

PERCEPTIONS OF MODERNITY AND THE SENSE OF THE PAST:  
INDONESIAN POETRY IN THE 1920s

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Nontraditional Malay poetry in Indonesia, the forerunner of "modern Indonesian poetry," is generally said to have begun in the decade between 1921 and 1931 in the publications of three young Dutch-educated Sumatrans, Muhammad Yamin (born in Sawahlunto, Minangkabau, 1903), Rustam Effendi (born in Padang, 1903), and Sanusi Pané (born in Muara Sipongi, Tapanuli, 1905). Through their writing of Western-influenced poetry in Malay or Bahasa Indonesia, all three saw themselves as contributing to the birth of a modern Sumatran (later Indonesian) culture, the basis of a new Sumatran (later Indonesian) nation. As such, they were among those who laid the foundation of the cultural nationalism which in the repressive conditions of the 1930s came to represent an alternative to the overtly political expression of Indonesian nationalism.

In the following pages, I wish to suggest (1) that through their writing Yamin, Rustam, and Sanusi all articulated a cultural stance which involved both a response to what they knew of European culture and their sense of an indigenous cultural heritage; (2) that there were important differences between the stances of Yamin and Rustam in this regard; and (3) that the poetry of Sanusi Pané, evolving out of Yamin's, established an approach to modernity which became the conventional standard for the burgeoning "Indonesian" poets of the 1930s.

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CINTA

Galiblah aku duduk bermenung  
Melihatkan langit penuh cahaya  
Taram-temaram bersuka raya  
Melenyapkan segala, fikiran nan renung.

Apa dikata hendak ditenung  
Hatiku lemah tiada bergaya  
Melihatkan bintang berseri mulia  
Jauh di sana di puncak gunung.

O, Tuhan sekalian alam  
Apakah guna aku di sini  
Menangiskan untung di hari malam.

Bintang berseri, sudahlah silam  
Meninggalkan daku duduk begini  
Merindukan cinta . . . biar tenggelam.

## LOVE

I am used to sitting, sunk in thought,  
 Watching the sky all aglow,  
 Dimly visible, joyous,  
 It sweeps all away, my contemplative thoughts.

What is there to be spoken, what should be said of the future?  
 My heart is weak, without any strength,  
 Watching the stars, shining gloriously,  
 Far off yonder, at the mountain peak.

Oh, God of all nature,  
 To what end do I sit here,  
 Bewailing my fate after nightfall?

The stars shine, it has become dark,  
 Leaving me sitting here  
 Longing for love--may I just be forgotten.

This poem, which appeared in the journal *Jong Sumatra* in 1921, exemplifies the significant changes which Muhammad Yamin introduced into the world of Indonesian poetry at the beginning of the 1920s. It is in the form which came to be called the Malay or Indonesian sonnet (*soneta*), and it illustrates a response to European literary traditions as well as the continuing influence of the Malay literary heritage. As such, it may be said to embody both a conscious modernity and a sense of the past. The particular nature of each may be approached by tracing Yamin's involvement in the "Young Sumatran" movement, the Jong Sumatranen Bond (League of Young Sumatrans).

Like Jong Java (Young Java), its predecessor and model, the Jong Sumatranen Bond was a pre-Indonesian cultural-nationalist organization. It was formed in 1917 by 150 Sumatran students in Batavia. The group aimed "to strengthen the bonds between Sumatran students, to foster an interest in the land and people of Sumatra and to support the practice of Sumatran customs, arts and language."<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the members of the Jong Sumatranen Bond saw themselves as striving for the unity of the various ethnic groups of Sumatra so that the Sumatran people could take their place as equals with the Javanese and other regional groups of the archipelago in the formation of a "Greater Indies." Their interest in, and promotion of, "Sumatran" culture was a means towards this end. Yamin, who appears to have first become involved with the Jong Sumatranen Bond in 1920 when he was a seventeen-year-old student at the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Science in Buitenzorg (Bogor), played a special role in the propagation and dissemination of this aspect of the organization's aspirations. In early 1920, he contributed a series of articles on Malay language and literature to the organization's journal, *Jong Sumatra*, aimed at illustrating the unifying potential of the Malay language and the wealth of the Malay literary tradition as a common cultural heritage linking the Sumatran peoples. The articles all spoke of the need for "young Sumatrans" to be aware of this aspect of their "Sumatran" heritage and to strive to restore language and literature to the highly regarded position they had held before the colonial presence had debased the one and slowed

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<sup>1</sup>J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, *De Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1931), p. 175.

the development of the other. He wrote admiringly of the innovative prose of Abdullah in the mid-nineteenth century and asked when the Malay cultural heritage would be blessed with further pioneers.<sup>2</sup> Even more explicitly, in a 1921 article entitled "Soeara Semangat," he wrote:

Sebenarnya kecil hati kita melihat perangsuran bangsa-bangsa di sebelah benua Besar dan Eropah dalam bahasa, kecil hati kita, karena kita ta' (belum!) sanggup bermain atau berjuang mengeluarkan perasaan hati dalam basa sendiri. Tuan, tuangkanlah fikiran di atas kertas (menggambar dengan kalimat, kata orang Jepang), keluarkanlah perasaan yang memenuhi dada tuan, peraslah kemauan ujung kalam dan kayakanlah perbendaharaan pembacaan bangsa kita. Tak ada dasar atau isi karangan? Ach, gunung yang tinggi, hutan yang lebat, sungai berbuih, lautan yang berombak, bukit yang jaram-mujaram, dan lain-lain, adalah halnya seperti mengajak tuan mencapai pena membuat syair, nalam, peruntungan dan sebagainya.<sup>3</sup>

It is discouraging, in fact, to see the progress which nations on the other side of the Great Continent and in Europe are making with their languages, because we are not (yet!) willing to amuse or exert ourselves in expressing our feelings in our own language. Sir, pour your thoughts out on to paper (draw with words, the Japanese say), express the feelings which fill your breast, squeeze the end of the pen with determination, and enrich the literature of our nation. Do you have no reason to write, or nothing to say? Ah, the high mountains, the thick jungle, the foaming rivers, the rolling sea, the steeply sloping hills, etc., are things urging you, as it were, to take up the pen and compose poems (*peruntungan?*).

These remarks are important, for they anticipate the appearance of Yamin's own poems and indicate the nature of their modernity. The concept of poetry Yamin evokes here, i.e., the poem as the expression of an individual emotional response to objective natural phenomena, had no precedent in the Malay literary tradition. The range of Malay poetic expression lay between the *pantun* and *syair*, neither of which encompasses the personal lyricism to which Yamin here alludes. The *pantun*, perhaps, comes closest, as this is the medium through which the Malay poet habitually expresses emotion in verse. There is a clear difference, however, for the *pantun* does not detail a sustained "flow" of emotion in the way Yamin proposes. Rather, within its four-line *kiasan/sampiran* formula, it abstracts the essence of an emotion, either stating it in simple, generalized terms, or alluding to it through patterns of imagery and metaphor. However the emotion is conveyed, the composer of the *pantun* is not intent on focusing on himself or herself as an individual; the verse exists apart from its composer and the particular circumstances in which it was composed.

