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FRANSISCUS XAVERIUS SISWADI

Reappropriating National Discourse

*"National Allegory" in The Weaverbirds
and The Migratory Birds by Y.B. Mangunwijaya*

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In This Issue

The framework in which *Reappropriating National Discourse: Fredric Jameson's "National allegory" in The Weaverbirds and The Migratory Birds by Y.B. Manguwinjaya* is embedded is the famous if controversial essay titled "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" (1986) by Fredric Jameson, a major contemporary American literary critic and political theorist.

Quoted most often by commentators from the essay, as a criticism or in defense of his argument, is the passage in which Jameson states that "Third-World texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic — necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."

Aijaz Ahmad, literary theorist and philosopher, famously responded to Jameson's alleged First and Third Worldist "essentialism" and "universalism" in his essay, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'". In this 1987 response, he argues that "there is no such thing as a 'Third World Literature' which can be constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge."

Nevertheless, Jameson's essay is a familiar insistence on the importance of critically addressing binaries between subject and object, and their various manifestations. In "Third-World literature," Jameson is as much concerned about the "Third World" as he is of the "First World," on the one hand—however his essay might be faulted for its alleged sweeping generalization around issues about the "third-world" as well as of representation and class consciousness in First World aesthetic practice—even as, on the other hand, he is focused on analyzing the distinctiveness of the figuration of national allegory in selected Third-World literature, a geopolitical space, now also called the "global south." Against the backdrop of such opposition, he imagines a "cognitive map" of a structural totality rendered inaccessible by the post-modernity of what is called elsewhere as "globalization," a conception discussed in his 1984 essay, "Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," and associated with realism in his 1981 book, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*.

It is to this distinctiveness of the figuration of national allegory in the case of the Indonesian novel that this monograph trains its critical gaze.

Across the works of Jameson runs a common thread which is his conception of literature as a cultural artifact, providing "a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation," as articulated in his book, *The Political Unconscious*, in particular. Drawing from this conception, this monograph tries to engage with this Jamesonian assertion through the analysis of the novels, *The Weaverbirds* and *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds* by Y.B. Manguwinjaya, a highly regarded contemporary Indonesian

author who is best known as a socially committed writer. As such, indeed, "it is notable that his works serve as a critique against the dominant ruling elites who tend to be repressive, reconceptualizing the established notion of culture, nation, patriotism, and development."

Following Jameson's conceptualization of national allegory, Siswadi deploys an allegorical reading in order to argue that the two novels, *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*, reappropriate a national discourse dominated by the ruling elites in the New Order Indonesia (1966-1998), a term Suharto used to refer to his regime in opposition to Sukarno's, which was called, henceforth, as the "Old Order" (1945-1966). Together, as discussed in the monograph, the novels offer an alternative discourse which is in contradiction with the existing official discourse, therefore, problematizing it. In the language of the world of the fictive imagination, the two novels enunciate actual realities, insisting upon "their own alternative national discourse which is distinct from the existing official one."

In *The Weaverbirds*, the enhancement of national unity is viewed not to be contradictory to political stability. As such, it "should not deprive individual citizens of their basic right to be fully actualized." Instead of disregarding fundamental principles like justice, democracy, humanitarianism for the sake of national unity, "it should be conducted in terms of these values." In this way, the nation as social/political construct, is not above its members as human beings; rather, it is to be viewed as a means to an end, as "merely instrumental to them in their effort to be fully human." In much the same vein, in *The Migratory Birds*, human beings need not be subordinated by efforts undertaken in the name of the nation. Underpinning the novel is the idea that the promotion of national cohesion is not to be confined to the physical boundaries of a nation. On the contrary, any undertaking to achieve the goal of national cohesion should be done in the light of human values which, in fact, do not recognize national borders.

As Siswadi concludes, Mangunwijaya's novels gesture toward nationalism in the age of globalization but in ways that are appreciative and critical of both. Creating figures of faith in the full development of humanity for all, the novels offer insights that help convey a sense of primacy of national allegory in analogous cultural forms and literatures by authors from the so-called third-world like Y.B. Manguwinjaya who are neglected by first-world cultures.

Abstract

As a cultural artifact, literature has been said to provide “a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation,” as articulated by Fredric Jameson in his book, *The Political Unconscious*. This assertion may be validated by the novels, *The Weaverbirds* and *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds* by Manguwijaya, a highly regarded contemporary Indonesian author. In Indonesian literature, Manguwijaya is widely known as a socially committed writer, a description he is the first to admit. As such, it is notable that his works serve as a critique against the dominant ruling elites who tend to be repressive, reconceptualizing the established notion of culture, nation, patriotism, and development. By deploying an allegorical reading in light of this attempt at reconceptualization, this study posits that the two novels appropriate a national discourse dominated by the ruling elites in the New Order Indonesia. In so doing, together they offer an alternative discourse which is in contradiction with the existing official discourse and, therefore, problematizes it.

Keywords

national allegory, globalization, third world literature, discursive reappropriation, New Order Indonesia

Reappropriating National Discourse

Introduction

Since the end of the Second World War, most of previously colonized countries have obtained their national independence. However, history points out that their independence, in a number of ways, has been merely nominal. In reality, these countries—consisting of the so-called “Third World”—are still enmeshed in the struggle for genuine economic, cultural, and political equality and freedom (Sprinker 2). What accounts for this situation, according to Chinua Achebe, is the fact that colonization has bequeathed to the ex-colonial subjects both material impoverishment and spiritual denigration (Jan Mohamed 152). Moreover, their former masters are in fact disinclined to loosen their grip on the empire which has brought material gains to their homeland. In place of colonization, imperialism has taken over, in the guise of such refined forms as multinational or transnational corporations and international monetary institutions.

Among the Third World countries is the Republic of Indonesia. She proclaimed her political independence in 1945 although the Dutch government—one of the former colonizers—recognized her sovereignty only in 1949. However, the proclamation of her independence did not lead at once

to the formation of the Indonesian country as she is now. She had to go through a number of ordeals coming both from without and from within. On the one hand, the expulsion of Japan which had occupied the country for three and a half years lured the Dutch government to reestablish itself in its former colony. On the other hand, due to the vastness of her land and her plurality—racial, ethnic, cultural, religious—a number of insurrections in some regions threatening to disengage themselves from her embrace occurred following the proclamation. Hence, nation-building is one of the issues which constantly confronts the Indonesian country in her effort to maintain her existence among other independent nations.

Literature does not come out of nothing but comes from a writer belonging to a society. Since he or she is a member of a society or a nation, his or her work may be suggestive of not merely his or her own personal preoccupation but also something about the society or nation to which he or she belongs. And it seems literature's involvement in societal or national issues can be largely seen in the works produced in the Third World countries.

As stated in the opening paragraph of this study, Third World countries are still engaged in liberating themselves from their colonial legacies. The writers in this sphere of the world cannot help but find themselves engaged in taking national issues as a subject-matter of their writings even though the ruling elites of the countries, which are usually presided over by military or authoritarian regimes, dominate over the production of national discourse (Franco 205). In this regard, Fredric Jameson does not hesitate to contend that national discourse characterizes Third World literature (Jameson, "Third-World Literature" 69).

Since the emergence of modern Indonesian literature, many of the Indonesian writers have been actively involved in the process of national formation and cultural liberation from colonial legacy including Muhammad Yamin, Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, Chairil Anwar, Mochtar Lubis, Pramudya Ananta Toer, Umar Kayam, Y.B. Mangunwijaya, to mention but a few. In their works, they portray what they imagine to be the Indonesian nation. In so doing, they read the Indonesian past allegorically by reinterpreting from the perspective of the present, locating it in the context of contemporary themes, or imagining the prototype of the new Indonesian. It can be said, therefore, that Indonesian literature has played a significant role in the process of nation-building.

The issue of nationalism first came up as a theme in Indonesian literature at the rise of modern Indonesian literature around 1920. For the first time, the literature produced could “be placed in an Indonesian framework.” (Teeuw 2). Previously, Indonesia had not been viewed as “a clear political ideal” (Teeuw 2), which is to say that its concept was not as clear as it is now.

Even after the formal birth of Indonesia as a new nation, the question of nationalism has never disappeared from the history of Indonesian literature. Indeed, this is understandable because nationalism or nation-building does not end with the rise of a new state. It is in fact a continuous process, “constantly in-the-making” (Alter 21).

In the history of Indonesian literature, Mangunwijaya is one of the novelists who treat the question of nationalism in their works. Before him, there had been Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, Pramudya Ananta Toer, and Mochtar Lubis.

Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana (February 11, 1908—July 17, 1994), for one, belongs to the pre-Independence War generation (1920–1942) (Teeuw 36–39). He is of the opinion that literature can play an important role in the period of nation-building. His main concern is to bring Indonesia to a worthy place among nations. He argues that one possible way to achieve it is to adopt the dynamic spirit of Western culture. Among his novels which are obviously indicative of his concerns are *Dian yang ta' Kunjung Padam* (*The Lamp which will Never Go Out*) (1932) and *Lajar Berkembang* (*With Sails Unfurled*) (1936).

Unlike Alisyahbana, Ananta Toer belongs to the 1945 generation consisting of writers who were born after the Japanese colonization of Indonesia in 1942 (Teeuw 163–167). His writings revolve around the time of the Indonesian struggle for freedom from the clutches of colonial powers. He looks at the events metaphorically in order to emphasize the fact that the essence of the Indonesian nationalism is a transition from a slave’s soul to a free soul. His belief can be clearly evidenced by *Ditepi Kali Bekasi* (*On the Bank of the Bekasi River*) (1947) *Perburuan* (*The Pursuit*) (1950), and also by such recent works as *This Earth of Mankind* (1990), and *Child of All Nations* (1991).

Mochtar Lubis is a member of the 1945 generation as well (Teeuw 196–197). However, his works are set not only in the period of the Indonesian struggle for freedom but also in the first years after the Indonesian National

Revolution in the 1940s. In his works, he points out that during this period, the revolutionary spirit diminished owing to the economic hardships, with some Indonesian leaders resorting to corruption and graft.

He argues for the importance of looking back at the essence of the nationalistic spirit. *Tidak ada Esok* (*There is No Tomorrow*) and *Djalan tak ada Ujung* (*Road Without End*) are two of his works which underscore his concerns over the fate of the young Indonesia.

There is no doubt Mangunwijaya has much in common with the preceding writers. However, what makes him different from them is this: he situates the issue of nationalism in the context of present-and-future days. As he does, he is also concerned with the issues of feminism and globalization. But significantly, such themes are viewed from the perspective of the national cause.

In Indonesian literature, Mangunwijaya is widely known as a socially committed writer, a description he is the first to admit to (Rahardjo 444). As such, it is notable that his works serve as a critique against the dominant ruling elites who tend to be repressive, reconceptualizing the established notion of culture, nation, patriotism, and development. Moreover, the idea of preferential option for the poor or the powerless is consistently evident throughout his life and in most of his works.

His novels include *Romo Rahardi* (1981), *Burung-Burung Manyar* (*The Weaverbirds*, 1983), *Ikan-ikan Hiu, Ido, Homa* (*Fish, Shark, Ido, Homa*, 1983), *Roro Mendut* (1984), *Genduk Duku* (1985), *Lusi Lindri* (1986), *Burung-Burung Rantau* (*The Migratory Birds*, 1992) and *Durga Umayi* (1994). The works to be scrutinized in this study are *The Weaverbirds* and *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds*.

Literature and Politics

It is often argued that there is a close relationship between literature and politics since literature, the novel especially, is often employed to expose current political issues in one's country (Franco 204). As a cultural artifact, literature can also be said to serve to provide "a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation" (Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* 79). These statements may be validated by *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*.

In this light, this study posits that the two novels reappropriate a national discourse dominated by the ruling elites in the New Order Indonesia. In so doing, these offer an alternative discourse which is in contradiction with the existing official discourse and, therefore, problematizes it.

In order to demonstrate the process of the reappropriation of national discourse by the two novels, the study will undertake an “allegorical” reading of them.¹ To be more concrete, it will pursue in them the allegorical or hidden meaning of the surface structure of their narrative. And then, it will compare and contrast it with the official practices or forms of national discourse made or produced at the time they were published.

In undertaking an allegorical reading, this study confines itself to the study of Mangunwijaya’s fiction, particularly *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*. The choice of the two novels is made on the grounds that their titles are suggestive of their connecting themes—a reference to the mythical bird *Garuda*, or eagle to be more precise, which is the symbol of Indonesia. To be sure, they are not the only novels of Mangunwijaya which are concerned with the process of nation formation or national consciousness. Only in these novels, however, does the author discuss at length the current issues facing Indonesia as a nation.

It is also true that the two novels do not merely deal with national discourse but also with other current issues like feminism and social inequality. However, as will be demonstrated later on in the rest of this study, nationalism is at the thematic core of the novels.

The choice of nationalism as the subject of the study is motivated by the fact that globalization, as evidenced by the proliferation of multinational or transnational corporations throughout the world, has forced each country, especially the Third World countries, to question once again their notions of what is called a nation.² Miyoshi contends that the current effective operation of multinational or transnational corporations makes the nation-states “more and more look undefined and inoperable” (743). If his argument is correct, the need for reconceptualizing the idea of nation is a must.

It goes without saying that this study does not pretend to exhaust the possible allegorical meaning of the surface narratives of the novels. For their polysemy paves the way for themselves to be “socially constructed” with other signifieds.

Little research has been hitherto conducted on Mangunwijaya's notion of nationalism as incorporated in his creative works and no attempt has been made to see how the notion has been elaborated in a related number of his works. The contribution of this study, therefore, is to add to this scholarship which is expected to become more and more relevant as globalization makes possible the tearing down of barriers between and among nation-states. In addition, it offers an alternative approach to the study of his creative works; that is, it takes into account the context of their production, an aspect which is apt to be put aside in the current scene of literary studies. As such, it makes it possible to shed light on the political content of *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*.

National Allegory in Literature

Reviewing Latin American literature in "The Nation as Imagined Communities," Jean Franco argues that there is a close link between national formation and the novel. It is in the novel that "different and often conflicting programs for the nation" are debated (204). Tentative solutions are also often advanced. Therefore, the question of nation is implicated in the genre.

Furthermore, due to its manner of presentation, the novel makes it possible for a people to imagine a special community, that is, a nation (Brennan 49). Indeed, the close relationship between the two is also confirmed by the fact that the nation can also be defined to be an "imagined political community" (Anderson 15), meaning, that there is in it a "sense of creation" or "fictionality," though not in the sense of being "false" (Rafael 591).

Envisaged as such, the novel can serve as an allegory of the nation. Its narrative might transparently refer to "the structure" of the so-called nation; in short, it can advance itself as an indirect means of representing or formulating the process of nation formation.

Indeed, allegory, in fact, characterizes both the novel and the other genres. In most cases, it is conceived as a form of "extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative, either in prose or verse, are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself." Such meanings can be "religious, moral, political, personal, or satiric" (Holman 10-11).

In terms of signifying process, allegory is at present construed as no longer dependent upon a one-dimensional mode of communication, as is

usually the case with John Bunyan and his contemporaries. As argued by Jameson, the meaning which extends beyond the surface narrative is itself “in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text (Jameson, “Third-World Literature” 73). This is to say that the meaning is not fixed and stable, and changes over time.

It is allegory’s non-one-to-one-correspondence type of communication that has been optimally cultivated by writers in an environment which does not provide sufficient room for freedom of expression, individual or collective. In the hands of oppressed peoples, allegory not merely becomes a refuge but also offers possibilities of tackling, albeit not frontally, the politics of dominance and subservience. It may serve as a strategy for waging a “guerilla war” against a repressive or authoritarian system of government.³ In an introduction to a book on Indonesian culture and society titled *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia* (1993), Virginia Matheson Hooker and Howard Dick hold that the character of allegory which emphasizes a double meaning of a text has enabled Indonesian writers or artists to launch an assault against their repressive government in a “safe” way.

