

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Dutch colonization toward Indonesia had influenced many aspects of both the colonizer's and the colonized's life. Beside the economic and political life, one aspect influenced by the colonization is personal relationship between the Dutch and the Natives. In this matter, the personal relationship between the Dutch and the Native can be seen in the phenomena of the Dutch men who had extra-marital sexual relationship with the Native women. That relationship resulted in the birth of many children who were mix-blooded of Dutch-Indies parents.

During its colonization, according to Jong (10) the Dutch divided the colonial society into three groups: Europeans (with the Dutch as the majority) who constituted as the upper class, Foreign-Orientals (Arabs, Malaysians, Chinese, British-Indians, and the like) who were in the middle class, and Natives (Indonesians) as the lowest. More or less, the policy resulted in the increasing number of 'Nyai' phenomena, that was native women who became sexual partners or mistresses, of the Dutch or the middle class group. As has been described by Jong (11), until 1870 there were never more than a few thousand Europeans, chiefly men, in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). Many of them, primarily the soldiers, took a native wife and had children of mixed descent. In 1892, the offspring of European fathers and Indonesian mothers were granted European nationality on condition that they were recognized by their father. The

terms of condition to be recognized as a Dutch or as a European included converting to Christian both for the Indonesian mothers as well as the children and or having European upbringing for the children. This group, the so-called Eurasians or Indo-Europeans, therefore automatically belonged to the legal category of Europeans.

The stratification of colonial society led into discrimination. Such discrimination had its root form different identities among the groups or the societies. Jong (12) explains, “no legal distinction was made between the Whites born in Europe and the people of mixed descent recognized as Dutch”. In the relationship with people from Netherlands, not in relation with the majority of Indonesian, “most of the Dutch Eurasian had to contend with a social disadvantages” (Jong 12). Jong continues that:

Some Eurasians could rise to the highest positions, while others were swallowed up or threatened to be swallowed up in the poorer Indonesian circles, and in between these two extremes was a group endeavoring to distinguish itself from the vast mass of Indonesians, but which was checked I its upward social mobility by the Dutch elite from Europe (12).

Related to the ‘Nyai’ phenomena, “the stories of Nyai” were very popular in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) during 19th and 20th century. Most of them were written by the Dutch Eurasians and the Chinese (Bandel). However, Bandel continues, “the stories of Nyai” were considered negative and had low qualities so that it could not be considered as literary works by Balai Pustaka, the institution which hold authority in deciding whether a work is considered

“literary” or not at that time. The considerations were based on the fact that “the stories of Nyai” did not promote “Bahasa Melayu Riau” as the standard language for high quality literary works and that the stories themselves were considered “inappropriate” and “impolite” because it told about extra-marital sexual relationship between native women with the two upper classes of colonial society, Europeans (including Eurasians) or Foreign-Orientals.

In the following time, besides the Dutch Eurasians and the Chinese who wrote about ‘Nyai’, there are Indonesian people who also write about ‘Nyai’ such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer with his character, ‘Nyai Ontosoroh’. From the famous stories about ‘Nyai’ such as ‘Nyai Dasima’ and ‘Nyai Ontosoroh’, it can be known that the ‘Nyai’ were native women who usually come from poor families and thus, whether they like it or not, let themselves or were urged by their family to be sexual partners of Dutch men. In the previous time, the stories about ‘Nyai’ were considered having low qualities, but it was no longer as there is Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s story about ‘Nyai Ontosoroh’ in his *Tetralogy*. In these four novels, “Pram succeeds in presenting the story about ‘Nyai’ as a critic toward both Javanese culture and colonialism, in which it portrays the ambivalency of (post)colonial experiences” (Bandel).