The *syair* narrative form is still more obviously removed from Yamin's concept, even though, in the 1920s, the Malay language offered him no choice but the word "syair" itself to designate "poem." As a specific poetic form, the *syair* was undergoing considerable regeneration at that time, moving from treatise or romantic narrative into the

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<sup>2</sup>Muh. Yamin, "Abdu'llah Munshi," *Jong Sumatra*, III, 2-3 (1920), pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup>Muh. Yamin, "Soeara Semangat," *Jong Sumatra*, III, 4 (1920), p. 58.

world of contemporary reality, recording and commenting on current events and issues;<sup>4</sup> but it was not a form in which the composer's personal response to the subject matter ever figures as a central theme. Moreover, in the tradition of both pantun and syair, there was no emphasis on authenticity of expression such as Yamin desires, when he exhorts his readers to let the words flow "straight from the heart" (*keluarkanlah perasaan yang memenuhi dada tuan*). As socially accepted literary forms, the pantun and syair were replete with a commonly accepted idiom and range of appropriate expressions. The emphasis throughout Yamin's exhortation is on the recognition of individual emotional response and its validity as the subject matter of poetry. This was the idea of "modern" poetry. It expressed Yamin's sense of identification with the European literary and intellectual tradition as he saw it, an identification that developed from his knowledge of the late nineteenth century Dutch literary movement known as *De Beweging van Tachtig*, "The Movement of the Eighties."<sup>5</sup>

The broad outlines of this movement's idealism, and the poetry which embodied it, had a significant impact on Yamin because they could be interpreted as relevant to his concerns, both as a Dutch-educated Indonesian youth, and as a "Young Sumatran" idealist. On the one hand, the Eighties Movement, a late expression of nineteenth century European Romanticism, was readily linked to the new sense of self and personal validity that Dutch education was instilling into Yamin's generation in Indonesia. For, influenced by German and English Romanticism, it exalted the individual against dead tradition, spontaneous emotion against prepatterned rationalism, and invention against imitation.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the Eighties Movement also demonstrated the relationship between this new identity and the sense of the past. For the Eighties were neither anarchists or aesthetes, but "cultural nationalists," vitally concerned to contribute to the enrichment and growth of their country's literary tradition. Their assertion of individualism was seen as a means of liberating Dutch literature from the stagna-

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<sup>4</sup>Note in particular the journalistic *syair* of Mas Marco Kartodikromo, published as *Sair Rempah-Rempah* (Semarang: [?], 1918). See also C. Lombard-Salmon, "Le 'Syair' de l'Association Chinoise' de Batavia (1905)," *Archipel*, 2 (1971), pp. 55-100.

<sup>5</sup>The question of the actual path by which Yamin came into contact with Dutch literature is an important one. It is hardly likely to have been part of his formal education, as in colonial Indonesia European literature (Dutch, French, German, and English) was taught only in the *Algemeen Middelbare Scholen* (AMS), which were established only in 1919, and in the teacher training colleges (*Kweekscholen*), neither of which he attended. It seems likely that he was introduced to Dutch literature by Amir, a student at the STOVIA (Native Medical School) who was editor-in-chief of *Jong Sumatra*. Amir had published original Dutch poetry and articles in Dutch on an aspect of the Eighties Movement in this journal prior to the appearance of Yamin's poems.

<sup>6</sup>The Eighties Movement was, of course, much more multifaceted than this simple reduction would suggest. It seems to me, however, that these very basic Romantic assertions are all that would have been relevant in the Indonesian context of the 1920s. In my dissertation, "'Puisi Baru': The Emergence of a Non-Traditional Malay Poetry in Pre-War Indonesia" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1974), I have attempted to indicate how individual Dutch poems may have been seen in Indonesia, outside their own cultural and literary context.

tion and stultification into which they believed it had declined.<sup>7</sup> Their use of the sonnet as the hallmark of their style of poetry, was both an assertion of Romantic individualism and a symbol of nationalist idealism. It was a form basic to the Dutch literary heritage, but its use had long since become mannered and laborious. The Eighties aimed in their sonnets at a revitalization and regeneration of the form to contribute to a Dutch literary renaissance.

The Eighties Movement thus embodied a youthful energy and a linking of individual and tradition with which Yamin could readily identify. Here, in Dutch poetry, was an example of individuals contributing to their cultural heritage by a declaration of their selves, a literary detailing of personal emotion. The excitement of that discovery, the path it seemed to open up towards a "modernist" renaissance of Malay literature, generated a flow of more than twenty Malay sonnets which appeared in *Jong Sumatra* between May and September 1921.<sup>8</sup> In all of these poems, Yamin wrote as he saw his Dutch models writing. He described the emotions accompanying his departure from Sumatra, his longing for the Bukit Barisan, the mountains of his Minangkabau homeland, his love of his birthplace, and, as in "Cinta," his melancholy in the face of the natural beauty of his immediate surroundings. Expounding on emotion, revealing his inner self, and writing in a new poetic form, he was writing "modern" poetry in Malay as an expression of his Sumatran nationalism.

At the same time, however, "Cinta" stands as an indication that the emphasis in Yamin's essays on the need for continuity with the Malay literary heritage was not a self-conscious neo-traditionalism or an attempt to rediscover lost roots, but a very real aspect of his cultural world. For like all the sonnets, "Cinta" demonstrates that Yamin's "modernity" is accompanied, and perhaps even overshadowed, by a very strong un-self-conscious sense of the past, expressed by the clear affinities with the pantun folk tradition.<sup>9</sup> The pantun tempers both aspects of the modern assertion, the new form and the detailing of personal emotion.

In formal terms, the external structure of "Cinta" closely parallels the Dutch sonnet. It is built of an octave of two quatrains and a sestet of two trios, within a tight rhyming scheme,<sup>10</sup> a conscious departure from any formal grouping of lines in Malay verse. When Yamin

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<sup>7</sup>For a general and accessible description of the Eighties Movement, see R. P. Meijer, *Literature of the Low Countries* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971), pp. 233-44.

<sup>8</sup>My inability to locate a complete collection of *Jong Sumatra* prevents precise documentation of the number and date of publication of the sonnets. I am basing my comments on the incomplete collection in the library of the Museum Pusat in Jakarta. Further, I make no reference here to Yamin's first poem, "Bahasa, Bangsa," and his anthem, "Tanah Air," published before the sonnets. They were verse adjuncts to the *Jong Sumatra* articles, and, while important in that context, were without the generative capacity which the sonnets proved to have.

