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An analysis of Utuy Tatang Sontanis Suling

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AN ANALYSIS OF UTUY TATANG SONTANI'S 'SULING'

I

Suling (The Flute), published in 1948, was Sontani's first play in *bahasa Indonesia* and is one of the very few allegorical verse-dramas in that language. (Rustam Effendi's *Bebasari*, before 1928, and Trisno Sumardjo's *Tjita Teruna*, 1953, are the others that spring to mind.) As Sontani explains in the short story "Mengarang",¹ *Suling* was an attempt to answer a problem which troubled him a great deal at the beginning of the Japanese Occupation: Are the main concerns of Indonesian society "the political as Bung Karno said over and over again, the economic as Bung Hatta said over and over, the religious (in the meaning of the salvation of society) as Kiai H. M. Mansur said and the cultural (in the restricted meaning of the peace and calm of society) as spoken of by Ki Hadjar Dewantara?"² The problem is dealt with in terms of an allegory, which I hope to analyse in this article.

II

The stage setting is extremely bare: there are no directions, one presumes that the stage is empty. Only stray hints are thrown out that the hero and heroine, Panji and Sri, exist in the real world, the *dunia njata*,³ at all. The longest description is in Scene Three:

... disinilah agaknja
Dunia jang tidak kenal duka,
Hidup jang tidak tahu tjelaka,
Bahgia dibuai tjinta.⁴

¹ *Orang-orang Sial*, (1963 text), p. 22-30.

² *ibid*, p. 24. These four were the leaders of Putra during the Occupation, and were frequent broadcasters and speech-makers.

³ *Suling*, (Balai Pustaka, 1948), p. 8. All the following references are to this edition.

⁴ Page 14. "...here presumably / is a world which knows not misery / life which knows not misfortune / happiness cradled by love."

Into this new Eden the two young children have been brought from heaven by an angel (*bidadara*), *melalui djalan angkasa jang gelap gelita*.⁵ They have been given a "fire in their souls" which is to be carefully cultivated, by their deeds and actions, and particularly by the use of the flute, if they are to return to heaven.

The flute, the visible manifestation of the inner-flame in the play, can, I would suggest, be taken to represent an idealised symbol of art. It is art which drives Panji on, for the sake of which Sri will give up all, it is art which is oppressed in the play and it is the recovery of art which achieves the final salvation of the hero and heroine. In art, they are both united, both equal: he the player of the flute, she the dancer:

Ah, pabila njanji mengkirap sunji,
Adalah mengadjak
Hamba bergerak
Untuk menari memberi seri.⁶

They are also complementary:

Tak ada jang berlebihan antara hamba dan tuan;
Masing-masing ada kewadjaban:
Hamba berkewadjaban menanti jang akan terdjadi;
Tuan jang wadjib mentjari.⁷

Both are very much in love. This shines through each of their highly ornate speeches in the emotional nature of their words. When Panji says

Tapi apa jang akan kutjari kurindukan,
O, Kekasihku!
Pabila tiada jang lebih kuindahkan
Dari tjantikmu?⁸

he characterises the whole relationship, for in the given emotional context there is no value higher for him than her beauty. This is reinforced by the answer she gives, which is symmetrical to his question, just as her beauty balances his strength:

⁵ Page 8. "following the most dark sky road."

⁶ Page 11. "Oh, whenever a song flutters in the silence / it is an invitation / for me to move / to dance revealing beauty." (Sri)

⁷ Page 11. "Neither of us had any special advantage over the other; / each has their responsibilities: / I am obliged to wait for what shall come; / you are obliged to seek." (Sri)

⁸ Page 11. "But what shall I seek, shall I long for / O, my beloved! / when there is nothing I find more beautiful / than your beauty?"

Sebaliknja apa jang kusilakan kunanti,
 Wahai, Pahlawanku!
 Pabila bagiku tiada jang lebih sakti
 Dari lagu dajamu?⁹

Later, answers will be found to both these naive questions.

