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# The Behavior of Third World's Bourgeois in the Short Story '*Si Padang*'

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the behavior of third world rich people in the short story *Si Padang* by Harris Effendi Thahar from Homi K Bhabha's perspective. The concept used is the west-east dichotomy and mimicry/mockery in the third world. The problem raised by this article is the behavior of rich people which is not the same as the traditional Minangkabau concept of wealth. This difference occurs because of the intersection of western and eastern culture, resulting in mimicry. The concept of third world mimicry in Bhabha's sense can be seen from figures who show off their wealth excessively but also provide social responsibility by building facilities in their hometowns. The results found are that the behavior of the rich man in the short story Si Padang is to pursue symbolic status in which wealth is squandered to gain recognition. Second, the characters who do not practice mimicri will be eliminated in the social arena. The conclusion is that the mimicry negotiation process is not balanced, the East in this short story is more dominant than the West.

## 1. Introduction

The Character behavior in literature is a reflection of the complexity of identity in society itself. Apart from that, literary works are basically representations of society that will form cultural identity (Hall, 2005). As a representation of cultural identity, literature has a function as documentation and to spread the value of cultural identity. Literary works with the style of traditional Indonesian society have noble values that can be an example for life and to express who they are (Semi, 1993). The value transmission function means that literary works with traditional identity patterns have strict rules, thus traditional values can be transmitted to the next generation. This can be seen from literature with a regional style, such as Minangkabau style literature. The values carried over from oral

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traditions such as *Malin Kundang, Kaba Cindua Mato, Kaba Anggun Nan Tongga* still appear in contemporary works such as *Negeri Lima Menara* (2009). However, the noble values of Minangkabau changed in the early 1920s. *Sitti Nurbaya* (1923) saw that traditional values were old-fashioned and needed to be replaced by modern values introduced by Europeans.

Literature with a Minangkabau style has a long history of social upheaval since the colonial era. Works such as Azab and Sengsara (1920) and Salah Asuhan (1928) are two examples of Indonesian literature with a Minangakabau style that gave rise to anti-colonial sentiments (Salam, 2003). However, these novels also became a propaganda tool for the colonialists to create a hierarchical relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The novel Salah Asuhan (1928) shows that the behavior of westerners is seen as high morality, therefore the imitation of the Hanafi ended with unthinkable disaster. This imitation behavior becomes an effective resistance strategy because in imitation there is a variable of insult to the culture being imitated. This imitation strategy then became common in literary works with Minangkabau style. Works such as *Kalau Tak Untung* (1933), *Memang Jodoh* (1961), *Namaku Mata Hari* (2010), *Tanah Surga Merah* (2016), *Bandiet-Bandiet van Siantar* (2021) give rise to imitation which is represented by the hybridity of the characters in the literary works.

The hybridity of characters is also seen in the short story by Harris Effendi Thahar entitled Si Padang. This short story tells the story of a Padang migrant who later became successful in the big city, but his success was demonstrated through symbolic things in his hometown. Minangkabau culture has its own concept of wealth. Navis (1987) states that Minangkabau wealth is immovable property that can be inherited and is usually related to food availability. The traditional Minangkabau concept of wealth is related to sustainability; hence wealth is seen from how much productive land one owns or how many rice barns one has. The short story Si Padang describes the different behavior of bourgeois peole of Minangkabau. This behavior could be seen as modernization and the effects of European colonialism which colonized the Minangkabau people for hundreds of years

The behavioral model pattern in the short story Si Padang is an imitation of the materialist behavior of western value but carried out with eastern collectivist value. These capitalist and hedonistic thoughts seemed to have been brought by Europeans, these thoughts were then also a colonized people. This application can be formed through education that contains the values of capitalism that have been tested in the West. The East is a symbol, which in Western discourse, only functions like a dramaturgical stage. On this stage, the east is analogous to a playwright, with orientalists (experts in eastern studies) as directors Said, (2010). This Alegory showed the colonialism is the process of functionalism to achieved the (re)formulation of otherness (Silva, 2018). The behavioral pattern appears to be the negotiation between the east and the west that created in-between space to compromise the otherness between two values.

## 2. Research Methods

To analize the The Behavior of Third World's Bourgeois, the authors use qualitative methods with the critical literary approach. The reason to use these qualitative methods in this study is to describe the Behavior of Third World's Bourgeois in the literary works. Meanwhile, critical literary approach will focus on interpretations of the hybridity and other postcolonial aspect in the literary works through documentation and appreciation of the literaray works under study. critical literary approach will analyze how the characters in the short stories excersice the third world bourgeois behavior. The urgency of researcher uses this approach is to get realistic cognition as meticulous research and to elaborate documentation method (Diamond, 2020).

