

Chapter IV

Conclusion

As I stated in the purpose of the study that is to find out the causes of the main character's failures in improving the indigenous' life in Multatuli's *Max Havelaar or the Coffee Auctions of a Dutch Trading Company*, the course of my analysis directs me into the following conclusions:

The first conclusion is that Max Havelaar misinterprets the exploitation due to the distinct kind of exploitation. It is true indeed that the indigenous people are exploited. Yet, the exploitation in Dutch East Indies is done in a complex structure. However, the kind of exploitation appearing in the novel is a combination between feudal power of the indigenous' rulers and the Dutch colonial government. This kind of exploitation subordinates the indigenous under the hegemony of their rulers with the traditional concept of *Manunggaling Kawula (People)-Gusti (God/King)* as the means in maintaining the exploitation, and also this kind of exploitation is unknown to Max Havelaar. Unaware by this, Havelaar perceives that the life of the indigenous can be easily improved and the Dutch colonial government will help him in fighting the exploitation.

The next conclusion comes from my analysis which emphasizes more on Max Havelaar and not his social surrounding. Although the structure of exploitation is proven to be complex, it does not obstruct Max Havelaar's anger toward the exploitation. Havelaar's anger and misinterpretation leads him to his second failure.

The second conclusion is that Max Havelaar misguidedly perceives that both the Dutch colonial government and the indigenous' rulers can be considered as a companion to fight the exploitation. Here we once again see Max Havelaar's misguidance in positioning himself. Although most of the Dutch colonial officials actually realize the exploitation, yet, they choose to conceal the exploitation. This ignorance can be understood in the way the Dutch colonial government maintains the exploitation. Meanwhile, the indigenous' rulers do not think that they are exploiting their people. It is because they have their own "people", their family. The burden of this familial piety is transferred to the people in the form of

exploitation. Therefore, Max Havelaar takes the ultimate action by accusing the Regent. As a response to his accusation, the Dutch colonial government transfers Max Havelaar to Ngawi as a form of punishment. Also, this transfer implies the Dutch colonial government's scenario in maintaining the exploitation.

I have mentioned in the previous chapter that Max Havelaar's failures comes concurrently one following another. Havelaar responds to his transfer by resigning himself from the Dutch colonial government, thus Havelaar moves into another failure which I present in the last conclusion. Lastly, I conclude that Max Havelaar's failure is due to his uncommitted consciousness. Havelaar separates his consciousness of improving the indigenous' life with the necessary action. Havelaar does not want to take the consequences which will result from the necessary action in improving the indigenous' life. Havelaar does that in order to secure himself from the vengeance of the Regent as the previous Assistant Resident (Mr. Sloterring) has experienced. Also, as a bourgeoisie, Havelaar bears ambiguity in taking his consciousness into the necessary action for improving the indigenous' life.

However, having gone through the course of my analysis with the above points as the conclusion, I cannot easily consider Max Havelaar's (or Multatuli himself, since this work is a biographical novel) failures as a total failure. It is because Max Havelaar's fail effort in improving the indigenous' life (which represent the failure of the author, Multatuli) sparks a process of a long struggle against the exploitation of the indigenous.

As a matter of fact, Multatuli has actually accomplished his aim. Multatuli (1987) himself appears in the last part of the novel and states his optimism toward his struggle; Yes, I will be read! When this object is attained, I shall be satisfied. For it was not my intention to write well...I wanted to write in such a way as to be heard (p318). In the end, it is proven that only history which has the power in absolving Multatuli's struggle. His work which contains his failures is widely read among the Dutch colonial officials and Indonesian's early nationalist. After the publication of this work, the struggle against the exploitation is continued through other individuals under Multatuli's influence. In addition, this work also sparks the beginning of a Dutch East Indies literature which pays more empathy to the

exploited indigenous rather than to focus only at the life of the Dutch society in the Dutch East Indies. With its rich historical accounts and insights, we can find cultural explanation on our nationality and historical root on our national identity in this kind of literary works.