisis moral* provided a more abundant source for short stories with its themes of teenage permissiveness, pre-marital sex and pregnancy. These were blamed on the young being overwhelmed by the freedoms bestowed by so-called Western-style modernity, and are discussed in Chapter VI.

Wayan Yarsa's poem *Pemilihan umum* (General election) published in *Damai* (1955) also declares disappointment in the leadership. Wayan Yarsa's poem, however, adopts a different tone from the ones cited above, urging its audience to become personally engaged in finding a solution to the social and political crisis faced by the nation. The opening verses of *Pemilihan umum* illustrate this point.²⁵

Wahai warga negara Indonesia	O Indonesian citizens,
Yakinlah kita semua karena	Give us all confidence, for
Waktu pemilihan umum telah	The general election is
dekat	approaching
Pergunakanlah kesempatan	Please use your opportunity
saudara	
Dengan tenang dan budiman	Peacefully and wisely

²⁵ The full version of the poem is included in Appendix B.

Here, the use of the pronoun '*kita*' (we) is worthy of comment because it refers to Indonesian citizens. Although the poet is Balinese, the use of 'we' with its referential meaning of 'Indonesian' no doubt reflects his intention to identify as an Indonesian. While the use of 'we' fits the subject of the poem, it also indicates a growing consciousness of Indonesian identity among Balinese poets, which was also a frequent feature of the overall content of Balinese publications. An editorial entitled '*Damai dan pemilihan umum*,'²⁶ for example, appeared in *Damai* (1955) a few months after Yarsa's poem was published. It emphasizes the importance of a 'peaceful' atmosphere to enable the election to come to a successful conclusion.

The poem *Pemilihan umum* was written before Indonesia's first post-independence general election in 1955. One of the strategic aims of the election was to contain and channel the energies and disappointments of dissident groups and separatist rebels who had emerged as threats to the unity of the newly created nation due to weak national leadership (Anderson 1998:279). The poem clearly reflects its immediate social and political context. Among its messages, it urges the people to participate peacefully and wisely in the general election, and asks them to understand the problems that the nation is facing. The last verse of the poem compares the newborn Indonesia to a home without a roof 'leaking here, leaking there', a metaphor that still equates today with 'widespread corruption'.

Negara kita memang muda	Our nation is indeed young
Segala-galanya belum teratur	Everything is not yet properly arranged
Ibarat rumah belum beratap	Like a house not yet roofed
Bocor kemari bocor ke sana	Leaking here, leaking there

Wayan Yarsa's poem acknowledges that Indonesia's problems are too numerous to be solved by the elected leaders alone, so the additional support of the people is essential. On this point it is possible to see similarities between Wirawan's *Dharmaku* and Wayan Yarsa's

²⁶ '*Damai and the general election*'. The title can also be interpreted as meaning 'Peace and the general election'.

Pemilihan umum – both emphasize the need for the Indonesian people to work together to solve the manifold problems facing their nation. Half a century later, this idea is still relevant in an Indonesia engulfed by political, economic and social crises since the late 1990s. The major difference is that while a strong spirit of nationalism and unity and a proud sense of being Indonesian characterized the 1950s and 1960s, the promotion of regional autonomy in the Reformation period has caused the former spirit of nationalism to be subsumed in ethnic conflict and regional or separatist sentiment. As will be seen in Chapter IV, Balinese poets from the Reformation period are no longer interested in expressing national issues and identity, but rather are preoccupied with local issues either as direct result of the national decentralization policy or global influences brought about by the impact of tourism.

Different types of national identities

Throughout the national revolution period, left-wing ideas and political debates became increasingly central to Balinese literature, reaching a peak in the mid-1960s. Cultural conflict between Lekra and LKN broke out in Bali as an extension of the wider conflict between the PKI and PNI. During this conflict, Balinese writers adopted differing approaches to writing that reflected their political and cultural affiliation – Lekra or LKN. Where Lekra adopted the slogan ‘Politik adalah panglima’ (Politics is the commander), LKN adopted ‘Marhaenisme sebagai panglima’ (Marhaenism is the commander) (Warna 1966a; Santeri 1966).

