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THE FAILURE OF A HERO AN ANALYSIS OF PRAMUDYA ANANTA TUR'S SHORT STORY 'SUNAT'

1. The constant flow of books and articles dealing with literary theory over the last decade or two has made one thing very clear: methodology has become the most discussed subject. "Contemporary literary criticism is on the threshold of a new phase. This is expressed in its ever-growing striving not so much toward unimpeachable answers as toward the verification of the correct way of posing questions. Literary criticism is learning to ask; previously it hastened to answer" (Lotman 1976:6). The danger inherent in this welter of new methods and new approaches is obvious: few attempts are made to arrive at a comprehensive systematic theory.

The work of Yu. M. Lotman is, however, one such attempt, and it is an impressive, fascinating one at that. His studies — prominent manifestations of Soviet structuralism — should be seen as an ongoing elaboration of Russian Formalism and its progeny, modified by French structuralism, Sapir, and modern information theories. Lotman is a semiotician.

It is not our intention here to give a detailed explanation of Lotman's ideas with all their implications.¹ Only those concepts will be summarized which are applied in the main body of this paper, the analysis of 'Sunat' [Circumcision], a short story written by the Indonesian author Pramudya Ananta Tur, as published in the 1952 edition of *Tjerita dari Blora* (Jakarta 1952). In the conclusion some suggestions will be made for further research into Pramudya's oeuvre, a highlight in modern Indonesian literature, along the lines indicated by Lotman.

Lack of an explicit, strong framework of theoretical concepts is one of the characteristic features of studies concerning Indonesian literature. The work of many scholars in our field appears to be based on

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intuitive, implicit notions about the literariness of given texts, the problems of interpretation and evaluation, and the relation between language and reality. Too often this has unavoidably led to unverifiable, more or less arbitrary analyses of texts, genres, and periods.² My primary aim here is to show that the study of Indonesian literature can only benefit by the consistent application of a comprehensive literary theory.

2.1 Literary language is a secondary, modelling sign-system. This is a basic tenet in most semiotic approaches.

2.1.1 In an everyday speech-act the system of the particular natural language used (e.g. Indonesian or English) is only partly realized. Both sender and receiver focus on the information contained in the utterance, while the system of the language as a whole remains unquestioned. The separate elements (basically words, or signs, i.e., arbitrary combinations of a signifier and a signified) are conventionalized and automatized, both in their meaning and in their faculty of combination. "The semantics of the units dictate the nature of the relations" (Lotman 1972:296). A literary text speaks in a special language, which is superimposed on the particular natural language. This secondary, additional system is constructed on the analogy of the system of the natural language: both are structured on the basis of the relational principle of combination and selection and the connected hierarchy, signification being the ultimate aim.

In a text perceived as a work of art such a secondary system is actuated completely. Both sender and receiver deliberately try to create a total comprehensive system; the separate elements achieve signification only through their co-oppositional, hierarchical relationships within the whole. "The character of the relationships dictates the semantics of the units" (Lotman 1972:296). Any pattern of regularities can be taken as being significant; ultimately all the various significations serve the system as a coherent whole.³

2.1.2 Every language system constitutes a complete model of reality; the system of the natural language is the model of reality par excellence: "Natural language, which is correlated with the world, becomes its model, a projection of reality upon the plane of language" (Lotman 1976:20).⁴

An every-day utterance, perceived as a message in the natural language, is a partial realization of a model.

A literary text represents the total realization of a given system, from which consequently a total model of reality, of the world, or of life, can be deduced. It should be stressed that such a model has its own system of denotations, which is not a copy but a compact compendium of the denotations of the particular natural language. "Secondary modelling systems are structures based on a natural lan-

guage. As structures superimposed on it such systems have a supplementary, secondary structure of an ideological, ethical, aesthetical or any other nature" (Lotman 1972:61).

2.1.3 In an every-day utterance the natural language system is not questioned: we tend to give the accepted meanings to words and to string them together into sentences according to the conventional rules of grammar.

On the secondary level the automatism collapses: the system to be used to mould the text into a coherent, significant whole is not known when the reader starts reading.⁵ His expectations are indeterminate, and only through attentive reading and re-reading will he be able to determine this secondary system. Eventually his successful efforts may lead again to automatization: the system so discovered may be incorporated into the system of the given natural language, and the text become a mere message in that language (cf. Lotman 1972:113ff. and Shukman 1976:327).⁶

2.1.4 Perceived as a speech-act in a natural language, 'Sunat' is a partial realization of the Indonesian language; only a small part of Indonesian is used, and thus only a fragment of reality is given. In the world created by the Indonesian language, circumcision plays a role; Pramudya seems to inform us about his own circumcision.

Seen as a work of art, 'Sunat' is to be read as the actuation of a comprehensive system of meaning, a model of reality shared by the author and his readers. On the basis of co-oppositions a hierarchically structured whole can be analysed into several levels of signification. In the analysis below I will show that the conflict between Java and Islam is one of these; in 3.4 others will be suggested.

2.2 As was noted above, any regular pattern of similarities and differences, constructed on the basis of a contrastive comparison of specific elements, will result in signification (cf. Lotman 1976:33-34). This capacity of textual elements for organization into poly-interpretable systems of regularities makes for conciseness and a polyphonic character of the text as a whole; the greater the combinative potential of the separate units, the more meaning a work of art will contain.

In a literary text this will inevitably result in a plurality of meaning: various overall systems can be constructed, which are sometimes mutually antagonistic, sometimes mutually supplementary. By means of this plurality of meaning a vast amount of information may be transmitted to the reader about the model of reality of the author and the culture he belongs to. The approach of a text as a work of art implies a willingness to search for this plurality. Tension and excitement are aroused in the perceiver: the probability that the text will contain a number of co-existent orders forces him to adopt an attitude of intensified perception towards the text (the aim of any

work of art), and consequently towards the world around him. 2.3 Systematization implies a search for coherence; only coherence conduces to intelligibility (Barthes 1964:215 and 270) and credibility (Lévi-Strauss 1969:13). Any system applied to a text should result in a coherent ordering of the separate elements: it must be able to retain its viability when confronted with equally total and homogeneous competitive systems (cf. Lotman 1972:104-109; Barthes 1963:159-160, 1964:270-272; Japp 1977:65-67).⁷

2.3.1 'Sunat' offers the possibility of plural interpretation; at least three coherent systems of meaning can be detected in it: the conflict between Java and Islam, the conflict between childhood and manhood, and the conflict between poverty and wealth.

2.4 In order to create meaning, the work of art is decomposed — on the principle of similarity and opposition — into a semantic field, a series of contrastive concepts that ultimately cohere in a final, unifying antithesis, namely the "archiseme" (Lotman 1972:216 and 251). All conceptions of time, social values, ethics, etc., which are discerned in the text must be classifiable in this basic binary opposition.

2.4.1 Reality, the world, is organized in terms of space, which is equally divided into binary oppositions: high vs. low, left vs. right, far vs. near, etc. In every text concepts are ordered by means of this spatial classification: "In literary texts a binary semantic opposition is usually the basis for the internal organization of textual elements: the world is divided into rich and poor, familiar and strange, orthodox and heretic (...) and this world is realized in terms of space: the world of the poor is realized in the suburbs, the slums, the attics; that of the rich in the main street, palaces, apartments" (Lotman 1972:337; cf. Lotman 1972:312-313 and 1974:200ff.).

2.5 The borderline between the two series of conceptual oppositions is the key to any intelligible interpretation. A text has a "sujet", an event, only if some element, mostly the hero, is able to cross the borderline, i.e. if he is able to transcend the classification of the world in which he moves. If the hero is not able to cross this border, he affirms the prevailing classificatory system, and as such is "typical" (Lotman 1974:347 and 1972:329ff.).

2.5.1 In 'Sunat' the hero (Aku) does not cross the border; he is not able to overthrow the existing world-order.

2.6 Through his spatial classification the author indicates his stand in matters of ethics, religion, etc. Two perspectives are possible: the outside is viewed and evaluated in terms of the inside ("we are in, they are out"), or the inside is viewed from the outside ("we are out, they are in"). The inside is familiar, ordered and safe, the outside is strange, chaotic and frightening (cf. Lotman 1976:83).

For a determination of the author's particular perspective the use of pronouns can be very enlightening: "The higher the modelling role

of the text, the more significant is the constructional function of pronouns" (Lotman 1976:83).

