

Indonesian in Andrea Hirata's *Edensor*

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Abstract

Culture is one of the uniqueness of humans that makes it have a way of surviving in the world. If animals grow anatomical organs to adapt and survive, then humans grow culture. Culture is our adaptive organ, it is our survival mechanism. This cultural world is an order of existence like no other because it is not shared by any other species. Culture adapts more quickly to new situations than changes in anatomy. That is why humans can move from any type of environment to another, whereas animals cannot. Culture is a collective product that includes general behavior, perception, emotion, self, motivation, which then synthesizes individual behavior in a new form. The behavior of all individuals involved in a particular context is not always uniform or identical, but sociocultural contexts can shape people in various ways. Indonesian society has a cultural mentality that refers to a number of distinctive characters, both individuals and community groups which then can be a distinguishing feature from other nations. A friendly, helpful and mutual cooperation character are some of the most often attributed to the character of the Indonesian people. Literature as a cultural product can be a means to see the mental identity of the culture. The *Edensor*, a novel by Andrea Hirata, shows how the representation of Indonesian students and their mental cultural identity in the midst of international relations, the Sorbonne University students. Through qualitative descriptive research with a constructionist approach from Stuart Hall's representation theory, the results of this study indicate that the representation of Indonesian students is tenacious, easily fascinated especially by Western society and culture and they tend to believe in superstition.

Keywords: cultural mentality; cultural identity; superiority; colonialism

Introduction

Understanding the culture of a society through literary works has long been done and has become a subject of study in literary studies. Literary works even though they are fictitious or fictional worlds, in the perspective of the sociology of literature are referred to as representations of society. Through the background elements in a literary work, the reader can understand the cultural and social scope in which the characters in the story interact. The emergence of a character with a certain personality can occur due to the influence of the cultural and social environment in which the character interacts with other characters.

One of the works of Indonesian literature which can be utilized as a means to identify the culture of the Indonesian people, is the works of Andrea Hirata. As a writer who was born in Belitung, he narrates the characters along with the setting and conflict in a humorous tone or storytelling style (Meslin, 2010). His first work, *Laskar Pelangi*, depicts the reality of Bangka children who are entangled with various life problems within the lower class society. *Laskar Pelangi* has been filmed and the written version itself has been translated into five languages which demonstrates the acceptance of the readers upon the simple and honest themes.

The third book written by Andrea Hirata is *Edensor* which was published in May 2007 and tells the story of two Indonesian university students who are studying in France. The characters, Ikal and Arai, encounter friends from various countries in their struggle to study at the Sorbonne University. Hirata shows how Indonesian students are in the midst of socializing with people of different nationalities and cultures, starting from how they have to

face completely different new realities to the attitudes they have to choose to adapt their life in France.

Edensor's storyline, which is light and witty at first glance, seems does not reveal any significant issues. However, when it is examined more thoroughly, aspects of mental culture emerge through the construction of conflicts and characterization of the characters. These emergences are repetitive and carried out by all Indonesian characters in the novel, thus distinguishing them from characters from other cultures. Mental culture in this case refers to the integral characteristics of people living in a particular culture that make it possible to describe the uniqueness of the way they see the world around them and the way they respond to it (Dubov, 1995). In other words, the cultural mentality of the characters in *Edensor's* novel differentiates the Indonesian characters to other characters, so that their presence can be interpreted as the cultural mentality of Indonesian students in context of intercultural relationship.

Research method

According to Faruk (2012: 55) the research method is "a way to gain knowledge about a particular object and therefore must be in accordance with the nature of the object's existence as stated by theory". The match between the method and the nature of the object will result in correct knowledge about the object. The material object in the research is the object that becomes the research material from which there are all documents which become the data source in the research. While the formal object is the point of view used to examine the object of research material. In this study, the material object is *Edensor* a novel by Andrea Hirata and the formal object used is the mental representation of culture in Indonesian students.

