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Writing novels under the New Order: state censorship, complicity, and literary production in Indonesia, 1977-1986

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Chapter 2

The New Order and Cultural/Literary Development

"Through good reading, the people will be able to advance their knowledge, broaden their views, improve their minds, and nurture their culture."

President Suharto, 1973[62]

On May 2, 1973, at a luncheon in the State Palace in Bogor, before several Indonesian authors, journalists, heads of the Indonesian publishers association and owners of press and publishing industry in Indonesia, President Suharto stressed the importance of books as means of education for the people. He said that since education was inseparable from national development, it was impossible that national development could be carried out without the publication of 'good' books from all genres, for people of all ages, from all walks of life. He added that with good books, the people could improve their knowledge, broaden their horizons, sharpen their character, and enrich their national culture. He then requested the authors, journalists, and publishers who attended the luncheon to help the government write, print, and publish quality books in a large quantity comparable to the huge number of the population in the country in order to sustain the government development program. He concluded that on behalf of the government, he would give full support, both administrative and financial, to every author and publisher who would fight for the said national cause. Relatively shortly after that luncheon, an incredible leap in the number of publications occurred. Within less than a decade after the New Order was first established, a dramatic increase in the number of books (from 3 million in 1967 to 79.2 million in 1975) took place.[63]

It is interesting to note, however, when the president made the request for publications of books and promised to give support, he had actually been banning and burning hundreds of other books and reading materials under the premise that the books were not in line with the national development project, posed criticism, or were written by certain suspicious individuals or about particular undesired themes. In this regard, there was this tension in what constituted 'good' books. The tension also occurred within the government cultural policy which was nuanced by repression and growth at the same time. The crucial questions are then: what constitute good books in the eyes of the New Order government? Who decides? What kind of circumstances did the New Order create in order for literary production to grow and at the same time keep control over the content? How did the state

[62] "*Melalui bacaan yang baik, masyarakat dapat meningkatkan pengetahuannya, memperluas pandangannya, memperluas budi pekertinya, dan mematangkan kebudayaannya*." Djunaidi 1975, p. 14.
[63] Djunaidi 1975, pp. 8-49.

contribute to the development of cultural or literary production in Indonesia? What motivated these decisions?

In order to understand how and why books that dealt with the issues surrounding the events of 1965 were published despite broad censorship, this chapter explores the economic conditions of the New Order and cultural politics. This is essential because the waxing and waning of internal repression in the New Order regime was often connected to the rise and fall of state revenues, shifts in political and military alliances, the rise and fall of political fortunes of key regime allies, and other behind-the-scenes changes in the power structure. It is possible that the authors together with their editors and publishers benefited from — and possibly even exploited — these shifting conditions. To contextualize both New Order cultural politics and the books which are central in this thesis, I first elaborate on the event surrounding the mass killings. Then I proceed into discussing the development and changes in social and economic development as well as the power structure of the New Order in order to trace the course of the government's cultural development policy, especially concerning the production of literary works under the New Order regime.

Indonesian Mass Killings 1965-1966

In the novels at the heart of this study, three elements from Indonesia's history are crucial: the rise of political tensions at the end of the Sukarno era, the anti-communist killings of 1965-1966, and their aftermath.

In an attempt to overcome political unrest and upheaval which echoed throughout the Indonesian government in the 1950s,[64] President Sukarno replaced the parliamentary system and introduced a new political model called 'Guided Democracy' in February 1957. According to Sukarno, Guided Democracy was a form of traditional government in which respected individual leaders played a dominant role in bringing Indonesian society to modernity. To legitimate this new governmental system, Sukarno formulated a concept called Nasakom (*Nasionalisme*, *Agama*, and *Komunisme* – Nationalism, Religion, and Communism), which was basically constituted by and intended to appease the three main factions in Indonesian politics at the time: the army, Islamic groups, and the communist party (PKI, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*). Sukarno voiced, as he proclaimed, the wishes of the people, united political difference, and embodied state policy. This produced effects of control to Sukarno as he grasped full authority over politics and, later, seized absolute power, especially since the Provisional People Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara*, MPRS) made him President for Life in 1964.

As president for life, Sukarno maintained a delicate balance of power, standing between the army and Muslim groups on the one hand, and communist and left-wing nationalists on the other. Sukarno's mediation could not prevent the two

[64] Crouch 1988, p. 32.

extremes from increasingly facing each other because of the different interests they represented and mutual distrust. The army together with the Islamic groups had had a great distrust and grudge against communists since the communist inspired Madiun rebellion against the Indonesian Republican government in 1948.[65] This was exacerbated further by the disbanding of the Muslim party, Masyumi, and the implementation of basic agrarian law (*Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria*, UUPA) and basic share-tenancy law (*Undang-Undang Pokok Bagi Hasil*, UUPBH) in 1960, which resulted in forceful seizures of land from Muslim landowners by the PKI-affiliated labor union (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, SOBSI) and peasants front (*Barisan Tani Indonesia*, BTI). With backing from Sukarno, the PKI became the biggest political competitor that thrived during Guided Democracy and developed into the largest party in Indonesia.[66] With its large membership, the party could mobilize the masses in support of the president more effectively than any other force in the country. Sukarno looked with favor on PKI. Throughout Guided Democracy, he publicly affirmed the party's legitimacy in the Indonesian political order. He gave it occasional protection, as in 1960 when he overruled a number of regional commanders who had banned the party within jurisdictions; and from time to time he removed individuals and groups whom the PKI found troublesome.[67] In the cultural field, this includes the disbanding on May 8, 1964, of *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto), a cultural movement founded by a group of authors, poets, playwrights, and intellectuals in late 1963 who saw themselves as proponents of universal humanism and free intellectuals fighting communist cultural authoritarianism and politicization of arts.[68] Clearly, the political left, in this regard the PKI's cultural arm, the Institute for People's Culture (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, LEKRA, founded in 1950), considered the *Manifes Kebudayaan* 'a danger to the national struggle and a threat to the course of the Revolution in the field of culture.'[69]

Similar to and partly reflecting the dichotomy in politics, society polarized itself into 'left' or 'right', between pro- and anti-communist.[70] This went as far as Indonesian politics was 'poised on the brink of cataclysm' and 'there was hardly an issue dividing Indonesians which could not be interpreted in terms of communism

[65] It was also a military revolt by regional leftwing commanders against a reorganization and actual reduction of troops by then vice president cum Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta, and chief of staff of the central army leadership. As claimed by David Charles Anderson, the official American representative Cochran met Sukarno and Hatta on the morning of September 17, 1948 in Yogyakarta. It was made explicit that a republican government which contained left-wing elements would not receive American support and therefore revolt against the central army leadership. See Anderson, D.C. 1976, pp. 1-63.

[66] By 1965 the PKI claimed to have 3.5 million party members and another 23.5 million affiliates, making it the largest communist party in the world outside the communist countries. See van der Kroef 1971, p. 5.

[67] Cribb and Brown 1995, p. 93.

[68] See A. Teeuw 1967, p. 252; Foulcher 1969, pp. 429-465; 1986, p. 107; Miller and Meyer 2006; Jones 2013, p. 107.

[69] Foulcher, 1969, p. 445.

[70] Brown and Cribb 1995, p.93.

and anti-communism.'[71] As a result, domestic tensions increased. Moreover, rumor circulated that a so-called Council of Generals from the army had conceived a plan to carry out a coup on October 5,[72] and that Sukarno's health was deteriorating in August 1965, and that he was no longer able to protect the PKI.[73] Both sides now began calculating their chances in the post-Sukarno era. An important aspect of the problem was whether the passing of the president would be a gradual process whereby the people concerned would be given ample time to prepare themselves for the critical hour or whether the event would come suddenly or even prematurely.

