

CHAPTER 11. PROGRESSIVE NOVELS FROM CENTRAL JAVA

11.1 Introduction

The Yogyakarta area's world of campuses, activism and art provide inspiration to a range of authors who are expanding in numbers and themes with the publishing boom. Until about 1970, Yogyakarta was a quiet Javanese town with a well-known university, tourist sites and a local sultanate. Now the area has hundreds of thousands students of higher education from all over Indonesia. Many writers have therefore had their base in Yogyakarta. 'Bustling' might be an exaggerated adjective to characterize this previously sleepy feudal town of central Java, but the forces of change are definitely present and constitute an impetus for literary creation. Yogyakarta was also a resistance stronghold during the anti-Soeharto struggle.⁴⁶¹ The survey found a conscious literature that socialises ideas and critiques of authors from this area. Novels originating from this environment are generally written in realist styles and are more structured and closer to NGO discourses than are the metropolitan novels. Fragmentary narratives are rare; rather an effort to be progressive and conscious is noticeable. Fragrant popular literature and student type novels, which have a large local market, appear as well, but are not the concern here.⁴⁶² The works of feminist Muslim writers, such as Abidah El Khalieqy and Anggie Widowati share characteristics with the metropolitans but are not 'fragrant' and actually fight for something. Generally this literature offers no interpretational difficulties as the symbolism is kept on a realist naïve level, Kurniawan's novel exempted.⁴⁶³

11.2 The Novel Style of Eka Kurniawan

Eka Kurniawan (b. 1975) contributed what can be 'a great novel' according to aforementioned criteria, perhaps the only one of his generation in the period. *Cantik itu Luka* (hereafter *CIL*, Kurniawan 2002b) is a historical novel, as defined by the fact that the author was not yet born at the time most of the described events occurred.⁴⁶⁴ The form of *CIL* is similar to Latin American 'magic realist' novels.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ The peer group in Widowati's novel (see 11.4) began their activism in Yogyakarta.

⁴⁶² The main character in M. Wulan's novel *Swastika* is also involved with student activism in Yogyakarta before she turns to an artistic experimental lifestyle. *Swastika*, like *Supernova* and *Mahadewa Mahadewi*, is 'serious' enough to be sold among serious literature, which is why they are all discussed.

⁴⁶³ Several AKY (see 7.3) works have reached the bookshops but Kurniawan remains the most successful so far, now 'taken over' by Gramedia. The writers involved with AKY exemplify the progressive tradition and is close to NGOs, such as the Institute for Social Change. Masharto Alfathi's *Layang-layang Putus* (2003) socialises ideas of facilitating simpler lives for the disabled, or, as it is better put in this novel, people with 'different abilities' (*difabel*), through the perspective of a handicapped youngster whose life is followed from childhood until adult. It is a micro-narrative novel against prejudice and discrimination with elements of the Bildungsroman. The characters create an organisation that works to implement laws favourable for handicapped and to supply equipment for them. The novel's narrative style, of several first persons, is very similar to *Para Priyayi*.

⁴⁶⁴ Bear with the author. 517 pages of numerous and related tales, myths and histories (a sign of unity in structure) are not easily retold or reduced. There is no room for an appendix but the analysis involves a summary. Better read the novel.

Magical realism, or *realismo maravilloso* (marvellous realism), ‘attempts to create new realities or to treat the existing ones with a different perspective from that of the social realism of the 1930s’ (Angulo 1995:1). The mode is different from Western realist styles and transcends both the fantastic and social realms. Therefore it tends to be seen as a wheel for interpreting the post-colonial situation and even as ‘the literary language of the emergent post-colonial world’ (Bhabha 1990:7), characterised by hybridity of cultural interaction. In marvellous realism, real and fantastic elements coexist without contradiction. Because this type of realism reinterprets history, it requires an understanding of national and/or regional, ideological and historical differences to be able to compare with the provided explanations.⁴⁶⁶ Indonesia has a similar history to Latin America, one of indigenous cultures, colonialism and a subsequent cold war ideological struggle with Western covert interventions resulting in military dictatorships.⁴⁶⁷ Indonesia’s magic realism is however organic.⁴⁶⁸ *CIL* is local Sundanese-Indonesian in the sense that the setting is a rather isolated harbour town by the south coast close to central Java. It is one of the few novels that offer a socio-historical analysis of Indonesian society.⁴⁶⁹

11.2.1 DEWI AYU AND THE PATRIARCH SON-IN-LAWS

The major social forces in post-independence society are represented through three anti-heroes. They are excessively local: they all refuse to leave Halimunda. **Shodanco** is the highest local authority, a Lieutenant Colonel who was the first to organise his *shodan* (unit of Japanese-trained militiamen) to rebel against the occupiers. He is the Soeharto of Halimunda and owes his reputation to his contribution to the revolution. Shodanco is initially a hero, the one the townspeople ask for help in times of trouble, such as the wild boar plague he successfully wipes

⁴⁶⁵ Gabriel G. Marquez’ *One Hundred Years of Solitude* comes to mind, which in turn had several precursors. *CIL* is also a family chronicle of about one hundred years set in a fictive town on the periphery of the world system (Moretti). A direct comparison between Latin American novels and *CIL* would be interesting but is outside of the scope here. The author views the form as appropriated, just like the novel form in general is appropriated, in the same way as, for instance, Pramoedya was inspired by Steinbeck and Gorki. Elements from Marquez and other Latin American writers are present in *CIL*, such as realism in a mythical world and the mingling of myths and socio-historical events in which the mythical places reveal another reality. Social, political and economical developments revolve around one or a couple of patriarchs and/or a matriarch over several generations, involving incest and the increasing madness of the colonel patriarch. History is interrupted by exterior forces and completes a cycle. The dominant social forces are gangsterism and militarism. Questions of identity – family, national and cultural – are touched upon while reaching a conclusion of mutual love and solidarity.

⁴⁶⁶ The introduction covers some of these. The novel style is related to the alternative history or the historical national allegory.

⁴⁶⁷ Like for instance the similar arrangements in Pinochet’s Chile and Soeharto’s Indonesia.

⁴⁶⁸ The country is arguably magic realist and absurd and many writers, such as I. Simatupang and P. Wijaya, have explored and exploited supernatural, surreal and absurd elements. In Indonesia the presence of ghosts is more commonly felt than in Europe and supernatural motifs are common in modern literature. Even Ayu Utami’s mostly realist novels have several mystical passages.

⁴⁶⁹ I identify Halimunda with either Cilacap or Pangandaran or both places. This, Halimunda, rather concrete locality is mostly cut off from the rest of the world, but sometimes exterior forces make themselves present or interfere.

out (p. 163). Shodanco is rather humble in the sense that he just wants to remain Shodanco and Lt. Col. in Halimunda. He is happy when his promotion to national commander is cancelled:

'I keep on asking myself what kind of military we possess, that chooses a man who does not even know the female organ yet to be national commander.' (p. 155)

'*Aku bertanya-tanya tentara seperti apa yang kita miliki, memilih seorang lelaki yang bahkan belum mengenal kemaluan perempuan sebagai Panglima Besar.*'

Maman Gendeng is the mystic leader of *preman* with headquarters at the bus terminal.⁴⁷⁰ Like Shodanco he was a revolutionary in the war for independence. After independence Maman Gendeng went on to become a Robin Hood type of robber until his arrival in Halimunda. Perhaps the most fantastical character, he is a man with an almost mythological background. Maman Gendeng is of the last generation of martial arts masters (*pendekar*), the only student of Empu Sepak from Gunung Gede who has raised the orphaned child of a *bupati* (regent) and his maid. 'At the age of five, believe it, he was the strongest boy on earth' (p. 113). Maman has been taught all his master's ancient *ilmu* (knowledge) and is *kebal* (invulnerable). Shodanco shoots Maman after he has come to punish Shodanco for the rape of Dewi Ayu, but the shot does not leave a wound (p. 140). Seemingly he does not age either. These are commonly represented views of a *pendekar* and *preman*.⁴⁷¹ Maman Gendeng is an image from the past that has lived on in *tjerita silat* (martial arts stories) and now lives as a literary image. **Kliwon** is the Arjuna type youth who becomes Halimunda's popular Communist leader. He was still a child during the revolution. As a teenager he lives an extravagant lifestyle. His mother spoils him to make him happy because her husband was a bitter Communist who was executed. She lets him do as he pleases, although she knows that he buys pirate records, goes to cinemas and concerts and has lots of girlfriends, some of whom he even makes love to.⁴⁷² Says his mother: 'Even if he becomes a Communist, he has to become a happy Communist' (p. 170).

The three leaders are opposing forces in the power struggle and all of them fall in love with a fourth force: the beautiful heroine **Dewi Ayu** and her three beautiful daughters whom each of them marry. Because the power figures are intermarried, social conflict becomes one of fratricide. Dewi Ayu is the town's most famous and professional prostitute, a legend.⁴⁷³ She works for the shrewd entrepreneur, Mama Kalong, the owner of the town's brothel. Once a poor girl, she becomes the richest

⁴⁷⁰ This was indeed a spatial coordinate of gangster territory (see Barker 2001:20-53). Through *Petrus*, the state reclaimed such territory to a large extent.

⁴⁷¹ It is relevant that during the *Petrus*, people, including the state agents involved, believed that prominent gangsters had attained supernatural powers that made them *kebal* (invulnerable) (Barker 2001:42-47). The search for such *ilmu* has a tradition in Java.

⁴⁷² Kliwon's lifestyle seems to be of a later date than the 1950s. But conventional realism is not the style chosen in the novel. Geertz, in his late 1950s study, however, notes an emerging youth culture in Modjokerto, one influenced by Western models but ambiguous in its stand (1976:307-308). Hollywood movies were popular and also nationally distributed magazines and literature.

⁴⁷³ Compare with Diva of *Supernova*.

woman in Halimunda. Together, ‘They were the source of the town’s happiness. There were no important gatherings in town to which they were not invited’ (p. 111). Pious women hate them because they know their husbands go to the brothel. Mama Kalong’s brothel and Dewi Ayu are of outstanding importance, both socially and symbolically. When Maman Gendeng monopolizes Dewi Ayu, ‘[it] seemed to be the end for the happiness of Halimunda’s men and for the wide smiles of their wives and girlfriends’ (p. 111). Dewi Ayu is the most intellectual character, along with Kliwon. She reads *Multatuli* and has grown up with folk versions of *wayang* tales (p. 68), which indicates her bond to the local people whom she thinks of as poor people who like to laugh. Although Dewi Ayu is a Dutch citizen, as an *Indo* she identifies with the indigenous people because of the above and her native grandmother Ma Iyang.

11.2.2 THE MARVELLOUS, THE ROLE OF MYTH AND SUPERSTITION

The marvellous is introduced from the first sentence:

One afternoon at the end of March Dewi Ayu arose from the grave after twenty-one years of death. It caused a young herder to wake up from his siesta beneath a Cambodia tree. He wet his underwear before crying out and his four sheep ran off in disarray between the gravestones as if a tiger was let loose among them. It all began with a shaking at an old grave with a nameless stone surrounded by hip high grass, but everybody knew it was Dewi Ayu’s grave. (p. 1)

Sore hari di akhir bulan Maret, Dewi Ayu bangkit dari kuburan setelah dua puluh satu tahun kematian. Seorang bocah gembala dibuat terbangun dari tidur siang di bawah pohon kamboja, kencing di celana pendeknya sebelum melolong, dan keempat dombanya lari di antara batu dan kayu nisan tanpa arah bagaikan seekor macan dilemparkan di tengah mereka. Semuanya berawal dari kegaduhan di kuburan tua, dengan nisan tanpa nama dan rumput setinggi lutut, tapi semua orang mengenalnya sebagai kuburan Dewi Ayu.

The event attracts people who hope there will be some kind of miracle, rather than just some shaking at an old grave. The grave is shaken as if by an earthquake; soil rains down and an old woman wrapped in burial clothing appears in front of the crowd. People faint or run off head over heels. The marvellous, humorous opening and the next marvellous-grotesque events in the tale of the birth of Dewi Ayu’s fourth child set the tone for the novel. Thereafter follows a drift towards social facts and history embedded in the tales. Marvellous events occur throughout the novel and are not only witnessed by mystics but by the majority. Therefore the phenomena belong to the common view. The novelist is at once embedded in and distanced from the local beliefs:

Fact is that most people in Halimunda believed in superstitions. They still believed that devils and ghosts and everything supernatural were hanging around the graveyard, living with the spirits of the dead. Furthermore they believed that the gravediggers were closely acquainted with them. (pp. 328-329, 1965)

Kenyataanya sebagian besar orang Halimunda masih percaya tahayul. Mereka masih percaya bahwa setan dan dedemit dan apa pun yang gaib

berkeliaran di tempat pemakaman, hidup bersama roh-roh orang mati. Lebih jauh lagi mereka percaya para penggali kubur hidup akrab dengan mereka.

However, the novel leaves no doubt about the existence of the supernatural. Shodanco is haunted by Communist ghosts after G30S.

He did not experience any hallucinations. What he saw other people saw, and what he was afraid of other people were afraid of too. The difference was that he was far more afraid than anyone else, especially when compared to his wife who with time became used to the appearances of the ghosts. (p. 380-381)

Ia tidak mengalami halusinasi apa pun. Apa yang ia lihat bisa dilihat orang lain, dan apa yang ia takutkan juga ditakutkan orang lain. Perbedaannya, ia takut lebih hebat dari siapa pun, terutama jika dibandingkan istrinya yang lama-kelamaan mulai terbiasa dengan kemunculan hantu-hantu tersebut.

