

Representation of Balinese Exoticism: Analysis of Inter-ethnic Relations Novels in Pre-independence Period



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Article history: Received: June 2, 2021, Accepted: July 21, 2021; Displayed Online: August 03, 2021; Published: September 30, 2021

Keywords

Representation;

Exoticism;

Bali;

Interethnic Relations;

Indonesian novels;

Abstract

This article discusses the representation of Bali in inter-ethnic relations novels by Indonesian authors published in the pre-independence period. The main question in this article is how is the representation of Bali in the inter-ethnic relations novels in the pre-independence period, and what is the historical, social context behind the representation? To answer the questions, a study was conducted on four Indonesian novels in the pre-independence period, namely *Kintamani* (1932) authored by Imam Soepardi, *Lejak* (1935) authored by Soe Lie Piet, *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu* (1938) authored by Anak Agung Pandji Tisna, and *Djangir Bali* (1942) authored by Nur Sultan Iskandar. The analysis was carried out using Stuart Hall's representation theory with Michel Foucault's discourse and descriptive-analytical methods. The research results show that novels on interethnic relations in the pre-independence period tend to represent Bali exotically. Such a representation places these novels to reinforce the dominant discourse on Balinese exoticism in the colonial era.

1. Introduction

Indonesian novels from the pre-independence period, especially the 1920s to 1930s, were coloured by ethnic themes. Novel *Azab dan Sengsara* (1921), which is called the milestone of the birth of Indonesian literature, raises Minangkabau ethnic customs. In addition to revealing the internal dynamics of ethnicity, Indonesian novels in the pre-independence period also describe inter-ethnic relations in Indonesia's pluralism. The inter-ethnic relationship is generally described in terms of inter-ethnic marriage. Novel *Darah Muda* (1927) and *Asmara Jaya* (1928), authored by Djameluddin Adinegoro, can be stated as early novels that reveal the problems of inter-ethnic marriage.

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There are also *Rusmala Dewi: Pertemuan Jawa dan Andalas* authored by Aman Datuk Madjoindo, which was based on the story idea of S. Hardjosoemarto. Haji Abdul Malik Karim Abdulah (HAMKA) also authored the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* (1939), which tells the story of the marriage between a Minangkabau ethnic figure with a Minangkau fathered figure and thousands of Bugis. Entering the 1940s, HAMKA wrote a novel *Merantau ke Deli* (1940), which tells the story of the tragic marriage of characters with Javanese (Poniem) and Minangkabau (Leman) backgrounds. Nur Sultan Iskandar also wrote the novels *Cinta Tanah Air* (1944) which tells the story of the marriage between ethnic Minangkabau (Amirudin) and Javanese (Astiah) figures with the background of the struggle for Indonesian independence from the Dutch colonial invaders.

The Minangkabau ethnicity does dominate the inter-ethnic relations novels in Indonesia. In addition to the writers who generally have a Minangkabau ethnic background, the background and theme of the story are also related to the Minangkabau ethnicity. Based on that, Hellwig (2003: 23) calls these colonial period novels Minangkabau novels. In addition to the ethnic background of the author, the use of the Malay language is also one of the factors that influence the dominance of the Minangkabau background and theme in novels on interethnic and religious relations in Indonesia.

However, other ethnicities do not escape the attention of Indonesian writers, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Andalas. The Balinese ethnicity, which is classified as a minority group in its demographic composition, also colours the inter-ethnic relations novels in Indonesian literature. The theme of the relationship between ethnic Balinese and other ethnic groups has emerged in the 1930s. It begins with the novel *Kintamani* by Imam Soepardi, which was first published in 1932. This novel tells the love story of a Javanese man and a Balinese girl that ends happily, even though they were separated because of the powerlessness of the two characters to face the lust of power of a Javanese nobleman.

In 1935, a romance *Lejak*, that was authored by Soe Lie Pietit, was also published. The central theme of this Low-Malay or Chinese-Malay romance is the romance of the Balinese people in their mystical and baby-birth customs of a pair of twins. However, the novel's final part is marked by the relationship between ethnic Balinese and ethnic Chinese. The author with a Balinese ethnic background, I Gusti Nyoman Pandji Tisna, who later became known as Anak Agung Pandji Tisna, also wrote a novel containing inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Bali, namely, *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu* (1938). During the early Japanese colonial period, the author Nur Sultan Iskandar also wrote the novel *Djangir Bali* (1942), which tells the love affair between a Madurese man, Raden Panji Susila, and a Balinese woman, Putusasih.