In the early hours of October 1, 1965, a group calling itself the '30 September Movement' (*Gerakan 30 September*, abbreviated as G30S), under the announced leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Untung, commander of a battalion of the Tjakrabirawa, President Sukarno's personal bodyguard, broke the deadlock. Their intention was to prevent a counter-revolutionary coup by a council of right-wing generals who had intended to make a show of force on October 5 in the wake of President Sukarno's falling ill.[74] They kidnapped six highest generals of the army and only narrowly missed taking Defense Minister General Abdul Haris Nasution, but instead killing his aide and daughter.[75] Three of the generals died during the attempted kidnapping. The others were taken to the Halim Airbase near Jakarta, where they were executed. The bodies then ended up in a pit called *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Pit), on a remote part of the base. Following the kidnappings, they captured the Jakarta studios of the Indonesian national radio network (*Radio Republik Indonesia*, RRI), the central telecommunications office, and other key points in the capital city. Untung then announced the formation of an Indonesian Revolutionary Council to exercise the entire authority of the state.[76] But the movement was actually a culmination of a clumsy power exercise, and, therefore, was short-lived.[77] By the end of the day, the army, under the command of Major General Suharto, then the head of strategic reserve command (*Komando Cadangan*

[71] Brown and Cribb 1995, p. 95-96.
[72] October 5 is the national armed forces day of Indonesia, in honor of the day of foundation of the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Body), the predecessor of TNI (Indonesian Armed Forces) in 1945. On Indonesian Armed Forces Day, military parades as shows of force were often held.
[73] Sukarno's single kidney continued to be troublesome and he apparently suffered two heart seizures during that period. This led the team of Chinese specialists who had attended him since 1960 to believe that he might not live long. Their opinion was communicated to Aidit: "It is not surprising that people began to think of the time when the 'old man' is no longer around. What would happen if his omnipresence was suddenly terminated, either by paralyzing illness or by death?" Notosusanto and Saleh, p. 6. See also Crouch 1989, p. 86.
[74] The generals were accused of being power-crazy, neglecting the welfare of their troops, living in luxury over the sufferings of their troops, dreading women and wasting the nation's money. See Crouch, 1988, p. 97. Also 'Selected Documents' 1966, p. 134.
[75] Generals Yani, Harjono and Pandjaitan were already killed in their house. Nasution escaped and instead his adjutant was taken to Halim and killed there. Generals Parman, Surprapto and Sutojo were taken alive to Halim Airbase in Jakarta. van der Kroef 1971, p. 12.
[76] Vassil 1997, p. 50; Brown and Cribb, 1995, p. 99; Hamish McDonald 1981, p. 41; van der Kroef 1971, p. 12.
[77] According to Roosa (2006), the purpose of the abduction was not clear and during the preparation a number of soldiers withdrew. The plans were not well thought out and were poorly executed.

Strategis Angkatan Darat, KOSTRAD), had mounted a successful counterattack. Before midnight, RRI had fallen to the army and by the next morning the plotters were in full flight. Now in complete command in Jakarta, the army announced that a revolt had been crushed and declared martial law throughout the country.

Although it was not clear which party represented the 30 September Movement, it did give rise to new developments in politics that would have major consequences. The failed coup marked the power shift from Sukarno to Suharto and ignited what became the tragedy in Indonesian modern history. The possibility for Suharto's takeover of power was created because the army declared that the communists were the mastermind behind the 30 September Movement. On the basis of this accusation, the military, as personified by Suharto, was determined to annihilate politically, once and for all, its arch-enemy, the communists, the PKI.

Between October 1965 and March 1966, the army together with civilians from various anti-communist and religious groups slaughtered thousands of PKI supporters around the country, especially in North Sumatra, Central and East Java, and Bali. Men, women, and children (accused of being) affiliated with the communist party were shot, strangled, clubbed, buried alive, or butchered with *parangs*, sickles, shovels, rakes, and other agricultural tools. The killing usually started only after the army arrived on the spot. In North Sumatra, for example, the killings began only after the special troops led by Colonel Sarwo Edhie Wibowo had arrived from Jakarta. In East Java, the commandos worked closely with the youth organization of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia. In addition, there were many people who wanted to show that they were not communists by participating in the killings. Similarly, mass killings in Bali took place through the initiative and orchestration of local and Java-based military authorities and the arrival of special troops led by Colonel Sarwo Edhie, making the island, along with Central Java and East Java, the site of the greatest carnage in 1965-1966 by situating local conditions within a broader pattern of national-level politics.[78]

To assess the severity of the post-coup violence, a nine-man committee officially appointed by the government in December 1965 came up with an estimate of 78,000 victims in January 1966; Sukarno exchanged the first two digits and the officially announced number of murdered persons amounted to 87,000. The Indonesian Ambassador to Washington, L.N. Palar, estimated the number of victims of mass murders at about 100,000. His chief, the foreign minister Adam Malik, accused the foreign press of having the number of murdered people grossly exaggerated. According to his own information, only between 100,000 and 200,000 people would have been killed. A few days later he called a somewhat more exact figure: 160,000.[79] The foreign press had given far and much higher figures — *The London Economist*: one million, *The Washington Post*: half a million, *Life*: 400,000

[78] See Geoffrey Robinson 2018, p. 272. See also Iwan Gardono Sudjatmiko 1992.
[79] Hughes 1967, p. 186; Sulistiyo 2000, p. 38.

and *The New York Times*: 'Best information estimate 150,000 to 400,000 but that could not be far more than 500,000.'[80] A moderate estimate counts 500,000 people killed during that period.[81]

The killings were seen or presented as 'the West's best news for years in Asia' and a victory over communism at the peak period of the Cold War, which had culminated in Southeast Asia in the Vietnam War, and were ranked 'as one of the twentieth century's most extensive mass murders.'[82] They were so massive that 'often there was neither time, opportunity, nor inclination to bury the dead.'[83] The dead bodies were then tossed into rivers. So many hundreds of them floated down the rivers that villagers downstream stopped eating fish for fear some might contain a human finger or some other portion of a decomposing body. Under bridges, or where rivers curved, corpses piled up in dozens. To keep the bodies from accumulating in irrigation channels leading off the river, the executioners protected the mouths of the channels with crude bamboo gates that let the water through, but deflected the corpses. In the *Saturday Review* of February 4, 1967, Horace Sutton reported that mutilated bodies, some missing heads and hands, and some already decomposing, came floating down the 375-mile-long Brantas River, the longest in East Java. In Probolinggo, where the river is lower than sea level, the bodies jammed like logs and s tayed like that for days, decaying. On the outskirts of Surabaya the marines forced the citizens at bayonet point to clean the river.[84]

In addition to the killings, more than one hundred thousand others, including intellectuals, playwrights, authors, and artists directly and indirectly linked to PKI were kept in camps for years without any form of trial. Families, members of various organizations which had openly affiliated with the PKI and ordinary people who were accused of being supporters or sympathizers of PKI for merely attending socio-cultural events organized by the PKI or its affiliated organizations were disappeared.[85] Furthermore, the Indonesian Chinese community was also specifically targeted by the military-backed mob due to the supposed relationship between the PKI and the Chinese communist regime, and also in the context of long term anti-Chinese discrimination that went back to colonial times.[86] They suffered exile, ostracism, and abrogation of civil rights. Suharto's regime believed it was socially and politically justified in killing and imprisoning these victims without due process,

[80] Hughes 1967, p. 184.
[81] Cribb, R. (ed) 1990, p. 143.
[82] See "Vengeance..'(1966), p. 34. See also Robert Cribb, (ed) 1990, p. 143 "In a report by the CIA, the massacre was described as one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950's. In this regard, the Indonesian coup is certainly one of the most significant events of the twentieth century, far more significant than many other events that have received much greater publicity." See also Blumenthal and McCormack, pp. 80-81.
[83] Hughes 1967, pp. 158-159.
[84] *Saturday Review*, February 4, 1967, p. 29.
[85] SOBSI (the Indonesian Workers Union), BTI (Indonesian Farmers Union), Gerwani (Indonesian Women Movement), PR (People's Youth), and LEKRA (Institute for People's Culture).
[86] Sulistyo 2000, pp. 145, 206.

and in stigmatizing them and their families by denying them numerous rights, including access to education, identity cards, and official employment.[87]

They, too, were prohibited from expressing their thoughts or developing their own narratives of what happened due to bans, censorship, and the persecution of creative works within genres of writing, including academic papers, fiction, and poetry. In 1966, 'Wiratmo Soekito, the key force behind the *Manifes Kebudayaan*, wrote in newspaper *Merdeka* in 1966 supporting the banning of communist books.'[88] Pramoedya Ananta Toer's (1925-2006) novels and all of his non-fiction works, unpublished works, and historical archives stored in his library 'were destroyed in the anti-communist frenzy.'[89] Pramoedya was not alone. Other prominent communist authors and poets, to name but a few A.S. Dharta, Bakri Siregar, Boejoeng Saleh Iskandar Poeradisastra, Utuy Tatang Sontani, Hr. Bandaharo, Sobron Aidit, Hersat Sudijono, Dharmawati, T. Iskandar A.S., Virga Belan, Nusananta, Setiawan Hs. and Agam Wispi, were not only deprived of their civil rights but also had all of their creative works burned. Equally tragic was the fate of S. Rukiah, a prolific feminist prose writer, poet, and editor of the literary supplement *Lentera* (Lantern) in the communist newspaper, *Bintang Timur* (Eastern Star). After the coup, she was sent to prison and forced to abandon writing upon release. Her books were not talked about anymore and her poems and short stories were removed from anthologies, including H.B. Jassin's *Gema Tanah Air: Prosa dan Puisi*.[90] This massive literary killing of leftist creative works has created a gap in Indonesian literary history and affected both its trajectory and richness.

