H. Aveling

Some conventions of prewar Indonesian verse

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SOME CONVENTIONS OF PREWAR INDONESIAN VERSE

A modern literature in a non-western environment begins, as several Czech scholars have pointed out,¹ after a period of contact with modern (western) thought by a modernising elite removed from the traditional environment. Then follows a period of intermingled reaction, imitation and experimentation, until the 'point of stabilization' is reached and the new literature enters into full contact with modern world literature in its own right, with its own individual modern (twentieth century) characteristics. In Indonesia, the spread of Dutch literature in schools after 1900 meant that the contact literature was the Dutch 1880's Movement, one of the last of the various Romantic movements in Europe or one of the late nineteenth-century Aesthetic movements depending on one's point of view, and the melodramatic novel.

This essay seeks neither to compare the Dutch and Indonesian movements² nor to explore a sociology of literature. Rather, keeping in mind the romantic (or neo-romantic) precedents of Indonesian literature, I hope to describe some of the conventions of prewar verse about poetry, nature, the artist and human nature, as found in the poetry and writings on poetry by practising poets of the period. Further I hope to suggest a contradiction between the persistent application of those conventions and the doctrine of poetic inspiration which, I believe, ultimately accounts for the failure of that verse to acquire aesthetic stature.

The Song of the Soul.

Poetry during this period was conceived of as the beautiful, spontaneous and irresistible expression of an overwhelming emotion. This

¹ O. Kral *et al.*, *Contributions to the Study of the Rise and Development of Modern Asian Literature*. Prague 1965.

² One looks forward to the work of Mr Keith Foulcher on this topic.

emotion was aroused by nature in particular, but could also derive from lofty thoughts or from the reading of other poetry.³ The hope was that the reader might experience the same emotion as the poet had himself experienced and attempted to communicate in his verse. For this the reader was required, presumably, to be a person of exquisite sensitivity, for: "the soul existed in society, nature and time; and because it was the soul of a poet (*pudjangga*) it felt more than other's did, more strongly, more deeply, more refinedly."⁴

The most common phrases used to describe the working of poetic emotion were "the soul singing" (*djiwa bernjanji*) and the "movement of the soul" (*gerakan sukma*).⁵ Writing meant giving form to one's emotion, although, it must be admitted, poets differed as to how laborious the process ought to be. Sanusi Pane (1905-1968) wrote in 1936, for instance:

Because his unity with the world and humanity is so close, because the sufferings and the joy, the ambitions and the ideals, the fears and the hopes of the world all live in him, the object of art which he produces develops of itself (*tumbuh dengan sendirinja*), there is no longer any idea of making it, it can no longer be measured with moral criteria which are exterior to it.⁶

Others saw it as a more deliberate process, the final perfecting of feeling as the more pragmatic Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (b. 1908) wrote in 1934:

Poetry is the loving art of language. The poet who is inspired gathers words to incarnate the feeling which burns in his heart. The words "gathered together" should not be seen in the same way as a man gathers material to build a house. In the linking of feeling and language in a poem, the position of the words is far more than merely a tool. Because the feeling which cradles in the heart is not yet complete in all its parts; although he feels

³ J. E. Tatengkeng, "Penjelidikan dan Pengakuan", *Pudjangga Baru*, July 1935. Reprinted in (ed.) H. B. Jassin, *Pudjangga Baru*. Djakarta 1963.

⁴ *ibid.*, Jassin, p. 332.

⁵ Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana uses the former phrase (see *Kebangkitan Puisi Baru Indonesia*. Djakarta 1969. Reprint of a series of essays published in *Pudjangga Baru*, from 1934 to the Japanese Occupation); Tatengkeng, *supra*, uses the latter. In "Bukan Beta Bidjak Berperi" Roestam Effendi states *laguku menurut sukma*, my song follows my soul.