These novels on interethnic relations inevitably became the initial representation of Bali in Indonesian literature. The pre-independence period, especially in the 1920s to 1930s, was a time to form Bali's image as a tourist destination sponsored by the Dutch colonial government (Picard, 2020: 111). According to Picard (2020: 112), since the 1920s, the island of Bali has been depicted in four prominent images: (1) as a genuine Paradise Park, (2) the cradle of culture that has not been touched by modernity and the various changes it has undergone, (3) the natives were gifted with extraordinary artistic talent, and (4) spent much of their time and wealth performing lavish ceremonies for the pleasure of them and their gods. Previously, Bali was also praised for the beauty of its women and the image of the "topless island", as well as the ferocity of its soldiers and the cruelty of its princes. The formation of an exotic image of Bali by the Dutch colonial government called Picard is a construction result.

The representation of Bali in interethnic relations novels can help explain the construction of the Balinese image. The main question in this study is, how is Bali represented in inter-ethnic relations novels and what is the historical social context behind the representation?

To answer this question, this study uses Stuart Hall's representation theory as a basis for thinking. According to Hall (1997: 15), representation is the relationship between concepts and language that allows us to refer to the real world of 'objects, people or events, and the imaginary

world of fictional objects, people or events. Hall's critical view is that representation is not just presenting a meaning that is already final (fixed), but in the process of presenting meaning itself, there is a process of giving meaning.

In a certain sense, representation transmits messages to form specific mental images (Alireza et al., 2015: 1). Hall (1997: 43) also asserts that meaning can be produced through the interplay between the visible or present and the invisible or absent in the text representation. According to Noviani (2020: 75), representation involves the idea of presence and absence, namely how something (objects, people, events) becomes present and absent in language.

To understand the constitutive representation, Hall offers two models, namely the semiotic model and the discursive model (Noviani, 2020: 69). Both of these models emphasize the critical role of language in the process of producing meaning. The semiotic model is based on the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes about the role of language and the practice of signification works to produce meanings, primarily related to the relationship between langue/parole, signifier/signified or the workings of binary opposition. The discursive model or discourse refers to Michel Foucault's thinking about discourse. In the discourse model, representation is not merely a process of producing meaning but also the production of knowledge closely related to power relations. This article uses a constructionist approach with Michel Foucault's discourse model. Literature is believed to contain hegemonic and discursive powers (Satrya HD, 2018: 117).

2. Materials and Method

The material objects of this article are four novels of interethnic relations in the pre-independence period. The four novels, namely (1) *Kintamani* (1932) authored by Imam Soepardi, (2) *Lejak* (1935) authored by Soe Lie Piet, (3) *Djangir Bali* (1942) authored by Nur Sultan Iskandar, and (4) *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu* (1938) authored by Anak Agung Pandji Tisna. These novels are novels of the early period in the history of Indonesian literature that represent Bali.

The formal object of this study is the representation of Bali in the novels and the historical, social context behind the representation. Representation in the text and the historical, social context behind it are two aspects that are closely related to the study of representation. This study is library research. Data collection was carried out using the document recording method, supported by reading, listening, and note-taking techniques. Primary data is in the form of quotes in novels containing Balinese representations, while secondary data is in the form of data and information on historical, social contexts sourced from research by experts relevant to the interpretation of Balinese representations in interethnic relations novels.

The analysis was carried out in a descriptive-analytic manner through reciprocal reading between the text and the context. The discussion departs from the phenomenon in the text, which is then connected to the historical social context at the time the work was written. This kind of reading is a characteristic of the sociology of literature approach, namely seeing the sociological dimensions of literary works by having a dialogue between text and context.

3. Research Results and Discussion

3.1 Three Ethnographic Novels, One Local Color Novel

Of the four novels studied in this article, three novels can be grouped as ethnographic works, while one novel is a work of local colour literature. The characteristics of the ethnographic novel are at least in the sense of being a novel about the Balinese ethnic community written by an author who is not from that ethnicity.

Imam Soepardi who wrote the novel *Kintamani* was from Java (Suwondo, dkk., 2004: 35—38). Soe Lie Piet, who wrote the novel *Lejak*, was of Chinese ethnic background (Setyautama, 2008: 335). Meanwhile, Nur Sultan Iskandar, who wrote the novel *Djangir Bali* has a Minangkabau background (Iskandar, 2000: 257). Only Pandji Tisna has a Balinese ethnic background (1955).

