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# NYAI DASIMA AND THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION: INTERTEXTUALITY, RECEPTION THEORY, AND NEW HISTORICISM

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**D**ue to the prevalent concept of literature being a document, recording an incident, as well as the lack of proper historical documents, people tend to take for granted that the description of a society in a literary work as an authentic description of the society it describes. *Sejarah Melayu* "Malay Annals" is then simply regarded as an authentic description of the Malay society in the Sultanate of Malacca. They never bother to questioning it although they know it was written more than 100 years after the fall of the Sultanate – for a further discussion please refer to Umar Junus, 1984 and Cheah Boon Kheng, 1998. Accordingly, one might take the same attitude towards *Cerita Njai Dasima* "Nyai Dasima story" by G. Francis (1896) which relates an incident in 1813. In this case, I agree with Kenji Tsuchiya (1991:476) who reminds us about the time difference between the incident and the time the work, which reported it, was written and published which does not allow us to take it as an authentic description of the respective incident. It is quite possible that the incident did take place in 1813. And as it was reported by Francis only in 1896, his source was simply one's memory rather than the actual incident – in this case it can be compared to the role of memory as discussed by Mark Freeman (1993). Francis then simply based his report on somebody else's report and this fits very well to Michael Maranda's statement regarding the nature of a historical fact (1998:416). It is not what has happened

but what is said to have happened. And in this case the respective incident has been filtered through the dominant ideology of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia among the people surrounding Francis' life. It can be compared to Lucien Goldmann's statement (1964, 1967) on Racine's dramas. Racine did not report an incident in ancient Greece. He simply used them to express his Jansenist ideology. And the phenomenon can be compared as well to F.R. Ankersmit's statement (1983:8). The facts are there, but as they are put in a narrative writing of history they are then subjected to the narrative logic rather than to the facts as facts. In this case we have to refer as well to Alun Munslow's discussion in *Deconstructing History* (1997) which emphasizes the fact that every thing is a discourse. It has to be seen as belonging to a syntagmatic system rather than to a paradigmatic one as I have previously discussed (1989:3-18) and it can be compared as well to the statement by Richard Harland in discussing the superstructuralism and beyond. However, we also have to take note on what Tineke Hellwig says in her 1992 article. She believed Dasima was fictional. She questioned the authenticity of Dasima's photograph (3-4) in Francis' text. It is quite possible that the function of the respective photograph is simply to authenticate the story, similar to those in *Pertemoean* "The Meeting" (Abas Pamoentjak n.S, 1927) and *Rol Patjar Merah Indonesia* "The Role of Indonesian

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Scarlet Pimpernel" (Matu Mona, 1940) as I have previously discussed (1988).

Goldmann treated Racine's dramas as an epiphenomenon to the Jansenist world view. He started with the Jansenist idea of the hidden God, *le Dieu cachee*, and then look for it in Racine's dramas. He was then able to establish the relation between the Jansenist world view and Racine's dramas. He used the information regarding a certain period or thing to explain the factors responsible for the creation of certain works. However, there are other ways of seeing a certain phenomenon. In this case I would like to employ ideas developed within the intertextual studies, the reception theory and the new historicism..

The presence of other versions of an incident regarding Nyai Dasima allows us to detach Nyai Dasima story from a (possible) real incident supposed to take place in 1813. It does not concern us whether the incident really took place or not as we are no longer concerned with the authenticity of the report. We simply concern with the publication of the works, discourses, directly related to the situation around 1896 – the year Francis published his work, 1940 – the year Roestam St. Palindih published his *Dasima*, not *Nyai Dasima*, based on a movie story, and 1965 the year S.M. Ardan published his *Nyai Dasima*. They take us to the world of text: Francis', Palindih's and Ardan's texts respectively. To these we can add Pramoedya Ananta Toer's text which is more than a simple re-publication of Francis' text, especially seeing it from the following perspectives. He published it as *Tjerita Njai Dasima* "Nyai Dasima Story" only while Francis published it as *Tjerita Njai Dasima, soewatoe korban daripada pemboedjoek* "Nyai Dasima, a victim of temptress". As Toer's title is different from that of Francis, his edition might lead the audience to a different perspective. In addition to that, Toer published Nyai Dasima story in *Tempo Doeloe* "The Yesteryear" (1982) together with other works from the same period which according to him seemed to have the same characteristics. It is then no longer an independent discourse. It now belongs to a wider discourse consisting of several discourses. This encourages us to compare Dasima story to other works, an intertextual