⁶ "Sikap Aestetisch", *Pudjangga Baru*, December 1936; Jassin, p. 281.

it pushing and shoving irresistably, its whole is still vague, its arrangement is not yet clear. In the arrangement of the words, the stirring which drives him (*gerak jang mendorong*) slowly becomes perfect.⁷

The most commonly used poetic forms were the sonnet and the prose-lyric; some use was also made of free-verse and of the cycle (of seven or nine lines). Armijn Pane (1908-1970) argued in 1933 that: "the sonnet is not a completely new form as far as we are concerned, but is rather a modernisation of an old already existing form" — the four-line *pantun*, in which the octet paralleled the first two lines and the sestet the second two.⁸ The theory is tempting, but even a random sampling of prewar sonnets will show that it is far from invariable. Nevertheless, the effect of this fairly tight form was, as Drs. Umar Junus has shown in *Perkembangan Puisi Melayu Modern*,⁹ a poetry of the word (*puisi kata*),¹⁰ in which individual words and their sound patterns were of primary significance: for their contribution to the all-over sound structure of the poem, and then, secondarily, for their meaning. Among the linguistic features available in Indonesian because of the alternation of consonants and vowels in word structure are: vowel assonance, double-vowel patterns (-a-u- patterns, for instance), double vowel inversions (-a-u- and -u-a-), larger vowel patterns often using affixations, phonic variation (between nasals or between short-e and i) and the repetition of consonant and vowel combinations. Amir Hamzah, perhaps because of his training in Javanese literature, used these techniques in a complex and sophisticated manner. That many lesser poets did not, and preferred to place their faith in undisciplined emotionalism is, perhaps, the reason that at least one critic, Prof. A. Teeuw, has concluded that Amir Hamzah is "the only pre-war poet in Indonesia whose work reaches international level and is of lasting literary interest."¹¹

Nature.

The doctrine of 'imagination' is one of the pillars of European

⁷ "Puisi Indonesia Zaman Baru, III", *Pudjangga Baru*, December 1936; Alisjahbana, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁸ "Sonnet dan Pantun", *Pudjangga Baru*, August 1933; Jassin, p. 259.

⁹ Kuala Lumpur 1970.

¹⁰ In private correspondence, Umar Junus has also suggested this might be called *puisi bunji*.

¹¹ *Modern Indonesian Literature*. The Hague 1967, p. 84.

romanticism: the Indonesian doctrine of the singing of the soul is clearly a very much weaker version of it. This being so, it is not, therefore, surprising if we almost never come across the associated doctrine of nature as a system to be read for deeper spiritual significances.¹² The Indonesian poet is, rather, a passive observer, entranced by but involved only minimally in what he sees: nature, pure, harmonious and whole most commonly, almost completely devoid of any cruelty or harshness. (There is no Indonesian frisson at high craggy peaks.) Nature, the countryside, is, in contrast with the city, a place of tranquility and an appropriate setting for the 'noble savage' (the peasant farmer, particularly the young boys who herd oxen and the girls who plant rice). By nature, the poet is provoked to reverie and then to a recurrent sense of sadness derived from a sense of absence or loss.¹³ (The term *rindu* seems to suggest 'yearning' rather more than 'melancholy'.) That which no longer is, may be the happiness of childhood or the love of one's parents (generally in some far off village), the love of a maiden, a purpose for one's life, and, on occasion, the former glory of Indonesia itself.

Amir Hamzah's "Berdiri Aku" is an interesting example of this strategy of natural description followed by sadness. It describes the poet standing at twilight,¹⁴ the seagulls flying below skimming the bay, the coconut palms unfurling their leaves like women their hair, jellyfish flowering in the bay. The wind caressing the bay, striking the water scattering sunlight, before running to the planes above where it plays in loneliness. A rainbow spreading like a pattern in a cloth newly dyed, which intoxicates a lone eagle floating with his wings rolled. And then:

Dalam rupa maha sempurna
Rindu-sendu mengharu kalbu
Ingin datang merasa sentosa
Mengetjap hidup bertentu tudju

¹² Rene Wellek, "The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History", *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven 1963) defines as the norms dominating European romanticism: "poetry as a knowledge of deepest reality ... nature as a living whole, and ... poetry as primarily myth and symbol." (p. 161).

¹³ J. D. Frodsham, *New Perspectives in Chinese Literature* (Twenty-ninth Morrison lecture in ethnology, Australian National University, Canberra. 1970) has an interesting discussion of the place of melancholy in the romantic complex. (See page 9.)

¹⁴ The importance of twilight in romantic verse is an example of the preference for 'soft-focus' and 'threshold' experiences. See W. T. Jones, *The Romantic Syndrome*. The Hague 1961. Ch. V.

