

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE DUTCH COLONIZATION TOWARD INDONESIA AND THE JAVANESE/SUNDANESE CULTURE AS THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF 'NYAI' PHENOMENA**

The 'Nyai' phenomena as one of the impact of the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia can be seen as the ambivalency of (post)colonial experiences of the native woman, in the novel it is represented by Titi. In this chapter, the writer intends to present the role of Javanese/Sundanese culture and keep calling Titi as Javanese/Sundanese. The presentation of the Javanese/Sundanese culture in influencing the widespread of 'Nyai' phenomena is important realizing that most of 'Nyai' were the Javanese/Sundanese woman. It happened realizing that the Dutch first landed in Batavia (Java) and that its colonial government was centered in Java. Besides that, compared to other places in Indonesia, the Javanese/Sundanese (women) were more open in accepting the idea and the practice of having extra-marital sexual relationship with the Dutch men. Further, that the writer calls Titi as a Javanese/Sundanese woman –although in the novel it is clearly that she is a Sundanese-, it is with the reason that it is quite difficult to find any books related with Sundanese culture. Thus, the writer prefers using Javanese culture realizing that in the novel, the characters –particularly Titi- practices such Javanese cultural values and that Titi is more the stereotype of a

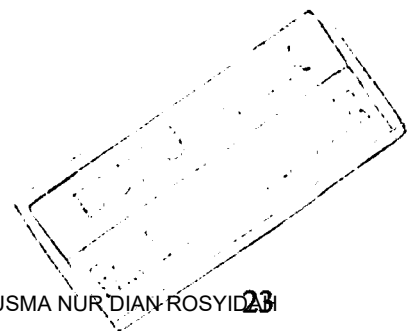
Javanese woman. In this matter, some causes of the widespread of 'Nyai' phenomena which can be considered are: first, the effect of the Dutch government policy and motive of its imperialism; and second, the Javanese/Sundanese cultural values related with social hierarchy, social interaction and gender relationship, and the Javanese/Sundanese feudalism.

## **A. THE INFLUENCE OF THE DUTCH COLONIZATION TOWARD THE WIDESPREAD OF 'NYAI' PHENOMENA**

### **A. 1. The Dutch Policy On Mix-Marriage and Colonial Society Stratification**

The Dutch colonization in Indonesia which dated from 1600s to 1940s had caused many changes in Indonesia. Mostly, the changes could be seen in politics, economic, social, and cultural life. In Said's book entitled *Culture and Imperialism*, Michael Doyle (qtd in Said 9) argues:

Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is the process of establishing or maintaining an empire.



About imperialism and colonization, Said (9) continuous that:

Neither imperialism nor colonization is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like 'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion', and 'authority'. Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized, or rejected.

What said has quoted from Doyle and what he has stated can also be seen in the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia. In the relationship between the Dutch and Indonesia during colonization, the positioning as the colonizer0colonized, the superior-inferior, the dominating-dominated, and the Self-Other between the two in general and social and cultural changes in particular were the dominant aspects. The impact was not only directly to Indonesia as a country but also to its people individually, who are treated as the colonized.

Related with the 'Nyai' phenomena, its historical events causing the widespread of the phenomena needs to be discussed. As has been described by Hellwig (11-12) in her book entitled *Adjustment and Discontent: Representations of Women in The Dutch East Indies*, the Dutch first landed on the Java's North's land in 1596 leaded by Cornelis Houtman. Six years later, there were many Dutch

sailors followed with the purpose to make profit in the spice trade. In 1602, VOC established. In 1605, VOC defeated the Portuguese in Ambon and took over the fort. From Ambo, the first Governor General of VOC, Jan Pieterszoon Coen decided to move the VOC headquarters in Java, it was in Batavia or Jakarta at present. The VOC employed civil and military officers. Both followed by strict hierarchical order.

Hellwig continuous that the majority of White population consisted of bachelor men. Many white men would enter into a liaison with an Asian woman, often a slave (12). Coen, the General Governor, strongly opposed extra-marital cohabitation. He considered it debauchery, and therefore, he supported female immigration from the Netherlands. However, in 1632, the Company decided not to sponsor any more women to come to the Indies. And some twenty years later, it restricted all immigration of women. Its ultimate goal was to create a stable and permanent community in the archipelago. To achieve this, the Company regulated a policy to give the Asian women and their Eurasian children the nationality of the husband/father in case of mixed marriages.