<sup>9</sup>In a forthcoming article Professor A. H. Johns notes that the early pioneers of modern Indonesian poetry were not heirs to the tradition of Malay court literature. Living tradition was, for them, the popular or folk literature.

<sup>10</sup>The alternative arrangement, also used by Yamin, is an octave of two quatrains followed by a sestet of three couplets.

comes to the actual dynamics of the individual line, however, he turns as a matter of course to pantun versification. Each individual line of the sonnet is constructed according to pantun form, a pattern best characterized by defining the elements of pantun rhythm, its most distinctive and all-pervasive feature.

The basis of this rhythm is the regular positioning of pauses, or caesurae, with a regular number of beats, or pulses, between them. Each line of the pantun normally has four rhythmic pulses, arising out of four accented syllables, and two caesurae, the primary one at the end of each line (there being no enjambement), and a secondary one after the second pulse. Thus, each line divides into two rhythmic units, each marked by two distinct pulses: ' ' | ' ' || <sup>11</sup> The four-line verse on this rhythmic basis is the essence of Malay poetics, the form which Malay speakers tend automatically to use if they want to express themselves in verse. The fact that Yamin uses it so unself-consciously as the basis of his sonnets' versification is a measure of the strength of tradition in his orientation. Every line has the four basic rhythmic pulsations: Galiblah aku duduk bermenung. Almost every line has a strong medial caesura: Melihatkan langit | penuh cahaya ||.<sup>12</sup> Modernity thus touches the shape of the poem, but does not affect the notion of verse in the language. The possibility of other versification dynamics simply does not occur to the writer.

In the detailing of emotion within "Cinta," there are also clear links between the sonnet and the tradition of *pantun dagang*, the Malay "songs of wandering":

Bunga senduduk buat kiriman,  
dari Gersik ke Surabaya.  
Jikalau duduk yang demikian,  
wahai nasib apakah daya.

*Senduduk* flowers as a gift to be sent,  
from Gersik to Surabaya.  
Sitting here like this,  
oh my fate, what can be done.

The affinity between "Cinta" and this verse is clear. Unlike the Dutch sonnets which provided Yamin's models, "Cinta" does not try to "understand" emotion. There are no connotations to the view of nature other than the simply emotional. There is no attempt to explore the problematic relationship between man and nature such as can be found in the

<sup>11</sup>In Malay verse, there are no meters interlocking with the rhythm, so the number and arrangement of the nonweighted syllables remains arbitrary and subject to great variation.

<sup>12</sup>I have assigned weighted (') and nonweighted (˘) syllables according to the principle of "accent" falling on the penultimate syllable in Malay words, except where it is transferred by a mute "e" in the penultimate position. This is clearly not always the case; most speakers, for example, would assign almost equal weight to each syllable in a bisyllabic word such as "duduk." Although this is a question to be treated by linguists, it seems that some slight variation in pitch or quantity is usually observable in every polysyllabic word, and that this variation, which produces the rhythmic pulsation, is more marked in spoken verse than in natural speech.

Neo-Romanticism of the Eightiers. Rather, like the pantun singer, Yamin is indulging the emotion, delighting in melancholy. They differ only in the degree of personal revelation. For whereas the pantun avoids the first person pronoun, making the verse a statement of commonly felt emotion, Yamin's view of European poetry tells him that the sustained description of personal emotion in the face of natural beauty is appropriate material for "modern" poetry. Hence, in contrast to the pantun singer, Yamin is intent on elaborating the emotion, describing himself and his particular circumstances in the fullest possible terms. In accordance with his stated ideals, he is attempting to contribute to a tradition, putting new life into it through a heightened sense of individual awareness. He is not initiating a late flowering of European Romanticism in Malay literature.

The distinction between sonnet and pantun, the heightened degree of self-declaration in the modern form, introduces an important difference in technique between the two. For whereas the conventional techniques of the pantun are indirect focus, allusion, and metaphor, all devices which distance the verse from its composer, the modern poem, which is seen as description and enunciation of individual emotion, is unalloyed rhetoric. Its imagery is visually descriptive; the emotions are stated clearly and directly. In contrast to the possibilities--subtlety and elusiveness--of the pantun, Yamin's sonnets are one-dimensional and static.

It is in the context of the "Young Sumatran" movement that the real nature and purpose of Yamin's poems become clear. Like that movement, they were attempts to articulate a dual cultural orientation, an idea of identity which can be seen today as the forerunner of the subsequently much-vaunted concept of "modern Indonesian man." They were also demonstration pieces, aimed at setting an example which others could follow, so as to generate a renaissance of Malay literature.

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The poems of Rustam Effendi, written some four or five years after Yamin's sonnets, represent a wholly independent experiment with the tradition of Malay poetry. Despite similarities in the two men's backgrounds and circumstances--both were tertiary students and members of the Jong Sumatranen Bond--there is no direct connection between their poetic styles. Rustam's commitments were as much political as cultural, and he did not share Yamin's unself-conscious identification with the popular Malay poetic heritage. Accordingly, his poetry offered an alternative approach to modernization--the ideal of a completely new beginning.

As was the case with Yamin, the decisive stimulus to Rustam's writing lay in the Eighties Movement.<sup>13</sup> It is apparent, though, that

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<sup>13</sup>Rustam Effendi's initial contact with European literature may well have been made during the years he spent as a student at the teacher training colleges in Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi) and Bandung. Indeed, it is possible that individuals he encountered in these environments may have actively encouraged to write; for as early as 1908 the directors of the Fort de Kock college had expressed the view that one of the aims of teaching Malay at an advanced level was to encourage writing in that language for the sake of meeting the reading needs of the population. "In the future, the Malay will have to put his own hand to the task, and . . . supply his own race

when he came to produce his own poems, Rustam saw the Eightiers less as literary models than as cultural ideals. Rustam did not try, as did Yamin, to align the Dutch model with his Malay heritage. Rather, he drew from his contact with Dutch literature a notion of what it meant to be "modern" and on this basis set out to change Malay literature as he found it. The notion of "modernity" meant for him an escape from the limited scope of traditional patterns of literary expression, and the construction, in their place, of a literature more suited to the needs of a Malay speaker with a modern (Western) education. Insofar as the Eighties Movement<sup>14</sup> asserted the unbounded potential of the individual's creative ability and the validity of his will for change, it helped to build in Rustam the self-confidence necessary for the ambitious program of literary renovation on which he was about to embark.