In literature, ethnographic works are embedded in literary works written as a result of intercultural contact between authors and certain cultures (Salam, 2011: 42). For example, an author from Batak wrote about the people of Sumbawa. In this kind of novel, perspective, narration, and articulation reflect negotiations between two different cultures, namely the culture of the people who are written about and the author's culture.

Kris Budiman, in the discussion "Writing Ethnographic Novels" held by the Regal Community in Yogyakarta on May 10, 2008, gave a limitation on ethnographic novels as novels about other cultures. If the novel is written by an author who comes from that ethnicity, it is called a local colour novel. Abrams (1981: 98) defines local colour literary works as literary works representing in detail the background, dialect, habits, clothes, ways of thinking and feelings that characterize a particular area (Abrams, 1981: 98).

According to Budiman, ethnographic novels do not always have to tell the story of an ethnic group but rather tell the story of another group (the other). Therefore, ethnographic novels can be used as a critique of culture. However, Budiman also emphasized the importance of an ethnographic novelist to keep his distance so that there is no stereotype of the written object. If the distance is too far from the object being written, it will give only a wrong impression to the reader. However, if it is too close, it will also give the opposite impression.

The impression of the ethnographic works in the novels of *Kintamani*, *Lejak*, and *Djangir Bali* is not only seen from the author's factors who have outsiders background (immigrants) from Balinese culture, but the point of view of the three novels does use outsiders characters. The three novels do use a third-person narrative point of view, but the narrator represents outsiders. The author always tries to explain the Balinese cultural background from the side of outsiders.

It is different from the novel *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu*. This novel is written by an author who has a Balinese ethnic background. In addition, this novel uses the point of view of first-person storytelling and the protagonist of the story, namely I Swasta, a character who represents the Balinese.

All the novels of the pre-independence period that became the source of this research data are romance novels that end in marriage, and the characters live happily (happy ending). Three of them are interethnic and interreligious romance novels. Only the novel *Lejak* is a love triangle story among ethnic Balinese.

The novels of *Kintamani* and *Djangir Bali* have almost similar characterization structures and plots. The protagonist is a male immigrant from a non-Balinese background and then loves an ethnic Balinese woman. After having faced a few obstacles, their love relationship ended in marriage, and they lived happily. The male protagonist in *Kintamani* is Sudarto, an ethnic Javanese who works as a painter, while the male protagonist in *Djangir Bali* is Raden Panji Susila, a Madurese nobleman who works as a teacher. The novel *I Swasta* is categorized as a historical novel, but it also contains a love story of different ethnicities between two of his subordinate characters, namely I Jabara and Ni Mergayawati. I Jabara is a Balinese man, while Ni Mergayawati is a Javanese girl. The term Javanese girl was repeatedly raised to mark the character Ni Mergayawati to emphasize her ethnic background. The marriage between I Jabara and Ni Mergayawati is also said to have a happy ending. I Swasta and Ni Nogati are told not to continue into marriage the protagonists' love story. Ni Nogati is indeed described as a Balinese girl, but her ancestors came from Sriwijaya (Sumatra) and adherents of Buddhism.

The emergence of romance novels has indeed become a trend in Indonesian novels during the colonial period, especially in the 1920s to 1930s. According to Sumardjo (1999: 25), the plots of

colonial-era novels were driven by the primary motivation of love. Sumardjo assessed that this was because the author was about 20 years old to 29 years old. However, of the three novelists representing inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Bali in the pre-independence period, only Imam Soepardi was 28 years old when *Kintamani* was published. Pandji Tisna, when his novel was published, was 30 years old, while Nur St. Iskandar was 49 years old when *Djangir Bali* was published. Therefore, the age factor does not seem to be the leading cause of the emergence of the tendency of the romance genre in inter-ethnic relations novels in Bali in the pre-independence period. The tendency factor for the colonial-era novel genre seems to make more sense to explain the emergence of this genre in the context of representation of inter-ethnic relations in Bali.

The love relationship between different ethnicities forms the framework for most novels, but generally, ethnic differences do not become a barrier to the relationship. Even if there were, these differences would not trigger conflicts, let alone to the point of thwarting marriages. The characters of the story can easily overcome the difference.