This research is qualitative research which contains the intention of a non-numerical study, which emphasizes quality, not quantity figures. Qualitative research can use methods that can be in the form of interviews, observations or document review or literature review (Moleong, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Nurgiyantoro, 2015). As a library research, the data in this study are in the form of words, phrases or sentences that contain mental representations of Indonesian students' culture in the *Edensor* novel. The data in the form of words are therefore descriptive.

To analyze the problem the paper is applying the paradigm of the constructionist approach is taken from the perspective of Stuart Hall's (1997) in his *Representation - Cultural and Signifying Practices* which states that constructing meaning is done by individual user using representational signs which is produced by social conventions. In this case representation theory is carried out by analyzing meaning and knowledge, which in this case means getting the relationship between linguistic and cultural aspects of cultural mental representations. This approach is carried out by first collecting, selecting and structuring and therefore it can be taken to see the relationship among the data or the relationship among the rules (Faruk, 2012). The data in the form of words in the *Edensor* are signs which symbolize the constructed cultural values about the mentality culture of Indonesian students.

Results and Discussion

A tenacious attitude in the face of adversity

Lucas (2018) describes tenacious as a character in which there are elements of fortitude, resilience, and persistence. These three elements in his observations affect the life of a person when he is studying and his life later. Resilience or resilience shows mental or mental strength. Its latin root is *resilire*, meaning 'to jump back' or to 'back off'. In other words, it describes the elastic property of absorbing energy and coming back to its initial state. In the study of the human psyche, resilience usually refers to a person's mental ability to recover quickly from illness, deprivation or adversity. Meanwhile persistence means the ability to stay with a certain task despite facing difficulties, challenges, opposition or failure.

The characters Ikal and Arai are told from a village in Bangka where the main livelihood of the people is coal mining. The two friends received scholarships to the Sorbonne University in France to study economics and biology. On their way to Paris at the beginning of their placement as students, these two friends must face harsh realities of life in a foreign country. Although Hirata wrote about the experiences of the two in a light and witty style, the experience itself was dramatic. The moment when they first landed at Schippol Airport and how they were rejected by the apartment manager, Simon Van Der Wall, because the administration had not been done properly, it made Ikal and Arai were forced to hang around in the snowy air outside. It showed the reader that the very first trait that really stands out in Ikal and Arai is tenacity, not giving up easily despite the tough difficulties they have to face.

Semakin malam makin tak tertahankan. Embusan uap es dari Laut Utara menyapu Semenanjung Zeebrugge di perbatasan Belanda, melesat bebas bersiut-siut, yang menghalanginya hanya dua tubuh kurus anak Melayu yang seumur hidupnya tak pernah berjumpa dengan salju. Gelap mengerucut dililit dingin, suara alam lenyap terisap angin, bahkan angin sendiri membeku. (Hirata, 2010 : 63)

Almost collapsing from being outside at night in an extremely cold temperature, these two characters are still cheerful when they wake up the next day, moreover they will soon meet Dr. Woodward who will direct their studies at the Sorbonne. The fact that they have to stay outside in winter season does not make them miserable.

Ikal and Arai's tenacity was at its peak when they expressed their desire to travel around Europe at the lowest possible cost when summer vacation began. With all their limitations they even plan to travel to Africa. Therefore, Ikal and Arai think seriously how to make this plan came true. Their international friends astonish in disbelief as they wanted to travel around Europe by becoming street singers.

*Townsend histeris mendengar rencanaku dan Arai. Kafe Brigandi et Bougreesses hiruk pikuk. Semua orang membuat ancang-ancang untuk liburan musim panas. Sahabat sekelasku merubungi kami.
"Mengamen untuk biaya keliling Eropa? Sampai ke Afrika ? Gila sekali! Belum pernah kudengar ide sekonyol."
"Apa kalian mampu? Hidup seperti seniman sirkus gipsi ?" ...*

"Tampil di jalanan ? dari kota ke kota ? Kalian bisa mati kelaparan! Atau diciduk polisi! Kalau aku ? Ha! No way, tak sanggup."

Melihat Townsend mengerut, Stansfield mendongak. (Hirata, 2010 : 165-166)

With the money they earned from working as human statues at the Koninklijk Paleis in Amsterdam, Ikal and Arai started their adventure across Europe from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, the Sahara Desert, Zaire, Greece, Estonia, Austria, Italy.