reality, dialogs among texts – Julia Kristeva developed the concept of intertextuality from that of dialogic of Mikhail Bakhtin and both now develop into two different ideas. In addition to that, *Tempo Doeloe* was published at the same period with Toer's tetralogy, starting with *Bumi Manusia* "The Earth of Mankind" (1980), in which a *nyai*, "a native concubine of an European master", also plays an important role, although she was of a different quality. At least we can relate it to the hyperreality phenomenon as discussed by Umberto Eco (1987). There is then an ideology – in Althusserian sense (cf. Catherine Belsey, 1980:5) – behind its reprinting. It can be also related to Toer's effort of introducing a new paradigm to the study of Indonesian literary history. Instead of starting with the novels published by Balai Pustaka, a literary agency established by the Dutch colonial power, he started the Indonesian literary history with novels of earlier period published in colloquial Malay by private publishers which is usually associated with non-Malay people: Chinese or Eurasian. For him, the genesis of Indonesian literature is not the classical Malay, usually associated with the palace life, but with literary works in the colloquial Malay which was responsible for spreading the Malay beyond its natural boundary. He then accordingly called the literature as *sastra pra-Indonesia*, "literary works of pre-Indonesian period". And this is simply a continuation of what the communist party had propagated before their 1965 abortive coup.

There is another version of Nyai Dasima story but I would not discuss here as it is in Dutch. It was written by A. Th. Manusama in 1926 under the title: *Njai Dasima, het slachtoffer van bedrog en misleiding. Een historisch zedenroman van Batavia* "Nyai Dasima: a victim of cheating and temptress. A historical moral novel of Batavia". Manusama did not mention the presence of Francis' version. He based his version on a "comedy" performed by a Komedi Stamboel group in Indonesia as he also regarded himself as a writer for "comedies" performed by such group. He was also the writer of "Stephan de Lima", "Krontjong" and "Komedi Stamboel". Although his story line is not different from that of Francis but he did some changes to the structure of the story

telling, by reorganizing it. And this might lead the audience to a different perspective but I have no intention of discussing it here. Manusama also did other changes. It was no longer a simple Master Edward W, it was now Master Edward Williams or Master Williams. He extended the story to the court sentencing people responsible for Dasima's death. Poeasa, no longer Poasa, got a death sentence. Samioen got a life sentence, while each Saleha, Hajati and Mak Boejoeng was sentenced 15 year prison. Koen-toem, Samioen's slave, was bought by Master Williams and was set free. Williams and Nancy then left Indonesia for England. In addition to that, Manusama also added an introduction and a historical background of the story. Accordingly, Manusama wrote the version not for an Indonesian audience, but for the Dutch one, at that time, during the colonial period, was a concerned audience. They were concerned about what happened to their colonized subjects as it would affect their life as well. It is then different from the audience of Harry Aveling's translation of the story – he translated the story for two other purposes, both are literary in nature (1988:1-3). At least Manusama prepared the story for the people who spoke Dutch. For this reason I prevent myself from discussing it here.

There were some socio-cultural and political phenomena responsible for the publication of "new" versions of Dasima story. It was not by accident that Palindih and Ardan published their texts, which are different from that of Francis, as it can be studied by the reception theory. Later on, the new historicism introduces a new dimension to the study of literary texts. Instead of describing the nature of a work from the historical background, which produced it, one now starts from the other end, constructing a society based on the phenomena supplied by literary works. Our problem now is how to construct the society responsible for the publication of Francis', Palindih's and Ardan's text from the phenomena supplied by each text. However, based on some reasons, we have to discuss the nature of Palindih's text first.

Although Palindih's text was based on a movie story, it is not a screenplay. It was not prepared for the production of a movie.