Halimunda is a society where people have been raised on myths and tales. Its genesis is shrouded in mythology. The orphan Maman Gendeng, broken-hearted from his first love, is lured to Halimunda by stories (*kisah*) told by fishermen about Princess Rengganis (pp. 118-126). The last descendant of the Sundanese Padjadjaran kingdom was so beautiful that men fought terrible wars over her. Her beauty became a curse for the country and for herself. Therefore she always stayed inside not to be seen. Finally she decided to marry the first one she saw after opening the window. It was a dog ('a dog will never care if I am beautiful or not'). They married and sought refuge in the misty forest Rengganis named Halimunda. Maman Gendeng's Oedipus complex compels him to search for the legendary princess. After a long and difficult journey he finally arrives in Halimunda where, according to the fisherman who has brought him: 'Even shit is always beautiful here' (p. 123). To his great despair he is informed that Princess Rengganis died hundreds of years ago. He wreaks havoc and monopolizes Dewi Ayu to make up for Rengganis. The curse, beauty, and the myth will repeat themselves, foremost in Maman Gendeng's beautiful daughter, Rengganis.

The main characters are all legendary in Halimunda, to the degree that they take on mythological properties in local belief. They have also been raised on tales and myths. The magic appeal of Kliwon is explained in marvellous terms. In the common view, especially of girls, he is not the child of his parents, but of a heavenly nymph. He was brought down from the rainbow as a baby or the stars shone brighter on the day of his birth (p. 201). About the fabulous Maman Gendeng: The people 'remembered the stories of the gangster as well as they knew the stories of the holy book' (p. 112). The town patriarch Shodanco is described as a man with a traditional outlook, but he is also a shrewd businessman. *Kejawen* is reflected in his speech and in his lifestyle. Shodanco lives for long periods in a hut in the forest, meditating and fasting Javanese style while supervising the business of the military. His grandfather has raised him with Mahabharata tales of war, which has formed his worldview. Shodanco fights war according to such strategies and also applies it to business and love: 'There is no difference between war and business. Both of them are carried out with great cunning' (p. 159).

11.2.3 COLONIALISM AND MA GEDIK'S BROKEN HEART

Halimunda's problems are partly rooted in colonialism. Although the novel is not chronological throughout and the past is always present, the binding plot is kicked off by a tale of colonial arrogance. 'That woman was another story, a kind of love that never became real' (p. 30). Ma Gedik and Ma Iyang were two native youths from the fishermen's hamlet of Halimunda. Having grown up together, only time prevented them from getting married. Ma Gedik, at the age of nineteen, still carried a bottle with his mother's milk everywhere he went. When Ma Iyang asked why, he replied, 'Because my father drank my mother's milk until he was old' (p. 31). Ma Iyang understood and behind the bushes she told him to suck at her nipples. Ma Gedik then fell in crazy love with Ma Iyang and stopped drinking his mother's milk. But disaster intervened. One evening the pretty Ma Iyang, decorated as a *sintren* dancer, got picked up by a horse carriage. Ma Gedik ran up to his girlfriend and asked where she was going.

'To a Dutch Master. [...] I will be a concubine. In the future you call me *Nyai Iyang*.' - 'Shit,' said Ma Gedik. 'Why do you want to be a concubine?' - 'Because if not my parents will become breakfast for dogs.' (p. 31)

'*Ke rumah Tuan Belanda. [...] Aku jadi gundik. Kelak kau panggil aku Nyai Iyang.*' - '*Tai, kata Ma Gedik. 'Kenapa kau mau jadi gundik?' - 'Sebab jika tidak, bapak dan ibu akan dijadikan sarapan ajak-ajak.'*

Ma Iyang, in one of several instances of clairvoyance, tells Ma Gedik to wait at the rocky hilltop in sixteen years to come, if he stills wants her then, because then the Dutch master will be bored (p. 32). Ma Gedik becomes crazy. The Dutch master was Ted Stammmer, plantation owner and Dewi Ayu's grandfather. Dewi Ayu, who has a developed sixth sense, knows that something is following her in life. It is the ghost of Ma Gedik, an evil supernatural force (*kekuatan gaib jahat*) and a hidden hand in events, seeking revenge on the descendants of Ted Stammmer. This is the family's and Halimunda's curse, together with beauty, that will haunt the family and the people until the plot is resolved, that is, when Dewi Ayu has returned from the world of the dead to deal with the evil spirit.

11.2.4 THE POST-COLONIAL SOCIAL HISTORY OF HALIMUNDA

CIL does not give voice to all the important ideological voices of the eras concerned.⁴⁷⁴ In Halimunda political ideologies play a small role. *Pancasila* is not even mentioned. People strive for survival, material goods, love and sex. There is also a rather quiet religious segment of society. Political ideologies and parties try to dominate society and distribute wealth among citizens. PKI claimed the largest support base of all the Southeast Asian Communist parties. Especially in Central and East Java, PKI became increasingly assertive towards 1965. Through Kliwon its local history is told. Communism is the only political ideology of importance, which is strived for by a main character. It derives its strength from the two major competing social forces that control most material wealth and people: the military and gangsters. Physical power therefore takes the place of political ideology.

⁴⁷⁴ See also the introduction, specifically 1.3.

11.2.4.1 *Militarism*

Shodanco and the military occupy the hegemonic position of power after the revolution. They answer to the central government, which only interferes in times of national insecurity (G30S 1965 and *Petrus* 1983). Other state representatives, such as the police, are relatively powerless. The military smuggles to and from Australia and sells merchandise with the help of a Chinese businessman for good profits.⁴⁷⁵ Shodanco is not satisfied with the generals at the centre who not only pay too little but also cut their profits. He also enters the local fishing industry with large modern boats that compete with the traditional fishermen.

11.2.4.2 *Gangsterism (Premanisme)*

In Halimunda phallic law is bare and obsolete. Immediately upon his arrival, Maman Gendeng decides to seize control of the town, beginning with the whorehouse and sleeping with Dewi Ayu. He succeeds after a legendary battle with the gangster leader, Edi Idiot that lasts for seven days until Edi is dead. The citizens are informed: 'All power is transferred to me. [...] Nobody is allowed to sleep with Dewi Ayu at Mama Kalong's brothel except me' (p. 131). The inhabitants are temporarily relieved but soon realize after a few excesses that they have another gangster at their heels. A soldier comments on the situation:

'It makes no difference for us. This town is inhabited by bandits, robbers, guerrilla veterans of the revolutionary army and remnants of the Communists. We face all the chaos that they create and we cannot do anything about it.' Shodanco nodded. 'We only exchange Edi Idiot with Maman Gendeng,' he said. The soldier smiled bitterly and whispered, 'We only hope he doesn't interfere with the business of the military.' (p. 130)

11.2.4.3 *Communism*

Communism's history and local genealogy is told in tales about Kliwon who becomes its ideologue. Communist discourse is depicted as rather absurd and is therefore unlikely to be persuasive. Kliwon is the popular, innocent, wonder boy of the town, a handsome star-pupil, until, one day, when he instantly falls madly in love with Dewi Ayu's eight-year old daughter, Alamanda. He becomes very sad and quiet, finally even crazy. Back home after the visit to Dewi Ayu, the one he had come to seduce, his mother asks, 'Have you become a Communist? Only Communists are sad' (p. 174).

When Kliwon was thirteen, a friend of his father sought his final refuge in his mother's house. Kamerad Salim told him the history of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) until the Madiun rebellion of 1948 and some things about Communism and its followers, such as 'If a Communist doesn't have the desire to rebel, don't believe he is a Communist' (p. 180). Salim also told his own history: 'I was even

⁴⁷⁵ Business in Indonesia has until recently been done partly through the military, which extended its influence into all sectors of society (*dwifungsi*). Since the revolution the military has been forced to sustain itself through both legal and illegal enterprises. Major General Soeharto himself began to conduct business during the revolution and early on established trading networks with ethnic Chinese businessmen, for instance with Bob Hasan in forestry, which he maintained and developed during his reign. Shodanco was also involved with illegal logging during the revolution, after which he smuggles it out and sells anything (pp. 158-159).

arrested by Stalin for three months, to be re-indoctrinated' (p. 181). According to him, God is irrelevant. We have to fight oppression in this world and make the hell of this world into heaven: the goal of Communism. The next morning, KNIL soldiers come to the house and execute Salim naked in the bathroom. Kliwon keeps Salim's Communist cape, as if it is his fate to become a Communist.

Kliwon's status in Halimunda competes with Shodanco's. When he was a mad hobo experiencing 'social contradictions' and not even his mother recognized him, he was still an imaginary hero in the minds and stories of girls (p. 202).

It seemed the Communist party used his reputation to attract many girls to become cadres because it was proven that when they brought Kliwon to speak at the podium, the field was crowded and the girls shouted hysterically. [...] Many people were of the opinion that if the Communist party were to receive a majority vote in the elections it would be because of Kamerad Kliwon. (p. 203)

The unhealthy competition in the fishing industry has elements of class conflict. Kliwon organises the traditional fishermen into a union on behalf of the party. Some fishermen want to burn Shodanco's boats but Kliwon, who upholds strict discipline, restrains them from anarchistic actions. Kliwon's Fishermen's Union takes care of all ceremonies, including the offering of cow-skulls to the queen of the South Seas, Ratu Laut Kidul, which the superstitious fishermen demand. At the offering ceremony all readings of *tembang* poetry are exchanged with the *International* and the end prayer with 'Workers of the world, unite'. 'I am like a missionary spreading a new religion. With the Manifest as the holy book,' says Kamerad Kliwon (p. 287). Kliwon ascends to chief rank in Halimunda (c. 1963), because of his skills, charisma and disciplined, forgiving attitude. Kliwon organises unions, strikes, a blockade of Shodanco's boats and even a small people's guerrilla. It is said that the Communist party achieved its most glorious reputation in local history under his leadership (pp. 319-321). People were sure it would become the leading party in the town if elections would be held and enemy parties prayed that it would not happen (c. 1965). The power of the party extended into the schools where children were taught the *International*. The celebrations and lively processions of the party, resembling carnivals, were unparalleled in Halimunda's history. Kliwon's mother, Mina was the most disappointed. The worst thing in her mind was that school youths were being arrested by the military under pressures from the party because of singing rock and roll songs, which was also a national policy at the time. The previously carnivalistic Kliwon has become authoritarian. Mina confronts the Communists at their office:

'Didn't you too sing those songs before with your guitar, and you too (to the bystanders), and now you want to have them arrested in the military prison because of singing those children songs?' (p. 322)

'*Bukankah di masa lalu kau juga menyanyikan lagu-lagu itu dengan gitarmu, dan kalian juga (pada orang-orang yang berkerumun), dan sekarang kalian menyuruh mereka masuk ke dalam tahanan militer kota hanya karena menyanyikan lagu anak-anak itu?*'

Kliwon did not stop at that. Under the banner of ‘Hang America and cursed be its false culture!’, he exerted pressure on authorities to confiscate pirated records with ‘mentally destructive’ Western songs and to arrest everyone who listened to such records at home. Instead, people’s art, often sensational, was propagated on a grand scale (p. 322). At the peak of his power, Kliwon laments about his fate, missing Alamanda whom he lost to Shodanco. He has doubts about the revolution. ‘Is it possible that humans will not oppress one another?’ (p. 308).

Sometimes he asked himself whether it was the fate of revolutionaries to live a lonely life with one’s head filled only with ideas about the revolution. Perhaps he was going to lead his life like this: make love while thinking of revolution, dream about revolution, be drunk with revolution, eat revolution and even shit revolution. (p. 309)

Ia kadang bertanya-tanya juga apakah sudah merupakan nasib para revolusioner untuk menjalani kehidupan yang sunyi dengan kepala yang meluludijekali gagasan-gagasan tentang revolusi. Beginilah mungkin ia akan menjalani hidup: ia bercinta sambil memikirkan revolusi, memimpikan revolusi, mabuk revolusi, makan revolusi, dan bahkan buang tai revolusi.

The fishermen are finally at their wits’ end with Shodanco’s boats that refuse to leave their waters. Then Kliwon succumbs to the desperate idea of burning the boats and leads the planning himself. Kliwon’s negotiations with Shodanco fail because Shodanco hates him, the first fiancée of Alamanda. After a long wait, the fishermen set fire to the boats in a night raid and sink them with happy shouts: ‘Long Live the Fishermen’s Union!’. Kliwon tells his friends that night, ‘If the revolution succeeds, everybody will take a shit in the same way’ (p. 312).⁴⁷⁶

11.2.4.4 Collusion and Social Conflict

Maman Gendeng and the gangsters earn money from protection of businesses, foremost drinking dens and Mama Kalong’s brothel. Before Communism becomes important, there are tensions between the two power groups. The gangsters get annoyed because the soldiers do not like to pay at the whorehouse and the drinking dens. Moreover, soldiers sometimes beat up gangsters for petty matters. When Shodanco is busy with family problems and the Fishermen’s union, the people of Halimunda get tired of the chaotic situation and begin to lose faith in their hero. They even begin to suspect that the military conspires with the gangsters to create chaos, even more so after both leaders have married Dewi Ayu’s pretty daughters. One day a fight over a girl goes out of hand and the situation approaches civil war. A part of the population is fed up with the gangsters and another is fed up with the military. The leaders of the two conflicting groups must negotiate.

‘Hey, Shodanco,’ said Maman Gendeng, ‘armed soldiers shall no more take other people’s girls, regardless of whether they are village girls or not. And the soldiers must pay at the brothel like all other men in this town every time they make love. They also have to pay at the drinking den every time they drink and pay for the bus every time they go somewhere. There are no favourite children here, Shodanco.’ - ‘Be my friend,’ said Shodanco.