III

Into this relationship of equality of respect and obligation, of love united by art, of searching and waiting, comes the first friend. The title "friend" is rather an ironic one. To the young couple each friend brings an ideal of life: each ideal is imposed upon them at the impoverishment of a little of themselves. These are cruel friends who want so much and give so little and as they are allegorical characters, lacking by definition human characteristics, there is little that needs to be done to cast them as repugnant. Too, they are apparently much older than Panji and Sri and thus represent the intrusion of an adult world into a child's delight of make-believe, and have the associated force and authority of an elder which cannot be truly rejected by one lacking in knowledge of how to deal with grown-ups. Finally each of the friends represents a particular type of experience. It is in this last characteristic that their ambiguity lies: the friends destroy the world of the children, yet it is, after all, a world which must eventually be destroyed if they are to mature as individuals and not remain Peter Pans all their lives. Experience is here both necessary and painful.

The first friend comes offering friendship itself, extending his hand in greeting. Panji offers his art by blowing the flute: The friend feels this is not enough and is offended:

... mengapa tangan jang kuulurkan
 Tiada kaubalas lagi dengan tangan?
 Mengapa suara hati jang murni
 Hanja disambut angin dibalas njanji?¹⁰

It is not all obvious why the first friend should represent Friendship as strongly as he does. At the basic level of explanation, however, he

⁹ Page 11. "On the contrary, what do I ask, do I await / Oh, my hero! / When there is for me nothing more powerful / than the song of your strength?"

¹⁰ Page 15. "Why is the hand that I extend / not given a hand in return? / Why the voice of my pure heart / only received with wind, answered by a song?"

is necessary for the extension of the awareness of the couple, for he represents the correlate of friendship, community. That is, where they have before lived to themselves, involved in their own love and their reciprocal art, now they must try a new type of human relationship: the relationship which will in fact be a more usual one for them in the play and hence in the daily life of the history presented before them. Friendship does not stop art but neither does it understand it as mutual love does. H. B. Jassin, A. Teeuw and Luigi Santa Maria¹¹ who all see the play as an allegory of the history of Indonesian society in its development, view the first friend as representing the "Hindu" period. This is not at all obvious from the play as it stands, Hinduism not being immediately linked in most people's thinking with the virtues of friendship. Possibly they mean in their interpretation the friendship of Indonesia with India, especially as there is a second friend who represents the value of religion. Hinduism is of course a religion: it might therefore be more historically valid to suggest that the friend represents the "pre-Hindu" period, that of mutual cooperation (*gotong-rojong*) which is often regarded as a primary Indonesian virtue, if Panji and Sri did not represent this primaeval condition. In this historicising approach, India has nothing to offer to art.

The friend's words are sweet, this is commented upon a number of times: for example:

O, jang datang!
Djiwakupun tersenjum kemilau,
Sebab terang,
Suaramu njaring tiada parau.¹²

His friendship is accepted by Panji, with Sri's accordance that:

Apa jang akan tuan tudju
Dengan tjita-tjita jang tjemerlang,
Biar akan hamba tunggu
Dengan djiwa jang tetap tenang.¹³

¹¹ H. B. Jassin: *Kesusasteraan Indonesia Modern dalam Kritik dan Esei*, (1962), Vol. I, p. 185-189.

A. Teeuw: *Modern Indonesian Literature*, (1968), p. 191.

Luigi Santa Maria: "Significato e problematica dell'opera di Utuy Tatang Sontani", *Annali*, Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, Vol. 15, p. 4-7.

¹² Page 15. "O you who come! / My spirit smiles glittering, / because it is clear, / your voice is clear, not rasping."

¹³ Page 17. "Whatever you wish to obtain / with your shining ideals / allow me to wait / my soul shall still remain calm."

Already it seems that she has a prescience of what awaits her, for, after deliberately linking hands in friendship with him, the blow falls upon herself:

Tapi sungguh tidak lajak
Wanita nampak bergerak;
Kewadjaban perempuan
Diam memagari badan.¹⁴

As in so many of Utuy's writings, it is the woman who suffers most from the conclusions of the man's ignorant bravado, of his dreams and follies. Wadela and Tambera's mother suffered for him in Sontani's earlier novel *Tambera*, now Sri must begin to suffer for Panji.

