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AN EPIC HERO AND AN "EPIC TRAITOR" IN THE *HIKAYAT HANG TUAH*

The study of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, the most monumental product of late medieval Malay literature, has raised many controversial questions. One of them is, no doubt, the problem of the social tenor of the HHT, whose principal hero, as is already announced in its wordy heading, "showed great loyalty to his sovereign and rendered him many great services". Some fifteen years ago, in a paper read at the 25th Orientalist Congress, the present author called attention to the utter ingratitude of the raja of Malacca towards the bravest of his heroes, and expressed the opinion that the written version of the HHT which has come down to us, represents a court adaptation of a popular epic containing "a new Malay version of the conflict between a hero and a monarch, the conflict which is so typical for a feudal epic".¹ That paper, having been translated into English, drew a great deal of attention from Malayists, among whom the most explicit critic was Teeuw.² Profound study of the text of the HHT, such as Teeuw emphatically calls for, makes it possible to abandon the support of an oral epos of Hang Tuah which has not been transmitted to us, and provides, in my opinion, new arguments in favour of my viewpoint, which probably was not expounded too convincingly.

I pose the question: what is the function of the episodes in which the raja punishes the innocent Hang Tuah, leaves him at the mercy of his enemies or, in order to satisfy his personal whims, allows the hero to risk his life which is so valuable both to the raja himself and to all his subjects? The author of the HHT remains true to the rules of epic

* Translated from the Russian by H. K. J. Cowan. The Russian version of the article was published in *Istoriko-literaturnye issledovaniya, sbornik statei pamyati akademika N. I. Konrada*, Moscow, 1974.

¹ See B. Parnickel, *An Attempt of Interpretation of the Main Characters of the Malay Hikayat Hang Tuah*, Moscow, 1960, p. 6. XXV International Congress of Orientalists. Papers presented by the USSR delegation.

² See A. Teeuw, "Hang Tuah en Hang Djebat, Nationalisme, Ideologie en Literatuurbeschouwing", *Forum der Letteren*, Februari 1961.

narration³ and does not comment upon these episodes. Of the foreign students only two have paid attention to the ugly role of the raja in these episodes. Teeuw, who considers the "Story of Hang Tuah" a grand and well thought out apotheosis of "the Malay as subject", restricts himself to the categorical statement that the author of the "Story" does not bother to whitewash the raja "because the Malay story-teller did not need to justify the actions of a prince whose absolute sovereignty extends even to the right to do wrong".⁴ De Josselin de Jong points out that in Malay literature there are many examples of a highly critical attitude towards certain rulers, and mentions the "divine judgment" which falls upon sinning princes in a number of works. But he merely comments that the immoral character of the sultan does not relieve Hang Tuah of the duty to obey him as long as he is his lawful ruler.⁵ Numerous typological correspondences suggest that these episodes where the "collision" comes to the surface are of a type, as W. W. Bartold has put it, found in every epic work in which "the magnanimity and the disinterestedness of the hero is opposed to the egoistic policy of the ruler".⁶ It is precisely this inner "collision", in addition to the constant resistance of Hang Tuah against "the foreign enemies" of Malacca, which constitutes, in my opinion, the *Leitmotiv* of the "Story of Hang Tuah", and which allows us to interpret it as a finished and conceptually complete product.

If it had not been for the prophetic dream of Hang Tuah's father, the situation with which the "Story" opens could hardly have led to the idea that the vicissitudes of the descendant of a celestial being — Sang Maniaka — and of the son of a petty tradesman and woodcutter were combined. Only the train of events — the successful fight with similar adventurers like them and the rescue of the prime minister of Malacca (the *bendahara*) — opens the gates of the royal palace for Hang Tuah and his four comrades. As a result the initial situation "becomes a collision (*kollision*) which leads to reactions and thus forms a starting-point as well as a transition to action in the true sense of the word".⁷

³ See Aristoteles, *Poetica*, 1460 a, C. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, London, 1952, pp. 30-31, 48.

⁴ See A. Teeuw, "De Maleise Roman", *Forum der Letteren*, Mei 1960, p. 118.

⁵ P. E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Rise and Decline of a National Hero", *JMBRAS*, vol. 38, pt. 2 (1965), p. 150.

⁶ W. W. Bartold, "Kitâb-i-Korkud, I. Bor'ba bogatyrya s angelom smerti", *Zapiski Wostotchnogo otdeleniya Russkogo arkheologicheskogo obshtchestwa*, vol. 8, 1894, p. 206.

⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *Ästhetik*, Band I, Berlin, 1965, S. 198-199.