The aborted coup, together with events leading up to and following it, subsequently became the subject of considerable investigation by Western scholars. Two book length, journalistic treatments of the attempted coup in Indonesia were already in print. These were John Hughes' *Indonesian Upheaval* (1967) and Tarzie Vittachi's *The Fall of Sukarno* (1967). In addition, articles were also written on the subject. In their articles, Dommen, Kroef and Sutter argued that the PKI was deeply involved in the planning for the attempted coup, as did Hughes and Vittachi in their books. However, following Burnell, Lev, and Rey, researchers at Cornell University in the United States, Ben Anderson and Ruth T. McVey, claimed that the coup was the result of internal conflict within the Indonesian armed forces and that the PKI had little or nothing to do with it.[91] Meanwhile, the Dutch professor, W. F. Wertheim, claimed that Suharto was aware of the plans beforehand, that he not only knew Untung but was also friends with him and could have prevented this massacre, but instead wholeheartedly supported it. [92]

[87] They were also excluded from professions in which they could influence public opinion: military, civil service, journalism, and teaching. See Orentlicher 1989, pp. 63-74.
[88] See Miller and Meyer 2006.
[89] See Miller and Meyer 2006.
[90] See Miller and Meyer 2006; Sarahtika 2018; See also Moeljanto and Ismail 1995, pp. 38, 40, 277, 278.
[91] Anderson and McVey 1971.
[92] W.F. Wertheim 1966, pp. 115-127.

The more recent study by John Roosa (2006) shows that the initiative for the seizure of power was taken by the leadership of the communist party. The chairman of PKI feared that the military would take his party as soon as Sukarno had disappeared from the scene. To stay ahead of them he planned a putsch against the army command with a small group of left-wing soldiers. Most recently, Robinson (2018) in *Killing Season* argues that the killings were the product of a deliberate campaign, led by the Indonesian army, without whom the mass killings could not have happened. He also details the role played particularly by the United States and British governments in facilitating the mass murder for reasons of cold war politics.

Under the New Order, however, almost nothing was ever written by Indonesian scholars and published in Indonesia, except for the *buku putih* (white paper) *40 Hari Kegagalan G30S 1 Oktober -10 November 1965* (*40 Days after the Failure of G30S October 1 – November 10, 1965*)[93] and *Tragedi Nasional: Percobaan Kup G 30 S/PKI di Indonesia* (*National Tragedy: The Coup Attempt of September 30 Movement in Indonesia*) in 1968 written by Colonel Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, a military lawyer, who published the accounts of the events as a rebuttal against criticism of the anticommunist interpretation of the coup.[94] The book later became the state's official account of the events. In this book, Notosusanto started his argument with the Madiun episode. He then extensively examined the events before and during the September 30 coup, leaving no doubt that the PKI had planned the coup. By framing it as such, Notosusanto did not mention a word about the involvement of the army in the mass killings and gave only subordinate role in the history of the New Order. He defined the killings simply as 'communal clashes' and 'horizontal' conflicts between societal groups originating from a spontaneous campaign by the people against communist treason. This implied that the PKI and, indirectly, the 'Old Order' of Sukarno were responsible for the chaos.

Notosusanto's version was enhanced further by a widespread narrative which was strongly at odds with the analyses of Western historians. Printed in army-affiliated newspapers, *Angkatan Bersendjata* and *Berita Yudha*, and also echoed by

[93] The first "*buku putih*" (white paper) was written by the staff of Defense and History Institute (*Staf Pertahanan Keamanan dan Lembaga Sedjarah*). It was published on December 27, 1965 and reprinted in 1996.

[94] In the sixties, Nugroho Notosusanto (1931-1985) became most important military historian, after which he developed into a highly influential person in his career as an interpreter of the official historical vision of the New Order. He could take on this role because he held various positions in which he could exert influence. Examples include: head of the Center for History of the Armed Forces (*Kepala Pusat Sejarah ABRI*) after 1964, professor of contemporary Indonesian history at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta (1980) and then in the first half of the years eighty minister of Education and Culture in the Development Cabinet IV. In addition, he was chairman of the editorial office of an office, *Badan Pembina Pahlawan Pusat*, central institute for the development of heroes, which wrote a series of biographies about national heroes, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs. In general, his career spanned from military affairs, education, and literary movement of the *Angkatan* 66 (Generation 66). Katharine McGregor sees the privileged position of Notosusanto as a civilian among scientists who helped the New Order military create histories of interest as a base of knowledge for the public as well as the military corps so that the spirit of the military corps (in military education) can be maintained. See, McGregor 2007, Chapter 2.

Kompas daily, Notosusanto's narrative detailed the involvement of the members of the communist women's organization, Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or Indonesian Women's Movement, founded in 1950), one of the biggest women's political organizations at the time, in the killings of the generals. Between October and December 1965, all of the newspapers above propagated reports about orgies, torture, brutality, and genital mutilation. *Berita Yudha* quoted an eyewitness who claimed that Gerwani women had cut the generals' genitals, while *Angkatan Bersendjata* wrote that the women had scorned the generals before they executed them 'by playing with and fondling the genitals of the victims while at the same time displaying their own.'[95] Such graphic allegations also appeared in *Kompas* as it wrote in salacious detail that the Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth, the youth wing of the PKI) and Gerwani members who underwent training in Lubang Buaya enjoyed wanton freedom during their stay in the barracks.[96] These reports were circulated widely and successfully heightened society's emotional and political dislike towards the communists.

The critical publications of the aftermath were never made available in Indonesia throughout Suharto's reign, even until today.[97] What happened beyond October 1, 1965 was cast in the dark, and the anti-communist interpretation of the events on September 30, 1965 remains the official view that is anchored in the collective memory of Indonesians. The authorized national history presents a thesis that the coup attempt was the work of the Indonesian communist party that 'had infiltrated the army and suborned a number of malcontent officers.'[98] This official narrative 'became omnipresent in Indonesia, not least in the country's school textbooks.'[99] The killings that followed were 'passed in silence as was the great number of persons who were arrested and subsequently transported to the notorious concentration camp on Buru Island in eastern Indonesia.'[100] For the rest of the population, in the remaining years of the Suharto New Order government, accusations of being a communist or of communist affiliation became a virtual equivalent of a political execution — which explains the gravity of fear that may have overwhelmed Tohari when writing *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* that was regarded to provide a possible alternative reading apart from the state's official narrative. In the first half of his literary career, Tohari claimed that he had been dubbed as

[95] *Angkatan Bersendjata*, October 11, 1965; Drakeley 2007, p. 15.
[96] *Kompas*, November 30, 1965. See also Drakeley 2007, p. 10-29.
[97] The official version of the aborted coup of 1965 is found in the authorized national history *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* (National History of Indonesia, 1975, 1976, 1982, 1983, 1992, and 2008). This series was prescribed by the New Order and written by the regime's interlocutor who was also regarded as its official historian (except for the first edition that was edited by among others Sartono Kartodirdjo). It was (and still is) used as a standard source for the writing of textbooks for Indonesian students and scholars alike — a showcase of how the New Order regime had used history for its purpose. In it, the military was showered with panegyric commentaries, while the communists and Sukarno were demonized.
[98] Hoadley 2005, p. 10.
[99] Hoadley 2005, p. 10.
[100] Hoadley 2005, p. 11.

semangka (watermelon — green on the outside, red on the inside), a formerly-popular derogatory term attributed to any Muslim man who was affiliated with or sympathetic towards the communists.[101]

Still today, fear and trauma still silence the unheard voices of the political exiles, and the education system was (and still is) (re-)shaped to indoctrinate the younger generations of the latent danger of communism. I personally experienced this during my fieldwork. On October 16, 2017, I was taken to a local precinct in Bandung for an hour long interrogation. The event that preceded the incident was the scanning process of the original manuscript that was written by Yudhistira ANM Massardi, whose novel is at the heart of this study. Written in 1977, the manuscript consisted of 100 folio pages and was placed in an old black plastic folder. On the cover of the folder, three letters were in vertical typeface, A, B, and K, which refer to the original title of the novel, *Aku Bukan Komunis* (I Am Not a Communist). Under the letters, there was a trace of a hammer-sickle insignia in typeface — only half of the symbol was visible.

When I had the manuscript scanned and copied at the local photocopy café in Jatinangor, Sumedang, a customer had a look at it and then left. A few minutes afterward, a young police officer came to the café and immediately asked me to come with him to the precinct that was only 50 meters away from the café. Prior to this, I had had some interrogations at several police precincts in Bandung for juvenile felonies and misdemeanors, but being questioned by the police on a serious ideological matter was completely unprecedented and rather unpleasant.