Despite the similarity of the phrasing, the two slogans highlighted significant differences in ideology – Lekra’s basis was communist, while LKN’s was Sukarno’s Marhaenism. Their primary point of difference occurred in their attitudes towards the state philosophy, Pancasila. While LKN incorporated its principles as part of its platform, Lekra did not, since Pancasila included the acknowledgment of a single omnipotent deity as the first of its five principles. This led to the PKI and Lekra being associated with atheism – a contentious position in a deeply religious society like that of Bali. This ideo-

logical difference led writers from Lekra and LKN to take separate approaches to the notions of revolution and national identity (Warna 1966a, 1966b; Putra 2003).

In *Bhakti* there are early examples of Balinese works, written by poets who later joined Lekra, that admit religious doubt and make negative comments about the traditional gods, while expressing concern for the oppressed and the poor. In his poem *Sajak di hari Nyepi* (On New Year's Day, 1953), Ketut Putu writes 'the gods too are suffering from hunger'. In another poem, *Aku dan kakak* (Me and my brother, 1953), he comments on the powerlessness of gods. None of the creative writing of Ketut Putu, Oka Derty and Putu Shanty after they joined Lekra in the early 1960s is traceable, and therefore it is not possible to assess its ideological tone. Indeed, it is hard to find any traces of work by Lekra members in Bali because books and newspapers like *Bali Dwipa* and *Mingguan Fajar* that can be assumed to have contained their works were burned during the killings of alleged communist adherents in 1965 and 1966. In addition, there is nothing in the archives of *Suara Indonesia* from the 1960s, because its ideological bias did not permit the printing of work by left-wing writers. Works by other Lekra writers, including Gde Mangku and Oka Sukanta, explicitly supporting left-wing ideology, appeared in national publications and are therefore available.

Gde Mangku's early work focuses on universal themes such as the beauty of nature, love and family and some of his poems make specific reference to Bali as a background. A change in his approach became apparent when Gde Mangku began to publish work in *Zaman Baru*, a left-wing magazine. His poems in this magazine deal with issues which lend themselves to the socialist realism style, such as anti-colonial sentiment, revolution and the struggle of the masses, as represented by the poems *Kerja* (Work), *Pasir putih* (White sand) and *Suara-suara hidup* (Living voices), all published in 1964.²⁷ When he refers to the 'people' in his poems, he means farmers, fishermen, labourers or revolutionary heroes within a national context. In the poem *Kerja* (Work), Gde Mangku declares: 'di sini kami bekerja / petani yang bangkit / di tanah air' (we work here / farmers who

27

The full versions of all three poems are included in Appendix B

struggle / in the homeland). The spirit of revolution and anti-colonialism, typical of the poetry of left-wing writers, is obvious in Gde Mangku's poem *Pasir putih*.

kita saling mendekap	we embrace each other
karena bersahabat	because we're friends
lebih dari itu	even more so
karena kita revolusi	because we're revolutionaries

kujinjing keranjang kerang	I carry a basket of sea shells
untaian hati nelayan	the garland of a fisherman's heart
ah bocah kecil berbibir mungil	oh little child with such tiny lips
mata terpencil dari sekolah rendah	with an isolated view from low-level schooling
dibelenggu sisa-sisa kolonial	shackled by the remains of colonialism

Oka Sukanta (born 1939) is the most productive of the Lekra writers of Balinese origin and is still writing actively. He began writing in his home town of Singaraja in 1954 when he was still at senior high school. He joined the National Lekra Congress in Denpasar in 1962, where he met a number of Lekra writers from elsewhere in Indonesia. Oka Sukanta continued his studies in Yogyakarta and finally became involved in the Lekra organization, gaining election to its literary leadership board. Within this organizational structure, he represented the Yogyakarta branch of Lekra, rather than its Bali branch.²⁸ He was a prolific contributor of poetry, short stories and other features to *Zaman Baru*.

Between 1966 and 1976, the New Order Government jailed Oka Sukanta, along with other Lekra writers and activists. Before and after this detention, he wrote many poems and short stories.

²⁸ Putu Oka Sukanta's name is on a list of 65 names of the committee members of Lekra's literary institution along with well-known figures like Sobron Aidit, Agam Wispi and Pramoedya Ananta Toer. In this list, Putu Oka Sukanta was a representative of Yogyakarta, not Bali. The list was published in *Harian Rakjat* 11-8-1963:1.