"In such a perfect scene/ Longing stirred in my heart/ The desire came to feel peace/ To taste a life with a definite direction."¹⁵

Or, in front of the Tadj Mahal, Sanusi Pane's sonnet of that title concludes:

Djiwa mendjerit, ditjakra duka,
Ach, Kekasihku, memanggil tuan
Hanja Djamna membalas seruan

"My spirit screams in the sad sky/ Oh, my Beloved, I call you/
Only the Djamna River returns my call."

Yet, in another poem, "Melati", Sanusi Pane is able to present a flower, the jasmine, as a complex and elegant symbol of both spiritual and sexual desire. In the opening lines, the flower is pictured like a woman, or goddess — a faint smile, creamy complexion, slender waisted — who suddenly appears, dancing. He compares the jasmine to a fine flower (so presumably it is not) and declares that it arouses in him "a pure passion" (*berahi jang sutji-permai*). Then the poem moves completely into the realm of the supernatural:

Djiwa termenung, terlena dalam samadi
O, Melati, memandang kau seperti Pamadi
Kebakaan kurasa, luas tenang dan damai

"My spirit contemplates, lost in meditation,/ O, Jasmine, I see you as Pamadi,/ And feel eternity, wide, calm and peaceful."

As soon as the perception is made, however, the conventional strategy reasserts itself and a barrier is thrown up, the barrier of sadness. The 'jasmine' becomes in the sestet like a flower in a garden of memories, or like an occasionally visible twinkling star: both are images of generous unattainability. *Tak 'kan pernah tertjapai tangan*, never to be got by human hands, Sanusi futilely concludes.¹⁶

Roestam Effendi (b. 1902) attempts in a number of poems to fathom nature, sensing that there ought to be some further, hidden meaning, but each time he runs into a blank wall. In "Rahasia Alam" for

¹⁵ *Buah Rindu*. Originally published in *Pudjangga Baru*, June 1941. Subsequently republished a number of times in Djakarta, and in Kuala Lumpur.

¹⁶ Both "Tadj Mahal" and "Melati" are in the collection *Madah Kelana*. Djakarta 1931, pp. 6 and 13.

instance, he begins with a melodious description of butterflies, birds playing, water roaring and monkeys screaming, which is neatly and interestingly handled.¹⁷ In the second stanza his gaze moves to man and animals, then to the wind slashing like fighting-cocks. All this suggests a multiplicity of hidden meanings, *banjak erti didalam kandung*, which he tries to fathom in the last stanza:

Kutangkap si-tiupan
berbisik-bisikan.
Rahasia besar
mereka paparkan.
Berontak darah dalam dada
Mengerti 'ndak, terdengar tentu

"I catch the blowing/ whispering by./ Great secrets/ being unfurled./ The blood rebels in my breast/ I do not understand but there is something there."

The secrecy of the world recurs in "Gelap Gelita"¹⁸ and "Lautan"¹⁹ which ends:

Bagaimanakah artinja rahasia hidup?
Apatah udjud manusia bernjawa?
Seorangpun tak mungkin menduga.

"What is the meaning of the secret of life?/ What is the goal of soulful man?/ No-one can possibly guess."

For Roestam, two responses follow from this impenetrability. The first is to seek a solution through orthodox religion, through Islam; to curse the world, as in "Alam"²⁰ as a place of sin and lust, bitterness, anger and sorrow, a place where "flowers are threaded on thorns" (*tempat bunga berkarang duri*), and to seek relief through death out of his suffering. The other solution is the council of patience and submission, and contentment with the glitter of the surface.

¹⁷ *Pertjikan Permenungan*. Original publication date in some doubt (1925 to 1928), republished Djakarta 1953, p. 11. On this poem, see Burton Raffel, *The Development of Modern Indonesian Poetry*. New York 1967, pp. 47-51.

¹⁸ *Pertjikan Permenungan*, p. 26.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 70.

Nature and Nationalism.

Nature, then, is evocative, rather than 'symbolic' in the sense in which the European romantics understood the term. This emerges clearly in those poems which link nature and nationalism. What the Indonesian critic Drs. J. U. Nasution has written of the verse of Sanusi Pane on this theme applies, more or less, to all prewar poetry with a nationalist tinge:

... the poet arouses love for the nation through his recollections of the history of the distant past. He yearns (*rindu*) and is sad because the fertility of his land does not of itself guarantee the continuation of that past ...²¹

In Sanusi Pane's case the yearning stems particularly from his response to the Hindu-Buddhist monuments of central Java, erected in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., long before the arrival of the Dutch in the seventeenth. In Roestam Effendi's, it arises directly from praise for Indonesia's fertility, desire for her well-being, sympathy for her oppression and a longing for the time when Indonesia is to be free again.