From that moment on every exploit of Hang Tuah is subjected to a double judgment: a check on his implacability with regard to the enemies of Malacca and a test of his loyalty towards the frivolous and cruel prince who is for Hang Tuah the exponent of the *daulat*, the sacrosanct principle embodied in the reigning monarch. Hang Tuah's duel, after his return from regular exile, with his closest friend and brother in arms Hang Jebat, who had rebelled against the raja, can be regarded as the culminating scene of the HHT. After a desperate fight Hang Jebat died by his brother's hand. Hang Tuah, who had put the state's interests before personal emotions, felt bitter compassion. The dénouement of the "Story" has two stages. The beginning of the dénouement is an episode full of profound meaning: during a pleasure trip at sea the raja of Malacca looked down at a little fish with golden scales which was swimming beside his ship, and he lost his crown. Hang Tuah dived after the crown in vain, collided with a huge white crocodile, and lost forever his own magical kris which made him invincible. As Teeuw rightly points out, "to Hang Tuah, to the king and to every Malay story-teller it was clear that this spelled ruin for the entire kingdom".⁸ And in fact, after Hang Tuah's illness and his last visit to Rum (the Turkish empire) he went away as a hermit. The raja, having become a dervish, disappeared after receiving a reproof from the Nabi Khidir, and Malacca was conquered by the Portuguese.

Agreeing with Hooykaas and Teeuw that the HHT represents an integral product of art,⁹ I believe that the dénouement of the "Story" must be the decisive moment of an artistic idea which permeates the work. This idea is that neither the boundless courage nor the unshakable loyalty of its subjects can save Malacca, which is ruled by a weak, ungrateful and cruel ruler.¹⁰ Thus, in my opinion, the heavy historical defeat of the Malays, the downfall of their entire brilliant kingdom, finds its explanation in the "Story". Similarly in the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* the killing of his sons and the other crimes of Sultan Ahmad explain the conquest of Pasai by the troops of Majapahit. In the *Malay Annals* the humiliating execution of the royal concubine leads to the fall of Singapore, and the conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese was

⁸ See A. Teeuw, "De Maleise Roman", p. 115.

⁹ See C. Hooykaas, *Over Maleise Literatuur*, Leiden, 1937, p. 77; A. Teeuw, "De Maleise Roman", p. 111.

¹⁰ Cf. "When the shâh plants a tree of wickedness, he loses his well-being and his throne".

Quoted according to M. N. O. Osmanow, *Firdousi, Zhizn' i tvorchestvo*, Moskva, 1959, str. 75.

provoked by the murder of the *bendahara* of Malacca and of his relatives by order of Sultan Mahmud.¹¹

The inner "collision" in the "Story of Hang Tuah" makes it possible, as we have already said, to connect it with the extensive cycle of popular epic products. It is characteristic of these epic "collisions" that they never develop into a decisive clash. W.Ya. Propp has written that "Ilya's protest does not remain within the limits of demonstration, it also takes more active forms".¹² But it is difficult to describe Ilya's table boast, mentioned by Propp, as an active form of protest.

Drink you poor, do not doubt
Tomorrow I shall be in Kiev to be prince,
and with me you will be leaders.¹³

In the words of E. M. Meletinskii the unity of hero and epic community is, as a rule, represented by the certain, though more unstable, unity of hero and epic "prince".¹⁴ When trying to apply a standard for that "unstable unity", which also appears in the Iliad (Achilles with his "lowly counterpart" Thersites on one side, and Agamemnon on the other), the "collision" between Hang Tuah and the raja of Malacca appears to be very dissimilar to the violent clashes of Rustam with Kaikawus, especially when the hero emphatically exclaims:

I am no slave of the Shah, and slave I shall not become!
Only before God I stand as slave.¹⁵

Equally far removed from Hang Tuah, who has the deepest respect for his ruler, are Guillaume d'Orange of the Old French epic "Cycle of Garin de Monglane" and Marco Kraljević, the hero of the Serbian epic, who occasionally frighten their rulers and do not give a pin for them.¹⁶ In his behaviour towards the monarch Hang Tuah is more like El Cid, "who bites the fieldgrass", going down on his hands and knees

¹¹ See P. E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies presented to Sir Richard Winstedt*, Oxford, 1964.

¹² See W. Ya. Propp, *Russkii geroitcheskii epos*, Moscow, 1958, p. 298.

¹³ See *Pesni, sobrannye P. N. Rybnikovym*, vol. II, Moscow, 1909, p. 127.

¹⁴ See *Teoriya literatury. Osnovnye problemy v istoricheskom osweshtchenii. Rody i zhanry*, Moscow, 1964, p. 85.