It is neither a movie story as such as it has been narrativized. I assume Mak Buyung was never labeled as *langkaneh*, "a poisonous leave", in the movie – *langkaneh* is a Minangkabau idiom for someone who only creates trouble for other people. Palindih gave her that label in the story as the narrativity allowed it. Accordingly, Palindih's text has to be treated as a story rather than as a screenplay. However, we can not erase the trace of a movie from it. There are more than mere facts in it, according to Ankersmit's idea (1983:7).

Our first problem is the intertextuality. There are so many discussions on intertextuality but for convenience I would like to refer here to an anthology edited by Jay Clayton & Eric Rothstein (1991). And for the present discussion, I would simply ignore some preliminary concepts of intertextuality. Where does it take place? During the process an author authoring his work? Or in the work itself as it does refer to other work(s)? Or does it take place in the audience who relates the respective text to any text – cultural and social as well – he ever encounters with? As far as (Nyai) Dasima text is concerned, I will concentrate on two types of intertextuality. First, its intertextual relation to any text published at the same period. We can establish an intertextual reality of Francis' text and texts published around 1900. We can establish an intertextual reality of Palindih's text with texts published around 1940. Or Ardan's text with texts published after 1950 or around 1960. Second, the intertextual relation among any (Nyai) Dasima texts. I would like to concentrate my discussion on the second concept of intertextuality, although sometime I might venture as well to the first concept.

Besides that, the differences among those texts and the "reasons" for their differences might also take us to the field of reception theory, the factors responsible for someone altering a particular text – there are so many discussion on the reception theory but I will simply refer to Wolfgang Iser (1978a, 1978b) and Hans Robert Jauss (1979). At the same time, reading a text from a particular point of view would enable us to construct the cultural reality of the period, which reminds us to a cultural mate-

rialism of Raymond William, in America now known as new historicism (cf. H. Aram Veeser, 1989). However, before going to such an analysis, I have to make an inventory of the property of each text. It is not an objective one as it is not free from any prejudice and subjectivity. I would also include items absent from the text as I have expected them to be present – based on the texts I have so far read. Or I would question the presence of an item as I have expected that it should not be there. I would, for example, list the absence of the description of how *Toean* or Master Edward W took Dasima as his *nyai* in Francis' text. The respective text does not tell us either regarding the living condition of Dasima family before Master Edward W took her as his *nyai*, concubine.

**Inventory of Francis' text:**

1. (It does not mention how Dasima became Master Edward W's *nyai* - 'master' is the translation of Indonesian *Toean*, a pronoun mostly reserved for a European master.)
2. Master Edward W treated Dasima kindly, providing her with materials and jewelry. It might suggest a happy "family" life especially as Dasima had given him a daughter. He even let her having everything he had given her when she left him. She came out from his house as a rich woman.
3. The happy "family" life of Master Edward W and Dasima was guaranteed as they were secluded from the native world.
4. The corruptness of the native people. They were so greedy. They would do anything for money. They were ready to sacrifice their religious principle for the sake of money until we suspect the religiousness of Salihoen, a haji who had performed pilgrimage to Mecca. We can also assume that one could cleanse his sin by performing pilgrimage. As a matter of fact, the text has manipulated Islam. It was used to cheat somebody.
5. Mak Boejoeng's infiltration to Dasima's life. Although she failed to influence Dasima by using a magic potion as it was

useless, she was successful in reintroducing Dasima to her native's world. She reminded her of her sin living an illicit relation, especially with a *kafir*, a non-Muslim man She reminded her of her bleak future as her master might take a wife of his own race; as well as of her loneliness being secluded from her own race.

6. Dasima was a victim of a native conspiracy who lured her to their world in order to rob her of her wealth. She was the victim of the corrupted native life.
7. Poasa, Samioen and Koentoem who were responsible for the death of Dasima were either got killed or would be later on be punished. However, no action was taken against Mak Boejoeng who lured Dasima to the native's world. There was no action taken either against Mpok Saleha and Hajati who treated Dasima badly and who urged Samioen to get rid of her.
8. Although Samiun only paid Poasa to kill Dasima – he was not Poasa's associate – he was not a good man either. He was a black-marketer dealing with stolen properties.
9. Hayati was Samioen's wife who treated Dasima badly. And Mak Boejoeng, as she was paid by Samiun, played an active role in luring Dasima into Samioen's trap.
10. Master Edward W was staying in Gambir, while Samioen in Pejambon and Poasa in Kwitang.
11. The story ends with a tragic ending.