⁴⁷⁶ Kliwon parodies himself in his utterances, thus himself acting the role of Don Quixote’s companion Sanchez or Semar in *wayang*, who are laughing at and degrading lofty ideals.

'Perhaps we can agree that you, hoodlums, surrender a part of what you gain through whatever means to the soldiers, so that they can pay for the prostitutes and drinks they need'. (p. 278-279)

Shodanco's and Maman Gendeng's friendship is a truce. From now on they will regularly meet at the bus terminal to play *truf* and share their problems. Society is not overwhelmed with the development. People are happy that the situation was solved peacefully at the card table.

But it annoyed them because they soon came to realize that there had occurred a cunning conspiracy between the military and the gangsters to enjoy the money extorted out of a large part of the town's inhabitants. [...] There was no use in asking the police for help, whose only job was to blow a whistle at the crossing. (p. 280-281)

[T]api menjadi cukup menjengkelkan sebab kemudian mereka mulai menyadari bahwa telah terjadi konspirasi licik antara para prajurit dan para preman untuk menikmati uang yang diperas dari sebagian besar warga kota. [...] Jangan harap mereka memohon pada polisi yang kerjanya hanya meniup peluit di perempatan jalan.

The gangster/military collusion benefits the Communist party and the positive Kliwon, already boosted by the fighting between soldiers and gangsters (p. 319). Maman Gendeng admits to Shodanco that he is envious of Kliwon: 'Sometimes I believe he is the only man in this town who views the future full of hope' (p. 282).

'Such are the Communists,' said Shodanco. 'Unfortunate people who don't know this world is predestined to be a rotten place. That's the only reason God promises heaven as relief for the unfortunate.' (p. 282)

'Begitulah orang komunis,' kata sang Shodanco. 'Orang-orang malang yang tak tahu bahwa dunia telah ditakdirkan menjadi tempat sebusuk-busuknya. Itulah satu-satunya alasan kenapa Tuhan menjanjikan surga sebagai penghibur manusia-manusia yang malang.'

11.2.4.5 G30S Ad Absurdum, History in Dialogue

In the novel, historical facts, by now more or less mainstream but not yet fully officially acknowledged, are questioned and answered through even more irony and absurdities, which will be argued is the novel style.⁴⁷⁷ We shall see that even as the macabre events are peaking, there is a loophole for laughter and another positive pole integral to the aesthetics that will be analysed in 11.2.5.

When the news of his burned boats arrives, Shodanco does not get angry because his wife is six months pregnant and he is both happy and busy with making sure that the baby is really there and not cursed in any way (p. 312). But Alamanda's second pregnancy turns out, like the first one, to be a mysterious air pregnancy. Shodanco becomes infuriated and again blames Kliwon, who had predicted the first air pregnancy, for a curse. He grabs a rifle, fires wildly and runs off to kill Kliwon, who just happens to have moved quarters to the one of the party. This happens to coincide with exterior developments; orders arrive from the centre to

⁴⁷⁷ The G30S and the *Petrus* killings were dealt with in a related short story (see 4.3.1).

wipe out Communism. The morning of 1 October 1965 Kliwon is waiting for his daily newspapers there.⁴⁷⁸ His girlfriend, Adinda comes along:

‘How are you, *Kamerad?*’ asked the girl. - ‘Bad. My newspapers have not arrived.’ The girl frowned. ‘Haven’t you heard that something bloody has occurred in Jakarta?’ - ‘How can I know if the newspapers do not arrive?’ [...] - ‘The radio keeps on sending the same news. The Communist party has staged a coup and they have killed some generals.’ - ‘If the newspapers arrive they will surely write about it.’ (pp. 314-315)

Kliwon is totally preoccupied with the newspapers and does not want to know of anything else besides what has happened to them. He has subscribed for years and suddenly they do not arrive. Comrade Karmin explains to his normally rational superior: ‘The military has occupied all newspaper offices. So I am sorry, *Kamerad*, today we don’t read the papers’. Kliwon: ‘This is worse than a coup d’état’ (pp. 315-316). Adinda believes they have been set up by the military in Jakarta (p. 318). Rumours arrive of killings and arrests of Communists in the capital. The party people gather, unaware of what has happened to the leadership at the centre, and decide to organise demonstrations and strikes for the freeing of Communists.

All reports seemed so conflicting. The only source of information available was the radio, which could not be believed at all, because they had reported the same things since the morning, as if it had been recorded and the tape was played repeatedly: *The coup staged by the Communist party has failed because the military immediately saved the country and seized power temporarily*. Then there came a new report: the President is on house arrest. Everything was so confusing. (p. 324)

Tensions between Communists and anti-Communists increase. The latter are roaring about the Communist coup.

‘Do something,’ said Adinda. - ‘What?’ asked *Kamerad* Kliwon. ‘Even Soviet and China are not giving any kind of help.’ - ‘So what are you going to do?’ - ‘I am going to keep waiting for those newspapers.’ (p. 324)

‘Berbuatlah sesuatu,’ said Adinda. - ‘Apa?’ tanya Kamerad Kliwon. ‘Bahkan Sovyet dan Cina tak membantu apa pun.’ - ‘Lalu apa yang akan kau lakukan?’ - ‘Aku akan terus menunggu koran-koran itu?’

By the next day Kliwon has still not eaten anything. ‘All of this chaos began when my newspapers didn’t arrive’ (p. 326). He insists they must appear underground, as is usual. Finally he explains why: ‘Because the Russian revolution would not have succeeded if the Bolsheviks didn’t have newspapers’. Outside the office demonstrators are shouting.

They, anti-Communist groups, were shouting about what the radio had been reporting since the previous day, that the Communists had staged a coup. *Kamerad* Kliwon, who had not yet lost his sense of humour, immediately commented, ‘Staging a coup and shutting down their own papers’. (p. 326)

⁴⁷⁸ Kliwon subscribed to the Communist *Harian Rakjat*, the Soekarnoist *Bintang Timoer* and a local Bandung Communist newspaper.

Orang-orang itu, gerombolan anti-komunis, mendengungkan apa yang telah dilaporkan radio sejak kemarin bahwa orang-orang komunis telah melakukan kudeta. Kamerad Kliwon yang masih tak kehilangan selera humornya segera berkomentar, 'Melakukan kudeta dan membredel sendiri koran mereka'.

These are the techniques whereby the novelist depicts the view of how this previously labelled Communist coup, that seemingly will never be fully resolved, was at least a hijacked one. It is done with absurdities and irony. In the fictive reality, as a kind of thesis, the satire's facts and Kliwon's statements ridicule the idea that the Communist party has staged a coup, also on the national level. It is clear that the local party leader is completely unaware of happenings. Coup-makers as a rule take control of the media. How would one stage a coup and prevent one's version of events from being told? In Halimunda people, Communists, believe that the military has occupied all newspaper offices. They believe that they have been set up. Information comes from rumours and the radio's monologue. Kliwon's obsession with the newspapers (the text's devotion to it) draws attention to what really happened to them, as well as furthering the view that it is a military coup.⁴⁷⁹ Next to the dialogue on historical facts is the dialogue on guilt. The locals are not guilty of the coup but they are punished with death.

History and guilt are thrown into dialogue in yet another way. Rumours about killings in the nation keep on coming and then it happens in Halimunda (pp. 327-328). The first victim is the guerrilla veteran Mualimin who is both Communist and Muslim. This is an indirect dialogue contradicting New Order and religious rightwing propaganda and the common view they have shaped, namely that Communists are atheists and enemies of God, which is why people who believe in God can kill them. Mualimin, who had mastered party ideology, saw his death in struggle against exploitation as *jihad*. The fake dualism in a common view is thereby shattered. Moreover, people such as Mualimin existed.⁴⁸⁰ Over the following days Kamino, the gravedigger gets lots of work. The slaughter culminates in a final massacre of 1,232 Communists. Later the remnants of the Communists are hunted down, killed or arrested. Kamino, who no one wants to

⁴⁷⁹ Lt. Col. Untung only announced the coup on radio at 7 am, therefore the newspaper editions of 1 October should not have been affected by events during the previous night, but what happened to distribution is not clear. The official announcement of the military shutdown of newspapers, except the military's own *Angkatan Bersenjata* and the loyal *Berita Yudha*, was only announced in the late afternoon on 1 October. What happened to Kliwon should accordingly have happened the following day (an author's mistake or were newspapers shut down before the official announcement?). But this type of fiction draws attention to historical facts rather than claims them. Kliwon's, or Kurniawan's, insistence on the newspapers draws attention to an area where further research might resolve what really happened to them, to further elucidate the coup, which is the point of the dialogue next to the dialogue on guilt. From my knowledge, little is known about the distribution of media between 30 September and 1 October. The leftist newspaper *Bintang Timoer* seems to have ceased publication after 30 September, judging from the KITLV archives. The newly started *Kompas* did not appear for several days. Incredibly, the PKI daily *Harian Rakjat* was allowed to publish until 3 October (the last edition in the KITLV archives) and on 2 October it published an editorial in favour of the G30S movement.

⁴⁸⁰ H. Misbach (1876-1926) was an early propagator of Islam and Communism. The prophet Muhammad SAW himself created a system that redistributed wealth.

marry because of his profession, falls in love with Mualimin's daughter, Farida after the burial of her father. Kamino helps Farida communicate with Mualimin through playing *jailangkung*⁴⁸¹ and she hears that he is fine in the afterworld. The two youths have a love story, immediately marry and have a one-day honeymoon during the killings (pp. 328-329). The story is part of the positive pole in the ambivalent aesthetics.⁴⁸²

11.2.4.6 Social Life in the New Order, Common People and Ex-Communists

Kliwon is the only high cadre who is free after the tumult. His former love, Alamanda, Shodanco's wife, has interfered with the offer to let her husband make love to her in exchange for Kliwon's freedom (p. 352). Kliwon's problems are connected with his past. He tries several ways to provide a livelihood. Kliwon is forced to close his small library (*taman bacaan*) because of complaints about the literature, 'low quality, naughty and not educating', that people connect with his Communist activities (p. 386). Kliwon: 'It's not that I don't want to supply quality books, the problem is that they have burned all such books'.⁴⁸³ With the coming of tourists who wants to swim he discovers a new business, swimwear, and becomes a small capitalist. The swim-pants are in increasing demand and Kliwon becomes the topic of business discussion in town, popular as ever. He is successful and others follow in his footsteps. But the mayor has grand plans.

The aforementioned greedy mayor began to wish that he could give land along the beach to large hotels, restaurants, bars, discotheques, gambling dens and perhaps an even more pleasant whorehouse than Mama Kalong's. (p. 391)

Walikota serakah tersebut mulai berharap bisa memberikan tanah-tanah sepanjang pantai untuk hotel-hotel besar, dan restoran dan bar dan diskotik dan tempat perjudian dan mungkin tempat pelacuran yang lebih menyenangkan daripada milik Mama Kalong.

Local fishermen own most of the land by the beach. Other parts are not owned by anyone and are full of simple souvenir kiosks (*warung*). Initially people are kindly persuaded and a few are bought off their lands. Later the one's who refuse are threatened by gangsters and soldiers. When intimidations fail, bulldozers are brought in by the mayor to destroy the remaining kiosks. 'Kamerad Kliwon, once again, became the Kamerad Kliwon from *before*. He could not stand to see what was happening before his eyes' (p. 392). Kliwon organises a large demonstration in defence of the people who live by the beach, the largest since the destruction of the party. 'A couple of intelligence agents began to smell the remnants of Communists among the rebels and soon recognized Kliwon' (p. 392). Shodanco, urged by the

⁴⁸¹ *Jailangkung* is a straw man device used in seances into which spirits of deceased persons enter.

⁴⁸² Also that month Shodanco and Maman Gendeng will finally get to make love to their wives.

⁴⁸³ It becomes an analogy for intellectual life during the early New Order and reflects the literary history examined at the end of 6.2.3 and the beginning of 6.2.4. In contrast, Kliwon's previous library at the headquarters of the Fishermen's Union was 'satisfying for people who were crazy about books' (p. 294). It had plenty of books on philosophy and politics. Adinda read novels of Gorki, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in English translations that were printed in Moscow and distributed by the party. She also read novels published by Communist Yayasan Pembaruan and government Balai Pustaka.

generals at the centre, has to arrest Kliwon, who is taken to the notorious Bloedenkamp and then on to the prison island Buru. These are places where the inmates are treated 'hard and sadistic', 'perhaps something like the colonial Boeven Digoel or the nazi concentration camps' (p. 393). Shodanco tells his sad wife, 'Believe that he will survive. Even if they die, the Communists live again as ghosts, as we know' (p. 393). Kliwon's son Krisan has to grow up without a father. When Kliwon finally comes back from Buru as a broken man, they cannot communicate.

The general atmosphere during the New Order period is described symbolically in an ambiguous way. Dewi Ayu's parents, Henri and Aneu Stammler visit Halimunda in search for their daughter.