Political critiques and descriptions of the poverty of workers and the oppression of peasants permeate his work. Oka Sukanta's poem *Bali* (1964), published in *Harian Rakjat* – the mouthpiece of the PKI – is described by Foulcher (1986:138) as a standard Lekra poem because of its strong PKI propaganda content, which is reflected in the following quote.²⁹

betapa ulet kawan-kawan bekerja	how tirelessly the comrades are working
– menggarap kemiskinan jadi keyakinan	– turning poverty into conviction and indifference into
ketakacuhan jadi ketekunan – padanya terpancang papan	perseverance – before them stand the signs
Partai Komunis Indonesia.	Communist Party of Indonesia.

Oka Sukanta's poem opens with a Balinese youth coming home after spending time in Java with other communist cadres and continues with party propaganda. It can be read as a reflection of the poet's personal experience – his pleasure and pride in once again seeing Bali and his Balinese friends – on a visit home from Java. The poem details how Bali has changed, not simply in terms of the new physical infrastructure built by its hard-working people, but also through the emergence of young, dedicated communist followers who are not afraid to die. By 1964, when the poem appeared, the number of PKI followers in Bali had increased because of sustained political propaganda, some achieved through cultural activities such as the 1962 National Lekra Congress. The fact that there were only two significant parties in Bali at that time, the PKI and the PNI, made it easier for Bali to become a PKI stronghold. The optimistic impression given by Oka Sukanta in this poem reflects the situation in Bali at that time.

Although the character of the poem *Bali* is happy to return to his home, he also stresses that he feels at home not only there but also on the major islands of Indonesia – Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan,

²⁹ The full version of the poem is included in Appendix B. The translation is taken from Foulcher 1986:147-8.

because on those islands and elsewhere in the country he can meet comrades with a similar desire for communist oriented struggle. Bali in this poem is seen as an integral part of the overall PKI structure, so that the Balinese are being included in a new 'brotherhood' within the communist network. This poem very clearly lives up to Lekra's slogan: 'Politics is the Commander'. Here and in several other poems by left-wing poets discussed above political consciousness transcends ethnic origin and nationality in defining identity. The poem *Bali* explicitly asserts that in terms of identity, being communist is more important than being Balinese or being Indonesian. Oka Sukanta wrote many poems about Bali and his ideas of anti-colonialism and anti-capitalism continue to retain their power in the works that he wrote after his release from jail.³⁰

Unlike revolutionary poems by Lekra writers, which received inspiration from the communist party and its supporters, those by LKN writers promoted a different form of national integrity based on Pancasila. Most LKN poems express sympathy for the oppressed masses, support for anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, and admire the spirit of Sukarno's revolution, which regarded the integrity of the nation as more important than regional or political sentiment. The figure of President Sukarno, *pemimpin besar revolusi* (the great revolutionary leader), is often present in poems by LKN writers. A major distinguishing feature between the two groups is that LKN poems often contain unambiguously religious overtones, something that is almost unimaginable in Lekra poems. While the Sukarno cult was obviously part of a national tendency among LKN writers, it had a special meaning in Bali because of Sukarno's particular relationship with the island and its people. It was well known that Sukarno had a Balinese mother, but his manifestation of genuine pride in Balinese art and culture (Vickers 1989:175) made Balinese people see him as a true leader. During Sukarno's period as leader, his name and teachings appeared in most Balinese poems and dominated public discourse. A pop song composed by a Balinese composer in the early 1960s expressing similar feelings of pride in

³⁰ See, for example, Sukanta 1999.

Sukarno added weight to his popularity among Balinese artists.³¹

One of the early poems by an LKN writer that blends a promotion of Sukarno's ideas for national integrity with religious belief is *Usdek dan manipol* (Usdek and manipol, 1960) by Rugeg Nataran, published in *Suara Indonesia*. 'Manipol' stands for *manifesto politik* (political manifesto), the name given to Sukarno's speech of 17 August 1959 in which he introduced a new series of terms. These were compounded into USDEK: Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 ([return to] the 1945 Constitution), Sosialisme Indonesia (Indonesian Socialism), Demokrasi Terpimpin (Guided Democracy), Ekonomi Terpimpin (Guided Economy) and Kepribadian Indonesia (Indonesian Identity). The five elements of USDEK became new pillars for Sukarno to accumulate full power over the process of nation building according to his vision. Every step and movement of nation building elements had to be based on Manipol's USDEK principles. Social organizations, schools and universities were among the various channels used to indoctrinate or socialize the ideology of Manipol and USDEK and its principles had to be properly implemented in the areas of culture and the arts. As with many other terms or acronyms introduced by Sukarno, the terms Manipol and USDEK quickly became popular and widely used even at a personal or family level. In Bali, where Sukarno's popularity was very high, parents used terms such as USDEK and Marhaen as names for their children.³² Sukarno's political propaganda clearly inspired Rugeg Nataran's poem *Usdek dan manipol*. The poet refers to Sukarno's political manifesto as 'the light of the Gods', a phrase that reflects a religious tone and is used to legitimize and sanctify the principles involved.