Kami mengobrol menceritakan pengalaman masing-masing. Tak satu pun mereka percaya bahwa aku dan Arai telah melintasi Rusia sampai ke Afrika, bahwa kami telah menjajah Gurun Sahara dan Zaire, bahwa kami pernah dirampok dan bertahan hidup dengan makan daun. (Hirata, 2010 : 273)

Sejak kecil kami bekerja keras tanpa belas kasihan. Kami pernah dirampok, diusir, terlunta-lunta dan kelaparan. Kami pernah dijerang suhu panas sampai empat puluh lima derajat di Sahara dan terperangkap suhu dingin sampai minus sembilan belas derajat di Laut Utara. Dan kami telah mengelana empat puluh dua negara hanya berbekal keberanian. Semuanya telah kami rasakan, dalam kemenangan manis yang gilang gemilang dan kekalahan getir yang paling memalukan, tapi selangkah pun kami tak mundur, tak pernah. Kami jatuh, bangkit, jatuh lagi dan bangkit lagi. (Hirata, 2010 : 280).

The adventures of Ikal and Arai put them as winners among their international friends who made the challenge of visiting the most European countries. They have managed to visit the country with the most numbers. As a reward, they were free from laundry and paid clubbing money for three months. All the expenses was paid by the losers, namely Manooj and Gonzales. The tenacity shown by both Ikal and Arai's characters dominates Hirata's depiction to construct the cultural mentality of the two Indonesian student figures. Their tough attitude and not giving up easily even enabled them to get achievements that other students could not achieve.

Worshipping the West

The East-West cultural dialectic is a discourse that places the relationship between the two which is contradictory. In Orientalism, Said (1978) says that the relationship between the West and East is a relationship of power, domination, from various levels of complex hegemony. The representation of the East in the European literary canon has contributed to the creation of a binary opposition between European and non-European (other). Although the geographic line between West and East is an imaginary and artificial one, acceptance of binarism will refer to Europeans as privileged and non-Europeans as not-privileged.

It is undeniable that Western knowledge of the East is in line with expansionism, exploration, and colonization. Said further argues that the 'East' is constructed and represented in a binary opposition to the West, as the other or the other. The result of Orientalism is a binary opposition between West and East which Eastern definitions refer to as being imposed as anything that is not Western, something exotic, foreign, dangerous, unreliable, something to be tamed, exhibited, and also a threat to the West. Western

metaphysics is based on binary, a hierarchy in which one is privileged and the other is not. In other words, binary considerations range from common binaries such as light/dark, white/black to some that are more complex and culturally meaningful such as colonizers/the colonized and superior/inferior.

In various relations between East and West, *Edensor* novel is successful in representing the mentality of Eastern culture in seeing the West. Apart from the tenacious and unyielding character that Ikal and Arai have among their friends, being easily amazed may be a parallel with Mochtar Lubis' opinion in his theory *Manusia Indonesia*. The legacy of feudalism and colonialism which is rooted in Indonesian society support typical understanding of how Ikal and Arai view the presence of their international friends.

Loomba (1998) and William and Chrisman (1994) explain that colonization has an influence on the identity of the colonized people. Both argue that different treatment raises awareness on different races and identities which leads to colonized people recognizing that they have inferiority.

The expression of admiration for the Western first appeared even when the two students arrived at Schippol airport and were picked up by Famke Somers. Watching the physical figure of a European woman, Ikal fascinated with her beauty:

Aku harus menengadah untuk melihat wajahnya dan aku terkesiap. Ia gadis muda yang luar biasa cantik, gorgeous. Aku seakan menatap cover majalah Vogue. Apa yang diinginkan wanita bule yang jelita ini! Ia mengatur napas dan kami terbius pesonanya. Ia sangat mirip Daria Werbowy, Anda tahu kan? Supermodel haute couture yang sering melenggok di Fashion TV berbusana Dolce and Gabbana itu.