Since the 1970s, the tendency to employ allegory as a rhetorical mode has been felt in the activities of cultural production in New Order Indonesia.⁴ The New Order has repudiated the radical nationalist and populist ideology obtaining in the 1950s and the 1960s in favor of a “pragmatic, materialistic focus on economic development” (Hatley 49). In its effort to achieve the goal, it has insisted on the policy of control of popular political activity. For this reason, articulation of individual reaction to political questions is often made in the guise of culture: fiction, drama, poetry, film, popular music. And the ability to allude and not directly state one’s message has grown into an indispensable prerequisite for the success in “communication” of this kind (Hooker and Dick 2-3).

The mode of cultural production in New Order Indonesia, therefore, may serve to validate Jameson’s proposition.⁵ He argues that “All third-world texts are necessarily..allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as . . . national allegories” (“Third-World Literature” 69). The factor that has underpinned his hypothesis is the absence of a “radical split between the private and public, between the poetic and the political” in the Third World. The texts, “even those which are seemingly private . . .,” he

contends, “necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory (“Third-World Literature” 69).

National Allegory in Mangunwijaya’s novels

For a demonstration of how Mangunwijaya’s novels reappropriate national discourse, the theories on allegory in the previous section will be rendered operational. It is widely accepted that allegorical reading is generally taken to mean an act of searching in the text for the narrative which consistently refers to another simultaneous structure of events or ideas. In the reading process, however, the allegorical structure has to be present within the narrative itself. It is not merely something added to it by interpretative undertaking alone; all critical enterprise, in a sense, calls for “allegorical interpretation through the attribution of meaning to events within the given context” (Rudnick 214).

This study will employ Jameson’s concept of “national allegory,” found in “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism” (1986) which focuses on the ability of a narrative text to metaphorically represent a nation through its elements of fiction. It will, therefore, serve as a guiding principle for scrutinizing *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*. That is, it functions as a lens through which elements of fiction of the two novels are to be interpreted. Their conflict, plot, and other fictional elements will not be seen merely in isolation but in reference to the nation.

Aside from that, the following discussion will try to make clear the type of allegorical reading conducted in this study. Roughly speaking, it can be said that there are two kinds of allegorical reading: “Bunyanian” style and “Jamesonian” style. The former refers to the traditional allegorical reading wherein a set of fixed correspondences is used to interpret the text. Whereas the latter type of allegorical reading refers to interpreting Third World texts as narratives of how the nation is formed, “the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society” (Jameson, “Third-World Literature” 69). However, in terms of their basic assumption, there is no discrepancy between them. Both presuppose that a narrative text has two kinds of structure: surface structure and deep structure.⁶

Only when they come to the second stage do they proceed differently. The Bunyanian version comes to read a series of significant things against a

set of equivalences on the deep level which represent given meanings. In this way it only relies on a one-to-one correspondence kind of communication. The following diagram visualizes the process (see fig. 1).

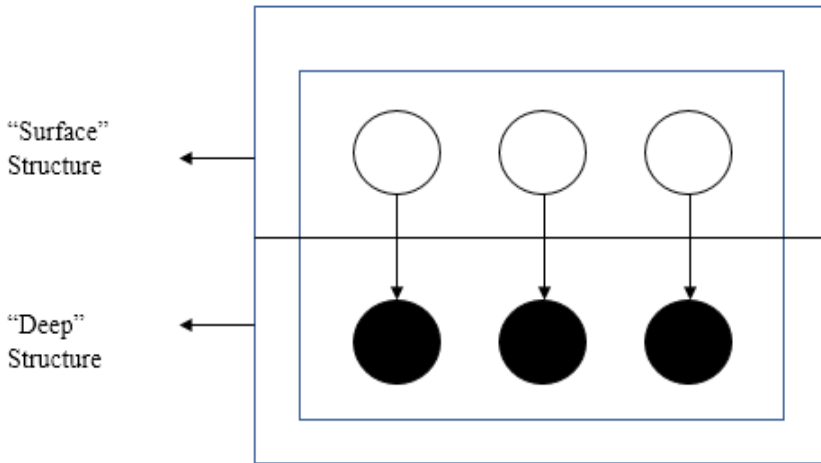


Fig 1. The narrative text has two kinds of structure: surface structure and deep structure. A single arrow pointing to the deep structure demonstrates how the signification process proceeds. As indicated by the dotted box inside the main box, elements on the surface level suggest the meaning of the element on the deep level and each has its own corresponding meaning.

In contrast, the Jamesonian reading sets them in motion against a set of equivalences on the deep level so as to form a sort of circuit after recognizing a set of signs on the surface structure. Relationship of the two sets is no longer "linear" in the sense that it is only one set that directly determines the meaning of the other. On account of the formation of a circuit, they "intersect and overdetermine each other" (Jameson, "Third-World Literature" 73). One set may determine the meaning of the other and the other way around. Therefore, an allegorical meaning of a text comes out of the interaction between them. In this way, the version is no longer hinged on a

one-to-one-correspondence line of transmission of meaning. Visualization of the process can be charted this way:

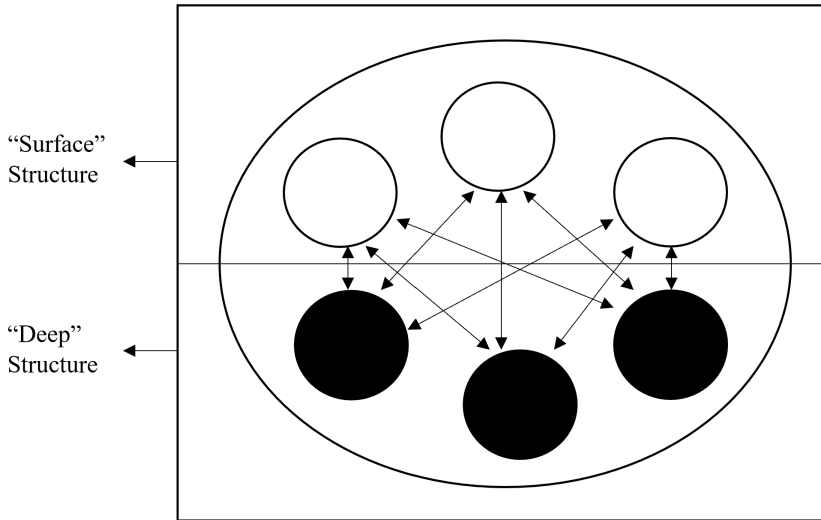


Fig. 2. The Jamesonian reading sets elements in motion against a set of equivalences on the deep level so as to form a sort of circuit after recognizing a set of signs on the surface structure. An arrow coming from and pointing to either structure shows the way a narrative text signifies. As articulated by the dotted circle inside the box, each element on either structure has a relative autonomy in determining the meaning of other elements. As a consequence, meaning comes out of the interaction among them and it does not progress in a linear way.

In this study the two novels will be analyzed one at a time, and then they both will be seen in terms of their thematic connection. The discussion on *The Weaverbirds* will be confined to its attempt to undertake an inward-looking reflection on the idea of nationalism, meaning that the reflection is projected into the individuals as members of the so-called Indonesia. Inversely, the treatment of *The Migratory Birds* will be limited to its effort to conduct an outward-looking reflection that is oriented towards Indonesian

individuals as global citizens. After the textual analysis of the novels is conducted, the discussion will proceed to show their allusion to the context in which they were produced.

Mangunwijaya, the Novelist and His Novels

As stated earlier, Mangunwijaya is well-known in Indonesia. He can, in fact, be construed as an all-around person. Aside from being a novelist and an essayist, he is also an activist, architect, a priest, and an ex-driver for the Republic during the Indonesian Revolution. In most of his pursuits, he always gains success. This accounts for the tremendous attention accorded to him and his works.

It is no wonder that a number of studies have been devoted to his works in the realm of “imaginative enterprise.” In what follows will be outlined a number of studies conducted on *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*.

Mudji Sutrismo claims that *The Weaverbirds* is Mangunwijaya’s effort to reconstruct modern Indonesian history (89-119). Specifically, Mangunwijaya has made an attempt to rehabilitate Syahrir, an actual historical figure in the novel, whose role has been downplayed in accounts of the Indonesian Revolution. In the novel, the intention has been embodied by its main characters, Teto and Atik. The study, however, stops there. It does not proceed to explore further the main characters’ role in addressing other issues of nation as will be undertaken by the present study.



Fig. 3 The celebrated Indonesian author Y.B. Mangunwijaya. The photo was taken in Yogyakarta in 1991. Acknowledgment to Gerry van Klinken for permission to use this photo.

On a different occasion, Boris Parnickel brings attention to the importance of the romantic affairs in the novel in probing into the colonial experience of Indonesia and her attachment with her former colonial master—the Dutch (17). Unfortunately, the study does not come to treat the impact of the colonial experience on the formation of current nationalistic feeling.

Toety Heraty Noerhadi's study states that the novel treats the issue of feminism in Indonesia as vividly shown especially by Atik—its female protagonist. She contends that Atik becomes, more or less, the author's projection of an Indonesian woman supposedly in the postcolonial period (70). In the study, however, Noerhadi does not situate Atik in the context of the issue of nationalism in general.

Like *The Weaverbirds*, *The Migratory Birds* also wins a great deal of attention from a wide public. An attempt to undertake a study on the issue of feminism in Indonesia as reflected in the novel has been made as well. Maman Suryaman holds that the female characters in the novel serve as prototypes of the Indonesian women in the post-nationalist (or globalization) era (43). But the study gives an impression that the Indonesian women entertain the idea that nationalism is no longer an issue of the era. This is undoubtedly not true. In these days, nationalism is still a relevant issue but merely takes on another dimension which renders it seemingly obsolete.

By applying structuralist genetic criticism to the novel, Wiyati comes to the conclusion that there is homology between the structure of the novel and the collective consciousness of Indonesian intellectuals in the face of the twenty-first century (Suryaman 44). But the study does not clearly relate the consciousness to the issue of nationalism with regard to the emergence of the so-called global village.

To be sure, those studies do not exhaust the discussion of the potential meanings of the novels. The present study aims at expanding the current field of inquiry into the two novels. That is, it will highlight their allegorical meaning and its relation to the issue of nation. As a consequence, there is continuity between this study and the previous studies on the same works in the sense that the studies are all examples of the act of reading against the grain. But there is also discontinuity between them in the sense that this study has a different way of looking at the two novels, that is, in the light of their nationalist thrust.

Context of *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*

Let it be noted from the beginning that the following discussion is meant to provide information on the context in which the examination of *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds* can be situated. The scope of investigation covers three main areas: Third World, Indonesia, and the author and his works; among these three areas, there surely is an interaction. Hence, the discussion of Mangunwijaya and his works cannot be conducted in isolation from the political and cultural aspects of New Order Indonesia in that he and his works are produced by, and at the same time produce the said aspects. The treatment of Indonesia, in turn, cannot be detached from that of the Third World. The areas will be seen in terms of their political and cultural dimensions.

The Third World and Colonial Legacy

The Third World and colonialism are in practice inseparable. It can even be said that one is identical with the other. The ensuing discussion will address their association.

a. Imperialism: From Direct Control to Indirect One

Within the social sciences, there have been a lot of debates concerning who first used the term “Third World” and its original meaning. However, it is widely agreed that it was coined by Alfred Sauvy, a French demographer and economic historian. He took it to mean “a group of countries outside the great power blocks,” namely, the West bloc (capitalist First-World), commonly associated with the USA, and the East bloc (socialist Second-World), associated with the USSR (Smith 19).

Although still related with Sauvy’s definition, the term used in this study is particularly meant to refer to a group of mostly former colonized countries:

. . . which are in the process of developing economically and socially from a status characterized by low incomes, dependence on agriculture, weakness in trading relations, social deprivation for large segments of society, and restricted political and civil liberties. (Smith 3)

However, it does not mean that in those countries there is no social stratification. Within them, no doubt, there can be found the so-called have-groups (the rich classes) with a big number of First-World facilities at their disposal.

Colonialism is one of the factors argued among social scientists as exerting the biggest formative influence on the status of the Third World. Its meaning is often confused with that of imperialism. The difference between the two is, in fact, simply in emphasis or focus. It is generally accepted, however, that colonialism largely concerns social and cultural matters while imperialism concerns economic matters.

As declared by Pramudya Ananta Toer in "The Role and Attitude of Intellectuals in the Third World", colonialism began with the coming of a number of Western (First World) countries in the sixteenth century to the Indonesian archipelago, the Moluccas, in particular, in search of spices. From then on, Western imperial powers established themselves, "bringing chaos to the whole non-Western world" (44). Only after the Second World War did most of these dominated countries (Asian, African, Latin American) manage to set themselves free from the grip of these colonial powers.

It was in the Asian-African Conference or Afro-Asian Conference, participated in mostly by newly independent countries, held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 that the Third World was formally born. In the conference, President Soekarno, President of Indonesia serving from 1945 to 1967, delivered his anti-imperialist speech, "Let a New Asia and Africa be Born," which made him the "Father of the Third World." To be sure, the emergence of the Third World has been a "decisive shift in the balance of world power." In this way, it is "nothing else but the illegitimate child of Western imperialism" (Toer 46).

However, most of the Third World countries gained their independence only on a formal political level. In practice, they are still caught up in the effort towards economic, cultural, and political equality with other nations on earth.

Given the poverty and backward economy of the country, a government in the Third World often faces difficulty in prioritizing the focus of the development of its country. Should it give priority to a socioeconomic sector, or a sociopolitical one? Or both? Preference for a socioeconomic goal

often leads to the rise of an authoritarian government while precedence given to a sociopolitical goal often results in an economic stagnancy of the whole country. And the compromise between the two sectors often makes the government impatient with limited results.

As may have been gleaned from many of the works of major Indonesian authors, material impoverishment and spiritual denigration have been brought about by imperialist domination and years of colonization which have left people in these countries with no good government and no strong economic system. To complicate matters, their former masters have been unwilling to grant them opportunities for self-determination. In place of colonization, they have reframed their imperialism within more socially acceptable forms such as multinational corporations and international financial institutions. In addition, within these former colonies had emerged the so-called comprador bourgeoisie who had been promoting foreign interests rather than domestic ones (Smith 29).

As a result, resistance to imperialism becomes a top priority on the national agenda of many Third World countries. They have to alert themselves to imperial powers not only from without but also from within. In this way, they are “locked in a life-and-death struggle” with imperialism, a struggle that is itself “a reflection of the economic situation of such areas in their penetration by various stages of capital” (Jameson, “Third-World Literature” 68). The constitution of the “Third World,” therefore, could not have been possible apart from colonialism, too. Due to the colonial experience, most people of the Third World are still entangled in “a culture of defeat and a colonized mentality” (Toer, “Role and Attitude of Intellectuals” 44), wrestling with the syndrome of “double bind” (JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics* 5). If they cling to their indigenous culture, they feel they can be labeled as members of a “calcified society”; if, however, they enhance assimilation, they fall into “a form of historical catalepsy” owing to their severance from their own past. In this way, they often lose “[their] sense of historical direction and soon [their] initiative as well” (JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics* 5).

In order to strengthen a feeling of superiority, the colonizers are actively engaged in an attempt to inculcate in the colonized people a belief that their masters are, in every walk of life, superior to them. For this reason, they

have employed a *modus operandi* accurately formulated by Chinua Achebe as follows:

You begin by looking down on the person and then at the worst stage the person you are looking down on also begins to look down on himself, when you reach this situation you have made your point. You don't need to do any more, he will take over and continue to look down on himself. (JanMohamed 152)

Indeed, as demonstrated by Frantz Fanon, the colonizers are not content merely with having the colonized people in their clutches, that is, by enforcing their rule upon "the present and future" of the dominated people. They also turn to their past, distorting and disfiguring it so that the oppressed people believe that the presence of their master is objectively needed. Otherwise, they will "fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality" (Fanon, "On National Culture" 226).