2.6.1 In 'Sunat' the orientation is from the inside to the outside: "we are in, they are out". In his curiosity the hero tries to step across the borderline to reach the outside, only to realize that these efforts are useless and vain. Moreover, the story is a fortunate choice for illustrating the importance of pronouns: "kami" (we, the ordered group) is used to emphasize the familiarity and safety of Java, that is, the inside, while "aku" (I, the lonely sufferer) is closely related with the frightening strangeness of Islam, the outside, which is eventually rejected.

2.7 The reduction of a text to two contrastive series of concepts is of extraordinary relevance for both textual and cultural interpretation; it can be used as a criterion for classifying texts (and, by analogy, cultures) into two types, viz.:

A. Texts which characterize the structure of the world (Lotman 1974:345). Their classification of concepts and values is fixed, ordered, constant: the correlated concepts (archisemes) give a representation of the social, cosmological, geographical, etc., structure of the world (Lotman 1974:346). The aim of this type of texts is to reduce chaos to a fixed scheme of invariants through iso- and homeomorphism (Lotman 1974:30-34). Texts belonging to this type can be labelled "mythic texts".⁸

B. Texts which characterize the place, situation and actions of man in his world (Lotman 1974:436). As such they deviate from mythic texts in that the classification of the world into two halves is destroyed, its order is upset by an accident, an unclassifiable anomaly. The aim of this type of texts is to question the fixed scheme of invariants, or rather, to tear it down by means of an event, i.e. an action performed by a hero.

Texts belonging to this type can be labelled "peripheric texts".⁹

Mythic texts reflect a completely ordered world, provided with an all-encompassing meaning. Peripheric texts reflect a world in which chance and irregularity constitute the dominant principle, leading to confusion (cf. Lotman 1974:47-48).

2.7.1 Literary periods (and in a broader sense cultural periods, and cultures) can be classified along the same lines.

There are periods in history in which the order of the world as represented in texts is the only possible reality, shared alike by the author and his readers (sender and receiver). Order implies classification and convention, and the texts concerned will ceaselessly confirm this order. In this kind of system the "aesthetics of identity", viz. an identification between the phenomena of life as depicted in the text and the model of reality as entertained and shared by the author and reader, dominate (cf. Lotman 1972:410).

In Europe, classicism and *commedia dell'arte* produced texts of this mythic type; in the Indonesian area wayang texts and classical Malay literature are apt examples of it.

Opposed to this we find the "aesthetics of opposition", relating to periods in history in which the classificatory model of the author is not shared by his readers. In texts of this type the author tries to deviate from the model of reality possessed by the reader; thus the reader is forced to make an effort to reconstruct the author's model. The works of any avant-garde movement, e.g., Dadaism and Surrealism in Europe, or the hard core of the Angkatan '45 in Indonesia, may serve as an example.

2.7.2 'Sunat' is a mythic text. It is a purely classificatory text in which the element of chance does not exist. It gives a picture of a rigid reality, and as such is closely related to the principal manifestation of traditional Javanese culture: wayang.¹⁰

3.1 It is possible to isolate various archisemes which generate coherent systems of meaning in 'Sunat'. For my analysis I have selected the basic opposition of Java vs. Islam.¹¹ I will try to show how separate elements of the text (words, phrases, sentences, fragments) can be assigned a secondary meaning deduced from the basic antithesis of the text as a whole.

In 'Sunat' a markedly explicit use is made of time indications to mark the text off into episodes; by successive such indications the segments are "coupled" together (Lotman 1976:34). A full description of the text would be unfeasible; I shall restrict my analysis to a description of the dominant level rather than of all the material relevant for intra-textual associations (cf. Lotman 1976:139).

3.1.1 For the purposes of my analysis the story will be decomposed into thirteen segments. Each segment will be followed by a paraphrasing interspersed with remarks of a more general nature on the structure of the story and (more importantly) with a detailed discussion of those elements conducing to the opposition Java vs. Islam. The aim of this segment-by-segment description is to show fully how the secondary meaning unfolds dynamically in the course of the text (cf. Schmid 1977, esp. 69-73).

3.2 On the informative level, i.e. as a text written in Indonesian as a natural language, the story is a simple one: a little boy (apparently the author himself, as he uses the first person personal pronoun "aku", I) is circumcised, only to discover afterwards that this has not brought about the change he had expected, namely his transformation into a genuine Muslim.

3.3 On the level of secondary meaning, i.e. as a model of reality, the coherent system of semantic oppositions revolves around the archiseme Java-Islam;

Java	home	mother	feminine	day	comfort	solidarity
Islam	school, mosque	father	masculine	night	fear	loneliness
childhood	poverty	earth				
adulthood	wealth	heaven				

The story describes the effort of the hero (Aku) to cross from Java to Islam. The painful passage ends in a failure, however, as the borderline is impassable and the hero remains in Java.

I.

Sebagai anak-anak kampung lainnja, kalau malam akupun datang ke-langgar untuk mengadji. Tak ada kesenangan kanak-kanak jang begitu besar daripada dilanggar. Untuk dapat mengadji, kami membajar dua setengah sen seminggu guna pembeli minjak pelita. Mengadji ini mulai pada djam setengah enam sore hingga djam sembilan malam. Dan mengadji ini adalah kesempatan satu-satunya buat kami untuk meng-hindarkan diri dari kewadajiban beladjar malam.

Apa jang kami namai mengadji itu tidak lain daripada bertjanda-tjanda, berahasia-rahasia mempertjakapkan masalah-masalah kedjenisan, mengganggu orang jang bersembahjang magrib dan isa, sambil menunggu giliran. Inilah dunia kami diwaktu aku berumur sembilan tahun.

Aku — sebagai kawan-kawan jang lain-lain djuga — ingin djadi pemeluk agama Islam jang sedjati, sekalipun pada waktu itu rata-rata diantara kami belum disunati. Walaupun dalam lapangan keagamaan kerdja kami tjuma mengganggu orang bersembahjang, meninggalkan peladjaran sekolah, beramai-ramai bersembahjang dimesdjid ditiap hari Djum^cat, walaupun tak sepatahpun kami mengerti apa jang kami doakan waktu bersembahjang itu, dan walaupun kami belum disunati, — ja, kami pemeluk agama Islam sedjati.

The three opening paragraphs provide us with ample information on the world of the hero, Aku. Lacking specific time indications, they contain statements of a more general, less time-bound nature. These passages enable us to make a preliminary (though incomplete) reconstruction of the system of semantic oppositions running through the story as a whole. Equally importantly, they indicate the orientation of the hero in the semantic field.

The hero (who will henceforth be referred to simply as Aku) is a young boy of nine years. Like all the other children, he loves to go to the mosque, the only place to escape his school-work. In the light of the lamp, for which he has to pay himself, he spends his time in Koran-recitation, though in a peculiar way, namely by joking and talking about sex with his friends and disturbing pious Muslims in their prayers. The semantic notions which can be isolated from this are negatively formulated: dislike of school, disinterest in recitation, which is connected with light and money (wealth), disrespect for Islam, and discomfort about sex. It is, in short, a world full of dislikes

and rejections; it is "our world" ("dunia kami"), the Javanese world of solidarity, in which dis-Islamic surroundings *Aku* seems to feel safe and comfortable.

In the third paragraph the semantic orientation is made explicit: *Aku* wants to become a Muslim, a genuine Muslim, that is. In close connection with his regular visits to the mosque he is gradually overcome by a vague, hesitant desire to leave this comfort and solidarity behind, i.e. to leave the inside for the outside. He realizes his limitations in this respect: he is given to disturbing pious Muslims and shirking his school-work, does not understand his prayers, and, most crucial of all: he is not yet circumcised — which is emphasized by a repetition. For the time being his desire is confused: he wants to become a real Muslim, while at the same time he already pictures himself as a real Muslim, together with all his friends ("kami") — as if the communal world could be transferred to the outside world of loneliness. Viewed from the safety of "our world", the outer world seems enticing and fascinating. So there seems to be something to strive for.

II.

Kemudian salah seorang diantara kawan-kawan disunati. Peralatan besar diadakan. Dan dikala itulah aku berpikir: betulkah aku orang Islam walaupun belum disunati? Dengan diam-diam hal ini kupikirkan. Aku harus djadi pemeluk Islam jang sedjati. Tapi mungkinkah ini bila belum disunati? Tapi pikiranku itu tak kukabarkan pada siapapun djuga didunia ini.