¹⁵ *Antologiya tadzhikskoi poezii*, edited by A. Bertel's and S. Sherwinskii, M., 1957, p. 130.

¹⁶ See *Srpske narodne pyesme*, skupio ikh i na swiet izdao Wuk Stef. Karajić, kniga 2, Beograd, 1958, str. 334, 397-398 (songs "Marko Kralyewich poznaye ochinu sablyu" and "Marko Kralyewich i Musa Kesejiya"); J. Frappier, *Les chansons de geste du cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, I. Paris, 1965, pp. 110-111 (concerning the songs "Le couronnement de Louis" and "Le charroi de Nîmes").

before King Alphonso, who disgraced him because of slander.¹⁷ The subject of what is in my view the culminating episode of the "Story", as W. M. Zhirmunskii has formulated it, "the ruler unjustly throws into jail (or banishes from his kingdom) the best of his knights. The knight, set free (or recalled) when the enemy attacks, becomes the saviour of the kingdom"¹⁸ is also widely known in world epics. The principal and specific feature of our epic lies, however, in the fact that Hang Tuah is compelled to fight not with foreigners who invade his native country, but with his own close friend and brother in arms, Hang Jebat.¹⁹ I shall, in this connection, present a closer view of the character of Hang Jebat, who plays an important part in the "collision" of the HHT.

"Another one, called Hang Jebat, is also of good appearance, has a fair complexion and curly hair, and is sharp in speech"; in this manner the Batin Singapura described Hang Jebat as he told the *bendahara* of Malacca about the five boys who overcame the pirates from Siantan.²⁰ Since childhood Hang Jebat had been the foremost of Hang Tuah's friends (only Hang Kasturi is comparable with him to some extent). In the HHT Hang Jebat often speaks. He thinks aloud about what will become of the Malay delegation after the "Magnificent Five" profaned the forbidden garden of the ruler of Majapahit. He threatens to reduce Majapahit to a scorched desert if something happens to Hang Tuah. Together with Hang Kasturi he prepares an assault on the ruler of Majapahit and his chancellor Gajah Mada in case the warrior secretly sent by them deals a blow to Hang Tuah. Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi take it upon themselves to guard the entrance to Hang Tuah's room in Majapahit; they even protect him against assault when he goes to relieve himself. The description of Hang Tuah returning from the battle-field, staggering and embracing Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi, is difficult to forget. Already during the five friends' first struggle Hang Jebat's fighting spirit stood out when he answered the enemy warrior who threatened him: "No, it is you who must bow to me so that I may forgive your offence". His ardour does not weaken even when he volun-

¹⁷ See *Canter de mio Cid*, texto, notes e introduccion de S. J. Mawrer, Buenos Aires, 1970, p. 94 (2021-2022).

¹⁸ W. M. Zhirmunskii, *Narodnyi geroitcheskii epos, Srawnitel'no-istoricheskie otcherki*, Moscow, 1962, p. 130.

¹⁹ If in similar scenes the friend also plays a part, he usually incites the hero to loyalty: the death of Patroclus brings Achilles back under the banners of Agamemnon, and Dobrynya calms down the impetuous Ilya Muromets and takes him to a feast in the princely palace (*Ssora Il'i Muromtsa s knyazem Wladimirom*).

²⁰ HHT Djakarta, 1956, hal. 29.

teers to settle with the general who prepared the attack on Malacca. "Just say so, sir", he says, addressing Hang Tuah, "and to-morrow your slave will slay Megat Trengganu at the raja of Indrapura's reception" (HHT, 231).

We turn now to Hang Jebat's last meeting with Hang Tuah before the intended execution of the latter. In tears the brothers in arms, Hang Tuah, Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi, embrace and kiss each other, and then part. On leaving, Hang Jebat and Hang Kasturi, at the command of the raja, take with them Hang Tuah's kris which makes him invincible. The raja hands over the kris to Hang Jebat, and the latter "was extremely happy to get the kris and thought to himself: 'Apparently I shall become *laksamana*'" (HHT, 306). The appointment of Hang Jebat as *laksamana*, the commander in chief of the Malacca navy, was in the circumstances not in the least surprising inasmuch as Hang Jebat was considered the natural successor of Hang Tuah and the latter himself had predicted his appointment to that post. This proves to be the exposition of the central episode of the HHT with which we are concerned, and Hang Jebat, so it would seem, proves himself to be the loyal subject who is at the same time by no means without human feelings. While he deplors the fact that his friend was innocently condemned to death by a higher authority in the state, he maintains discipline and does justice to the tokens of appreciation received from that very authority.