In the year of 1976 Halimunda was filled with hate. It was full of curious ghosts. All the inhabitants felt it and so did two Dutch tourists who had just stepped off their train at the station. [...] 'Like arriving in a ghost town,' commented the wife while shaking her head. 'No,' answered her husband, 'It is like there has been a massacre of humans in this town'. The *becak* driver who transported them to the hotel told them about the ghosts. He said that they were really strong and that they better pray that the ghosts do not turn the *becak* over. 'Do such things often occur?' asked the husband. 'It is very unusual that they do *not*,' answered the *becak* driver. (p. 372)

'The ghost attacks, Communist ghosts, were felt the most severely by Shodanco' (p. 379). Shodanco suffers from severe insomnia for years after the massacres. The ghosts are constantly at him, even when he plays *truf*. He sees their shot wounds and hears them groaning in agony. The terror makes him temperamental, paranoid and irrational. He sees blood where there is water, leaves home without pants and has even made love to the privy hole, believing it was his wife (p. 379). Initially Shodanco shoots at the ghosts but after some time they become invulnerable to bullets. His family life, especially the contact with his daughter, suffers from his paranoia.⁴⁸⁴ Socially, Shodanco becomes dangerous. He begins to arrest people and beat them up for petty reasons. Shodanco throws a hobo in jail without due process because he has beaten a dog and he shoots a drunken fisherman in the feet and throws him in jail because he disturbs him. Alamanda asks him, 'Are you crazy, throwing somebody in jail only because he is drunk?' - 'He was possessed by a Communist ghost' (p. 383).

What Shodanco was doing had to the town's inhabitants suddenly become more terrifying than the ghosts themselves because he could accuse anyone he did not like of being possessed by Communist ghosts. If a person received such a bad fate he was lucky if he was only thrown in jail indefinitely, because he could also be tortured first. Like when souls possessed by Satan were cleansed at the ancient Catholic monasteries in the past. (p. 383)

⁴⁸⁴ Both Kliwon and Shodanco fail in their relations with their children. The reason is the aftermath of G30S, which has devastating effects on both of their lives. Shodanco and Maman Gendeng both lose their daughters, because Kliwon's son Krisan murders Rengganis.

Shodanco is happy to leave the ghosts for East Timor upon hearing that the occupation there is having difficulties. But he returns too soon with a bullet in his thigh, which he keeps as a sad souvenir.

‘Because the one who shot me pointed his rifle at me while singing the *International*,’ he said with a sad look on his face. ‘Those hoodlum Communists are apparently everywhere.’ (p. 386)

Karena penembakku bahkan menodongkan senapannya sambil menyanyikan Internationale,’ katanya dengan mimik sedih. ‘Begundal komunis itu ternyata ada di mana-mana.’

The Communist ghosts are symbolical of ‘the Communist ghost’, which was invoked by the New Order authorities throughout its reign, seeing Communists behind anything disliked.⁴⁸⁵ But the ghosts are also ghosts of the supernatural kind. An atmosphere of paranoia and terror is described, which is schizophrenic in the military commander. The ghosts also represent a lasting, surreal atmosphere of death and fear, which is immediately sensed by outsiders. The ghosts are an ambiguous motif of importance, like the motifs of lovemaking during the Communist slaughter, in the novel style.

11.2.4.7 *Petrus Ad Absurdum*

The truce and collusion between the military and gangsters has to come to an end. As with G30S, local social quarrels and family quarrels coincide with national developments.⁴⁸⁶ Then, as in 1965, an order comes from the central command, which has heard of the society’s grievances: ‘deal with the gangster problem, if necessary massacre them’ (p. 479). He says to his wife, ‘I have been long convinced that the gangsters must be finished off like the Communists’ (p. 479). The gangster problem is dealt with in a well-organised, undercover military operation. Undercover soldiers identify their victims by patterns of behaviour and looks, such as tattoos, and snipers kill them. The inhabitants are pleased, although worried about new ghosts. No one knew who shot them, ‘but everyone could guess who was behind it because everybody does not carry a gun’ (p. 482). That is, in the common view of the people it was the military. The prime target of the cleansing, the mystic leader Maman Gendeng, escapes the pursuers by fulfilling *moksa* in a Japanese cave and by changing the traitor Romeo’s appearance to his so that Romeo is killed instead (p. 488). Again a chapter ends with a motif that is both marvellous and positive in character. Maman Gendeng also returns to say farewell to his wife and explain that he departed to watch after their daughter three days after his death or *moksa* (pp. 461-463).

⁴⁸⁵ Authors Jamil and Utami both invoke the shallowness of the military and New Order propaganda concerning the threat of Communism in their novels.

⁴⁸⁶ Anarchy and riots follow Maman Gendeng’s wrath after he has found out that his daughter is dead (pp. 476-478), while Shodanco partly holds Maman responsible for the disappearance of his daughter Ai, Rengganis’ cousin, best friend and protector. The bandits massacre the town’s dogs because a dog had raped Rengganis, according to her testimony, which was how problems began. Because Shodanco is a dog-lover, it increases the tensions between the two leaders. For the gangsters it is also payback time against the society that looks down on them.

11.2.5 THE IDENTITY AND FUNCTION OF GROTESQUE REALISM

Bakhtin's study of Rabelais and medieval folk humour and grotesque realism elucidates the novel's hyperbolic and ambivalent images, as well as highlighting the anonymous historical destiny of the genre itself. 'Exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered fundamental attributes of the grotesque style' (Bakhtin 1968:303). The novelist is, according to Bakhtin, a subject who is tied by necessities of history and genre, a successor in a line of anti-authoritarian and anti-canonical popular strategies in which Rabelais was both a peak and a precursor. Furthermore:

The entire field of realist literature of the last three centuries is strewn with the fragments of grotesque realism, which at times are not mere remnants of the past but manifest a renewed vitality. (Bakhtin 1968:24).

Bakhtin sees in Rabelais and the carnival the roots of the novel, which is therefore anti-authoritarian and democratic in spirit. The type of novel combats official languages and ideologies while being part of a collective learning process, as it is also encyclopaedic. The satirical attitude and the ambivalent hyperbolic images, which make up the core of the carnivalesque and the grotesque, destabilise the official worldview. They negate the present state of affairs and therefore something better, utopian, is affirmed by historical necessity.

Actually the grotesque [...] discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life. [...] [T]he grotesque liberates man from all the forms of inhuman necessity that direct the prevailing concept of the world. This concept is uncrowned by the grotesque and reduced to the relative and the limited. Necessity, in every concept which prevails at any time, is always one-piece, serious, unconditional, and indisputable. But historically the idea of necessity is relative and variable. The principle of laughter and the carnival spirit on which grotesque is based destroys this limited seriousness and all pretense of an extratemporal meaning and unconditional value of necessity. It frees human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new potentialities. For this reason great changes, even in the field of science, are always preceded by a certain carnival consciousness that prepares the way. (Bakhtin 1968:48-49)

CIL does not have an authoritarian perspective that claims the truth, because the ambiguous style plays with such notions. *CIL* neither has a we-group nor an ideologue as have the other novels represented in this work. For these reasons and because of the hyperboles and ambivalences, it is posited in the Rabelais line of novelists. There is a mediation of Rabelais literary style, which runs through the world novelists and reappears in different degrees. The marvellous style is closely related to the grotesque, which is a style with universal fundamentals. The analysis identifies laughter and a democratic folk spirit in *CIL*. Laughter is universal and every nation has folk humour. In Indonesia we recognize similar elements also in the common *wayang*; the grotesque figure Semar, who farts excessively, is also the people. Excessive images are common throughout *CIL*. The grand passions of people in love (Ma Gedik, Maman Gendeng, Kliwon, Shodanco, Krisan, Kinkin: all men; the women have more control), which influences historical events, are

grotesque and even numbers are. It must be stressed that the grotesque image reflects transformation of biological life in both cyclic and historical time and that ambivalence is an indispensable trait (Bakhtin 1968:24-25), such as that recognized in *CIL*'s images of love, death and ghosts. Important, too, is the link with the cosmic whole, which is, although repressed, universal to human experience, again maintained in the *wayang* cosmology. The grotesque and the carnivalesque carry with them laughter, which is liberating and brings things down to earth. The humour is ambivalent and regenerating.

The people's laughter which characterised all the forms of grotesque realism from immemorial times was linked with the bodily lower stratum. Laughter degrades and materializes. [...] "Upward and "downward" have here an absolute and topographical meaning. "Downward" is earth, "upward" is heaven. [...] Degradation here means coming down to earth [...]. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously in order to bring forward something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body [...] it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth. Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth [...]. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of non-existence [...] but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum [...]. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving. (Bakhtin 1968:20-21)

Kemaluan (genitals) and *tai* (shit) are in the Rabelais line of literary language of *CIL* literally fertilizers, different from modern negative usages. Characters who, like Shodanco and Maman Gendeng, take themselves seriously and even history itself are brought down to and corrected by the bodily lower stratum '(the absolute lower stratum is always laughing)' (Bakhtin 1968:22). Copulation occurs all through the novel, even in times of death. Lovemaking between lovers is always lustful and excessive. The imagery is fertile and prepares the ground for the open end in a new era post New Order. The ambivalences reach a poetic expression in the opening of the chapter following the Communist slaughter:

The rainy season is the time when many people get married. [...] While the men who have not been able to marry yet will go to the brothel and warm their bodies with women's bodies. Lovers will meet more often and make love in secret. Married people almost have another honeymoon [...]. In this time many ovums are fertilised and many children will be created in the wombs of women. [...] Even at the height of the slaughter of Communists people were still making love, especially when the rain was falling hard. (p. 343)

It is a Rabelais type of medieval grotesque image: death and copulation, not opposites but part of a whole cosmic cycle, here conceiving and giving birth to a new era without Communists.⁴⁸⁷ Life goes on and a new generation is soon born.

⁴⁸⁷ Images related to death and copulation: Dewi Ayu copulates a lot and an old customer even dies when making love to her. Mama Kalong's brothel is during the revolution named 'Make Love Until Death', which is appropriate after several deaths in boots. Krisan, Cantik's nephew and lover, is shot in Cantik's bed after they have made wild love. The hobo Isah Betinah is still sweaty from the wild

The gravedigger will get a child and so will the patriarchs. On the grotesque body concept:

[T]he grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. [...] It is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. [...] The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth [...] only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation. [...] In contrast to modern canons the body is most frequently represented in immediate proximity to birth or death [...] to the womb or the grave, to the bosom that gives life or swallows it up. But at their extreme limit the two bodies unite to form one [...]. The unfinished and open body [...] is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects. It is cosmic [...] an incarnation of this world at the absolute lower stratum. (Bakhtin 1968:26-27)

This cosmic body concept is recognized in the intelligent prostitute heroine, Dewi Ayu.⁴⁸⁸ She arises from the grave to where she went shortly after giving birth to the grotesque baby Cantik (beautiful), an immediate cycle of earth, death and birth. In the last chapter, when Dewi Ayu has killed the evil spirit, she transforms into a beautiful butterfly and returns to the world of the dead. This motif is related to the *moksa* of Maman Gendeng. None of them leaves a dead body. Even the evil spirit makes a short reappearance after his 'death'. The bodies are unfinished and open. Biological life is transcended. This type of bodily imagery is present throughout the novel. Farida dies while she is six months pregnant and the baby, Kinkin, is born in the grave (p. 360). It is at once fantastic (ghosts as unfinished bodies), marvellous and grotesque.

Dewi Ayu's identification with the people, their laughter and their tales has been mentioned. It is a point of view, integral to the whole composition, which determines it from within. The cosmic symbolism in Dewi Ayu's figure (earth, mother, womb), as in the downward movement to the underworld of the dead for 21 years, is universal in character and an element of grotesque realism. Heroes of past folk humour often descend into an underworld hell, which is feared but defeated by laughter in the carnival. It is an upside down image, the opposite of the common or official worldview. The perspective also throws light on Utami's *Larung* (10.2.7). Larung descends into the underworld, a kind of hell connected with the G30S killings, led by a Calon Arang type *dukun*, one whose image is close to the cosmic and the grotesque and who has defeated fear. Like Dewi Ayu, he returns with new strength to kill a kind of monster. After the magic mercy killing,

lovemaking with Kliwon when she dies of a snakebite. After his return from Buru, Kliwon is a broken man but decides to help Shodanco with the ghost problem. He goes to his house but only Alamanda, the lost love, is home (pp. 398-399). They make wild love and do not regret it. The ghosts tell the loyal Adinda, who tells Kliwon, that it is no problem if it makes him happy. Kliwon gets a bad conscience, hangs himself and becomes a ghost.

⁴⁸⁸ The image of Dewi Ayu relates to the previously narrated Calon Arang, witch or incarnation of the ancient Durga, mother goddess and goddess of death, as well as to other ancient goddesses. They invoke images of the birth, life, death cycle, which is also the essence of life in the Javanese *sangkan paran* quest for origin and destination. The grotesque body concept is likely to have universal fundamentals. Also in Java, traditionally the body is neither 'separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects. It is cosmic'.

Larung performs a dismemberment of his grandmother, which is grotesque, and he searches through her bowels for the mantra pellets. What Larung does and goes through in these passages is almost defining of grotesque imagery.⁴⁸⁹ ‘The mighty thrust downward into the bowels of the earth, into the depths of the human body, is reflected in Rabelais’ entire world’ (Bakhtin 1968:370). In addition, Utami’s and Kurniawan’s novels consistently debase and take things down to earth. ‘[D]ebasement is the fundamental artistic principle of grotesque realism; all that is sacred and exalted is rethought on the level of the material bodily stratum’ (Bakhtin 1968:370).⁴⁹⁰ Larung’s search in both the bowels of the earth and in the bowels of his grandmother ends in an anticlimax, if one fails to see beyond the vain search. From the viewpoint of the grotesque, there is a positive process. Larung first descends into an underground hell. After he has dismembered Simbah, the magic passes on to him. He becomes a fearless person. In Dewi Ayu there is a similar positive process. She gathers strength in the world of the dead, like the *dukun* do, to fight the evil spirit. Interestingly, from the viewpoint of the grotesque and carnival humour, the sinner Dewi Ayu does not find the world of the dead uncomfortable. This is contrary to the common view, according to which unfortunates do not rest in peace:

[T]he woman in the ground had been a prostitute for the Japanese during the war and the *kyai* always said that people who are soaked with sin surely suffer pains in the grave. The shaking at the old grave surely stemmed from the whipping by torturing angels [...] (p. 1)

[P]erempuan dalam tanah itu pernah jadi pelacur bagi orang-orang Jepang sejak masa perang dan para kyai selalu bilang bahwa orang-orang belepotan dosa pasti memperoleh siksa kubur. Kegaduhan itu pasti berasal dari cambuk malaikat penyiksa [...]