Sudah djadi kebiasaan didaerah kami dikota ketjil Blora anak-anak disunati pada umur delapan sampai tigabelas tahun. Dan biasanja ini dirajakan sebaik-baiknja. Anak-anak perempuan disunati pada umur lima belas hari dengan tiada dirajakan sama sekali.

The linear story sets in. One of *Aku*'s friends is circumcised, and a great party is held to celebrate the occasion — an indication of the significance and the wealth which are attached to circumcision, the ceremony which turns a boy into a man and a good Muslim. It makes *Aku* realize that he himself is definitely not yet a good Muslim, as he is not yet circumcised. Here the story begins to take shape: *Aku* wants to be a real Muslim (the key-sentence which with slight variations will be repeated again and again throughout the text), and circumcision seems the necessary prerequisite.

Aku does not have the courage to express his wish to cross the border to anyone in his world of comfort and solidarity, and this makes him feel lonely; from now on the word associated with loneliness, "*aku*", becomes very closely linked to Islam, as opposed to the solidary "*kami*" and "*aku* sebagai anak-anak kampung lain", which are connected with Java.

The statements in the next paragraph again are of a rather timeless

character. Two important notions come to the fore here: wealth, as circumcision (the passage to Islam) is associated with sumptuous parties, and masculinity (transformation to manhood), as circumcision is only relevant for boys, girls being casually circumcised at fifteen days old.

It may be useful at this point to summarize the notions evoked so far. On the one hand there is dislike of school, disrespect for Islam, a-masculinity, solidarity and childhood (implicitly connected with Java), and on the other hand there is wealth, masculinity, adulthood and loneliness (already explicitly connected with Islam).

The general statements of the three opening paragraphs refer to the inside, or Java, and the general statements in the fifth paragraph to Islam, the outside. The fourth paragraph mentions an event which formally serves as a connecting passage between the two. Thus I and II present a blueprint of things to come: the crossing from Java through circumcision to Islam, from a closed, safe world to a chaotic, frightening world.

Aku's orientation is clear: from Java, the side he belongs to, he wants to cross to the other side, which he is only able to conceive of vaguely and hazily as something to do with wealth, loneliness, masculinity and adulthood. He does not know how to get there, and needs help from the other side, as his own world is not willing to assist him.

III.

Pada suatu malam datanglah ajah. Dari mana aku tak tahu. Waktu itu pelita-pelita rumah sudah dipadamkan dan tinggal sebuah sadja dinjalakan ditengah-tengah rumah. Aku lihat ajah sedang ada dalam keadaan gembira. Dikala itu aku sedang mendengarkan dongeng ibu tentang seorang hadji jang gila kawin. Sangat mengagumkan dongeng itu. Dan karena kedatangan ajah, dongeng itupun matilah.

"Nak, engkau sudah berani disunati?" tanya ajah.

Pada mulutnja tergambar senjum mintahati.

Bukan main takutku mendengar tawaran itu. Tapi aku mau djadi orang Islam sedjati. Dan selamanja aku takut pada ajahku — ketakutan jang tak kuketahui mengapa. Tapi kali itu, oleh senjum mintahati itu hilanglah semua ketakutanku.

"Berani, ajah!" kataku.

Dan ajah melebarkan senjumnja djadi tertawa jang sangat ramah.

"Apa jang kausukai kalau disunati nanti? Kain atau sarung?"

"Kain, ajah."

Kemudian ajah menanjai adikku Tato jang berumur tujuh tahun.

"Dan engkau, Tato — beranikah engkau?"

"Tentu, ajah, tentu," sahut Tato gembira.

Ajah tertawa puas. Nampak dalam tjahaja pelita itu giginja jang putih dan gusinja jang merahdjambu. Ibu bangun dari kasur jang digelar dilantai.

"Kapan engkau sunatkan mereka itu?" tanya ibu.

"Setcepat mungkin," ajah berkata.

Kemudian ajah berdiri dan pergi, hilang dalam kegelapan malam, masuk kedalam kamarnya.

Ibu bertiduran lagi. Tetapi tak diteruskannya tjeriteranya tentang hadji yang gila kawin itu.

"Mamuk, dan engkau Tato, bersukurlah pada Tuhan karena telah digerakkan hati ajahmu untuk menjunatkan engkau."

"Ja, bu," kami menjahuti.

"Almarhum nenekmu dan nenek-mojang yang lain, yang sudah berbahagia disorga akan sangat bersenanghati bila mengetahui engkau semua sudah disunati."

"Ja, bu," kami menjahuti.

The father (Islam) offers Aku the passage he desires, i.e. circumcision. This happens one evening in the comfortable darkness of his home, while Aku is attentively listening to the story his mother is telling him about a concupiscent Hadji (i.e. Muslim). A set of five notions emerges from this: darkness, comfort, home, mother, non-Islam.

Then suddenly, from an unfamiliar world, the father bursts in; in the light of the only lamp still burning, breaking the comfortable quiet darkness of home, he interrupts the mother in her anti-Islam story to ask Aku if he wants to be circumcised. Islam extends a helping hand in crossing the border, and for once Aku forgets his usual fear of his father, as he is attracted to the other side. A *kain* is promised — an indication of the material wealth to come with Islam. Circumcision is offered to the younger brother, Tato, as well, and from now on the little boy will follow Aku through the story as his younger double, an accentuation of Aku's ties with youth and naiveté, a pure version of himself. In the discussion between the father and the mother the basic antithesis between Java and Islam shows up in its elementary form: she does not know anything of his plans to have their sons circumcised, and of course, being the personification of Java, she *cannot* have known. The conflict over the boy between the two sides here takes shape; it will gradually be intensified, eventually to lead to the defeat of Islam. For the time being Java (the mother) will take increasingly greater pains to keep Aku on her side, under constant attack from Islam (the father), who aggressively tries to pull the boy over to his side. Initially it looks as though Islam will be successful (cf. II).

Although the father disappears again, taking Islam with him, the previous situation of homely comfort is definitely disturbed; the self-evident, stable world of Java is shaken. The mother does not resume her story about the concupiscent Hadji, but instead tells her sons, though almost reluctantly, to thank God for inspiring their father to have them circumcised. Significantly, she does not use the typically

Muslim word "Allah", but the vague, general "Tuhan" for God. And of course she does not omit to add that their grandmother(s) and all their ancestors will be very happy about this. Thus the boys are subtly drawn back into Java again.

IV.

Malam itu susah betul aku bisa tertidur. Kubajangkan kesakitan dipotong jang akan kuderita. Kubajangkan kain, dan sandal jang mungkin dibeli untuk keperluan itu, badju baru, ikat kepala, pitji, tidak bersekolah, tamu-tamu jang banjak, hadiah-hadiah jang besar sekali kemungkinan akan kuterima kelak. Alangkah senang bila punja kain dan ikat kepala, karena selain ingin djadi pemeluk agama Islam jang sedjati akupun ingin djadi orang Djawa jang sedjati. Dan alangkah senang mendapat sarung, punja sarung dua atau tiga. Nanti kawan-kawan jang belum disunati pasti akan mengiri melihatnja.

Aku feels his inner conflict, as touched on in II, deepen. In bed, still in the cosy darkness of Java, he feels torn between Java and Islam, which are both pulling him, while he does not yet realize that the two are irreconcilable. The ambiguity is explicitly worded: he wants to be a good Muslim, and a good Javanese as well (Islam is mentioned first, so that the orientation indicated is maintained). Loneliness creeps in: he will be separated from his friends. They will be jealous of him, not only because he is to be circumcised, i.e. turned into a man, but also because so much wealth will come his way in the form of all the presents he will receive, indicative of the opulence on the other side.

V.

Keesokan harinja riang betul aku bangun. Pagi-pagi betul aku dan Tato berangkat kesekolah. Kaki jang seakan-akan menolak dipakai berdjalan kesekolahan kini terasa ringan. Semua anak murid mendengar belaka. Dan anak-anak jang belum lagi disunati memandangi kami berdua dengan hormatnja, terutama anak-anak jang umurnja lebih tua daripada kami. Tiap pasang mata memandangi kami dengan pandang jang tak pernah kami terima sebelumnya. Djuga paraguru nampak memandjakan kami dengan pandangnja. Dan sebentar lagi — sebentar lagi kami djadi orang Islam jang betul-betul: orang Islam jang sudah disunati. Dan kemudian lagi — dan inilah jang paling penting diatas segala-galanja — kami mempunyai hak menempati sorga seperti jang diadjarkan oleh kiai kami. Kalau kami sudah disunati, kami kelak akan hidup senang disorga. Kami tak butuh lagi pada barang-barang bagus jang kami ingini waktu itu, yakni barang-barang jang tak mungkin kami sebut kepunjaan kami.