**Inventory of Palindih's text:**

1. The title is no longer *Njai Dasima* but *Dasima* only. And there is no longer Master Edward W. He was replaced by Winata, a rich native who was legally married to Dasima, whose parents were poor.
2. Dasima felt empty as Winata spent most of his time with his business although he did provide her with material wealth.

3. Dasima was dissatisfied with Winata as he did not respect her parents and did not support them with money either.
  4. Mak Buyung – nobody paid her, just for fun? – played an important role in breaking up Dasima's marriage to Winata by fabricating false stories about him. And she did her best matching Dasima to Samiun.
  5. Samiun, after the death of his wife, spent his time in Puasa's gambling den, and was under Puasa's influence. He asked Mak Buyung to match him to Dasima after she was divorced by Winata and returned to her parents. Samiun later on actively took part in the plot of killing Dasima.
  6. Hayati was Samiun's sister, not his wife as in Francis's version, who together with her mother, Saleha, purposely treated Dasima badly.
  7. Salihun, Saleha's brother, was a good man but was cheated by Saleha and her children.
  8. At the end of the story, everybody got their punishment. Samiun and Puasa was caught by the police after Winata had revenged their cruelty towards Dasima, and were properly punished. Hayati and Saleha now made a living as beggars. And Mak Buyung had to spend her life in a mental hospital.
  9. There were no specific location about where the story took place.
  10. The story ends with a tragic ending.
3. Accordingly, Master Williams was bad. As Dasima did not return to him as he had predicted, she was afraid that he would do something bad to her (1971: 53). And Puasa's conversation with Dulo (55) suggested that Puasa was hired by Williams to kill Dasima. Puasa was boasting having plenty of money, and he didn't tell Dulo who gave him, but we, the audience, are sure he did not get it from Samiun who was not rich enough to give away a big amount of money.
  4. Mak Buyung was a lady with good character. She worked for Dasima without any prior motives. She matched her with Samiun as he was really in love with her, not because he paid her to persuade Dasima to marry him. The same thing goes to Saleha and Salihun. Saleha was, as a matter of fact, complaining about Hayati's character and she was against Samiun taking a second wife.
  5. Samiun earned his living honestly. Dasima knew him as he sent Nancy, Dasima's daughter, to school. He married Dasima out of his love to her. He had no intention of robbing her of her wealth. However, he was too weak to go against Puasa's and Hayati's wish – Hayati was his wife and a gambler – the antagonists. Samiun could not prevent Hayati from mistreating Dasima, taking away her jewelry.
  6. The audience knows that Samiun was not guilty. It was Williams who hired Puasa to kill Dasima. But no other story characters knew that. And the audience also expects that the authority would take Mr. Williams responsible for the death of Dasima, not Samiun. The knowledge of audience of the 1965's

Inventory of Ardan's text:

1. The title is once again *Njai Dasima*. There was no description on Dasima's household with Master Edward Williams – no longer a simple Master Edward W. It only told us that Dasima is Williams' *nyai* and they had a daughter, Nancy. It didn't tell us how Williams got Dasima. But it did tell us that Dasima's parents no longer acknowledged her after she became Williams' *nyai*.
2. Dasima left Master Williams as he did not respect her. He simply treated her

version of Dasima story is then different from that of the characters of the story.

7. Williams stayed in Pejambon while Samiun in Kwitang.
8. The story has a comical ending. Everybody said that Salihun and Mak Buyung pitied Samiun. Samiun's father had asked Salihun to take care of him, while Mak Buyung treated him as her son.

The inventory tells us how one text differs from another. In addition to that, by comparing them to the social or cultural texts so far known to us we can establish the relationship between a particular text with those of its period. Let me concentrate on the first item of the Francis' text, the absence of description on how Dasima became Mr. W's *nyai* and what kind of family life they might experience.