The friend's argument for this limitation is a curiously abstract one; that it is not the female (*perempuan*) but her femininity (*keperempuanan*) which is elevated into a definite position of status among mankind.¹⁵ With the coming of society comes a special differentiation between men and women, out of the hermaphroditic condition of unrealised sexuality. The emphasis on the greater sexual differentiation is further increased by the second friend.

Sri, it should be noted, has from the beginning been willing to accept whatever will be imposed upon her by Panji. The blow is not entirely unexpected and not unbearable as long as art may continue:

Apa jang akan terdjadi kini,
Telah hamba nanti sedjak tadi
Dengan tenang,
Tidak bimbang,
Hingga tiada hamba kedjutkan,
Tiada mesti hamba rusuhkan.

Dari itu kehendak kawan kita ini
Biar hamba turutkan dengan tidak menari,
Tidak bergerak,
Tidak bertindak,
Asalkan suling terdengar merdu berbunji;
Sebab didalam hamba berdiam diri,
Api didalam
Tiada padam,

¹⁴ Page 18. "Truly 'tis not right / that a woman should be seen to move; / a woman's responsibility / is to quietly fence her body."

¹⁵ Page 18.

Bahkan ketenangan hamba dalam menanti,
Hamba djadikan sikap memupuk Api.¹⁶

In her foresight woman knows the actuality of that which is outside man's knowing. In his satisfaction at Sri's acceptance of this limitation on herself and her former complementary state of equality with him, Panji himself debases her, though we may not be intended to think so. Then Panji returns to his magician's flute.

IV

The second friend comes to:

... melihat
Entah disini Tuhan melimpahkan rahmat.¹⁷

and Panji receives him in the way that he has been taught in the earlier socialisation so that his new friend might be happy. He is at once concerned, this new friend, that there is only one woman among two men. This has not formerly been a problem, but as with friendship comes a conscious differentiation of the couple into male and female, now there arises the implication of this differentiation. There has been no previous problem of morality for there has been no conscious awareness of sexuality. The second friend who represents (as his speech shows) all that is religious as well as his own natural right to interfere where-ever he feels the need, very quickly draws the problem to their attention. (Here for the first time is the busybody Kiai who is to be such a stock-character in Utuy's later writings, the hypocrite, never balanced by a respected young religious man.)

Panji does not realise the problem, the first friend denies it exists:

Apa gunanja orang bertanja
Tentang hak antara kita,
Bila kita bertiga sudah bahagia
Hidup diliputi tjinta? ¹⁸

¹⁶ Page 19. "What will happen now / I have long awaited / calmly / without worry / so I wasn't anxious / I must not let myself be upset by it. //

Therefore, the will of our friend / shall I follow by not dancing / nor moving / nor acting / as long as I can hear the sweet sound of the flute; / Because in quietening myself / the Fire within / is not extinguished / but rather my calmness in waiting / I shall form into an attitude to cultivate the Fire."

¹⁷ Page 22. "To see / Whether God has poured out his blessing here."

¹⁸ Page 24. "What is the use of your asking / of rights among us, / When we three are happy / to live enfolded in love?"

As the Kiai explains it, the problem rests in a larger context, that of the governance of God, "The orderer of life and livelihood, the merciful, all-knowing, He who sent you down into the world."¹⁹ An interesting touch this, as it has not been brought to our attention before exactly whose heaven the couple came to earth from! Immediately Panji declares his belief in God. The implication of this declaration follows at once: they who believe in God must follow his laws, in this case, they must be married and the marriage witnessed. (The first friend conveniently fills this role.) Again there is a reassertion of their love, both seeing in the love-declaration a discovery of God's riches in the other.

Then, for a second time, the blow falls upon Sri, a blow which has, again, been kept back until the last moment:

Haruslah wadjah isterimu disembunjikan,
Berkudung tak nampak ditutup kain.²⁰

The first limitation was upon the movement of her body, this now falls upon even the revelation of her face. The femininity which was so esteemed before is here now correlated with mere prettiness and this latter is forbidden that "safety" be not destroyed.²¹ Again she accepts the slight, having known before that it would come. Again too she accepts the degradation as long as she may continue to hear the flute. Panji blows the flute that a new friend might come to drive away the confusions which surround his heart: a commendable, if limited, view of art and hardly what happens here.