Ikal expressively names Famke's beauty as the beauty of supermodel in Vogue magazine and therefore he bewildered with that. When Ikal tried to compare her beauty, he took the name of international supermodel as comparison to Famke's. As a young man who comes from a remote village of Indonesia, Ikal's knowledge about Western entertainment live seems astonishing. His understanding about it supports the idea that he might adore Western people.

Likewise, when Ikal describes a Scandinavian girl named Erika Ingeborg who according to him is the type of woman who is intelligent and efficient, which then he later relates to the success of Erika's ancestors, Viking descent, in colonizing and oppressing almost all nations in Europe. When helping to take care of the place to live, Ikal physically and consciously feels small behind Erika and this could be because she is a descendant of the colonizer nation, not the colonized.

Furthermore, in all activities involving Ikal and Arai with their friends from various nationalities, especially those from Europe and America, Ikal in this case always labels them with good qualities.

Aku takjub dengan gadis Belanda ini. Tak sedikpun ia kedinginan. Tak heran Kumpeni bisa menjajah kita sampai karatan. Dari central station Amsterdam kami naik kereta menuju Brussel. Dalam sekejap, kami akrab dengan Famke. Ia tak berhenti bicara dan kami tak berkedip menatap kecantikannya. Seperti kami, ia juga penerima beasiswa Uni Eropa, ia mahasiswi Amsterdam School of the

Arts. Ia mendalami street performances atau pertunjukan seni jalanan. Perspektifnya tentang seni jalanan amat memikat (Hirata, 2010 : 55).

Not only in social relations, in academic terms, Ikal also gives admiration for students from European nations. In his description of the students in the economics class he took, Ikal referred to his friends from England as The Brits. The character of The Brits who is open and provocative, explained by Ikal as a common thing to have because: *“Ini tak lain produk sekolah yang membiasakan mereka berbeda pendapat secara positif sejak usia dini”* (Hirata, 2010 : 96). The Brits are competing with four students from America, led by Victoria Sue Townsend. Those in class are referred to as The Yankees with a character that Ikal describes as: *“Dalam diskusi, kelompok Amerika cenderung mendominasi, intimidatif, penuh intrik untuk mengambil alih kendali, lalu membangun aliansi”* (Hirata, 2010 :74)

In addition to his amazement with The Brits, Ikal described German students as tactical, methodical, systematic and anticipatory individuals when doing assignments and making presentations. Likewise, Ikal's description of Dutch students, namely Saska de Rooijs and Marike Ritsema, is described as a quiet person with a very intelligent brain. The competitors for these Dutch students are those of Jewish descent, namely Abraham Levin, Y'hudit Oxxenber, Yoram Mazuz and Becky Avshalom.

These four groups of students who differ according to nationality are described by Ikal as a group that always and likes to compete to show their thinking and analytical skills. *“Mereka tak suka berperkara sepele. Mereka hanya tertarik pada sesuatu yang besar dan revolusioner.Ide mereka lebih besar dari Saskia dan Marike yang ingin mengubah Universitas Sorbonne. Ide orang-orang Yahudi itu adalah mengubah Perancis* (Hirata, 2010: 101). The comparisons made by Ikal always refer to the intellectual reasoning competition between students from developed countries, and not to others. Even when their lifestyle seems to be in bad shape because they like to get drunk, but that doesn't diminish Ikal's admiration for the intelligence of his friends.

Sering aku merasa heran. Kawanku-kawanku The Brits, Yankee, kelompok Jerman, dan Belanda adalah para pub crawler kawakan. Mereka senang bermabuk-mabukan. Tak jarang mereka mabuk mulai Jumat sore dan baru sadar Senin pagi. Sebagian hidup seperti bohemian, mengaitkan anting di hidung, mencandu drugs, musik trash metal, berorientasi seks ganjil, dan tak pernah terlihat tekun belajar, namun mereka sangat unggul di kelas. Aku yang hidup sesuai dengan tuntunan Dasa Dharma Pramuka, taat pada perintah orang tua, selalu belajar dengan giat dan tak lupa minum susu, jarang dapat melebihi nilai mereka (Hirata, 2010 : 82).