The social and cultural texts, which brought me up – I do not think I have to itemize them – tells me that the Dutch master forced the *nyai* system to Indonesian women. By abusing his power – the most respectable one only abused his money, he was able to force a native girl to be his *nyai*, to satisfy his sexual needs. Only an immoral girl would voluntarily submit herself to be a *nyai*. In addition to it, as it is an extramarital relation, it is a sin according to the Islamic law. A faithful Muslim would not commit such a sin. Accordingly, the principal motive of *nyaiship* is a sexual pleasure – a *nyai* is simply a sexual object – rather than establishing a family life, as is the case with a marriage sanctioned by law. Accordingly, we can not expect much from it. We can not expect it to be lasting. And it is not a happy family life either. Dasima in both Francis' and Ardan's version, experienced a psychology of fear. She was afraid her master would anytime get married to a European girl and she would be thrown out of the house. She did not belong to her master's society. She then felt she had to reunite with her native community to which she belonged. She was also afraid of punishment from God in the other World. And the natives, in their effort of luring Dasima to their trap, capitalized on this matter. As she was anxious about her future, at present as well in the after-death life, Dasima was ready to

return to her native world which promised her a safe heaven, the move she later regretted. Nyai Dasima story is then a tragic one. Dasima was trapped between two opposing worlds. One gave a secured present but an uncertain future. The other, on the other hand, she hopes, would give her a certain future. On the contrary, it gave her a bleak present instead as it simply victimized her.

Stories published at the same period provide us some information. The mother in "Tjerita Njai Tassiem" – Story of Nyai Tassiem – in "Tiga Tjerita" – Three Stories – (1897) sold Tassiem to a European man. At first she was happy as her master was very generous. He however threw her out of the house after getting married to an European girl. She accordingly lost her minds as she was not allowed to take her children with her. Mas Kromodiwirjo in "Sahira" in "Tiga Therita" had to let babah Ong, a rich Chinese, to take Sahira as his *nyai* as he was unable to pay his debt. However, Sahira persuaded Mas Ngabehi Tirta di Medjo, her fiancee, to kill babah Ong. Mas Ngabehi was later sentenced to death. And Sahira took her own life at the very date Mas Ngabehi was executed. Saipa in "Tjerita si Tjonat" – Story of Conat – (F.D.J. Pangemanann, 1900, Toer, 1982:155-220) became a *nyai* as her father sold her to her master. Nyi Paina in "Tjerita Nji Paina" – Story of Nyi Paina, (H. Kommer, 1900; Toer, 1982: 315-29) - had to inflict herself with smallpox in order to kill Master Briot, her master who had abused his power so her father who was working for him had to surrender her to him, becoming his *nyai*. Master Briot was accordingly dead and she survived by only having scars on her face. The same thing happened to Nyi Sarikem. Those stories told us the hardship an Indonesian woman had to endure because of the practice of *nyaiship*. They are totally different from Dasima's experience. Those stories then make us question the reality of Dasima's story. It is too good to be true. Or we might arrive at other conclusions.

Francis' version of Dasima's story was discrediting the natives who victimized Dasima by first luring her to their world and later victimized her. It is explicitly expressed by its subtitle: *soewatoe korban daripada*

*pemboedjoek* "a victim of a temptress" and the temptress happened to be the natives. They manipulated the religious and the ethnic sentiment until she submitted herself to the psychology of fear. We might then conclude that Dasima would lead a happy life should she stick with her master, did not submit herself to the fantasy world of her natives circle. As a matter of fact, Dasima moved from the white world of her master to the black one of her natives. In addition to that, Francis' text was also discrediting Islam – Hellwig also raised this problem (12-15). Dasima left her master as Mak Boejoeng reminded her of her sin living together with a man without getting married. She would receive heavy punishment in the other world. The religious fear made her leave her master and yet she was victimized by the very society she sought for salvation.

Master Edward W was very understanding. He provided Dasima with every material pleasure even when she was leaving him. He even had an intention of legally marrying her after she was converted into Christian. The native world was, on the contrary, black. The world of darkness, *duisternis*, as the title of the collection of Kartini's letters edited and published by J.H. Abendanon in 1911 might suggest. Dasima, as did Kartini, had to be brought to the world of light, *licht*, as the title of the collection of Kartini's letters, *Door Duisternis tot Licht*, "From Darkness to the world of Light", might suggest. The world of natives are the world of black magic, black-marketing, the world of leisure and cheating, getting something without having to work (hard) for it. The natives were then simply lazy, creating the myth of the lazy natives. To earn his living, Master Edward W had to work up to five o'clock in the afternoon. The natives, on the other hand, were simply enjoying life, did nothing to improve their living condition. Samiun "improved" his living condition by robbing Dasima of the wealth she got from her master. For such a purpose, they did not hesitate to manipulate the religious and the ethnic sentiment, giving Dasima a false sense of belonging. She did not, in fact, belong to the ethnic and religious world of her natives who would only victimize her. Francis was accordingly wrote Nyai Dasima's