Similarly, in Utomo's paper "*Sexuality and the Sexes in Indonesia: A Historical Perspective*", Andaya (qtd in Utomo) writes:

In 1596 the Dutch entered Indonesia, invaded and controlled Jayakarta, rebuilt it as the main headquarters of the Dutch East India Company and changed the name into Batavia.... The establishment of the Dutch-controlled city influenced the physical structure, government, economic

affairs, the people and even the idea of having sexual liaisons with foreigners. The last influence created half-caste or mixed race communities which became the intermediaries bridging the gaps between the Dutch and the Indonesians.

As the 'Nyai' phenomena was the main cause of the increasing number of mix-blooded offspring, Utomo writes that "the mix-blooded phenomenon became common in the city as the foreign men rarely brought their womenfolk to Southeast Asia". In addition, other historical events which affected to phenomena as has been written by Andaya (qtd in Utomo) was:

At one stage in 1609, thirty six white women were sent to Batavia, but these women were not the respectable women that the authorities hoped for. So by 1652 the Dutch had established a policy which existed for the next 200 years to restrict the immigration of white women. Another policy that developed relating to intermarriage was the 1617 Heeren XVII decrees that marriage for 'free burghers' could only be legal with the Dutch East India Company's agreement. These free burghers could only marry Asian or Eurasian women if these women became Christian and would raise their children and their slaves as Christians. Places where free burghers and their slaves as Christians.... Then in 1639 to fulfill the objective of constituting a colony, the Company forbade them to return to Europe while still married. This policy was enforced by another that forbade Asian or Eurasian women to go to Europe. Another complexity to

these mixed-marriages was the children who were socially located between the two cultures and not accepted by either....

Since then, racial and social class discrimination of mixed-blooded developed. It was, in the time of the Dutch colonization, as described by Jong (11), in legal terms the inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies consisted three groups: Europeans as the upper class, Foreign-Orientals as the second, and Natives as the lowest one. Hellwig (25-6) writes that European community consisted of both white Europeans and mixed-blooded or *Indoes*. Over some two hundred years the colony had come to a point at which white supremacy was firmly anchored. A colonial patriciate had generated itself and its members filled most, if not all, of the managerial and decision-making positions. They perceived themselves highly superior to all other inhabitants of the Indies and assumed a patriarchal attitude. The Europeans in the Indies appeared as typical middle-class elite.

Hellwig continues, *Indoes* or the Eurasians formed a distinct group. Born out of relationships between the Dutchmen and the native women, their legal status was European or *inlands* (native). This distinction depended on the question whether they were born as the legitimate children or born out of wedlock but recognized by their European fathers, in whom in this case they were Europeans; or whether they were illegitimate children, in which case they were *inlanders*. Whatever the case, real social inequality between the Whites and the Eurasians/*Indoes* was out of question. In a different way than the Chinese, the

Eurasians were affected by racism, and they were very conscious of their skin colour, the number one determinant of status and prestige.

### **A. 2. The Colonial Economy and Society**

Hellwig writes that following 1870 the economy took a new direction under the Liberal policy in the Dutch government. The Liberal adhered to ideas which allowed private enterprises, free cultivation and individual possessions in the Indies. After 1870, the Liberal continued to see the colony as a State of enterprise and adopted the policy of surpluses. Concerning land ownership, the Liberal regulated that land which was not privately owned, it was State land. It was divided into land free for native rights and land subject to native rights. Dutch subjects and companies could lease this land, which resulted in a steady encroachment of private capital investments in the colony. Larger number of Europeans now shared in the economic growth, while larger number of Indonesians felt the oppression of colonialism. Capitalism developed rapidly, and the subsistence economy according to which the peasants on Java had lived for centuries was inescapably replaced by a monetary economy. With its production of export crops the Indies gained foothold by a monetary economy. At the outset, land was leased to private landlords who set up their enterprises and plantations. In the situation as it was before, these landlords had complete authority over the inhabitants of their territory.