For this reason, the practice of cultural production in the Third World is colored by a response to colonial experience, either oppositional or accommodative. Fanon's mapping out of the evolution of colonized writers can aptly depict not only writing activity but also cultural production in general. He has divided the evolution into three phases. And the division cannot surely be taken as a clear-cut designation (Fanon, "On National Culture" 270–271).

The first phase is an assimilation stage. The dominated writers have adopted "the culture of the occupying power." They have sunk themselves in it. Their works are oriented toward their masters. Therefore, it is easy to identify in their works the same motifs as their counterparts in the mother country. The feeling of uneasiness or disturbance is characteristic of the second phase. The natives go back to "what they are" as they feel uncomfortable with what they have been doing so far. However, since they are not a part of their people, they are simply concerned with themselves, "recalling their life only" and interpreting old legends "in the light of a borrowed aestheticism." The final phase is a fighting stage. After "having tried to lose [themselves] in the people and with the people," the oppressed writers turn themselves into "an awakener of the people." They are driven by the need to "speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action" (Fanon, "On National Culture" 271).

To be sure, Fanon's taxonomy cannot be readily employed to portray the cultural life of the current Third World. However, it is still helpful mainly because people of the Third World countries have still sunk down in the swamp of colonized mentality; neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism has been a common phenomenon.

Faced with the current neo-imperialism which is actually an accelerated expansion of capital by the First World, Third World countries, according to Jameson, have no choice but nationalism as their "weapon."⁷ This seems necessary for the neo-imperialist powers have adopted postmodern culture, which is, in fact, suited to the logic of late capitalism.⁸

The Third World is still stuck to an attempt to free itself from colonial legacy. And Indonesia struggles for the same cause, as well. As will be shown later on, her effort does not always result in success.

Tendency towards Authoritarianism

Indonesia was colonized by two imperial powers, the Dutch and the Japanese. The former occupied the country for three and a half centuries from the 1600s until the 1940s, while the latter for three and a half years (1942-1945). Although Indonesia's attempt toward self-determination started early in the 20th century, the impetus for national independence came to its peak during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). She proclaimed her independence on 17 August 1945, with her national territory practically copying that of the Dutch East Indies (van Dijk 104). The national ideology she has subscribed to is "Pancasila" which comprises five principles, namely, belief in God, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice.⁹ In general, the postcolonial political history of Indonesia can be divided into two main eras: the Old Order under the presidency of Soekarno and the New Order under the presidency of Suharto. The former covers the period from Independence Day (1945) to the abortive Indonesian communist coup (1965) while the latter period from the bloody coup up to the present.

The "Old Order" associated to Soekarno by the Suharto era's "New Order" can be divided into the following periods: the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1950), Parliamentary Cabinet period (1950-1955), and the Guided Democracy period (1955-1965). During the Indonesian revolutionary period, the Dutch government attempted to reestablish its authority in its

former colony through violent means. The Parliamentary Cabinet period covers the time when the Western concept of democracy was put into practice and the internal disintegrative and divisive forces came to the surface. Finally, in the course of the Guided Democracy period, the ruling regime resorted to an authoritarian government system that ended with the abortive communist coup. Therefore, the first twenty years after the proclamation of independence in 1945 have been more or less marked with “almost constant political upheaval” (Crouch 51).

Accusing the previous order of not implementing Pancasila properly, the “New Order” of President Suharto from its inception insisted that its government promote it as the sole ideology of the state and put it into practice “in a pure and consequent fashion.” For this purpose, it has denounced the ruling cabinet and instead, has given a “high priority to growth” (Crouch 55). It believes that stability is the most crucial factor that paves the way for development in that it will draw plenty of foreign investors. In this way, it has, in fact, reintegrated “the Indonesian economy into global capitalist structures” (Robinson 24).

To attain political stability, the New Order has brought forth a “floating mass” program in which the common masses are deprived of any access to practical political activities. Individual citizens then have no adequate room for articulating their political concerns or expressing themselves. They are allowed to channel their political aspirations only through three government-recommended parties: Golkar, PPP, and PDI.

Besides, the Order has also taken strong measures against any factor which is believed to have stood in the way of the promotion of stability and development. As a result, a series of bans have been carried out during its government. Parties like the PKI (Indonesia’s Communist Party) and the PRD (People’s Democratic Party) which are thought to have threatened the continuation of the development program are prohibited. Likewise, a ban is also imposed on publications which are felt to have disrupted social security and stability. Among those which have been denied permission to resume circulation so far are *Sinar Harapan* (a daily paper), *Tempo*, *Detik*, and *Monitor* (all weekly magazines).

Hence, concerning the employment of Indonesian national ideology, the New Order has laid emphasis on “national unity, harmony, and stability” (Wang 251). Indeed, its effort has been fruitful. The economic

accomplishments and successful social programs of Indonesia “have been internationally recognized and praised” (Ramage 147). For the sake of political stability and economic growth, however, the regime, which has claimed proper interpretation and application of Pancasila, “has systematically violated Pancasila’s humanitarian, democratic, and justice principles” (Pabottingi, “Indonesia: Historicizing” 252). For this reason, most Indonesians today increasingly feel that the “the nation is abandoning its original ideals at an accelerating speed” (Pabottingi, “Indonesia: Historicizing” 253).

Primacy of Politics over Culture

It is good to take note again of the fact that New Order Indonesia has prioritized economic growth and development. The accomplishment of the objective calls for enhancement of political stability in all levels of society and all sectors of life. To ensure the stability, it has introduced the policy of depriving the masses of their chances for direct involvement in the activities of practical politics.

Aside from that, the New Order has also discouraged any engagement of politics in the field of cultural life. Its opposition to the diffusion of politics and culture has been, as it were, triggered by what happened in the late era of the Old Order. By then Indonesia’s Communist Party established Lekra (The League for People’s Culture) so as to mobilize a mass following. Through the institution, it promoted subordination of cultural life to political purpose (Maklai 70-71). In order to prevent the activity from occurring again, the government of the New Order has been very strict with its policy of distinction between culture and politics.

To make the policy effective, the government supports it with a censorship policy. Therefore, it does not hesitate to impose a ban on any publication or activity which is felt to have violated it. For example, many of Ananta Toer’s works have been banned because they have been thought of as laden with political content. For the same reason, a number of drama performances by Riantiarno and poetry readings by F. Rahardi or Rendra have been denied permission to be enacted.

On the other hand, with respect to its attitude toward culture, the New Order has emphasized that “culture is being used as a means to defuse potential political problems” (Hooker and Dick 5). For this reason, it has been

actively engaged in boosting and “moulding a national culture.” Considering that the heterogeneity of Indonesia as a nation can take on political force, it has “culturalized” it as much as possible (Hooker and Dick 5).

Today’s artists or writers of New Order Indonesia seem to have been increasingly familiar with the government’s policy. Likewise, in order to play safe, they have to “play the same game and culturalize socio-political comment and critique (Hooker and Dick 5). They hold that as long as they can situate in a cultural context the comment or debate which criticizes the New Order, it is all right. If, however, they cannot, they will surely be censored.

This situation has led them to resorting to forms of cultural production as a means of articulating and foregrounding their political interests. In this way, they are able to spot inconsistencies within the repressive system and manipulate them in order to resist the system. Indeed, it is true. For, as brilliantly shown by Michel Foucault, “where there is power, there is resistance . . . and the resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power (*The History of Sexuality* 95). In this sense, resistance began to emerge from “inside” Indonesia’s existing forms of cultural production even during the “New Order” regime.

Mangunwijaya and the Struggle towards National Liberation

Mangunwijaya’s works are a response to the political situation promoted in New Order Indonesia. What kind of response he makes will be traced back to his life history and his creative works.

Yusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya, brought up in a Catholic family, was born on May 6, 1929 in Central Java, Indonesia. He, therefore, knows what it is like to live as an Indonesian under three different systems of government, namely, Dutch colony, Japanese colony, and Indonesian Republic. He is among the few living witnesses to how Indonesia as a nation came into being.

The Indonesian Revolution was a watershed in the history of Mangunwijaya’s life. As a student-soldier, he was able to see that exploitation of man by man is not a hollow idea but it is something concrete. The cruelties and greediness of the dominator, both foreign and domestic, presented themselves as a “holed sack” which can never be fully filled. On the other hand, he was also capable of noticing that one’s hope for human life is not merely a dream. It is something real. “Little people” silently and gallantly resisted

“the repressive/ideological state apparatuses,” to draw from Althusser. Philosophically speaking, he witnessed a universal war: humanity versus inhumanity. In this case, one certainly cannot stay neutral and become simply a spectator. Mangunwijaya decided to be on the side of humanity or the little people. At the end of the revolution, he made up his mind to pursue priesthood as his life-career, “*yang bekerja tidak demi harta dan kekuasaan, apalagi dengan ‘tangan-tangan berlumuran darah’ yang mengorbankan rakyat*” (“Working not for riches, nor for power, nor with the ‘bloody hands’ which sacrifice the common people”).¹⁰

As precisely claimed by Willy Pramudya, Mangunwijaya is difficult to be seen in a “compartmentalized fashion” (11). He is almost an all-around person. He is an activist, architect, essayist, a novelist, and a literary critic. However, there are two things which make up the hallmark of who he is: seriousness and option for the poor, the weak, and the powerless. Both are reflected in his works in architecture, essays, creative writing, and also in social activities.

As a child of three eras, Mangunwijaya is very concerned with national issues of his country. He always hopes for the emergence of Indonesian individuals who can act in accordance with what they, as individuals, see to be best suited to their own country under particular situations at any given time, not merely on the basis of orders from above. Apart from that, he always tries to bring public attention to the fact that the cause of Indonesian independence is to free individual citizens from any form of oppression or exploitation.¹¹

As a novelist, he prefers to see himself as an amateur in its true sense of the word (Mangunwijaya, “Pengakuan Seorang Amatir” 99). For him, literature should, first of all, address universal questions about the spiritual as well as the material conditions of existence of human beings. Literature should surely be political. However, it should not be reduced to a “political manifesto” (Mangunwijaya, “*Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather*” 63). In the writing of his novels, he starts with choice of theme and message and then proceeds to carefully building up plot, tension, and other fictional elements (Mangunwijaya, “*Saya Tak Mau Jadi Godfather*” 63).

His trilogy—*Roro Medut* (1984), *Genduk Duku* (1985), *Lusi Lindri* (1986)—chronicling the collapse of the latest biggest kingdom on the island of Java in

the eighteenth century, demonstrates not only his insightful analysis of the political intricacies in the era but also a framework for seeing the current political milieu.

Burung-Buring Manyar (1981) and *Burung-Buring Rantau* (1992) which are discussed in this study also reflect his sympathy for those who are forced to live in the margins socially, culturally, and politically. His novels then become “the allegories of resistance,” to use San Juan’s terms.¹² The allegorical meaning of his novels launches a missile of criticism at the ruling elites in New Order Indonesia who tend to monopolize the national discourse.

With the discussion of the Third World, New Order Indonesia, and Mangunwijaya and his works in this section providing a framework for understanding the context of *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*, analysis of the novels will now be done in the next sections.

Inward-Looking Reflection on the Concept of Nationalism

The discussion of the three areas in the previous section functions to provide an underpinning for the analysis of *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*, i.e., the novels are viewed in relation to the context of production. The following discussion of *The Weaverbirds* will proceed in this way: first, it will make an account of Teto and Atik and their families; second, it will probe into its surface narrative; and third, it will uncover its allegorical meaning.

Teto and Atik as One Family

The Weaverbirds is about two close friends from childhood who have feelings for each other—Setadewa (Teto), whose mother is of mixed blood (Dutch-Javanese) and whose father is a Javanese aristocrat, and Larasati (Atik), whose mother is a Javanese aristocrat and whose father is a civil official. During the Indonesian Revolution, however, they stand on different banks of the river. Teto works for the Dutch, serving in the Dutch Colonial Army while Atik works for the Indonesian Republic, serving as a secretary. After the revolution they meet again when Atik defends her dissertation titled “Inner Nature and the Language of Self-Image in the

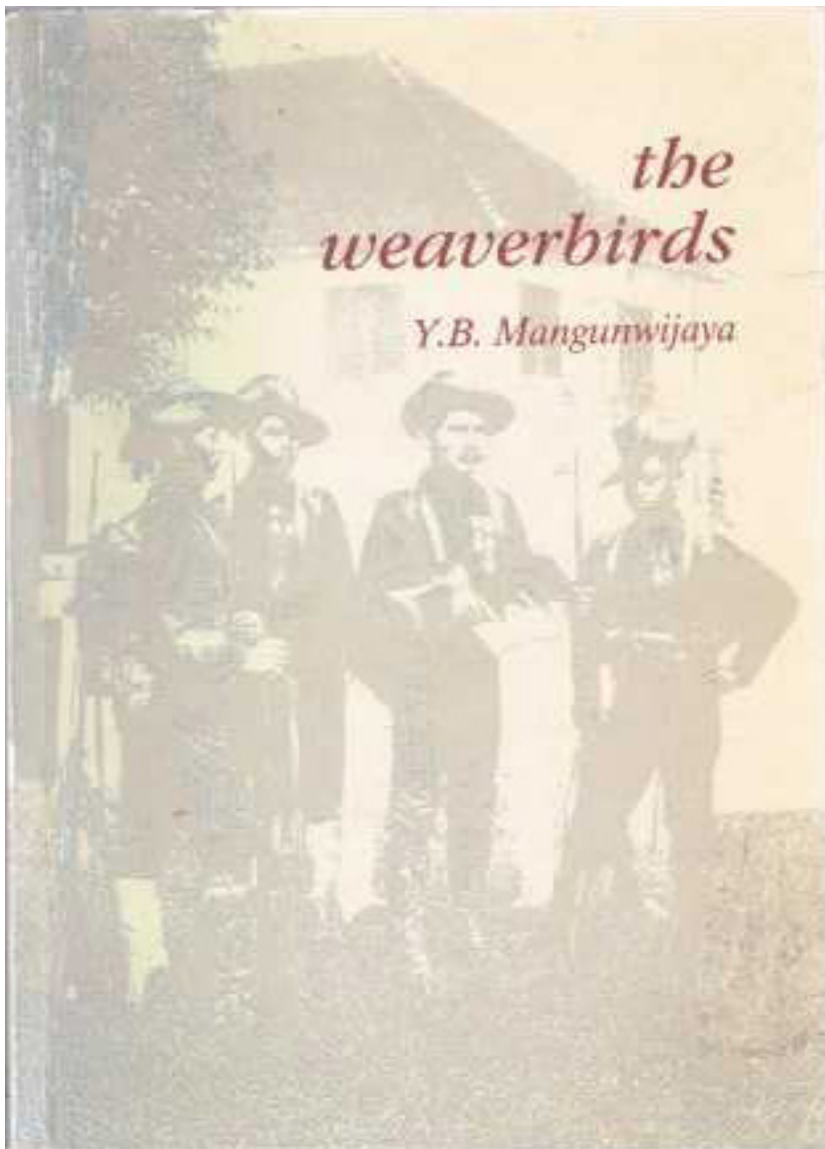


Fig. 4. The book cover of *The Weaverbirds* (translated by Thomas M. Hunter) published by Lontar Foundation in 1991.

Communicative Structure of the Avian Species *Ploceus manyar*” for a PhD degree in biology.

A lot of changes have happened to the two persons. Atik has gotten married, has three children, and works as the head of Directorate Environmental Protection while Teto has earned a PhD degree in computer science and works in the capital of city of Indonesia as a chief production manager for Pacific Oil Wells Corporation—a transnational or multinational corporation whose majority stocks are in American hands.