In social interaction, Ikal expresses his admiration for how his fellow students from France are the most impressive individuals because they view friendship highly. Meanwhile, those from Taiwan and Hong Kong are described as broad-minded, broad-minded and friendly to anyone. In the context of romantic relations between students, Ikal also gives positive attributions to Caucasian men compared to others.

The Brits dan pria-pria dari negeri Paman Sam lain pula lagaknya. Mereka jauh lebih percaya diri dibanding pria Asia atau Amerika Utara seperti Gonzales.

Mereka langsung mengatakan pada Katya ingin mengajaknya kencan. Tawaran mereka tegas: take it or leave it, filosofi mereka menarik, yakni nothing to lose. Kadang mereka sedikit tendensius dan ofensif, namun jika ditolak, mereka bersikap gentleman, mengakui keunggulan pesaing lain (Hirata, 2010 : 87)

Unfortunately, the picture of Ikal's astonishment at the character of other nations does not appear when he describes his small group which he calls The Pathetic Four, a term that refers to how these four of his friends are of mediocre quality if it can't be said that they stumbled in the midst of fierce competition from competitors. economic thinkers in their class. The term The Pathetic Four refers to India, Mexico, Georgia and Indonesia. On various occasions their cultural character is the same. Curly further describe:

Sisanya selalu terlambat, berantakan dan tergopoh-gopoh adalah The Pathetic Four-empat makhluk menyedihkan- penghuni jejeran paling depan. Jika dosen menjelaskan, mereka berulang kali bertanya soal remeh temeh sampai menjengkelkan. Anak-anak ini melengkapi diri dengan perekam agar petuah dosen dapat diputar ulang lagi di rumah. Norak dan repot sekali. Beginilah akibat penguasaan bahasa asing ilmiah yang memalukan dan efek gizi buruk masa balita (Hirata, 2010 : 103).

Likewise in terms of lifestyle, The Pathetic Four group is always in a state of deprivation. Even though they help each other, they are still struggling in a socio-economic life that is not getting better, as illustrated by Ikal:

Bangsa yang besar adalah bangsa yang menghargai pahlawannya, dan bangsa yang besar menurunkan sifatnya kepada warganya. Awal bulan, ketika baru menerima allowance beasiswa, MVRC Manooj dan Gonzales bertingkah laku seperti tak mengenal aku, Arai, dan Ninoch. Mereka melenggang dengan pakaian perlente, baunya wangi. Mereka tak sudi makan siang di kantin mahasiswa. Tapi hal itu hanya berlangsung sampai tanggal lima belas. Setelah itu mereka merengek-rengok minta diutang untuk bisa hidup lima belas hari berikutnya. Tak jarang MVRC Manooj menggadaikan apa pun yang melekat di badannya. Awal bulan nanti ia akan kaya lagi dan kami akan berutang padanya. Gali lubang tutup lubang, mirip tabiat ibu pertiwi masing-masing (Hirata, 2010 : 78).

The choices of expressions of Hirata's admiration for Western society through the characters of the students in the novel Edensor show what Ashcroff (1989) stated about the cultural crisis in postcolonial society. He said that the colonial experience gave rise to complaints from people who were already inferior so they had the view that their culture was replaced with a more superior or more advanced one. At a broader level, identity crises often arise because even though the colonization period ends, people are still faced with a crisis to choose between cultural nationalism based on their traditional culture or choosing modernization which is a symbol of the superiority of the nation that used to colonize them. In this context, the description of Ikal and Arai's admiration for Western students confirms Hirata's admiration for the superiority of other nations.

Belief in the Superstitious / Unscientific Aspects

Superstition is an attitude of believing in supernatural elements or contrary to nature, or believing that one event leads to another cause without a physical process linking it. People who are familiar with some form of belief or superstition tend to be based on belief systems that cannot be empirically proven. This superstition exists in all societies and cultures. It's just that in Eastern culture things that are superstitious are inherent in the lives of both individuals and society.