After Dewi Ayu’s resurrection, *Kyai Jahro*, who had reluctantly buried her, approaches her as if she is a saint. He can now visit Dewi Ayu’s house, but in the past he had preached that just touching the fence of her house could make one fry in hell.

‘How does it feel to be dead?’ asked *Kyai Jahro*. - ‘It’s pleasant actually. That’s the only reason the dead don’t return.’ - ‘But you came back,’ said the *kyai*. - ‘I returned to say that.’ (p. 24)

‘Seperti apakah rasanya mati?’ tanya Kyai Jahro. - ‘Sebenarnya menyenangkan. Itulah satu-satunya alasan kenapa orang mati tak ada yang

⁴⁸⁹ When Rabelais is used as an authorial definition of grotesque realism. Otherwise the passage does not have the humour and hyperbole associated with grotesque realism; therefore ‘almost’. The last patriarch to die, Shodanco is dismembered and eaten by his own dogs, a degrading death for a revolutionary hero, which can be an image of Soeharto who at the time of Shodanco’s death (c. 1997) was kicked around by the students. The dissected body is a grotesque image and dismemberment of bodies is a feature of the grotesque style. The culinary treatment of the dissected body creates ambivalence. There is an image even closer to this conception in 11.2.7.

⁴⁹⁰ This process is clearly there in Utami’s novels, not least in the image of Wis (one who is going down to Saman and finds concrete love), but with less humour and fewer absurdities than in the novel under discussion. Utami’s imagery is closer to modern canons, science and theory.

kembali.' - 'Tapi kau bangkit kembali,' kata sang kyai. - 'Aku kembali untuk mengatakan itu.'

The *kyai* gets a great speech for his Friday sermon. In the quotes, the more serious religious view of death is turned upside down (a carnival image) with the resurrection and Dewi Ayu's testimony. The imagery is folksy and parodies, or brings down, the *kyai* and his discourse (which is high) in a positive way.

11.2.5.1 Hyperbolic language

Abusive language is generally connected with the lower stratum of the body, which is integral to the aesthetics of *CIL*. Moreover, the positive ambivalent pole of the grotesque is maintained in most of the novel's passages. Dewi Ayu says to the *kyai*, who wants to stop her from wearing burial cloth: 'Because you ask a prostitute to open her clothes, you must have money to pay me' (p. 8). The *kyai* disappears and never returns. The degradation is not so exaggerated but works on two levels, namely it refers to prostitution, which is low, and the target is high (a *kyai*), which creates the ambivalence of grotesque aesthetics.⁴⁹¹ When Maman Gendeng, after his first rampage, states about Dewi Ayu: 'I will wet (*mengencingi*) her vagina like a tiger marks his territory' (p. 127), she replies: 'Do it now, darling, before you wet (*ngompol*) your pants'. *Mengencingi*, wet in Maman's utterance, becomes ambiguous: pee or have sex. He means the latter but the first connotation is necessary for the likening of himself with a tiger. *Ngompol*, wet one's pants, is degrading as it is, but is also ambiguous in the reply to Maman, which therefore degrades him also sexually. Ambivalence and body fluids such as urine and semen are all elements in grotesque imagery. The invincible gangster leader, Maman (power and terror) is thus taken down to earth, debased by the ambiguous reference of Dewi Ayu (earth) to bodily fluids of the lower stratum.

Even (*bahkan*) and similar words are the prime tools of hyperbolic constructions. Says Alamanda when tied up and raped by Shodanco: 'Even if I am dead, believe it, this man will have intercourse with my grave' (p. 242). In fact the hyperbole is also linked with the earthly images of copulation and the grave. In some passages there is not much left of the positive force of the grotesque, such as when Dewi Ayu sarcastically says about her own children: 'They left once they knew how to open the buttons of men's pants' (p. 16). At the time of *Petrus*, the people help to bury the decomposing bodies of gangsters who are wrapped in bags. Examine the metaphor with which it is described: 'Not like burying corpses, but like burying shit after shitting in the banana garden' (p. 482).⁴⁹²

⁴⁹¹ It is possible that the wider ideological world prevents this type of grotesque from fully developing as a leitmotif in the Rabelaisian way, but Kurniawan's world is also different.

⁴⁹² In the image the bodies of gangsters are likened to excrement. The reproductive force is also present in defecation, intermediate between body and earth. The mentioned allusion to copulation during the height of Communist slaughter created a direct ambivalence, but the link to the bodily lower stratum is weak in this case. Instead the sarcasm, references to ghosts and finally the Maman Gendeng's *moksa* create the positive force, as does the tale (*kisah*) about the traitor Romeo with the grotesque wife (pp. 463-471).

11.2.6 DEWI AYU, THE PEOPLE AND THE RAPE MOTIF

CIL tells of a tragic history of colonialism, occupation, war and fratricide. History's cruelty is highlighted through a prevalent and linking motif in the histories depicted: the rape. There is no viewpoint in *CIL* that is free from absurdism, which is partly explained by the context of cruel events in a world of crazy values. Yet Dewi Ayu can be defined as the novel's heroine. Like Diva (a high class prostitute and an 'ideologue') in *Supernova*, she is depicted as the coolest person. After all, she resolves the plot and annihilates the evil spirit. She is self-sacrificing and witty, but also sarcastic and wicked: ambivalent. Dewi Ayu is a survivor (even of death) and 'a little bit crazy' from the start. In the Japanese camps she is inventive and helpful.⁴⁹³ When it comes to identity, besides the identification with the people, Dewi Ayu is a true hybrid, *Indo* in blood and actually Dutch, which is interesting because she represents the people. But nothing is pure in *CIL*: the people of Halimunda are descendants of the world's most beautiful woman and a dog. In religion Dewi Ayu was a practising Catholic, with early signs of losing her faith, who became a Muslim at her wedding. When pregnant for the fourth time, she prays to all kinds of gods as advised by Rosinah: 'A few gods have been proven to be stingy' (p. 17). She explains for her new, and sole, client, Maman Gendeng who admits that love makes him suffer:

'All women are prostitutes, because even a really good wife sells her vagina for wedding gold and shopping money or love if there is any. [...] It's not that I don't believe that there is such a thing as love. On the contrary I do all of this with full devotion. [...] I have been married and I have been religious, but now I have lost it all. But it does not mean that I have lost love. As a prostitute you have to love it all, every body and every thing: genitals, fingertips or cow feet. I feel like a saint and a Sufi at the same time.' (p. 135)

Rosinah explains for Dewi Ayu's parents that Dewi Ayu did not become a prostitute only to pay back the debts to Mama Kalong for her house:

It was because she did not want what happened to Ma Iyang and Ma Gedik to happen to other couples who are deeply in love. 'Prostitutes at least make it possible for people not to keep concubines. [...] A love is destroyed and a life is messed up each time a man keeps a concubine. But a prostitute at worst hurts a wife who is clearly married, but it is her fault that she makes her husband go to a brothel.' (p. 378)

Through this type of logic, operative under certain social circumstances, Dewi Ayu motivated herself to be a prostitute. Her logic in wishing for an ugly baby is the context of social reality, one critical of males: 'There is no more horrible curse than giving birth to beautiful girls in a world of men horny as dogs in the mating season' (p. 4). On top of that, her three children are extraordinarily beautiful and drive men mad:

⁴⁹³ Her self-sacrifice is proven by her premiere in prostitution. Dewi Ayu's friend Ola can only get medicine to her dreadfully ill mother if she sleeps with the commander. She cannot, so Dewi Ayu does it. Although he is fast, Ola's mother dies in the meantime (p. 71-73).

'Just as Maria gave birth to the son of God and the two wives of Pandu gave birth to child gods, my womb has become the place where devils put away their children' (p. 9).

'Seperti Maria melahirkan anak Tuhan dan kedua isteri Pandu melahirkan anak-anak dewa, rahimku jadi tempat setan membuang anak-anak mereka dan aku melahirkan anak-anak setan.'

Dewi Ayu's reasoning is ambivalent. She is neither good nor bad. Dewi Ayu is a hyperbolic grotesque character: an incarnation of the bodily lower stratum.

Only after arriving at Mama Kalong's renovated war brothel in Halimunda, where the pretty girls are taken from the Japanese prisoner of war camp, do the girls finally acknowledge their fate. 'We're going to be prostitutes!', cries Ola van Rijk. Dewi Ayu: 'Worse than that. It seems we're not going to get paid' (p. 88-89). The inauguration night becomes a night of horrors. Dewi Ayu hears from the girls' rooms 'hysterical noises, ongoing fights', escapes and captures, girls thrown into beds, wailing and the laughter of Japanese soldiers among the commotion. 'What made Dewi Ayu suffer was not the wild, inexhaustive love making, which almost froze her body [...] but the hysterical shouts and crying of her friends' (p. 91-92). Ola cuts her wrists in despair. When her friends can neither imagine playing corpse nor getting a special customer, tell tales or play cards, Dewi Ayu tells them, 'Rape them!' (p. 93).⁴⁹⁴ Even in this tragic realist episode, the wit of Dewi Ayu provides space for comfort and hope.

When the revolution comes, the girls have already been freed from their duties by a noble Japanese general, but are still at the brothel guarded by KNIL soldiers. Among them is the *Indo* ex-Stammler employee, Willie, who wants to marry Dewi Ayu. Indonesian revolutionaries attack and Willie dies. When they find that the girls are Dutch, they get wild and rape the girls: 'Their shouts were far more sad than when the Japanese made them prostitutes' (p. 100). Says Dewi Ayu at Willie's grave: 'If you had joined the guerrillas you could at least have raped me' (p. 101).

A decade later, after independence, Shodanco and a few guards appear at the brothel. Not only does he want the prettiest prostitute but he also wants to marry her eldest daughter. Shodanco threatens the recently monopolized Dewi Ayu with a pistol. Dewi Ayu advises him not to chase after Alamanda because it is vain. Moreover, there are many pretty descendants of Rengganis and 'All female genitals feel the same' (pp. 137-138). Shodanco rapes her.

She could not believe it because it was the first time somebody had sex with her in such an impolite way. Even the Japanese soldiers had treated her politely and everybody treated her far more sweetly than they treated their own wives. [...] as if she was not a beautiful woman admired by the whole town, as if she was a piece of flesh and the man only had sex with a privy hole. (p. 138)

Ia tak percaya sebab inilah kali pertama ia ditiduri dengan cara yang begitu kurang ajar. Bahkan prajurit-prajurit Jepang memperlakukannya dengan sangat sopan, dan semua orang memperlakukannya jauh lebih manis

⁴⁹⁴ The motif of women raping men, an upside down image and a discourse of social change, is also present in Utami's novels.

daripada yang mereka lakukan terhadap isteri-isteri mereka. [...] seolah ia bukan tubuh perempuan cantik yang dikagumi seluruh kota, seolah ia hanya seonggok daging dan lelaki itu hanya menyetubuhi lubang toilet.

Shodanco, already debased as a coarse rapist, becomes the ultimate bait for the heartbreaker Alamanda and vice versa. The brute is in mad love but she is hard to defeat. Shodanco (rapist) approaches her on a night of celebration: 'It's not good for a girl to walk alone at night, is it?'. Alamanda replies with an indifferent look: 'Don't be stupid, Shodanco, I am walking with hundreds of people tonight' (p. 167), and the ideology of scaring women inside is unmasked. 'What guerrilla strategy can defeat love?' asks the soldier himself. Later, on a picnic with Alamanda, Shodanco asks her to at least make love to him. Before she is too dizzy from the drugs in her drink, she is able to think how depressing men are. Shodanco rapes her. 'I win all wars, including the war against you' (p. 225). The tragedy is retained in these passages, which debase Shodanco, the military hero and saviour.⁴⁹⁵ In contrast, the gangster, Maman Gendeng is a ladies' man, respected by Dewi Ayu. In married life Alamanda is raped repeatedly by her husband Shodanco, whom she marries with the promise not to love him as revenge.⁴⁹⁶

Dewi Ayu 'always said that she became a prostitute because of history': 'Like history creates a person to become a prophet or an emperor' (p. 110). In her own history the sad fate of women is told. From the times of colonialism, Japanese occupation, revolution to free nationstate, Dewi Ayu and her family have been raped by the ones in power. The sad experiences described show continuity in the social experience of women.⁴⁹⁷ Shodanco, with his Japanese title, comes to represent the continuity of Japanese colonisation into the post-colonial state. Dewi Ayu's grandmother was stolen and made a concubine because of her beauty. Dewi Ayu was made a prostitute because of her beauty and raped. Her daughter and granddaughter were also raped because of their beauty. Beauty is a problem. Power, male dominant and/or institutional power, seizes it. Dewi Ayu stands out as a symbol of the people's survival, in which history is viewed from a perspective degrading of those just mentioned.

11.2.7 GROTESQUE IMAGES EXAMINED

Ma Gedik (pp. 32-38): The sad departure from his loved one devastates Ma Gedik. He swears to love Ma Iyang 'even if she returns as minced meat' (p. 32). 'He began his waiting by becoming crazier than crazy people, more idiotic than idiots, but especially more depressing than people in mourning'. Ma Gedik's friends try to cheer him up, with drink and gambling. When they cannot get him interested in

⁴⁹⁵ 'When Alamanda became conscious the next day, the first thing she remembered was Kliwon. Suddenly she felt that everything was over for her and for her boyfriend' (p. 227).

