
WOMAN AS NATION IN MANGUNWIJAYA'S *DURGA* *UMAYI*¹

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In 1991, Manguwiyaya published his eighth novel, *Durga Umayi*, a protean epic in which the history of modern Indonesia is inscribed in the life and experiences of a single female character, Iin Sulinda Pertiwi Nusamusbida. Iin is present at the ceremony proclaiming Indonesian Independence on the 17th of August, 1945; she serves in the Revolution both as a cook for irregular paramilitary units and as a soldier in her father's army detachment; she becomes involved in corruption and shady business dealings during the early period of liberal democracy; she works for the communist-affiliated organizations *Lekra* and *Gerwani* during the Guided Democracy era of 1959-65; she undergoes a pivotal "facelift" which occurs in Singapore on March 11, 1966, the date of the *Supersemar* transfer of power from Sukarno to Suharto; she consolidates a multinational conglomerate able to undertake huge prestige development projects in Indonesia in the New Order era; and she finally reemerges from a second round of plastic surgery with her restored "native" face on the occasion of a *Harkitnas* (Day of National Resurgence) celebration. As such a national narrative, *Durga Umayi* stands as a clear condemnation of the Indonesian nation's "progress" from its idealism and concern for the ordinary people during the revolutionary period, to the opportunism and corruption of the 1950s and 1960s, and the pragmatic, materially driven business boom of the late 1980s. The novel's final pages leave Iin teetering on the horns of her own dilemma. Like the nation, she must choose her future: will she go to prison as an ex-communist, or agree to continue her large-scale

¹ I would like to thank the two anonymous readers for *Indonesia* who reviewed an earlier version of this manuscript. Their comments contributed significantly to the improvement of this final version.

development schemes at the request of the government, thus securing her personal liberty but dooming her twin brother to be the victim of displacement and enforced transmigration?

Mangunwijaya's choice of a woman as symbol of the nation's evolution begs a number of important questions about current ways of imagining the nation, particularly among Indonesia's social activists and those members of its emerging middle class who, like Mangunwijaya, are concerned to reshape Indonesian society along more egalitarian, inclusive, and democratic lines. Given that the novel represents the history of the nation predominantly through the figure of a single woman of lower middle-class background and suggests that this nation is in dire need of reformulation and redirection, some of the key questions which *Durga Umayi* poses are: How might the Indonesian middle class, and more specifically, that segment of it which can be characterized as critical or "oppositional," imagine the nation? How might those groups conceptualize the role of women within such imagined communities?² What problems are involved if the figure of a woman is used to represent both the historical experience of a nation and a group—women—subsumed and oppressed within the nation?

By raising these questions, the novel addresses issues that challenge Indonesian social activists and members of its middle class, groups which are closely connected, since many of the new breed of social and political activists come from a broad spectrum of middle-class family backgrounds—middle and lower level civil servants and military officers, professionals, and small entrepreneurs—and are active in student movements or non-government organizations (LSMs or *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*).³ Such citizens are likely to be well acquainted with Mangunwijaya and his ideas, either through his frequent mass media columns, novels, and participation in a variety of seminars and public forums, or his involvement in social campaigns, LSM networks, and grassroots development efforts. Similarly, because of his continual association with such social groups, Mangunwijaya is certainly in touch with their concerns and discourses, which inform this particular novel. I do not propose that this author's thought, as represented in his art and public pronouncements, should be accepted as a prototypical example of the thought of such groups, but I will argue that contradictions and problems that complicate the novel reflect dilemmas that trouble a large number of Indonesians who are committed to social change, and that the novel can be seen as one particular effort to confront and resolve these contradictions. Further, I will argue that Mangunwijaya's novelistic "solutions" may well have

² I refer to Benedict Anderson's concept, detailed in *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), of "imagined community" not as "false" because imaginary, but rather, as a cultural artifact which commands great emotional loyalty and which enables the existence of a certain way of organizing collective life.

³ E. Aspinall, "Students and the Military: Regime Friction and Civilian Dissent in the Late Suharto Period," *Indonesia* 59 (April 1995): 29-34; Max Lane, "Students on the Move," *Inside Indonesia* 19 (July 1989): 11-12. See also Philip Eldridge, "NGOs and the State in Indonesia" in Arief Budiman (ed.), *State and Civil Society in Indonesia* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 503-538.

considerable appeal for those segments of the liberal middle class, in particular the men among them.⁴

In this paper, I will argue that Manguwijaya's *Durga Umayi*, is characterized by a complex combination of conflicting ideological elements which the text attempts to organize into an aesthetically satisfying formal/thematic "resolution." The key tension around which *Durga Umayi* organizes itself, and which it attempts to resolve, is the tension between the deconstruction of traditional narratives which situate men, the elite, and the military as the significant actors in the revolution and nation, and the shaping of a new, middle class intellectual "master narrative" of nationalism. On the one hand, the critique or deconstruction of the traditional narrative requires that the author expose and express ways in which the contemporary nation oppresses women and the peasants. In *Durga Umayi*, this results in Manguwijaya's attempt to give voice to, and thereby symbolically empower, such marginalized groups. Conversely, the attempt to articulate a new discourse of national unity requires that these angry, disparate, and desperate voices ultimately be contained within a unified, overarching framework which "transcends" the potential divisiveness of the nation's manifold "interest groups." The ideological tension here shapes the relationship between the narratorial voice and the novel's many characters, as well as the way notions of tradition and modernity are deployed. It also generates the figure of Iin, the novel's leading character, who, as a woman, is made both to represent the nation's oppressed, and to symbolize the nation's historical trajectory and loss of ideals. This contradictory maneuver—embodying individual victim and collective victimizer in the same fictional character—constitutes the novel's aesthetic "solution" to the historical and ideological problem encountered by middle-class male intellectuals who seek democratic social change in contemporary Indonesia. Iin/the nation is a protean composite, a handy, though slippery, tool for those who might wish to reformulate national idealism in the "natural" figure of a nurturing mother who at the same time is

⁴ In arguing that the problems of the novel are not simply the problems of its author, but are to a great extent shared by elements of Indonesia's middle-class and activist communities, I am drawing on a specific set of notions regarding literary texts. The point of departure for my reading is Raymond Williams' notion of hegemony as neither a system nor structure, but rather a process in which dominant ways of organizing and *understanding* life must be continually "renewed, recreated, defended and modified." This is because hegemony "is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own." A lived hegemony is never total according to Williams. Yet the dominant position of hegemonic notions in a society also suggests that resistance, or attempts to reconfigure that hegemony, are never completely free of the notions which they seek to oppose or transform. See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 112–113. Pierre Macherey, in theorizing the production of literature, suggests a model which relates to Williams' notion of the continual process of maintaining and resisting hegemony. Macherey argues that the literary work, through the functioning of its structure and aesthetic processes, reveals the gaps and contradictions in the ideological material—the "imaginary" experience of reality—which is the ground from which it emerges. This is possible because a work is imbued with conflicting ideological elements, and historical problems present in relation to ideology. It is precisely these conflicts and contradictions which compel a work to seek to erect an "illusory order." See Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 42, 50, 59–60, 79, 84, 93, 99–100, 155. Jameson describes this textual operation as the invention of "imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictions." See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 79. Terry Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1976), esp. pages 64–101, is also useful in developing this kind of critical approach.

naive, prone to hysteria, apt to be led astray, and therefore in need of guidance from rational male intellectual nationalists.

The Social and Ideological Context

In order to fully understand *Durga Umayi's* relation to the ideologies which inform it, it becomes necessary to survey briefly certain aspects of Indonesian history and New Order society. Socialism (though always envisioned as adapted to local cultures and circumstances) and elements of a generally egalitarian vision of a future Indonesia were important to virtually the entire nationalist movement, from the PKI to nationalists such as Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir, to Natsir's Masyumi Islamic modernist party.⁵ In order to prove its modern fitness to constitute a nation, as well as to position itself against conservative aristocratic elements, the nationalist movement advocated education and greater social opportunity for women, though at the same time arguing that women ought to accept as primary their familial roles as wives and mothers to the nation's children.⁶ On the other hand, the nationalist ideology also contained strands that bound the new nation to "traditional" concepts of an "organic" or "integralist" state.⁷ Permeated with Javanese aristocratic notions of order, hierarchy, and familial relations dominated by paternalistic authority,⁸ such integralist concepts were put into practice and gained ideological authority under Sukarno's "Guided Democracy"; the state's investment in its own "paternal" authority has deepened under the New Order of President Suharto.⁹

⁵ See, for example, Takashi Shiraishi's *An Age in Motion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). See also George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 49–52; John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934* (Singapore: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 5–7; J. D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 73–133; Mavis Rose, *Indonesia Free: A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, 1987), pp. 26, 62; Deliar Noer, *The Indonesian Modernist Muslim Movement* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁶ Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed, 1986), pp. 4–16, for a general argument about the relations of third world nationalist movements' to women's emancipation. For specifics on Indonesia, see Saskia Wieringa, "Aborted Feminism in Indonesia: A History of Indonesian Socialist Feminism" in Saskia Wieringa (ed.), *Women's Struggles and Strategies* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Gower, 1988), pp. 69–75.

⁷ David Reeve, "The Corporatist State: The Case of Golkar" in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, pp. 157–160; Richard Robison, "Indonesia: Tensions in State and Regime" in Kevin Hewison, Richard Robison and Garry Rodan (eds.), *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, Democracy and Capitalism* (St. Leonards, NSW, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1993), p. 42.

⁸ The existence of such Javanese ideas is discussed by Nancy K. Florida in "Sex Wars: Writing Gender Relations in Nineteenth Century Java," in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 207–224. By the time of the nationalist movement such ideas had, according to Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, already been combined with 19th century Dutch bourgeois ideas to form a notion of woman's role as "mother." See her "Ibuisism and Priyayization: Path to Power?" in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (eds.), *Indonesian Women in Focus* (Leiden: Foris, 1987), pp. 43–51. In such Javanese aristocratic-Dutch hybrid notions, one can find a line of continuity with the ideas of modernizing nationalists on women's roles, though the views of the latter seem more benignly disposed towards allowing women some measure of freedom.