The critics above who described the first friend as the Hindu period in Indonesian history, see the second friend as standing for the Islamic period in Indonesian history and justify this by the language and style of the character. More specifically, as the Islamic period is (in some obvious sense) still operative, Jassin at least sees this friend as representing the period of the great Islamic Javanese kingdoms in the north coast of Java and Mataram, up to the coming of the Dutch. The historically more logical correlation of the first friend put forward above, as the pre-Hindu period, runs into difficulty when one tries to ally the manner and speech of the second friend with the Hindu

¹⁹ Page 24.

²⁰ Page 28. "The face of your wife must be hidden, / veiled, not seen, covered by cloth."

²¹ Page 29.

period, although on a tremendously general level of evaluation one could argue both represent Religion.

I have given enough suggestion as to how the friends may so far be interpreted as representing the growth of the human conscious from childlike playing, through social integration into marriage. I cannot see how the progress of the soul could be allegorically interpreted out of the story to date, despite the publisher's claims: what higher stages can the friends possibly represent?

V

Just as the second friend had revealed his nature in his opening words, so does the third friend expose himself in his:

Patut aku mau kemari
Lantaran mendengar suling berlagu,
Sebab rupanja orang disini
Akan menghargai arti datanku.²²

In this speech, beside the tone of self-confidence and assertion, the significant emphasis is undoubtedly in the last line, in *menghargai*, a verbal form of *harga*: the "price", "cost", or "value" of an object. This friend represents economics, the business of making a profitable living:

Harus engkau berusaha
Dengan menggunakan akal;
Begitu harusnja manusia
Jang punja akal sebagai modal.²³

Both the previous friends' benefits have been spiritual, one brought friendship, the other religion. That man may live by bread part of the time at any rate, and to celebrate the marriage, this friend brings the material benefit of food:

... datanku membawa santapan
Jang akan kuserahkan pada kalian
Untuk membikin keberuntungan.²⁴

²² Page 32. "It is right that I wanted to come here / having heard the flute sing / because, obviously, the people here / shall appreciate the meaning of my coming."

²³ Page 33. "You must do your utmost / by using your intelligence; / that is a necessity for mankind / whose intelligence is his capital."

²⁴ Page 33-34. "I came bringing food / which I shall give to you all / to create success."

This pleases the other two friends who talk of *kita* in identification with Panji and Sri. Again there is a condition to the taking of what is given:

Tapi diserahkanja makanan,
Djika penukarnja kauberikan,
Sebagai tanda penghargaan
Atas diriku jang mengusahakan.²⁵

The first friend rejects this, for he feels that between men no-one should give merely for the sake of a return: the second friend rejects it, too, as he argues the sufficiency of the riches of God. For both the third friend has an answer — exchange builds an economy, it is the backbone of prosperity (*kemakmuran*) and the tie binding social intercourse.²⁶

If the second friend — interfering, religious old man, spying about the morality of others — looks forward to characters in a number of Utuy's later plays, the third friend — who gets in exchange for his giving (less) — looks back to the spirit of the Dutch in *Tambera*.²⁷ It is no wonder the critics favouring the allegorical interpretation of *Suling* as history have unanimously explained the third friend as the invading west.

The third friend offers food for bodily needs and for feasting. They — Panji, Sri and the two friends accept it; Sri is, however, concerned that a balance be kept and that, as they eat, the rhythmical voice of the flute should be heard. The price of the food is high and has to fall, as we have unfortunately come to expect, on Sri. Here the third friend, who has never been one to trifle over his words, is quite explicit in stating what he wants for his food:

Hanja gelang isterimu sadja
Jang mesti ditanggal dan diserahkan:
Djikalaus gelang tak kuterima
Makananpun takkan djadi kuberikan.²⁸

The decision is passed to Sri, she knowing what was coming and she gives up her bracelets: first her dancing, next the showing of her face, now her bangles. (Panji is really quite a coward.)

²⁵ Page 34. "But the food will be given / if you give something in exchange / as a sign of appreciation (valuation) / of myself who have exerted myself."