The fullest expression of the pattern occurs in the two cycles written by Muhammad Yamin (1903-1962) who is often considered the first modern Indonesian poet. The first, *Andalas Nusa Harapan*, was written for the fifth anniversary of the Sumatera Youth League, in 1922; the other, *Indonesia Tumpah Darahku!*, was for the All-Indonesia Youth Congress of 1928. In both poems, the poet sits, surrounded by a panorama of mountains above, beach and green rice-fields below, musing on the beauty around him and the contrast of the past history and present condition of his people. The static opening is a conventional one, yet, unusually enough, in both poems great emphasis is placed on the flux contained within the permanence of nature: the flux of natural phenomena and that of man, the villager and the kingdom builder, whose history changes but whose racial heritage is ever constant. Nature is an organic whole, enfolding and outlasting man, but, nevertheless, deriving its significance from him. (A rice-field is both a part of nature and the work of man: as an heirloom it is, further, a part of history.) Despite the dynamism of the attitude towards nature, the time scale employed is the simple then/now contrast, or the progression of past perfect, present gloom (and future perfect): In *Indonesia*

²¹ Sanusi Pane. Djakarta 1963, p. 41.

Tumpah Darahku! the past is associated with an imagery of light and the present with darkness and night. In both the present is characterised by the absence of past values: glory, freedom, language and political power.

Nature and Man.

Prewar poetry is largely a modern urban product.²² In the nationalist verse, it was the closeness of Indonesian man to the soil and the greatness of his empires, now surviving in only a few stone monuments, which stirred the poet. In its dealings with contemporary man, the verse again turns its back on the city (though not on the urban primitive, the proletarian). The life of urban man is a false one: the poetic ideal is for the simplicity and innocence of the rural life. This pastoral attitude is found, for instance, in the sestet of Sanusi Pane's "Dilereng Salak"²³:

Dirumput halus jang beledu,
Aku guling memandang s'orang,
Bagai minum keindahan alam.

Teringat kota aku tersedu,
Takut kembali ketempat orang,
Ta' mengenal perasaan dalam.

"In the fine velvet grass/ I lie looking around me/ As if drinking
in the beauty of nature.// When I remember the city I am sad,/ I am afraid to go back to that place of men,/ Who do not know deep feeling."

Yamin, in whom one already finds most of the conventions fully established, is responsible for two melodramatic directions in this fascination with nature and the good life. The first is the recognition of the burdens borne by the primitive. In Sanusi Pane's verse, the fields are green and the harvesters sing as they gather and pound the crop. In the poem "Sawah"²⁴ and others like it, one even finds the poet so identified with his environment that only the melancholy lilt

²² See Heather Sutherland, "Pudjangga Baru: Aspects of Indonesian Intellectual Life in the 1930's", *Indonesia* (Cornell), October 1968. Also Goenawan Mohamad: "You Can't Go Home Again", *Quadrant* Special Indonesia Issue 1969.

²³ *Puspa Mega*. Jogjakarta n.d. (1927), p. 39.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 12.

of the flute reveals his presence at all. But in Yamin's verse the song of the shepherd, *Gita Gembala*,²⁵ emphasises the pathos of an orphan child bewailing his fate, alone, hungry and unloved, grateful that each day brings him a little closer to death. In this way, Yamin has the best of both sentimentalities, that for the peasant and that for the orphan boy.

This partial salvaging of reality was of great importance in the poetry written in sympathy with the urban proletarian. Marius Ramis Dajoh, an admirer of the Dutch socialist poet Henriette Roland Holst-van der Schalk,²⁶ in "Tanah Djawi"²⁷ cries out:

Tolonglah kami, orang miskin!
Pengembara kemana-mana!
Kena rampasan tanah pusaka.

"Help us, the poor!/ Wandering everywhere!/ Looted of our traditional land."

and sorrowed at the small child "bent over/ working like his father!"²⁸

Asmara Hadi (b. 1914) was perhaps the most critical of all the prewar poets about the condition of the people, and he frequently attacked his fellow poets for their seeming indifference whilst working from within the same conventional framework as they. The poem "Dapatkah tuan ...?",²⁹ largely directed at Sanusi Pane one would guess, begins:

Dapatkah tuan bersukatjita
Bagia raja didalam dada,
Djikalau rakjat berdukatjita
Terkadang makan, terkadang tidak?