## 3. Results and Discussion

*The Melting of the East and the West*

Edward said that none of the Eastern terms or Western concepts have ontological stability, each of these two camps is essentially man-made, partly by affirming and partly by identifying, the existence of those two terminologies has the ruptured boundaries. The construction idea of The East is a merely attempt of West to maintain their superiority in various aspects. The East is seen as a stagnant, wild and strange culture, the East is also unable to define itself. Then the West positioned as a helper who helped the East to construct itself to be as civilized as the West. The East itself is a single entity that has its own culture, it is clear that Eastern culture is different from the West. However, the West imposes the construction of the East with hegemonic practices to control the territory and resources in the East. In response to this, the East is experiencing a syndrome called xenophobia (fear of foreigners who come from outside), so according to this explanation, the combination of East and West is just a kind of stage play where the West with its political power dictates to the East.

Said's explanation above explains that the East is just a metaphor. West needs to express their abilities in various aspects with its superiority, therefore the East is only treated like a puppet. Such treatment has an impact on the West practices in instilling its more superior values. The East, which is considered inferior, is forced to agree with these values. Facing such Western attitudes, the East must carry out mimicry or imitation. This mimicry was also intended by the East as a form of resistance for emancipation, increasing one's dignity so that one is equal to the colonialists (Faruk, 1998). However, in reality the West is different from the East and Western knowledge about the East is only a shadow of the West. According to Bhabha (l994) the colonial subject is a desire of a different subject to be the subject of another who is almost the same, but not completely, as subject of a difference, that is almost the same, but not quite. The West has very defect imperial ideology is that it fails to conceive of its own pitfalls. It cannot go beyond the centuries-old logic of binary opposites; ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Bouzzit 2017).

As a manifestation of desire, the East as a colonized society adapted itself to the West values to achieve progress, hence the East could place itself on the same as the West. However, according to Bhabha, this adjustment is an ambivalence where the natives wanted to build the same identity with the colonialists, while they also considered themselves different. In practice, self-adjustment also carries the notion of mockery, imitating but also making fun (Bhabha, 1994). This mocking attitude was also a way for the East to identify itself as a colonized people. The process of self-placement or imitation carried out by the East according to Bhabha will never be the same, it will definitely create an empty space which is identified as the third world, this world is not East and West but a world created because of the intersection of these two worlds.

The third world is described by Bhabha (1994: 5) as the character of Reene Green's ladder-link architecture which has wheels that flow between the upper and lower rooms. This world is a space that was created because of the contact between West and East. The East experienced the cognitive failure, the East could not fully accept the values instilled by the West. The failure creates the new space that is biased and without form. In this new space the colonized (East) find themselves at a crossroads or the East loses their identity. As a real example that occurs in Indonesian culture is the use of beskap in the Surakarta Palace, beskap which is a product of Western culture combined with Bebet which is Eastern culture. Bhabha further explained that the process of imitation by the colonizers was called "Mimicry".

Based on Lacan's psychoanalysis, Bhabha argues that mimicry is not only a process of imitation but that it can also be interpreted as subversive resistance. Mimicry is not only a process of

camouflage but also a process of adaptation for survival. Mimicry does not try to align itself by reducing the differences between the imitator and the imitated. This imitation process is solely carried out for its own interests and purposes. Examples include the mimicry that chameleons do to deceive their natural enemies, or soldiers who paint their faces green and wear uniforms that look like plants, in order to hide themselves from their enemies. Bhabha states that mimicry is the process of rewriting the identity of the colonized in the third space. The adjustment to the colonial identity is actually intended to turn one's face away from the colonial power. This is a place for survival as well as an effort to fight colonialism. In this condition it clearly creates an ambivalent state because it tries to live in two conflicting conditions. This is the condition of postcolonialism, where identity is unstable and always opposes causality, even if it is very small manner. However, ambivalence actually ensures the diversity of expressions of identity and culture, as long as there are always attempts at cultural domination and absolute determination of an identity, mimicry, hybridity and attitudes of ambivalence will always exist, as a rejection of western domination.