Atik and her family finally accept Teto as her own brother although they used to be “enemies.” After Teto has spent some days with Atik’s family, he tells them that he is going to reveal the unfairness of his company in distributing its profit which is disadvantageous for the Indonesian country. He realizes that his plan is risky to his career and he may be fired due to it. However, he is determined to do so as he has sworn to reveal this unfairness before the grave of his mother who has shown to him during her life a good example of how to love her husband and her country.

Atik’s husband, who is a top government employee, helps Teto in making public the hidden corruption. As expected, both Teto and Atik eventually get dismissed from their positions for what they had done may affect the relations among the countries behind the company. The story ends with the death of Atik and her husband as they are making their way on a pilgrimage to Mecca, a sacred place for Moslems and with Teto adopting their children, determined to bring them up.

Conflict of Teto and Atik as a Family Feud

The above brief account of the novel is only meant to function as an entry point for the following discussion of the surface structure of the story. Focus will be directed toward the main characters and their actions. *The Weaverbirds* centers on two families, namely, Teto’s family and Atik’s family. It is historically set in three different time periods with each making up one part: colonial period (Dutch and Japanese occupations), Independence Period, and postcolonial period (in order of time-sequence). The story opens with an introduction of the main characters Teto and Atik in their childhood and their families, and a meeting of the two families in Mangkunegaran, one of the royal palaces in central Java. In addition to beginning the novel,

the introduction serves to supply a hint of the main issue advanced in the novel. All members of the two families, except Teto's mother, have much in common with regard to their attitude toward the palace: they tend to stay away from it. The question which might arise is: How does one bring one's self in relation to such social institutions as monarch, party, nation? The following discussion of the novel will be an attempt at concretizing and addressing the issue.

Regardless of the fact that his family is an aristocratic one, Teto the protagonist and one of the narrators of the novel, prefers to live as an "army brat," playing in the streets with his peers from his compound. By so doing, he does not have to "remember hundreds of little points of politeness which had made you end up feeling no better than a marmot in the cage," and therefore feel as if he had "found the Garden of Eden on Earth" (10).

Like his son Teto, Brajabasuki, an official of the Royal Dutch Army, the army stationed in Indonesia, is "much happier outside the walls of the palace," and likes "the free life, the life that people lead in Europe" although he is a minor prince of the Mangkunegaran court. For this reason, his father does not find anything wrong with Teto hanging out with the children of corporals or privates; he thinks his son is getting "a good and practical education" (13).

Similarly, Atik's family does not really appreciate the royal ways of life. Once, Atik protests being called "Princess," an address which she does not like. Instead, she prefers to be called merely as Atik. As witnessed by the maidservants in the palace, she "doesn't seem to be happy here in the palace" and she is "always alone, either reading a book or daydreaming" (23).

Instead of marrying a nobleman, Atik marries Antana, an agricultural advisor in the Dutch Indies Government who is devoid of noble blood. It is Atik's mother, a relative of the king, who chooses Antana. Like Teto's family, Atik's family does not live in the palace's compound but outside it. They live in Bogor, near Jakarta, "a city famous for its high rainfall, but also for its fertility and an air of freedom." Her father often invites her to come along to his work, touring through fields and forests. In this way, she develops a taste for outdoor activities like seeing birds playing, climbing up a tree, sightseeing and hiking in the fields or forests, and she cannot, indeed, "imagine living as a lady of the court" (31).

The two families once in a while meet each other in Mangkunegaran court, answering the invitation of Prince Hendraningrat. Therefore, Teto and Atik often find themselves playing together but they also frequently end up quarreling since Teto delights in teasing her by violating the rules of the game they have agreed to abide by, or even at times by slinging stones at the birds she is watching.

In a way, the introduction of Teto and Atik in their childhood and their families foreshadows what the novel's main characters go through later in the story. When the novel's focus moves on to the account of the Japanese troops' invasion of Indonesia, the intensity of the story begins to heighten, and the question posed earlier, "How does one bring one's self in relation to social institutions such as monarch, party, and nation?" begins to take on complexity.

The defeat of the Royal Dutch Army to the Japanese troops has brought disaster to Teto's family. While his mother tries to support the family by selling their cashable belongings one at a time in the market, his father Brajabasuki becomes very disheartened. He involves himself in the anti-Japanese movement, expecting the final victory of the Allied Forces and the return of the Dutch. His act forces him to be separated from his family and relatives.

Not wanting to put Prince Hendraningrat's family in danger, Teto and his mother look for a haven in Antana's home in Jakarta. However, it is from there that the tragedy confronting Teto's family plays in full swing. Brajabasuki is in the end captured by Japanese agents while attempting to contact his family. The incident brings a tremendous shock to his mother: "Mama, having lost the husband she loved so dearly, had retreated more from life. . . . She became more silent and uncommunicative" (45). Teto can't help but see the moment as the beginning of "a new chapter" in his life: "I felt inside me a call to take my father's place" (45).

Teto feels like he has been bumped against the wall of reality when Mrs. Antana tells him that his mother has become the mistress of a Japanese commandant in order to spare his father's life: "Mama could choose: either Papa would die or she could become the Commandant's mistress. She chose that latter course but did not want the truth about her to be covered up" (47). Indeed, it is hard for Teto to accept the reality. For this reason, he weeps for the first time in his adult life; he really does not know whether "to be proud of his mother and to sing her praises or to kill her" (47).

As a result, Teto hates anything Japanese: “The hatred that ran through my entire being for anything and everything that smelled of Japan grew ever greater.” His hatred also includes his fellow countrymen, including Soekarno and Hatta, who call themselves Indonesians, but who are never tired of “kowtowing to the Japanese,” and take to the streets to “scream their inane slogans: ‘Long live The Rising Sun’” (48).

Moreover, he decides that he will “follow [his] father’s footsteps and join the Colonial Army.” He is determined to unshackle himself from his homeland with “its villager mentality” and from “all those instigators and purveyors who called themselves nationalists and supported the bastards who had made a whore of my mother” (48).

From that time onward Teto stays in the Antana’s home. All members of Atik’s family are very attentive to him, feeling sorry for the disaster “that had befallen his father and mother.” Atik treats him as “her own brother” while Mr. Antana and Mrs. Antana present themselves as good second parents to him. The latter even often finds herself imagining Teto as her son-in-law.

The Weaverbirds begins its second part with the account of Teto joining KNIL (the Dutch Colonial Army) following the surrender of Japan to the Allied Forces. It is here that the story reaches its climax and the novel’s theme is situated within a wider context: What basically constitutes a social institution? Is it identical with its member’s total being? Is its membership permanent? Do its members have any right to nullify the humanity of non-members?

The main factor that accounts for Teto’s joining the army is that he can, as he argues, fulfill himself through it. Hence, it is wrong, he goes on, to consider him as “a lackey for the Dutch.” For him the Dutch Colonial Army is only “a means to an end, no different from the Republic of Indonesia, that nationalist idea of a means to an end” (62).

War, which marks the Indonesian Revolution, breaks between the Dutch colonial government and the new Republic of Indonesia just proclaiming its independence. Teto has no misgivings in mind about his alliance with the Dutch. He violently attacks his own countrymen whom he thinks of only as “pupils of the racist Japanese” (62).

However, Teto becomes very upset when he comes to a realization that Atik and her family are on the Republic’s side: “Atik, dear Atik, I thought.

Wouldn't she be disappointed to see me as an enemy of Soekarno" (70). He remembers arguing with Atik while he was staying with her family. He tries to convince her of the following point:

Please, Atik. You should be able to see for yourself. How can a people who bow at the feet of plunderers really want freedom? Later, maybe, but not now. It is not the time yet. Dreams and emotions are not enough. We need logic. I'll say it again—logic. Can't you understand? (71)

As a matter of fact, Teto does not know how to face Atik and her family. When he conducts a patrol with his subordinates, however, he always takes the opportunity to stop by at Atik's emptied house, hoping to meet the family, especially Atik whom he misses very much. In fact, he risks being called a traitor by the Dutch Colonial Army as Atik's house is on the side of the Republic. However, he is lucky to have a good-hearted superior like Colonel Verbruggen, who fails to marry his mother but who still loves her. Teto is still allowed to frequent Atik's house which has become his "last refuge."

Finally, Teto's effort bears fruit; he is able to meet Atik. The meeting, however, turns out to be a nightmare for him since it has led him to a climactic inner conflict: Whether to give up his belief and then choose Atik or to stick to his belief that he is on the right side and lose Atik in return. Indeed, he cannot bear seeing Atik weeping in his arms:

It was at that moment I doubted myself for the first time. I felt afraid of once again losing someone I loved. I also felt shame. I wished that I'd never been born. Was this the power of a young woman, to shake the foundations of a man's strongest beliefs? (94)

Again, for the second time, Teto cannot help bursting into tears, considering that now he might lose Atik. He is unable to prevent his hatred toward the Republic from increasing, finding that it has snatched his beloved Atik from his hands. Finding no way out of the conflict, Teto finally leaves Atik alone, running his jeep like "a madman off in search of a mad world" (97).

After the incident in the Antana's house, Teto still remains with the Colonial Army. But, he gradually becomes disillusioned. The insistence of the Dutch government on the use of violence against the Republic of Indonesia

brings him to an awareness that it is just as racist as well. Furthermore, his pride of being an official of the Colonial Army deteriorates after Colonel Verbruggen tells him its difference from the Royal Dutch Army, "The Royal Dutch Army is the true army of the Dutch Crown. The Dutch Colonial Army is nothing but a band of outlaws and hoodlums" (79). He realizes he is, in fact, no more than a gangster, too.

Due to the pressure from the Allied Forces and international institutions which have been sick of world wars, the Dutch government is forced to withdraw its troops from Indonesia and to recognize its sovereignty as a nation. Accordingly, Teto has to accept the fact that he belongs to the losing side. At the end of the Dutch occupation, he becomes more downhearted finding his mother being treated in Kramat Mental Asylum. He cannot communicate with his mother any longer for the only answer to his question is: "I gave them everything. But they broke their promise" (166).

The reencounter between the novel's main characters, Teto and Atik, in postcolonial days heralds the last part of the novel. It is here that tentative answers to the novel's questions gain articulation.

Many things have happened to Teto and Atik while they were away from each other. While the latter has gotten married and has three children, the former is a widower. Most important is the fact that Teto has changed a lot. He has been able to look back critically on the things he has undergone over the past years and to learn a lesson from them.

After completing a doctoral program in computer science in the United States and working overseas for years, he is back in Indonesia as chief production manager of a multinational corporation specializing in oil mining. Being an expert in computer science, he discovers the practice of data manipulation by his company thereby causing a big loss to Indonesia. As usual, his heart moves him to take measures against a dishonest or corrupt practice. He makes up his mind to use the opportunity of making the practice public as a momentum "to fulfill my vows to my mother and father," that is, "to do something to make them proud of me . . . to prove . . . I was not a person who broke promises" (226).

Due to the decision, Teto encourages himself to meet Atik and her family, realizing the time has come for him "to face the woman I loved," and "to change from the old kind of person into a new kind of man" (290).

Seeing himself as a traitor, he, in fact, finds it hard to meet with them. Much to his surprise, however, they do not feel about him that way: “We’ve never thought of you that way at all. We know the reasons behind the choices you made. And you are honest. That’s what counts with us” (285).

As indicated precisely by Mrs. Antana, Teto realizes that he has so far been directed more by emotion than by reason: “Hasn’t your heart in fact been your guide in everything you’ve done?” (266). His mistake is, according to Atik, only “to have placed his personal problems directly beneath the storm boots of the military and the state” (169).

It is true that Teto’s mistake, as he acknowledges, lies in his equating the Republican nationalists with the Japanese: “It was wrong of me to identify the Republican nationalists with the Japanese” (290). However, this is not to say that this negates the fact that “. . . there were among the Republican leaders—and pardon me for saying this—ones who not only studied the Japanese mentality, but became its inheritors” (290). The case of Samsu (one of the minor characters in the novel) can be advanced as an example. He is one of the leaders of the guerrilla troops for the Indonesia Republic. However, his acts attest to the fact that he was no more than a bandit who is now ironically employed as a regent (almost equal to a mayor) after the revolution:

Then the news was heard that Samsu had executed the clerk and waterworks overseer in the nearby village of Bawongan. Samsu claimed that they had gone to the city and come back with Colonial Army money in their pocket. This he placed “for safekeeping” in his metal case, much heavier now since it also contained the gold that clerk from Bawongan had owned, a wealthy man by local standards. (139-140)

Teto does not change his mind although he is reminded by Atik that his plan to reveal to the public the corrupt practice in his company might endanger his position and lead to his dismissal. He does not falter in his decision as he feels that now, he is not mistaken in identifying the target. As he argues:

I won’t go on serving a corporation that exists to perpetuate a fascist mentality, a company that has no qualms about cheating and exploiting this country, forcing upon it a formula of ruin. Indonesia is my country, too. It’s my mother, although in another form. So if the

country I love is now to be destroyed by a bank of computers, the time for revenge has come again. This is a new moment of reckoning for me. I didn't waver back then and I won't waver this time either. Back then I was mistaken in my choice of targets. This time I'm not. (291)

Predictably, Teto loses his job. However, his action has created him anew. His "reentry" into the so-called Indonesia has enabled him to undergo self-fulfillment, that is, to be a new person, and his self-actualization is underscored by the symbolic unification of himself and Atik's family: he adopts the children of Atik who dies with her husband while making their way on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Nation as a Means to be Fully Human

The earlier discussion comes to a recognition of significant elements on the surface structure of the text: Teto, Atik, and their conflict. The construction of the surface structure, in fact, rests mainly upon their account. Both of them are actually one family since they are derived from the Mangkunegaran court. In their childhood, Teto and Atik break out but are separated. Teto is on the side of the Dutch whereas Atik is on the side of the Republic of Indonesia. In the end, they get united again.

The prominence of Teto and Atik and their action on the surface structure provides clues to the allegorical meaning of the text which will be discussed later on. The separation of Teto and Atik raises a number of questions: Can Teto be considered a traitor to this country? Is he morally wrong? Is Atik's decision merely subjectively made? To be more abstract, these questions can be summed up by asking: How should one bring oneself in relation to a social institution like the nation? To be more specific, the questions posed earlier can in fact be repeated thus: What basically constitutes a social institution? Is it identical with its member's total being? Is membership permanent? Does its [social institution] members have any right to nullify the humanity of non-members?

As will be highlighted later on, it is argued in the text that nation is not an end in itself but simply, in Teto's words, "a means to an end." Its objective is to lead its citizens into self-fulfillment or self-actualization as free human beings. Therefore, when it no longer serves the purpose, one can, in fact,

withdraw his membership. As clearly shown by Atik and her family, it does not entitle its members to deny the human aspects of non-members. They readily accept Teto with open arms.

Allegorically speaking, therefore, *The Weaverbirds* can be seen as an attempt at undertaking an inward-looking reflection on nationalism. It gives an insight into the core of nationalism: it is only an instrument for gaining a given objective. To be more concrete, it aims at enabling self-actualization of its citizens as individuals rather than of the state, meaning that it provides liberation for individual citizens rather than for their state. To speak of the same thing differently, as an ideological or political principle, nationalism leads to the constitution of each citizen as a subject (Althusser 170) or in Fanon's words, it becomes "part of the personal experience of each of its citizen" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 159).

In order to articulate the "hidden" meaning more fully, the novel is also metaphorically concerned with the treatment of current issues in the political map of New Order Indonesia, namely, the prevalent views of the Indonesian Revolution and the 1965 abortive communist coup. The subsequent investigation will tackle the issues one at a time.