Then follows the description of the rapid rise of Hang Jebat. The king rewards his new favourite in every possible way and bestows on him the rank which up to then had only been awarded to the *bendaharas*. The hero, however, misuses these august favours. With incredible audacity he openly accepts the overtures of the palace beauties and wickedly mistreats the courtiers ("sirs, you need not come into the palace and make noise here", HHT, 310), thereby provoking the strong disapproval of his close friends and prejudicing the beloved royal consort Tun Teja against himself.

Within a short time the royal palace is changed into Hang Jebat's pleasure garden, where he feasts, amuses himself, and revels with the royal concubines and other occupants of the palace who please him. Under the cover of night the raja, accompanied by his body-guards and those wives and concubines remaining loyal to him, leaves the palace. Pleased, Hang Jebat unhesitatingly washes in the royal bath, dresses in the royal clothes, and sits on the royal throne. Feasting continues incessantly in the palace, and only from time to time Hang Jebat laughingly

risks from the royal seat in order to crush new bodies of men sent by the king to regain his place. It appears that the rebel is quite satisfied with the wholly absurd situation of reigning over women and being the master of a palace emerging, like a lonely island, out of a sea of enmity, hate and fear.

Let us hear what Hang Jebat himself has to say concerning these turbulent events. As long as Hang Jebat was still in the raja's good graces he dismissed the matter airily and avoided giving a straight answer to Hang Kasturi's question. Having treated the dignitaries like dirt, he suddenly adds, as if for their edification, that the times of Hang Tuah are gone. But then he again complains to Hang Kasturi that the *bendahara* envies him, Hang Jebat, and possibly even hides Hang Tuah somewhere [we recall that in the eyes of Hang Jebat the *bendahara* was Hang Tuah's murderer (HHT, 338), and so Hang Jebat adroitly throws doubt upon the loyalty of the *bendahara*, not suspecting that the accusation fully corresponds with the facts].

When Hang Jebat becomes master of the situation, however, he begins to sing a totally different tune. Thus, when his comrades come at the head of the royal host and threaten his refuge, and when Hang Kasturi challenges him to a duel, he answers Hang Kasturi straightforwardly: "I have done all that because of my grief over the death of the *laksamana*. His blood I avenge on the raja of Malacca and his envious officials. Why did the raja not send the enviers of Hang Tuah after my soul, for they would be without their heads by now. As for you, my three brothers, you are not my enemies, and against you three my hand will not be raised. Allah and His Apostle are my witnesses that I do not wish to fight my brothers" (HHT, 318-319). To this Hang Kasturi replied: "Oh Jebat, I understand you but what can I do, I have not come here of my own free will but I have been sent by my king..." (HHT, 319). Hang Jebat says much the same to the three elder courtiers devoted to Hang Tuah, who headed the following detachment that advanced against the palace. In both cases Hang Jebat, who beat the besiegers left and right, does not even lay a finger on the friends and sympathizers of Hang Tuah among them.

When he recovers from his surprise at the sight of Hang Tuah returning from secret exile, Hang Jebat swears by Allah that he would never have revolted if he had known that Hang Tuah was alive.²¹

²¹ I note a little further down that Hang Tuah, in answer to Hang Jebat's repeated explanations, says: "Your words are true, but we, royal servants, must consider carefully every step" (HHT, 338).

Hang Tuah suggests that he regret his actions but Hang Jebat answers: "There is nothing for me to regret, nor do I fear death. I know that I am meant to die at your hands and one cannot avoid one's fate. Only you must first see how the rebel Jebat fights: it will take fourty days to rid Malacca of dead bodies, and there will be nothing to breathe but the stink. 'If once you're bad, then do be bad, and don't be shy about it' — thus I go on" (HHT, 333). Again Hang Jebat does not wish to be the first to attack his friend, but Hang Tuah goes up into the palace and the fatal duel begins in which Hang Jebat fights with the same determination with which he had acted against the exponent of the sacrosanct principle of Malay state authority and had profaned the attributes of the royal power in the palace.

The description of Hang Jebat's last actions create a great impression. The mortal wound Hang Tuah inflicted upon him leads to terrible and long-drawn-out agony: Hang Jebat was ruined... After a three-day seclusion for purification Hang Tuah goes out into the street, sees countless bodies of Malaccans killed by Hang Jebat, and calls on him. "And his voice reached Hang Jebat. And then he went towards the voice and saw the *laksamana*. And the latter said: 'Eh, Jebat, enough of your killing thousands of people, for you yourself are no more of this world!' And when Hang Jebat heard these words he knelt before him and said: 'O, my lord, quickly kill your slave, I would rather die by your hand than fall under the blows of strangers.'