*Metropolitan Life as the Third World*

Colonial constructions of both the West and the East can receive varied and even contradictory interpretations. The imitation carried out by the west is the model of life offered by colonial discourse. The short story Si Padang does not describe anything related to colonialism; however, the problems in the short story are a legacy of the Dutch several centuries ago. This proves that colonialism is always ambiguous and the polysemic can still be felt to this day. The identification of the occurrence of the third space in this short story was obtained from the dialogue between Mansur as the main character and Lidia. In this dialogue, Mansur, who is a native of Padang, useed the word "diacuk" which is a curse language commonly expressed by East Javanese people, but the curse uttered by Mansur cannot be heard and this indicates a failure in the mimicry carried out by Mansyur. Mansyur, who is actually a native of Padang, still has a strong Minang dialect, hence the resistance carried out by Mansur cannot be categorized as frontal resistance. In the same paragraph it is also said that Mansyur felt insulted because he was ordered around by Lida, who was younger than him. In Mansur's village there were no older people being ordered around by younger people. From this statement, it can be seen that there is a collision of two different cultures, where Mansur is a native Minang person and Lidia is a metropolitan girl.

The concept of the third world in Bhabha can be seen from the character Mansur. He is native Padang but practiced the both eastern and western values because he has almost abandoned Eastern habits. In this case Mansur has dissolved into a formless form. Mansur's meltdown can be seen from the negotiations that arose between Mansur and Lidia, where at first Mansur provided an alternative to encourage Parmin to buy cigarettes for Lidia's boyfriend. Parmin was not at the location, Mansur finally agreed to Lidia's request. This approval was obtained because Lidia gave Mansur the cigarette money as a gratuity. Mansyur's decision to take a percentage can be interpreted as Masur behaving as a capitalist because he expects wages or profits for doing something trivial. The behavior shown by Masur can be understood as a legacy of the Western empire where material benefits were deified. However, in this short story it is also said that what Mansur took was not much, Mansur carried out such practices because there was still a Padang behavior in him and he still upheld Minang customs and a sense of family towards Lidia as his uncle's daughter.

Haji Kiram Datuk Nan Kunieng Timbago, who is Mansur's uncle in this short story, is depicted as the person most affected by the "affair" of Western and Eastern culture. In the Minangkabau tradition, the term "merantau" is known, "in the minds of the Minang people, a hometown or land of birth is like a nursery which functions to grow seedlings. After the seedlings grow, they have to leave the nursery to a wider area so that they can later become big trees, bear fruit" This quote is often used by national

figures from Minangkabau. Migrating in Minang is a habit of the people to broaden their horizons and have a better life elsewhere. According to Minang custom, this will bring great benefits to the person who does it and the Minang community itself. Merantau can also be interpreted as leaving temporarily, this procession is learning that is carried out to strengthen understanding of Minangkabau values and customs. One of the ways to strengthen Minangkabau value is to compare values other's custom and value to create more resilient value. Migranting is not actually based on increasing material possessions due to the poverty in the land of Minang or the difficulty of living there. The purpose of rantau here is as a ceremony to improve the quality of Minangkabau customs and culture (Munir, 2013).

A different practice is shown by Haji Kiram Datuk, in this short story he is described as a person who migrates to gain material wealth and sells symbols of his wealth in his hometown. In one of his narratives, Mansyur said that Haji Kiram had a very young and beautiful wife whom he brought to his hometown on Eid al-Fitr. This implies that Haji Kiram Datuk chose his partner by looking at her beauty and youth because that was what he saw and could be proud of. A beautiful wife is a very prestigious symbol in the West, because a beautiful wife is a symbol of a man's success. In Minangkabau, women play an important role in customs, as is well known, the lineage there is seen from the mother's lineage, not the fathers, as is the case in the West in general, because of this, Minang women can be said to be more than just symbols. Haji Kiram does not seem to have forgotten this tradition because in the narrative it is said that Haji Kiram married his young wife because his young wife had died a long time ago. The emphasis on time represented by the word "long" shows that Haji Kiram respected his old wife who was also a Minang woman. Apart from that, Haji Kiram also did not marry a woman who came from Minang but from Betawi, but in subsequent practice Haji Kiram married a young and beautiful woman to be used as a symbol of success. Therefore, his beautiful wife can be displayed in the hometown.