Dilanggar, kabar inipun disambut dengan kagum oleh kawan-kawan. Pak kiai pun memandjakan kami dengan pandangnja seperti paraguru disekolahan. Dan aku sendiri merasa djadi lebih tinggi dan lebih penting daripada kawan-kawan jang lain. Pintu sorga telah nampak-nampak terbuka didepanku. Djuga parabidadari jang didjandjikan oleh

kiai kami, bidadari jang teramat tjantik, jang dalam bajangan otakku tjantiknja sama dengan kawan perempuan disekolahan jang pada waktu itu djadi buah bibir semua murid lelaki.

"Kalau aku sudah disunati, aku djadi orang Islam sedjati," kataku pada kiaiiku. "Dan aku punja hak menempati sorga."

Kiai kami tertawa senang dan menjambung:

"Engkau akan mendapat bidadari empatpuluh empat orang."

"Tapi aku tak suka pada bidadari jang teteknja enam atau delapan seperti tetek andjing," kataku.

Kiai kami tertawa.

"Aku ingin mendapat bidadari jang seperti Sriati, kawan sekolah kami jang tjantik."

Kiai kami tertawa lagi.

"Dan aku akan memantjing dikali susu sehari-harian," kata Tato.

Kiai kami tertawa lagi. Dan giginja jang tak pernah digosok itu nampak terlampau buruk. Dan kawan-kawan kami jang umurnja djauh lebih tua daripada kami dan belum disunati mendengarkan pertjakaan kami itu dengan diam-diam. Pada mata mereka nampak ketakutan tak kebagian tempat disorga, ketakutan kehabisan bidadari, dan ketakutan mendapat neraka sebagai gantinya.

Loneliness is confirmed. The next morning at school, away from the comfort of home, his friends look at him full of respect, and the teachers treat him with unprecedented kindness, while in the evening in the mosque the same thing happens: his friends are full of admiration and awe, the teacher full of jokes. The difference between the respect (*hormat*) at school and the admiration and awe (*kagum* and *ketakutan*) in the mosque is noteworthy in that the words used for these designate social and religious feelings respectively.

Arriving at school in a blissful mood, as if floating up from the earth, Aku has a wonderful vision of the kind of Heaven awaiting him once he is circumcised: material wealth abounding and an opulence that is inaccessible here on earth, in the poverty of Java. In the mosque his vision of Heaven is a different one, and has strong sexual overtones: in this heaven beautiful women lie waiting for him — a vision that is confirmed by the grin of the religious teacher (here the connection with the father is formally given: both show their teeth when talking about circumcision). His friends listen in fear lest all the women will have been taken by Aku by the time they arrive. The special feelings with which he is regarded here (jealousy, envy, respect and fear) lead to alienation and individualization, in short loneliness.

In this segment seemingly anticipating a successful passage to Islam, school and the mosque are very closely bound up together. At school Aku's vision is intimately connected with the promises made by the teacher in the mosque: everyone who is circumcised will go to Heaven and enjoy opulent wealth; in the mosque Aku's vision is directly

associated with school: the women waiting for him should resemble Sriati, the beautiful girl at school.

As in every other segment, Tato functions as Aku's younger double; in the mosque Aku shows an interest in beautiful women (adulthood, masculinity), while Tato does not understand this: in his childish innocence he only wants to fish in the river of milk, indicating a naive form of masculinity.

VI.

Sedjak sore itulah kami mengadji dengan sungguh-sungguh. Peladjaran sekolahpun kami buru betul-betul. Dan disamping itu aku dan adikku berpuasa Senen-Kemis hingga tutup tahun peladjaran. Hasil dari semua itu aku naik kelas.

The connection between Islam and school, introduced in V, continues on a different level. Their joint opposition against Java becomes more evident here. In the preceding segment Aku was still safely embedded in Java, home, comfort and youth; now, once he has been exposed to Islam, he is led into temptation.

Aku exerts himself to assure himself of a safe passage to the other side. Religious duties are observed and school tasks are performed, and both bring success: Aku is advanced to the next class. Eventually even Tato is mentioned no longer: loneliness grows as the hero approaches the border. Java is losing ground.

VII.

Setengah bulan sebelum tutup tahun pengadjaran, ajah merentjanakan mengadakan sandiwara jang akan dimainkan oleh anak-anak sekolah sendiri. Dan sandiwara ini diikuti oleh penjunatan pada keesokan harinja. Dan ajahpun merentjanakan akan mengadakan ini tiap-tiap tahun dan memberi kesempatan pada kawan-kawannja jang miskin untuk bersama-sama menjunatkan anaknja. Tetapi tak ada sambutan jang memuaskan dari penduduk kota ketjil kami. Orang-orang ditempat kami merasa malu bila anaknja sendiri disunatkan oleh oranglain. Djadi untuk pertjobaan pertama itu hanja enam orang sadja jang akan disunati, yakni aku sendiri, Tato, seorang kemenakan ajah jang berumur sepuluh tahun, seorang anak-angkat ajah jang berumur enambelas tahun. Anak-angkat ajah jang sudah berumur delapanbelas tahun dan sudah punja anak dengan babu kami, tak mau disunati. Dia bilang, dia akan disunatkan oleh bapaknja sendiri. Dua orang lagi ialah anak-anak miskin jang tinggalnja dipinggir kota.

The great day is drawing near, and the long awaited moment of circumcision, of initiation into manhood, masculinity, wealth and Islam, is in sight.

To mark the end of this successful school year the father is planning a theatrical performance on the eve of circumcision. The success of school must be emphasized by the success of Islam, and vice versa;

the connection between school and Islam must be confirmed, and the double victory over Java is to be jointly celebrated. And again Aku receives help from the other side: for the second time the father — more self-confident now — tries to pull him across the borderline.

In the good tradition of mutual aid that is so highly valued among the Javanese, the father now offers his help to the poor people of the town by giving their children an opportunity to be circumcised together with his own sons at his expense. Islam can afford to be generous, with success seeming so near.

But whereas in III Java (the mother) falls silent when the offer from the other side is made, this time the Javanese reaction is frank and unequivocal: the offer is plainly rejected. The people, poor though they are, would feel embarrassed (*malu*) to accept the help of an outsider, someone who basically is not one of them. The pull of Islam is beginning to turn into a failure, and the father is forced to look for a compromise to save his face namely by holding a joint circumcision as an experiment, in which rather unconvincing attempt to connect Java with Islam, to transform Java into Islam, some distant relatives and obscure poor children are eventually found prepared to cooperate. The father suffers defeat even among his own relatives: one of his foster-children, wrapped in Javanese poverty and married to a servant, rejects his offer; he prefers comfortable Java to the threatening pains of Islam.

VIII.

Sepandjang jang dapat kuingat, rentjana ajah akan membuat perajaan tutup tahun sekolahannja dengan sandiwara dan penjunatan anak-anak miskin itu tak dapat berdjalan seperti jang diharapkanja.

A retrospection of a more general character, comparable to I and II, is inserted here. Whereas the opening paragraphs present themselves as a blueprint for a smooth passage to Islam, this segment anticipates the difficulties Aku will face in crossing. The father's efforts miscarry even in this experimental stage — the celebration is a one-time affair, and the poor Javanese are never offered help again to have their children Islamized. The opposition between Java and Islam is an uncompromising one. The stage is set for a failure.

IX.

Waktu itu aku duduk dikelas empat disekolahan ajahku sendiri. Dan adikku Tato duduk dikelas dua. Kami berdua naik kelas pada tutup tahun pengadjaran itu. Lima hari sebelum diadakan perajaan tutup tahun kami jang akan disunati harus menghafalkan njanjian *panembrama*. Kami harus menjanji dipanggung, memperkenalkan kepada chalajak bahwa keesokan harinja kami akan disunati, dan memohon doa pada chalajak agar penjunatan itu berdjalan dengan selamat.

Guru kami telah mengarangkan sebuah sandiwara tentang *kambing hilang*. Semua jang memainkan ialah murid-murid lelaki.

The great day is drawing near, and for the first time Java is leaving home, comfort and poverty, in order to repel Islam's aggressive attempts to gain ground over her.