story in order to favor the world of (her) European master, parts of his *mission sacree*, bringing out Dasima from the world of darkness of the natives to that of light of her European master. She had to return to her master for protection. It was not by luck that Nancy and her servant who found Dasima's corpse in the river behind her house. W then informed the Dutch Resident who took the proper action, arresting the persons, the natives, who were responsible for her death.

Accordingly, we might conclude that only the European master provided Dasima with material pleasures. The natives, on the other hand, simply robbed her of the wealth she got from her master. And as W failed to save Dasima from being victimized by the (wicked) natives, he had failed in his sacred mission to help and to civilize the natives. He failed to bring out Dasima from the world of darkness of her natives to that of light of his own. He even let Dasima victimized by the world of darkness of the natives.

Or it can be said that Francis wrote Njai Dasima story in order to describe the tragic life of a *nyai* living in the world of no return. She could not return to her previous world as it would only victimize her. In addition to that, she no longer had a previous world to return to. By leaving her society, she had, as matter of fact, changed herself. She could not erase the fact that she had left her society. To her, her previous society is no longer the same. It had changed. She accordingly had to stay in the world of her master and had to accept any consequence. She should accept the fact that she might one day be thrown out of her master's house and had to accept whatever her master gave her. She could not ask for more. Tassiem's mistake was she asked too much – asking for her child – from her master. She is supposed to be passive, had to simply accept what other people decided for her.

Everything in Njai Dasima story was Francis' ideology who was in opposition to that of people who were associated with the national movement against the Dutch colonialism. G. Francis did this as he was a descendant of an English gentleman who, after the British left Indonesia in 1816, joined the Dutch administrative system. For

a further information regarding G. Francis and his family see Toer (29-31).

Francis' discourse was then a colonial discourse. However, we can also say that during the time he authoring the story, there were some conflicting views regarding the *nyaiship*. Besides promising material security to a native woman, it also promised her a spiritual insecurity, which made her looking for it outside her master's world, the world of her natives, which at the same time would rob her of her material wealth. Accordingly, Ardan, whose world was in opposition to that of Francis', had to reformulate the story. He then wrote a different version of Nyai Dasima story as can be seen by comparing the inventory of his story to that of Francis'. Ardan's text can then be regarded as a post-colonial text, questioning the ideology of Francis' discourse

In Ardan's version Dasima left her master on her own free will as she felt she did not belong to his society who simply looked down on her. For her master, she was simply a sexual object. She accordingly felt that she belonged to her native community, which, in turn, due to her relation to her master, had however, regarded her as an outsider. In addition to that she had been living alone, secluded from her native community. In Ardan's version there was no conspiracy among the natives to lure her to their community. And as far as Mak Buyung is concerned, she only gave Dasima encouragement to leave her master. Samiun did fall in love to Dasima but he did nothing to pursue it. He even had to hide it from Hayati's knowledge. Saleha and Salihun was against the idea of Samiun getting married to a *nyai*.

In Ardan's version, Dasima was not a victim of a native conspiracy. Samiun did not pay Puasa to kill her. Ardan, as a matter of fact, did his best to convince his audience that Williams paid Puasa to kill Dasima. Samiun was a good man. He was not lazy. He had a job to support his living. But he however failed to prevent Hayati from mistreating Dasima as he was too weak to go against her wish. Hayati even bullied him, "robbing" him of his money. Not the other way round. What Ardan admits is the presence of bad hats among the natives and they were exploited by the Dutch (and the

white men) for their purposes. There was no religious reason in Ardan's text for Dasima's return to the native community. Dasima left her master not because she was afraid of committing a sin. There was no statement to that effect in Ardan's text.