⁹ For arguments that the patriarchal familial elements of aristocratic Javanese concepts of the nation state have been increasingly emphasized and endorsed in New Order official policy and public discourse, as well as strengthened in the state's programs and institutions, see articles by Julia I. Suryakusuma ("The

The New Order equates development (*pembangunan*) with modernization, economic growth, and industrialization,¹⁰ and it has mobilized the integralist notions and corporatist organizations of the Guided Democracy era in support of its initiatives.¹¹ Yet the New Order does not simply rely on development successes to consolidate its social control. *Pancasila*, the official national ideology,¹² is represented as an articulation of the historical experience of the Indonesian peoples and thus put forward as a formulation of their traditional philosophy of life.¹³ President Suharto has maintained that correct understanding of *Pancasila* is required for Indonesia's future development, and that *Pancasila* and "Development" are inseparable. Summoning the familial discourse of integralist nationalism, Suharto's allies have proclaimed him "Father of Development." This title represents his authority as "natural" and implies that development is a social activity with familial characteristics. The metaphor also suggests that Suharto has been chosen by destiny for the position which he occupies, and thereby presents him as someone without personal interests (*pamrih*) in holding political power.¹⁴ Such an image can be tied to traditional Javanese aristocratic concepts of legitimate power which still carry authority for many Indonesians.¹⁵ The government's version of *Pancasila*, linked discursively to tradition and nature, determines the parameters within which "legitimate" political action and discourse can occur, and dissent from this ideology, and the notions of development with which it is currently intertwined, is considered potentially subversive.¹⁶ Still dissent does exist within New Order Society. Some of the most prominent dissenting voices during the New Order have been those of students identifying themselves as a "moral force" above the corruption and sectarianism of party politics.¹⁷ Student movements of this nature have typically advocated stamping out corruption, while generally approving of the overall development strategy pursued by the New Order.¹⁸ Another current of

State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia") and Daniel S. Lev ("On the Other Hand") in *Fantasizing the Feminine*, pp. 92–119 and 191–202. Also, see Norma Sullivan, "Gender and Politics in Indonesia" in Maila Stivens (ed.), *Why Gender Matters in Southeast Asian Politics* (Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), pp. 61–86

¹⁰ Ariel Heryanto, "The Development of Development," *Indonesia* 46 (October 1988), pp. 6–7; Michael van Langenberg, "The New Order State: Language, Ideology, Hegemony" in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, pp. 124–5.

¹¹ Van Langenberg, "The New Order State," pp. 123–5.

¹² The "Panca Sila" or five moral principles are: Belief in one God; a just and civilized humanitarianism (sometimes called "internationalism"); a united Indonesia; democracy guided by wisdom through consultation and representation; and social justice for all the Indonesian people.

¹³ Michael Morfit, "Pancasila Orthodoxy," in Colin MacAndrews (ed.), *Central Government and Local Development in Indonesia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 42–45; Chua Beng Huat, "Looking for Democratization in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 15:2 (September 1993): 140.

¹⁴ Heryanto, "The Development of Development," pp. 20–21.

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" in *Language and Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 35, 51–3, 66.

¹⁶ Van Langenberg, "The New Order State," pp. 124–5.

¹⁷ Arief Budiman, "The Student Movement in Indonesia: A Study of the Relationship Between Culture and Structure," *Asian Survey* XVIII, 6 (June 1978): 617–622; Aswab Mahasin, "On the Outskirts of the Periphery: Popular Movements in the New Order," *Prisma* (English Edition) 47 (1989): 29–31.

¹⁸ R. William Liddle, "Modernizing Indonesian Politics" in R. William Liddle (ed.), *Political Participation in Modern Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Series, 1973), pp. 179–181.

“dissent” within New Order society comes from ex-students and others working in non-government community development organizations (LSMs). In contrast to “moral force” student advocates, those interested in community development have been spurred on by widespread critiques of the government’s development programs taken as a whole. They saw this development strategy as the cause of a growing, structurally generated inequality of wealth and power,¹⁹ and advocated small-scale community projects predicated upon a “basic needs” strategy as a suitable alternative for the poor. By the 1980s, emphasis among the LSMs had shifted to include the education and mobilization of women, farmers, squatters, and workers regarding their rights vis-à-vis issues such as pollution, land alienation, and evictions.

Still, the ability to raise such issues in public debate is constrained by the government’s power to define acceptable *Pancasila* discourse, and critics must be careful in framing their arguments. Often, such critics respond by referring to notions of social justice similar to those posited by early nationalist leaders, notions which can be safely defended as part of the *Pancasila* doctrine. Typical critiques of this sort focus on the obvious discrepancies in wealth and power between the majority of the population and a bourgeoisie which the New Order has helped to construct through patronage and state protection, a group characterized by conspicuous wealth, involvement in aggressively expanding business conglomerates, and connections to the palace.²⁰ Critics also object to the dominance of the “free market” and foreign-investment-friendly economic policies of New Order technocrats, who have acted as crucial intermediaries between the Indonesian government and the global financial institutions which have supported the New Order.²¹ These “anti-technocrat” groups favor more government initiatives to promote the interests of ethnic Malay-Indonesian entrepreneurs against both Chinese-Indonesian businesses and foreign-based multinationals. Economic “nationalists” of this stripe have also upon occasion, therefore, adopted aspects of the “social justice” argument, sometimes in combination with anti-foreign or thinly veiled anti-Chinese-Indonesian sentiments (though the latter are officially proscribed).²² In their attempts to delineate an alternative understanding of the Indonesian nation, social activists and dissidents like Mangunwijaya are not entirely immune to this kind of argument.

Mangunwijaya: Tradition, Modernity, and the Middle Class

Born in Ambarawa, Central Java on May 6, 1929, Y. B. Mangunwijaya is a Roman Catholic priest, architect, media columnist, and novelist. Furthermore, he has long been known both within and without Indonesia as a social activist who has put his architectural skills, organizational ideas, and social prestige as columnist, novelist, and intellectual to use defending and working with various poor and marginalized communities. In addition, in 1991 Mangunwijaya joined Muslim leader Abdurrahman

¹⁹ Richard Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 156–58.

²⁰ Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital*; Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 98–161.

²¹ Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, pp. 74–85, 182.

²² Hamish McDonald, *Suharto’s Indonesia* (Sydney: Fontana, 1980), pp. 237–8; Michael Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics Under Suharto* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 171–2; Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, pp. 77–84, 115–131.

Wahid and others in forming the ill-fated Forum Demokrasi, whose purpose was to provide a forum for the discussion of democracy and human rights in Indonesia. Such work has made him a widely respected figure among Indonesia's growing number of grass roots development organizations and critics of the current government. It is precisely this social position which makes Mangunwijaya's literary works interesting subjects as guides to general ideological currents flowing among the ranks of Indonesian social activists.

With a background that includes "lesser *priyayi*" origins and education and residence in the Javanese cultural capital of Yogyakarta, as well as modern and western education and military experience during the revolution,²³ Mangunwijaya's history suggests that he has come in contact with a wide range of ideologies and doctrines. Following the revolution, Mangunwijaya decided to devote his life to repaying the ordinary people of Indonesia for their support and sacrifices on behalf of the army. Yet, wishing to avoid moral and spiritual corruption, he decided to become a priest in order to redeem his debt as an individual free of the need to pursue power and money. He has lauded "voluntary poverty" (*kemiskinan sukarela*) as a part of the highest stage of human development—one in which people have overcome material necessity and their own uncontrolled desires. According to him, those who voluntarily accept poverty have freed themselves from dependency on material possessions, and often devote themselves to helping others in their struggles against worldly suffering and oppression. The language which Mangunwijaya uses to characterize those who choose voluntary poverty is, significantly, the language of the Javanese aristocracy, as appropriated by twentieth-century Indonesians. He describes this type of poverty as "*murni ningrat sejati*" (pure, authentic nobility), "*suci, murni, bening*" (holy, pure, clear), "*agung ningrat*" (exalted nobility), and "*ningrat tetapi tidak angkuh*" (noble, but not arrogant).²⁴ Like "moral force" students and even President Suharto himself, Mangunwijaya uses the hegemonic aristocratic vocabulary of disinterested service for constructing his own position within Indonesian political and social life. According to Lindsay Rae, Mangunwijaya does not seek the downfall of current leaders, but rather "wants to free them from their corruption, and to restore the organic unity between fellow human beings, rulers and ruled, which he believes to have been broken by the intrusion of negative forces: power, violence, and avarice."²⁵ He thus echoes Javanese/integralist formulations in his desire for harmony and the organic unity of a community.

Yet unlike the *priyayi* of past ages, Mangunwijaya does not claim that he serves the state, but rather, that he serves the needs of the oppressed and marginalized people. And while he is curiously like a *resi* in his prolonged "isolation" in residence or involvement with poor urban and rural communities (the Kali Code squatter

²³ For biographical information, see Lindsay Rae, "Liberating and Conciliating: The Work of Y.B. Mangunwijaya" in Angus McIntyre (ed.), *Indonesian Political Biography: In Search of Cross-Cultural Understanding* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 239–261.

²⁴ Y. B. Mangunwijaya, "Kemiskinan dan Perempuan," in Fauzie Ridjal, Lusi Margiani, and Agus Fahri Husein (eds.), *Dinamika Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pt. Tara Wacana Yogya, 1993), pp. 150–153.

²⁵ Rae, "Liberating and Conciliating," pp. 253–54.

settlement; Karang, Gunung Kidul; the Kedung Ombo villagers), his work in these locales and the issues he addresses strike one as relatively “modern”—resembling LSM community development actions and issues—rather than traditional. He does not really maintain a *resi*'s “isolation.” Kali Code is not an isolated rural area, after all, and he came to Kedung Ombo from the outside as a nationally known writer and spiritual figure. In fact, Mangunwijaya frequently moves back and forth between the capital of Jakarta, Central Javanese cities like Yogya, Solo, and Salatiga, and rural areas. He has access to LSM networks, urban literary groups, and the national media.

Mangunwijaya sees a positive, dynamic power in western science, and he stresses the importance of individual education, creativity, rational thought, and wide intellectual horizons.²⁶ In accordance with such values, when talking about the revolution or ideal political figures, he tends to privilege Sutan Sjahrir. Mangunwijaya praises Sjahrir as revolutionary but cultured, someone who possessed a universal spirit, mature in heart and mind, and clear in his thinking when facing the international community. He lauds Sjahrir for having criticized the latent fascism in “feudal” Indonesian cultures.²⁷ Mangunwijaya has also been touched by currents of “Liberation Theology” which have flowed through the Catholic church since the early 1960s.²⁸ In ways similar to the best known theoretician of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, he views the history of humanity as a movement towards liberation from all the oppressive shackles of life, and towards expanding horizons and communities.²⁹

Yet even here one can detect Mangunwijaya attempting to articulate Javanese traditional concepts within a modern discourse. For he describes Sjahrir as an “*abdi*” (servant) of the nation, one who did not greedily thirst after power. Equally significant, and exhibiting an echo of *priyayi* paternalism, is his recourse to the language of family relations in saying that he had to distance himself from the Code residents after several years in order to “ween” (*disapih*) them from dependence on him, and that he did not want to become their “Godfather.”³⁰ These two statements display the tension in Mangunwijaya’s position vis-à-vis the poor: in one, he has already figured the poor as *dependent* children, while in the other he expresses the wish to avoid becoming a parent who is too controlling.

All of this suggests that Mangunwijaya is a unique kind of figure. Imbued with some of the patronizing superiority, vocabulary, and ideological assumptions of the *priyayi* about power and self-restraint, Mangunwijaya nonetheless reaches beyond the characteristic notions of a traditional Javanese intellectual. As a result of his own ambiguous social position (from a lesser *priyayi* family), his personal psychology,³¹ the

²⁶ Mangunwijaya, “Pengkakuan Seorang Amatir,” in Pamusuk Eneste (ed.), *Mengapa dan Bagaimana Saya Mengarang* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1984) p. 102-03; Y.B. Mangunwijaya, “Kosmologi Baru, Agama, dan Demokratisasi Bangsa” in M. Imam Aziz, M. Jadul Maula, and Ellyasa Kh Dharwis (eds.), *Agama, Demokrasi dan Keadilan* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1993), pp. 3-7.

²⁷ Mangunwijaya, “Pengkakuan Seorang Amatir,” p. 105.

²⁸ Mangunwijaya, “Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather,” *Matra*, April 1988, p. 17.