The first indication of what all this might mean in practice was Rustam's verse drama, *Bebasari*, which was written for performance by a group of high-school pupils in Padang and was published in 1925.<sup>15</sup> The play itself is a nationalist allegory, telling of the imprisonment of the princess Bebasari by the ogre Rawana, and the trials by which her betrothed, the prince Bujangga, eventually finds his bride. The influence of traditional literature is, obviously, still very strong, for the naming of the ogre invites comparisons with the *Ramayana*, and much of the plot follows closely the Panji motif (the quest of the hero lover for his vanished love) which pervades the classical romances. It is in the concept of verse drama and in the actual approach to versification itself that the significant changes are to be found. In both respects, Rustam was working completely outside the Malay literary heritage. The idea of a verse drama was suggested by contact with Shakespeare;<sup>16</sup> the actual versification was Rustam's attempt radically to restructure Malay poetry as he found it. It was this same approach

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with reading matter, which will provide them with useful relaxation in their free time and take them further along the road of development and civilization." *Gedenkboek samengesteld bij gelegenheid van het 35-jarig bestaan der Kweekschool voor Inlandsche Onderwijzers te Fort de Kock, 1873-1908* (Arnhem: n.p., 1908), p. 42. With regard to his knowledge of Dutch literature, Rustam himself has commented, "Sekalipun pelajaran tentang Nederlandse letterkunde di Kweekschool di masa itu tidak berapa dalam, tetapi di luar pelajaran sekolah, saya sudah banyak mengetahuinya, karena cinta dan kegemaran saya pada Nederlandse literaire werken." (Autobiographical notes, typewritten manuscript in the literary documentation collection of H. B. Jassin, Jakarta, dated July 1953.)

<sup>14</sup>The "cultural lag" between the mother country and the colony helps explain why the Eighties Movement was the Indies' ideal of the "modern." Textbooks used in the teaching of Dutch literature in Indonesia at this time supply an historical outline, accompanied by biographical notes and selections of literature, of the development of Dutch literature from the Middle Ages to the Eighties Movement. The Eightiers thus emerge as the most "modern" writers.

<sup>15</sup>The first edition of *Bebasari* was undated, and so the real date of publication has been the subject of controversy. It was discussed, however, in the newspaper *Hindia Baroe* on August 22, 1925 (*Overzicht van de inlandsche en maleisch-chineesche pers* [IPO] 35/1925), as a "revolution in the field of Malay literature," and in the same edition of IPO it is mentioned as a new publication received by Balai Pustaka.

<sup>16</sup>Mentioned in the autobiographical notes cited above.



to Malay verse which formed the basis of a body of original lyric poems written in the next two years and published at the end of 1926 in a volume entitled *Pertjikan Permenoengan*.<sup>17</sup> It is the earliest published collection of lyrical poems in Malay, and in terms of its form it was probably the most revolutionary and ambitious poetry to appear in the whole of the prewar period.

The ambitiousness of Rustam's formal experimentation lay in his attempts to introduce changes in Malay versification, at a much more fundamental level than that of Yamin's pantun-based sonnets. Although, like Yamin, he used the sonnet as an arrangement of lines, the "shape" of a poem was of minor significance for Rustam; his concern was primarily with its internal dynamics, the in which the rhythmic and acoustic elements of verse were welded together into new formal designs. He defined new rhythmic structures and overlaid them with complex acoustic patterns of rhyme, assonance, and alliteration.

It was his experiments with rhythm which proved the most significant aspect of Rustam's innovative techniques, as they set his poems free from the hallmark of earlier Malay verse--the single line defined by the balanced arrangement of four rhythmic pulsations. Rustam realized that variation and development of this rhythmic scheme were possible, both by regulating the number and arrangement of syllables in a given line, and, more importantly, by adding further pulsations and varying the position of the caesurae. As he discovered, the only way to add pulsations is to add words, and the only way to vary the position of the caesurae is to arrange the words in such a way that sense necessitates the placing of pauses in positions other than those in which they occur in the traditional four-pulse line. When Rustam wrote a four-word line such as "Tiada aku tiada tangkis," for example,<sup>18</sup> he deliberately broke the traditional rhythm by displacing the caesura. At first sight, the line appears to be rhythmically balanced in the traditional manner, especially as the repeated "tiada" invites comparisons with a pantun line such as "Terang bulan, terang di kali." This resemblance is, however, deceptive. If there is to be any marked pause in Rustam's line, sense requires that it come after the first "tiada," making the following "aku tiada tangkis" one rhythmic unit ("It's not that I don't parry"). In place of the traditional balance, two units of two pulses, Rustam introduces a unit of one pulse, followed by another of three. Rhythmic variation created by displacement of the

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<sup>17</sup>The first edition of *Pertjikan Permenoengan* was also undated, and the date of its publication, as well as its relation to *Bebasari*, have caused considerable confusion. There can be no doubt as to the chronological order, as a note inside the back cover of the original edition of *Pertjikan Permenoengan* indicates that the first edition of *Bebasari* had already been sold out. (This was noted by L.-C. Damais in his *Cent-Deux Poèmes Indonésiens* [Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1965]. Nor is the original publisher of *Bebasari* known. The second edition of both *Bebasari* and *Pertjikan Permenoengan* were published in Jakarta by Fasco, 1953. The spelling of the latter title was changed to conform to contemporary orthography.) The most contemporaneous commentaries give 1926 as the date of publication of *Pertjikan Permenoengan*. Moreover, a review of the collection appeared in Balai Pustaka's popular magazine, *Sri Poestaka*, in January 1927, stating simply that "another book from the pen of R. Effendi, writer of *Bebasari*, has been published."

<sup>18</sup>This line is taken from a poem entitled "Kenangan Lama (II)," *Pertjikan Permenoengan*, 2nd ed., p. 40.

primary, end-of-line caesura is, of course, more immediately obvious, and Rustam commonly makes use of such emjambement, extending his rhythmic units from one line into the next. These rhythmic units, once defined, can usually be seen as forming a distinct pattern in Rustam's verse, a pattern which then becomes the underlying structural basis of the poem as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

In establishing acoustic patterns within these rhythmic structures, Rustam also developed the way in which rhyme, assonance, and alliteration were used in traditional versification. He enriched the rhyming element by devising new schemes of end-rhyme and, more significantly, developed rhyme in itself, extending single-vowel rhyme into double-vowel rhyme with consonant alliteration and creating complex internal rhyming schemes. He also elaborated the use of assonance and alliteration, already present in the pantun and its predecessor, the *peribahasa* (proverb). Whereas in traditional forms assonance and alliteration were used to achieve subtleties of suggestiveness, Rustam devised highly complex patterns of vowel assonance and made vigorous use of extended alliteration simply for the sake of the acoustic structures in themselves.

Rustam imposed a strict regularity on his verse schemes such that each syllable was designed, ideally, to have some place both in the rhythmic structure and in some acoustic pattern. It was an original and highly complex view of versification, but the poetry itself is constant testimony to the reluctance with which the language lends itself to this kind of rigid complexity. Apart from those moments of variation in an established verse pattern chosen for deliberate effect, Rustam's poems often forgo the continuation of a pattern simply because the words can not be found to maintain it;<sup>20</sup> for he makes every possible attempt to compel language to conform to his structures. His use of obscure vocabulary and words drawn from languages other than Malay (in particular his native Minangkabau), as well as the coining of new words and the eliding of syllables in old ones, can be shown to be mostly aimed at maintaining particular complex verse patterns. Yet so often, when the pattern does falter, it can only be in order to allow a development in meaning in the sense of the poem as a whole. The more regularly the patterns are maintained, the less meaningful the sense of the expression is likely to be.