And when the *laksamana* heard this he took Hang Jebat by the hand and led him away. He wiped off the blood covering Hang Jebat from head to foot and then took him to his own house. And the *laksamana* asked: 'Oh, my brother, won't you eat a little rice?' And Hang Jebat answered: 'No, my lord, but may the Almighty God reward you for your kindness which I have not the strength to repay. But if you would do me a favour, I have only one request.' And the *laksamana* asked: 'What is that request?' And Hang Jebat said: 'Your slave has had intercourse with Dang Baharu, a servant girl from the house of the *bendahara* Paduka Raja, and now she is seven months pregnant by me. If a child is born to her, take it into your house and educate it or make it your servant, whichever you wish. That is all I ask from you.' And the *laksamana* said: 'Very well, my brother, with God's will your child will become my child.'

And, having granted Hang Jebat's request, the *laksamana* served him betel, and he accepted the betel and tasted it. And Hang Jebat began to unwind the bandage which protected his wound. The *laksamana* un-

derstood that Hang Jebat wished to die and without hesitation he undid the rest of the bandage. And when it was off, the blood rushed to Hang Jebat's face and spouted out of his eyes, his ears and all the pores of his body. Hang Jebat fell into the arms of the *laksamana* and died" (HHT, 344-345).

Even after his death, however, Hang Jebat did not sink into oblivion. Appearing before the raja, Hang Tuah requests that Hang Kasturi be able to go with him to see the dead rebel, "because he was a friend and very like a brother to us ever since childhood — formerly the five of us were inseparable. You know yourself, my prince, all in life is not simple" (HHT, 346). Hang Kasturi wept at the sight of the bloody body of Hang Jebat, lying before Hang Tuah's house, and he exclaimed: "Poor Jebat, my poor brother, your death was so senseless! If only you had met this end in the cause of our king, I would have died together with you!" (*ibid.*). Hang Jebat is not forgotten when his body is dragged to the market-place at the command of the raja, nor when Hang Tuah sends his new-born son to the father-in-law of the Malaccan raja, at Indrapura (according to the Kelantan version, Hang Tuah thereby saves the child from death, because the king had ordered it to be thrown into the sea).²²

Even today Hang Jebat is still remembered because he draws the attention of writers and scholars. In Malaysia he became a symbol of the young radical intelligentsia and was interpreted in many products of literature and art as the noble rebel who takes action against arbitrariness.²³ Kassim Ahmad wrote in 1958 that "the figure of Jebat represents the first personification [in Malay literature, B.P.] of future man, i.e. of our contemporary".²⁴ Kassim Ahmad does not stand alone: his views meet with good response and warm support, e.g. in the article of S. Othman, who regards Hang Jebat as a precursor of the Malay national

²² See *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, menurut naskah Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka diselenggarakan oleh Kassim Ahmad, Kuala Lumpur, 1964, p. 329.

²³ See, e.g., Tongkat Warrant, "Sa-buah choretan", *Dewan Bahasa*, March, 1958; Kassim Ahmad, "Dialogue", *Write*, 1958, no. 5; Kemala, "Idham Khalil", *Dewan Masharakat*, mei 1970. Hang Jebat is the hero in the Malaysian film *Hang Jebat* (1961). As a positive hero Hang Jebat is also represented in the plays of Ali Aziz, *Hang Jebat menderhaka, suatu tragedi*, Singapore, 1960 and Usman Awang, *Mati-nya sa-orang Pahlawan*, in: Usman Awang, *Tamu di-Bukit Kenny dan tiga lakunan sa-babak*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.

²⁴ Kassim Ahmad, "Mempelajari Sastera Melayu", *Dewan Bahasa*, Aug. 1958. In a similar manner the figure in question is treated in yet another work by the same author: Kassim Ahmad, *Characterisation in "Hikayat Hang Tuah"*, Kuala Lumpur, 1964.

liberation movement and a fighter against feudal absolutism.²⁵ At the same time, however, Teeuw does not wish to believe one word of Hang Jebat's and describes him as a man "who, feeling his impunity and pursuing his own interests, deliberately violates binding laws, and then, seeing that he cannot avoid punishment, decides to go on with his crimes to the end. In this work we are concerned with concrete Malay standards: obedience to the prince with all the consequences which follow thereupon, a basic principle of Malay society. But those standards apply not only to some specific, and in this case feudal and therefore, perhaps, in our eyes reprehensible, society. The artistic force of this work lies, above all, in the fact that those binding standards have a considerably more universal character, and in this connection Hang Jebat is an offender in the broadest sense of the word. His conduct is, even from a western point of view, ... extremely bad. He is *durhaka* in the true sense of that word: *drohaka*, 'a public enemy', 'a socially harmful man' ".²⁶