²⁹ Mangunwijaya, “Kosmologi Baru,” p. 11; Rae, “Liberating and Conciliating,” pp. 248-250.

³⁰ Mangunwijaya, “Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather,” p. 21.

³¹ Rae, “Liberating and Conciliating,” pp. 251-253, explores the possible implications of Mangunwijaya’s family relations. He was the oldest of 12 children and as such, was likely called upon to take care of his younger siblings. According to Rae, this may have served to heighten his concern for welfare of his peers,

egalitarian and socialistic aspirations present in the nationalist revolution, and the impact of liberation theology, he has been won over to an ideology of Catholic, socialist, egalitarian modernity. As he combines in his life and work elements of traditional discourse with a desire to participate in the global project of "modernity," Mangunwijaya is well suited to act as a spokesperson for the emerging Indonesian middle class, both men and women, whose desire for modernity is being shaped, in large part, according to Javanese aristocratic notions of conduct, prosperity and prestige, due to the prominence of a reconstructed *priyayi* tradition within key New Order institutions and society.³²

Mangunwijaya, Indonesian Literature, and Nationalism

In his novels, Mangunwijaya has frequently tried to redefine or challenge standard notions of patriotism and nationalism. His best-known work, *Burung-Burung Manyar* (The Weaverbirds, 1981), presents the revolution mainly through the eyes of an Indonesian who fought for the Dutch. While completely in support of the revolution, the novel nevertheless does not portray all Indonesian revolutionaries in a positive light, and suggests those who fought against independence may have had understandable reasons for doing so. The *Roro Mendut* trilogy, in contrast to much nationalist historiography, represents the last great Javanese kingdom, Mataram, as a site of internal conflict between regional interests, generations, and social strata. The author's concern for the "little people," for those often neglected by historians, novelists, and politicians alike, informs much of his work. Peasants, the urban lower classes, coastal fisherman, and remote tribal groups figure prominently in *Burung-Burung Manyar* (1981), *Ikan-Ikan Hiu, Ido, Homa* (1983), *Ballada Becak* (1985), and the *Roro Mendut* novels (1983-86). As Mangunwijaya weaves "their voices" into his narrative fabric, the reader is often presented with a view from below that is quite critical of standard, elite-generated notions of history, development, and contemporary social dynamics in Indonesia. In interviews, the author has stated that in his works he endeavors to raise the issues that concern the poor and the "little people" because such groups are most frequently the victims of social injustice.³³

Though his thematic interests and social commitment might align Mangunwijaya with the socially concerned critics of the *sastra kontekstual* group,³⁴ his own view of

in the same way that the need to adjudicate between his own needs and those of his siblings could have contributed to his attention to distributive justice and equality.

³² Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 460-62; Aswab Mahasin, "The Santri Middle Class," *Prisma* 49 (English Language Edition—June 1990): 91-92; Suryakusuma, "The State and Sexuality," p. 96; Van Langenberg, "The New Order State," p. 134; and Benedict Anderson, "The Languages of Indonesian Politics" in *Language and Power*, pp. 125-26.

³³ Y. B. Mangunwijaya, "Sastra Yang Berorientasi Pada Orang Kecil," Interview in *Horison* XXXI/9 (September 1986): 365.

³⁴ Names associated with this group are Ariel Heryanto, Emha Ainun Nadjib, Yudhistira ANM Massardi and the sociologist, Arief Budiman, who in the mid-eighties launched the *sastra kontekstual* (contextual literature) debates. In contrast to the hegemonic view of modern Indonesian literature as essentially defined by the inspired, individual writer's exploration of universal human values, the contextualists asserted that there were no "universal values" or universally valid styles of literature. Furthermore, they held that literature was a product of the varied specific social circumstances prevailing in any given society at a certain time. The contextualists argued that dominant notions of literature in Indonesia were

literature locates him as a synthetic figure. Mangunwijaya sees literature as something which should primarily “elevate humanity.”³⁵ For him, good literature is imbued with *religiositas* (religiousness), which springs from a basic human desire to grapple deeply with fundamental problems of origin and meaning in life.³⁶

Influenced by this relatively ideal concept of literature, Mangunwijaya is concerned to avoid producing “political manifestoes”³⁷ framed by rigid ideology, dogma,³⁸ and conversely, the opportunistic corruption inherent in most politics.³⁹ As will be evident from my reading of *Durga Umayi*, the author’s distrust of rigid ideologies disposes him to depict a utopian search for a just and caring basis for human behavior in his novel at the same time that the book is paradoxically situated within the framework of the nation and “national tradition.” Yet these conflicting features help Mangunwijaya’s work avoid direct confrontation with a New Order State concerned to protect its own formulation of *Pancasila* from any potential rival or critic.

The Problematic of *Durga Umayi*

I have already stated that the key tension in the novel resides in the double project of deconstructing the dominant New Order narrative of nationalism, and conversely, constructing a new, different notion of the Indonesian nation. Seen as a literary intervention in the ongoing ideological discourse about the form and meaning of the Indonesian nation, *Durga Umayi* can be described as an effort to reassert, on the thematic plane, the early, egalitarian socialist roots of nationalism as a central component in the identity of the contemporary Indonesian nation. It does so by arguing that social justice has not been achieved for all Indonesians, thus staying within the confines of the officially sanctioned discourse by implying that one of the precepts (Social Justice for All Indonesian People) of the state ideology, *Pancasila*, is not being fulfilled.

A second, related axis of the text’s problematic can be located at the stylistic and structural levels. This axis takes the form of a conflict between narrative variety and interpretive focus, and involves two potentially irreconcilable textual operations. On the one hand, Mangunwijaya’s style relies on an enormous fund of word play and description, the addition of synonyms or words to create alliterative or assonant effects, provide extra emphasis to actions or descriptions, or simply draw our attention

elitist, disproportionately western-influenced, and did not lead to the production of literature which spoke to the lives of the majority of Indonesians. In addition, other notions of literature—such as that literature should strive to be immediately relevant, intellectually and stylistically accessible to a wide audience, or that it should speak directly of social issues—were often de-valued by contemporary critics prominent within the Indonesian literary establishment. The contextualists were concerned to create a space within Indonesian literature for works which could unashamedly address contemporary social issues of local concern.

³⁵ Y.B. Mangunwijaya, “Sastra Yang Berorientasi Pada Orang Kecil,” p. 365.

³⁶ Mangunwijaya, “Pengakuan Seorang Amatir,” pp. 106; 117–18. See also Y. B. Mangunwijaya, *Sastra dan Religiositas* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1988), pp. 11–16.

³⁷ Mangunwijaya, “Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather,” p. 19.

³⁸ See, for example, his opening essay in the collection *Sastra dan Religiositas*, pp. 11–16.

³⁹ See his statement about Sutan Syahrir regarding the difference between a statesman (*negarawan*) and a politician (*politikus*) in “Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather,” p. 23.

to the fun of playing with language. In the "lexical exhibitionism" of Mangunwijaya's narrator, one finds something like a post-modernist use of language which draws attention to itself and away from its context.⁴⁰ The author's digressive style also shows a propensity to elaborate the thoughts and memories of the characters at length, in sections that resemble interior monologues, and yet are reported by the narrator. The whole creates a self-conscious narrative fabric that is unlike anything else in modern Indonesian fiction, and which challenges both the conventions of that fictional tradition, and, some would argue, the language and "no-nonsense" attitudes of New Order Society.

One important goal of the novel, according to the author, was to break free of what he saw as an established convention of modern Indonesian fiction—following the work of post-revolution prose pioneers such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Mochtar Lubis, and Idrus—which dictates that sentences must generally be short and concise. Eventually, Mangunwijaya feels, the style of these writers was transformed into a kind of a "mass-habit" that avoided longer, more complicated sentences considered to be artificial and opaque. Thus, in his novels, and especially in *Durga Umayi*, Mangunwijaya breaks with a dominant style he perceives in modern Indonesian literature as part of an attempt to challenge readers' intellectual abilities and horizons.⁴¹ Though he stops far short of equating the work of dissident writers like Pramoedya with New Order documents, Mangunwijaya does also suggest, in certain portions of the novel, that an exclusive focus on efficient productivity is a part of the malaise which has haunted Indonesia since the Revolution. (72, 76) Thus the novel's digressive, elaborate language also challenges New Order attempts to promote a national language that is *baik dan benar* (good and correct), language ready to be employed as a transparent instrument for reinforcing thoughts and attitudes useful to social control and economic development.⁴² *Durga Umayi*'s joyous, exuberant language refuses to be solely instrumental or *baik dan benar*. The novel's sentences often run on for an entire page, and the language is full of slang, puns, and all sorts of foreign vocabulary which challenge the government's guidelines and prohibitions.⁴³

The second element of this axis seems, in its slant, to accord with the first. In *Durga Umayi*, the narrator frequently changes voices, creating a kaleidoscopic sense of the Indonesian nation's diversity. The book's narrator shifts between presenting the voices of peasants, revolutionary *pemuda*, starving artists discussing aesthetics, prominent nationalist figures such as Sukarno and Hatta, simple housemaids, prison camp commandants, PKI ideologues, and even the "voices" of investment brochures for huge mega-tourism projects. Amidst this *heteroglossia*, it would at first glance seem difficult to create or discover a single coherent "master narrative." Yet some voices do

⁴⁰ An interesting and suggestive exploration of these aspects of *Durga Umayi* can be found in Pamela Allen's unpublished paper, "The Words and Worlds of Mangunwijaya's *Durga Umayi*," esp. pp. 10-17.

⁴¹ Mangunwijaya, personal interview, 12 July 1994.

⁴² For a discussion of the New Order's language policy, see Virginia Matheson Hooker, "New Order Language in Context," in Virginia Matheson Hooker (ed.), *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 272-293.

⁴³ Keith Foulcher, "The Construction of an Indonesian National Culture: Patterns of Hegemony and Resistance" in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, pp. 305-306.

carry more authority than others, and this feature indicates where one can discover the “master narrative.”

Aligning himself with middle-class social activists, Mangunwijaya, through his essays, interviews, and novels, often articulates the conflicted desires of the emergent middle class for a greater share in political power, which they hope to attain without thieving from the dispossessed masses which enjoy even less power than they do. Mangunwijaya’s fictional solution to this problem is to incorporate the voices of the oppressed—particularly women and peasants—into his novel’s narrative, as though allowing them to tell “their own stories.” He accomplishes this through an intensive working of a key modern narrative device, *free indirect discourse*, which allows a third-person narrator to present the thoughts and speech of other characters as though in the characters’ own words, thus creating a close identification of the narrator with the characters and at the same time permitting the narrator to retain a subtle control over the narrative.⁴⁴ Telling the stories of so many others would seem to open a space for competing narratives of meaning within the nation. Yet in the end the novel relies on a hierarchical ordering of these voices to establish a subtly paternal order of its own.