It is repeated that Aku and his brother are advanced to the next class: circumcision implies scholastic success.

At school, a few days before the end-of-the-year celebration and the circumcision, the six boys who are going to be circumcised are taught a Javanese song, a *Panembrama*. They are to learn it by heart so that they will be able to sing it on stage, to inform the people (*chalajak*, a Muslim word, is used here) that they are about to cross the border, and to ask them to pray for them (for this again a Muslim word, *doa*, is used). This Javanese song for an Islamic victory may seem paradoxical, but it represents Java's first active attempt to resist the threat Aku is facing from Islam. Meanwhile, one of the teachers has written a play with the significant title 'The Lost Goat', suggesting that Java is about to lose some members of her flock. Only boys will take part in it, of course: masculinity will be accentuated in the ceremonies to come.

X.

Maka datanglah hari jang kami harap-harapkan itu. Malam sebelum disunati, aku dan Tato mendapat hadiah sarung sutera dari nenek, sandal perlak dan badju baru dari ibu, tjemara dari murid-murid perempuan, delapan buah buku kanak-kanak dalam bahasa Belanda dari ajah sendiri. Hadiah-hadiah itu membuat kami lupa, bahwa kami akan mengalami kesakitan pada keesokan harinja.

And then finally the big day has arrived.

Initially everything goes as it should: at home, in the evening, before setting off for the other side, school, Aku receives the necessary provisions for a safe passage — a taste of the opulence awaiting him — in the form of clothing from his female relatives and friends, and books from his father, representing comfort and school respectively. The father does not keep his promise to give Aku a *kain*, which is related to Java (cf. IV). Perhaps he apprehends a failure, or perhaps he is simply over-confident of himself — this in any case indicates unreliability.

Delighting in their new-found wealth, Aku and Tato together ('kami'), who are still on the side of comfort, or Java, suppress all thoughts of the pain awaiting them. The presents will facilitate the crossing, and on the other side pain and poverty will undoubtedly be forgotten.

Here the decisive passage sets in — Aku is standing near the border, and from his side, Java, looks across to Islam. The Javanese evening is to be followed by an Islamic morning. As was indicated above, the pull of Islam becomes stronger and stronger. Consequently, Java

becomes increasingly combative in her efforts to pull Aku back into darkness and comfort, and moreover is forced to leave home to do so.

XI.

Malam itu sekolahan kami penuh-sesak oleh penonton. Makanan dihidangkan, terdiri dari ubi dan katjang rebus, tape, gemblong dan djuadah-djuadah lainnja. Waktu permainan hampir dimulai, kami jang besok akan disunati berdjadjar dipanggung. Aku berkain dan berikat kepala. Djuga Tato, dan anak-anak lainnja telandjang kepala. Berbareng dengan dibukanya lajar, gamelan mulai dipukul. Kami membungkuk menghormati hadirin. Aduh, alangkah besar hatiku waktu itu. Aku lihat semua penonton terpikat pada kami jang sedang bernjanji, menjanjikan perkenalan bahwa besok kami akan disunati. Dan gadis-gadis melihat kami dengan kagum: djedjaka akan bertambah enam orang.

Selesai bernjanji, kami membungkuk memberi hormat. Dan penonton menjambut dengan tepuk tangan jang meriah. Kemudian lajarpun tutuplah. Lepaslah kami dari kewadajiban jang mahaberat.

Dikota kami jang ketjil itu, djarang sekali ada tontonan. Karena itu sandiwara *Kambing Hilang* itu dibandjiri oleh penonton dari seluruh sudut kota kami. Ruang sekolahan jang empat kelas banjaknja dan lebar dan luas itu penuhsesak oleh manusia.

Sebentar-sebentar, bila gamelan mati, musikpun menjusulkan suaranya, melagukan lagu-lagu Kembang Katjang, Rose Mary, lagu-lagu koboi, lagu stambul Konstantinopel, dan lagu-lagu krontjong lainnja.

Waktu sandiwara habis, kami jang akan disunati banjak mendapat tepukan pada bahu — tepukan jang memberanikan hati. Dan itu sangat menggembirakan hati kami. Semalam itu Tato terus sadja menjanji ditempat tidurnja hingga suaranya kian lama kian lemah dan mati. Dia tertidur sudah.

The end of the school-year is celebrated, marking the start of the passage. Java tries to invade the celebration held at school, a place which is basically hostile to her. In unfamiliar surroundings this time she emphatically presents herself to Aku in her most accentuated form.

It is a comfortable evening. The place is packed with people, who all enjoy the *gamelan*, the sentimental songs, and the paltry food served; they all show their well-meant solidarity with those who are going to be circumcised. The six boys together sing their Javanese *Panembrama*, but Aku and his brother are clearly distinguished from the other boys by their dignified clothing, thus confirming the principle of hierarchy which is so dominant in Javanese society. And yet, even during this joint singing Aku is overcome by non-Javanese feelings, again offering a foretaste of the things to come on the other side; standing in front of all these people watching him, he again is aware of the separation to come, involving his withdrawal from unquestioned familiarity into loneliness. But this time he also feels proud: his desire is nearing fulfilment. All eyes are on him, with the girls looking at

him in adoration: an innocent boy is turning into a marriageable man.

'The Lost Goat' is performed, making it plain for everyone to see what is going to happen: some members of the community are renouncing their solidarity with the rest of that community. It seems an irrevocable step. Afterwards, amid the encouraging words of all the guests, Aku's loneliness vanishes again: Java makes him realize that he still is a member of a sympathetic community offering warmth and happiness.

Back home, Tato, the younger double, falls asleep happily singing, while Aku himself feels glad as well: everyone has been so kind to him and has given him comfort. Java has done her best. In spite of all her efforts, however, Aku's desire to leave remains. Java seems to have been defeated.

In this and the following segment the various elements of the archiseme are intricately entangled: darkness, poverty, community, femininity and childhood, vs. light, wealth, loneliness, masculinity and adulthood are brought into play. Java is the dominant force during the evening, Islam during the next morning, while in each episode the counterforce vigorously asserts itself. During the celebration the presence of Islam is so strongly felt that the passage seems near to completion.

XII.

Hari sunat termasuk dalam hari-hari besar dikampung kami, seperti djuga halnja dengan hari kelahiran, hari perkawinan, hari kematian dan hari raja. Dan kabar-kabar mengenai itu selamanya tjepat sekali melebar keseluruh kota. Dari mana-mana ibu menerima sumbangan, sekalipun tak ada surat undangan diedarkan. Dan seperti pada hari-hari besar lainnja, kami tidur malam-malam dan bangun pagi-pagi. Pada djam setengah lima pagi, rumah kami sudah sangat ramai. Anak-anak jang akan disunati sudah mandi dan berkain baru, berpitji atau berikat kepala. Adik-adikku jang perempuan berpakaian serba baru. Ibu berkain parang rusak baru, berkebaja bordiran berkutubaru jang diterimanja sebagai hadiah dari bibi jang djadi guru sekolah gadis dikota R. Selembar pelangi hidjau dikenakannya. Ajah berpakaian pakaian sekolah, yakni kain parang rusak dan badju tutup. Ajah selamanya telandjang kaki. Hanja bila dirumah dia memakai bakiak atau gampanan.

Seperti didjalari penjakit, paratetangga jang dekat-dekat, turut pula bangun pagi, berpakaian serba baru dan berangkat kesekolahan bersama-sama kami. Sekolahan kami terletak limaratus meter dari rumah kami.

Disekolahan telah dibangunkan gubuk tempat penjunatan. Dan gubuk itu didindingi dengan klambu tule. Kami jang akan disunati duduk dibarisan kursi dekat pada gubuk itu. Lama-kelamaan orang tua-tua jang akan menghadiri penjunatan itu kian banjak. Anak-anak-pun tak ketinggalan merubung gubuk itu. Dan anak-anak perempuan

mendjauh sedikit. Achirnja *tjalak* pun datang membawa bungkus sputangan jang berisi tiga buah pisau tjukur.

Datanglah seorang-orang tua pada kami dan berkata:

"Djangan takut. Tak sakit disunati. Rasanja tjuma seperti digigit semut merah. Aku dulu tertawa sadja disunati."

Dan banjak lagi suara-suara menjenangkan seperti itu. Tapi betapa djuapun manisnja suara itu, kami tak kuasa menghilangkan ketjemasan dan ketakutan kami.