However strange it may seem, the contradictory judgments concerning Hang Jebat help to point out that basically he is the very epic hero *pur sang* of whom Bowra writes. The surplus of vital energy, the worry about personal glory, and the belief in one's own "ego" often lead this hero to a severe clash with public interests, force upon him a tragic choice between different value-systems, and lead him to a "tragic mistake", ending in his death. It is also true that "the splendour which irradiates a hero in the hour of his defeat or death is a special feature of heroic poetry".²⁷

The striking similarity between Hang Jebat and the typological description by Bowra is the more surprising since Bowra, who is unacquainted with the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, regards "the epic traitors" such as Ganelon or Vuk Brancović (recall how Ganelon explains to the barons of Charlemagne that his malice against Roland "is not treason" ²⁸) as the real heroes. The traditional epic traitor, such as Hang Jebat, cannot be called a man of the future in the strict sense of the word. But it is also clear that he does not deserve the verdict Teeuw passes on him in the name of law-abiding mankind. Teeuw does not take into consideration historical and literary data which must be known to him,

²⁵ See S. Othman, "Konsep kebangsaan dalam kesusasteraan lama Melayu", *Dewan Bahasa*, Jun 1970.

²⁶ A. Teeuw, "Hang Tuah en Hang Djebat", p. 47.

²⁷ C. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, p. 126.

²⁸ "mais traïsun nule n'en i otrei" (*La chanson de Roland*, publ. par J. Bédier, Paris, s.d., p. 312, 3760).

and absolutizes by no means unreserved medieval Malay social ideology.

"The all-conquering, stone-like feeling of justice, characteristic of the people of the Middle Ages", and the "indestructible belief that every deed requires retribution",²⁹ were typical of medieval Malays as well as of Europeans. But in accordance with the ethical rules prevailing at that time, the subject could not with impunity blame the raja for the wrong he had done (the general revolt against the cannibalistic raja in the *Hikayat negeri Kedah* is an exception which is perhaps explained by the fact that this work was written at a relatively late date, in the 18th century, and that the crimes of the raja in this case were already of a totally exceptional nature). The official ideology gave the discontented the right to leave the country of the undesired monarch or to wait until providence punished the criminal ruler (and often his subjects with him!) for his sins.

Leaving one's residence is not an easy matter, however, and providence is usually in no hurry to pass judgment on criminals. Therefore, some related sentiments naturally arose in the public conscience of the Malays. There were dynamic symptoms carrying "a clearly expressed negative charge against this or that aspect of the former way of life" which were "always actively directed not only towards something but even more against something."³⁰ These sentiments that cropped up in a soil that had been fertilized by the remnants of local patriarchal notions and the ideas of Islam, easily spread in those spheres of art, religion and ethics where emotions have preponderance over rational and logical ways of thinking.³¹ Thus within the preserved framework of the prevailing ideology a distinct ambivalence develops with regard to the institution of monarchy, an ambivalence which can be regarded not only as the dialectic contradiction between the official ideology and psychology³² but also, according to the position of the investigator, as the result of the struggle "between the prevailing tendency of the feudal culture that had been formed and the opposite tendency which often has not sufficiently taken shape and has not quite been stripped of a thin feudal coating"³³; as the presence of different axiological systems, a dominating one and "lateral" ones, in the framework of the disintegrating society³⁴

²⁹ See J. Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, Haarlem, 1952, p. 24.

³⁰ See B. F. Porshnew, *Sotsialnaya psikhologiya i istoriya*, Moscow, 1966, p. 89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

³³ See I. S. Braginskii, "K. diskussii o stanovlenii realizma w literaturakh Wostoka", *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1961, no. 5, p. 156.

³⁴ See W. F. Wertheim, *East-West Parallels, Sociological Approaches to Modern Asia*, The Hague, 1964, p. 27.