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<sup>19</sup>It is for this reason that the "Tiada aku tiada tangkis" line cannot be compared with the type of pantun line in which the usual "balancing" function of the medial caesura is slight or absent. In Rustam's poetry, the nonbalanced line is part of an overall structure; in the pantun, it is a variation of the overall structure, perhaps often the product of lack of skill.

<sup>20</sup>This could well be the source of the frustration Rustam describes in his well-known poem, "Bukan Beta Bijak Berperi":

Sering saya susah sesa'at,  
sebab madahan tida' na' datang.  
Sering saya sulit menekat,  
sebab terkurang lukisan mamang.

I often experience moments of difficulty,  
because the verses will not come.  
I often have trouble creating designs,  
because the tools for drawing are insufficient.

Some of the complexities of Rustam's schemas emerge in the poem "Lengang":

Lengang di lawang,  
tidak berderak, tidak berombak.  
Awan pun tenang,  
tidak bergerak, tidak beroyak.  
  
Bunyi pun sunyi  
haram berdentam, haram menderam.  
Sakti ba' mati  
Alam bermuram, alam berdendam.  
  
Tidur terpekur  
bening keliling, hening yang penting.  
Kejur sekujur,  
tidak berdenting, tidak berpaling.  
  
Senyap me-engap  
Pantang bergoyang, pantang tergoncang.  
Engap yang sedap.  
Tenang di lawang, padang dan ladang.  
  
Kenang melayang.  
Tinggi dirbumi, hati bersuni.  
Cewang merewang,  
Cari mencari hati berahi.  
  
Untung merenung.  
Entah di mana, entah ke mana.  
Jauh membubung,  
atas angkasa, ditanai pawna.  
  
Konyong sekonyong . . .  
lengking melengking, menggasing kuping.  
Beta ternonong . . .  
"buah kermunting, . . . buah kermunting!"<sup>21</sup>

Silence on the earth,<sup>22</sup>  
No creaking (of branches), no rolling (of waves).  
The clouds too are calm,  
They do not move, they do not scatter.  
  
Sounds too have died away,  
There is no trace of booming or rumbling.  
A magic (spell) like death,  
The world is gloomy, the world is impassioned.  
  
Asleep in meditation,  
Clarity around, an important quietness.  
A stiffness on everything,  
No jingling noise, no altering direction.  
  
A breathless stillness,  
No trace of a swaying movement, no trace of anything being shaken.  
A sweet breathlessness.  
Calm on the earth, on plains and fields.

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<sup>21</sup>*Pertjikan Permenungan*, 2nd ed., p. 27.

<sup>22</sup>*Lawang*: this word appears on a number of occasions in Rustam's poetry. In some cases it occurs in contrast to *sawang(an)* (skies), apparently in the sense of "earth."

Thoughts fly.  
 High above the earth, the heart is silent.  
 An indiscriminate restlessness,  
 Passionate hearts searching after one another.

Pondering on fate.  
 Who knows where, or where to.  
 Rising high  
 Above the skies, borne on the wind.

Suddenly, . . .  
 There is a shrill noise, a spinning in the ears.  
 I am dazed . . .

"The fruit of the *kermunting* . . . the fruit of the *kermunting*!"

The formal point of departure for the poem is the rhythmic unit consisting of two pulses before the caesura. With this as a base, Rustam constructs his own regular rhythmic pattern which serves as a skeleton for the poem as a whole:

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      '      '      ||
    '      ' | '      ' ||
      '      '      ||
    '      ' | '      ' ||
  
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In addition to this regular patterning of pulses and caesurae, the syllabification itself fits a constant pattern. Each rhythmic unit of two pulses is composed of a bisyllabic word followed by a trisyllabic (or a bisyllabic word preceded by a prefix or other nonweighted syllable), so setting up a regular ' ' | ' ' pattern within each unit. There are two nice examples of how Rustam has changed words in order to make them conform to his patterns. In the line, "Tinggi dirbumi, hati bersuni," the form "dirbumi" is newly coined to fit the rhythm. The full form, "dari bumi," would add an extra syllable, and more importantly, an extra pulse, which would destroy the regular rhythms of the whole. Similarly, in the first line of stanza five, the final syllable of "kenangan" is omitted, producing "kenang melayang." In two cases, "ditanai pawna" and "menggasing kuping," the order of syllables within the rhythmic units is reversed for no apparent acoustic effect. (Note, however, that the second "a" of "pawana" is elided, in order to avoid the accumulation of an extra syllable.) In at least one case, Rustam deliberately alters a form in order to maintain the syllabic arrangement. This is in the final stanza, where "sekonyong-konyong" becomes "konyong-sekonyong." In another case, the "untung merenung" of stanza six, he seems to have introduced an inversion for the same reason.

Within this defined rhythmic pattern, the acoustic patterns come into play. Each stanza rhymes to a double-vowel-and-final-consonant *abab* pattern, but there is also constant internal rhyme. In each unit of two pulses, there is usually vowel and final consonant rhyme, and in the four-word lines, the final vowel is usually repeated in each word. In this case, the technical structure of the poem is so complex and rigid that the intricacies of its application tend to make the poem more a piece of music than an expression of meaning.

In other cases, however, there are indications that Rustam did indeed attempt to consider the implications of his formal techniques

for the sense of his expression. In the sonnet "Kepada Yang Bergurau," for example, the octave is composed on a similarly-patterned arrangement of rhythmic units of three pulsations, with variation, indicated by punctuation, in the final line. The breaking of the pattern serves to foreshadow the variation occurring in the sestet:

O, engkau cucu Adam,  
yang bermain di taman bunga, berteduh di bawah bahagia.  
Alangkah senang sentosamu,  
menyedapi buah yang lezat bertangkai di pohon Asmara.

O, engkau Ratna alam,  
yang bertilam kesuma nyawa, disimbur Asmara juwita.  
Soraikan gelak suaramu,  
dipeluki tangan yang lembut, dicium, diriba Permata.

O, engkau makhluk Tuhan.  
Sepatah madah tolong dengarkan, tolong pikirkan,  
sekali pun tuan dalam bergurau.  
Jauh bersunyi tolan,  
Seorang beta dalam berduka, tiap ketika,  
merindukan tanah dapat merdeka.<sup>23</sup>

Oh, you descendant of Adam,  
sporting in flower gardens, sheltering beneath happiness.  
How content and secure you are,  
enjoying the delicious fruits hanging on the tree of Love.

Oh, you Jewel of nature,  
resting your body on the illustrious flowers, sprinkled by sweet Love.  
Shouting out your laughter,  
embraced by soft hands, kissed, and held in the lap of the Jewel.