The perspective of believing in superstition by the author Edensor is illustrated from the very beginning when the novel's narrative flows. One of them was when Ikal's parents had to change his name. The name changes in the character of Ikal's childhood occurred repeatedly because of his unruly attitude and behavior during his childhood. Born with a name meaning peacemaker, the first baby curl was named Aqil Barraq Badrudin by his parents. Unfortunately, the name was considered too heavy for a baby to carry, who later grew up to be a naughty little boy and troubled the villagers with his behavior, embarrassing both his parents. His name was later changed to Wadudh. Unfortunately, the name which means a gentle man with a big heart did not last long. Wadudh threw up again for smearing Wak Tarjik's cap with brake fluid.

Berat sekali cobaan ayah.

"Bagaimana keputusanmu, pak Cik ?! Apa tindakanmu agar tabiat buruk Wadudh tak terulang lagi?!"

Taikong tak sabar, nadanya mengancam.

Suasana hening.

"bagaimana Pak Cik ?"

Ayah berulang kali menarik napas panjang.

"Baiklah Taikong..."

Suara Ayah terbata-bata karena ia akan menyesali keputusan kejamnya padaku. Tapi ia tak punya pilihan lain. Aku terkulai di lengannya. Majelis was-was menunggu keputusan keras Ayah...

"Akan kuganti lagi namanya..." (Hirata, 2010 : 24)

Changing a name that is known in the tradition of a nation that adheres to animism and dynamism is believed to have a positive influence on the owner of the name. There is no scientific explanation for this kind of tradition, considering that there is no logical connection between a person's name and character. Ikal's parents felt the need to change the name as a form of their belief that the name brought an important change in the behavior of their fifth child.

The change of Ikal's name many times as part of this unscientific cultural practice became the background created by Hirata to carry on the same sequence when Ikal grew up to become a student abroad. Even though it takes most of the setting in Europe, which is famous for its all-logically material society and the atmosphere of student life who is all-scientific-minded, Edensor's novel re-emerges this non-scientific perspective of belief when Ikal and Arai get into trouble. This happens when Arai suddenly leaves Ikal without a clear reason where he is going and for what purpose. A few days before Arai's departure, Ikal had sensed that something different was about to happen. curl says: *"Gejala ini semacam sixth*

sense yang tumpul. Bisa tak berarti apa-apa, namun dalam banyak kejadian, sesuatu yang buruk akan menimpaku, Arai ingin pamit pergi ke suatu tempat yang tak mau ia katakan. Janggal. Sebentar saja, katanya. Petaka“(Hirata, 2010:89).

What Ikal feels has no scientific explanation but Ikal believes it strongly based on his previous life experiences. It turns out that disaster did happen, all day until midnight Arai had disappeared without a trace. His friends frantically search without success. One clue that struck him is that all the radios in Paris that day were playing a song in memory of legendary singer, Jim Morison. So, Ikal rushes to Jim Morison's funeral where became the center of the celebration of the death of the legendary.

Arai is there, at the grave of his longtime idol singer and reads poetry to his childhood lover who did not reply his love, Zakiah Nurmala.

Conclusions

Analysis of *Edensor* novel shows the cultural mentality of Indonesian students as figures who are tenacious and do not give up easily. They are constructed to have skills in interacting with various students with different cultural backgrounds. In other words, the flexibility in various situations is a positive aspect that makes Ikal and Arai characters survive in various circumstances. They are described as individuals who generally do not have difficulties in social interaction. In context of intercultural friendship, Ikal and Arai are considered equal by their fellow students. Mochtar Lubis' perspective which illustrates the mentality of Indonesian people as a hypocritical, irresponsible and weak character is not seen in *Edensor* novel. However, Hirata also constructs Ikal and Arai as admirers of Western culture and society through various happenings they experienced when they interacted with students from other countries. Hirata always attributes positive aspects to British, American, Dutch and German students. On the other hand, negative aspects are attributed to students from poor countries such as Indonesia, India, Georgia and Columbia. The unbalanced depiction of this matter makes *Edensor* reaffirm what is labeled and cult by Eastern society towards Western society, that Western society is far more advanced and better.

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