or as the result of experiences connected with the early fase of infancy.³⁵

These social feelings often came to light not only in Malay literature, but also in the literature of the Javanese and Balinese for whom the monarchy was an even more charismatic institution than for the late medieval Malays. In some cases these sentiments took a frankly traditional shape, serving as a suitable lightning-conductor for public passions. Thus during the performances of the "Balinese opera" (*arja*) the peasants "with explosions of pornographical laughter" reacted time and time again to the tricks of the jesters — shield bearers who parodied the court etiquette which was so full of sacrosanct significance.³⁶ During *wayang purwa* performances Javanese village spectators reacted similarly to the jokes of *panakawans* who, according to Aveling, expressed frustration and subconscious dreams of the society, some of whose members formerly were forced to follow "subtle" patterns of conduct and become traitors (*menderhaka*) in the true sense of the word in order to foster the progress of the human personality in this society.³⁷ Similar emotions were also experienced by the readers of the Malay *Hikayat Pelanduk Jinaka*, in which the deceitful and roguish mouse-deer becomes the ruler of the animal kingdom and receives the homage from animals bearing pompous and absurd titles.³⁸ In other cases anti-aristocratic sentiments find satisfaction in stories which are in agreement with the official ideology but describe kings who are punished by God or by fate. In Bali, for instance, the poems about Bagus Diarsa and Jaya Prana may be included among such stories.³⁹ The same feelings may be present in the veiled form of the Javanese *wangsalans* (a type of riddle in which the part that is expressed must call to mind the part that is concealed) or in the Malay *pantuns* which sometimes admit of precisely the opposite interpretation.⁴⁰

³⁵ J. M. van der Kroef, *Indonesian Social Evolution, Some Psychological Considerations*, Amsterdam, 1958, p. 48.

³⁶ See G. Bateson, and M. Mead, *Balinese Character: A Photographical Analysis*, New York, 1952. Cf. L. M. Coster-Wijnsman, *Uilenspiegelverhalen in Indonesië, in het bijzonder in de Soendalanden*, Santpoort, 1929.

³⁷ See H. Aveling, "Mahasiswa, Masyarakat dan Kesusastraan Indonesia", *Dewan Sastra*, September 1972.

³⁸ See R. Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, Revised Edition, *JMBRAS*, vol. 31, pt. 3 (1958; published in 1961), pp. 18, 49, 68, = Monographs on Malay Subjects, no. 5.

³⁹ See J. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp, *De Goddelijke Gast op Bali, I Bagus Diarsa*, Bandoeng, 1940; C. Hooykaas, *The Lay of Jaya Prana. A Balinese Uriah*, London, 1958.

⁴⁰ See R. Roolvink, "Five-Line Songs in the Sejarah Melayu?", *BKI*, dl. 122, afl. 4, pp. 455-457.

The Javanese *lakon*, *Petruk dadi raja*, is also similar to the literary products characterized above. In this work we are again confronted with a quite typical variant on the theme of "epic treason". According to the *lakon* the prince of Madura, through his haughtiness and pride, arouses the wrath of the gods and they decide to punish him. The result is that the *panakawan* Petruk, placed at the head of an army of giants, captures Madura and seats himself on the Madurese throne. The exiled king of Madura turns to his neighbours for help, but Petruk defeats them also. After this he indulges in drunkenness, fraternizes with the courtiers, demands female dancers and "in every way lacks royal dignity". The lordly Angkawijaya (Abhimanyu in Sanskrit) arrives in Madura searching for his missing *panakawan* and Petruk, unrecognized, engages in a duel with him and wounds him. Thereafter he conquers all the great Pandawas, and nearly raises his hand against his own father, Semar, and his brother, Nalagareng. These two, however, "instantly conquer him, ripping off his princely regalia and clothes, and he appears before them as the servant of Angkawijaya".⁴¹

Clearly, this popular Javanese drama strongly recalls the central episode of the HHT. There is, however, one essential difference: the offender of the foundations of Javanese society, who was conquered by his own next of kin (in the HHT by a close friend), remains unpunished. But this is not surprising because Petruk, just like his father and brother, belongs to the *panakawans*. Acting as the instrument of the gods he punished the king who had aroused their wrath, enjoyed impunity to his heart's content, and, once unmasked, was restored to his previous condition under the good-natured laughter of the spectators. The will of the gods appears in this drama as an ideological excuse for a terrible criminal "in the broadest sense of that word", the sinner who took up arms against the king and shed the blood of his own master.⁴² And there

⁴¹ See H. Overbeck, "Petroek als Vorst", *Djawa*, dl. II, afl. 4. (1922). I have used in the article the summary in L. A. Merwart, "Malaikii teatr", in *Wostotchnyi teatr*, Leningrad, 1929, pp. 124-127.