Firstly, nowadays there is a tendency among the ruling elites in Indonesia to fix or homogenize the meaning of the Indonesian Revolution by romanticizing it (Sutherland 113). They never fail to avail themselves of the opportunity of identifying it with the spirit of patriotism: willingness to serve and sacrifice for the motherland or nation. It just may be that this has got something to do with the fact that some key members of the present ruling elites were involved in the revolution. Therefore, the insistence on its identification with the spirit of patriotism, which is often called "45 values," contributes to "sacralization" of the generation involved (Lay 20), thereby enforcing the legitimacy of their present power. If this point is correct, it is reminiscent of Fanon's criticism of the nationalist bourgeoisie in *The Wretched of the Earth*.¹³

The Weaverbirds implicitly conveys its resistance to any attempt to homogenize the meaning of the Indonesian Revolution. It brings it back to the contested terrain of signification by implying that a lot of vested interests were intertwined in that historical event. Of course, it does not claim that the so-called "45 values" do not exist. Indeed, they do exist, but the spirit

contradicts any notion that the meaning of the revolution is identical only with the “45 values”. In this regard, by discouraging any effort to confine the meaning of the revolution merely to the “45 values” privileged by the current dominant ruling elites, the novel, in fact, offers a subversive way of interpreting the revolution. As clearly shown in the earlier analysis, Samsu’s case exemplifies a different set of values, or interests, to be precise. In this way, the meaning of the Indonesian Revolution is subject to overdetermination.

As a result, the fixation of the meaning of the Indonesian Revolution, no doubt, will go against the underlying spirit of nationalism. That is, it will get stuck in the national revolution and will not proceed to the revolution in other fields of life—political, socioeconomic, and cultural. In this way, the aspirations or interests of individual citizens will always be subordinated to those of the homeland or the state, which is actually a mere abstract entity. Moreover, it will give an impression that nationalism or the process of nation-building has been completed, which is of course not true. For, in fact, nation is, according to Anderson, an “imagined community.” Therefore, it refuses fixity of its meaning or concept.

Secondly, the abortive Indonesian communist coup is the darkest page in Indonesian history and has led to the ascendancy of the New Order into power. The coup, according to the US Central Intelligence Agency, has caused the death of six generals and the massacres of about 87,000 up to 500,000 people. The victims of the massacres include the members and suspected members of PKI (Indonesia Communist Party). It seems the present government is very traumatized over the event. The PKI has been banned since 1965 and the families of the PKI members are closely watched and even sometimes isolated. Ironically, there is so far no “serious dispute over who was in the main responsible for initiating and guiding the massacres” (Pecora 281). Apart from that, the uprooting of PKI has led to “the demonization as communists of virtually all perceived opponents of the New Order” according to John McBeth (qtd. in Berger 334).

With regard to the coup, *The Weaverbirds*, in fact, does not say anything explicit about it. Even the periodization of the Indonesian history covered in the novel skips the period in which the event took place. It only deals with three periods: 1) 1934-1944; 2) 1945-1950; and 3) 1968-1978. Therefore, it does not cover the period from 1951 to 1967 when internal conflicts within

Indonesia were rampant and the abortive communist coup was the climax. As no different account of the bloody historic event has been written, the novel does not say anything explicitly about it, either.

The omission, according to HB Jassin, constitutes a sort of defect of the novel since it brings forth a missing link in it.¹⁴ However, it does not necessarily mean that it says nothing about the period. In fact, it even gives a clue as to how to understand the novel's perception of it inasmuch as, according to Macherey, "What the work cannot say is important because the elaboration of the utterances is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence" ("The Text Says" 218).

The account of the conflict between Teto and Atik, in fact, keeps referring to the conflicts obtaining in the missing period. This "mirroring technique" is also accentuated by the prelude of the novel, which actually functions as a basic framework of the novel as a whole. It takes over a significant scene from a shadowplay.

The prelude presents an account of a family feud between Pandawa and Kurawa (evil cousins of Pandawa) in general, or a conflict between two brothers, Kreshna (Narayana) and Baladewa (Kakrasana) in particular. And it is commonly agreed that, concerning the conflict, Pandawa is on the right side while Kurawa on the wrong one.

As it is clearly evident from the prelude and the whole story of the novel, the prevalent view is put into question. The view is too black-and-white a judgment which is bound to be a sweeping generalization. It tends to overlook the "right" or positive aspects of Baladewa's stance. As the prelude points out, Baladewa's siding with Kurawa is born out of his love and loyalty to his people and the Kurawa land that has brought him up.

The novel argues that one's identification of Baladewa with his nation and also Teto with the Dutch will pave the way for a failure to see the human dimensions of the two characters. This, in fact, parallels the tendency to elevate the status of a nation above that of humanity which is persistent in New Order Indonesia. The tendency will, in turn, discourage individual citizens from promoting their capacity for independent analysis and judgment of issues regarding the nation. Accordingly, the significance of the two scenes cannot be confined to one dimension. They are then rendered under the control of an overdetermination process or the "polysemia of the dream."

As remarkably revealed by Atik who is able to welcome Teto back into her arms and family, human values must be placed above political differences. Hence, the massacres of fellow countrymen following the coup should not have occurred and the “isolation” of the members of the PKI members’ families should have come to an end. In this way, the novel provides some sort of framework for coping with the internal conflicts that happened during the period, that are happening, and that may happen in the future.

The national allegory of the novel is also accentuated by the symbolic rendering of the weaverbirds which are used as the title of the novel and the topic of Atik’s dissertation entitled “Inner Nature and the Language of Self-Image in the Communicative Structure of the Avian Species *Ploceus manyar*.” The dissertation provides an account of her investigation of the behavior of the avian species called *Ploceous manyar*. The presentation begins with an account of how the males of the species win their partners during the mating season. First of all, they build nests of “sedge-grass, the fiber of sugar-cane leaves, and other long-leafed plants.” While they are building their nests, the females look on, “apparently relaxed and unconcerned, but in fact paying rapt attention to the progress of their young avian engineers.” And then comes the stage when the female weaverbirds inspect and appraise the construction efforts of the males and then choose the ones that have caught their fancy.

The males whose nests are chosen, live together with their partners while those which fail “take wing and fly at their finished nests, tearing at them with their beaks until nothing is left.” However, the males do not abandon their hopes. They begin to build new nests again from the outset, hoping that “this time their creation will be the ones chosen by the princess of their realm” (243-44).

Again, the elaboration of the behavior of the species sheds light on the national discourse symbolically articulated by the novel. The Indonesian people should not be discouraged by failures they have made on their way to realizing the ideals of their nation. Like the failed weaverbirds, they should not hesitate to “reweave” their nation so as to attain a liberation of its citizens from any form of bondage, a cause whose realization does not stop upon the proclamation of national independence from the colonial powers but entails an ongoing process. To be sure, like the birds, they “don’t just build nests.” However, their efforts should be “the language of creation itself, a



Fig. 5. A weaverbird (*Ploceus manyar*). Photo by Imran Shah licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0.

manifestation of attitudes and emotions that human eyes and ears can in fact record” (247).

Attending Atik’s doctoral-defense ceremony, Teto cannot help but feel like a failed weaverbird as well: “Almost every one of her remarks could be read as an allusion to my personal history” (248). Located within this context, Teto’s personal life-history cannot be read merely in individual-psychological terms. As a matter of fact, it has to be seen as a national allegory. His alliance with the Dutch Colonial Army is not a matter of an attempt to take his revenge upon the racist Japanese and also their nationalist followers for the destruction they have brought to his family. Indeed, it is more than mere vindictiveness, which actually does not pinpoint the primary cause for his action.

When Teto finds that nationalists have paid more attention to the independence of the Indonesian land rather than to the liberation of its

inhabitants from colonial legacy, particularly colonial mentality he makes up his mind to join the Dutch Colonial Army which he thinks will provide him with bigger room for full self-fulfillment as a human being. The conflict within his heart then is more between himself and fellow countrymen rather than between himself and Atik, namely, the conflict over the objective of nation formation or national independence. In other words, is it for the sake of the liberation of the homeland or state which is an abstract entity, or is it for the sake of its people or citizens? In a way, therefore, it is, in fact, a conflict within the Indonesian nation itself.

As stated earlier, the novel favors the idea that the goal of national independence is to bring liberation more to citizens than to their state. The process of liberation itself does not come to an end with the accomplishment of independence inasmuch as it is actually simply a bridge to the true liberation of the people in every walk of life—political, cultural, economic. That the process of liberation is an ongoing process is symbolically indicated at the end of the novel by Teto's adoption of Atik's children following the death of their parents: "I was made the legal guardian of Atik's three children? . . . [to] guide them towards a future befitting their own 'inner nature' and 'self-image'" (308). Aside from that, the process of liberation has always been contextualized in accordance with the demands of the times, that is, in line with the inner nature and self-image of the members who form the so-called Indonesia at a given time.

To sum up, *The Weaverbirds* provides an insight into the underlying principle of nationalism. It is only instrumental to a given cause, meaning that it is constructed not simply for the sake of itself but that of enabling its members or citizens to be fully human. To put it another way, the purpose of the formation of a nation is to liberate not only the state or country but mainly its individual citizens from any shape of subjugation or suppression. A subsequent insight from Teto may function to underline this point: "That was the mistake in the nationalists' logic, thinking that a country and its people were the same thing. They figured that if the country got its freedom it would follow that its people get theirs" (62).

In other words, the novel talks about the concept of nation in terms of its contribution to the self-actualization of its citizens as human beings. In fact, it also invites readers to look into the concept in the light of the citizens'

attitude toward their counterparts from other countries as globalization has become a common thing. However, it does not offer a clear insight into it. It seems its author has deliberately reserved the issue for his other novel entitled *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds*, a discussion that is found in the following section.

Outward-Looking Reflection on the Concept of Nationalism

While the previous section demonstrates how *The Weaverbirds* makes an attempt to undertake an inward-looking reflection on the concept of nation, this section conveys the way *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds* critically meditates about the concept in an outward-looking fashion. The discussion in the section undergoes the following stages: first, it provides a brief account of the novel; second, it discusses its surface narrative; third, it unfolds its allegorical meaning; finally, it uncovers the thematic connection of the two novels.

Wiranto and His Children

Burung-Burung Rantau or *The Migratory Birds*¹⁵ talks about Wiranto's family. He is an ex-general and a former Indonesian Ambassador to Britain and right now is a commissioner in the State Central Bank. He has five children: Anggrainin Primanighsih (Anggi), Wibowo Laksono (Bowo), Candra Sucipto (Candra), Marineti Dianwidhi (Neti) and Edi (in order of age).

The family can be said to be an "international family." Anggi is an international businesswoman. As a career woman, she keeps moving from

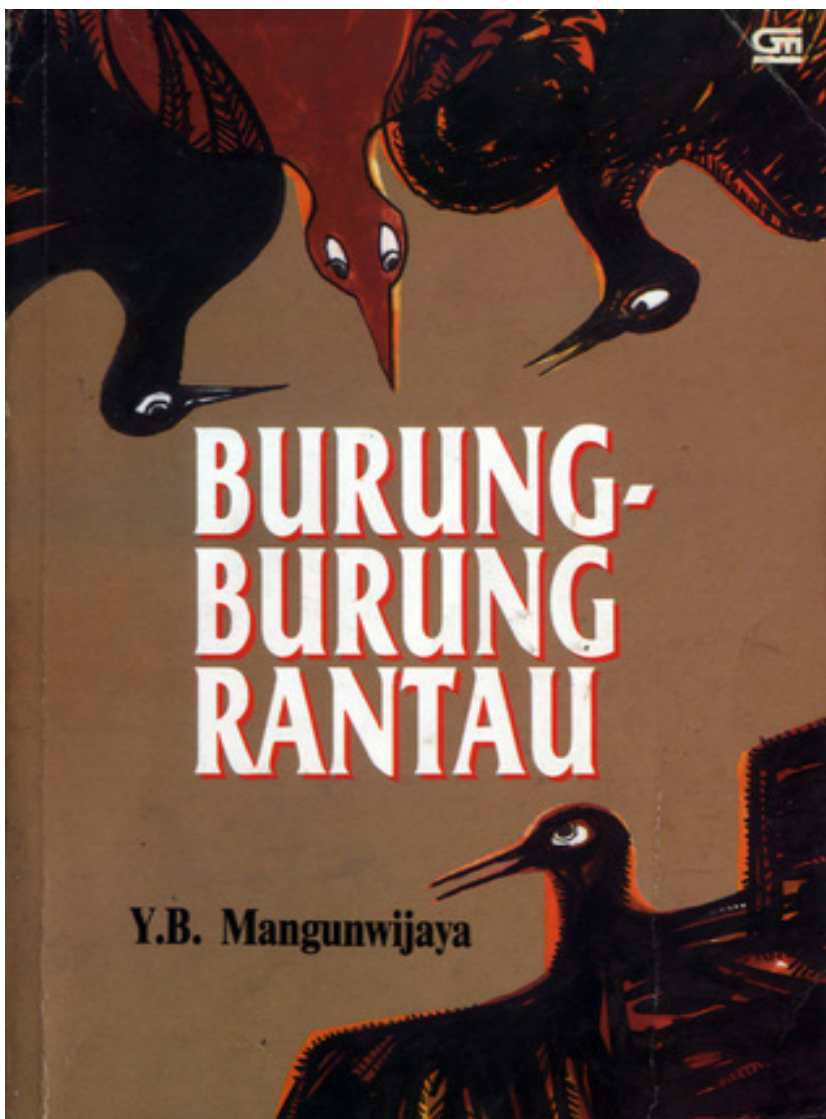


Fig. 6. The book cover of *Burung-Burung Rantau* published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

one country to another, managing her business. Bowo is a scientist who has earned two doctorates—one in nuclear-physics and the other in astrophysics. He works in an international CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Geneva. He is married to Agatha, a Greek woman. Unlike his older brother who is a theorist, Candra is a practical person, serving in the air force academy in Madiun (Indonesia). “Most unique” in the family is Neti. While being a graduate student in anthropology, she works as a social worker among squatters in urban slums. She fails to marry Gandhi Krishnhatma (Krish), an Indian who also dedicates his life to the development of his country. The youngest is Edi who is a drug addict and dies young.

In general, for parents to see their children grow up brings about not only delight but also anxiety within their hearts. On the one hand, they tend to be contented when finding that their children have come of age staying on the right course, meaning that they have followed in their footsteps and set foot within the boundaries set down by society. On the other hand, they are inclined to lose their temper when coming to a recognition that their children have been questioning their ideals and social values and have walked down a road not commonly taken by the previous generations. Indeed, the fate and future of the new generation frequently become a serious matter in one’s family. *The Migratory Birds* has chosen this common family problem as its main subject.

The novel primarily revolves around Wiranto’s family; to be more precise, it gives an account of its second generation. How Wiranto’s children mature and choose their life careers constitute the focus of the novel.

The novel begins with the scene in which the old folks of the family are brought into the spotlight. Wiranto serves as the head of the family. He is a retired lieutenant-general, which is a high rank in the military, and a former Indonesian ambassador to the United Kingdom. He is at present employed as director of a state bank in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia.

As he is proud to admit, Wiranto who comes from a lower-class family has been “pushed upward” onto the top level by history (54). His initial ideal is to be a teacher in an elementary school. When the Revolution hits his country, however, he is compelled to enlist himself as a student-soldier. Then, right after the war he still has to remain in the army as separatist insurgencies come up to threaten the unity of the newly born country. Besides, he succeeds in

crushing the Indonesian Communist Party's attempts to topple the ruling government. As such he belongs, in fact, to the "revolution generation".

Unlike her husband, Wiranto, who is a pure Javanese, Yuniati is of mixed blood. One parent of hers is Kawanua and the other is Javanese. She sticks strictly to a system of values in which she has been brought up and always takes things, particularly those concerning the education and future of her children, so seriously that her daughter, Neti, often teasingly says to her, "*Mam, Mami, Mami cantik dan baik hati, cuma sayangnya tidak peka humor*" (14) ("Mam, Mammy, Mammy is pretty and kind, unfortunately lacks a sense of humor"¹⁶).