I am sure, Ardan started working on his text after reading Francis' colonial text. He realized that Francis had discredited the natives, blaming them for the misfortune Dasima encountered with. Francis believed that the natives were bad as they would do any trick to rob Dasima of her wealth. Islam, their religion, failed to prevent them from doing such a thing. On the other hand, it gave them room for manipulation. Besides telling Samiun that killing someone was a sin, Hadji Salihoen also told him that the sin could be cleansed by going pilgrim to Mecca, praying for God's blessing. He even actively engaged with black magic activity. According to Francis every native was bad. Even Moesanip and Gani. They told the authority about the murder not for the sake of truth, but for the sake of money as they were interested in the reward offered by the government.

Ardan expresses a different perspective. He does acknowledge the presence of bad natives such as the unrepentant Puasa and Hayati who later blamed herself for what happened to Samiun. However, there were also some good natives. Mak Buyung was good, no longer bad as she was in Francis' and Palindih's text. Samiun was good. And he was arrested only for two reasons. First, the authority's effort to blame the native for the death of Dasima as he had committed a serious mistake, robbing a white man of his property, of his sexual pleasure. Secondly, Ardan might somehow feel that he had an obligation to change the story-line developed by Francis as it had a pretension of being a historical record, describing an incident took place decades ago. He then did his best to twisting it. Samiun was arrested as he was at the scene of the killing. He was suspected of helping Puasa killing Dasima. As a matter of fact, Samiun was not involved in the killing. He did not defend Dasima as he did not dare to go against Puasa. The murder was Puasa's idea as he was paid by Master Williams. Ardan blamed the Dutch colonial power, who ignored the

role played by Williams in the killing of Dasima. They were happy to have caught Puasa and Samiun and they do not want to pursue it further. Ardan simply reveals the dirty tactic played by the Dutch authority. They were not looking for the truth. They were looking for a truth which suited them.

Ardan also feels that he has an obligation to defend Islam from a false accusation present in Francis' text. He accordingly erases any trace of such an accusation. Dasima left her master not because she was afraid of her sinful sexual relationship with Williams. She left her for other reasons. Francis' and Ardan's text are different from each other as each of them were written within two opposing socio-cultural and political conditions. I do not think I have to elaborate it further as I have exposed them above. Francis' text is a colonial discourse while Ardan's text is a post-colonial one.

Palindih's text was written within a different condition. Palindih is, different from Francis, a native. And as the text was a "translation" of a movie story we have to take into account the persons who were responsible for producing the movie as well as the implicit audience, the audience who might react to the story. In addition to that, we also have to take into account the socio-cultural and the political condition of the time it was produced. It is the different colonial period from that of Francis.

Francis lived in an era where the colonial power was absolute. Nobody challenged it, at least not systematically. Native resistance was only directed against a further encroachment of their territory by the Dutch without any intention of liberating Indonesia. Palindih lived in a different era. The Dutch colonial power was politically systematically challenged. This condition was responsible for the creation of Palindih's text. However, as I do not have the materials, which allow me talking about the prewar movies and their implicit audience, I prefer to talk the other way round. I would construct the condition responsible for the creation of the respective text from the materials provided for by the text itself.

The scriptwriter based his movie story on Francis' text. Winata shares some Master Edward W's qualities. His name can be regarded as the extension of the initial W.

He was a keen businessman who could provide Dasima every material she needed. Dasima was a victim of a conspiracy of Samiun, Puasa, Mak Buyung, Saleha and Hayati who robbed her of her wealth. And they were properly punished according to the role they held. But the parallelism stops there. Winata was no longer an Englishman but a rich native who legally married Dasima. The text is no longer about the *nyaiship* as it is not about *Nyai Dasima*, but about Dasima. Rumini, a native name, replaced Nancy, Dasima's daughter. Dasima had her own reason for divorcing Winata. She got lonely as Winata spent most of his time with his business. She let herself influenced by her parents' complaint as Winata did not give them what they asked for. She also let herself influenced by Mak Buyung's gossip who told her bad things about Winata. She simply believed it, never questioned it. She "divorced" Winata after Mak Buyung told her that Winata was enjoying himself in a restaurant served by several girls. Samiun and Puasa asked Mak Buyung's favor to lure Dasima to their trap. Samiun would like to marry Dasima so he could lay his hands on the wealth she got from Winata. Although Saleha and Hayati never liked Dasima, they had no objection of Samiun marrying her as it would benefit them. Hayati was not Samiun's wife, but his sister. In addition to that, Dasima was also a victim of her parents' dislike of Winata. Her father was very happy with the breaking up her marriage to Winata. He had no objection of Dasima marrying Samiun. Only later he regretted it.