There are a number of ways in which Mangunwijaya works the text to create a hierarchy of identification and veracity among the teeming character-voices in *Durga Umayi*. Cohn argues that “free indirect discourse” is particularly dependent on the narratorial voice that mediates it, and thus on tone and context. For example, Iin, while sympathetically framed for the most part, is also shown striking “false notes” on a number of occasions. At the beginning of Chapter Four, the narrator gives us a rationalization for Iin’s descent into corruption, presenting it as though in Iin’s own words:

What can you do, all of that happened long ago, a time of youthful revolutionary romanticism which can’t be brought back again except in useless nostalgic dreams full of sorrowful longing . . . ⁴⁵ (74)

The passage suggests that revolutionary enthusiasm is simply a product of youthful illusions which eventually fade, giving way to a more mature, realistic understanding of the world. However, shortly thereafter, the narrator, whose voice is clearly differentiated from Iin’s voice by tone and by repeated references to Iin as a third person, states that the more mature Iin has in fact *forgotten* her idealism. Then we are told:

. . . ah yes maybe it’s completely normal for someone who has suffered deprivations since they were young to go hog-wild easily enjoying freedom and

⁴⁴ In *Transparent Minds*, Dorrit Cohn characterizes *free indirect discourse* (Cohn refers to it as “narrated monologue”) as more complex than both third person “objective” narration and interior monologue (quoted monologue). According to Cohn, *free indirect discourse* is like the former in that “it maintains the third person reference and the tense [past] of narration, but like the quoted monologue it reproduces verbatim the character’s own mental language.” Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 13-14, 102-112, 116-126.

⁴⁵ “Apa boleh buat, semua tadi sudah masa yang lampau, masa romantika remaja Revolusi yang tak akan kembali kecuali dalam impian nostalgia rindu-sendu yang tidak ada gunanya...”

luxury even though that freedom was purchased at great price by comrades of her father . . . ⁴⁶ (75)

Thus, in the chatty, conversational tone so peculiar to *Durga Umayi*, the narrator takes the stance of an understanding observer who nonetheless sits in judgement of Iin's actions, retaining the sympathetic tone of Iin's evaluation of her own situation, but undercutting Iin's own logic by suggesting she has lost control of herself as a result of her previous suffering. It is this kind of interaction between the narrator and character which is a crucial part of the aesthetic "solution" to the problem of dissident middle class intellectuals speaking on behalf of others: Mangunwijaya's use of *free indirect discourse* allows his narrator to draw close to the idiom of the oppressed, while still retaining a parental, "objective" right to distance and judge.

The narrator's tone can even be biting and sarcastic in particular contexts. On one occasion, the narrator introduces the "voice" of TVRI, Indonesia's state television station, explaining its decision to air US serial soap operas such as *Dynasty* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*. (85) TVRI's rationale offers these programs as models for Indonesians needing to learn how to lobby for the nation's interests internationally using "extra-curricular methods." Prior to this, the narrator has been gently but wickedly poking fun at Iin's rationalizations for her sexual promiscuity, which often serves her commercial interests; the "extra-curricular" programs and methods of TVRI recall Iin's activities. Most of Mangunwijaya's readers, in all likelihood middle and upper-middle class, would understand the glaring irony of the government's own television station touting such serials as study materials for aspiring diplomats and international jet-setters. In such a context, this passage portrays the cultural and political crudity of the Indonesian government and its television station.

It is not only the narrator's judgemental tone and the context that help to establish a hierarchy among the multiple voices circulating in the text. The kind of language which characters themselves are allowed to speak also helps determine the readers' feelings towards them. Characters like Iin, the peasants, and ordinary people generally express personalized memories, giving voice to doubts, desires, sympathies, and reflections. Other characters are given less latitude to make themselves known as complete, thinking-feeling human subjects. Members of the *Pemuda* or the PKI, for example, are portrayed as swaggering, self-important bullies and hardened dogmatists. Representatives of the feminist group, *Gerakan Martabat Perempuan* (The Movement for Women's Prestige) are hardly ever even allowed to speak, though they are mentioned at several important junctures. Significantly, the narrator who appropriates the right to speak on their behalf describes their actions in a more belittling, judgemental, parental tone than was used in relation to Iin.

Another distinctive feature of Mangunwijaya's style mobilized to help contain the diverse voices, references, and the meandering, digressive narrative is his deployment of recurring, often bipolar sets of images or *leit motifs*. One finds the twin characters, Iin and Brojol (representing Indonesians who become rich capitalists and those who are left behind), the Microphone of Pegangsaan Timur 56 (a symbol of the revolution's

⁴⁶ " . . . ah ya mungkin sangat normallah bila orang yang sejak kecil serba kekurangan mudah tergila-gila menikmati kemerdekaan dan kemewahan padahal kemerdekaan yang sudah dibayar mahal oleh kaum sebaya ayahnya . . . "

idealistic concern for the fate of the ordinary people), and the central image of *Durga Umayi*—the beautiful goddess, Umayi, who is cursed to turn into the destructive goddess of death, Durga. These repeated images act almost as runway lights, directing the reader to follow the conceptual path mapped out by the author.

The third problematic relationship in the book involves attempts to find a position somewhere between the simple advocacy of national tradition and the advocacy of a foreign-dominated modernity. The narrator is also constantly mediating between references to Indonesian and, more specifically, Javanese culture and history, and references to Dutch, English, French, Japanese, and Latin individuals and phrases that evoke the wider world. Within the text one can find not only mention of Ken Arok and Ken Dedes, Petruk, Diponegoro, Sjahrir, Bakorstanas, G30S, Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, and Ronggowarsito, but also of Freud, Marx, Margaret Thatcher, Isolde, Shakespeare, Hollywood, Mitsubishi and the Asian Development Bank, as well as Dee Dee McCall from the popular US television series, *Hunter*. What's more, the novel sets up a tension between indigenous and foreign genres, for the entire discourse is contained in a form, the modern novel, whose development was dominated by the "West" but which is inflected here by the specifically "Eastern" tradition of the *wayang*. This tradition is invoked to resist the more unsavory characteristics of Western capitalism, consumerism, and "development" as they have been appropriated, but also critiqued, by educated Indonesians and New Order representatives.

The delicate attempt to position the novel between tradition and modernity, between "Western" and "Indonesian" cultures, the New Order and an alternative, generates a complex set of conflicting ideological positions within the text.⁴⁷ For if the desire to propose a more inclusive, democratic alternative to the New Order prompts Mangunwijaya to foreground broadly modern, egalitarian, socialist ideas, the author's justifiable concerns about western capitalism, coupled with his anxiety about retaining some measure of control and guidance over the "oppressed" whose empowerment is being enacted, result in the mobilization of conservative traditional discourses.

The process of combining Indonesian and Western genres can clearly be seen in Mangunwijaya's attempt to appropriate the role of the shadow theater's *dalang* for novelistic uses. Mangunwijaya has admitted that one of his chief technical aims in writing *Durga Umayi* was to experiment with the notion of a *wayang kulit dalang* transposed to the modern novel.⁴⁸ The experiment is based upon the use of *free indirect discourse*, as outlined above. This allows the narrator, like a *dalang*, to subsume all of the other voices under his/her own voice. Furthermore, the differences in what kind of language the varied characters are allowed to speak creates a kind of *halus/kasar* split similar to that in the shadow theater.

All of this is, however, inserted into a modern novel, a form for which the mode par excellence is narration, and Mangunwijaya's use of free indirect discourse further dictates that virtually all dialogue, the staple of drama, is narrated through the perspective of the narrator or one of the characters, rather than directly quoted. Further, in contrast with the *dalang*, whose narrative interludes so often consist of

⁴⁷ See "Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather," p. 20, for Mangunwijaya's explanation of his mixing of traditional myths and the modern novel.

⁴⁸ Y. B. Mangunwijaya, personal interview, 12 July 1994.

formal, sometimes archaic language, Mangunwijaya's narrator uses chatty, everyday language which creates an identification between the narrating persona and the characters, and makes room for long digressions and word play. It would seem, then, that on the levels of genre and structure, tradition is being adjusted to modernity rather than the other way around.

Yet tradition exerts its power. The author superimposes a rather conservative reading of the Durga-Umayi⁴⁹ myth on the narrative which renders Iin's militant opposition (and by implication, the opposition of contemporary feminists) to male domination as alien, outside of woman's *kodrat* (essence). Iin's anger and resistance are seen as hysterical and divisive and therefore, disruptive to "natural" order. As such, they pose a threat to Javanese ideas of organic unity (imagined as a patriarchal family) and disinterested power, but also, to modern male nationalist visions of a unified state governed rationally by men. Ultimately, this conservative reading of the story is part of the novel's aesthetic "solution" to the dilemma confronted notably by middle-class males who wish to recognize the plight of Indonesia's oppressed while, at the same time, retaining a certain control over the masses—and women. For notions of the patriarchal family and women's *kodrat* fuse with the novel's efforts to combine, in the character of Iin, the symbol of a nation gone astray and the figure of woman as a

⁴⁹ Interestingly enough, earlier images of Durga in East and Central Java frequently relate an episode in which Durga saves the Gods from the Asura demons and their king, Mahisa. In these temple relief images Durga is not an ugly demon, but a powerful and reflective avenging warrior called forth by both Shiva (Batara Guru) and Wishnu. For details, see Jan Fontein, *The Sculpture of Indonesia* (Washington/New York: National Gallery of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), notes on plates 22 and 23. Astri Wright has suggested that early Hindu influenced traditions, such as found in the temple reliefs depicting Durga in East and Central Java, do not conceive of the Durga-Umayi figure as "split." Durga is at one and the same time "Mistress of the World" and "Destroyer." By splitting Durga-Umayi into two aspects, her power (Durga)—a fact hinted at in the novel by Iin's rise to economic prominence and by her rage at men—can be severed from her more domesticated features (Umayi), a change of great importance for Mangunwijaya's project.

This places Mangunwijaya's construction of the legend closer to more condemnatory versions. According to Holt (*Art in Indonesia* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967], p. 54), the legends surrounding the creation of the Prambanan temples in Central Java fuse the story of Lara Jonggrang, the reluctant bride who used deceit to foil a persistent suitor, with a statue of Durga. This story suggests a less praiseworthy Durga, and indeed, the Durga who appears in the repertoire of the *wayang kulit* is close to the destructive Durga represented in *Durga Umayi*. (See Benedict Anderson's *Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese* [Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1965], p. 31).

By far the most intriguing version of the story which I have come across is that found in a S. Ardisoma *wayang purwa* comic book from 1956 which, in relating the episode "Sanhyang Manikmaya" states that Dewi Uma(yi) was in fact a *banci* or *wandu* (hermaphrodite) who was turned into a beautiful "real" woman through the power of Batara Guru. Guru then became her husband and later cursed her to transform once again, into Durga. (pp. 53-60). This version of the story seems to accord with that presented in the *Ensiklopedi Wayang Purwa I (Compendium)* (Jakarta: Direktorat Pembinaan Kesenian, Dit. Jen. Kebudayaan Departemen P & K, 1978), pp. 464-467. Given the fact that village culture rituals often featured bisexuals and effeminate young men considered to be symbols of sexual potency and fertility, the political significance of such a version of the story for the courtly tradition is striking. It is conceivable that Mangunwijaya could have built his novel around this version in order to emphasize power relations between villagers and a central authority, and one gesture toward such a reading exists in the novel (p. 20). But this version also involves sexuality considered to be outside current norms, which would not have fit with the novel's resort to heterosexual familial models in marking good and bad women. My thanks to Astri Wright, Laurie Sears, Saraswati Sunindyo, and G. G. Weix for comments which encouraged me to pursue the history of Durga-Umayi representations.

representative of the oppressed. Together, these elements set limits to the reformulation of a national narrative.