Oh, you creature of God.  
Listen to just one word, and then think on it.  
Even though you are enjoying yourself,  
Far off lies a comrade all alone,  
a sorrowful slave, at every instant,  
yearning for the land where he might be free.

The pattern is precisely defined, and corresponds to the progression of the theme. The octave describes and invokes, while the sestet appeals. The arresting effect produced by the introduction of even-numbered rhythmic units is a means of indicating a change in the tone of the expression.

The clear political overtones of this poem are typical of a number in the collection. Indeed, in scope, as in technique, *Pertjikan Permenoengan* is far more ambitious and wide-ranging than the *Jong Sumatra* sonnets of Yamin. Apart from the detailing of personal emotion (usually more objectified than in Yamin, through the use of a third person pronoun in a symbolic setting), the poems range from objective nature description to questions of morality and nationalistic outpourings in varying degrees of disguise. In every way, the collection strains for radical change.

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 61.

Significantly, however, it was the synthetic, rather than the radical approach to modernization which ultimately proved more acceptable to Indonesian writers of that era. Sanusi Pané, writing in the late 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, frontally rejected Rustam's experiments as violating the "spontaneous expression of personal emotion,"<sup>24</sup> the "modern" poetic credo derived from the Eightiers, and built instead on Yamin's example. When Sanusi's poetry subsequently generated the conventions of the Poedjangga Baroe period (the 1930s), Yamin thereby became the "founder" of the nascent main tradition of modern Indonesian poetry.

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At the time of the publication of Yamin's sonnets, Sanusi was a sixteen-year-old high-school student in Padang, West Sumatra. He shared Yamin's patriotism and youthful idealism as well, it appears, as his notions of the relationship between patriotism and literary expression. For at the same time as Yamin, a student in far-off Java, was writing sonnets about his Sumatran homeland, Sanusi wrote a poem entitled "Tanah Air," an adulation of Sumatra in syair form and idiom, for publication in a school magazine in Padang. This poem was reprinted, with enthusiastic comments from the editors, in the September 1921 edition of *Jong Sumatra*, one of the first editions of the journal to contain a selection of Yamin's sonnets.<sup>25</sup> It is not clear whether Sanusi was actually a member of the organization at this time, but he would doubtless have seen the issue of *Jong Sumatra* which contained his own poem. This coincidence is important, for alongside his syair he would have found Yamin's sonnets. In reading them he would have experienced the first formative influence on his development as a poet in the new style.

If this contact with Yamin's sonnets was probably the first formative influence, the next decisive factor in Sanusi's development was certainly the years he spent from 1922 or 1923 until about 1927 as a student at the Kweekschool Gunung Sahari in Jakarta, a teacher training college founded and maintained by the Theosophical Society. The educational principles of this college were based on the ideas of Tagore, namely that modernization and Westernization in India and other Asian societies were desirable but could only be successfully realized if built on a sound foundation in the indigenous cultures.<sup>26</sup> This approach to modernization was intended to permeate the educational development of students in the college; for Sanusi, who became a member of the Theosophical Society during this time,<sup>27</sup> its influence was decisive and

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<sup>24</sup>This judgment is contained in a review of *Pertjikan Permenoengan* published in 1932. See below, footnote 28.

<sup>25</sup>The poem is included in Fachruddin Abo Enre, *Perkembangan Puisi Indonesia Dalam Masa Duapuluhan* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1963), p. 79, where its source is incorrectly given as the November 1921 edition of *Jong Sumatra*.

<sup>26</sup>These principles are outlined in the college's report, *Verslag over de Jaren 1921, 1922 en 1923*, held by the library of the Museum Pusat in Jakarta. It is described as Neutrale Kweekschool "Gunung Sari" de Weltevreden. (Particuliere kweekschool met de Gouv. kweekscholen gelijkgesteld bij Gouv. Besluit d.d. 25-11-18). Uitgaande van de Vereeniging Associatie van Oost en West.

<sup>27</sup>A detailed autobiographical note by Abdul Rivai (Yogi) in the H. B. Jassin

lasting. It meant that while he too felt the fascination of European culture, and the accompanying new sense of self, he came to experience the same dual cultural orientation which lay at the heart of the "Young Sumatran" movement. With Sanusi this dual orientation was much more self-conscious than with Yamin. Sanusi appears to have consciously formulated a cultural stance in which the sense of an indigenous cultural identity, a continuing preservation of the past, would function as a means of reconciling the potentially antagonistic notions of the Western intellectual and the Sumatran, or, as it was fast becoming, the Indonesian nationalist.

Thus, when Sanusi came to write "modern" poetry, the example of Yamin's sonnets proved more attractive than the versification of Rustam Effendi. Yamin's work embodied both the "modern"--the appeal of the Eightiers' poetry and its glorification of the individual self--and continuity with the past, its formal bases in the conventional patterns of Malay versification. Rustam had rejected the latter, and in doing so, produced poetry which in Sanusi's view was "unnatural," "a contrived manipulation of words."<sup>28</sup> In Sanusi's poetry, the break with the past came gradually, and was never as obtrusive as in *Pertjikan Permenoengan*.

The influence of Theosophy on Sanusi's development as a poet was significant in yet another way, for it appears that contact with the Eighties Movement in this environment meant a heightened emphasis on the "spiritual" aspects of the movement's aesthetic theory. Theosophy sees the process of civilization and its expression in art as a continuing refinement of human sensitivity, a path of human development from a base, animal-like nature towards an ultimate restoration to the realm of the spirit.<sup>29</sup> The aesthetic theory of the Eightiers used a similar "spiritual" terminology in reference to the creative process. Willem Kloos, one of the movement's most significant poets, referred to the source of poetry as "movements of the soul";<sup>30</sup> art was born out of the spiritual fervor experienced in devotion to Beauty. The adoration of Beauty, which lay at the heart of the Eightiers' theory, was a new religion. The poet's task was to crystallize spontaneously these "movements of the soul" in the written word, in pure artistic form. The coalescence of these two views of art in Indies Theosophy meant that Sanusi understood "modern" poetry as a "spiritual" activity, the expression of individual emotions related to an exalted, spiritual world, rather than the world of everyday reality.

The foundations of Sanusi's poetry were, then, like Yamin's, a new sense of self alongside an identification with the past, and a

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literary documentation collection records that Sanusi became a member of the Theosophical Society about 1925, just before Rivai first made his acquaintance. This detail does not appear in any other available biographical data on Sanusi.

<sup>28</sup>See Sanusi Pané, "Pertjikan Permenoengan oleh R. Effendi," *Timboel (Bagian Indonesia)*, I (March 15, 1932), pp. 6-7.

<sup>29</sup>These ideas can be found elaborated in a contemporaneous publication, C. Jinarajadasa, *First Principles of Theosophy* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1921), pp. 306-13.