Kemudian datanglah saat disunati itu. Ajah dan bunda jang duduk dikursi besar ditengah-tengah paratamu berdiri dan mendekati gubuk penjunatan. Pada paras mereka nampak kebanggaan dan kebesaran hati.

Mula-mula jang dimasukkan kedalam gubuk itu ialah anak angkat ajah karena dialah jang tertua diantara kami. Anak angkat ajah jang seorang lagi, jang sudah mempunjai anak, hari itu tak menampakkan dirinja diupatjara penjunatan itu. Dan anak-anak jang datang untuk melihat tambah mendekati gubuk itu hingga orang tua-tua terpaksa menghalaukan mereka.

Bukan main takutku pada waktu itu. Tetapi aku ingin djadi orang Islam sedjati. Namun ketakutan itu tak djuga gampang dihilangkan begitu sadja. Terutama waktu *tjalak* meneriakkan doa, debaran dadaku bertambah keras lagi rasanja. Sebentar terdengar teriak itu, kakak angkatku itupun dituntun orang keluar dari gubuk. Djalannja djadi pajah. Mukanja putjat. Bibirnja putih. Dan nampak djuga dia kehilangan tenaganja. Ia didudukkan dikursinja jang tadi. Dan diantara kedua kakinja ditaruh orang piring tanah berisi abu dapur guna menadahi darah jang masih djuga menitik dari kemaluannja.

Seorang demi seorang masuk kedalam gubuk itu dan keluar lagi dengan putjatnja, dan dengan djalannja jang tak betul lagi. Kemudian datanglah giliran jang kutunggu-tunggu. Dua-tiga orang memegang bahu, seperti takut kalau aku melarikan diri. Dituntunnja aku masuk kedalam gubuk penjunatan itu. *Tjalak* sudah menunggu kedatanganku itu dengan kedjamnja. Ja, kedjam nampaknja dimataku. Aku didudukkan dikursi dan kepalaku ditengadahkan. Kedua bahu dipegangi erat-erat, dan sepasang tangan orang tua menekan keningku supaja aku tak bisa menunduk. Dibawahku sudah disediakan orang piring tanah jang diisi abu. Kemudian terasa kemaluanku diraba-raba, achirnja selaputnja diputar kentjang-kentjang hingga terasa panas sekali. Dan kemudian daging selaput itu dirantaskan oleh pisau tjukur. Aku habis disunati sudah. Sepasang tangan orang tua itu dilepaskan dari keningku. Sekarang kulihat darah bertetes dari udjung kemaluanku.

"Djangan bergerak dulu," kata salah seorang diantara mereka.

"Ja, djangan bergerak dulu. Tunggu sampai darah-rantai habis."

Dan aku lihat darah-rantai — darah kental jang kehitam-hitaman dan seperti benang — djatuh dengan pelannja menghilang dalam abu dipiring tanah.

Jang paling achir sekali ialah Tato, karena dialah jang paling muda diantara kami. Kami didudukkan berdjadjar. Sebentar-sebentar darah

djatuh bertitik dipiring tanah. Semua mata memandang kami. Ibu datang padaku dan mentjium pipiku. Terasa betul ketjintaannja padaku. Dan oleh ketjintaan itu menitiklah airmataku. Djuga Tato ditjium pada pipinja. Ajah datang dan bilang:

"Selamat. Selamat."

Anak-anak mulai bubar. Dan jang tinggal diruang kelas enam, tempat kami disunati, hanjalah orang tua-tua. Merekapun pulanglah seorang demi seorang setelah minta permissi.

Kami jang disunati pulanglah kerumah berdjalan kaki.

The next morning the decisive passage is continued.

At home, in the dark, preparations are made to leave for school again. The mother receives the usual assistance from the community, and everyone feels involved in the Javanese way, showing love and care for those who are leaving forever. Java is forced to accompany her blind child to the climax, still hoping for a chance to pull him back, still showing her love, till the end.

At this crucial moment the basic opposition between Java and Islam is expressed in the clothing of the parents: the mother wears Javanese dress, the father his school clothes; they try to hide their differences in the similar pattern of their *kains*. The father is so self-confident now that he allows himself to wear a *kain*, a Javanese element. Java seems to have given in, but refuses to show signs of surrender till the end: when the boys leave home they are accompanied by relatives and neighbours, that is, by comfort.

Then Islam takes over as the dominant force. At school the boys are separated from their community; they are brought to a special place near a curtained-off booth, isolated and lonely. Respectable old men come in, the young girls (and later the young boys) are obliged to retreat into the background, as there is no place for femaleness and childhood any longer. The *tjalak* arrives with three razor-blades (masculinity). And as the pull of Islam becomes stronger, the boys become more afraid; the reassuring voices from the other side, from the old men who were circumcised long ago, are ineffectual in dispelling their fear, and the father, and even the mother, seem proud now in the fearful eyes of Aku. Where the inception of the passage, the intensive religious and scholastic preparation, was exacting, so is the passage itself; although the singing of the *Panembrama* the previous night was a very difficult task, the climax, the circumcision, is even more arduous.

First the older boys are circumcised (the principle of hierarchy which was re-affirmed the night before is rejected now), and Aku has ample opportunity to see the consequences: pain, exhaustion, blood. His agony and loneliness are growing, and are exacerbated when the inquisitive boys swarming around the booth are chased away. And whereas at the beginning of the story Aku was still able

to overcome his "extraordinary fear" of Islam (cf. III) because of its alluring smile, this time he is not able to, even though his desire to become a real Muslim is still intact.

The glorious moment itself is described in detail: the transformation into a real Muslim seems a point of no return. Old men mercilessly drag him into the booth, and there hold him in an iron grip: Islam is afraid that *Aku* will escape at the last moment. Only now does *Aku* realize what Islam stands for: cruelty, personified in the frightening figure of the *tjalak*. There is no way back, though, and the operation on his male organ is quickly accomplished. With a fixed stare *Aku* watches the dripping blood, and soon after that the six boys are back on their chairs again, dizzy, bloody and in pain. The vacuum is watched by everyone.

The next moment the mother is there to enfold him in her warm love, pulling him back to Java again. It makes *Aku* weep: the ties with Java are not broken, but are even strengthened by the cold, distant congratulations of the father. The failure of Islam, which has so long been inconceivable, is suddenly apparent.

The fight between Java and Islam is drawing to a close. Even at school, a place where Java did not belong, she proves unconquerable. The arena is left as everyone, young and old, goes home after showing their solidarity with *Aku*. The circumcised boys ("kami") leave together; they walk home and no longer feel as though they are floating to Heaven.

XIII.

Hari itu, kami diperlakukan seperti radja-radja. Semua orang jang kami perintah mau belaka mengerdjakan perintah itu. Famili dari anak-anak miskin jang disunati dengan kami datang kerumah membawa ajam dan beras.

"Bagaimana, Muk, adakah engkau merasai perubahan sesudah disunati?"

"Aku senang sekali sekarang, ibu," kataku.

"Dan sudahkah engkau merasa djadi orang Islam sedjati?" ibu bertanya lagi.

Aku kaget mendengar pertanjaan itu. Dan njatalah olehku, sesungguhnya aku tak merasai sesuatu perubahan bahwa aku kini djadi orang Islam sedjati.

"Aku merasa seperti kemarin dan kemarin dulu. Aku belum merasa djadi orang Islam sedjati," kataku.

"Barangkali sembahjangmu tak pernah lengkap?" tanjanja.

"Lengkap. Selalu lengkap, ibu."

"Kakekmu dulu naik hadji. Barangkali kalau engkau naik hadji, engkau akan mengalami perubahan — djadi orang Islam sedjati."

"Naik kapal, bu?" tanya Tato.

"Ja, naik kapal kenegeri Arab," kata ibu.

"Kalau begitu harus kaya dulu, bu?" tanjaku.

"Ja," kata ibu.

Sekaligus hilanglah harapanku untuk djadi orang Islam sedjati. Aku insaf akan kemiskinan orangtuaku. Kami tak punja apa-apa untuk mampu naik hadji.

"Mengapa ajah tak naik hadji, bu?" tanjaku.

"Karena ajahmu miskin, Muk."

Kami, walaupun keinginan djadi kaya itu ada, tak pernah pertjaja bahwa pada suatu kali bisa djadi kaya. Sesudah sembuh, tak pernah lagi keinginan akan djadi orang Islam sedjati itu datang kepikiranku. Dorongan kemiskinan itu mematikan tjita-tjita dikampung kami. Dan lama-kelamaan aku dan Tatopun djadi anak seperti anak-anak kampung lainnja — anak-anak jang segala-galanja jang ada padanja direngutkan oleh kemiskinan.