Woman and Nation in *Durga Umayi*

Several commentators have already begun to explore the significance of representations of women in Indonesian fiction during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵⁰ According to Barbara Hatley, some writers, such as Umar Kayam, Linus Suryadi, and Ahmad Tohari, have chiefly presented women as figures willing to surrender to fate and acquiesce in the authority of husband or master. These representations portray women as the appropriate bearers, if not the living embodiments, of traditional cultural values.⁵¹

In contrast to such fiction, the novels of Mangunwijaya and Pramoedya Ananta Toer are seen as offering more positive images of women.⁵² Characters, such as Pramoedya's Nyai Ontosoroh (*Bumi Manusia, Anak Semua Bangsa*) and Mangunwijaya's Roro Mendut (*Roro Mendut*) are independent, spirited, resourceful, and willing to fight back against those who oppress them. Hatley has suggested that such women are interesting subjects for socially critical writers for at least two reasons: the figure of a female concubine allows for a sustained analysis of the processes of authoritarian control in Indonesian society; secondly, since women are marginal figures within existing structures of power, they may attract less attention and repression from New Order censors as symbols of resistance. Yet when female characters in these novels are employed as symbols of heroic resistance to oppression, they often tend to lose naturalistic qualities that would render them convincing as fully realized characters. And they tend to be used by the authors to raise quite different issues from those raised in the works of women novelists. Thus, Hatley has argued that virtually all of the works in this cluster of "serious" literature published by Javanese men in the 1970s and 1980s, whether those of the socially critical writers such as Mangunwijaya and Pramoedya, or those of the more "tradition"-oriented writers, have one key trait in common. They all put forward representations of women which contribute to a "distinctly male discourse which influences women's experience but exists apart from it."⁵³

Mangunwijaya's *Durga Umayi* fits this pattern, as it uses the figure of a woman to expose oppression within contemporary Indonesia, thereby confronting common

⁵⁰ See for example, Barbara Hatley "Hegemony, Resistance and Constructions of the Female in Contemporary Indonesian Literature," unpublished paper; Tineke Hellwig, *In the Shadow of Change: Images of Women in Indonesian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), esp. pp. 69–196; and Toeti Heraty, "Women's Issues in a Patriarchal Society: Novels by Indonesian Women," in Thelma Kintanar (ed.), *Emergent Voices: Southeast Asian Women Novelists* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1994), pp. 121–165.

⁵¹ Hatley, "Hegemony, Resistance"; Tineke Hellwig suggests that a number of these works (particularly the novellas of Umar Kayam) actually offer images of womanly solidarity and self-determination. See *In the Shadow of Change*, pp. 99–108.

⁵² See Hatley, "Hegemony, Resistance"; Hellwig, *In the Shadow of Change*, pp. 69–98; and Wong Soak Koon, "Women's Tales and Minke's Awakening in Pramoedya A. Toer's *Bumi Manusia*," *Tenggara* 34 (1995): 7–22;

⁵³ Hatley, "Hegemony, Resistance."

Indonesian notions of gender and familial roles which underpin so much of the nation's ideology, everyday life, and art. Manguw Wijaya, himself, argues that women are particularly oppressed members of society. They are socially constrained to serve and support their husbands while being denied independent recognition of their own skills. This situation presents women with a potential opportunity: they must always work at home while the boys are allowed to do whatever they desire, and as a consequence, women are often more productive, practical, and better equipped to face life's difficulties. Yet like the ordinary people, he suggests, their labor is always appropriated by an elite male-controlled system.⁵⁴

As implied by Manguw Wijaya's pairing of women and ordinary people, however, *Durga Umayi* is not only concerned with advocating equality for women. Issues of power amongst men of different social classes and positions are, in many ways, just as central to the project of Manguw Wijaya's text. Yet in appropriating the figure of a woman to enact symbolically the trajectory of the nation's history, Manguw Wijaya is forced to pay special attention to gender oppression, the existence of which in contemporary Indonesia the New Order state has been at pains to deny. The attempt to reincorporate this abused, angry woman, and the badly straying nation she symbolizes, into a revised national project results in acute structural and thematic tensions. In the end, both Manguw Wijaya's efforts to create a text sympathetic to women's (and the ordinary people's, the *rakyat kecil*'s) issues as well as his attempt to reconfigure the meaning of "nation" remain highly problematic precisely as a result of this tension and the "solutions" to it which the novel offers.

This attention to women's issues, and their linkage to the national question, is announced on the very first page of the first chapter where the narrator engages in a good-humored discussion of the proper term of address to be used for the main character. In this passage, a *Pujangga Baru*-era figure, characterized playfully as a *tumenggung* (vizier) of language, inveighs against "coarse," "low" forms of Indonesian in discussing the proper terms of address for a woman. Not only does the passage announce the importance of women as a topic, but it also introduces questions concerning tensions between those who wish to construct a proper national language and the seething variety of traditions incorporated into the nation-state, some of which the elite attempt to exclude. The humor with which the vizier of language's pronouncement is handled indicates the narrator's (and most likely here, also Manguw Wijaya's) stance in regard to nationalism. He/she is sympathetic not to the officious, puffed-up elite nationalist and his conservative linguistics, but rather to the many possibilities of Indonesian, especially those present in the popular, coarse, but lively Market Melayu.

In fact, the variety of issues raised in this opening paragraph illuminates a characteristic feature of the novel. Throughout the novel the problems of women, which are broached repeatedly in the text, clearly parallel the problems of the little people and call attention to conflicts existing between "ordinary" Indonesians and those with power. Together, these two issues form the core of Manguw Wijaya's critique of current nationalist narratives of history and state of the nation.

⁵⁴ Y. B. Manguw Wijaya, "Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather," pp. 22-23; See also Barbara Hatley "Attempting a Feminist Reading of Contemporary Indonesian Literature," a paper delivered to the Fourth "Women In Asia" Conference, 1-3 October 1993.

For example, the novel begins by registering Iin's early awareness of the inequitable family roles assigned to her and her twin brother. Inevitably, Brojol is allowed to go out and play, getting into all sorts of trouble, while she is kept at work inside the house. To add insult to injury, she is obligated to clean and mend her brother's clothing after he returns from his carefree adventures. While serving in a general mess-hall during the revolution, Iin is subjected to other injustices perpetrated by men, this time purported national heroes.

Really it made Bang Brojol and Tiwi and their friends from the village half crazy trying to gather the supplies on such an enormous scale from small farmers who were still suffering themselves . . .

And so, by an unfortunate chance one afternoon the tempe had run out because there was a unit that got angry, felt insulted that their allotment of tempe was only one piece and they stormed into the kitchen and took all the tempe there was so that when the next unit came a little while later all they could be given were rice and a few vegetables; and what happened? They flew into a rage because they felt they were being treated unfairly, whaddya mean rice without tempe for the heroes; and they accused all the cooks in the general mess hall and especially the managers and above all the village head of being enemy spies who had no idea of the value of the struggle of these heroes and potential heroes who could fall in combat the next day like precious gems shattered or like frangipani whose falling led to the growth of a hundred more, so that Tiwi was shaking because one threatened to rape her later if there wasn't tempe or tofu or even better chicken or fried spicy beef with grated coconut because they hadn't come here to while away the time but to defend the homeland and to seize back Semarang which had been occupied by both the Dutch and the Japanese; and so Tiwi was forced to go around in the dead of night asking for help whether tempe or tofu or teri fish or roasted taro leaves or used peanut oil or soy beans or soy bean mash or blood pudding or shrimp crackers or eggs or anything to avoid being raped even though by potential heroes.

And so ever since that moment the two Arabic-Israeli eyes of Mbak Tiwi were opened to the fact that as a woman she had to be able to defend herself, something more than the ability to wash clothes or cook in the general kitchen, whether she was facing the NICA in a life or death situation or her own people, in particular the men; and she decided to join a women's combat unit . . . ⁵⁵ (53-55)

⁵⁵ "Sungguh bikin pusing Bang Brojol dan Tiwi dan kawan-kawan mereka di desa untuk mengumpulkan logistik yang begitu raksasa dari para petani yang sudah cebol masih menderita sendiri . . ."

. . . Nah pada suatu petang kebetulan sial lauk-pauk sedang habis karena ada laskar marah merasa dihina karena tempe jatah masing-masing hanya satu, lalu mereka menyerbu ke dalam dapur dan mengambil semua tempe yang ada, sehingga ada laskar lain yang datang kemudian hanya dapat dihidangi nasi dengan sayur saja; tetapi apa akibatnya? Mereka marah sekali karena merasa diperlakukan tidak layak, mosok nasi tanpa lauk untuk pahlawan; lalu mereka menuduh seluruh pemasak di dapur umum terutama pengurusnya terutama lagi Pak Lurah sebagai mata-mata musuh yang tidak tahu nilai perjuangan para pahlawan dan calon pahlawan yang boleh jadi besok pagi sudah gugur sebagai ratna mutu manikam pecah atau bunga melati kemboja yang gugur satu tumbuh seribu, sehingga Tiwi gemetar karena ada yang mengancam nanti akan diperkosa kalau tidak ada tempe atau tahu atau lebih baik daging ayam sapi empal pakai serundeng karena mereka kemari tidak untuk bertamasya tetapi membela Tanah Air dan merebut kembali kota Semarang yang diduduki Belanda dan Jepang itu; maka terpaksa Tiwi dalam malam buta berkeliling ke desa-desa sekitarnya untuk meminta bantuan apalah tempe atau

This passage ties together issues of class and gender, but pays special attention to the threats directed at Iin as a woman. Not all the “national heroes” Iin encounters threaten her in packs and treat her so brutally, however. Others present themselves as friendly teachers. For instance, at one point she accosts Bung Karno and Bung Hatta during the days of the Old Order

to ask them why the price of rice and sugar and whatever keeps going up, why do the Indonesian people enjoy bickering amongst themselves over inconsequential things, and given that tendency, wouldn't it be better to make a new proclamation creating a Javanese nation and a Sumatran nation, a Flores nation, a Kapuas nation and so on, so that everyone is satisfied and peace is restored; but Bung Karno became infuriated with her but honestly, a republic is not a wash tub full of clothes that can be hung out to dry one by one, and Jeng Tiwi shouldn't be involving herself with complicated political matters, especially when confronting the CIA which is always trying to divide the New Emerging Forces, and it would be better for her to ask herself seriously why she's not married yet when she's made for it in every way both physically and spiritually that Iin Linda; and that the Indonesian nation will only become important if its total population increases like the People's Republic of China, so that the greatest service a woman can offer is to give birth to patriots of this Greater Indonesian nation, just as was done by the hero of the Baratayuda the noble Arjuna who married women and had children wherever he went; But Iin, as a Mahaputra of the Third Class and a bearer of the Guerrilla's Star, explained to his excellency that she held a different opinion, that it was precisely the theory of the kitchen-well-bedroom woman which denigrated women's worth, even though wasn't it precisely women's worth which Bung Karno was defending when he wrote *Sarinah*, although Iin didn't agree with sections of that book?"⁵⁶ (80–81)

tahu atau teri atau buntil atau kethak atau bongko atau pelas atau saren atau kerupuk atau telur pokoknya jangan sampai diperkosa kendati oleh calon pahlawan sekalipun.