³¹ I Gusti Putu Gde Wedhasmara, a Balinese composer of national reputation, composed a song in the 1960s entitled 'Dirgaayulah Bung Karno' (Long live Sukarno), which expressed feelings of pride and gratitude towards Sukarno as a leader. Brigita Isworo Laksmi's article (2002) 'Suatu ketika saat Bung Karno "dicekal"' in *Kompas* reports that part of the phonograph recording containing the song is damaged, meaning that at present the song cannot be played again.

³² For example, a member of the Bali Provincial parliament for the period 1999-2009 is named Usdek Maharipa. He was also a leader of the PDI-P Party. In my own village, a former PDI party leader named his son Anak Agung Marhaen. Both PDI and its replacement PDI-P are reincarnations of the PNI which was established by Sukarno.

Usdek dan manipol

Lahirlah dia dengan wajah
gemilang
Dalam hamparan caya
dewangga
Merangkaki dada-dada
Marhaen
Memberi senyum pada hatinya
Dan menyanyilah mereka
Lagunya dengan nada-nada
lembut:
'Berilah kami kehidupan yang
adil'
'Berilah kami bahagia dan
damai abadi'
'Rakyat Indonesia'
'Dari Sabang sampai ke
Meraoke'
'Itulah cita-cita kami'

Usdek and manipol

They were born with shining
faces
On a field bright with the light
of the gods
They crept over the chests of the
Proletariat
Bringing a smile to their hearts
And they sang
A song with soft, measured
tones:
'Give us a life that is just'
'Give us happiness and eternal
peace'
'The Indonesian people'
'From Sabang to Merauke'
'Those are our dreams.'

The pronoun '*kami*' (we or us) is used to refer to the *rakyat Indonesia* (Indonesian people) in the same way as in Wayan Yarsa's *Pemilihan umum*, again indicating that the poet speaks on behalf of Indonesian people or as an Indonesian rather than as a Balinese. The term 'Indonesia' is defined here as a nation whose territory extends from Sabang (a small island off the northern tip of Sumatra) in the west, to Merauke (in the south-east of West Papua) in the east. The expression 'Dari Sabang sampai ke Merauke' (From Sabang to Merauke) is the title of one of the Indonesian *lagu wajib* (patriotic songs) that refers to the extent of Indonesia's territory from west to east. The song was written to inspire Indonesians to support the takeover of *Irian Barat* (West Papua) occupied by the Dutch until 1963. West Papua was the last part of contemporary Indonesia that Sukarno's government retrieved from the Dutch, who had continued to occupy it since Indonesian independence in 1945. Fighting the Dutch for control of West Papua became one of the most important elements of Sukarno's

revolutionary, anti-colonial, nation building propaganda program that dominated public discourse in the early 1960s. The religious element in Rugeg Nataran's poem is significant because it reflects one of the specific characteristics distinguishing LKN poems from Lekra poems.

Some poets who joined LKN were activists in Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (GMNI, the Nationalist Students' Movement of Indonesia), an organization affiliated to the PNI. Active writers in LKN included IGB Arthanegara, Ngurah Parsua, Judha Paniek and Raka Santeri. These young poets published their work in *Suara Indonesia*, which later changed its name to *Suluh Marhaen* to indicate its affiliation to Sukarno's PNI party. To emphasize their nationalist loyalties, these Balinese poets frequently mention Sukarno, Pancasila, Indonesia's territorial integrity and the common people in their works. Like Rugeg Nataran, they were very obsessive in their use of words like Pancasila, revolution and Sukarno or Bung Karno.³³ A good example is Ngurah Parsua's poem *Anak marhaen* (Children of the proletariat, 1966), quoted in part below.³⁴