The police questioning centered around the origin of the documents and on the motive that a communist insignia appeared on the folder of the manuscript, along with the word *Komunis*. Furthermore, I was required to give an explanation on the purpose of copying the manuscript, as the interrogator suspected that it might have been used to promote the teaching of Marxism, communism, and Leninism. Scanning and copying the manuscript 40 years after it was written were still considered unacceptable, let alone writing it under a social and political situation where anti-communist sentiment was still powerful and ubiquitous. This experience lends some insight to the difficult framework and circumstances under which literary production took place, as well as doing research on this topic in Indonesia today.

New Order, New Beginning

A year after succeeding in suppressing the G30S coup, Suharto was conferred full authority to restore stability and security by a letter of order from Sukarno known as Supersemar, a contraction of *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* (The Letter of Order of March 11, 1966), one of the basic texts which Suharto used to legitimize his New Order regime and marked the break from Sukarno's politics which was now referred to as the Old Order. The military established the New Order with a promise to end

[101] Interview with Ahmad Tohari on November 6, 2017 in Jatilawang, Banyumas. Also in Riyanto 2006, p. 42.

the ideological strife in the political, and cultural, arena, to safeguard the unity of the country, and to put the country back on the road of economic development. In the effort to reach these goals, the New Order government liquidated the Indonesian communist party and disempowered the majority of Indonesians while establishing the Suharto's government monopoly by creating and developing its political engine, Golkar (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Group) the government political party.

As Suharto became a full president, and with the support of the Indonesian military (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, ABRI), he started building his power structure that would continue for thirty-two years after Sukarno's overthrow in 1965-1967. Jamie Mackie and Andrew MacIntyre have characterized the three decades that Suharto's regime endured in the following periods: 1966-1974, which was characterized by highly participatory society and weak government at the beginning but becoming stronger as economic growth increased revenue and control over resources; 1974-1984, where political participation was popular and the state became stronger due to abundant oil revenues and increasingly autonomous; and 1984-1990, which was indicated by exclusionary regime with little participation from the society in politics, although the state was strong and highly autonomous.[102]

An elaboration on these phases will help us understand the regime's economic achievements and concomitant social changes that would eventually lead to the creation of a setting and cultural politics that were favorable to the development of specific trends of cultural and literary production in Indonesia, characterized by aesthetic experimentation, sometimes surreal absurdist mode of expression, and reference to indigenous, regional cultural traditions.[103] But at the same time, tensions occurred. As the state became stronger, it forced society to embrace its authoritarian developmentalist discourse and penetrated every section of society, committing what Dhaniel Dhakidae called 'systemic totalization' that entails high concentration of political control and increasing constraint on political activity, the press, and public statements.[104]

Phase One: Recovery (1966-1974)

When power passed from Sukarno to Suharto in 1966, Suharto inherited economic turbulence as Indonesia had been put under international isolation. Politics, too, had been seriously weakened because left-wing political parties had been permanently disabled since 1965 and other parties had barely functioned since the introduction of Guided Democracy. 'Economic growth was practically -0.4 percent while inflation reached an extremely high point, exceeding 500 percent' while the population living

[102] These three phases which indicate the evolution of the New Order's power structure were first formulated by Jamie Mackie and Andrew MacIntyre in their overview of the growing strength of the New Order state and the immense personal authority of President Suharto. See Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.4.
[103] Hatley 1994, p.223.
[104] Dhakidae 2003, pp. 288-289.

under the poverty line was 65 percent.[105] Bureaucracy was weak and ineffective after it had been discredited by the economic and administrative chaos of the mid-1960s. In short, the economy had virtually come to a standstill. To address this, Suharto allied with ABRI, which was the key factor in how power was effectively wielded. Together, they rallied broad support, especially from groups that were marginalized under Sukarno or by the PKI, such as the Muslim party Masyumi and its followers, which had been banned in 1960 and other anti-communist alliances, student action fronts, and intellectuals. Development became the keyword of the New Order. The spread of development ideas in Indonesia began from a group of economists of the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta led by Widjojo Nitisastro, Indonesia's foremost economic policymaker.[106]

Following his inauguration as acting president, Suharto immediately named Nitisastro and his colleagues the Team of Experts for Economic and Financial Affairs with the mission of restoring the economy. This marks the journey of these leading economists as the New Order's technocrats. Having been marginalized during Sukarno's era and now grasping full political support from Suharto, Nitisastro's group immediately abandoned all economic orientations of the Old Order and implemented market economy policy. They argued that the economy was a domain of neutral ideology and politics, and economic policies should follow rational, technocratic calculations. In this regard, they opted for 'a set of economic policies that included balancing the state budget, controlling the money supply, reorganizing financial institutions, and opening widely the gate to foreign investors'[107] — except China, as Suharto decided to break the link with the communist country. Consistent with these decisions was an attempt to work out the relationship with international finance groups, most notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. All of these policies were stated in a 1966 MPRS decree known as Regulation of October 3. In 1967, a consortium of donors, called the IGGI (intergovernmental group on Indonesia), was formed to help coordinate the flow of foreign aid to Indonesia and provide strong international support for Indonesia's economic recovery. Bolstered by political stability, these policies performed so well that Indonesian economy unprecedentedly experienced economic growth of 10.9 percent marking the beginning of the recovery phase.[108]

Entering the 1970s, the economic growth picked up pace 'when international petroleum prices quadrupled due to the Israel-Arab war, which conferred a massive

[105] See Indicators of Indonesian economic development, 1965-90 in Hal Hill (ed.).1994, p. 57. See also Yuliar 2008, p. 116.
[106] Most of these economists were trained as economists at the Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta and earned their post-graduate education at the University of California at Berkeley during 1950s and 1960s. They were often consulted by Suharto and responsible for various liberal economic policies, which were often considered to be on the side of the people, such as privatization, deregulation, abolishment of subsidy, tight budgeting. Their domination over policy led them to be known as 'Berkeley Mafia' (Salim 2003, p.197).
[107] Amir 2010, p. 317.
[108] Hill (ed.) 1994, p. 62.

windfall in revenue for the Indonesian economy.'[109] In addition, significant development also became evident in agriculture, especially after the Suharto regime revisited Green Revolution policy. Sukarno had left Indonesia increasingly dependent on imports of rice, with more than one million tons imported annually during the early 1960s. In 1968, conscious of the implications of inadequate supplies of the basic food staple, the New Order established a large scale program of extension services in agriculture known as Bimas (*Bimbingan Massal* or mass guidance) in order to instruct and inform farmers in new methods of agriculture. The New Order government also founded a rural banking system to channel credit to farmers. Due to this, within less than a decade, Indonesia had achieved self-sufficiency in rice and reserved stocks of 3 million tons and was involved in lending rice to Vietnam and the Philippines. By the mid-1980s, it had more than doubled to over 25 million tons,[110] eventually creating new middle-class groups. The windfall gains in oil revenue and agricultural success were channeled into the development of primary education. Universal primary education was almost attained, which means that illiteracy almost disappeared, especially among the younger population.[111] The biggest changes were in the proportions of Indonesians without primary education, which dropped to only 16 percent from an astounding 70 percent, and in the numbers of Indonesians who completed secondary education which rose to 22 percent.[112]

This phase also marked the period of a wide degree of press freedom and production in literature. Under Sukarno's Guided Democracy, journalists and editors had been subject to arrest and detention, especially if they lost commitment to the revolutionary struggle and did not adhere to the regime's policy of revolutionary press and guided press. Wiratraman writes that 'any criticism of Sukarno and his leadership would be punished, with the military playing a central role in both regulation and enforcement, without judicial control. Accordingly, many newspapers were closed down.'[113] In contrast to the Soekarno regime, the New Order 'raised hopes about a freer press, especially after the adoption of Indonesia's Press Law in 1966,'[114] which, surprisingly, promised to guarantee press freedom and prohibition of all forms of censorship and banning.

In this regard, the first decade of the New Order era saw the birth and rise of, for example, the weekly magazine *Tempo*, which played a large role in shaping the intellectual landscape and offered literary journalism — blending journalistic and literary ways of writing.[115] Furthermore, from the early 1970s onward, the New Order saw developments favorable to the expansion of popular literature. An explosion in commercial publishing houses associated with major newspapers and magazines took place. The proprietors of the national daily *Kompas* founded

[109] Yuliar 2008, p. 116.
[110] Hardjono 1994, p. 191 .
[111] See Hull and Jones 1994, pp. 123-178.
[112] Hull and Jones 1994, p. 161.
[113] Wiratraman 2014, p. 266.
[114] Wiratraman 2014, p. 266.
[115] Djunaidi 2011, pp. 173-174.