Two of Wiranto's children, Anggi and Candra, have gotten married. Anggi is a successful businesswoman and has lived most of her life out of the country. Unfortunately, her family is a failure, having divorced twice and is now a widow with one child. Moreover, none of her traits is reminiscent of her parents. The business world, to her mind, is a world of man-eaters and is present-oriented. Therefore, faithfulness does not concern her; only effectivity and efficiency or at least productivity does (127).

Like his father, Candra pursues a life career in the military. He is a jet-fighter pilot and is so deeply absorbed in his profession that he tends to look at other things in terms of it. For him, the world and life are nothing but a machine. Therefore, everything is seen as fixed and functional and there is no need to go beyond the "instruction manual". As seen by Neti, he is a practical person from an applied world who is really a nationalist in attitude and manner (292).

The youngest of the family is Edi. He becomes a narcotic addict and ultimately dies young. Unlike his brothers and sisters, he is sensitive and tends to be an introvert. He never addresses himself as I or me but instead uses his own name to refer to himself. Finally, he seems to find it a burden having successful parents like his own.

Continuation of Generations

After the summary of the novel presented in the previous section, the following discussion is an attempt to probe into the surface narrative of the novel. *The Migratory Birds* covers a wide range of ideas. As its author reveals in a letter to HB. Jassin, it is, in fact, tailored to be a "compilation of essays

which takes the form of a novel.”¹⁷ The framework of the novel is, therefore, hinged more on reflections than events. The scrutiny of the novel, however, confines itself to the elaboration of its concept of nationalism.

The dialogue between Wiranto, Yuniati, and Neti in the opening chapter of the novel offers a glimpse of the crucial issue raised in the novel. The talk among them is once in a while interrupted by a dispute between Neti and her mother. Her mother, who always insists on her behaving decently and properly, gets alarmed at finding her not putting on a brassiere when she is about to go outdoors, “*Maumu apa sih, berpakaian provokatif saru begitu, ikut mode sok internasional ya, merendahkan diri itu Namanya heh, jengkel aku*” (10) (“What are you after by dressing in such an indecently provocative way? Pretend to be international in fashion? That’s humiliating yourself. I’m really distressed”). Neti jokingly argues that there is nothing wrong for a girl endowed with a good enough body to do that thing, say, for a “social action.” Her mother immediately continues “*Kalau begini yang Namanya generasi penerus, lha kapan gerakan kami pernah meneruskan hal-hal semacam itu?*” (12) (“If this were to be a continuing generation, when had we passed such a thing?”)

Wiranto, who is busy reviewing a written official report made by his subordinates, cannot help finding himself intrigued by the debate between his wife and daughter. Indeed, the issue of continuation of generations, more often than not, keeps him thinking and thereby worrying. And it also brings him to the recollection of the unfortunate fate of his youngest child, Edi whose death makes him ask a number of questions: Is it a submission to the turbulence of times? Is it submission to Western influence? Or, is it because of the parents’ incapability to educate their own children?

The present generation is, as argued by Neti “*generasi penderita bayangan gelap generasis revolusi*” (52) (“a generation suffering in the dark shadow of the revolution generation”). It seems to Wiranto they do not know which direction to take either. Do they elaborately take up an easy road or all the available possible roads opening for them? However, as a parent he feels it wise not to jump at a quick conclusion about them. And he often reminds Neti that: *Setiap angkatan, bahkan setiap orang punya medan juangnya sendiri-sendiri. Ada kontinuitas memang dan itu penting, sebab kita bukan anggokan batu kali di samping tumpukan batu bata serba lepas* (52) (“Every generation,

even everybody, has its own area of struggle. There is of course continuity, which is surely important. For we are not a pile of river stones beside a pile of bricks completely unconnected”).

Accordingly, he is still hoping that there emerges “*generasi yang tidika menyia-nyikan warisan pusaka yang sudah diperjuangkan dengan banyak pertumpahan darah dan derita jutaan manusia generasi gerilya*” (13) (“a generation who will not spoil the sacred heritage which has been struggled for through blood that has been shed and the miseries of millions in a guerrilla generation”).

The theme of the novel begins to unfold itself on the surface when the question of the marriage of Bowo, the second child in the family, comes up in the story. Marriage is no doubt common in one’s family because it is a stage of life generally undergone by its adult members. Despite its commonality, however, it is also regarded as an important event since it is concerned with unity of the family and continuation of the generation. The most common condition which paves the way leading to marriage, apart from love, is similarity in background such as religion, education, social status, ethnicity, nationality. As a result, marriage between two persons of different backgrounds, say nationality, is normally discouraged since such a marriage usually raises the following questions: Will the couple be happy? Will they manage to adapt themselves with one another? In whose country will they live? Will they not change their national consciousness or patriotism? And finally, will the marriage not end up in a divorce?

There is no question that Bowo’s marriage to Agatha, a Greek woman, has taken up much of the attention of Wiranto’s family. It is understandable because the marriage engages two persons coming from two different countries. One is from the East (Indonesia) and the other is from the West (Greece). As a consequence, it stirs up a number of reactions among the family’s members.

Wiranto’s wife cannot conceal her concerns over it. It is not because Bowo is her favorite son but it is mainly because her would-be daughter-in-law is from a foreign country, namely, Greece. She wonders if her son will be happy with a woman coming from a “different” planet of the universe and if he will still be part of the family.

Wiranto, in fact, also shares his wife’s apprehension: “*Berkeberatan atau tidak, jelas untuk si Bowo itu tidak berbicara apa pun. Aku hanya berpikir, bahwa*

perempuan bule itu tidak akan mudah hidup sebagai istri di negeri ini (“Neither objection nor approval definitely means anything to Bowo. I’m only thinking the blonde girl won’t find it easy to live as a wife in this country”). But he finally realizes that he has to view the marriage with goodwill: *“Kita kan selalu harus mulai dengan bersimpati”* (57) (“We should always start with sympathy”).

Unlike her mother and father, Anggi, as a businesswoman who spends most of her time traveling around the world and is not that concerned with Agatha’s foreign background, thinks it will even pave the way for expanding her business network abroad. What matters most to her is the way the reception after the wedding ceremony in Greece is to be held for it might determine the prestige of Wiranto’s family as a whole and her reputation as a successful businesswoman in particular.

However, Anggi becomes very disheartened upon being informed that Bowo is not willing to have the reception held in Jakarta which, he thinks, is too crowded a city. Instead, he wants to have it done with the family in Banda (in the eastern part of Indonesia). There is no question, she supposes, that the plan may disgrace her in the eyes of her business relations. As a result, she cannot help but feel regret for having come home just to meet these silly things: “. . . *ya begini inilah kalau punya adik-adik yang masih atau sangat udik atau terlalu foreign. Tidak ada keseimbangan*” (113) (“. . . this is the way it is if we have younger sister or brothers who are still or are too backward or are too *foreign*. No balance.”)

On the other hand, Neti has shown a modest attitude toward Bowo’s plan to marry a Greek woman and not to hold the wedding reception in Jakarta. Neti sees the coming event with more empathy than prejudice. She also feels there will be no problem with her older brother Bowo in the case of their difference in nationality. As it is evident from the following dialogue between her father and Neti, Bowo is, to her way of thinking, a post-Indonesian person who is no longer confined by national boundaries or two seemingly divided hemispheres, the East and the West:

“Apa Mas Bowo itu masih manusia Indonesia?”

“Masih, masih cuma lain, mungkin lebih tepat manusia pasca-Indonesia.”

“Sudah bukan Indonesian lagi?”

“Bukan begitu, pasca artinya masih tetap sama, tetapo sekaligus menjadi lain. Papi di KTP dan nyatanya menyatakan diri berbangsa Indonesia yang pasca Jawa yang suka wayang, alias manusia Indonesia yang pasca-Jawa.” (160)

“Does your brother Bowo still remain an Indonesian?”

“Sure! But in a different sense. Man of post-Indonesia, to be more precise.”

“No longer an Indonesian?”

“Not really. Post means both remaining the same and simultaneously becoming different. Mind in the ID, Papa claims to be an Indonesian but still a Javanese who is fond of a shadow-puppet show, meaning an Indonesian who is post- Javanese.”).

Indeed, Neti’s assertion is true. As a doctor of nuclear physics and astrophysics working in an international laboratory CERN in Geneva, Bowo no longer feels attached to his country the way his parents are. He argues that biological and geographical dimensions do not count most to humankind, and its supremacy, in fact, owes much to its capability to transcend these things. Therefore, what matters to him and Agatha, he further asserts, is that he and Agatha are “mentally one soul.” No doubt it has nothing to do with whether or not it is patriotic for he holds that:

Patriotisme bukan seperti yang diindoktrinasikan orang-orang kolot zaman agrarian itu. Aku tetap cinta pada Tanah Air, tetapi tidak dalam arti birokrat. Cinta saya kepada Tanah Air dan bangsa kungkapkan secara masa kini, zaman generasi pascanasionalisme. Jika aku menjadi orang, pribadi, sosok jelas, yang menyumbang sesuatu yang berharga dan indah kepada bangsa manusia, disitulah letak kecintaanku kepada bangsa dan nasion (59).

(Patriotism is not like that indoctrinated by those from the ancient agrarian epoch. I still love my Homeland but not in a bureaucratic sense. My love towards Homeland and people is realized in correspondence with the present circumstances, an era of post-nationalism. If I become a being, a person, a prominent figure, who can contribute something valuable and beautiful to humankind, in this lies my love towards my own people and nation.)

To put it another way, nationalism then, according to Bowo, is no longer confined to biological and geographical aspects for the present generation is that of “*burung-burung rantau yang sedang terbang ke benua-benua lain*”

(297) (“birds of passage which are flying to other continents”). It should, therefore, be materialized in the global context and what underlies it is the spirit of contributing to the betterment and full flowering of humankind. For this reason, he does not mind being called a non-nationalist as long as he can become a good global citizen (346).

Finally, Wiranto’s family leave for Greece to attend the wedding ceremony. The visit to the country is very significant to Wiranto’s family. Not only is it related to the wedding of one of its members but it is suggestive of what kind of life Neti will end up with.

As it is known, Neti is the only member of the family who has not gotten married. So far, the parents and other members of the family are not really sure about the course of life she is actually going to pursue. In addition to studying for a master’s degree in the University of Indonesia, she works as a social worker in a slum area.

However, the family doubts if she has a solid motive for taking the job. Anggi is perhaps the only one among them who is very critical of her. On the night she is waiting for Neti to arrive home, she cannot help but say harsh words against her before her parents. She reminds them to be stricter with Neti otherwise, she will end up being a spoiled child. Aside from that, she also questions Neti’s motive for working with the squatters in the slum area. She argues that Neti does that thing only because of “*kecewa Edi meninggal, lalu escape ke dunia impian alim jadi sosiawati*” (105) (“disappointment at Edi’s death and then *escape* into a holy dream-world becoming a social worker”). She also doubts the effectiveness of helping out the destitute. They are, according to Anggi, merely a “holed-sack,” (104) meaning that it is almost definitely a failure to provide aid for them.

Moreover, Neti seems to remain aloof from the opposite sex and shows no interest in marrying. Hence, the rest of the family entertain the belief that she wants to be a nun. However, she says to them that “*saya tidak merasa sedikit pun terpanggil masuk biara, saya bukan jenis biarawati atau rohaniwati atau biksu maupun sufi*” (23) (“I don’t in the least feel any vocation to entering a convent, I’m not the type of a nun, nor spiritualist, nor a monk, nor a sufist”). For these reasons, she remains a blur to the family.

On their visit to Greece, Neti meets her friend Krish. They first met when they attended the Asia Conference for Grassroots Education in Calcutta,

India. He is invited to the wedding ceremony by Agatha's father as he is his son's friend in Heidelberg. Neti's father, mother, and brother Candra, the third child in the family, have noticed that Neti feels very cheerful during the party. The first thing that comes to their minds is that Neti is a normal person after all, which is a great relief to them. They wonder if she is in love with Krish, an Indian. Her mother frantically tries to confirm the possibility: "*Kamu mulai terkena panah Cupid*" (187) ("You must have got hit by an arrow of *Cupido*"). However, she gives neither approval nor disapproval of her mother's assertion. Instead, she relates to them the background of her friend.

Krish's full name is Gandhi Krishnahatma. The name of a charismatic figure of India is attached to his name because he was born on the day the figure was assassinated. He is from a high-class family who runs two dailies in India. He is at present pursuing a doctoral program in microbiology in Heidelberg. He is, according to Neti "*sifatnya kebetulan seperti Gandhi. Dasar utamanya cinta sayang, menolak kekerasan, merangkul yang kecil, walaupun dia dari kasta brahmana seperti Pandit Nehru*" (190) ("coincidentally like Gandhi in character. The underlying principles are compassion, anti-violence, embracing the weak, although he belongs to the same Brahmin caste as Pandit Nehru").

Like Neti, he is actively involved in promoting the marginal people and in helping out the needy. The topic of his dissertation is, in fact, designed to solve the issue of famine besetting not only his own country but also the whole world. He seeks to develop a non-irrigated variety of paddy which can assimilate the characteristic traits of grass in consuming little water and resisting pests. In this way he will be able to produce a variety of paddy which does not call for high-cost cultivation like dam, fertilizer, and insecticide (266-67).

Neti has feelings for Krish and the latter also feels the same way for the former. He wins her heart because "*hatinya dari intan, keras memang, bukan romantikus yung hanya dapat bermimpi tentang bulan dan bunga, tetapi berbelas kasih*" (324) ("his heart is made of pearl, surely hard, not a romantic one which can only dream of moon and flower, but compassionate"). Indeed, Krish has met her criteria. And it seems she does not really care where the person comes from, as homeland, in her opinion, is a "*tempat penindasan diperangi, tempat perang diubah menjadi kedamaian, kira-kira begitu*" (161) ("place where exploitation is combatted, war is converted into peace; more or less like that").

However, Neti is not really sure if her relationship with Krish can lead to marriage. She is still seized with a feeling of doubt although she often refers to Bowo's case in order to strengthen her hope:

India tidak terlalu jauh dari Jakarta. Jika bangau berani menjelajahi sekian benua demi kelangsungan hidup dan keturunannya, mengapa Neti takut? Tetapi India bukan Swiss, dan Gandhi bukan Bowo, dan neti bukan Agatha. (316)

(India is not really far from Jakarta. If pelicans courageously travel a number of continents for the sake of continuation of their lives and offsprings, why does she fear? But India is not Switzerland, nor is Gandhi, Bowo, nor is Neti, Agatha).

Her ideal conception of homeland, however, has not been able to prevent her from distrusting her determination to marry Krish especially when she recalls inhuman practices which can be found in his country. In India, as she has seen herself, there abound considerable cruelties like kidnapping of children and taking their eyes out or committing suicide because of one's inability to stand being a spinster (270).

Hence, it is difficult for Neti to be proud to belong to an East ironically labeled spiritual, collective, humane, culturally refined, and other similar things although she realizes cruelty is not a monopoly of the East. The West is, in fact, filled with cruelties, as well. The difference between them, in her opinion, is that:

Kekejaman Barat tidak kentara, bahkan dapat berwajah ilmiah perkasa ningrat, bergaya manusia jaya yang progresif estetis mempesona, sedangkan kebengisan Timur bugil buruk apa adanya. (271)

(The cruelty of the West is not apparent, even puts on a scientific, arrogantly noble face, acts as a great man who is admirably progressive and esthetic whereas the cruelty of the East is bare, ugly, and the way it is.)