⁴⁹⁶ Alamanda's experiences of a marital rape are described: 'Alamanda felt truly crushed because, for the umpteenth time, she had been unable to defend herself. She felt humiliated and dirty and was very regretful. When Shodanco had emptied his lusts [...] Alamanda kicked Shodanco to the floor without hesitation and said, "Rotten rapist, you don't just rape your own wife, perhaps you even rape your own mother!"' (pp. 303-304).

⁴⁹⁷ Other rapes: In his life as a hobo, Kliwon, a ladies' man, saves the hobo girl Isah Betina from a rape by five hobos. Rengganis is raped by a dog (actually Kliwon's son Krisan) in the school toilet. Marital rape is mentioned in *Saman* and is a motif in Khaliqy (2001).

other women, they try to take him to the brothel in the harbour. 'Marry or go to a brothel are both treasons, answered Ma Gedik stubbornly.' But one time his friends are able to get him drunk and manage to pull him inside the brothel, where he spends his money on 'a fat woman with a genital hole the size of a rat's'. Stunned by his experience, he utters: 'Fucking a prostitute is not treason because they are paid with money and not with love' (p. 33). He becomes a regular visitor for a couple of years until his friends get married one by one and can 'sleep with their wives with love, not with money'. Alone, 'he began to practise the ability of his hands for that purpose' and only visits the harbour when he cannot resist.

'Then he became strange, if not an enemy of society.' He has been seen disturbing cow barns: 'apparently he was raping a cow or a chicken until its bowels fell out'. Even people's sheep are attacked in his 'terror of lusts'. He does not wash or eat anymore, except shit, even his own. Finally his mother chains him in a sheep barn where he only eats shit. The family sends for a wise healer, a *tabib*, who calmly replies to the worried: 'Only love can cure crazy people'. But since only Ma Iyang's love is enough, Ma Gedik has to remain in the barn for years. Children pass by and play jokes on him and he teaches them naughty things. After Ma Gedik has suggested: 'It will be more pleasing if you try it with a girl's vagina', the villagers have had enough and close up the barn with boards. 'The punishment did not diminish his enthusiasm at all' (p. 35). As a kind of revenge, Ma Gedik begins to terrorise the community with dirty songs, keeping people awake at night 'shivering in pain'. When the people again come after him, 'a miracle suddenly occurred. [...] he sang beautiful love poems (*kidung-kidung*) that made many people cry' (p. 35). People come from afar, stunned 'as if waiting for nymphs to descend from heaven'. Finally someone understands; it has been sixteen years and Ma Gedik is going to meet his love on the hilltop. The people let him out, wash and dress him.

'You are so handsome, you make me worried my wife will fall in love with you', they said. 'Of course,' he said, 'because even sheep and crocodiles fall in love with me'. That Indian *tabib* was indeed right. Love could cure his disease and any disease whatsoever. (p. 36)

'Kau begitu tampan,' kata mereka, 'membuat khawatir kalau isteriku dibuat jatuh cinta kepadamu.' - 'Tentu saja,' katanya, 'sebab domba dan buaya pun jatuh cinta kepadaku.' Benar juga kata tabib India itu, cinta bisa menyembuhkan penyakitnya, bahkan penyakit apa pun.'

There is a lively celebration and the love story becomes an everlasting one, but it ends in tragedy. Ma Iyang escapes from her Dutch master to the hills, followed by cars, hordes of people and Ma Gedik on a donkey. The two lovers are the only ones that make it to the top.

'Do you still want me?' asked Ma Iyang. 'My whole body has been licked and covered in Dutch saliva and my genitals have been penetrated by his one thousand one hundred and ninety two times.' - 'I have penetrated twenty-eight female genitals four hundred and sixty two times and penetrated my

own hands uncountable times, not counting animal genitals. Are we any different?'⁴⁹⁸ (p. 37)

'As if the god of indecency had taken possession of them', they embraced and made wild love with all the people watching in amazement from below... Afterwards, Ma Iyang realizes that they will be thrown to the dogs if they descend to the people, so she says she will fly. She jumps, while Ma Gedik screams in terror. No parts of her are found, so everyone believes she really flew. The hill is thereafter named after Ma Iyang, which in the grotesque imagery means that she has fused with nature. The cosmic cycle, including copulation and death, is fulfilled.

Values and morals are also turned upside down in the image of Ma Gedik with the carnivalesque bodily excesses set against the backdrop of his mad love, stolen by a colonialist. He is rightly considered crazy but the craziness is set in a world of crazy values: colonialism (where you can steal people's girlfriends without their consent). In this crazy, grotesque, literary image, love stands out as the only thing that preserves his humanity. Ma Gedik deteriorates into a shit eater and a beast that rapes animals, yet he maintains his hope of the girl's promise. That is, chained and smeared in shit in the dark barn for years, he still lives for his love and is able to compose and sing the most beautiful poems; contrasting ambivalent images. And love is the only cure. In almost all of the novel's passages, love, beauty and exploding hyperbolic passions are the driving forces. The hyperbolic imagery is repeated in other characters, such as when Kliwon falls in love with the eight year old Alamanda and becomes more hobo than any hobo (p. 188); mad because he has to wait for years. No *dukun* can cure him either (p. 177).

Cantik: Dewi Ayu names her fourth daughter Cantik (Beautiful) without looking at her, taking for granted that she would be pretty. But the baby is so ugly that the *dukun* midwife 'was not sure if it was a baby and thought it was a piece of shit, because the holes where babies and shit come out are only separated by two centimetres' (p. 2). When it proved impossible to kill the baby in the womb, Dewi Ayu prayed intensely to all kinds of gods and supernatural powers to get an ugly baby. The baby's looks seem to be the result of her wild imagination and wishes. Cantik the ugliest is an ambivalent hyperbolic image; a grotesque body in the sense discussed. The midwife says the baby is cursed.

She was not even able to describe to it. She could only imagine it as a cursed monster from hell. The whole body of the baby was totally black as if it had been burned alive, with a shape that did not resemble anything. For instance, she did not know if the baby's nose was a nose, because it looked more like an electric cable than a nose [...] (p. 3)

Ia bahkan tak mampu mendeskripsikannya, hanya membayangkannya sebagai monster kutukan neraka. Seluruh tubuh bayi itu hitam legam seperti terbakar hidup-hidup, dengan bentuk yang tak menyerupai apa pun. Ia, misalnya, tak begitu yakin bahwa hidung bayi itu adalah hidung, sebab itu lebih menyerupai colokan listrik daripada hidung [...]

⁴⁹⁸ Note the unnecessary precise - grotesque - numbers.

Virgin Grotesque: At the time of the arrival of the Japanese, Dewi Ayu needs a native husband because she counts as Dutch. Her choice falls on the old Ma Gedik because she was always fascinated by that sad story and because of her anger with her grandfather who had destroyed their love. Ma Gedik is brought before Dewi Ayu from the dirty hut where he lives with a supernatural family. He is not pleased. Ma Gedik has a grudge against Stammers and has promised not to marry anyone because of his everlasting love. He also believes marriage is for hiding an unwanted pregnancy. Dewi Ayu, who is not pregnant, threatens to level Bukit Ma Iyang to the ground if he does not accept the marriage, so he does. The old and confused Ma Gedik shivers with fear as he refuses Dewi Ayu's invitations long into the wedding night.⁴⁹⁹ Finally Dewi Ayu gets naked in front of the hysterical Ma Gedik:

'Do it and you will know that I am a virgin.' - 'By the devil, I won't do it because I know you're not a virgin.' Then Dewi Ayu inserted her middle right finger into her vagina, deep inside, right in front of Ma Gedik's nose. The girl grimaced a little from the pain every time her finger moved inside the groin until she extracted it and showed it to Ma Gedik. A drop of blood was flowing down her finger. She smeared it all the way from the top of Ma Gedik's forehead until the tip of his chin and made the man shiver in merciless horror. 'You're right,' said Dewi Ayu. 'Now I am no longer a virgin.' (p. 54)

The image is an accentuated one, hyperbolic but yet grotesque as it debases Ma Gedik with the bodily fluid. Moreover the virgin concept is desacralised, together with norms of female behaviour. Dewi Ayu is the bodily lower stratum incarnated, reflected in all her speech and behaviour. Ma Gedik escapes the morning after, running 'as if he had seen the devil'. He tries to fly off the sister hill of Ma Iyang but hits the stones and transforms in a grotesque way (like other important characters) into a twin image of food and dismemberment - 'minced meat' - as Dewi Ayu had predicted.⁵⁰⁰

11.2.8 POWER UNMASKED, LOVE GENERALLY

The two most powerful and feared men have similar problems and desires. Both long for a real home with love. Maman Gendeng's first failed love led him towards a legend and on to Dewi Ayu. Dewi Ayu wants her youngest daughter, Maya Dewi, to marry as soon as possible before she becomes naughty like her sisters. She persuades her boyfriend, Maman Gendeng to marry Maya Dewi, 11 years old. The marriage becomes a hyperbolic climax. Maman is the town's most dangerous guy, tough and cruel. Maya Dewi is a diligent schoolgirl. As early as the wedding

⁴⁹⁹ 'Think about it, we're married and you don't make love to me,' she said again. 'I will never be pregnant and people will say that your genitals don't function anymore.' - 'You are a seducing female devil,' said Ma Gedik finally. - 'A beautiful tempter,' added Dewi Ayu. - 'You are not a virgin anymore.' - 'That is not true of course,' said Dewi Ayu slightly offended. 'Make love to me and you will know that you are wrong.' - 'You are not a virgin and you are pregnant and you are going to make me into a scapegoat.' (p. 54)

⁵⁰⁰ Only later is it revealed that she loved Ma Gedik because of his extreme sadness (she wanted to heal him but he ran away to hurt her) and that she tried to abort Cantik to free her from the curse of Ma Gedik's hate (pp. 493-495).

night, Maman reads her fairy tales before going to sleep, stunned by her sweetness.⁵⁰¹ In the morning she makes him coffee before going to school, when he goes back to bed. Maya Dewi turns out to take such good care of the house and her husband that Maman even ceases to make love to his mother-in-law. He has found what he sought. Because Maya is too young, he never makes love to her either. He waits.

Alamanda wears 'anti-terror' protective underwear of iron, locked with secret mantras to protect her from her husband's lusts. The wedding night is a nightmare for Shodanco, as he tries anything, even his pistol, to open the magic iron panties (p. 235). Later Alamanda tells Shodanco to go to the brothel to relieve himself, which he does not because he really wants to prove his genuine love. In times of emergency he makes love to his pillow and dumps his seed in the privy. Once Shodanco tries to rape his wife but the rape is only half achieved, as he makes love to the iron panties and Alamanda still can claim victory (p. 239). After a period of marriage Shodanco feels ashamed before society because Alamanda does not get pregnant (people wonder if he is impotent, sterile or castrated?). On one occasion Shodanco catches his wife naked in the bathroom without the chastity belt. He ties her to the bed so that he can rape her when he wants to, for days on end (pp. 241-245). Alamanda falls ill and becomes pregnant. But the pregnancy turns out to be a mysterious air pregnancy.⁵⁰² At the *truf* table Shodanco opens up his heart to Maman: 'I want to live like everyone else. Love and be loved' (p. 282). Another time he cries as he tells of his lost babies, Alamanda's underwear and even admits the rapes. Maman Gendeng understands. He too does sexual fasting and says that his wife is still a virgin.

'And I tell you, Shodanco, I never go to the brothel. Instead I enjoy myself in the bathroom. Do as I do.' Maman Gendeng continued, 'It is sufficient to relieve you from anger and distress, because the contents of your testicles have to be routinely emptied.' - 'I have tried it,' replied Shodanco, even almost with the behind of a dog.' - 'As long as you don't do it with a bottle hole.' (p. 344)

'Material power and strength is helpless against the bodily procreative principle' (Bakhtin 1968:314). The toughest men in town cannot make love to their wives. Primordial power, which should be fertile like all worldly power, is debased. In the image of the brute gangster Maman Gendeng is the ambivalent hyperbole created by his mother complex and longing for a sweet home. At home he is the opposite of what he is outside. In the image of Shodanco the stress is laid on his flawed *kasar* character, the opposite of his *ksatria* image and ideals, in his relation to the opposite sex. Both brutes are literally debased as wankers. The gangster is, however, a true gentleman in his relations, which makes his official counterpart look worse. Maman Gendeng convinces Shodanco that the key lies in being patient (after a long wait, both of their wives finally surprise their husbands after G30S). Shodanco's desires are debased with allusions to the privy hole, which also debases

⁵⁰¹ Note the subtle critique of courting: 'He did not immediately jump on the bed to grab his wife's body and rape her without mercy like most bridegrooms would do in a clumsy way [...]' (p. 270).

⁵⁰² See also 11.2.4.5.

his character. His fertility and love are debased with Alamanda not being pregnant, the magic chastity belt and with the mysterious air pregnancies, which Kliwon says happened because the couple married without love. Both primordials are, however, humane beings with feelings. They love their wives and are loyal to them. When ambivalence is style, a universal humanism emerges, as there are no people who are only good or only bad.