Back home the two brothers are treated like princes; people obey their orders and offer them gifts. The idea of hierarchy is restored.

The father has vanished, and it is the mother, the personification of Java, who makes Aku conscious of the fact that he does not feel a genuine Muslim at all. Nothing has changed, everything remains the same: the passage has failed completely. From the mother Aku learns that Java and Islam are as irreconcilable as poverty and wealth. For the poor Javanese the journey to Mecca, another sort of passage to Islam, is unattainable. Aku draws the only possible conclusion from this: he no longer has any desire to become a real Muslim, and thus he is back again in Java, in his community, back home, where he so hopefully set off on his passage. The wish for wealth remains, and the other side has not lost its fascination, the orientation still being from the inside to the outside. The conviction that it is possible to reach the latter, however, has been shattered. The border is insuperable.

The story ends with a phrase closely resembling the first: just like all the other children in our village we are poor. Essentially Aku is back at his point of departure.

3.4 The extraction and application of the archiseme Java-Islam in the above analysis produced a coherent secondary system of meaning; most of the elements (there will always be a few residual elements) fit into a consistent over-all meaning. It was shown in the process how the thirteen segments, formally separated by time indications, are "coupled" into a unity.

It is possible to extract other archisemes which would yield equally coherent interpretations. We shall not go through the segments of the text again to show in detail how the resultant other basic oppositions link the separate fragments into a coherent whole. Suffice it to give a schematic representation of the relevant oppositions, along with some explanatory remarks.

At least two other basic oppositions might be successfully applied, as follows:

3.4.1 The story describes the efforts of the hero to cross the border from childhood to manhood. This gives rise to the following scheme:

<u>childhood</u>	<u>mosque, home</u>	<u>friends</u>	<u>asexuality</u>
<u>manhood</u>	<u>school</u>	<u>mother, father</u>	<u>masculinity</u>
<u>(dreams of) wealth</u>	<u>solidarity</u>		
<u>poverty</u>	<u>loneliness</u>		

Both the mother and the father try to prepare Aku for manhood, each in their own way, the Javanese and the Islamic one respectively. The story develops from the ceremonies surrounding the hero's circumcision — a fine example of Javanese syncretism. The opposition Java vs. Islam is not a relevant one here: they both belong to childhood and adulthood alike, as does poverty, though it is negatively expressed in childhood by dreams of and pretensions to wealth. The parents take their eventual failure differently: the father disappears in disappointment, whereas the mother adjusts herself more easily to the situation. The child remains a child.

3.4.2 The story describes the effort of the hero to cross the border from poverty to wealth. The scheme here is:

<u>poverty</u>	<u>mosque, home</u>	<u>father, mother</u>	<u>syncretism</u>	<u>asexuality</u>
<u>wealth</u>	<u>school</u>	<u>Islamic people</u>	<u>Islam</u>	<u>masculinity</u>
<u>solidarity</u>				
<u>loneliness</u>				

In spite of their poverty the parents give a great party on the occasion of their son's circumcision, hoping to stimulate his desire for wealth and prestige in this way. They urge him to work hard at school and to be a pious Muslim — two absolute preconditions for becoming rich. However, the circumcision does not bring about the expected changes. The hero realizes that his visions of wealth will never materialize, and that he does not really want to become a Muslim. He prefers to remain poor, like his parents and his friends.

4.1 As was explained in the theoretical remarks above, these three (and there are probably more) modelling systems which can be inferred from the text are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are mutually supplementary and simultaneously present. Elements which are equivalent in the one system may be opposed (e.g. the father and the mother, the school and the mosque), serve another meaning (e.g. poverty and wealth), or be irrelevant in another. It is precisely this intermixture of various systems within a single text that forces us on to the intensified perception which every work of art aims at.¹²

'Sunat' is more than just a simple account, written in Indonesian,

of Pramudya Ananta Tur's circumcision. It is "heavier", and as such the text has the potential of fulfilling a literary (aesthetic) function. It is a "text with a semantic load which, in relation to non-literary texts, is heightened, not lowered. It signifies more, not less, than ordinary speech" (Lotman as cited by Shukman 1976:317). It offers more information, and therefore is beautiful (cf. Lotman's definition of beauty (1972:213), viz. "Beauty is information", i.e., the more informative a text, the more beautiful it will be).

The analysis has provided us with some of the basic notions of the model whereby Pramudya tended to view reality and interpret life at the time. The inferred archisemes represent ideas that are fundamental in his view of the world around him and which determine the classification of various concepts which are of vital importance for Pramudya and his particular Javano-Indonesian cultural environment.

4.2 In the real life of a culture every text may be multifunctional, and may perform not one but several functions simultaneously. Thus a text like the *Sejarah Melayu* had a historical, literary, moral, legal, political and religious function in the Malay setting of its time; the essays of Virginia Woolf had a moral, political and literary one in their particular English context.

Prior to the study of the various functions a text may have in a particular community, these functions should be clearly distinguished from each other. Each function should be described and defined in adequate, intelligible terms.

The above theoretical explanations intended to isolate the literary function of a specific text; the concrete analysis of 'Sunat' tried to show the implications of this. It was an initial but basic step: I tried to give an answer to the question of whether 'Sunat' should be perceived as a work of art, i.e. as a text with a literary function. This answer was positive. Other questions were not posed, as they are of secondary importance. They include such questions as: What is the place of 'Sunat' in the collection *Tjerita dari Blora*? What is its place in Pramudya's oeuvre? What is its place in modern Indonesian literature? And also such extra-literary questions as: How did 'Sunat' function in Indonesia in the fifties? How does it function now? How does it function in the West? These remain to be solved. Each will reveal different aspects of the story (cf. Lotman 1976:3-9). In the following some lines for further investigation will be indicated, taking 'Sunat' as starting-point.

5.1 A text is embedded in a variety of extra-textual structures, the most abstract level of which may be referred to as world-view or cultural model. Each cultural model has its own semantic field of conceptual co-oppositions (somehow inferable from any single text), and its individual orientation in relation to this field, expressed in a

certain scale of values (true vs. false, good vs. bad, etc.). I will not venture to give an in-depth description of the model of reality of the culture Pramudya's text is embedded in: the Javano-Indonesian one of 1950. Speaking in very general terms, we may safely assume on the basis of the available information that at the time 'Sunat' was created (and read) that reality was crude and unstable. Undoubtedly the Javanese were taking great pains to adapt their world-model to the radical changes taking place in their political, social and economic reality (cf. the authoritative book on this period by McTurnan Kahin 1952, esp. p. 470ff.).

In our terms: the semantic field was shaken, and the Javanese were forced to revise their stand (orientation) within it. They suddenly discovered that it was possible to cross the border from poverty to wealth, which were previously thought to be mutually exclusive, from oppression to freedom, from a safe closedness to an adventurous openness, from communalism to individualism. The value scale of good and bad, low and high, bound and free, changed accordingly.

Pramudya wrote 'Sunat' in this time of startling transitions, and in this light the text is intriguing. Although it does show oppositions such as between poor and rich, dark and light, communalism and individualism, it emphatically denies the possibility of crossing any border, the chance to change. Moreover, Pramudya's orientation is clear and fixed: he positively accepts Java, poverty and childhood, associated with home, stability and comfort; on the other hand, there is a constant longing for the impossible, the unattainable, wealth and adulthood, associated with the big wide world that is hostile and full of danger.

The other stories in *Tjerita dari Blora* seem to confirm the world-view as deduced from 'Sunat'; in each story the relevant notions can be classified into two opposing blocks, separated by an impassable border which no element is able to cross. This may be summarized in the words of one of the main characters of 'Dia jang menjerah', who, after all kinds of calamities, eventually observes: "Biarlah badjingan tetap djadi badjingan. Biarlah jang baik tetap baik".¹³

As a text with a fixed classification of irreconcilable concepts, 'Sunat' (like the other stories in *Tjerita dari Blora*) is a fine example of a mythic text, and as such is an expression of a cultural framework in which the "aesthetics of identity" are prevalent. The heroes are stable, fixed characters, while their efforts to cross the border are "typical", i.e. confirming and stressing the rigidity of the classification they are caught in (cf. Lotman 1974:347). The comparison with wayang is almost self-evident (cf. Teeuw 1967:179-180): wayang texts, like Pramudya's work, also have fixed characters, which are easy to create, easy to recognize, and easy to place in the over-all classification of the semantic field involved. The heroes' adventures serve to con-

firm the existing border in wayang texts and Pramudya's work alike. The correspondence cannot be denied, but is better described not so much in terms of influence as in terms of a common model of reality, of two manifestations of the same ideology, with a clear, fixed scheme of values.