Gramedia publishing in 1970. Producers of the *Sinar Harapan* launched their publishing arm *Sinar Kasih*. *Pustaka Jaya*, *Cypress*, and *Grafitipers* set up to publish light, popular fiction in the early 1970s.[116] Writers such as Marga T., Ashadi Siregar, Marianne Katopo, Yati Maaryati Wiharja, Titiek W.S., and, one of the authors under study here, Yudhistira Massardi, could now write without having to worry anymore that their romantic novels could be categorized as counter-revolutionary due to the absence of direct engagement in social and political processes. As a matter of fact, as I will discuss further in Chapter 4, Massardi enjoyed national recognition for his 'unserious' popular works and play, most of which won awards on a regular basis.[117]

Ajip Rosidi (left) and Ali Sadikin, Governor of Jakarta and initiator of Taman Ismail Marzuki, opening art exhibition at Taman Ismail Marzuki.
(Photo collection of Ajip Rosidi)

In addition to the gradual establishment of publishing industry, dominant trends in artistic expression began to appear with the founding of arts centers such as Ismail Marzuki Park (*Taman Ismail Marzuki*, TIM), in 1968, and the Jakarta Art Council (*Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*, DKJ), in Jakarta, as well as other literary circles Theater Kartupat (*Teater Kartupat*, founded in Medan in 1976), and Yogyakarta Arts Center (*Taman Budaya Yogyakarta*, founded Yogyakarta in 1977). The New Order's mandate to promote a national culture was seen in the unveiling of Taman Ismail Marzuki in November 1968, a forum to showcase traditional and modern experimental art in the field of literature, painting, and the performing arts. Not only could artists experiment with new forms, but also with content. This resulted in an outburst of creativity and talent applied to diverse topics in diverse forms and styles.

[116] Sumardjo 1979, pp. 10-11.
[117] 'Massardi' 1981, p. 370.

As the economy began to recover and growth started to take shape, the New Order policy began to spark criticism. Under the leadership of Suharto's most important adviser, General Ali Murtopo, the political arena was reorganized. A central place in this was occupied by the Golkar, a semi-official party representing the New Order and to encourage supporters of the government, particularly ABRI and the regional bureaucracy, to join it or vote for it in the elections.[118] It received strong backing from civil servants who came under pressure thenceforth to join their professional body, KORPRI (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Civil Servant Corps) and to dissociate from other political parties in the name of '*monoloyalitas*' (exclusive allegiance). In the 1971 elections, Golkar gained 62 percent of the vote. The initial optimism among intellectuals that the New Order would become an open democracy soon came to an end. In 1973 the political field was further streamlined. The Islamic parties were merged into the PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, Party for Unity and Development), while the nationalists and the Christian parties were housed in the PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian Democratic Party).[119] The control of Golkar was yet another mechanism used to defeat political dissent as well as to project a sense of democratic ideals which in practice were not realized.

Moreover, dissatisfaction with corruption scandals and the emergence of Japan's dominant role in the Indonesian economy, which created severe competition for indigenous businessmen, led to large groups of student protesters when Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka visited Jakarta in January 1974. The demonstration got completely out of control and quickly developed into an anti-Chinese riot, and a march on the presidential palace. The incident was soon known as Malari (*Malapetaka 15 Januari*, the disaster of January 15). Behind this, there was a conflict within the army in the background. General Sumitro, head of KOPKAMTIB, was accused by Lieutenant-General Ali Moertopo, the main strategist of the New Order and former political advisor to the president, of using the demonstration to strengthen his own position in relation to Suharto. Malari disclosed 'a decisive shift from the relatively open, pluralistic phase of political life under the New Order toward one in which society-based forces'[120] — which include student activists, muslim groups, intellectuals, professional middle classes, and even a number of retired senior military officers who had been prominent in the founding of the New Order — 'were to be largely excluded and rendered almost powerless to influence state policies or the distribution power at the top.'[121] In sum, the first phase of Suharto regime is characterized by initial freedom of the press and literary production that evolves towards repression, by the end.

[118] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.12.
[119] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p. 13.
[120] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.
[121] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.

Phase Two: Steady Growth (1974-1983)

With the increased tightening of freedom of expression and the imposition of the state ideology, Pancasila, the Malari riot was seen (in retrospect) as 'a watershed moment in the development of the New Order political system.'[122] The focus on political and social stability was seen as imperative for economic growth and development. In order to ensure its stability, the military-backed New Order regime began to adopt an authoritarian modus operandi to exercise control by oppressive means. Student protests on January 15, 1974 ended violently and resulted in the arrest of students and the banning of newspapers.[123] Prior to 1974, several minor cases of press permit bans occurred but these were insignificant compared to the government ban on 12 publications which had given the Malari demonstrators sympathetic coverage.[124]

In addition to oppressive measures, the New Order also exercised control by means of monopolizing the state ideology, Pancasila, and the continued participation of the military in all aspects of society. The New Order now made clear that preventing such public demonstrations and student protests was a priority, and in 1978 Suharto had the MPR (the People's Consultative Assembly) propose that Pancasila should be the only guiding principle in society, shaping both social and political spheres.[125] The main means of spreading the five principles of the Pancasila was the P4 program, which stands for the '*Pedoman Penghayatand dan Pengamalan Pancasila* ', or the Upgrading Course on the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila. Pancasila itself consists of five broad principles: a. belief in one Supreme Being; b. a just and civilized humanitarianism; c. the unity of Indonesia; d. a people led by wise policies through a process of consultation and consensus; and, e. social justice. The five principles were first introduced by Sukarno in June 1945, prior to the declaration of Independence, and have generally served as a unifying national ideology. The P4 curriculum was, however, sheer indoctrination instituted to create ideological conformity around the official state philosophy and a direct attempt to convince the people that there was no better alternative than the reigning government. 'The core of the curriculum consisted of thirty-six precepts (*butir*). The sessions, which were required to include at least forty hours of classroom instructions, stressed rote memorization and regurgitation of the precepts. The sessions were first required of civil servants in late 1970s and were extended to campuses in 1980' in order to prevent the emergence of renewed criticism.[126]

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[122] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.14.
[123] Liddle, 1978, p. 126.
[124] '*Himpunan Surat Keputusan Jaksa Agung RI tentang Larangan Beredar Barang Cetak Buku 1963-1991*' (The Compilation of Attorney General Decrees of the Republic of Indonesia on the Prohibition of Printed Matters, 1963-1991). Arsip Subdirektorat Pengawasan Agama, Kepercayaan Masyarakat, dan Barang Cetakan (SUBDITPAKEMBARCET), Kejaksaan Agung Republik Indonesia, Jakarta.
[125] Brown and Cribb 1995, p. 136.
[126] All state officials were required to be members of *Korpri*, the Indonesian Civil Servants Corps, which constantly reinforced their adherence to Pancasila and their exclusive allegiance, which inculcated an ethos of unquestioning obedience and acceptance of hierarchy and discouraged

The strongest measure against further protest came in a package of policies called the *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan* (NKK/BKK or the Normalization of Campus Life/Students Coordinating Body), drawn up by the New Minister of Education and Culture Daoed Joesoef through a decree of April 1978. The NKK/BKK imposed more stringent course requirements, placed student life under a campus bureaucracy with ABRI oversight, barred student organizations from political activities, limited 'student autonomy, and effectively made university administrators answerable to military authorities and to the central government for violence of restrictions.'[127] The government normalized campus life and directed universities to focus only on academic rather than in political pursuit.[128]

The next step in propagating the Pancasila was the introduction of the law of the '*Azas Tunggal*' (sole philosophical foundation), in 1985. This new law stipulated that from then on, all socio-political organizations were obliged to use Pancasila as the only principle (*Azas Tunggal*).[129] The official idea behind the principle, according to Suharto, was that the political parties in the past had not made a connection between their own ideology and the state's Pancasila. As a result, there had been a struggle to change the foundations of the state, 'through seemingly peaceful and democratic [changes] to armed uprisings.'[130] The result of this, according to Suharto, was a constant mutual mistrust: 'In order to lay the political and ideological basis, we had to put a definitive end to these problems, in order to prevent repetition. And on the other hand, in order to achieve the goal of our national independence, we had to continue to do our best to build a Pancasila society.'[131] Pancasila was transformed from a unifying nationalist ideology into a hegemonic state doctrine which could not be questioned through public debate.[132] This compulsion of ideological conformity has ever since been highly effective in curbing dissenting views and maintaining political stability.