Maka sejak itulah kedua mata Arab-Israel Mbak Tiwi terbuka bahwa sebagai perempuan ia harus punya kekuatan bela diri, tidak hanya kepandaian mencuci pakaian atau memasak di dapur umum, baik menghadapi NICA hidup-atau-mati maupun terhadap bangsanya sendiri khususnya yang lelaki; kemudian ia memutuskan untuk masuk ke dalam salah satu laskar wanita..."

⁵⁶ "... ia telah mendatangi Bung Karno dan Bung Hatta pada waktu Ordo Lama itu untuk menanyakan mengapa harga beras dan gula dan apa saja kok naik terus, mengapa bangsa Indonesia itu suka cekcok satu sama lain tentang soal-soal tetek-bengek, dan oleh karena itu apakah tidak lebih baik ada semacam proklamasi baru, ada Negara Jawa dan Negara Sumatera, Negara Flores, Negara Kapuas dan sebagainya, agar mereka puas semua dan kedamaian terpulihkan; tetapi Bung Karno memarahi dia dengan geram tetapi terus terang, suatu republik itu bukan panci dengan pakaian jemuran yang bisa digantungkan pada kawat sendiri-sendiri, dan bahwa Jeng Tiwi jangan berurusan dengan politik yang sulit, khususnya menghadapi CIA yang selalu saja memecah belah *the new emerging force*, dan lebih baik berpikir serius mengapa belum menikah padahal segala-segalanya sudah tersedia dalam tubuh maupun jiwa si Iin Linda; dan bahwa bangsa Indonesia hanya menjadi besar bila penduduknya bertambah jumlahnya seperti RRC, sehingga jasa paling besar seorang perempuan ialah melahirkan patriot bangsa yang Indonesia Raya ini, seperti yang dikerjakan oleh pahlawan Baratayuda sang Arjuna yang di mana-mana mengawini wanita dan punya banyak anak; tetapi Iin sebagai Mahaputra Kelas III dan penyandang Bintang Gerilya menerangkan kepada beliau, bahwa pendapatnya lain, dan teori dapur-sumur-kasur itu justru merendahkan derajat wanita, padahal bukankah justru martabat itulah yang ingin diperjuangkan juga oleh Bung Karno ketika menulis buku *Sarinah*, walaupun Iin tidak setuju dengan banyak bagian buku itu?"

This shows Sukarno mobilizing common notions of women's "proper place" in society, supported by references to traditional mythology, in order to silence alternative discourses about the organization of political power. The attempt to remake the woman before him into a silent nurturing object is countered by Iin with references to Sukarno's own writings about women's worth. It should be noted how often in the novel Iin is advised to subordinate herself to men, in particular *nationalist men*.⁵⁷

Many of the passages in *Durga Umayi*, effectively representing the actual discourse of nation, revolution, and family through free indirect style, illustrate in striking fashion just how such structures of subordination are connected. That this was a consistent theme in Indonesian nationalism is confirmed by a statement made by Sukarno in an article published in anticipation of the 1928 National Women's Congress:

It is to be hoped that . . . they [women] work as hard as possible to achieve equal rights, not just for the sake of equal rights alone, but with a particular aim and with the strong determination to eliminate anything that hampers their march and obstructs their step in the struggle to pursue the nation's salvation. It is to be hoped that they also . . . carry out, with the highest integrity and the noblest effort, *their feminine duties* [my italics] of educating their children with conviction and positive readiness, educating, in fact, the sons of the nation. Especially with regard to the "feminine" duty of educating the children, it is to be hoped that they realize with the fullest consciousness that disaster or salvation of the nation is in actual fact in their hands. Therefore it is to be hoped that they all have the virtues of the great mother . . .

'De man heeft grote kunstwerken geschapen; de vrouw heeft de mens geschapen; en Grote moeders maken een Groot ras.'⁵⁸

Mangunwijaya attempts to challenge the traditional sort of nationalism, rooted in the oppression of females, by using the voice of Iin to give a stinging critique of such patriarchal attitudes and the structures of social organization which those attitudes help erect and support. Throughout the novel, as indicated by her reply to Sukarno, Iin struggles to avoid becoming simply a "kitchen-well-and bedroom woman," and she joins a revolutionary army detachment in order to learn how to defend herself. Later, she struggles to achieve success and financial independence via multiple avenues. At key moments, Iin gives vent to her anger towards Indonesian men's treatment of women within the boundaries of the nation:

. . . no, the power which she enjoyed . . . wasn't for just for her own sake but for her gender, to take revenge for so many million deeds like what those Dutch Intelligence Service executioners did to the daughters of Dewi Umayi who were ready to serve and possessed wombs ready to be inhabited by little human beings

⁵⁷ Etienne Balibar argues in "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," that nationalism and sexism have a secret affinity: ". . . insofar as the inequality of sexual roles in conjugal love and child-rearing constitutes the anchoring point for the juridical, economic, educational and medical mediation of the 'state' in the lives of everyday citizens, enabling the state to use the family, as well as schools, as a site for the production of ethnicity--and thus, frequently, 'national identity.' See Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 101-3.

⁵⁸ Sukarno, *Under the Banner of Revolution*, Vol. 1 (Jakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), p. 97.

who didn't yet have homes of their own, who gave milk to little creatures who were not yet able to provide for themselves; yes, in the name of half of the nation who were meant to be liberated too by the Proclamation back then in the pavilion which Iin had helped sweep and scrub countless times when they were shorthanded, who willingly accepted their fate as self-sacrificing women but who were nevertheless always mocked made the butt of jokes insulted and spied upon watched torn and shredded in return for their services, ah just let Nussy be the sacrificial payment be the scapegoat just let her be the sacrificial victim who was stamped mocked as a wild one without morals, because for them it's always women who are immoral.⁵⁹ (104)

Here, when Iin as oppressed woman, rather than symbol of nation, speaks, the history of colonial Dutch treatment of women guerrilla fighters expands into a general burst of anger which is surely directed at Indonesian men in the post-Independence era. The narrative of woman as representative of an oppressed gender thereby temporarily confounds the narrative of nation by having the very woman who is symbol of the nation condemning her own men, and comparing them implicitly to Dutch torturers. The passage thus points to one of the structural contradictions operating in the text—Iin as symbol of nation and representative of real, oppressed women within the nation.⁶⁰ I will elaborate this point momentarily.

A second corrective to dominant narratives of contemporary and historical Indonesia is Mangunwijaya's insertion of the voices of the ordinary people into the text. They appear most prominently in the stories the "Microphone" tells to Iin regarding the commonplace but ignored heroism and endurance of the ordinary people in the revolution, despite years of oppression both by the Dutch and their own native leaders, as well as abuse from impatient and self-important revolutionary youth (69–70). The voices of the ordinary people are featured as well late in the book when Iin returns home to see her brother, only to discover that one of her own gigantic tourism projects has forced him, his family, and their fellow villagers off of their land (Chapters 6–7). Their fate, like Iin's as a representative woman, often involves abuse, coercion, and manipulation. Like Iin, though they are symbolically weighted as the very heart of the nation, they too offer sharp criticism of it. In this novel, ordinary Indonesians, those who carry out all the difficult, practical, "nurturing" and "life-giving" tasks—teaching, healing, feeding, making the trains run, raising food—are the true heroes of the revolution, but unhappily, they receive, as recompense, evil treatment and abuse from those in power.

⁵⁹ ". . . bukan, kekuasaan yang dia nikmati itu...tidak demi diri sendiri tetapi untuk kaumnya, untuk membalas dendam sekian juta perbuatan semacam yang dikerjakan algojo-algojo NEFIS itu pada putri-putri Dewi Umayi yang darmawan punya rahim untuk dihuni manusia-manusia mungil yang belum punya rumah, yang punya susu-susu untuk makhluk-makhluk kecil yang belum mampu mencari nafkahnya sendiri; ya atas nama separuh bangsa juga yang mau ditolong oleh Proklamasi nun kala itu di pendapa yang berkali-kali Iin Sulinda ikut sapu dan pel bila tenaga kurang, yang ikhlas ditakdirkan menjadi perempuan darmawati namun selalu diperolok-olok dibuat dagelan dihina dan diintip ditonton disobek-robek sebagai balasan budi, ah biarin Nussy jadi tumbal biarin jadi kambing hitam biarin jadi korban pepulih yang dicap dicemoohkan sebagai orang jalang tuna susila, karena bagi mereka yang tuna susila toh selalu wanita."

⁶⁰ Thanks to Helen H. Leung for helping me develop this point.

In his novel, Mangunwijaya introduces a fantastic invention to broadcast voices speaking in support of egalitarian ideals and speaking for “the little people” who characteristically remain unheard. The “Microphone of Pegangsaan Timur 56” is the microphone used by Sukarno and Hatta to proclaim Indonesian Independence on the 17th of August, 1945; in the act of personifying this instrument, the narrator alludes to Sukarno’s self-assumed role as the *penyambung lidah rakyat* (extension of the people’s tongue). According to the narrative, at the moment of the proclamation, Iin, who was present, witnessed a miraculous event observed by no one else. The microphone raised itself up from the rostrum and walked over to her, asking her, as a representative of the Indonesian masses, to say whatever she felt to the world. Throughout the rest of the text, Iin’s relationship with the microphone serves as a barometer of the health of the Indonesian nation’s progress. It comes to her when concern for the people is still strong, and disappears when both Iin and the nation have exchanged their egalitarian idealism for greed and a pragmatic materialism.

The microphone is a key device for creating a linkage between Iin, as individual character, and Iin as symbol of the nation’s fate. There are times when the microphone figures as Iin’s phallic partner, her “male lover.” (67–68) This essentially masculine instrument facilitates the transformation of Iin’s female voice into the voice of the nation.⁶¹ As Iin becomes entangled in the corruption of the 1950s, the microphone shows a growing reluctance to visit its friend. (71) What’s more, the microphone also reacts to national situations and comes to Iin with decreasing frequency after a series of events which begin with the signing of the actual agreement that sealed Indonesian Independence at the Round Table Conference of 1949 (138; see also 71–72, 79); it appears that this event signals, in the text, a point after which Indonesian nationalist idealism begins to decline. The situation grows even worse once Indonesia annexes Irian Jaya in 1962–3, for from that point on, the microphone completely abandons Iin. (138)

The transformation of Iin from an idealistic semi-innocent to a corrupt, materialistic, powerful entrepreneur, a transformation that parallels the nation’s loss of ideals, is represented most consistently and regularly in the text through the manipulation of the Umayi-Durga dyad. This crucial, paired image evokes mythological associations familiar to Mangunwijaya’s Javanese readers, allowing the novel to position its modernity in line with tradition. According to Mangunwijaya’s version of the story, Umayi is cursed by her husband, Batara Guru, for sensibly resisting his public sexual advances. The curse transforms her into the hideous, destructive Durga. The author weaves this story into the challenging prologue of the novel where words, much like Iin’s many names and the very voices, temporal settings, and cultural references that make up the main text, are protean. References to the myth occur frequently at key moments in the narrative, and the initial pages of each chapter are adorned with *wayang* figures, several of which represent Durga and Umayi.