11.2.9 SEX, SEXUAL ATTITUDES, CARNIVAL

Libido plays a great role in the marvellous-grotesque imagery of the novel, which is far from posited in the *perawan* line of literary language. Libido is less intentional when compared with Utami's novels because sex is not a theme; rather sex is organic to the style. But it can still be argued that sex is accentuated for the same reasons, namely dialogue with the norms of the recent past. The social significance of the brothel and Dewi Ayu has been cited ('the source of the town's happiness'), a hyperbole which, in a sociological novel, still indicates a widespread non-normative view of sexuality among the male population. It is therefore part of the wider cultural criticism. The brothel is important for social harmony. Examine the hyperbolic passage when the curious woman next door to Dewi Ayu's is given a sign by Rosinah that Dewi Ayu is dead. The hatred in her voice disappears:

'Dead?' She showed her true character, that sensitive woman, and cried as if it was her own mother that had died. She spoke while sobbing, 'The eighth of January last year was the most beautiful day in the life of our family. It was the day when my man found money below the bridge and went to Mama Kalong's whorehouse and slept with the dead prostitute in front of me. He came home and it was the only day ever that he was so nice and didn't hit any of us.' (p. 11)

'Mati?' *Ia menampakan sifatnya yang sejati, perempuan cengeng itu, menangis seolah yang mati adalah ibunya, dan berkata dengan sedikit sedu-sedan, 'Delapan Januari tahun lalu adalah hari terindah dalam keluarga kami. Itu hari ketika lakiku menemukan uang di kolong jembatan dan pergi ke rumah pelacuran Mama Kalong dan tidur dengan pelacur yang mati di depanku ini. Ia pulang dan itu adalah satu-satunya hari di mana ia begitu ramah dan tak memukuli salah satu di antara kami.'*

The image, although a hyperbole, links sexual dissatisfaction with domestic violence, while affirming the role of Dewi Ayu as the epicentre of love. *CIL* has plenty of wild love scenes and rapes.⁵⁰³ We have examined how Maman Gendeng and Shodanco were debased by the procreative principle. Such phenomena are

⁵⁰³ 'Kliwon's gang of friends were perhaps the people who lived happiest in town those years, partying almost every night' (p. 171, late 1950s). The young, wild, carnivalistic, Kliwon leads his friends to play at the brothel and they do not pay the bill from one girl: 'I asked her if she liked to make love with us, and she said yes. If she liked it and we also liked it, then why should we have to pay?' (p. 170). Later in life Kliwon saves the hobo girl Isah Betina from a gangrape and they make hot love until she dies and Kliwon becomes a Communist. The gangster who later betrays Maman Gendeng, Romeo, lives with a grotesque woman who sleeps with anyone and he is happy with that: 'You should be a philosopher, said Maman Gendeng, 'if you're not crazy' (p. 467).

rarely represented.⁵⁰⁴ Social history is rethought on the level of the bodily lower stratum. Infidelity, along with incestuous relationships, occur in the family. Krisan makes wild love to his cousin Ai in a wet dream (p. 440). About male love: 'There are two types of women that a man can love: first, women that are loved for love's sake, second, women that are loved for making love. Krisan felt he had both' (p. 451). Shodanco's daughter Ai is of the first type and Maman Gendeng's daughter Rengganis of the second. He fools Rengganis into making love with him in the school toilet (p. 458). She becomes pregnant. Later Ai dies in sorrow after Rengganis has disappeared to her and Krisan's hiding place in the forest. Krisan finally murders Rengganis to prevent the truth from emerging. But he is misled by the evil ghost. Since for Krisan beauty led to disaster he is advised to look for an ugly girl. He entertained the idea for years: 'What is wrong with ugly women?'. Krisan solves his problem and one of the novel's: 'They can be fucked (*dientot*) just like pretty women'. He decides to find the ugliest, which is his aunt Cantik. Krisan enters her house invisibly, by the intervention of the ghost who has since long cared for Cantik and promised her a prince. There he makes love to Cantik in the novel's final, orgiastic passage. 'Intercourse (*bersetubuh*). Intercourse. And more intercourse. What difference did it make now, everything felt the same. Intercourse with Rengganis the Beautiful or the ugly Cantik was not all that different' (p. 516): an ambivalent, fertile but egalitarian conclusion, perhaps even feminist. Kinkin is, through *jailangkung*, finally able to find out who murdered Rengganis, whom he loved. Kinkin shoots Krisan in Cantik's bed (1997, p. 508).

11.2.10 LIFE AFTER THE PATRIARCHS? SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The end reaches into the contemporaneous, where it structures itself, in 'open-endedness' (Bakhtin). The narrative has built up to an end suggestive of a way out of history's vicious circle. The four children of Dewi Ayu's cursed family, who have all lost their loved ones, find each other at the burial of Krisan. They find and love each other and are happy with that (p. 510). Cantik is able to leave the house with a veil. In its time period it coincides with the unmentioned fall of the New Order, which coincides with the grotesque dismemberment of Shodanco (c. 1997). It is a vision of love, solidarity and sisterhood, highlighting the social situation of women: the coming history has been prepared through the debasing of history, its cruelty and its figures of power. History has performed its tragic drama before readers who have seen through its folly in the mirror of social history and laughed at it. Laughter is close to the truth, far from seriousness and official truths, which it defeats, together with fear. This truth is expressed from below, from the people who are the witnesses of history. Where else do we find such a vivid account of history and of the experience of living in Indonesia? The microcosm of Halimunda contains human history in time, represented by characters symbolising the major forces of society, thereby it provides the knowledge for the necessary continuation

⁵⁰⁴ There is a parallel example in Cok's stories from the groin in *Larung* (Utami 2001:88-89, see also 10.2.8)) about her military lover. 'The cat in boots' is brought down by the groin but not obliterated. He becomes a human.

of the historical process. This symbolism transcends the individual characters like the biological body is transcended in the grotesque aesthetics. The people, as a laughing body, progress. As a symbol of the people, Dewi Ayu represents a positive principle that is surviving and laughing.

The entertaining element is a dominating one in Kurniawan's narrative technique, which is absurd, existentialist, good-humoured and sympathetic. It is not sensational because it is a sociological satire, and it is moral because it is embedded in common value systems. The grotesque, a style with universal fundamentals, blooms in ambivalences as history is rethought on the level of the body's lower parts and hyperbolic mad loves. Universal humanism is accordingly maintained in that all characters, including the feared Shodanco and Maman Gendeng, have humane sides, such as the capacity to love, and share universal characteristics, such as the longing for love and a home. The love message, accordingly, is likewise strong; love cures and hate fulfils the vicious circle. Love and sex are important factors behind individual action, as they are in the historical events. Sex is given a social role through which culture is criticized and laughed at and its non-normative function is acknowledged. As the subject is treated, in carnivalistic and satiric ways, it is removed from the fear connected with taboos. *CIL* is more fertile than Utami's novels in a generally more positive and organic way through the grotesque aesthetics, which give it cosmic and universal folksy meanings. *CIL* is the novel richest in irony, the novelist's and satirist's instrument of truth, of all novels encountered by the thesis' author from the examined period and maybe of all Indonesian novels. Ayu Utami uses little irony. The other novelists brought up are also quite low in irony.

CIL makes clear that marvellous realism is not specific to Latin America, as it is saturated with local beliefs and motifs. Although in part realist, the larger part is 'mock history', which can be argued is the style Kurniawan is developing, one that constantly intermingles facts, myths, tales and history to create something new. *CIL*, which fulfils several criteria of the great novel, also the encyclopaedic, perhaps lacks in heteroglossia, not due to a lack of dialogue, voices and perspectives, but because of the accented technique. However it is certainly polyphonic.⁵⁰⁵ Characters speak in an absurd way about an absurd reality, which is the author's tool to create local atmosphere and to entertain.

The plain social interpretation of *CIL* is not very different from common accounts. Society's problems are rooted in the past colonialism, which left a lasting wound (Ma Gedik's ghost). Also, in the tracing of the backgrounds of characters, ideologically, the fact that people were brought up on myths emerged as a problem. The local ruler, Shodanco was, like Soeharto, raised with Mahabharatan tales of war, the ideas of which he applied to life. Yet he failed morally. It also holds true for Maman Gendeng and the people generally, which led to problems in the post-colonial state. Life followed myth into the post-colonial history and continued the vicious circle of strife and fratricide from the days of yore when knights ravaged the country for pretty princesses. The people's upbringing on myths also highlights

⁵⁰⁵ Such as when, with Bakhtin, Dostoevsky is held as a measure.

the need for education. Communism played a role in providing educational materials, which were aborted together with Communism itself. The emerging post-colonial society emerged from the rough Japanese occupation and revolution, after which the strongest ruled. Therefore the authoritarian structures lived on. At that time there were no clear distinctions between revolutionary, gangster and military. Neither was it clear afterwards. Military commanders emerged as businessmen, in both illegal and legal trade, using ethnic Chinese businessmen as middle-men. Illegal trade was profitable and they merged with gangsters in businesses dealing with protection, prostitution and alcohol. The system of protection prevented the emergence of an independent class of traders. Here Communism appeared as the only alternative until it was aborted. The Communist party in Halimunda was manipulative and disciplined. It gained power because it was the only place people could turn to. The local leader was an innocent, charismatic man who became immersed in ideology and used by the party. He too became authoritarian. The local PKI was completely unaware of the G30S coup and completely destroyed.⁵⁰⁶ After Communism, the corporate state emerged and authoritarianism intensified. Military, politicians and gangsters made independent life and trade difficult. An order of fear emerged, sustained by the aftermath of the G30S military coup and the invocation of the Communist ghost, which *CIL* frees the subject from in the open end after the age of the patriarchs.

In the character of Dewi Ayu, from her position and perspective, as in the girl group of Utami's novels, common views, norms and values become relative against the backdrop of the cruel history and the bodily lower stratum. The prevailing concepts of the world are turned upside down. *CIL* deals with and condemns colonialism, both Dutch and Japanese. But the behaviour of local revolutionaries, later gangsters and military are described as no better than the colonialists. *CIL* delivers stinging criticism against both native revolutionaries and post-Independence leaders. When it comes to women, Shodanco is much worse than Maman Gendeng. Later his social behaviour is also worse; the inhabitants fear his irrationality more than anything. It is a critique of one's own culture and the role of the army, one that does not polish history. Whereas Utami has a clear feminist perspective explicitly set within patriarchal values and New Order militaristic violence, Kurniawan is less explicit and therefore more universal, but the overall message is the same. The social situation of women through the ages is accentuated. But it takes on universal properties and condemns militarism and violence in general. All of this was clear with the rape motif, which indicts the wider male world as well as values and institutions.

The grotesque, as defined from Rabelais by Bakhtin, is as much the style of *CIL* as 'magic' or marvellous realism. This style is, also in Bakhtin's view of the novelist, an heir of popular and democratic anti-authoritarian strategies. In a schematic square of Malay literary languages and realities, *CIL* located in the opposite corner to *adiluhung* literary language interpretations. Those are all

⁵⁰⁶ The literature during the New Order expressed similar things, such as the innocence of the victims, as researched by Nilsson-Hoadley (2002). A difference is that after the New Order even the founding fact or myth is questioned, if not reversed, by authors.

involved in a discursive play about the legitimate way of representing reality, which is also the struggle to impose reality's dominant definition. Moreover the play involves Western realisms, the modern canons of which are uncrowned in this manifestation of a novel in the line of Rabelais. Finally, if Kurniawan's tragic histories can be appreciated on the comic level, with laughs and smiles, he is certainly a teller of comforting tales (*tjerita penglipur lara*). Like many other Indonesian writers, Kurniawan is working within two traditions, novel and *tjerita*, of which his many stories are proof.

11.3 Abidah El Khalieqy

Abidah El Khalieqy (b. 1965), first known as a poet, published her first two novels during the period. Her themes are female emancipation and gender equality within Islam, which involves male emancipation. *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* ('Woman with Shawl' 2001 [see appendix]), similar to *Atas Singgasana* ('Above the Throne' 2003), is a developmental novel or Bildungsroman in the sense that it follows Nisa from childhood to adult age.⁵⁰⁷ The style is also that of the problem novel. Both novels have primordial settings, which is the problem, involve NGOs and have an independent freedom seeking Muslim woman as main character, who struggles to be free in a world of 'creatures with moustaches and firm bodies, proud breasts and hunters' gazes...' (Khalieqy 2003:2).⁵⁰⁸

That *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* is an emancipatory type of novel, accusatory of patriarchy, is clear from the first pages. The setting is a traditional *santri* environment in Java. Nisa is the novel's heroine, a stubborn girl who seeks knowledge in a conservative village dominated by her father, leader of a large *pesantren*. Her inspirational source is the knowledgeable young half-uncle Lek Khudori, consistently described as pious, soft-spoken, bright, open-minded and a poet; therefore the internally persuasive 'ideologue' of the novel. Lek is, however, unusual in Nisa's environment, where men are traditionally religious and not well educated, outside of a certain narrow tradition. Even in this environment men have greedy eyes for women, even for young girls, including Nisa's recitation teacher.⁵⁰⁹

The child's eager questions to parents and teachers reveal the thin veil of justifications behind the enforced and emphasized division of duties and labour between the sexes. In school the children repeat after the teacher, 'Fa-ther go-es to office, Mo-ther co-oks in the kitchen' (p. 10). When Nisa asks, 'But Dita's mother goes to the office, Teacher [...]', the class burst into laughter. At home Nisa's mother tell her that a woman's duties last all day and night (p. 13). By contrast, Nisa's brothers roam around freely without knowing politeness. The father has said that freedom is men's disposition because they are human beings, while women look human but have desires like animals. Therefore they must be taught politeness

⁵⁰⁷ Her third novel, *Geni Jora*, a novel with similar themes, won the DKJ novel contest in 2003 but the winners were only announced in 2004 (see also 8.3).

⁵⁰⁸ In *Atas Singgasana*, independent Kamila has to navigate through a sea of manipulative and tempting men.