²⁶ Page 35.

²⁷ Note particularly Page 49 (1952 edition).

²⁸ Page 37. "Only your wife's bracelets / which must be taken off and given me: / If I do not receive the bracelets / I shall not give the food."

VI

There is one friend to come. Sri is extremely anxious about him, and she re-emphasises the original relationship of love and equality, which has been under such strong attack from the friends. The 'fall' of Panji and Sri is not merely a vertical one from innocence: it is also a horizontal falling apart, their continuing separation.

Tapi djika tuan faham
Akan jang kunanti kini,
Tuan takkan terleka diam,
Melainkan akan mentjari.²⁹

The strong wills of the previous friends will soon be seen to be much milder than that of the fourth friend who now enters while Panji plays his flute. With this friend there is no extension of amicity, no inquiry whether God has poured out his blessing here and no feeling that the inhabitants ought to appreciate his coming. Rather there is the definite assertion and all-conquering self-affirmation:

Orang disini seperti kerbau,
Tidak mengenal tingkat mertabat,
Mudah sadja menjebut "engkau",
Menganggap aku tidak berpangkat.³⁰

No wonder Panji's comment is rather inane:

Ah, kawan kita jang baru ini
Menempatkan diri lebih tinggi.³¹

From a start of equal and complementary association in love, through extension to community, to submission to God's law and marriage, to mutual giving and receiving, never has any character asserted so much arrogance. The force of the language, the evil egocentrism of the friend stands in strong contrast to those other friends, who are united in their submission to him. He is in violent opposition to the Sundanese social values (Utuy is a Sundanese) in which respect towards superiors is repaid by the humility of the superior, and the relationship of equal

²⁹ Page 38. "But if you understood / that for which I now wait, / you would not negligently be still / but you would search."

³⁰ Page 40. "People here are like buffaloes / not knowing degrees and rank, / finding it easy to say the equalising and derogatory "you" / regarding me as if I were of no status."

³¹ Page 40. "Our new friend / places himself above us."

men is mutually self-humbling. An arrogant person, he knows no shame and is therefore an offence to correct behaviour as well as to harmony between equals and their future cooperation.³² This is a friend who will take no compromise from any of them:

Jang kubawa hanjalah pedang,
Sendjata tadjam untuk menjerbu,
Membinasakan tiap jang lantjang,
Tak mengindahkan kemuliaanku.

Maka semua jang ada disini
Haruslah tunduk kepadaku,
Djangan sekali lagi berani
Merendahkan kedudukanku.

Siapa jang hendak mentjaba pula
Menganggap aku orang jang rendah,
Pedangku ini tentu nistjaja
Memenggal lehernja sehingga patah.³³

Even as he says this, he draws his sword. For this is the only gift he brings, "a sharp blade to attack", and this is sufficient answer to any social, religious, or economic democracy which would feel his leadership as unnecessary: an answer which, for the first time, throws them into violent argument and disheartened submission. Worse still, the authoritarian state which the fourth friend represents, forbids Panji to play his flute except when his agreement has first been sought, much to Panji's horror:

Tapi apakah arti berlagu
Dengan izin
Dari jang lain?
Wahai, apakah arti bernjanji
Dengan tiada
Bebas merdeka? ³⁴

³² Dr. Andrea Wilcox: "The Sundanese Village" in (ed.) G. W. Skinner: *Local, Ethnic and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia: A Symposium*. (New Haven, 1959), p. 44.

³³ Page 41. "The only thing I bring is the sword, / a sharp blade to attack / to destroy whoever is bold / who does not regard my glory //

"All who are here / must submit to me / not to be bold at all / to lower my status //

"Whoever would try / to regard me as a commoner, / my sword will undoubtedly / cut his neck till broken."

³⁴ Page 46. "But what does making melody mean / if it requires the permission / of others? / Oh, what does singing mean / If it is not done / in complete freedom?"