⁴² "The will of the gods" and "the command of fate", not only asserted themselves in popular drama, but also in life. Sometimes the offender of "basic social standards" suddenly gained victory. Thus, usurpers were the apparent founders of medieval Javanese dynasties such as Erlangga (1019-1049), Wijaya (1293-1309) and Senapati (1582-1601). However, their victories were taken as evidence of the fact that they were the personification of the gods or their nearest relatives or were thought to enjoy the blessing of the gods which is bestowed upon kings (see: C. C. Berg, "The Javanese Picture of the Past", *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, Ithaca, 1965). A similar view of things was also held by the Malays. The medieval Portuguese historians J. de Barros and T. Pires report that in the principality of Pasai in

is no mention of punishment when it is Semar himself who is an incarnation of the almighty Sang Yang Tunggal and revolts against his royal masters in the Javanese *lakons*, *Dewa lelana* and *Pandu Bregola*, and in the Malay *wayang* drama *Kerak nasi (Nasi Dingin)*.⁴³

The rebel hero of the HHT ends his life in a tragic manner, but he could count on the sympathy of the reader. To him were ascribed noble intentions: none of the epic traitors known to us rebelled in order to avenge a friend, but rather because they had feelings of personal honour.⁴⁴ Hang Jebat was endowed with tremendous courage and strength, and this was not, in the eyes of the practical medieval readers, minimized by the fact that he revolted just after having received the magic kris of Hang Tuah.⁴⁵ Had he acted differently, he would have been taken for a fool. The time for a feast amidst women who were madly in love with him was bestowed upon him. He was also given time to perform heroic deeds. These, it is true, included the liquidation of a great number of countrymen; but this was not an offence within the framework of the imperturbable epic philosophy of life.⁴⁶ And after

North Sumatra a regicide automatically became king even in the 16th century. The inhabitants of Pasai were, they say, convinced that this was a laudable custom inasmuch as God would never allow such an important and powerful person as the king to fall without being guilty, since he is God's representative on earth [*The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires* . . . , vol. I, London, 1944, p. 143; M. Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from Joao de Barros' *Decadas da Asia*", *Indonesia*, 1970, no. 9 (April) p. 146]. In such a manner the official ideology willingly made concessions to the successful offender by including him in its world view. To conclude with an old Chinese proverb: The winners are government hosts, the losers are a gang of robbers.

⁴³ See J. Kats, *Het Javaansche toneel, I. Wayang Poerwa*, Weltevreden, 1923, pp. 349-356; A. Sweeney, *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow Play*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, pp. 266-267.

⁴⁴ When discussing the motives for Hang Jebat's behaviour some investigators refer to the fact that Hang Jebat on several occasions explains his revolt with references to fate (see A. Teeuw, "Hang Tuah en Hang Djebat", p. 44; P. E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Rise and Decline of a National Hero", p. 153). In the epic context references of this kind can only be taken for "general-theoretical" motivations of this or any other occurrence, but not for their direct causes.

⁴⁵ Cf. A. Teeuw, "Hang Tuah en Hang Djebat", p. 46; P. E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Rise and Decline of a National Hero", p. 153.

⁴⁶ We recall how Maxim Gorky, who possessed a rare epic sense, was heartily delighted about the wide scope of the Nowgorodian Wasilii Buslaew and was not at all worried about the fact that his men-at-arms, who had a dispute with the Nowgorodian suburban peasants,

"thrashed . . . often to death,
twice, three times more twisted,
hands, legs they broke . . ."

(*Byliny*, introd. article, selection of texts and comments by P. D. Ukhov, Moscow, 1957, p. 349).

all that happened he was given some moments to prepare himself peacefully for death, to express a last wish and to die in the arms of his best friend who had also been his terrible adversary.

In summarizing the character of Hang Jebat, we can now also justly appreciate that episode of the HHT which has for so long held our attention. We can now see that its significance is not merely that Hang Tuah was compelled to make an important sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland by slaying his rebel friend nor that the duel between Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat is really a heroic combat fascinating to the reader. Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat stand out in that single combat as two parts of one "ego", which are usually more or less harmoniously combined in one character. The unruliness of the epic hero and his solicitude for the public welfare which causes him to be loyal to the monarch are personified in the HHT by two different but perfect heroes who are bound by ties of friendship and end up in an implacable struggle. We know that in this tragic fight the state sovereignty will prevail over the sovereign personality or, in the words of Hegel, loyalty and obedience with regard to the master conquer subjective sentiments: scrupulousness, honour, the feeling of offence, etc. However, the bloody and brilliant victory of Hang Tuah over the second half of his own being turns out to be his simultaneous and implicit catastrophe involving the psychological motive for the downfall of the Malaccan sultanate. The mutual elimination of emotions of substance and emotions of form, concerning which L. S. Wygotskiĭ wrote,⁴⁷ finds a remarkable solution in the HHT and gives it a special place among the epic-heroic literary works of the world's nations.

⁴⁷ See L. S. Wygotskiĭ, *Psikhologiya iskusstva*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 237-274.