"Can you be happy/ Really happy within yourself,/ If the people are suffering/ Sometimes eating and sometimes not?"

The question is repeated twice again, and is followed by the couplet:

²⁵ Jassin, pp. 349-350.

²⁶ See M. R. Dajoh, "Surat Pudjangga Njonja Henriette Roland Holst-van der Schalk kepada M. R. Dajoh, pada tahun 1933", *Pudjangga Baru* August 1941. And "Kenang²an pada Pudjangga Dr. Henriette Roland Holst-van der Schalk", *Pudjangga Baru* 1952, pp. 153-160.

²⁷ Jassin, p. 158.

²⁸ "Pekerdjaan Anak", Jassin, p. 162.

²⁹ *Pudjangga Baru*, August 1937; Jassin, p. 183.

Dapatkah tuan?
 Aku tak dapat!

"Can you?/ I can not!"

In his poem "Kepada Seniman"³⁰ Asmara Hadi tried to turn his fellow poets to an appreciation of the modern world in terms they could understand, finding Beauty not just in flowers, a girl's eyes, the stars, the mountains and the seas, the Hindu relics, but also in:

... mesin paberik jang gegap-gempita.
 Dikapal udara pemburu musuh,
 Dilumpur sawah, ditangan buruh,
 Dalam segala ada Keindahan,
 Tertawa, menangis, menanti seniman.

"... the staccato factory machine/ In the aeroplane hunting its enemies,/ In the mud of the fields and in the hands of the labourer,/ In everything Beauty is,/ Laughing, crying, waiting for the artist."

"Dapatkah tuan ...?", too, concludes from within the conventions that the masses are like the rolling sea (one of the most conventional of natural images for energy) and the decision that the poet will abandon himself to sorrow for as long as the people suffer. The urban mass, like the natural rural man barely distinguishable from his oxen, is undifferentiated from his fellows, brutish and, because of his suffering, capable of making the poet feel quite sad.

As the following comments reveal, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana was highly aware of the convention of:

The excessive awe which leads to poems of praise and worship of the world as if it were a paradise of joy and utter beauty. The poems of the happy life of the shepherd in the field, the village people who know neither deceit nor dishonesty and the viciousness of the town people, poems about naked children bathing in pure sparkling rivers, all born of an exaggerated notion and evaluation of the happiness, playfulness and tranquility of nature.³¹

³⁰ Jassin, p. 186.

³¹ "Pemandangan Alam jang Baru", *Pudjangga Baru*, January 1935; *Kebangkitan Puisi Baru Indonesia*, p. 41.

(Yet this, in the next year 1936, did not stop him in *Lajar Terkembang* from presenting nature as a beautiful setting for the innocence of young love and a place of refreshment from urban bustle.)

The second direction begun by Yamin was the association of nature and the innocent man with the death of a loved one. In Yamin's own verse the loved one was a parent, usually his father, and Yamin used much of the traditional Malay graveyard imagery (thus mixing a Malay and a gothic tradition) to depict his sadness. In the verse of Roestam Effendi, Sanusi Pane and Amir Hamzah, however, the loved one is a deceased mistress. (One is reminded of E. A. Poe's *Philosophy of Composition* where the death of a beautiful woman is considered the loveliest and most moving of topics.) In Roestam Effendi's verse we meet *kubur Asmara ditanah Djawa*, the grave of Cupid in far-off Java,³² in "Pekik Asmara" which is a long lament on the death of the beloved and an earnest wish for his own: the theme recurs in some half-dozen other poems as well.³³ Then, unexpectedly, this morbid convention appears in the verse of Sanusi Pane, in the central part of *Puspa Mega*. In Amir Hamzah's case, the convention is complicated in his early verse and prose-lyrics through an association of the deceased girl with his mother, and in the later verse by the association of his broken love affair with an unsuccessful, erotic, mystic search for God.³⁴

Love and Rindu.