Obviously such a controlled art is of no worth and is itself debased, debased from its role as the personal expression of an individual consciousness, as the statement of the author's own experiences in and of life. In this debasement lies the ultimate degradation of all mankind, the removal of the last freedom, that of the individual to at least keep to himself his thoughts. Sri, whose only pleasure throughout her continual limitation, has been the flute, again suffers most by the action and leaves the stage:

Maka djika suling tak sanggup berbunji
Biarlah hamba menanti didalam sunji.³⁵

This is the final punishment she has long awaited. Indonesia as a land may accept outside friendship, religion and economics without complaining, but to be robbed of art is the ultimate betrayal of her soul and the destruction of her justification for existence. And just as Indonesia flees, so does Panji the artist, leaving the fourth friend, politics, triumphant over sterility.

It is understandable that when Jassin linked the friends with the personalities whom Utuy claimed they were based on, he was taken aback at the fourth friend. To correlate the first friend with Ki Hadjar Dewantara who asserted that the state ought to be based on "culture (in the restricted meaning of the peace and calm ordering of society)", the second friend with Kiai Hadji Mas Mansur who advocated "religion (in the sense of safety)", and the third friend with Bung Hatta with his continual talk of the state as based on economics — that was not hard. But to be asked to accept the fourth friend with all his rampant fanaticism of authority as based on Sukarno, the father of the nation! — that was too much. "I would much rather see the Japanese fascism as revealed in this friend" he wrote,³⁶ suggesting that the forbidding of Panji to blow his flute was the recent period when the Japanese censor controlled art, carefully supervising its propagandistic value. This last suggestion I would not disagree with (although Jassin may well have changed his views since 1963). But the way that political activity is pictured here is not at all inconsistent with Utuy's views on the topic as found in his writings, the ferocity of the Dutch in *Tambera*, the powers of arbitrariness in the Revolution as depicted in *Orang-orang Sial*, the capitalist-bureaucrats in his later plays. His general view is, I would

³⁵ Page 47. "If the flute is not willing to sound / let me wait away in silence."

³⁶ *Kesusasteraan Indonesia Modern dalam Kritik dan Esei*, Vol. 1, p. 188.

suggest, that the will of the state is arbitrary, its power despotic, its main purpose to maintain police and military supervision over a population of basically reasonable people who could live very well without the state. In this regard, I have no doubt at all that Utuy's view on the state is one of a marked preference for an anarchistic state of free, human, individuals.

When Sri throws away the flute, with the consent of the fourth friend, Panji is forced to divorce her: when a nation rejects art, the artist, however unwillingly, must reject the nation. Too, Panji apparently strangles Sri. The state consents to the rejection for one reason:

Karena aku disini tiada mau
Melihat jang melebihi kekuasaanku.³⁷

The state is afraid of only this, and stands for selfishness and reason at the cost of emotion. In this betrayal religion concurs ("if one is not prepared to control, one must be clever in following".³⁸) And to the artist, the result is the confusion of his own soul and the fantasising of dreams:

Ingin aku mengikut:
Untuk melihat gunung,
Memandang lembah tersenjum,
Mendengar suara burung,
Mentjium bunga mengharum,
Supaja djiwaku segar berisi,
Kepala tegak diangkat tinggi.³⁹

Confusion and dreaming culminate in the rejection of the artist by all the friends.

VII

As Utuy tells in 'Mengarang', this much of the play had been written when the Independence of Indonesia was proclaimed and, the play apparently not being well planned, he was at something of a loss how to conclude now that Panji and Sri had separated. Then the last

³⁷ Page 50. "Because I here do not want / to see anything surpass my power."

³⁸ Page 54-55.

³⁹ Page 64. "I wish to join her; / to see the mountains / to see the smiling plains / to hear the voices of the birds, / to smell the aroma given off by flowers / so that my soul should bloom filled / my head straighten to be held high again."

character was born and she was born out of Utuy's anger at the rudeness with which he was treated by a young lady.⁴⁰ In a sense she ranks as fifth friend. Her name is the *Perempuan pengembara*, the wandering woman. She is obviously very pretty, and she is, too, obviously very loose in her morals for she walks where she wills and, talking of Panji, she says:

Kepadanya hendak kuserahkan
Badanku untuk menggembirakan.