<sup>30</sup>See Willem Kloos, "Inleiding," in Jacques Perk, *Gedichten* (Amsterdam: Van Looy, 1899), p. 43.

view of poetry as an expression of the individual soul. His first volume of poems appeared in 1928 under the title *Poespa Méga*,<sup>31</sup> following the publication in 1926 of a collection of prose poems modeled on Tagore.<sup>32</sup> All but one of the thirty-seven poems in the collections are sonnets after Yamin's example, and the new poetry is for the first time given the name *sajak*, as a translation of the European concept of "lyrical poem."<sup>33</sup> "Sebagai Merpati" illustrates well the fusion of the perception of modernity and the sense of the past which Sanusi's "sajak" represents.

Di atas perabung rumah dimuka  
 Burung merpati, berbulu putih,  
 Bersih dan suci laksana buih,  
 Dua sejoli bertekur suka.  
 Bermain seketika burung dara  
 Habis bersenda sayappun kembang,  
 Kedua merpati lalu terbang,  
 Terbang bersanding dalam udara.  
 Sebentar lagi kita kedua  
 Bernyawa satu kedua badan,  
 Mengambil merpati jadi teladan.  
 Jauh dekat bersama jua,  
 Karena jiwa telah terpadu,  
 Sehidup semati, cerai tak tahu.<sup>34</sup>

Perched on the roof-ridge at the front of the house  
 Are doves, white-feathered,  
 Clean and pure, like the foam of waves,  
 A pair, their heads cooing in delight.  
 They sport together a moment,  
 And after their games, they open their wings.  
 The two doves then fly off,  
 Side by side in the sky.  
 A little while longer and the two of us  
 Will share one soul in our two bodies,  
 Taking the doves as our example.  
 Far apart or side by side we will be together,  
 Because our souls will be united,  
 One in life and death, inseparable.

<sup>31</sup>Sanusi Pané, *Poespa Méga* (Weltevreden: n.p., 1927; 2nd ed. [*Puspa Mega*], Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1971). Note how the "exalted" view of poetry expresses itself in the use of a Sanskrit title.

<sup>32</sup>Sanusi Pané, *Pantjaraan Tjinta* (Weltevreden: n.p., 1926).

<sup>33</sup>The Arabic-derived Malay term *sajak* traditionally referred to elements of verse, "assonance, cadence, melodious harmony, rhythm"; R. J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, Pt. II (London: Macmillan, 1959), p. 1001. Sanusi was the first to use it to mean "lyrical poem." His concept is enunciated in the well-known sonnet "Sajak" in *Puspa Mega*, 2nd ed., p. 26. For the most appropriate interpretation of the poem, see Harry Aveling, "An Alternative Reading of Sanusi Pané's *Sajak*," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, 128, 4 (1972), pp. 491-92.

<sup>34</sup>"Sebagai Merpati," *Puspa Mega*, 2nd ed., p. 11.



The formal structure of the poem is the pattern which Yamin had developed by combining the external features of the Dutch sonnet and the essence of traditional pantun versification. Sanusi, however, has taken the synthesis of the two forms a step further by identifying the pantun's kiasan/sampiran technique with the pattern sometimes found in the Dutch sonnet of making the octave an image drawn from nature which suggests the moral or sentiment to be expressed in the sestet. So here the pair of doves, innocent and free, becomes a kiasan for the expression of undying love. As in Yamin's "Cinta," the sentiment itself is a more directly personal enunciation of the romantic melancholy of the pantun. The final line of "Sebagai Merpati" is actually a reminiscence of a well-known pantun sentiment:

Ketapang belah berperai-perai,  
dari Serati lalu ke Jawa.  
Di manakan boleh kita bercerai  
jikapun mati biar berdua.

Split *ketapang* scattered about,  
from Serati thence to Java,  
How could we be divided,  
even in death we would be together.

It is significant, though, that under the influence of the "spiritualism" of Theosophy and the Eightiers, the unity of the lovers in "Sebagai Merpati" is a unity of "souls," undefiled like the doves, and removed from baser planes of existence. This "spirituality" sets Sanusi's poem apart from the world of the pantun, always much closer to earth, and introduces the continuing tendency towards idealization in his treatment of themes and subjects. Throughout *Poespa Méga*, "love" is always elevated to an idealized plane, a realm of "spiritual" values. In all references to love, lover and beloved are exalted, removed from too close a contact with the commonplace realities of everyday life. The beloved is "queen of the (lover's) soul";<sup>35</sup> love is fulfilled not physically, but always on a spiritual plane.<sup>36</sup> Passion is described as a dream;<sup>37</sup> love threatens to evade the lover's grasp, because of the essentially other-worldly attributes of the beloved.<sup>38</sup> Similarly idealized is the view of natural beauty, the second of the two principal themes in the collection. Nature, in *Poespa Méga*, is something pure, embodying spiritual values. As in Theosophy, nature exists on the same level as the soul, before the soul's imprisonment in the body.<sup>39</sup> With Sanusi, as with Yamin before him, the heightened sense of self in the "modern" poem generates a descriptive rhetoric, a declamatory style which leaves no room for indirection or suggestion. To illustrate by contrast, consider the use of the dove image in one of the most famous pantun:

Burung merpati terbang seribu,  
Hinggap seekor di tengah laman;  
Hendak mati di ujung kuku,  
Hendak berkubur di tapak tangan.

<sup>35</sup>"Melati," *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup>"Ke Pantai," *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup>"Mimpi," *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup>"Bimbang," *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup>"Jiwa," *ibid.*, p. 20.

A thousand doves flying high,  
 One perches in the middle of the yard;  
 I would die at the tip of your fingernail,  
 I would be buried in the palm of your hand.

Here the relation of image to thought expressed in the second couplet is primarily one of tone. The image of the solitary dove introduces the sense of something unique and apart, as a prelude to the figurative expression of total devotion and undying love in the second couplet. It is this technique of suggestion and subtle allusion, basic to the *pantun*, which Sanusi, like Yamin, replaced with description and statement. As he did so, he determined, in this respect as in others, the path which the development of the new poetry would take during the next decade.

Sanusi's second book of poetry, *Madah Kelana*, was published by the government printing house, Balai Pustaka, in 1931. In the interval, Sanusi had joined the teaching staff of the Gunung Sahari college, and had been transferred when the college itself moved from Jakarta to Lembang, near Bandung. Here he became associated with Pemuda Indonesia (Indonesian Youth), the youth organization formed under the aegis of the PNI (Indonesian Nationalist Party) in 1927, which between 1929 and 1931 was instrumental in helping to fuse the existing regional youth movements into a single body, Indonesia Muda (Young Indonesia). His Theosophy-based "Indonesian" cultural nationalism led him into involvement with *Timboel*, the fortnightly journal of the Solo Study Club, in which he began to publish historical dramas that glorified the spiritual greatness of Java's past.<sup>40</sup> Finally, it was also at this time, specifically at the end of 1929, that Sanusi visited India, probably under the auspices of the Theosophical Society.<sup>41</sup> One year after this visit, in early 1931, he became joint editor of *Timboel*, and contributed a spate of articles to the journal on political questions, the political implications of cultural issues, history, and religion. In all of these, his eclectic blend of Theosophy, "Indonesian" nationalism, and Western liberal intellectualism, in an identity which would preserve the past and yet meet the demands of modernity, is clear.<sup>42</sup> In *Madah Kelana*, that eclecticism emerges in poetry.