After its political stability was ensured, the New Order could now concentrate on its role as the engine of economic growth. As an oil-producing country, the Indonesian economic situation was improved as the international oil prices hiked in the early 1970s after a series of energy crises caused by problems in the Middle East and Arab oil producers imposed an embargo.[133] Because of this favorable condition and because the oil industry was in the hands of the state, Indonesia was able to pay almost three-quarters of the second five-year plan, 1974-1979, from its oil revenues. Gains from increasing oil revenue were also allocated to finance various infrastructure and industrial projects. The private sector was invited to partake in

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independent thinking on political or social issues. See Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.27. See also Saunders 1998, p. 84.

[127] Saunders 1998, p. 6.

[128] Hill 1994, pp. 37-40.

[129] Brown and Cribb, *Modern Indonesia*, p. 136.

[130] With seemingly democratic [changes] Suharto probably meant both the attempt to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state and the overall functioning of the PKI as a party until 1965.

[131] Soeharto, Karta Hadimadja, and Dwipayana 1989, p. 268.

[132] Vatikiotis 1993, p. 107.

[133] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/mar/03/1970s-oil-price-shock.

constructing basic and import-substituting industries, including publishing houses. State-owned enterprises were directed to make large investments with support from the national budget. Such large-scale projects benefited from a heavy influx of oil revenue due to increasing oil prices and many successful oil exploration projects.[134]

In this second phase of the New Order, the government, with its authoritarian development model, recorded rapid growth. Between 1971 and 1981, 'real GDP increased at an annual average rate of 7.7 percent and in all years it grew by at least 5 percent.'[135] However, this progress was accompanied by setbacks, which included a high concentration of political control and increasing constraint on political activity, the press, and public statements. Jamie Mackie and Andrew McIntyre observed that the invocation of Pancasila 'has had the effect of constraining the public expression of dissentient ideas and opinions within the limits of what is safe and uncontroversial.'[136]

It has thereby induced a strong inclination towards conformity and self-censorship in public utterance because of the risks involved in straying beyond the limits, intentionally or otherwise. The editor of the fiction department of Gramedia, for example, admitted that the publishing house has never had any other option but to print creative works while adhering to the values of Pancasila.[137] In 1981, accused of being affiliated with the former the Institute for People's Culture (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat,* LEKRA), Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's brother, was dismissed from his position as the translator of Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *Musashi* that appeared as a serial in *Kompas* daily. According to him, the chief editor of cultural desk of the said newspaper phoned him and claimed that due to his affiliation with the disbanded communist organization, his name could no longer appear as the translator of the serial. The chief editor had to ensure a high degree of outward conformity towards the wishes of the authorities.[138] The publishing industry in Indonesia understood it so well that they resorted to self-censorship on sensitive issues in order to stay well inside the limits of what was permissible.

Phase Three: Thrust in Economic Policy (1983-1990)

In the years between 1982 and 1986 world oil prices fell dramatically, with the worst decline between January 1986 and August 1986. In one stroke, Indonesia faced the worst economic crisis since the New Order came to power. There were only two possible routes to restore the economy: 'oil prices would have to rise again, and quickly, or else the economy would have to be rapidly and drastically restructured

[134] Boediono 2016, p. 131-135; van Zanden 2012, p. 347.
[135] Hill 1994, p. 63.
[136] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p. 27.
[137] Interview on September 11, 2017 with the chief editor for fiction department in a room called 'secret' on the fifth floor of Gedung Kompas Gramedia Palmerah Barat.
[138] Interview with former chief editor of cultural desk of Kompas. Also see Sidharta 2014. Available at https://kbr.id/nusantara/10-2014/novel_musashi_dan_cerita_eks_tapol_65/51533.html [accessed on August 10, 2021].

away from its heavy dependence on oil.'[139] The restructuring of the Indonesian economy began with the goal of replacing lost foreign exchange earnings from oil. The government canceled or postponed many major industrial and infrastructure projects and tried to increase domestic sources of revenue. Furthermore, it encouraged foreign investment by removing many of the restrictive regulations concerning foreign investment set up during the oil boom years. Suharto was forced to turn towards a more export-oriented industrialization strategy as suggested by the Bappenas (the national development planning agency). As Robison noted, the Bappenas technocrats were able to introduce policies and regulations that deregulated the economy,[140] which proved remarkably successful in coping with the decline in oil revenues, promoting a dramatic increase in non-oil exports.

Another important change was the marked increase in the personal authority of Suharto after his re-election in 1983. This altered the character of the political system as power became more concentrated at the apex of political pyramid than ever before.[141] By the mid-1980s Suharto was much more than just commander in chief of the army and president by virtue of that fact. In 1983, he would be officially conferred the title of Father of National Development by the MPR. In the eyes of millions of Indonesians, Suharto's regime seemed to have satisfied people's expectations on economic development. Suharto had created better social and economic conditions that allowed the Indonesian people to taste material welfare and modernity unprecedented in Sukarno's era. From this perspective, the New Order's success in economic development became a political commodity for Suharto to perpetuate his power.

Cultural Development

Besides affecting the economy, society, and politics, the dramatic changes after the attempted coup in 1965 also directly impacted culture, particularly Indonesian literature. The New Order, however, had never always been steady from the start. Its early years were full of uncertainties as Suharto had to cautiously increase his power base and therefore needed support from the emerging middle-classes and the *Manifes Kebudayaan* camp which was an ideological contrast to the leftist leaning LEKRA. He also looked for support from other groups that were marginalized under Sukarno, such as intellectuals who had turned against PKI, and supporters of the muslim political party, Masjumi, as well as the liberals who were affiliated to the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), including Achdiat K. Mihardja, Mochtar Lubis, Rosihan Anwar, Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana, and Y.B. Mangunwijaya, all of whom were intellectuals-cum-literary authors.

Literary historian Boen S. Oemarjati, who was one of the initiators and signatories of *Manifes Kebudayaan*, recalled in 1979 the transition to New Order

[139] Prawiro 1998, p. 221.
[140] Robison 1992, p. 73.
[141] Mackie and MacIntyre 1994, p.17.

period as a catalyst for growth in cultural expression as in other fields of activities. She noted that rapid growth in literary writing after 1966 was encouraged by at least five extrinsic elements, namely 'freedom of expression (both in practice and self-legitimation), sponsorship, education, mass media, and readership.'[142] According to her, the socio-political situation in Indonesia during the early years of the New Order allowed a greater opportunity for creative freedom than in the preceding era, which was inclined to favor the communists. Throughout the first half of the 1960s, during the so-called guided democracy era, ideological and political interests were forcibly pushed by the cultural movement of the communist party, c.q. LEKRA. The term experimentation in arts and literature, for instance, was one-sidedly interpreted as imperialistic and counter-revolutionary, and, therefore, became the target of terror and repression from the cultural left, and eventually from the Sukarno government, via Presidential decree dated May 8, 1964.

Under the new regime, the ideological and political interests that had been forcibly pushed by the cultural movement of the PKI collapsed while experimental forms that had previously been under constant offense went to such an extent that improvisation became the last cry in the Indonesian literary movement. Aesthetic experimentation, a non-realistic, sometimes surreal and absurdist mode of expression, and a concentration on philosophical themes was a dominant trend observable amid the individual variation of the Indonesian literary movement in this period, in addition to the reference to indigenous, regional cultural traditions.[143] Writers and modern theatre performers talk of liberation from the dominant political issues, from constant confrontation with artists of opposing political affiliation, and of freedom to pursue personal creativity.[144]

Since the liquidation of the communists that included immediate bans of books by 87 LEKRA writers together with the eradication of their newspapers and magazines, namely *Kebudayaan Baru* (New Culture), *Zaman Baru* (New Age), *Harian Rakjat* (The People's Daily), *Bintang Timur* (Eastern Star), *Sulindo*, *Warta Bhakti* (formerly *Sin Po*) and *Berita Minggu* (Weekly News),[145] the first movement carried out in the field of culture was the convening of the cultural symposium called *Kebangkitan Semangat '66: Mendjeladjah Tracee Baru*[146] (The Awakening of Spirit 66[147]: Exploring a New Trace). This symposium was initiated and organized by the

[142] Oemarjati 1979, p. 134.
[143] Sumardjo 1984, quoted in Foulcher 1987, pp. 6-28.
[144] "Writers and modern theater performers talked of liberation from the domination of political issues, from constant confrontation with artists of opposing political affiliation, and of freedom to pursue personal creativity." Hatley 1994, pp.219-220.
[145] See Lukman Ali, "Pelarangan Karya Sastra Manifes dan Lekra," in *Kompas*, October 10, 1993; See also, Rosidi 1973. "Laranglah Buku, Djangan Pengarang," *Masalah Angkatan dan Periodisasi Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia*. Djakarta: Pustaka Jaya, p. 67.
[146] Wardhana 1966.
[147] This number indicates the year of establishment, generally known as Angkatan 66 (Generation of 66). This refers to students, intellectuals, and activists who helped topple Sukarno after 1965. Later, it was used to indicate literary groups in Indonesia who began writing or had been active in the said period or 'young artists associated with the student movement.' See Jones 2013, p. 132.