*Haji Kiram Mimicry as Hedonic-Symbolic Behavior*

In this short story it is also said that Haji Kiram got all his wealth out of nothing, indeed in this short story the process of how Haji Kiram got all his wealth is not narrated. However, from this it can be seen that Haji Kiram obtained all his wealth with very minimal capital. What Haji Kiram did is actually the spirit of Western capitalism which uses minimal capital and gets maximum results. It seems that Minang's social value still remains in Haji Kiram because he left a little profit to build his hometown. The behavior shown by Haji Kiram by building his hometown is symbolic capital that made him respected and very popular, it is even said that his popularity exceeds the Regent. It is clear that Haji Kiram's hedonistic attitude shown in the restoration of his family's Rumah Gadang. In the Minang tradition, the Rumah Gadang is a symbol of success for a 'rantau', the more luxurious the house, the more prestigious the family is. The mimicry of capitalist attitudes shown by Haji Kiram is not entirely the same as what is instilled by the West because in Haji Kiram there is still a deep-rooted love for his hometown. This behavior shows the spirit of Minangkabau cultural values. What encourages Haji Kiram's behavior to act hedonistically, showing off his wealth is hybrid behavior. He shows his wealth through purely symbolic things. The hybridity that occurs within Haji Kiram is Minangkabau style of bourgeois behavior. Haji Kiram's hedonistic behavior is created which cannot be described as Eastern or Western.

Haji Kiram's abundance of symbolic capital not only made him popular but also made him respected by people in his village. This makes him arrogant and likes to intimidate people who are considered weaker than himself. It can be seen from what he did when he had a dialogue with Mansur and his mother when he was in the village. This behavior is suspected to be a legacy of Dutch colonialism which was imitated by Haji Kiram, but once again his imitation was not perfect, this can

be seen from how he established his hegemony by using the religion and lectures. In the narrative, it is said that most people were amazed by his fatwa. The emphasis on the word fatwa can be interpreted to mean that it contains a hegemonic element, not just an ordinary lecture. So, it could be said that the "terror" felt by Mansyur who did not dare to look his mother in the eye when speaking felt more frightening, because of the cultural closeness and use of religious media carried out by Haji Kiram

The "might" shown by Haji Kiram has no effect on his family, which in the narrative is represented by his youngest daughter. In the climax of this short story, it is told that Haji Kiram's youngest daughter put her boyfriend into the room, thereby provoking Haji Kiram's anger and wanting to strangle Lidia's neck. This indicates that Lidia experienced a cognitive failure. In this case, it can be said that Lidia is a hybrid of her father's Minang culture and a western Metropolitan who imitates her father's Minangkabau culture. It is showed by how she calls Mansur with the word Uda which is meant as respect. In the explanation of Bhabha's concepts, it is said that mimicry has two edges in the one blade, apart from obedience there is resistance. Hence, Lidia's obedience also contains resistance with her act putting her boyfriend in her private room.

This capitalist behavior practiced by Mansur, who only graduated from vocational high school yet, he tried his luck in Jakarta with just nothing at all, the same as his uncle. Mansyur's skills in machining were improved after he met his village friend Basril. Just like Mansur, Basril also stays with his uncle in Jakarta. It is narrated in this short story that Mamak Basril's family is different, they welcome Mansyur with great fanfare. This shows that the real Minang people, in this short story they are represented by the Mamak Basril family which are so fluid and full of warmth. However, it can be said that Mamak Basril's family is marginalized by metropolitan Jakarta. It is not clear what the economic situation of Mamak Basril's family is, but Mamak Basril's family's business as illegal taxi drivers are an indication of the marginalization of society which still upholds authentic Minang traditions. This short story also implicitly says that if you do not imitate the values of western capitalism, you will be marginalized by the flow of modernity.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis in the previous section, it can be concluded that the creation of the Third World in this short story is due to a cognitive failure in accepting the West values. Mimicry in Bhabha's sense is not only an act of imitation but also an act of resistance. This can be seen from the dualism that occurs in the characters in the short story. The hedonistic and ostentatious actions carried out by Haji Kiram Datuk Nan Kunieng Timbago are the examples of cognitive failure. Haji Kiram has the spirit of Western capitalism which uses minimal capital and gets maximum results therefore, he has excess wealth. However, Haji Kiram still has a social spirit and love of the village left in him. He built facilities in his hometown and renovated his family house with his little profit. Haji Kiram's actions are considered as symbolic hedonism. The short story also tells that the Mamak Basril family, which is Minang family, the family is truly marginalized because it can be said that if they do not imitate the values of western capitalism, they will be marginalized by the flow of modernity.

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