Iin as woman and Iin as nation display both Durga’s and Umayi’s contradictory characteristics. There are a number of points in the text where Tiwi sees herself, and the revolution, as both life affirming and life-destroying, both Durga and Umayi at

⁶¹ Again, thanks to Helen H. Leung for the elaboration of this particular point.

once. (64–65, 111, 118–119, 183–4) The pairing of “good” and “bad” elements in both Iin and the Indonesian revolution is a consequence of Mangunwijaya’s feeling that Indonesian nationalism has been both a blessing and a curse for Indonesians. He sees it, and life, as a dialectic of contradictions.⁶² Dynamic interactions between these contradictions guide the novel towards its conclusion. Whereas idealism and love are seen as more “original,” coloring the early stages of Iin’s and the nation’s life, corruption and destruction dominate following the end of the revolution and come to characterize independent Indonesia.

Iin’s decision to become a soldier, to defend herself, leads to her engagement in battle with a squadron of Gurkha mercenaries. Her sole noted action in combat is the beheading of an already fatally wounded Gurkha. She commits the act as much out of pity as out of blood lust, but later triumphantly places the head on the desk of the Indonesian divisional commander. However, in the following days, Iin has a crisis of conscience. She wonders if she has gone against her essence as a woman (the essence of nurturing and giving life) in killing the Gurkha. Eventually, she imagines herself as the Goddess Umayi transformed into the ugly goddess of destruction, Durga. Her thoughts still in turmoil, Iin wanders out of her detachment’s camp and is caught by the Dutch forces, who gang-rape her in the course of interrogation, then imprison her for the duration of the revolution. Iin emerges from captivity at Revolution’s end, a poor, disoriented woman with few prospects who eventually, because of her beauty and ability to speak a smattering of Dutch, English and French, becomes a high-class call girl in the early Independence era.

The transformation from the life-giving Umayi to the death-dealing Durga is certainly the central *leit motif* of the text. The motif colors Iin’s frantic attempts to clarify the significance of her killing of the Gurkha soldier. It appears again in Iin’s relations with Sukarno (who at one moment appears to Iin to resemble Batara Guru, Umayi’s husband, the would-be rapist who curses her to become Durga) and Hatta (Iin regrets that Hatta, who is so proper and morally upright, wastes his time advising her when she carries within her the seeds of Durga), and is used as well to characterize the communist party and its affiliated groups who wanted to defend the little people but ended up, the narrative asserts, becoming destroyers. Iin’s relationship with an innocent artist, Rohadi, is also shaped by the Durga-Umayi *leit motif*. Rohadi is “destroyed by Iin” simply because the army intelligence reports showed that he was friendly with an important woman cadre, member of both *Lekra* and *Gerwani*. The colossal tourism project that causes the eviction of Iin’s own brother from his land advances Iin’s transformation into Durga, the destroyer.⁶³

As Iin experiences the crisis described above, she imagines the revolution as a series of conflicting images of life-affirming and life-destroying acts. Again, her personal experience recapitulates broader national patterns. The PKI and LEKRA are also described as Durga-Umayi in the way that they defend the poor but rend the

⁶² Y. B. Mangunwijaya, personal interview, 12 July 1994.

⁶³ This is confirmed by the fact that chapters four and seven (the chapter in which Iin visits her brother after he has been evicted) are headed graphically by the representation of a *wayang kulit* image of Durga. Similarly, chapters one and three, the chapters concentrating on Iin’s pre-Gurkha/rape life, and chapter eight, which describes her confrontation with herself over the project which will force her brother off his land, are headed by the image of Umayi.

nation. Iin's theme park project which will, in true Durga fashion, displace her brother, also stands as a parody of national development. The symbolic association between Iin and the narrative of nation conflicts with her other function in the novel, where she is so often called on to represent female and poor victims collectively.

There are other, related problems in the twinning of Iin's function as woman/little people and as symbol of nation. In her debate with Sukarno and in her denouncements of men, Iin as symbol of nation must step aside in order to let Iin as victimized woman castigate the nation and its men. (80-81, 104) This creates an interesting cognitive disjuncture between symbolic and "actual" levels of the text. A similar example can be found in the initial moment of Iin's crisis which leads to her transformation into Durga. In this instance, the crisis is predicated upon her feeling that she has gone against her nature (*kodrat*) as a woman in killing the Gurkha. Yet we know that Iin initially learned to defend herself because of the danger of rape posed by the *Pemuda* troops, and she is in fact later gang-raped by NEFIS agents while being interrogated. Not only could she have been justified in taking up arms in self-defense against both Dutch and some Indonesian troops, but she might also defend herself as a participant in the struggle which helped to give birth to the nation—a womanly action. Yet in assigning Iin's combat action the status of an act of "destruction," Manguw Wijaya's narrative here conservatively foregrounds the violation of women's "nature" by focusing on Iin's individual act and moral dilemma, while denying this character any value on the symbolic level as a "mother" helping to give birth to the nation through struggle and suffering.

On the thematic level, this bifurcation of Iin as woman/little people and Iin as nation has consequences for the novel's delineation of an alternative nationalism, a "good" nationalism meant to replace the current, corrupt version. When Iin loses her credibility as a representative of "the little people," her twin brother, Brojol, is called on to take her place. While Iin follows the path to urban and international commercial success, Brojol chooses to marry a peasant girl and become a farmer. This reverses his earlier privileged position within their family. Subsequently, he is oppressed throughout the book, becoming victim to his own sister's development schemes in the final chapters. The particular logic of Manguw Wijaya's narrative of nation proceeds from this point to mark Iin as a bad girl.

She engages in continuous meaningless sexual affairs and all sorts of reprehensible business—including weapons and drug trafficking. Her transformation into a prostitute—someone who loves for money—represents a crass betrayal of "true emotion" and "love," a betrayal which the narrator associates with Iin's growing estrangement from the collective idealism represented by the microphone and her estrangement from her own family. One of Iin's greatest sins is to have "forgotten" her mother and her family. She rarely returns to visit her brother after Independence, and seldom remembers her long-dead mother. Iin's materialistic sexual adventures are contrasted with a sacrificial act of infidelity by her mother, who had sex with a Japanese officer in an effort to protect her husband and family from possible harm. By the conclusion of the novel, Iin has lost her connection to both of her admirable masculine partners—the microphone and her lover, Rohadi. Her steady metamorphosis from the naive, idealistic Iin into a destructive, unattached monster

busy with international commerce and meaningless sexual encounters alerts the reader to a key element in the author's "master" narrative.

By arranging Iin's metamorphosis from idealist to monster, Mangunwijaya erects an obvious good woman/bad woman opposition, which he then employs to construct his portrait of an "alternative" nation based on a model of a "good woman." In constructing this picture, he draws on the ideologies most available to contemporary dissidents: self-restraint, patriarchal family order, *priyayi* ideas of service without *pamrih*, and opposition to New Order development as an offshoot of international capitalism critiqued as an agent of economic exploitation and moral degradation.

In the course of the novel, Mangunwijaya's narrator endeavors to demonstrate that women are *generally* morally and practically superior to men in their position as life givers, nurturers, and managers of day to day life. (77-78, 104, 119, 144-145) In a key passage, Iin's sweetheart, Rohadi describes the purpose of art: art should help humans reach self-realization and raise the level of their values. He then claims that women, as mothers who must care for messy infants, are naturally better at finding the beauty in all things including the most foul. (114-115) In a sense, women, as presented by Rohadi, are potentially the most artistic, the most self-aware of humans. The entire text, in fact, symbolically praises women through the figure of Umayi as life-giver and as the ultimate mother of the nation. (104, 119, 182) In contrast to all those who have applauded the military for their successes in the revolution, Mangunwijaya suggests that women and ordinary peasants were the actual heroes of the revolution insofar as they provided the most potent bullets: the food and services which kept the soldiers fighting. (53, 68)

When all of these images are taken together, the outlines of a new "ideology" of nationalism begin to be discernable. Mangunwijaya's text posits a future time when the practical work of producing, nurturing, and protecting will not be soiled by corrupt "politics," rigid and oppressive ideologies, and money ("the mud of the world, no that's wrong: the generator which drives the world"-105). In so doing, the novel presents an ideal of nation as a family based upon motherly nurturance, egalitarianism, and the free intellectual and spiritual growth of all its members. Unfortunately, predictably, this essentialized image of woman as "life-giver/nurturer" calls up standard notions of gender roles and hierarchical control within the family.

As Iin wanders farther away from the familial "center" that stabilizes the novel's vision of an ideal nation, her physical appearance changes, and she takes on a face that the novel identifies with the "face" of international capitalism. Early in the text, individuals who show signs of mixed ancestry are described positively. Iin's eyes were described as Arabic-Israeli, and it is clear there are Arabic ancestors in Iin's family tree (19-20). Similarly, some of her childhood friends are described as half-Chinese. Entertained by the novel's prodigious use of all sorts of foreign languages and phrases, the reader concludes that the narrator revels in any diversity of racial backgrounds that enriches a given community. Yet farther on in the story, after Iin undergoes plastic surgery and begins to go by different names (Madame Nussy, Cik Bi, etc.), the narrator's attitude undergoes a subtle shift. He/she notes:

. . . and really, it was truly astonishing, ever since the 11th of March, 1966 Tiwi's face metamorphosed into something completely different, the previous Genuine

Central Javanese Tidar and Progo-Elo valley beauty now made one think of a Chinese loveliness or of that particular beauty spiced with an *Indo* (mestizo) flavor so that you might think that she was a Macao girl with a bit of Portuguese blood, or also, perhaps, French mixed with Japanese, but you wouldn't be wrong either if you guessed her to be a *cokri* (chick) or a *perokum lemot paten bintrok bohay* (a major babe) from Jakarta's Menteng area, a fusion of DNA chromosomes from Bombay, Morocco, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Shanghai, the Priangan, Samosir, and Kawanua . . .⁶⁴ (131)

The list of possible ingredients in the ultimate chromosome pool of *Jakarta* Menteng is fascinating here for the very reason that it is in fact a list, though certainly not exhaustive, of the many ethnic and racial roots that large numbers of contemporary Indonesians can historically claim. Yet, in order to hint that Iin's transformation is a false one, Mangunwijaya's narrator posits a notion of a "genuine" Javanese type of beauty which he further locates as originating from the Progo-Elo river area and the environs of Mount Tidar, long thought to be the "nail which holds Java in place." Not only does such a notion begin to privilege racial purity (here, specifically ethnic Javanese), but it also ignores the novel's own earlier admission that Iin's family has Arabic blood. Just a few pages later, this negative judgment of Iin's new, "mixed" face is reiterated:

. . . [she] was wildly rich drop dead gorgeous in an ideally *Indo* way but a total lie with three passports with three different passport photos with a false face resulting from plastic surgery, yes with an *Indo* face raised to the seventeenth power precisely because she had lost her identity and her genuineness as well as her true self-image, had become a null-personality product of surgery with high-tech and accounts in foreign, offshore banks which although overflowing with liquidity were nonetheless the product of lobbying and fishing in the muddy waters of post-independence confusion era political intrigues . . .