## **B. THE INFLUENCE OF THE JAVANESE/SUNDANESE CULTURE TOWARD THE WIDESPREAD OF 'NYAI' PHENOMENA**

### **B. 1. Two Basic Principles of Social Interaction of the Javanese/Sundanese and the Javanese/Sundanese Sexual Ethic**

In his book entitled *Etika Jawa*, Suseno (38) quotes Geertz that there are two principles which determine most of the pattern of the Javanese social interaction: first, harmony principle, and second, respect principle. Harmony is an ideal condition in which each member of society has to keep peace to each other. It is expected that each member of the society can maintain the condition under all circumstances and in all social interaction, in a family, and within all stable social group. The principle is aimed to keep the society to be in a harmonious life. Respect principle means that everyone should always show his/her respect and honor to each other based on his/her position and status in the society. The respect principle is maintained based on hierarchical order in the society. About sexuality, the Javanese/Sundanese hold a strict attitude toward it. Any extra-marital sexual relationship is considered negative and breaks both the religious and the social norms.



## **C. 2. Gender Relationship and the Role of Women in the Javanese/Sundanese Society**

One element of the Javanese/Sundanese culture related with gender relationship and the role of women in the Javanese/Sundanese society is ideology of family. As described by Kusujiarti (91) in *Sangkan Paran Gender* (Abdullah, ed.), ideology of familial is an ideology which emphasizes on the domestic and reproductive roles of women. In this ideology, women are represented as calm, tidy, haughty, and elegance in appearance but do not have high intellectuality. Women also have less spiritual power than men; that's why women are considered unable to be in high position in a society and government. Women are placed as the second sex. Because of such natures, women are considered to be protected and led by men. Their status in the society is determined by their husband's status. As a result, women should place themselves as the subordinate and thus have to serve men.

Moreover, the Javanese/Sundanese society keeps the patriarchal system strongly. The system places men as the ordinate and women as the subordinate. It influences the perceptions of both men and women about their status and role in a family and in a society. It also determines both men and women image in the social order.

### **B. 3. Feudalism In the Javanese/Sundanese Economic System and the Influence of the Dutch Capitalism On It**

The nature of imperialism is economic motive. Later in its coming, the Dutch practiced capital economic system toward Indonesia through two ways: high tax of land owning and strict monopoly. The Dutch practice of capitalism during its colonization mainly can be seen in one of its policy related with land and crops production: culture steel.

Before the coming of the Dutch and during some years of the Dutch colonization, the economic system hold by the Javanese/Sundanese is feudal system. Realizing the hierarchical order within the Javanese/Sundanese society, the Javanese/Sundanese believed that their kings were the personification of God. This belief then influences their view on land-ownership. The Javanese/Sundanese believed that lands were belong to the Kings and also it belonged to other rich members of the society. The poor were only cultivate the land for the benefit of the Kings and the rich. In this matter, feudal system strengthened the position of the Kings and the rich as ones who had right of land ownership. On the other hand, the poor did not had such right and could not do anything to free themselves from such condition because as Javanese/Sundanese, they hold high faithfulness to the landowner: the high class of the Javanese/Sundanese.

With its capitalism, the Dutch had influenced the feudal economic hold by the Javanese/Sundanese. The influence could be seen that the land owned by the Kings or the rich of the Javanese/Sundanese should be cultivated with the

production crops, such as coffee, tea, and sweet-bamboo. Even, the Dutch considered its biggest income of its capital economic came from sugar. Here, to grow up the production crops, the Dutch needed a big number of lands which were mostly owned by the rich Javanese/Sundanese. For its purpose, the Dutch leased the land from the rich and, on the other hand, gave a kind of 'punishment' to the rich who didn't plant the production crops or lease the land with high taxes. The Dutch also created a policy of monopoly. Under the policy, the production crops should be sold to the Dutch government. Above all, the influence of the Dutch capitalism which was practiced through the policy of culture steel toward the feudal system of the Javanese/Sundanese had caused the peasants and the lowest classes of the natives who did not had any land became frightened and suffers in poverty.

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **ANALYSIS**