Commentary on *Madah Kelana* has always focused primarily on its "Orientalism," its fascination with the mysticism of Indian religions. Indeed, there are a number of "travel" poems, probably written in

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<sup>40</sup>Sanusi later described his fascination with Javanese culture in terms which recall the educational principles of the Gunung Sahari college. In "Java en de 'Buitengewesten,'" *Timboel*, V, 19 (November 1931), he wrote: "Dynamic forces, which are in the position to raise the Indonesian nation to inner greatness and political power can be released primarily from *Javanese* culture, in which the Oriental spirit finds its purest manifestation in Indonesia."

<sup>41</sup>Sanusi recorded his impressions of India in a valuable series of articles, "Impressies van India," *Timboel*, IV, 3-4, 7, 8-9 (1930).

<sup>42</sup>A concise illustration of this eclecticism occurs in a series of articles on the Bhagavad Gita, "Inleiding tot de Bhagawad-Gita," *Timboel*, V, 3, 10, 14, 16, 21-22 (1931). Asserting at one point that the Bhagavad Gita is a reflection of the universal quest of mystics for enlightenment, the goal of all striving, Sanusi offers a quotation from a sonnet by Jacques Perk, one of the Eightiers, as an illustration of this universality (10, p. 154).

India, and some others (those most widely known today) which express the conviction that mysticism, the world of inner being, is the ultimate reality. But in terms of what was an evolving style of "modern" poetry in Indonesia at the time, I believe the most significant aspects of the collection are those areas where it stands in a direct line of continuity from *Poespa Méga*, blending "traditional" and "modern" in a style of idealization; for his treatment of the themes of love, nature, and now nationalism directly foreshadows the conventions of Indonesian poetry for the remainder of the 1930s. A poem like "Kembang Melati," with its idealization and possible nationalist overtones, still expressed within a basically traditional mode of versification, both looks back to Yamin and forward to the Poedjangga Baroe poets:

Aku menyusun kembang melati  
Di bawah bintang tengah malam,  
Buat menunjukkan betapa dalam  
Cinta kasih memasuki hati.

Aku tidur menantikan pagi  
Dan bermimpi dalam bah'gia  
Duduk bersanding dengan Dia  
Di atas pelaminan dari pelangi.

Aku bangun, tetapi matari  
Sudah tinggi di cakrawala  
Dan pujaan telah selesai.

O, Jiwa, yang menanti Hari,  
Sudah hari datang bernyala,  
Engkau bermimpi, termenung lalai.<sup>43</sup>

I weave a bouquet of jasmine  
Under the stars in the middle of the night,  
In order to show how deeply  
Love has penetrated my heart.

I fall asleep awaiting the morning  
And dream in bliss  
Sitting in ceremony with Her,  
On the bridal dais of the rainbow.

I awake, but the sun  
Is already high in the sky,  
And the morning prayers are over.

Oh, my Soul, awaiting the Day,  
The day has come all ablaze,  
And you were dreaming, lost in idle thought.

It is significant that *Madah Kelana* was the first, and in fact the only collection of the new poetry to appear from the Balai Pustaka

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<sup>43</sup>Sanusi Pané, *Madah Kelana* (Batavia: Balai Pustaka, 1931; 2nd ed., Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1957, p. 12). Note that the rhythmic structure of the poem falters in the lines "Dan bermimpi dalam bah'gia" and "Dan pujaan telah selesai," because the monosyllabic "dan" cannot support a full rhythmic pulsation. This seems to me to be inadequate technique within the chosen form, rather than a conscious departure from it. It is possible that in this poem a certain irony is expressed at the expense of the idealized vision. Such irony, however, never reappears in the rest of Sanusi's work, or that of his successors.

press. The distribution channels and library services of Balai Pustaka would have meant that the potential audience for *Madah Kelana* was much greater than any poetry in the new style published previously. It may not be entirely coincidental that within a year of *Madah Kelana*'s publication, the Balai Pustaka's biweekly Malay magazine, *Pandji Poestaka*, was being "flooded" with poetry in the new style "from all corners of the Indies."<sup>44</sup> A special column devoted to the promotion of literature, "Memadjoekan Kesoesteraan," was set up to contain the new output, under the editorship of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, a 23-year-old graduate of the Bukittinggi teacher training college, who had joined the staff of Balai Pustaka in 1931. It was through this column that Takdir first came into contact with Armijn Pané, then a teacher at a Taman Siswa school in Kediri, East Java, who suggested to him the idea of an independent literary journal. Pursuing that idea ultimately led to the founding of the journal *Poedjangga Baroe* in 1933. There, the flow of poetry continued unabated. A number of figures who first contributed to "Memadjoekan Kesoesteraan" in 1931 and 1932 continued to write for *Poedjangga Baroe* throughout most of the 1930s. In their poetry, and that of their fellow contributors, the innovations of Yamin and Sanusi assumed the settled form of the conventions of *Poedjangga Baroe* "romanticism." Working from the basis of pantun sentiment and versification, they adopted Sanusi's vision of the exalted spirituality of art and poetry, and wrote of idealized love, nature, or nationalism, or filled their poems with high-minded moralizings and "noble thoughts." The idealized view of art introduced the convention of beauty, which meant a selective view of both the themes and the language considered appropriate for poetic expression. In terms of technique, Yamin's descriptive rhetoric remained the norm, producing an assertive declamatory style. Three important figures writing poetry within this style, Takdir Alisjahbana, Armijn Pané, and J. E. Tatengkeng, offered in different ways examples of how departures from it were possible. But only Amir Hamzah, the "prince of *Poedjangga Baroe*," transcended it consistently. In general, however, the decade was marked by a continuing eclectic attempt to blend modernity and the past, a fact which clearly has significant wide social and political implications beyond the immediate field of literature.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Editorial note in "Memadjoekan Kesoesteraan," *Pandji Poestaka*, March 8, 1932.

<sup>45</sup>The study of modern Indonesian literature still awaits a sophisticated application of detailed literary analysis to broader areas of social investigation. Given adequate data, it should be possible, for example, to relate structurally the literary norms of a given period to developments in those areas of society out of which they have come. While the necessary data for such an analysis of the prewar period is probably irretrievably lost, a study could well be undertaken of the large volume of poetry and short stories published in Indonesia in recent years.