To complicate the problem, neither Krish nor Neti has the courage to approach the other: "*Krish berharap. Sampai sekian Neti masih menunggu*" (316) (Krish cherishes a hope. Hitherto Neti still awaits). Krish is not really

aggressive. Instead, he seems to let karma decide the course of their relationship. As he confesses himself, despite his education he is not by all means free from the concept commonly embraced by his fellow Indians: "*Kami dikandung oleh ibu kami sudah dengan benih dan darah karma. Mau apa?*" (214) (We've been delivered by our mothers with seeds of blood and karma. So what?) In fact, Neti is thinking of taking the initiative, putting aside the fact that she is a woman: "*Mengapa harus menunggu? Pasif. Kuno. Dan mengapa harus kumbang?*" (268-269). (Why wait? Passive. Traditional. And why should a beetle be first?) Unfortunately, she finally succumbs to custom.

In the end, time really gives a solution to her dilemma. Krish sends her a letter saying that he has to marry the woman his parents have chosen for him. Again, she enters into "terra incognita." However, there are two things which are now clear to Wiranto's family with respect to Neti: first, she is, perhaps, not going to remain celibate. Second, her choice of Krish as a person of her type has articulated an ambition in her life. Like Krish who in spite of his high social status, has reached out his hands to help out the grassroots, she wants to dedicate her life to alleviating the miseries of the dispossessed although she realizes she often finds herself faltering. Like Bowo who through the sciences has projected his life to the furthering of humankind, she imagines there will arise a community in which there is no exploitation of man by man.

Nationalism with an International Dimension

The earlier examination of the text has brought to view a significant set of elements on its surface structure. They are the members of Wiranto's family and their familial problems. To be sure, not only do they provide a basis for the surface structure of the text but they also supply a stepping stone for the quest of the allegorical meaning of the text.

The members of Wiranto's family together with their familial problems find parallels in the history of Indonesia. Wiranto's family are concerned with the issue of continuation of generations, that is, from the generation of Wiranto and his wife Yuniati, to that of their children, thereby facing the question of familial unity. Indonesia is also dealing with a problem of continuation of generations, that is, from the generation of the revolution to that of post-revolution.

As held by Wiranto, every generation has its own area of struggle and array of challenges. Similarly, the Indonesian generation of post-revolution faces different challenges from the previous generation. The previous generation had the task of driving out colonialists from the homeland and gaining political independence. And in so doing, they placed themselves as

a single unit in direct opposition to external powers (colonizing countries). The present generation has the mission of materializing the independence in relation not simply to their fellow countrymen but also to their counterparts from other countries.

However, it does not mean that there is discontinuity between the two generations. They are still connected by the same commitment, that is, the commitment to abolish exploitation of man by man, and to create a better world. While the previous generation confronted the exploitation in the form of colonialism which, according to Cohen, rests mainly on “direct power” of the colonizing countries, the present generation faces it in the form of neo-colonialism which relies on “more subtle and indirect means of compulsion and persuasion” (Smith 137).

Of primary importance in *The Migratory Birds* is the issue of a most recent global phenomenon, namely, globalization, which in effect concerns not only the economic aspect but also the “technological, political, social, cultural dimensions and configurations such as global civil society” (Pieterse 372). The questions to be raised are: Does each nation have to participate in it? Can a nation stay away from it by recoiling in its own shell of “nation-ness”? Or, how can a nation take part in it without experiencing a distortion and sacrificing its identity?

The present Indonesian generation of post-revolution is also confronted with the global trend. And indeed, no nation on earth can avoid the wave of this phenomenon. About it, Miyoshi contends: “How to situate oneself in this neo-Daniel Bell configuration of transnational power and culture without being trapped by a deadened nativism seems to be the most important question that faces every critic and theorist over the world at this moment” (742).

It seems the Third World countries nowadays cannot help but be prepared to “greet” the phenomenon of globalization as indicated, among them, by the mushrooming of transnational or multinational corporations. As warned by Miyoshi, transnational corporations actually continue colonialism, constituting neo-colonialism. Like colonialism, they “operate over distance,” homogenizing regions and remaining “aliens and outsiders” in each place (749).

The allegorical meaning of the novel is enunciated mainly through the episodic line of actions woven by members of Wiranto’s family. A sense

of “globalness” of the world in the novel is created by its international and mobile characters who move from one country to another although it does not mean that all of them are no longer geographically bound.

By means of Bowo and Neti, the novel introduces the thesis that nationalism should, in the face of the phenomenon of globalization, be reformulated. Nationalism whose basis is, in fact, a liberating spirit from any form of oppression or exploitation, has to be projected beyond conventional frontiers. Betterment of humankind in general should be a top priority in its current agenda. Therefore, the concept of national cohesion or unity should be contextualized in accordance to the demands of the times.

In this case, one cannot, indisputably, go global like Anggi for she lends herself to destruction of her own being, nor can one remain a “pure” nationalist like Candra, who gets stuck with his own instruction manual, nor can one resort to romantic nativism, which can be very fatalistic, as symbolized by the death of Edi, the youngest in Wiranto’s family.

Put within this perspective, therefore, globalization or orientation towards transgressing national borders in relation to continuation of generations or familial cohesion has to be rendered as polysemic. One’s ability to get rid of geographical boundaries does not, undoubtedly, necessarily amount to doing a positive thing or a negative one for a national cause. Its meaning is subject to overdetermination.

In order to accentuate its theme, in addition to employing “international” characters and episodic plots, the novel makes use of the image of migratory birds. The symbolic significance of the birds in the novel is evident from the use of them as the title of the novel and the devotion of one chapter of the novel, which is also entitled after them, to their account (340).

The birds are well known for their courage and ability to travel very long distances during a season in which they find it hard to survive in their homeland in order to find another place which enables them to go on living. As a matter of fact, there are a number of groups of birds of this sort. Some migrate from Switzerland to South Africa and some others from the Russian coasts around the North Pole to the coasts along South America. To be sure, they are also varied in terms of distances they manage to cover. The birds are a wonderful phenomenon. What is fascinating about them is that they come and go at a regular time, even in terms of day. Indeed, “. . . orang

bisa tak percaya, bagaimana mekanisme orientasi mereka begitu baik mengenal rute perjalanan maupun waktu iramanya" (315) ("... one may find it hard to believe, how their mechanism of orientation can so well recognize the routes of their trip and timing").

Indeed, not only is the dominant image of the birds very effective in establishing an atmosphere of "globalization" which constitutes the current issue raised in the novel. It is also capable of hinting how to cope with the problem. The characters in the novel are in a way like those birds of passage in the sense that they have entered the globalized age, an age in which they cannot remain confined within the boundaries of their homeland. As aptly described by Bowo, their generation is actually the generation of "birds of passage": "*Sama. Orang-orang generasi kita semua burung-burung rantau*" (314) ("All the same. People of our generation are all migratory birds") The distinction among them is simply in terms of distances they can cover. Some can travel thousands of kilometers and some others only hundreds of kilometers. Like the birds, the Indonesian people should not get themselves stuck within the old conception of the nation which celebrates the importance of physical adherence to a homeland.

For these reasons, it can be said that the novel implies that the Indonesian nation should participate in "globalization" still in progress without being carried away by it. Therefore, national consciousness should take on an international dimension (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 198). The nation desired should then signify a concrete universal embodying solidarity with other oppressed communities engaged in fighting against any form of exploitation or oppression. Indeed, according to Ahmad, in the face of globalization-capitalist universality—"which is accepted by all the bourgeoisie of the world, no one is allowed simply to recoil into the folds of some pure national culture" (qtd. in Wood 50).

As a consequence, the idea of Indonesia, or nationalism, needs to be reconceptualized. It should not be confined to physical cohesion or geographical boundaries any longer. Instead, it should transgress them. Or in Bowo's words, it has to be postnationalist or post-Indonesian in substance. And it does not necessarily amount to ceasing being an Indonesian or having no identity or national consciousness (346).

For this purpose, it recommends rejection of any attempt to be indifferent to "any suffering" obtaining in other parts of the world (inside or

outside one's country). This idea is resonant of the following passage from Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and may sum up the discussion of this section:

The building of the nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values. Far from keeping aloof from other nations, therefore, it is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows (199).

Nationalism in the Two Novels

The ensuing discussion reveals that *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds* complement one another in an effort to reflect upon the concept of nationalism. Their being complementary is emphasized by the parallels in them and their thematic continuation. The parallelism can be detected mainly in terms of their motifs and thematic symbolization hinged upon their titles.

First, like *The Weaverbirds*, *The Migratory Birds* builds its surface story on account of family. The distinction between them is that *The Weaverbirds* revolves around two families which are actually one big family, namely Setadewa's family and Larasati's family whereas *The Migratory Birds* focuses on one family only, that is, Wiranto's family. Indeed, the image of family can effectively serve to allegorically mean a nation for the two imply collectiveness. "Family" literally means "all those persons descended from a common ancestor" (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 1984). "Nation" means "a social group which . . . has become conscious of its coherence, unity and particular interests" (Alter, *Nationalism* 17-18).

Second, the titles of the two novels are both of remarkable significance. The image of "bird" is not only suggestive of the so-called Indonesia which uses the eagle as its symbol, but it also plays an important role in articulating the theme. In *The Weaverbirds*, the rendering of the behavior of weaverbirds—the avian species—which are used as its title symbolically highlights the main issue of the novel. Like a weaverbird, a species whose male sex is known for its ability to demolish and rebuild its nest following a failure of winning a partner, Teto and other Indonesians are expected to be able to reformulate the concept of their nation in order to solve their internal issues

as a people. Likewise, in *The Migratory Birds*, an account of the behavior of the birds of passage which are employed as its title is meant to give articulation to the theme of the novel. The birds are known for courageously travelling across a number of continents for the sake of continuation of their lives and offsprings. Like these birds, members of Wiranto's family and Indonesians are supposed to adjust themselves to and anticipate challenges of the times for the sake of their continuation; they should not be confined within geographical borders.

As a matter of fact, it can be said that *The Migratory Birds* is the continuation of *The Weaverbirds* although they were written separately with the span of nine years and other works appearing in between. The third part of the latter actually has imparted some clues to their connection in theme. With the proliferation of transnational or multinational corporations during the postcolonial era, the notion of nation which tends to be established in the Third World needs to be reconceptualized; their communities need to be "reimagined."

In that part Teto has been involved with a transnational corporation, and the US ambassador hints at the current problem of nationalism:

The ambassador laughed. "I'm sorry, I've offended you. I'd like to know, I've never been sure, Seta, just what country it is you're a citizen of?" "I'm a multinational!" The ambassador's guest smiled. "After all, I work for an international trading company" (Mangunwijaya, *The Weaverbirds* 204).

The Weaverbirds does not deal explicitly with the phenomenon of globalization. As discussed earlier, the phenomenon is particularly addressed in *The Migratory Birds*. Therefore, the novel is "inward-looking." It places emphasis on the recognition of what actually underlies the idea of a nation. Its birth is meant to bring liberation or freedom not only to the state (abstract entity) but mainly to its citizens (concrete individuals). Stated another way, it is an appeal to look inward into the core of nation: its basis is not a liberation of an abstract entity (the state) but concrete individuals (citizens). To be more concrete, concerns over national cohesion or existence should not prevent individual citizens from being fully human, beyond the matter of citizenship alone. In this way, it has reflected on the concept of nation in an inward-looking manner.

In contrast, *The Migratory Birds* is “outward-looking.” It offers the notion that national cohesion is not necessarily projected into itself. Therefore, an effort to foster it does not put aside one’s possibility to be involved in human problems on an international scale. For the involvement can, in turn, strengthen one’s nationalistic feeling. By so doing, the novel looks into the concept of nation in an outward-looking fashion. The ensuing diagram summarizes their connection (see fig. 7).

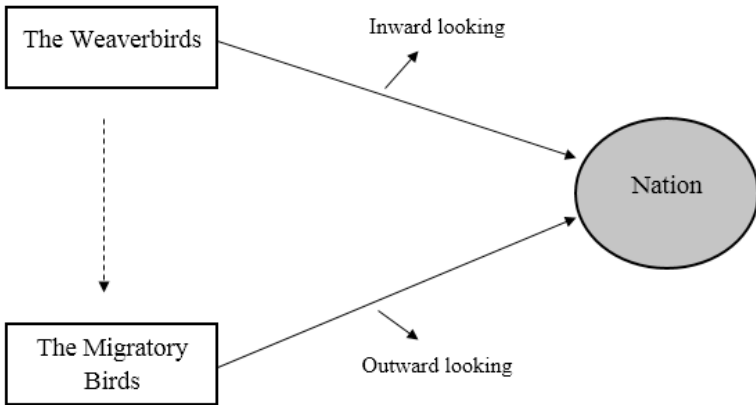


Fig. 7. A dotted line moving from *The Weaverbirds* to *The Migratory Birds* implicitly indicates both the connection of the two novels and the latter’s continuation of the former. In its own way, each of them reflects upon the concept of nation as shown by an arrow pointing to a circle of nation and the circle in turn emphasizes that their notions of nation are complementary.

To be sure, the use of the terms “inward-looking,” and “outward-looking” employed above is not meant to say that there is no tension at all between the two novels in terms of reflecting upon the concept of nationalism. Indeed, between them can be identified some sort of contradiction, which to some extent gives a hint that they are not entirely freed from the socio-political structure in which they were produced.

The end of *The Migratory Birds* is suggestive of the tension between the two novels. Here, it is told how the romantic relationship between its main character Neti, an Indonesian, and Krish, an Indian, finally comes to a parting of ways. As demonstrated earlier, Neti has been an enigma to the members of Wiranto's family. Indeed, the uncertainty of her life cannot be accounted for in psychological terms only. It has also to be situated within national terms.

As shown in the novel, Neti's life is entangled with the national issues of her country. Her involvement with the promotion of the lives of her fellow Indonesians living in the slum area partly explains her confusion as to what kind of future life-career she will decide to pursue. Unlike her brother Bowo or her sister Anggi, she often finds herself metaphorically questioning herself: What sort of bird is she? Is she also a migratory bird? Indeed, it is a time when she does not know how her life is in any way related to those of her other fellow Indonesians. However, she finally learns it. For example, she at first finds it hard to understand her father's idea of her studying in her own country. But then she "*mengalah dan memahami maksud Papi untuk menghayati masa persiapan di tengah bangsa sendiri dengan segala positif-negatifnya*" (132) ("gives in and gets papa's point of engaging herself with preparation period among her own people with its positive and negative sides"). For these reasons, it is surely not adequate to attribute her being a social worker simply to some sort of escapism from her brother's death as argued by Anggi, the eldest in Wiranto's family.

Neti's break up with her boyfriend Krish is not merely a matter of individual severance which is prompted by their racial-cultural differences. As a matter of fact, it is a separation which is engendered by a conflict of priority within her heart over the resolution to her country's national issues. Does she have to give a priority to resolution of internal issues facing her own country as clearly elaborated in *The Weaverbirds*? Or does she have to tackle first the external issues confronting her country as globalization has established itself a worldwide issue? Indeed, Neti's dilemma seems to be a reflection of Mangunwijaya's dilemma over the resolution of the national issues facing Indonesia.

The romantic relationship between Neti and Krish is ended in a relatively abrupt way. *Deus ex machina* has to be employed by the author to

“overcome their problem,” a problem which is allegorically the problem of the author and his nation. Thus, the concept of Karma is advanced to put an end to their relationship. In the end, Neti comes back into the embrace of her own country, which is indicative of the stance the novel has taken over the aforementioned dilemma. If this reading is to be agreed with, the humanistic atmosphere pervading the two novels is not utterly rigorous; they are in a way still embedded in their structure of production.

How the two novels are, in fact, an attempt of the author to reappropriate a national discourse from the ruling elites in New Order Indonesia will be spelled out in the last section.

Reappropriating the National Discourse

This section discusses how *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds* reappropriate the national discourse from the ruling elites in New Order Indonesia.