I would like to talk about the changes Palindih made to Francis' text. First, he changed the title from *Nyai Dasima* to *Dasima* only. Second, it was no longer Master Edward W, but Winata. Third, the father played an important role in breaking up Dasima's marriage to Winata. Fourth, the role of gossip in breaking up Dasima's marriage. And the fifth, the resistance towards polygamous marriage.

The movie is the world of images. In playing a certain role, one's characteristics contributes something to the image of the person he/she portrays. We can question the beauty of a character played by a certain actress if she is supposed to portray a beautiful lady. Accordingly, there should be

some questions concerning the images portrayed by an actor and an actress playing W and Dasima respectively in case there were a movie portraying their life.

The Dutch might question the beauty of an actress playing Dasima. It is a matter of someone's taste. And the natives would feel sorry for Dasima if she were portrayed by a beautiful actress. The Dutch might also feel sorry for a handsome Dutchman if he were portrayed as a rather ugly person. The situation can be compared to the absence of illustration in *Salah Asuhan* "The Wrong Upbringing" by Abdul Moeis published for the first time in 1928 as I have discussed it (1988). They encountered a problem in visualizing Hanafi and Corrie. A handsome Hanafi would suggest that every native was handsome. A not-so-handsome Hanafi would make people questioning Corrie's choice of a man she falls in love with. A not-beautiful Corrie would suggest that every Eurasian girl was not always beautiful. And one would pity a beautiful Corrie for falling in love to a native. Due to those considerations, I hypothetically state that the movie intentionally changed W to Winata. The director did not have any problem of how to visualize them.

In addition to that, describing a life of a *nyai* is more than simply presenting it. It might go as far as legitimating it. Or at least acknowledging it. And the (native) people at that time might not be ready for it. They did know the presence of *nyaiship* but they did not want to openly acknowledge it. It was a shame for an Indonesian to acknowledge it as it could be understood as a submission to the world of European master. It was also a shame for the European descendants, the Indo, to acknowledge that they were born out of such a condition, from a *nyai* who was forced into *nyaiship*. As it is better not to talk about the *nyaiship*, Mr. W had to be substituted with Winata.

The movie also added another flavor to the story by introducing the role played by Dasima's father in breaking up her marriage to Winata. He did his best to prevent Dasima from reconciling with Winata. His only reason was he was not satisfied with Winata. He did not give him what he wanted. His role is then simply a variant of the role of a mother-in-law, a popular topic in the prewar

Indonesian stories, especially the popular ones, such as *ludruk* stories as discussed by James L. Peacock (1968). And this made situation favorable for Mak Buyung. She gave Dasima reasons for breaking up her marriage to Winata. And the decisive last blow was her gossip about Winata enjoying himself with some girls in a restaurant while Dasima was waiting for him to return home, waiting to have an evening walk. This made the gossip played an important role in the movie story, and was also quite popular in the Indonesian popular literature before the second world war.

Hayati in the movie is Samiun's sister, not his wife. The change had something to do with the sentiment regarding the polygamous marriage in Indonesia. The cultural atmosphere at that time was against it. In case of Dasima marrying Samiun while knowing he already had a wife, the audience would not sympathize her. She would be condemned. In addition to that, of having no wife – his wife had deceased – Samiun had a reason to be wild. Salihun hoped he would change by marrying Dasima, the hope never accomplished.

That is the problems we encounter in having three versions of Dasima's story. Their presence can be analyzed by using ideas developed in the study of intertextual, reception theory and new historicism which I have described above. How those three texts intertextually related to one another. How one text was particularly created in response to the existing text and in this case we can not ignore the role played by the implicit audience – this is usually studied by the reception theory. How the presence of a particular text can be used to see the socio-cultural condition at the time it was written and published, the new historicism perspective.

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