. . . yes, how could her beloved Microphone possibly recognize her with this Super-*Indo* multiracial cosmopolitan face. . .⁶⁵ (136-138)

Here, the "other" in Indonesia is represented by a manufactured "cosmopolitan" face that suggests an encroaching world of multi-nationals and global capitalism, the hegemony of America (18, 165-6) and institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (148-149). The association of ethnic diversity with a countenance

⁶⁴ "...dan sungguh memang sungguh mengherankan, wajah Tiwi sejak Hari 11 Maret 1966 itu sudah bermetamorfosa menjadi lain sama sekali, dulu si jelita asli Jawa Tengah Tidar Progo dan Elo, tetapi sekarang ada kesan amoinya atau bumbu-bumbu selera *Indo* yang begitu khusus, sehingga bisa ditafsir gadis Makao campur Portugis, bisa juga Perancis campur Jepang, tetapi tidak salah kalau dianggap *cokri* (cewek) atau *perokum lemot paten bintrok bohay* (perempuan cantik hebat mulus seksi) Jakarta Menteng, perpaduan dari DNA kromosom Bombay, Maroko, Lisabon, Amsterdam, Syanghai, Priangan, Samosir, dan Kawanua . . ."

⁶⁵ ". . . yang kaya raya cantik molek ideal indo tetapi serba bohong dengan tiga paspor dengan tiga macam pasfoto dengan dusta wajah hasil klinik operasi plastik, ya indo pangkat tujuh belas sebetulnya justru karena hilangnya identitas dan kebenaran jati diri maupun citra dirinya, menjadi nir-pribadi hasil pembedahan teknologi canggih dan konto bank-bank asing di luar tanah air yang biar berlimpah tetapi hasil lobi dan pemancingan dalam air keruh intrik politik kemelut pascakemerdekaan...ya mana bisa sang Mikrofon tersayang dapat mengenalnya kembali dengan wajah yang super-Indo multirasial kosmopolitan ini . . ."

somehow marked by its contact with “foreign, offshore banks” forces the text into an almost xenophobic discursive logic. Mangunwijaya’s narrative of nation, then, is propped-up at key points by essentially conservative racial and patriarchal assumptions that the narrator, at other points in the novel, has branded as destructive.

This fusion of modern nationalist and traditional Javanese notions of family is also apparent in one more troubling conjuncture in the text. Iin, for all her predatory cunning and business instincts, is depicted as morally and philosophically naive in key passages. This accords with traditional gendered divisions within the Javanese family, where women are assigned the practical work while men take on spiritual and political roles.⁶⁶ Declarations about spiritual and intellectual growth in the text are generally spoken by male characters. This allows Iin’s progress (the nation’s progress) to be judged and guided by several male figures: discursively by the rhetorician of Indonesian nationalism, Sukarno; morally by the great nationalist leader, Mohammad Hatta, and by the artist, Rohadi; and morally and symbolically by the Microphone of Pegangsaan Timur.

In the passage quoted above, where Iin and Sukarno debate the role of women in the national struggle, Iin’s resistance, her refusal to be silenced, depends upon the use of the contradictions within her own interlocutor’s thought. This suggests that women seeking to legitimate their demands for greater independence must rely on the nationalist fathers and their discourse regarding women. While Hatta teaches her that one of the central goals of the nation is to develop and liberate the individual character of its citizens, at the same time he urges her to remain morally pure, positing Iin/woman/nation as something which must keep itself isolated from the corruption of the world. (82) Rohadi, who must educate Iin about art and culture through romance and the force of his arguments, quickly unsettles her party-line support for socialist realism. In his opinion, this aesthetic ideology and its products are simply useful tools for immature and oppressed minds. Iin had earlier reasoned that all women are necessarily “socialist realists” since they give birth and breast feed. (79) When Rohadi critiques that sort of jargon and analysis, he takes on a familiar role as gently paternal teacher. Finally, Iin’s relationship to the microphone suggests that she and the “little people” she represents must turn to elementally male “instruments” to make themselves heard.

Contemporary feminists who assert their independence from all male teachers and instruments are represented in the text as strident and shallow, dogmatic and divisive, rather like the *pemuda*. Yet unlike the revolutionary youth, they are not even given a chance to “speak” in the course of the narrative.

Thus Mangunwijaya, like so many nationalists before him, concludes with a vision of a nation that must be tutored and guided by men.⁶⁷ In so doing, his novel offers evidence of the way in which hegemonic ideologies and discourses may inhabit the

⁶⁶ Ward Keeler, “Speaking of Gender in Java,” in Jane Monnig Atkinson and Shelly Errington (eds.), *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 130–31, 133.

⁶⁷ Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism*, pp. 1–19 and 146–162. See also Wieringa, “Aborted Feminism in Indonesia,” pp. 69–89. Cora Vreede-de Stuers’s *The Indonesian Woman: Struggles and Achievements* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1960), also clearly demonstrates the framework within which nationalists envisioned the advancement of women.

thinking of even critical and alternative figures. This “solution” is possible in the novel because the doubling of Iin as nation gone astray and as oppressed woman conveniently creates a traumatized, vengeful figure who must once more be brought under control in order to preserve any possibility of imagining a nation at all. Rohadi as teacher/lover and the microphone as conscience/lover create in the text images of heterosexual relationships which symbolically bring Iin/Durga under the control of men, effectively subordinating Iin’s rage. What’s more, the novel is marked by the absence of representations of women nationalists or women’s movement leaders who might serve as moral compasses in the same way Hatta does.⁶⁸ *Durga Umayi* represents the moral and intellectual leadership of the revolution and nationalism as a male enterprise, and thus follows commonly accepted historiographic representations of Indonesian nationalism.

As Iin loses her vital independence as a character and takes on an increasingly monstrous face, the masses also lose their energy. In the early sections of the novel, peasants and ordinary people are, like women, represented as neglected heroes of the revolution. By the final chapters, the peasants have been reduced to a near helpless vulnerability, passive victims of the New Order. Though critical, their stubborn and determined resistance seems futile and overwhelmed. Thus the peasants shrink to become children in need of guidance and protection. Ultimately the ordinary people are relegated to act as the children of nationalist, middle-class intellectual fathers and rebellious, fractious mothers whom the fathers have tamed. Like much official New Order rhetoric, the dissident Mangunwijaya ends by constructing a model of the nation as patriarchal family.

Conclusion

What I have argued is that Mangunwijaya’s attempts in this text to allow the voices of the oppressed—women, peasants, the ordinary people—to express their grievances conflict with the project of reformulating the basis and boundaries of nation according to the visions of a specific segment of the Indonesian middle class. The text embodies this conflict in its style and structure, and in the figure of Iin, who is both a representative of women and oppressed groups within the nation, and a symbol of the entire nation’s historical experience. In order to “resolve” the tension between the novel’s two main projects, the themes of women’s oppression and need for equality are ultimately subordinated to efforts to reformulate an alternative ideology of idealistic service to nation that can resist the dehumanizing and destructive aspects of New Order “development” and global capitalism, efforts which are themselves compromised by their own reliance on patriarchal assumptions. To achieve this “resolution,” Mangunwijaya’s narrative places Iin, both as symbol of nation and as woman, under the tutelage of a nationalist history and artistic/intellectual tradition represented as a male-controlled domain.

I would also argue that the dilemmas confronting Mangunwijaya have troubled and been faced by other Indonesian fiction writers, one of them Pramoedya Ananta

⁶⁸ That such women existed can be verified by reading Cora Vreede-de Stuers, *The Indonesian Woman: Struggles and Achievements*, as well as the Indonesian government’s *The Indonesian Women’s Movement* (Jakarta: Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1968).

Toer, though Pramoedya's history and stories clearly mark him as a more radical, militant figure, a stance for which he has paid dearly. Both these authors are critics of the New Order, and both have written novels featuring prominent women characters. At times it seems that Iin's history mirrors the life of Pramoedya's independent, entrepreneurial Nyai Ontosoroh (*Bumi Manusia* tetralogy) in an almost parodic fashion. To be sure, there are major differences: Nyai Ontosoroh is not required to symbolize the Indonesian nation in the same self-conscious way that Iin is. What's more, Pramoedya's first-person narrator, Minke, tells a story that is relatively straightforward, realistic, and personal compared with the inventions of Mangunwijaya's third-person omniscient narrator. Perhaps most important, Pramoedya avoids positing Javanese family hierarchies or cultural/racial purity as necessary to the formation of the just state.

Yet the two works share several features. Pramoedya's works do evoke certain traditional Indonesian stories and powers; in *Bumi Manusia*, Minke's Javanese mother imparts to him the ideals of a Javanese knight. This mother's continual nurturing, scolding presence is important to the subsequent development of Minke's intellectual and spiritual identity. Compared with this good mother, Nyai Ontosoroh, the admirable businesswoman, is labeled, curiously enough, as a poor mother,⁶⁹ someone who in fact "should have been a man."⁷⁰ Furthermore, Minke's progress through many marriages and a number of racially diverse wives may well subsume images of woman, in a symbolic fashion, under the authority of a male nationalist. Hatley argues that the depictions of Minke's wives suggest that Pramoedya, too, despite his more radical perspective, has summoned stereotypical images of women in order to represent symbolically the genesis and unity of the nation.⁷¹

This brief comparison of Pramoedya and Mangunwijaya offers us a glimpse of two related but different attempts to work out, through fiction, ideological and aesthetic "solutions" to the current dilemma faced by dissidents within New Order society. Ultimately, though Pramoedya's more radical approach has won him many admirers among social activists and contributed to a tradition of principled, firm resistance to oppression, Mangunwijaya's writing, for better or worse, as I have attempted to argue, seems to correspond more closely to the way in which a majority of middle-class Indonesians of both genders,⁷² including many social activists, make sense of the various processes and discourses which engage them on a daily basis. As such it approximates their desires for a widening of political participation.

⁶⁹ Hatley suggests this in "Hegemony, Resistance." See Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Bumi Manusia* (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1980), pp. 199, 243-245.

⁷⁰ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Jejak Langkah* (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1985), pp. 201-205.

⁷¹ Hatley, "Hegemony, Resistance."

⁷² Though I have argued that Mangunwijaya's text offers a particularly male perspective on the problem of women's roles in a more democratic Indonesia, there is reason to believe that the pervasiveness of patriarchal ideologies of family and gender under the New Order would incline many women toward at least a partial acceptance of *Durga Umayi's* representation of "good women" as nurturing, self-sacrificing mothers. Particularly germane to Iin's depiction as mother/monster is Sylvia Tiwon's suggestive essay, "Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Females in Indonesia," in Laurie J. Sears (ed.), *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 47-70. See also Heraty's "Women's Issues," pp. 162-65 in that same book, for evidence of these ideologies in popular "women's novels."

After all, even nationalism contains a glimmer of that longing for a better human community which Fredric Jameson describes as the utopian dimension of all ideology.⁷³ With its notion of "horizontal comradeship,"⁷⁴ nationalism seeks to project an image of internal equality, of community, and it is this which allows Mangunwijaya to argue for the inclusion of women and "little people" in the first place, despite the fact that the structuring of nation in *Durga Umayi* suggests, in the end, a return to their subordination. Furthermore, women and ordinary people are depicted as subjects who have feelings and resist oppression, subjects who may potentially, through resistance, help reform the world; such a portrait constitutes an important gesture in New Order Indonesia. *Durga Umayi*, then, despite all its troubling contradictions and compromises, presages the advent of a wider, more various community and nation. Indeed, the very tensions between the novel's varied, even incompatible projects make *Durga Umayi* a fascinating study of the crosscurrents that have sculpted the riverbed of Indonesia's history and will almost certainly carve the channels of its future.

⁷³ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p. 281.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 7.