Indonesian Student Action Forum (KAMI) and Indonesian Scholars Action Forum (KASI) in Universitas Indonesia Jakarta on May 6-9, 1966 with the support from the signatories of the newly reinstated *Manifes Kebudayaan*, the main rival of the then disbanded LEKRA. In this regard, even though it also focused on economic and political problems and on Indonesian foreign policy, this symposium was seen as a direct offense against the left cultural movement, which had already been suffering from the anticommunist purge during that period. This is evident in the precepts formulated by the participants of the symposium, which read:

1. The philosophy of Pancasila manifests in arts
2. In fostering and promoting our national culture, we must avoid the interest that goes on for the benefit of one group
3. The power of a nation is supported by the masses, laborers and the middle-class, but the development of a nation determined by the collective potentials of the people
4. *Angkatan* 66 yearns for freedom, not only political freedom but also individual freedom as basic human rights
5. *Angkatan* 66 rejects 'Lekraisme' and Neo-Lekraisme in culture, namely the political domination of the works of art

The relatively stable socio-political and socio-economic conditions of the country allowed both governmental and non-governmental institutions to encourage creative writings, which in turn began as part of a more general process of economic and social development.

In addition to the precepts, the aforementioned symposium manifested in the foundation of the monthly magazine *Horison* in July 1966. In its first edition, *Horison* professed itself as 'monthly magazine of literature in the broadest sense, which was committed to stimulating ideas and experiments in the field of literature specifically, and culture generally, and striving to present the works of artists and intellectuals from outside Indonesia, especially works that articulate new thoughts and experiments in the field of culture.'[148] In his introductory editorial, Mochtar Lubis, one of the founders of the magazine, charted the new magazine's course towards freedom and constructive values, constituting a clear break with the monolithic power of the past — a clear dig at the previous influence of LEKRA. He called upon readers to 'leave the narrow space which till now has imprisoned our spirit and thoughts and let us free ourselves from the shackles and traps of slogans of a chauvinistic and xenophobic nature.'[149]

As the first New Order literary magazine, *Horison* was almost as strong in its anticommunism as in its opposition to Sukarnoist populism. As it gained a greater

[148] Hill 2010, p. 112.
[149] Mochtar Lubis headed an editorial board that included HB Jassin, Zaini, Taufiq Ismail, Arief Budiman, and D.S. Moeljanto, all of whom had been signatories of the *Manifes Kebudayaan*. See *Horison*, July, 1966, p. 1.

audience, *Horison* became the major outlet for those writers constrained by the closure of *Sastra*, its predecessor, which was forced to close in 1964. Since its first publication, *Horison* magazine continued to develop its mission as a literary and cultural magazine by opening space for the birth of various experimental works and by its publication policies it eventually came to set the standards 'for serious literature, providing models which writers all over Indonesia attempted to emulate' by which New Order fiction was evaluated and in time *Horison* played an important role as 'gatekeeper' strongly influencing literary production in the New Order Indonesia.[150]

Several new publishing houses were given long term support in the publication of literary works. No less than forty newspapers in Jakarta and other cities gave special attention to literature as they allotted special space to poetry, short stories, and serials every week. A greater part of the population, estimated 63 million strong, belonged to the consumer group and formed the potential readership of literature in Indonesia.[151]

Newspapers that had accommodated literary expression in special rubrics began to (re)appear. The newspaper *Merdeka*, which had been banned by Sukarno since February 1965, made its comeback and was then followed by Catholic newspaper *Kompas* and *Harian KAMI*, and *Indonesia Raya*.

Balai Pustaka as a government publisher that had played an important role in the development of Indonesian literature since the colonial 1920s, and well into the 1950s reprinted a number of literary works published before the war of independence. A number of literary works that have been long enough not to circulate in the community, re-emerged, such as romantic and didactic novels *Sukreni Gadis Bali* (Sukreni: A Girl from Bali) by Panji Tisna, *Azab dan Sengsara* (Pain and Suffering) by Merari Siregar, *Siti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli and *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah* (Under the Protection of Ka'bah) by HAMKA. Some private publishers who were initially interested in printing non-fiction books, especially textbooks, were now beginning to publish novels. Moreover, almost all the newspapers and entertainment and family magazines printed short stories or serialized novels and organized regular creative writing contests.[152] This was made possible, mainly, by rapid economic growth, increases in overall prosperity, and strengthening of the state apparatus, as well as the defanging of alternate political structures, which resulted in enormous changes in the facilities for and conditions of cultural expression.[153]

Economic growth fostered a boom in the publishing industry and made books, once rare and limited, a familiar and accessible commodity.[154] The availability of books went hand in hand with increasing interest in reading. With

[150] Hill 1984 and Foulcher 1987 as quoted in Hatley 1994, p. 222.
[151] Oemarjati 1979, p. 135.
[152] Damono 1979a, p. 3.
[153] Hatley 1994, p.222.
[154] Hatley 1994, p. 217.

government support, in early December 1980, *Yayasan Gemar Membaca* (The Foundation for Reading Interest) was established in Jakarta. According to the head of the foundation who was also the chair of the Indonesian Publishers Association (Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia – IKAPI, founded in 1950) Jakarta Branch, the intention of launching the foundation was to stimulate interest in reading among the Indonesian society. He was concerned that there was only about two percent of Indonesian people who could enjoy books (the population of Indonesia at that time was 140 million). Among Asian countries, reading interests in Indonesia ranked the lowest. The practical purpose of this group was to facilitate the circulation of books among the wider community.[155] Reading interest was also encouraged by community-based organizations, such as the *Himpunan Masyarakat Pecinta Buku* (Himapbu - Book Lovers Community) that was first established in Jakarta on February 12, 1980. The group is affiliated with the National Development Supporting Body (Leppenas), whose main aim was to support the national goal of economic development. Himapbu claimed 2300 members across the country, all of whom were determined to increase literacy through participatory actions and community involvement.[156]

In addition to state recognition of the important role that publishers played, IKAPI received sponsorship from the government and raised substantial funds which were used to establish the Yayasan Buku Utama, a non-profit foundation that rewards the best books every year, including literary books, and aims to encourage and develop the writing of books in the field of literature and science, especially of a popular nature. Ahmad Tohari was one of the many writers who had won awards. As a matter of fact, Tohari won two awards from Yayasan Buku Utama for his first novel *Kubah* in 1980 and, remarkably, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, for *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* in 1986.

To further promote the book industry as well as to implement supervision, control, and simultaneously, censorship, the government issued a Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 0399/0/1977 dated September 6, 1977, through the Ministry of Education and Culture. It stated that IKAPI and other publishers would exist under the guidance, regulation, and supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the following year, on March 31, 1978, a Presidential Decree No. RI. 5/1978, which stipulated the establishment of the National Book Development Advisory Board (BPPBN), was issued and followed by the Decree of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia No. 512 / KMK.04 / 1979 on November 28, 1978, which abolished sales tax and implemented special rates for book delivery. In addition to this, the government drafted the Deposit Act, which required book publishers to submit a copy of every book they published to the *Perpustakaan Nasional* (National Library, officially founded in

[155] *Antara*, January 7, 1981.
[156] IKAPI 1976, p. 15.

1980).[157] Given this obligation, not only could book publishing be documented but also be multiplied.[158]

When publishers stalled production due to a paper price hike in the early 1980s, the government interfered by instructing the Ministry of Industry, Ir. Hartarto, and the Minister of Trade, Rachmat Saleh, to set paper price guidelines in order to maintain the stability of paper prices. In addition to the guidelines, the government also implemented the reduction of the paper import duty. The reduction was massive, from 60 percent to only 10 percent, allowing the publishing industry to continue to thrive.[159]

By the fiscal year 1979/1980, the government had provided 107 titles of books, and 13,375,000 copies, or 7 percent bigger than the targeted number. For the fiscal year 1980/1981, the government purchased 100 titles of books, totaling 14,000,000 copies worth Rp. 4.5 billion.[160] In the fourth five-year development plan (Repelita IV 1984-1988), the government planned to improve the quality of education by providing about 200 million books.[161] School textbooks were printed in greater number, totaling 263.3 million copies — an incredible leap since the New Order was first established.[162]

It is interesting to note, however, that while the state was showing a kind gesture to ensure that literary books could be evenly distributed and read by Indonesian people across the country, the above policies were issued after Suharto had consolidated his power, as the Army remained the dominant force and bureaucracy gained in influence and efficacy. The New Order had just entered its second phase, in which constraints on political activities, the press, and public statements were increasing.