The story of ‘Nyai’ as a critical expression toward Javanese/Sundanese culture, the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia, and the ambivalency of (post)colonial experiences also can be seen in E. Breton de Nijs’ novel entitled *Faded Portraits*. E. Breton de Nijs is the pseudonym of Rob Nieuwenhuys. He was born in Semarang in 1908, the son of a Dutch Father and a mother of

Javanese-Dutch descent from Solo. *Faded Portraits* is his only novel and was begun when he was interned in a Japanese concentration camp, written partly as an attempt to make sense of his own childhood.

In fact, E. Breton de Nijs' *Faded Portraits* is not the story of 'Nyai'. The novel tells about mix-blooded de Pauly family, particularly Sophie, the matriarch, who makes efforts to preserve the family heritage, the purity of the Dutch bloodline and culture which ends tragically. As mix-blooded, each member of the family cannot consider him/herself as a pure Dutch or a pure European. But, there is a small part in it tells about Titi who is the representation of 'Nyai' in the novel. As a native and a woman as well, Titi is treated as the subordinate by the members of De Pauly family, especially Sophie and Alex. In the novel, it is also described that Titi receives her condition and position without any protest or action to free herself from being marginalized. Simply, Titi's conflict can be said that it is because of her identities. As a 'Nyai', Titi has identities as a woman, a native, and a colonized. Unfortunately, as she lives in a colonial society, Titi's identities cause her into a problem of being stereotyped, which leads to her discrimination and marginalization.

Titi's identities as the result of her status as a 'Nyai' lead her into experiencing complex marginalization. As a woman, Titi is marginalized both by her native society and her master. As the member of Javanese/Sundanese society, her cultural values require her to be homage and perform a service to her family. She has to follow her family's expectation to marry since a very young age or to be 'sold' to the Dutch man as the result of family's poverty condition. Those two

can be stated as possible factors which cause Titi lets herself to be a 'Nyai', besides the influence of living in a plantation area which became one of the Dutch government policy on its colonial economic. From the Eurasian, Titi is positioned as merely sexual partner of her mix-blooded master who has to serve the master totally. As a native, Titi is marginalized by Alex and Sophie, who are the mix-blooded. She is placed as the subordinate, the 'other' of the 'self' Alex and Sophie, who is unlikely to be equal with them because she does not belong to European culture and race.

Both in Javanese/Sundanese and the colonizer society, the status as a 'Nyai' was considered negative. Javanese/Sundanese society considers a 'Nyai' as a betrayer of the society's religion and social structure. As a 'Nyai' has contact with Europeans who are Christian, her religious aspect is doubted by her own society who is mostly Moslems. She is considered having broken the religious rule of not having extra-marital sexual relationship and not marrying a non-Moslem man. In the social structure, it is difficult to place the 'Nyai' whether she stays as a Javanese/Sundanese or belongs to European. Status as a 'Nyai' is considered negative by the colonizer because the relationship is not under a legal marriage. Also, it is because the Europeans hold negative stereotypes toward the native women.

Since the very limited data about 'Nyai' can be gained in the novel, its critical expression toward colonization is better related with the fact of Javanese/Sundanese culture and the Dutch policies during its colonization toward Indonesia which influence the marginalization of the 'Nyai'. Analyzing 'Nyai'

phenomena in E. Breton de Nijs' *Faded Portraits* is considered interesting because in fact, most of 'Nyai' let themselves to be in such status not because they like to be 'Nyai' (although not all 'Nyai' feel unhappy as 'Nyai'). In fact, they let themselves to be 'Nyai' because they were in 'colonized' condition, economically, politically, and culturally both by the Dutch and the Javanese/Sundanese. In this matter, clearly, it can be seen how the identity as a 'Nyai', its image, representation, and stereotype which lead into marginalization is constructed by the society in which the subject lives. Moreover, it is also interesting because Titi is marginalized by the Eurasians, who are, in fact born because of the Dutch men-the native women extra-marital relationship. In the novel, this fact is presented by the ways Titi is marginalized by the mix-blooded patriarch, Alex, and by the matriarch. Sophie.

B. STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

1. How are complex marginalizations experienced by Titi as a 'Nyai'?
2. How does Titi react toward complex marginalization as the result of her status as a 'Nyai'?