⁵⁰⁹ In *Atas Singgasana*, such monsters are called Gorgon or Medusa and reside even in kind men who can be transformed into such.

(p. 44). According to mother, women have to fully close their *aurat* not to invite temptation from devils that follow them outside of the house (p. 45). Lek Khudori, however, explains that, according to the Koran, women should wear veils in places where their identities as respected women are not known (pp. 45-48). Their best veil is actually the faith. Nisa asks him, 'Then, how do you identify a good and respected man, Lek?' Lek answers that a person gains respect from how he or she behaves. Lek is the man who straightens out religious questions. In his view everything in Islam is rational and free, but not free from responsibility. Lek disregards the *pesantren* tradition of books but finds freedom and authority in the Koran. The injustices Nisa encounters tend to make her even more determined to do what she wants, initially Islamic studies and horse riding.

When the beloved Lek has left for higher education abroad, Nisa becomes introvert. In addition, her father imposes more restrictions on her freedom. Nisa begins to study the religious books of the tradition (pp. 70-74), which are revealed as flawed in her questions and discussion with her friend and her mother, and ultimately in the discussion with the leading *ustadz* Ali (pp. 75-85). The scriptures used are not taken first hand from the Koran, Hadits or even Fiqih (Isl. jurisprudence), but from books about them (p. 70). Some state that women have less reason and religion. Reasons stem from prohibitions to reading the Koran, entering Mosques, praying and fasting while having menstruation ('dirty blood'). But Nisa has noted that men who are far dirtier than menstruating women enter the local mosque (p. 73). The words of Ali and the old books are absurd, not only to a modern mind but also to common sense, which Nisa recognizes. It is this discourse she is freeing herself from. Quotations from Nisa's *pesantren* literature about women:

"A woman who watches a man who is not her husband will have her eyes nailed on the day of judgement." "If a woman raises her voice against her husband, everything that is hit by the rays of the sun will curse her." "Allah has created 70,000 angels in the skies of the world, and they will curse every woman who betrays her husband's property. On the day of judgement she will be gathered with the witches and fortune tellers, even if she spends all her life in devotion to her husband." (pp. 76-77)

'Really unbelievable. Frightening!' thinks Nisa. She wants to ask the leading Ustadz Ali about such things at his next lecture. Excerpts from Ali's *ideologim*:

'Tonight I will lecture about what kinds of women will go to heaven and what kinds will go to hell. [...] Any woman who is invited to have sexual intercourse by her husband and postpones it until the husband falls asleep shall be cursed by Allah.' (p. 79)

'Malam ini, saya akan menjelaskan macam-macam kaum perempuan yang masuk neraka dan masuk surga. [...] Perempuan mana saja yang diajak suaminya untuk berjimak lalu ia menunda-nunda hingga suaminya tertidur, maka ia akan dilaknat oleh Allah.'

Nisa becomes unnerved by the preoccupation with female behaviour. Her curious questions to Ali unnerve the surrounding crowd as well, which does not dare to question Ali's authority. Such as: 'How about if there is an open wife who invites

the husband and does not like to wait?' Ali replies that men usually do not like such women. Wives should be shy, have a patient attitude and wait. Nisa: 'Wait until when, *pak kiai*?' Ali then changes the subject and warns her about useless films, novels, magazines and comics made by *kafir* (Isl. infidels). Nisa thinks it is because Ali believes she has indulged in it and has been influenced to ask the questions. Upon returning, Nisa thinks that wives are slaves and that she does not want to be a slave. Basically, in the *ideologim* of Nisa's *pesantren* community women are inferior and weak.

Nisa gets married off to Samsudin before the legal age because the parents think that she does not need to go to school. Udin is a monster that Nisa only meets for the first time one hour before the wedding. He is the opposite of Lek Khudori: rough, careless and he smells, although he has a diploma he brags about and is the son of a respected *kiai*. In the first scene after the marriage, Udin sits and blows cigarette smoke in Nisa's face. When Nisa protests he carries her off to the bedroom and takes her by force.

'You raped me, Samsudin! You have raped me!' - 'Rape? Ha, ha, ha [...]
How can a husband rape his own wife. You are strange, Annisa. I have never seen a woman as stupid as you. But however stupid you are, you are still pretty. [...]' - 'Cease your twaddle! You do not behave like a Muslim!' (p. 99)

'*Kau memperkosaku, Samsudin! Kau telah memperkosaku!*' - '*Memperkosakan? Ha, ha, ha [...] mana ada suami memperkosakan istrinya sendiri. Kau ini aneh, Annisa. Aku belum pernah melihat perempuan sebodoh kau ini. Tetapi sekalipun bodoh, kau begitu molek.*' [...]' - '*Hentikan ocehanmu! Perilakumu seperti bukan muslim!*'

Udin is unemployed and hangs around the house most of the time. Nisa often rebels and confronts him with truths that he cannot stand and he curses and beats her. When Nisa is finally freed from her marriage she gets involved with NGOs in Yogyakarta and talks about gender issues at forums. Nisa, now 18 years old, and Lek marry. Nisa says that, with the marriage, she entered the third stage of freedom in her life (p. 211). Her widow status is over and she can still study. The understanding Lek is able to cure Nisa from her sexual traumas created by Samsudin, who had not only accused her of being both frigid and infertile but who had also raped her.

Lek stands out as the ideal man, not the only good guy, but the only good and emancipated character. Therefore he saves the novel from misandry. The novel sets modern emancipated discourse against that of the antagonist primordial *pesantren*, a type of intentional hybridity, which is how the theme is orchestrated. Because of the latter, Nisa was turned over to an irresponsible pervert by her parents. Marriage, children, husband wife relations and the veil have all been bathed in the new light of modern emancipated Islam. The novel is NGO discourse that reinterprets and subverts a community and represents a departure from a primordial era. The way out involves being stubborn as Nisa and wise as Lek, education, emancipation, belief in Islam and in oneself. In contrast with Ayu Utami, parents have voices and are not entirely discredited, as they are let back into dialogue and

help out once Samsudin's evils have been revealed. They too look up to Lek, the wise, humble and educated. Sex is a motif in this Muslim novel and is used as a feminist dagger thrust at male monsters through a similar conflictual structure as the other motifs. The behaviour of Lek, who utters prayers during intercourse the first time Nisa truly makes love (pp. 217-220), is contrasted with Udin's rapist and depraved behaviour (the marital rape motif). The novel does intersect with the liberal feminists: it writes in the female body and teaches about how to treat it. It is also anti-authoritarian and anti double standards. The novel's dialogues are already old in the sense that they depict a past time, Nisa's youth, but they are still hot with tensions with the diminishing traditional power it confronts.

11.4 Anggie Widowati

Anggie Widowati's (b. 1970) debut novel *Langit Merah Jakarta* ('Red Sky over Jakarta' 2003a, [see appendix]) is the only novel the author knows of that has got somewhere (accepted by a major publisher and the large bookshops) that sets out to document the struggle of student activists against the New Order (c. 1995-1999): the struggle for social and political change.⁵¹⁰ The novel has journalistic accounts, which does not differ from common accounts of the recent history described. It is also totally realist, which is unsurprising when a journalist becomes a writer and writes about a journalist. The structure is ordered in chapters and is chronological with some flashbacks, easy to follow and understand. Such a novel can be treated with a more structuralist approach because the narrative is neither disturbed, as in the metropolitan novels, nor has several layers of symbolism as in the marvellous strands of writing. As is the case in structured realist literature, the concrete social context is provided, which here, together with the backgrounds of the main characters, set the motives for the plot. The oppression and corruption of the New Order is the principal antagonist and the target of the student activists, whose struggle constitutes both plot and theme. The perspective is that of an insider's with a clear stance. Maturity is a secondary theme. Main character and first person narrator, Fifie is searching for her place in the world. The most developed peer group (*kami*), whose social ideology is revealed, is the one of Fifie and her two best friends, Argo and Dery. Fifie is a Javanese girl, a *Raden Ayu* of the Susuhunan dynasty of Surakarta, whose father has renounced feudalism. The family wants her to marry another noble and has even attempted to pair her, a practice she resents (p. 17). Fifie is a slightly more defined Muslim than most people of her social background and sees whom she will marry as being up to Allah. She enjoys the thrill of living on the edge with the state apparatus. Her celebration of freedom is exemplified by her habit of watching sunsets on top of towers and skyscrapers. She smokes if she is under stress and wants to 'because it is social discrimination to let men smoke and women not' (p. 3).

Argo and Dery are both male and supportive of Fifie's activism and writing. They have all studied at the same faculty in Yogyakarta, where the friends used to cry out for change and listen to the social critic rock-star Iwan Fals. Dery comes from a

⁵¹⁰ Widowati also published a second novel, *Laras* (2003b), in the same year.

broken home, born unwanted with a drunkard father. He has grown up partly with only his mother and grandmother. After a period of happiness, at the age of ten his father flipped again, drank and beat his mother until she became crippled. His experiences have defined his outlook on life: 'I hate violence, because violence made my mother suffer for life' (p. 35). Dery is the most political of the group. Argo is a sympathetic young man of a modest Javanese farming family. Fifie narrates Argo's story of how Development came to his village and demanded the rice-fields to be given up for factories (pp. 44-51). Argo's father refused, although he was promised work in the batik factory, which one by one his neighbours had accepted. Village life totally changed as the factory became central to people's lives. The people's moral behaviour changed for the worse. Argo's father was finally murdered in his home by factory thugs. The rice fields were bulldozed the week after. 'The joy of the small village disappeared [...]' (p. 51). Argo's background has given him the view of industrial development as a form of violence (p. 126). The worldview and identity of the peer group has been partly formed in opposition to violence and the New Order.

Irawan is Fifie's colleague in Jakarta and her boyfriend, a nice guy with a more traditional outlook, but neither understands the idealism of activists nor the unconventionality of Fifie. He is not so interested in politics, is pro-reform but dislikes demonstrations and likes horror movies. His family is Javanese and lives in Jakarta. The father, Supangat does not want his wife to work other than with the home and the children. 'Although most Javanese have changed now, Supangat's type is not few in numbers' (p. 99). Supangat's values have been passed on to Irawan, who wants Fifie to stop working. Irawan's values and attitudes are representative of another peer group, an antagonistic one in the semantic structure.

The basic principle of the three friends is to resist violence because it violates human rights and to demonstrate is the way of doing this because there is no other way open to them in the country. This philosophy is laid out in the context of disillusion with state interference in all attempts to create change (pp. 126-128). Previously the concept of violence has been developed to denote even poverty in a nation of many rich people and all activities that damage others, such as capitalism's use of workers for industries (p. 54). At her office Fifie criticizes the feudal mode of thinking about respect and attracts the fury of her boss when she insists on writing about a corrupt minister and friend of the boss (pp. 117-121). Fifie also views the disregard she is shown at the office as a form of violence. This is contrasted with her group, who often had different views but got along well. Authoritarianism results in violence, she concludes (p. 123).

The Post New Order of *Langit Merah Jakarta* concern gender, identity and values, all tied together in one *ideologim*, which is the worldview of the 1990s forces of change. The vague ideology is representative of the student movement, united only under the banners of anti Soehart, anti KKN, pro democracy and human rights, which resulted in stalemate. Fifie herself does not vote in the elections of 1999 because she thinks the political way is wrong and dirty. She has to be regarded as an emancipated, modern individual and a more than vague Muslim who follows her heart in everything. Fifie and Irawan split up because of

their differences. His traditional Javanese values contrast too much with Fifie's emancipated character. Irawan directly refers to *kodrat* in their arguments about gender roles and says in Javanese terms that everything will be chaotic if people do not act according to their roles (p. 103). He also believes career women are unfaithful. Fifie does not entirely disagree with Irawan; she also thinks that the main duty of woman is in the home, but it is up to her to decide and women are needed as active participants in society: 'Let them choose themselves'. Irawan is also rather jealous of the more emancipated Argo. Symbolically, it reads as an allegory concerning identity. Indonesia (modernity) and Java (tradition) go their separate ways. The lover who sticks to traditional values has to go. Fifie marries the emancipated Argo who gives her freedom. Similarly, there is nothing to hope for from the older generation. Fifie's father is, however, supportive of her and the only elder with an approved voice. The generational argument is explicit in the journalist account. During an anti Golkar action the students issue a statement for the journalists. They claim it is a generational war (pp. 159-60). They do not believe in *reformasi* because the New Order system still remains and occupies the country and Soeharto is still influential: 'That is why the generational war has to be prioritised'. With Irawan and Fifie's father the generational argument is illustrated as the struggle between the old and the young mentality. The ideas above are coherent but the conflictual structure is reduced to only two systems.

The reality the text is embedded in is a period of change, insecurity, idealism and raised expectations, in which the peer group is one with the forces of change, which determine the important concepts for this group. The aesthetics of opposition is not really avant-garde because of the partial success of the student-movement that the fall of Soeharto constituted. Form is neither a renewal nor post-modern in any sense because it is a structured realist narrative with only the above-mentioned symbolism. The post of the novel is only found in the values espoused, because New Order values and policies are finished off. Still, the novel is progressive because it leaves certainty for uncertainty and idealism, away from the culture where chance does not exist. Moreover, the peer group succeeds in changing the world, although the ideological conflict leads to the death of a hero; Dery lives on by naming in the next generation - a victorious principle. *Langit Merah Jakarta* affirms the position of activists and has as such a function in an unstable political world. Moreover, this type of realist, structured novel is rare since the flood of metropolitan novels. Widowati also avoids the gender trap of the *sastrawangi* authors because the novel has no sex while devoting room for Western style courtship.

TJERITA AND NOVEL IN POST NEW ORDER INDONESIA