3.2 Balinese Woman Exotic

Stereotypes become a challenge for ethnographic novels due to the distance between the author and the society he writes about. Inter-ethnic relations novels in the pre-independence period show a tendency for such exotic depictions, as seen in the depiction of Balinese female characters.

Luh Lentari in *Kintamani* is a lonely girl whom her parents left behind. He then lived in *Kintamani* with his aunt, Men Dangin. It is the only family left. The author of *Kintamani* describes Luh Lentari as a beautiful Balinese woman, with the appearance of an angel, who attracts many men. Not only that, but Lentari also represents the stereotypical image of Balinese women in the colonial era: topless women.

He looked at the movement and sway of the virgin without blinking his eyes. After disappearing from his sight, then Sudarto went down to take a shower.

"Buah dada jang begitu bagus, kenapa dibiarkan sadja tiada tertutup?" Kata Sudarto seorang diri sesudah ia berpakaian dan kembali ketempat perkakasnja menggambar.

Such beautiful breasts, why are they left uncovered?" Sudarto said alone after he got dressed and returned to his drawing tools. (Soepardi, 1949: 42)

The exotic image of Balinese women in Luh Lentari's figure is made even more perfect by making her a model for Sudarto's paintings. Luh Lentari did not mind being used as the object of Sudarto's painting. For his willingness, Luh Lentari also did not want to accept money from Sudarto.

"Aku tidak ingin menerima uang". Sahut Lentari.
I do not want to accept money." said Lestari.

"Habis? Apakah jang kauminta?"
"Finished? What do you ask for?"

"Aku suka menurut permintaanmu, tuan". Kata gadis itu dengan sungguh-sungguh: "Karena tuan tidak akan main-main sadja".

"I like anything according to your request, sir". The girl said earnestly: "Because you are not going to be kidding me." (Soepardi, 1949: 48)

The woman who became the model for Sudarto's painting ended up loving Sudarto and vice versa. However, their love was hindered by the influence of power and wealth from the Mataram,

Javanese nobleman, Raden Mas Sasongko. Raden Mas Sasongko, who invited Sudarto to Bali, was also captivated by Luh Lentari's beauty and wanted her. Sasongko, who felt more capable of making Lentari happy, asked Sudarto to step down and let the Balinese girl be his. With a heavy heart, Sudarto released Luh Lentari so that the girl was brought to Java. However, competition with Sasongko's fellow concubines in Mataram made Lentari flee back to Bali.

Similar exotic images also appear in the novel *Leak*. In this novel, there are two Balinese female characters, both of whom are dancers. Balinese girl as a dancer is one of the prominent stereotypes at that time. The painting of Balinese women with bare chests is also unavoidable in this novel, as the following quote shows.

Sakean lama ia berlakoe demian samentara iapoenja dadah saben-saben berombak toeroennaek menandahken jang ia lagi berpikir keras. Tapi itoe kaada'an dari Retna diliat penoeh serba menarik oleh Goesti Rai, teroetama iapoenja dadah serta boahnja jang kentjeng zonder ditoetoe pin koetang atawa pakean, hanja tjoema dengan sapotong slendang tenoenan boekan maen membetot mata lelaki jang manapoen!

For a long time, he acted like this while taking drugs now and then with choppy waves while thinking hard. However, Goesti Rai sees the situation from Retna as an interesting character, especially the dadah and the tall boy caught in the eyes of a man who cares about him. (Pie, 1935: 24)

Nur Sultan Iskandar also contributed to this kind of depiction of Balinese women, such as the following quote.

The women walk hand in hand while holding up the offerings, which will be offered to the water god. Their clothes were straightforward. Only they are clothed in sarongs or long cloths and short kebayas, wrapped in a shawl around their slender waist. Her thick black hair seemed to be flowing back, but it was actually in a folded bun at the nape of her neck with lotus ends.

Among all the women, many were without clothes, just wearing a scarf, so that the upper part of their body was visible... and caused lust, as well as the two smooth round arms that served as candles. Her long hair was just wrapped around her head, above her forehead, and decorated with flowers. Only the girls' hair was flowing all the time ~ and decorated with tiered white flowers. On the level above one flower and the second and third levels two each... How simple but sweet! (Iskandar, 2000: 2)

Exotic image novel *Kintamani* and *Djangir Bali* are also seen on the covers. In *Kintamani*, – fourth printing, 1949—the cover image is of a topless Balinese woman holding an urn in the background of a temple. In *Djangir Bali* – second printing, 1956—the cover image is a painting of a Balinese girl, not topless but staged, carrying gebogan or Balinese offerings.