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To point out complex marginalization experienced by Titi as a 'Nyai'.
2. To scrutinize Titi's reaction toward complex marginalization as the result of her status as a 'Nyai'.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is expected that by analyzing 'Nyai' phenomena in E. Breton de Nijs' *Faded Portraits*, the reader will have a broader knowledge about colonization in which it is not only a matter of gaining power and authority of a country over another, but how the practice of colonization is also a matter of colonizing an individual, both physically and mentally, of one who considers him/herself as superior over the inferior one.

Moreover, the analysis of 'Nyai' phenomena is aimed to dig deeper about the fact in Indonesian history during the colonization by the Dutch and to broaden the reader's understanding about the impact of social stratification during the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia which affected its members to position him/herself in his/her 'proper place'.

E. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

Realizing that the character of Titi is not a major character whose characterization build up the conflict in E. Breton de Nijs' *Faded Portraits* and that her action and speech are presented very limited and in very small portion in

the novel, the analysis is concentrated on the complex marginalization experienced by Titi which are practiced by other characters who are mix-blooded of Dutch-Indie parents.

In order to make a better explanation about 'Nyai' phenomena during the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia, the analysis of Titi's complex marginalization is wider on the historical facts of Indonesia during the Dutch colonization, particularly Javanese/Sundanese culture which influence the complex marginalization experienced by Titi by her own society and her reaction toward the complex marginalization, besides the complex marginalization experiences she has from the mix-blooded characters in the novel.

F. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to make the analysis adequate, the thesis will employ postcolonial study as the theory. In general, the theory will be used to scrutinize the construction of identity and stereotype of identity within colonial discourse which results in the marginalization of colonial subject and the way the colonial subject reacts toward the colonization.

G. METHOD OF THE STUDY

After reading E. Breton de Nijs' *Faded Portraits*, the study is started by finding and formulating the problems which are proper to be analyzed. The study is continued by determining the significance of the study, making the scope an limitation of the study, and determining the relevant theory to be used in the

analysis. Finishing all those four steps, the following step done is collecting the data. Since the work is a historical novel which portrays the condition of colonial society, particularly colonial family, library research is needed to collect data and material related with the issue.

The data and material are collected from various books both on criticism and Indonesian history during the Dutch colonization, encyclopedias, articles, and other printed materials dealing with E. Breton de Nijs' work, especially *Faded Portraits*. The data and materials collected are classified into primary and secondary data. The novel constitutes the primary data while other printed material dealing with the analysis of 'Nyai' are the secondary one. Then, it is determined which data and materials about 'Nyai' phenomena gained from the novel and from the factual condition of Indonesian history during the Dutch colonization toward Indonesia are proper to be analyzed using some tenets in postcolonial theory. The use of postcolonial theory is considered appropriate since the novel deals with the characters who experience colonization, particularly the character of Titi. Related with the issue of 'Nyai' phenomena in *Faded Portraits*, postcolonial theory is used to analyze the representation of native woman in postcolonial discourse, particularly some tenets discussed in the critic such as the matter of identity, its stereotypes, and representation in colonial discourse descriptively.

H. DEFINITION OF KEYTERMS

- **'Nyai'** : native women and or non-European women who have pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relationship with European men and or Foreign-Oriental men; non-European women who become home maid as well as bedmate of European or Foreign-Oriental men
- **Complex marginalization** : condition of racial, gender, social class, and religion discrimination of native women in their position both as a colonized people and as women which is done both by the colonizer and their native society as well
- **Difference** : a notion of 'the outsider' or 'the other' which is produced through binary opposition in the construction of identity
- **Stereotype** : a false interpretation of a given reality; oversimplified, rigid, and generalized belief about group or people in which all individuals from the group are labeled with the perceived characteristics of the group
- **Fetish** : disavowal of difference which represents absence and difference

CHAPTER II
RELATED STUDIES AND
LITERATURE REVIEW