Kita adalah anak-anak marhaen	We are children of the
	proletariat
anak-anak revolusi yang hidup	revolutionary children who live
demi revolusi	for the revolution
anak yang harus hidup berjuang	children who must live to
	struggle
segema derunya marhaenisme	an echo of the roar of Sukarno's
bung karno	proletarianism
yang kita lagakan demi	for which we struggle for
kemanusiaan	humanity

The name of Sukarno is also prominent in other poems by Balinese poets such as *Sajak untuk Bung Karno* (Poem for Sukarno) by Nyoman Bawa, *Revolusi* (Revolution) by Raka Santeri and *Catatan 23 April 1965*

³³ Bung Karno was a widely used nickname for President Sukarno.

³⁴ The full version of the poem is included in Appendix B.

(A note on 23 April 1965) by Ida Bagus Pudja. *Catatan 23 April 1965* warns of the danger of the return of imperialism and urges people to always obey Sukarno's commands and ensure they are carried out, whether on land or sea or in the air. Earlier, Chairil Anwar had occasionally mentioned the names of Sukarno and other political figures in his work.³⁵ While politics was the primary motivation for the frequent appearance of Sukarno's name in poems by Balinese poets, the influence of Chairil canvassed in the previous chapter cannot be totally ignored. An example of a Balinese poem that uses a combination of revolution and religion is Raka Santeri's *Revolusi*, which defines revolution as an instruction from God. Again, such an association would be most unlikely in the strongly secular, communist and populist Lekra poems.

During the transition of power from Sukarno's Old Order to Suharto's New Order following the alleged communist coup on 30 September 1965, Indonesian literature in Bali displays some interesting characteristics. After the banning of PKI and Lekra and the killing or jailing of left-wing activists and writers, LKN writers continued to attack their former opponents by writing work infused with anti-communist sentiment. However, they expressed this anti-communism with a degree of ambivalence. While describing the communist followers as being wicked, deceitful and the killers of several generals, they also acknowledged them as sisters and brothers. This approach can be seen in Raka Santeri's poem *Catatan buat anakku Sari* (A note for my daughter Sari, 1969), quoted below.³⁶

ketika kami pulang dari padang	when we returned home from
perburuan kaum komonis	hunting down the communists
mereka adalah saudara-saudara	they were all our sisters and
kami juga	brothers too,
sebangsa dan setanah air	from the same nation, the same
	homeland

³⁵ In several of his poems, for example *Kerawang Bekasi* and *Persetujuan dengan Bung Karno* (An agreement with Sukarno), Chairil Anwar mentions Sukarno. These poems are in the anthology *Deraai-derai cemara* (Anwar 1999:65, 80-1)

³⁶ The full version of the poem is included in Appendix B.

Another interesting phenomenon of this transitional period is that Balinese poets who used to devote their poems to Sukarno understandably felt uncomfortable about continuing to do this after he lost power in 1966. However, while poets did criticize his regime ('away with you, Old Order!' as *Catatan buat anakku Sari* says), they made no specific reference to the name Sukarno, probably as a strategic way of preserving the image of the leader that they had admired for so long. This indicates the close connection between the way in which Balinese poets interpreted social reality and negotiated their identity and the contemporary political landscape at the national level.

The notable feature of Balinese poetry from the colonial and national revolution periods is that it illustrates the complex variety of discourses that have emanated from the groups of writers who experienced these different periods and changing political situations. The important shift that Balinese poetry reflects here in is the approach to identity, which moves from regional (being Balinese) to national (being Indonesian). Nevertheless, as Chris Barker (1999:3) and Jeff Lewis (2008:398) state, in the context of identity construction there has never been a single, simple or fixed form of regional or national identity. Under colonial rule, Balinese defined themselves according to caste difference, a concept that recurs in the 1990s, when it is again used frequently as a theme, particularly in the context of intercaste marriage. This will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter V. However, after independence Balinese people aspired to national identities – but ones based on political ideology that was nationalist or communist. All these different approaches to identity construction suggest that Balinese identities are neither static nor singular, but rather dynamic and pluralist. A significant dynamic shift reflecting a return from national identity to regional sentiment will be seen in the poetry from the New Order and Reformation periods.