In the context of ethnographic works, such stereotypical depictions show that the author has not yet reached the level of familiarization or entering the point of view of the ethnic community he is writing. It is also proven from the perspective of the three novels as a traveller's point of view, even though the narrator in the three novels applied third-person omniscient. The author is still on the "outer fence", not yet "entered the house".

In novels *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu*, exotic depictions of Balinese women are not very visible. Balinese and Javanese female characters are depicted not much different. There are no topless portraits of Balinese women. Another difference between the novel *I Swasta Setahun di Bedahulu* and the other three novels is that Balinese and male protagonists are the protagonists of the story. In the other three novels, the story's protagonists are Balinese and male outsiders, while the

Balinese are female. In the context of the patriarchal culture adopted by the Javanese and Balinese people, this kind of positioning becomes a symbol of its own. Ethnographic novels written by authors with non-Balinese backgrounds tend to represent Bali as a feminine element. The choice of this kind of representation is undoubtedly closely related to the exotic representation that is the author's choice.

3.3 Representation of Java's Past

In addition to the exotic representation of Balinese women, the representation of Bali in inter-ethnic relations novels in the pre-independence period cannot be separated from cultural bias. The novel is strongly influenced by the author's subjective point of view, both in the context of the story's literary strategy and the author's ideological framework.

Indonesian novels that represent the discourse of interethnic and interreligious relations in Bali are an aesthetic response to the primordial facts of the multicultural Indonesian nation. Thus, the novels are a form of cross-cultural interaction amid Indonesia's diversity. These novels as literary works are a mirror for cross-cultural interactions that have occurred or are currently happening and a cultural, social, and even political praxis that also shapes and plays in these cross-cultural interactions (Budianta, 2003: 129).

In cross-cultural interactions, cultural bias is indeed a problem that is difficult to avoid. In the Dictionary of Psychology of the American Psychological Association (2021), cultural bias is defined as the tendency to interpret and judge phenomena concerning the typical values, beliefs, and other characteristics of the society or community to which a person belongs. It sometimes leads people to form opinions and make decisions about others before any experience with them. In other words, cultural bias is an attitude of judging other people's cultures from the point of view of one's own culture. This cultural bias will usually be suppressed if cross-cultural interactions and dialogues are continuously and intensively carried out.

The tendency of cultural bias can be traced from the depiction of the island of Bali as a portrait of the past of the island of Java. It is especially evident in the following quote from Kintamani's novel.

"Sesungguhnya, bila kita bangsa Djawa ingin mengetahui keluhuran kita dan peradaban kita pada zaman dahulu, dapat juga kita dapati dipulau Bali sekarang ini". Kata bangsawan itu.

"Mengapa begitu, tuan?" Tanja Sudarto jang telah siap hendak berangkat ke Kintamani.

"Ja, sebab keadaan dinegeri ini masih asali, belum banjak berubah dengan keadaan masa dulu. Adat kebiasaan, sifat-sifat dan perangai penduduknja, banjak bersamaan benar dengan isi sedjarah tanah Djawa. Pun dusun-dusunnja, peraturan desa, masih bersahadja. Baiklah nanti kita peladjar hal ini, supaja pelantjongan kita besar gunanja bagi sedjarah".

"Tuan sudah banjak mengerti tentang pulau Bali dan penduduknya, bukan?"

"Lagi sedikit".

"Hambapun Ingin juga".

"Bagi bangsa Djawa mempeladjar kebudayaan Bali, mudah sadja, karena bahasa mereka ini hampir bersamaan dengan bahasa Kawi. Siapa saja jang mengetahui sedikit sadja bahasa Kawi, dapatlah mengerti akan pembitjaraan bangsa ini. Bukankah kau mengerti bahasa Kawi?"

"Sedikit-sedikit djuga".

If we, Javanese, want to know our nobility and our civilization in ancient times, we can also find it on the island of Bali today." The noble said.

"Why is that, sir?" Sudarto, who was ready to leave for Kintamani, asked.

"Well, because the situation in this country is still the original, it has not changed much from the past. The customs, characteristics and temperament of its inhabitants were shown together in the

history of the Java land. Even the hamlets, village regulations are still humble. Well, we will study this later so that our offerings are of great use to history."