... Dengan tak ada
Peraturan apa.⁴¹

She needs not economic reward, nor love, and cares not at all for marriage and nothing for the threats of the fourth friend. She only submits to herself and the state cannot kill her. She is the first friend to make Panji laugh and when he kisses her, she tells him:

Badanmu akan kuat seperti badanku,
Dan engkau takkan merasa lagi
Ada derita diatas bumi,
Tak akan lagi mesti terhujung
Dikepung pusing dan bingung;
Dunia ini mendjadi suatu lapang
Tempat engkau bersenang-senang.⁴²

The promise enflames him, that he might again be satisfied to be human and to reject the fourth friend, to attack and fight, that a new age might come to bury contaminated friendship. This is encouraged by "the Fire which burns in his breast, by God who is within himself."⁴³ There are few kisses given in Indonesian literature, none with this significance. He kisses her and the state cannot kill him. But he rejects her demand that he become her friend for life as his body is no longer the body of an ordinary person. He defeats the fourth friend and receives back the flute, as well as the submission of the three friends. Again

⁴⁰ *Orang-orang Sial*, (1963), p. 26.

⁴¹ Page 71. "To him I wish to surrender / my body to give him pleasure.

... "With there being no / special arrangement at all."

⁴² Page 77-78. "Your body will be strong like mine / and you shall never feel again / that there is misery on the world / never more must you falter / surrounded by pain and anxiety / the world shall become a field / where you can enjoy yourself."

⁴³ Page 78.

he rejects the woman's demand that he follow her and he does so having realised that there is more he wants than beauty — there is truth. The only truth the woman knows is in negation: Panji prefers to return to Sri who revives as he plays the flute. In his view Sri is not only the object most beautiful, but she is, too, Truth. The nation revived by art may still live again, despite her previous apparent disavowal of the artist. There is a great deal of similarity here between *Suling* and Rustam Effendi's *Bebasari*: the struggle of the artist to free Indonesia from the hold over her by the powers of evil, politically motivated, as a main theme, the idealisation of art and the artist, the use of allegory and stately, rhymed verse. Both are fables of the young.

But who is she really, this wandering woman, the mixture of divine woman and prostitute? Jassin⁴⁴ suggested that she is "the inspiration of the artist which gives him strength", that she is "unconditionally free" inspiration, which, unlike Panji, "cannot be easily influenced by events that happen to herself." I am in some doubt if this gives enough explanation of the woman's immorality, though one might argue that the White Goddess (as Robert Graves calls her) must be free to give herself to whom she will. And it is difficult to explain why Panji must reject her as a negative force if she is to him artistic inspiration. It might be suggested that the woman represents a purely physical beauty, while Sri represents spiritual beauty, the beauty of the soul. On this basis the woman has certainly to be rejected as the soul of Panji's art and devotion. One cannot, however, on the basis of this interpretation really explain her necessity in the play and the strength and victory she gives him. Is it too fanciful, following through the historical interpretation to see in the woman the Revolution itself, with an awareness on Utuy's behalf of the double nature of war, beneficial in bringing freedom, harmful in taking life?

VIII

The play has now run its course. Panji and Sri have their salvation and they return, escorted by the angel, to heaven. Panji delivers the epilogue which closes:

Kebenaranmulah, Kekasihku!
Njatanja Kemenanganku
Diatas bumi

⁴⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 185.

Jang djadi kuntji pembuka pintu
Ke Langit.⁴⁵

For the woman indeed taught him that none of the four friends is final, the knowledge that, as Panji declares:

... kedamaian
Keselamatan, kemakmuran dan keagungan
Takkan lahir bila kepertajaan hati
Akal dan pikiran tidak disinari seni.⁴⁶

In art, in the dance and singing that follows the rhythm of the soul, so it is asserted, Truth abides. This is the answer to Utuy's original question as to which style society is founded upon: all four, but each has its meaning only through art. The ugliness of the death of this belief is to be found in Utuy's later plays.

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⁴⁵ Page 92. "Your Truth, my Beloved! / Its clearness is my victory / on the earth / which is the key, the opener of the door, / to heaven."

⁴⁶ Page 88. "... peace, / safety, prosperity and greatness, / cannot exist when the belief of heart, / mind and thought are not enlightened by art."