5.2 The place of 'Sunat' (and *Tjerita dari Blora* as a whole) in Pramudya's oeuvre opens another line of investigation.

Pramudya's own later rejection of this collection of short stories may be taken as a starting-point here. In a paper presented to the Faculty of Letters of the Universitas Indonesia in 1963,¹⁴ Pramudya squarely qualified his *Tjerita dari Blora* as bourgeois and decadent, and it is clear why: his passive resignation to the world as it is and his vague desire for happiness and a better world as expressed in 'Sunat' had by this time developed into an active, successful attempt to break through the rigid borderline toward the other side.

The development of Pramudya from a traditional Javanese child to a progressive, nationalistic Indonesian adult had been painful and marked by intense emotional involvement. A broad study will undoubtedly find this radical change in Pramudya's world-view expressed in his oeuvre (cf. Teeuw's remarks on his 'Sunji-senjap disiang hidup', Teeuw 1964).¹⁵

5.3 A comparison of 'Sunat' with work of Pramudya's contemporaries and successors may bring to light yet other facets of this story. Not all texts of the revolutionary period reveal an identical classification system and world-view.

Even more importantly, perhaps: definitely not all texts from this period are mythic texts. Thus the works of Achdiat Kartamihardja, Mochtar Lubis and Sontani, to mention only a few (non-Javanese) contemporaries, do have heroes who are able to step across the border confronting them (e.g. *Atheis*, *Djalan tak ada Udjung*, and *Tambora* respectively). A text like Chairil Anwar's 'Hoppla!' suggests a similar possibility to tear down fixed classifications and so create periphrastic texts.

5.4 The reception of Pramudya's work is an altogether different field of study, which has hardly been touched upon so far. Studies of reception should revolve around the question: is or was 'Sunat' perceived as a work of art (i.e., as a text with a literary function), and if so: by whom, where and how? The entire range of extra-literary relations is involved here. The seminal concepts and ideas evolved by Czech structuralism (Mukarovsky 1977 and 1978, Vodička 1976) and German Rezeptionsgeschichte (Jauss 1970, Grimm 1977) could be a useful starting-point in this connection.

Lotman himself has aptly summarized the problems involved as follows: "These series of poetico-occasional synonyms and antonyms are perceived in relation to the semantic fields already in force in

text-external communication systems. In the mind of the reader there is a set of familiar associations that are canonized by the authority of his natural language, by his general outlook on life, by the conceptual structure of the period and the type of culture he belongs to, and, last but not least, by the total structure of the artistic constructions which are familiar to him" (Lotman 1972:285).

How 'Sunat' is evaluated by Indonesian and Western readers, the influence of critics, the government and commercialism on this, the different successive and simultaneous interpretations of the text, the latter's influence or lack of influence on its readers — these are just a few of the important problems to be investigated.

The isolation, definition and systematization of these phenomena is a task indispensable to the study of literature, which in our field has hardly begun to be tackled.

NOTES

- 1 A useful introduction to Lotman's ideas is given in Shukman 1977. As the original Russian texts are inaccessible to me, I had to rely on translations. The English translations of the quotations from Lotman 1972 and 1974 are mine. I shall limit myself in the following to written texts. Occasionally I will refer to the work of the main representatives of French structuralism, not only for clarity's sake but also to indicate certain points of correspondence between French and Russian structuralist thinking (cf. Günther 1973:76). In the presentation of my text I shall follow Lotman's system of numbering the various sections. I would like to express my thanks to Sandra Niessen for her corrections of my English and to Willem van der Molen and Peter Worsley for their useful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. For a good survey of modern literary theories see Fokkema/Kunne 1977.
- 2 Of course there are some stimulating exceptions, notably Braginsky 1975 and Teeuw 1978.
- 3 My analysis below is concentrated on a single story, which is treated as the total realization of a comprehensive secondary language system. Accordingly I will use the relevant terms in the singular ("a work of art", "a literary text") in my theoretical remarks. 'Sunat' can be variously described as representing the realization of a hierarchically structured series of secondary language systems, viz. as an individual text, as part of a cycle of texts (in this case *Tjerita dari Blora*), as part of the oeuvre of the particular author (Pramudya Ananta Tur), as part of the literary language of this author's epoch (the time during and shortly after the Revolution), and as part of the Indonesian language (cf. Lotman 1976:285). The identification of the literary language of 'Sunat' could be the first step in a broader investigation, in which one begins with a single text, and works concentrically outwards to ever widening circles: the cycle of texts, the oeuvre, etc., each consecutive step feeding back to and throwing new light on the previous circles and looking ahead to throw relevant light on the subsequent one.
- 4 This notion of language as the model of reality is reminiscent of the Sapir/Whorf thesis, as is pointed out in Fokkema/Kunne 1977:42, who rightly add that in semiotics the truth value of a system is not questioned. The Telquel

- group around Barthes and Derrida (Barthes 1966) and Eco (Eco 1976) work along the same lines (cf. Lotman 1972:30-31).
- 5 Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1969:20: "Poetry exploits simultaneously the intellectual significance of words and syntactical constructions and aesthetic properties, which are the potential terms of another system which reinforces, modifies or contradicts this significance".
 - 6 The cultural typology of "aesthetics of identity" vs. "aesthetics of opposition", as explained below, is of crucial importance for the possibility of this automatization (cf. Lotman 1972:408 ff.).
 - 7 It is noteworthy that on this point structuralism and hermeneutics seem to agree (cf. Japp 1977:69). Equally interesting, and worth a separate study, is a comparison with Mukarovsky's concept of the "semantic gesture" (Mukarovsky 1978:89-129).
 - 8 This is reminiscent of Lévi-Strauss' concept of the "bricoleur": "by inclination he always remains within the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization" (Lévi-Strauss 1966:19).
 - 9 This is reminiscent of Lévi-Strauss' scientist: "always trying to make his way out and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization" (Lévi-Strauss 1966:19).
 - 10 It may be useful to point out that, living in a culture in which the aesthetics of opposition are prevalent, we have hardly any difficulty in distinguishing and describing the two types of culture, whereas persons living in a culture dominated by the aesthetics of identity are not able to describe the aesthetics of opposition. The question of what a particular concept means to those living in a different reality is not raised in periods in which mythic texts are dominant (cf. Lotman 1972:61).
 - 11 "Java" is used here to denote the entire set of relevant cultural values, i.e., "Javaness".
 - 12 It should be noted that every analysis will inevitably lead to simplification. In any text various systems of coherence may be simultaneously at work, causing tension and conflict. The text as a multi-dimensional system cannot be transformed unequivocally into the one-dimensional system of an analysis (Lotman 1972:108). A clear example of a conflict between two archisemes is provided by segment XIII above: the binary opposition between poverty and wealth is at least as strong as the one between Java and Islam.
 - 13 Two more quotations which illustrate Pramudya's stand in this classification are, from 'Jang sudah hilang': "Sungguh mengherankan hatiku mengapa semua jang terdjadi tidak tetap terdjadi. Tiap-tiap perubahan jang selalu berpindah-pindah itu, kadang-kadang tak dapat atau tak sampai dalam pengamatan-amatan manusia dan mengumbang-ambingkan begini banjak manusia didunia ini" (Pramudya 1952:41), and: "Dan rata-rata orang Indonesia sudah senanglah hatinja bila mempunjai harapan. Sekalipun ia kosong berisi kabut" (Pramudya 1952:305). The use of the river Lusi as the symbol of life in the first paragraph of the opening story of *Tjerita dari Blora* acquires a very special significance: its banks are torn away again and again, and will never meet. The border is impassable.
 - 14 It is remarkable that this document (Pramudya 1963) has been so badly neglected, as it gives some valuable and deeply original insights in the development of modern Indonesian literature.
 - 15 It is tentatively expressed in the novelette *Midah - simanis bergigi emas* (1954) and in the short story 'Paman Martil' in the PKI-collection *Jang tak terpadamkan* (1965).

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