Besides massive increases in printing occurred, this second phase also saw a significant increase in women's novels written by female authors who belonged to both the intellectual middle and upper classes (mostly housewives).[163] No fewer than 40 female authors wrote short stories in magazines and in novel form. The emergence of these women writers coincided with the publication of women's magazines in these decades, and most importantly, the rise of the literate middle-class resulted from economic growth. *Isteri* (Wife, 1977) by La Rose, for example, was first published as a serial in the weekly popular magazine *Selecta* during the second half of 1976. It depicts problems and settings that are familiar to Indonesian women readers and conforms to the regime's state of *ibuism*, in which women were not taken into account in formal politics and were defined simply as wives and

[157] *Kompas*, October 23, 1981.
[158] *Kompas*, October 26, 1981.
[159] *Antara*, January 7, 1981.
[160] *Antara*, September 23, 1981.
[161] This is symbolic of the state as a scientific, economic-planning and rational administration and stresses the centrality of the state to the attainment of a prosperous modern future. See Langenberg 1986, pp. 20.
[162] *Suara Karya*, January 31, 1984.
[163] Oemarjati 1979, p. 138.

mothers who serve their men, children, family, community, and state.[164] Tellingly, La Rose's *Istri* was immediately followed by *Janda* (Widow, 1977), in which "suspense and tensions were built alternately by carefully balancing sentimentality with the spontaneous responses of a woman's instincts that were sometimes innocent, sometimes cunning, yet in all [*sic*] subtle and quite credible."[165] In no time, La Rose's name was regarded as a guarantee for commercial success in the book business. As the trend became dominant, other women writers joined La Rose's example of writing novels on problems that appeal to their mostly women readers.

According to Sapardi Djoko Damono, one of the driving forces that increased the publication of the works of fiction was more and more housewives who had a lot of free time that required some sort of medium to spend their leisure and channel their creative urge. Such medium came in the form of various women's magazines. The habit of reading an article in women's magazines increased the pleasure of reading fiction. The number of young women who loved light reading also increased. More and more women who worked in offices found themselves in need of entertainment. This number was coupled with girls from well-off families who shared similar interests, which was evident in the high record of sales of women's magazines such as *Femina*, *Sarinah, Gadis, Putri*, and *Hai*. Damono added that some of the women who contributed their stories to the magazine had turned writing for pleasure into writing for additional financial gain.[166] While it is true that the growth of an increasingly affluent, educated middle-class aspiring to modern knowledge and skills facilitated the publishing boom of the 1970s and 1980s, this situation also created tension and ambivalence in the life of Indonesian literature.

The increase in the number of literary writers and their works shows that Indonesian literature became more viable as it encompassed a wider public. But literary observers were anxious that this phenomenon might disrupt the quality of Indonesian literary writing. Sapardi Djoko Damono, a prominent poet-cum-literary critic, juxtaposed the popular literary writings in the 1970s and 1980s with the erratic '*batjaan liar*' (wild books) printed and published during the colonial era which did not adhere to literary aesthetics and standard language at the time.[167] Jakob Sumardjo was concerned about the fact that the novels of the 1970s were uniform, written hastily and without attention to literary intrinsic values, cheap, and always market-oriented.[168] Obviously, their views easily fall under the category of cultural elitism against a very different and distinct category, i.e. commercial popular mass culture. Lastly, Ajip Rosidi, one of the authors central in this study, made a quip about the contemporary literature aficionados who had a poor taste for literature, as they had become accustomed to reading what he considered to be poor quality literature.[169] At the same time, stories with weighty literary values were housed in the literary

[164] Suryakusuma 1996, p.102.
[165] Oemarjati 1979, p. 138.
[166] Damono 1979a, p. 9.
[167] Damono 1979a p. 10.
[168] Sumardjo 1979e.
[169] Rosidi 1977, p. 22.

magazine *Horison,* which according to one of the founders himself was rather intellectual, felt foreign, and was not about Indonesia's own problems. In addition, the editors received criticism from authors who could not get their works published in the magazine because of what they claimed as its resistance to styles of writing outside the personal tastes of its editors. With *Horison,* literature seemed to have lost its viability and therefore could not be categorized as good since they only had a limited medium of expression and maintained only a low level of readership. In contrast to the success of the so-called 'cheap' literature mostly written and read by women, publishers of weighty and serious literary works struggled to promote and sell their publications.[170]

Ajip Rosidi, head of IKAPI, author, publisher, (left), meeting President Suharto in 1972. (Photo collection of Ajip Rosidi)

Equally ambivalent was President Suharto's endeavor to get authors and publishers to assist national development by producing his definition of 'good books'. Riddled with vagueness, the phrase 'good books' that he used was dictated at the final stage of Phase One, i.e. 1973, when Suharto began to gain greater strength and was no longer in need of broad support from the liberals and its untiring advocates. This resulted in more control and surveillance over content. Under the authoritarian regime characterized by tightening of government control, one could never be sure what was meant by 'good'. The president's appeal to have authors and publishers produce 'good' books while at the same time other 'good' books were being banned left authors and publishers in constant alert in producing literature that always had to be politically safe. In this light, the ambiguity in Suharto's speech on May 2, 1973, at a luncheon in the State Palace in Bogor, before several Indonesian

[170] Hill 1993, p. 251.

authors, journalists and heads of the Indonesian publishers association and owners of press and publishing industry in Indonesia presented a justification to establish a political atmosphere which was hostile to all non-conformist literary expression.

Conclusion

It is under this tension between economic growth and political repression that the production of the literary works at the heart of this study took place. The regime initially saw developments favorable to the expansion of literature, including the outpouring of creativity and talent applied to diverse topics in diverse forms and styles. But at the same time, the regime's drive to maintain stability for national development caused a shift in the structure of cultural production. From its inception, the New Order promised to restore order. This was formulated as early as August 1966 in the second Army Congress in Bandung.

> 'The New Order is a more realistic and pragmatic way of thinking. It wants the national interests to come first and strives to achieve […] subsequent period of development, good work of economic and democratic ideals, and the realization of a cultural, economic, political, and social system that is inspired by the Pancasila mentality.'[171]

The pragmatism in the above formula meant in practice a strong concentration of power in the hands of Suharto whose policy emphasized social and in particular economic development. The regime responded to the need of the population to put an end to the economic malaise and hyperinflation as quickly as possible, as well as to the political bickering during the parliamentary democracy and the polarization during the Guided Democracy.[172]

With great emphasis on economic development, the New Order regime made great efforts to stabilize national politics and to boost the economy, which had collapsed under Sukarno's Guided Democracy. Under the logic of political stability came the organizational structure of the New Order, as well as the explanation of and justification for Suharto's rise to power. The legitimation strategy was as follows. Firstly, its formal establishment consisted of several official documents: the Constitution of 1945, Pancasila, and Supersemar. On the basis of these documents, the New Order claimed its legality and argued that it was the best representative of the state. Secondly, there was the category that was closely related to the defense of the norms and values of the Pancasila. To preserve Pancasila, the New Order propagated a strong anti-communist ideology.

The interpretation of political legitimacy changed in the 1970s as a result of increasing criticism of the regime. The criticism focused, among other things, on the low level of democracy, economic policy that benefited only a small group, foreign economic influence in Indonesia, and the Westernization and secularization of

[171] Karta Hadimadja and Dwipayana 1989, pp. 131-132.
[172] Vatikiotis 1993, p. 6.

society, marking the beginning of a change in Suharto's politics as it strengthened its legitimacy. The five principles became the linchpin of political legitimacy through their transformation into a rigid state ideology. Central to this was the presidency of Suharto. He had a very strong position as a result of the authority of the presidency granted in the Constitution of 1945, and the decree of the MPR in 1968, which allowed the president to dominate the executive, legislative, and judiciary.[173] In addition, Suharto also possessed great power being the supreme commander of the military. Not only did the army guarantee its own security by repressing the opposition, it also occupied a strong position as a result of self-appointed political function. Thus, Suharto was able to exert influence on the political level through military and gave his position the opportunity to oversee security and information services.

The New Order evolved from a relatively open and participatory atmosphere with the free expression of opinions into a state of increased constraints and tighter control. Under the regime, all publications and printed materials, both literary and non-literary, could be put up for review and banned if found harmful or offensive to the interests of the state and its citizens. The regime controled, homogenized, policed cultural production, and chafed it under restriction.

[173] Jenkins 1984, p. 13.