"Master, you understand a lot about the island of Bali and its inhabitants, don't you?"

"A little more".

"My servant wants too."

"For the Javanese to learn Balinese culture, it is easy because their language is almost the same as the Kawi language. Anyone who knows just a little Kawi language can understand the speech of this nation. Don't you understand Kawi?"

"Just a little bit" (Soepardi, 1949: 28—29)

A similar picture can also be found in the novel *Djangir Bali*, as quoted below.

Ketika kelihatan gambar-gambar patung yang serupa dengan apa-apa yang kerap kali bersua di Jawa, ingatan Susila melayang kembali kepada masa pemerintahan Raja Hayam Wuruk yang mahsyur.

Pada bentuk desa-desa yang berpagar tembok berekat dengan tanah liat, pada pintu-pintu gerbang yang tinggi dan kadang-kadang berhiaskan pelbagai macam patung, tampak nyata benar pengaruh Hindu pada kedua pulau itu. Cuma bedanya: di Bali masih kelihatan ke "hindu" an itu pada rumah-rumah tempat kediaman dan pada pekarangan, yang masih penuh dengan pura-pura pujaan, padahal di Jawa rumah-rumah sudah bercorak zaman baru, yakni zaman Islam, sekalipun belum boleh dikatakan masuk zaman modern benar-benar.

When he sees pictures of statues similar to what he often meets in Java, Susila's memory flashes back to the reign of the famous King Hayam Wuruk.

In villages that are fenced with clay-glued walls, on high gates and sometimes decorated with various statues, the Hindu influence on the two islands is visible. The only difference is that in Bali the "Hinduism" is still visible in the houses where they live and in the yards, which are still full of idols, whereas, in Java, the houses have a new era style, namely the Islamic era, even though it is not allowed to do so. said to enter modern times. (Iskandar, 2000: 28).

At first glance, such a picture of Bali seems without problems because historically, Bali has historical closeness to Java. Genealogically, according to Picard (2020: 301), the Balinese also often associate their social order and religious traditions with the conquest of their island by the Majapahit Kingdom, a large kingdom in Java, in the XIV century. The Balinese aristocracy also used the genealogy of Javanese aristocrats to legitimize its power in Bali, including clerical traditions.

By using the genealogical history of Bali from Java, the narrative in the novel represents Bali as a place that evokes images of the past for the two main characters with non-Balinese backgrounds, both Sudarto and Raden Mas Sasongko, who have Javanese ethnic backgrounds and Raden Panji Susila. Madurese ethnic background. Bali's view as an image of Java's past without realizing it raises the author's superiority over Balinese society and culture. This kind of the point of view seems to be why authors with non-ethnic Balinese backgrounds tend to place Balinese ethnic figures as women. In the context of a strongly patriarchal culture in Indonesian society, especially in Java and Bali, this is an ideological cue from the novel's texts, a kind of Balinese hierarchy as a representation of femininity which is under the subordination of Java (and other ethnicities) as a representation of masculinity.

Such a hierarchical representation is further strengthened by the description of the newcomers in the novel as the bearers of change for Bali. The character of Raden Panji Susila in the novel *Djangir Bali* is said to be a driving force for the emergence of Balinese awareness about independence and being more critical of their culture. Using an analytical characterization

technique, the author, through the narrator, criticizes the attitude of the Balinese who so revere what is referred to as the "old traditional heritage of obsolescence", even sharply mentioning "Balinese people live to die". Through the narrator, the author also criticizes the efforts of the Dutch government. It was conducted to maintain the "authenticity" of Bali as a policy of strengthening colonialism against Bali.

Raden Panji Susila's intention to become Balinese was not solely because of his love for Bali or the pragmatic factor of marrying the Balinese girl he loved, but also his ambition to free Balinese people from the caste hierarchy. This character is said to have aspirations to abolish caste in Balinese society with the intention of "equalizing human dignity and wanting to strengthen unity".

The relationship described in the story gives the impression that the main character of the story, Raden Panji Susila, is a "saviour" who came from outside Bali to "liberate the Balinese" from the strength of the old customs that are obsolete and maintained by the Dutch government for strengthening colonial rule through the establishment of schools. Raden Panji Susila's efforts are said to have received the support and acceptance of the Balinese people.