As might be expected, love is the theme of much of prewar Indonesian verse. In Roestam Effendi's verse, love is usually represented by the deity Asmara, *dewi dari segala dewi*, goddess of all goddesses.³⁵ Asmara is something which comes unsought and in disguise: it can be associated with a flower growing quietly, a pool of bathing nymphs, honey or simply with delight. On the other hand, it can also be cruel and is associated frequently with death, recklessness and suffering, even to the extent of being imaged by an arrow thrust into the heart.³⁶ In Sanusi Pane's verse on love, the gentler aspects of the emotion prevail: the waves whispering on the beach, the soul whispering, doves, youth and,

³² "Pekik Asmara", *Pertjikan Permenungan*, p. 89.

³³ For example, "Kenangan Lama", p. 47; "Dalam Kamar", p. 52; and "Kolam ditanam", p. 117.

³⁴ See my forthcoming essay: "Hilang Ia Jang Dilihatnja", *Horison*.

³⁵ "Pekik Asmara", *Pertjikan Permenungan*, p. 86.

³⁶ In "Kenangan Lama", p. 45; "Dewi Asmara", p. 55; "Pekik Asmara", p. 85; and "Ditengah Sunji", p. 92.

often, a delightful uncertainty.³⁷ Amir Hamzah, too links love with natural phenomena: flowers, trees and the wind, above all. The explicitly sexual significance of the flower imagery in his verse (and, the Freudian would add, the flying imagery) has, as yet, not been very much stressed by critics.

Yet for none of these poets is love ever finally a thing of happiness: like everything else it provokes *rindu* by its absence or finishedness. Sanusi Pane in "Bahagia"³⁸ expresses his hope that happiness would come in the form of a *manusia-dewi*, a human-goddess or, more vulgarly 'an angel'. His poem continues:

Kekasih datang, tjinta bernjala
Djiwa terpadu
Mendjadi satu
Tetapi waktu datang menundjukkan tjinta
Bukan bahagia jang dinanti-nanti
Dan aku berdiri miskin dan hina
Sebagai dulu: hidup mati
Menanti bagia tiba

"The beloved came, love burnt/ Our souls were fused/ To become one/ But time came and showed that love/ Was not the happiness I had waited for/ And I was left poor and humbled/ As before: alive but dead/ Awaiting the coming of happiness."

Whilst Amir Hamzah laments in "Tuhanku Apatah Kekal?"³⁹:

Bunga laju disinari matahari
Machluk berangkat menepati djandji
Hidjau langit bertukar mendung
Gelombang reda ditepi pantai

Salangkan gagak beralih warna
Semerbak tjempaka sekali hilang
Apatah lagi laguan kasih
Hilang semata tiada ketara

Tuhanku apatah kekal?

³⁷ Particularly in the early parts of *Puspa Mega*.

³⁸ *Madah Kelana*, p. 42.

³⁹ *Buah Rindu*.

"The flower fades in the heat of the sun/ Creatures depart to keep their promise/ The green of the sky changes to overcast/ The waves fade on the edge of the beach// If even the crow changes colour/ if even the fragrance of the frangipani vanishes/ how much the more so will love's song/ fade away and go completely ...// My God, what lasts?"

Love may disappear for several reasons. The lover may be hesitant and miss his chance and his beloved betrothed to another (as in the early parts of Sanusi Pane's *Puspa Mega*). Or he might go away, to study for instance, leaving his sweetheart behind him, apparently for ever (as in parts of Amir Hamzah's *Buah Rindu*). Or, as we have seen, the beloved may have succumbed to the early death which afflicts so many maidens in Indonesian literature. But, most commonly, no reason is given: love has been given and shyly returned and now love is no more. It is the quality of the *rindu* which is important, not that which provokes it. To put it another way, love is as structurally useful as — to illustrate from Roestam Eeffendi's verse — childhood memories, mother, the sound of a flute, a dove, loneliness, the moon and night-time, the death of a child and the present age's lack of faith. The emotion has no necessary connection with the event which provokes it, nor is its extent connected with the commonly accepted emotional significances of those various events. *Rindu* is an emotion to be enjoyed for its own sake.

Such emotional self-indulgence, expressed in slipshod language, in response to stock stimuli, does not, I believe, readily commend itself to contemporary readers. If one accepts Donald Wesling's claim that "an adequate literary representation of human life will inform description with meditation, and will be at once fully aesthetic and fully ethical",⁴⁰ prewar Indonesian poetry is most inadequate.

HARRY AVELING

⁴⁰ *Wordsworth and the Adequacy of Landscape*. London 1970. Preface.