Western civilization has helped shape the so-called Third World countries. Although these countries have attained the right for self-determination, they are, in practice, still entangled in the whirlwind of colonial enterprise, both material and spiritual. An undertaking to get out of this situation has turned out not to be so easy as the expulsion of their former masters from their homelands. In the process of finding the way out, they very often fall into the trap of promoting forms of government which are more repressive than the ones during colonial times.

Belonging to the Third World is Indonesia. Since her official birth in 1945, she has undergone two forms of ruling government: the Old Order (up to the 1965 abortive communist coup) and the New Order (up to the present). The former proceeds under the presidency of Soekarno while the latter under the presidency of Suharto.

Near its fall, the Old Order turned into an authoritarian governmental system, subscribing to "Guided Democracy." And then, the New Order came

up under the leadership of Suharto, wishing to “correct” the mistake made by the previous regime, that is, the deviation from the doctrines of “Pancasila,” Indonesia’s national ideology. According to Mochtar Pabottingi, however, with the passage of time, the present ruling government in general ends up being nothing but a replica of the previous regime:

Order Baru bukanlah antithesis dari system politik Orde Lama seperti klaim semula. Orde Baru hanya bertolak belakang dari Orde Lama dalam hal kebijakan ekonomi. Akan tetapi dalam hal sistem dan kebijakan politik yang cenderung otoriter dan monopolistic, ia adalah pelanjut yang setia dan “kreatif” dari model rejim Orde Lama. (“Dilemma Legitimasi Order Baru”, 25-26).

(New Order is not a political antithesis of Old Order as previously claimed; New Order is the opposite of Old Order merely in terms of economic policy. However, in the light of aptly authoritarian and monopolistic political policy and system, it is a faithful and ‘creative’ successor to Old Order model.)

As stated in section two of this study, the New Order has placed emphasis on the enhancement of economic growth and development. In order to achieve this goal, the government has given a high priority to political stability for it is believed to be a key factor in the success of economic advancement. Accordingly, most of the government’s policies are directed towards unity, stability, and harmony. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with the government’s promotion of the aspect of national stability. However, a problem surely arises when the aspect is given too much emphasis; that is, it is bound to be repressive and cannot accommodate and anticipate social dynamics properly, nor can it put up with a plurality of political visions.

With regard to the political implementation of the national ideology, the boosting of political stability, in fact, only caters to the third principle, namely Persatuan Indonesia or the Unity of Indonesia (Kahin, “Indonesian Politics and Nationalism” 178).¹⁸ Not only is the New Order’s emphasis on the principle tantamount to “one-fifth” of the application of the whole national ideology but it is also counter to the historical context in which the ideology was formulated as a national consensus. The unity in question should be one that caters to the other principles of belief in God, humanitarianism,

democracy, and justice. In this way, it cannot serve simply as a unifying tool (Pabottingi, "Dilemma Legitimasi Order Baru" 15).

Confronted with the existing official national discourse which emphasizes the third principle or aspects of political stability, Mangunwijaya has not kept silent. Through *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*, he puts forward an alternative national discourse. To be sure, he does not do this in a straightforward way in view of the fact that the political climate fostered in the era of the New Order does not enable someone to speak out, especially about political issues. Tactically, he has chosen to speak in an allegorical language.

As has been demonstrated in the earlier discussion, the two novels are closely related. Both of them are united mainly by thematic connection, namely the issue of nationalism. It can be said that *The Migratory Birds* is a continuation of *The Weaverbirds* although they have been published at different times, within the time span of nine years and with other works appearing in between those years. The latter undertakes an inward-looking reflection on the idea of nationalism, meaning that the reflection is projected into the individuals as members of the so-called Indonesia. In contrast, the former conducts an outward-looking reflection that is oriented towards Indonesian individuals as global citizens.

The Weaverbirds conveys the idea that national unity should not negate the existence of Indonesian citizens as an individual being. Therefore, the attempt to materialize it should provide room for Indonesian individuals to be fully fulfilled as a human being, meaning, that their universal rights have to be fully guaranteed. Different political visions among Indonesians, then, are to be accepted as natural since they are in fact a manifestation of each Indonesian experiencing "Indonesianness" as a part of his or her personal experience.

Teto and Atik, the main characters of the novel, vividly articulate and embody the above argument. Through ups and downs in undergoing his being Indonesian, Teto can make Indonesia a part of his personal experience. In this way, his Indonesianness becomes a forum through which he can fulfill himself as a human being. Likewise, Atik does not look at Teto's alliance with the Dutch as being a "traitor of humanity." She is able to welcome him back as part of her family regardless of their different political visions in

the past. For this reason, as Teto puts it, the Republic of Indonesia is not an end in itself but simply a tool to gain a cherished cause.

Unlike *The Weaverbirds* that focuses its reflection on individuals as citizens of Indonesia, *The Migratory Birds* emphasizes its reflection on Indonesian individuals as global citizens. The novel reveals that the concept of national cohesion should not annihilate the status of Indonesian individuals as “global citizens.” As a result, the effort to achieve it should give Indonesians the opportunity to actualize themselves as global beings. This is to say that their being Indonesian does not provide a limit to realize themselves as a human being in relation to fellow human beings from other countries. To put it another way, their Indonesianness has to encourage their involvement in matters which concern all human beings on earth such as famine, poverty, injustice, and this, in turn, will reinforce their being Indonesian. In this case, to be sure, a principle of “let-another-country-mind-its-own-business” or “do-not-meddle-in-my-own-internal-affairs!” is not applicable.

In the novel, Neti and Bowo help accentuate and concretize the thesis. By way of her involvement in issues of poverty, although she is not always successful, Neti seeks to expand and embody the concept of “homeland” as a place where “exploitation is battled against.” Similarly, by means of his engagement in the world of science, Bowo makes an attempt to make a contribution to the full-flowering of humanity. In this way, they try to transgress geographical and biological boundaries; indeed, in the ability to do this lies the primacy of being a human being.

Therefore, Mangunwijaya offers an alternative national discourse which challenges the official one. He argues that the promotion of national unity or cohesion should not relegate individual citizens to a secondary position for, in fact, nation is only a means to an end. That is, it is simply a tool for citizens to be fully human. The undertaking to realize it, therefore, should not put aside the values of humanity or justice.

In terms of the principles of Pancasila, he claims that implementation of one principle does not mean to annihilate the other four principles, namely belief in God, humanitarianism, democracy, and justice. Indeed, it is true. Those principles are, in fact, on the same footing; neither subordinates itself to the other (Pabottingi, “Dilemma Legitimasi Order Baru” 15). In this way, Mangunwijaya reappropriates the national discourse which is monopolized

by the ruling elites in New Order Indonesia. In so doing, he does not speak in a loud voice but in whispers. Concerning the discussion of the issue of nationalism in general, like his predecessors, he brings to one's attention the goal that the underlying spirit of nationalism, regardless of time and place, is nothing but freedom from, or abolition of, any form of exploitation and oppression. The following chart visualizes the contention of the two kinds of national discourse (see fig. 8).

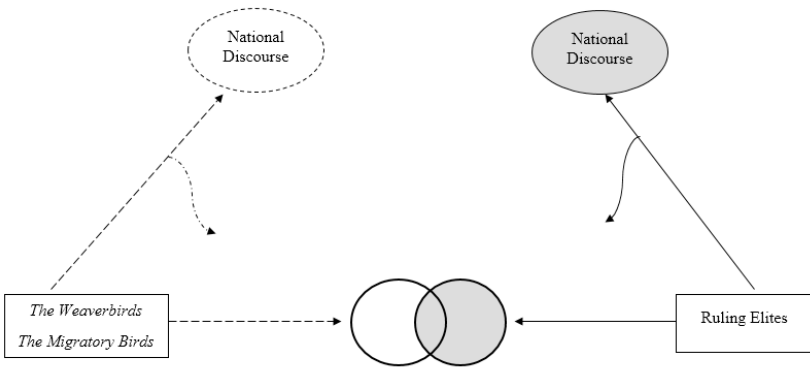


Fig. 8. The two boxes represent contending sides. Each side has a national discourse of its own. Unlike the ruling elites, as shown by the dotted lines, the two novels do not put forward the alternative discourse forcefully. Therefore, the clash which takes place within a discursive field does not proceed in a frontal way.

It should be noted, however, that in his attempt to counter the hegemonic official discourse, Manguwijaya seems to be unable to set himself entirely free from it. As shown in the previous section, his entanglement with it is evidence of the tension between the two novels which is articulated by the ending of *The Migratory Birds*. Neti's separation from her boyfriend Krish and her return into "the hands" of her homeland Indonesia disrupts the humanistic stream that runs through the novels. His humanistic vision, in a way, cannot completely transgress the context of the production of works.

The subsequent diagram sums up the whole previous discussion (see fig. 9).

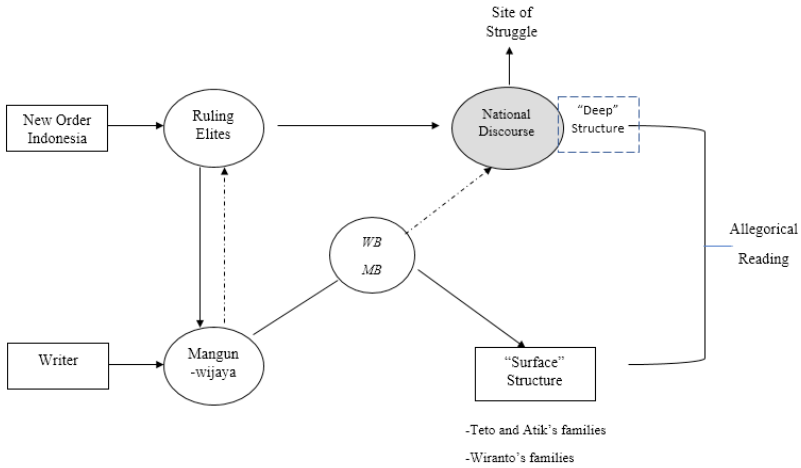


Fig. 9 The focus of this diagram is on the bold oval. This diagram suggests that this is where the clash between ruling elites and Mangunwijaya occurs. The clash is itself on a discursive field. And it is not done in a direct and obvious manner. It is only through his novels that the author allegorically challenges the national discourse provided by the ruling elites, that is, by suggesting an alternative discourse of his own as represented by a dotted box.

The earlier discussion leads to the conclusion that Mangunwijaya's novels, *The Weaverbirds* and *The Migratory Birds*, reappropriate a national discourse dominated by the ruling elites in New Order Indonesia. In their attempt to do so, the novels do not work on their own. They complement one another in enunciating their own alternative national discourse which is distinct from the existing official one. Besides, they do not do this in a straightforward manner and instead, shrewdly speak in an allegorical language, meaning that they do not get to the point directly or they say one thing to mean something else.

The Weaverbirds contends that enhancement of national unity, or political stability to be specific, should not deprive individual citizens of their basic right to be fully actualized. An effort to attain the unity does not mean

disregarding other fundamental principles like justice, democracy, humanitarianism. Instead, it should be conducted in terms of these values. In this way, the status of nation is not made absolute, meaning that nation, as social construct, is not above its members as human beings. It is merely instrumental to them in their effort to be fully human.

Similarly, *The Migratory Birds* also questions a tendency towards subordination of human beings to nation. To be more precise, it claims that promotion of national cohesion does not mean to be confined to physical boundaries of a nation. On the contrary, an undertaking to achieve the goal should be done in the light of human values which in fact do not recognize national frontiers.

Indeed, Mangunwijaya's novels gesture toward nationalism in the age of globalization, but in ways that are appreciative and critical of both, creating figures of allegory of faith in the full development of humanity for all.

Notes

1. It is an act of searching in the text for another narrative which on a second level of understanding extends beyond the obvious meaning of the surface structure of a story.
2. For further explanation of Miyoshi's contention, see Masao Miyoshi, "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Declines of the Nation-State," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, pp. 726-751.
3. For further elaboration, see Virginia Matheson Hooker and Howard Dick, Introduction to Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia, pp. 1-23.
4. New Order is a name attached to the ruling cabinet following the 1965 abortive coup of the Indonesian Communist Party.
5. Ahmad demonstrates that Jameson's assertion sounds too sweeping a generalization for a following number of reasons: first, it only refers to a small number of Third World texts which happen to be available in English; second, it uses an inconsistent criterion in dividing the globe into three worlds; third, nationalism itself is a problematic concept for not all kinds of nationalisms are oppositional to the capitalist First World. For further elaboration of his argument, see Aijaz Ahmad's "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" in *Social Text*, vol. 17, pp. 3-27.
6. The terms "overt" and "covert" can also be used as substitutes for the words "surface" and "deep" respectively. They are simply used to designate that a narrative text has two sorts of structures. While one is shown by what is actually said in the text, the other is implied by it.
7. Nationalism in the Third World is believed by Jameson to assume an anti-imperialist or anti-colonial character. For further explanation, see Jameson "Third World Literature." And as shown by Chatterjee in Mark T. Berger's "Old State and New Empire in Indonesia: Debating the Rise and Decline of Suharto's New Order," in *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 18, nationalism has been a site of anti-colonial resistance but "the new nation that emerged from the nationalist struggle has increasingly demonstrated the ability of colonialism to reproduce itself" (329).

8. Ahmad contends that postmodern culture denounces the concept of universality. Capital can find a haven in the culture since the question of the ownership of property, which is its monopoly, can be raised merely in the context of universality. For further explanation see "Culture, Nationalism, and the Role of Intellectuals: An Interview with Aijaz Ahmad" in *Monthly Review*, vol. 47, 1995, p. 56.
9. The author copied Kahin's English rendering of Pancasila which is in fact roughly done. See page 178 of George McT. Kahin's "Indonesian Politics and Nationalism," in *Asian Nationalism and the West*, edited by William L. Holland and published in 1953.
10. See Willy Pramudya, "Perjalanan Hidup Seorang Yusuf Bilyarta Mangunwijaya," in *Mendidik Manusia Merdeka*, edited by Th. Sumartana, et al., p. 11.
11. This hope is clearly seen in both his creative and non-creative writings. Parakitri, among others, sees Teto and Atik, *The Weaverbirds'* main characters, as a reflection of the hope. For further discussion, see Parakitri, "Y.B. Mangunwijaya 65 tahun 3 Mei 1994: Sumbangannya lewat Karya Sastra bagi Kabudayaan Indonesia," in *Mendidik Manusia Merdeka*, edited by Th. Sumartana, et al., pp. 55-56.
12. San Juan reminds writers and intellectuals of the importance of forging "cultural ideological weapons necessary for liberation." For further explanation, see E. San Juan, Jr., *Allegories of Resistance: The Philippines at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, p. xvi.
13. Fanon argues that the ruling elites of new emerging countries often refer to the role they played during the independence revolution so as to legitimate their governance. For further discussion of this phenomenon, see Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 136.
14. This was taken from an interview with HB Jassin by Patriasari Sundari held in Jakarta, March 28, 1989. The text is now filed in HB Jassin's Center for Literary Documentation in Jakarta.
15. Y.B. Mangunwijaya, *Burung-Burung Rantau*, 3rd reprint, Jakarta: Gramedia, 1996. The title is rendered into English as *The Migratory Birds*.
16. All English translations of passages from *Burung-Burung Rantau* or *The Migratory Birds* that appear in the monograph were done by the author.

17. Y.B. Mangunwijaya's personal letter to HB. Jassin, one of the most prominent Indonesian literary critics, dated April 13, 1992. It is now filed in HB. Jassin's Center for Literary Documentation in Jakarta.
18. Kahin has translated the principle into nationalism. It seems nationalism is not a proper equivalent for the words "persatuan Indonesia" not only because unity is only one aspect of nationalism but mainly because the word nationalism is not a fixed concept. Its meaning tends to widen due to its frequent usage these days.

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