The historical fact shows that Bali was too late to get acquainted with nationalism. Balinese people began to recognize nationalism from teachers and Indonesian independence activists in Java. Although late, literary texts written by Balinese authors in the 1920s to 1930s also ignited the spirit of nationalism through the use of the Malay language, which became the forerunner of the Indonesian language (Darma Putra, 2016: 189).

3.4 Hegemony of Colonial Discourse

To understand the stereotypical representation of Balinese and Balinese women as a reflection of the exotic Javanese past, it must be traced to its historical, social context. During the Dutch colonial period, the exotic image of Bali was part of colonial politics to package this tiny island as a tourist destination for European travellers. The books of Western writers show the tendencies of Dutch colonial politics.

Gregor Krause, a German doctor who worked for the Dutch colonial government between 1912 and 1914, published a book containing photographs of Bali in 1920. The book received a warm response from the public and was even reprinted many times. Picard (2006: 39) and Couteau (in Darma Putra, 2011: 111-112) assess the key to the book's success which also shows the success of promoting Balinese tourism in Europe in the 1920s of the depiction of Balinese women with bare chests in baths.

"Bali as a topless island" has become the most prominent stereotype of the image of Bali during the colonial period. Apart from the photographs in Krause's book, paintings by Western artists also show this. In the representation of Western artists, Bali was present as a place of immediate sexual fantasy. According to Couteau (in Darma Putra, 2011: 113), this must be related to the situation in Western countries at that time, especially in Europe, with the fact that Victorian morality was increasingly fading after World War I. Artists like Walter Spies and Margaret Mead tended to have sexual behaviour that was freer and "advanced" than European society in general. The "nudity" and "freedom of the body" that he witnessed in Balinese society became a kind of model of "freedom" that Western artists aspired to for their society in Europe.

In addition to the image as a "topless island", Bali is also imaged as the island of demons. This image is inseparable from one of the films about Bali in the United States, namely "Goon-goon" (Picard, 2020: 27). This film impresses the closeness of Balinese people to the magical life. Another positive image of Bali is the island of artists. This image is mainly associated with the richness of Balinese dance, which is closely related to Balinese religious rituals. Jane Belo (in Picard, 2020: 119) well formulated the relationship between dance and Balinese religious rituals. According to Belo,

the Balinese consider their dance as an offering. On the contrary, they perform the offerings as a show.

The exotic image of the West towards Bali seems to be firmly entrenched and among Indonesian writers. This fact seems to make the most sense to explain why the main Balinese characters in Indonesian novels during the colonial period were generally beautiful Balinese women and dancers. The Lestari character in *Kintamani* is a perfect illustration of the exotic Western image of Balinese women: beautiful and topless. The Putusasih character in *Djangir Bali* also depicts beautiful Balinese women and skilled dancers.

Symbolically, the Balinese female characters in these novels can be interpreted as representing the beauty of Bali that is worth fighting. The figures of Sudarto and Raden Panji Susila are representatives of Balinese outsiders who struggle to get the perfect beauty of the island of Bali. The main obstacle in the struggle to get the beauty of Bali is not the difference with the seeker but instead comes from other factors that can finally be overcome so that the beauty of Bali is obtained.

4. Conclusion

Pre-independence Indonesian novels that describe inter-ethnic relations in Bali are ethnographic. The ethnographic characteristics are characterized by the author's background, which is generally not a Balinese ethnic background. Only Anak Agung Pandji Tisna has a Balinese ethnic background. The characteristics of this ethnographic work have implications for the representation of Bali, which tends to be exotic. The exoticism of Bali can be seen in the depiction of charming Balinese women with bare-chested stereotypes. In addition, the exoticism of Bali is also shown by the representation of Bali as the past of Java. Such exotic representations are closely related to the historical, social context that lies behind the novels. Apart from the socio-historical context of the author's background, it also reflects the dominant discourse hegemony in the colonial period, namely the constructivist image of the island of Bali as the "The Last Paradise", "The island of Artist", "The Satanic Island", and "The Topless Island". Inter-ethnic relations novels in the pre-independence period can be seen as reinforcing colonial discourses about exotic Bali.

Acknowledgements

The researcher expresses his gratitude and appreciation to the Education Fund Management Institute (LPDP) of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. They have assisted with the Indonesian Domestic Lecturer Excellence Scholarship (BUDI-DN) and dissertation research funding assistance to support this research.

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