

THE ORIENTALISM IN DANIEL DEFOE'S *ROBINSON CRUSOE*
(*Kajian Orientalisme di dalam Novel Robinson Crusoe Karya Daniel Defoe*)

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Abstract

This research analyses some issues related to the representation of Orientalism in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In this article there are three goals of the study. The first goal is to find out the cultural assumptions between the Western and the Eastern in the novel. The second is to analyse the attitude of the Western toward the Eastern. The third discusses the Orientalism in *Robinson Crusoe*. This research uses Said's theory of Orientalism. This research is qualitative research. Documentary method is also used in this analysis. There are several steps in order to achieve the subject matters of this research. The first step is collecting the data based on the phenomenon in the novel. All the collected data related to Orientalism issues that the representation of the Western and the Eastern. The next step the data correlated to the attitudes of the Western toward the Eastern in the novel. The last step the data represent the Orientalism in *Robinson Crusoe*. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the novel of *Robinson Crusoe* represents the imperialism of the European through the representation of a European is depicted as the Western who is superior. Otherwise, the non-European is described as the Eastern who is inferior. The European's position has right to control the non-European. The European colonizes the non-European through his knowledge of language (English), religion (Christian) and culture. The European dominates the non-European's identity. Furthermore, through the strategy, the European turns to be a colonizer who scatters colonized people's ideology. The injustice of the European to the non-European in the novel is opposed by Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

Keywords: Postcolonial, Orientalism, Stereotype, Superior, Inferior

Abstrak

Artikel ini menganalisis tentang representasi yang berkaitan dengan Orientalisme dalam novel Robinson Crusoe karya Daniel Defoe. Dalam artikel ini terdapat tiga tujuan. Pertama adalah untuk mengetahui asumsi budaya antara Barat dan Timur di dalam novel. Kedua adalah untuk menganalisis sikap Barat terhadap Timur. Ketiga membahas Orientalisme di dalam novel Robinson Crusoe. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Edward Said tentang Orientalisme. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kualitatif. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode dokumenter. Ada beberapa tahapan proses dalam penelitian ini. Tahap pertama adalah mengumpulkan data berdasarkan kejadian di dalam novel. Semua data berkaitan dengan isu-isu Orientalisme bahwa representasi dari Barat dan Timur. Tahap selanjutnya data dihubungkan pada sikap Barat terhadap Timur di dalam novel. Tahap terakhir data menggambarkan Orientalisme dalam novel Robinson Crusoe. Dari penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa novel Robinson Crusoe menggambarkan imperialisme Eropa melalui representasi orang Eropa yang digambarkan sebagai Barat yang superioritas. Sebaliknya, non-Eropa digambarkan sebagai Timur yang inferioritas. Posisinya Eropa mempunyai hak untuk mengontrol non-Eropa. Eropa menjajah non-Eropa melalui ilmu bahasa (Inggris), agama (Kristen), dan budaya. Eropa mendominasi identitas non-Eropa. Selanjutnya, melalui strategi Eropa menjadi seorang penjajah yang menyebarkan ideologi orang-orang terjajah. Ketidakadilan dari Eropa terhadap non-Eropa ditentang oleh Edward Said dengan paham Orientalismenya.

Kata kunci: Poskolonial, Orientalisme, Stereotipe, Superioritas, Inferioritas

Introduction

Robinson Crusoe is one of literary works that represents stereotyping of the Eastern subjects in which the main character comes to the strange island. After having the hard struggle to conquer the land, the main character tries to conquer the savage, as the inhabitant of the island, by using modern language and habits—a logic of colonialism (Carey, 2009:116-121). The opposite, the Eastern subjects more often adored the Western subjects as rational, developed, humane, and superior (Said, 1977:301). Defoe describes Friday as a representation of the Eastern and the Western represented by Crusoe. Friday represents not just a Caribbean native, but all the natives of America, Asia, and Africa who would later be oppressed in the age of European imperialism. The Western persons are higher than the Eastern or the noble people are higher than the servants are, so they are free to oppress and fool them. The West colonizers always underestimate the East colonized as the subjects with different identity.

Friday is also described as a cannibal, marginalized, and backward person based on colonizer's perspective. It is suitable with his culture before meeting Crusoe. Indirectly, it is a kind of description related to the Eastern culture. Aside from his importance to our culture, Friday is a key figure within the context of the novel. Friday's life is depicted by using the law of jungle because a superior people have a right to control their other persons however the condition is very different after the encounter with Crusoe. Edward Said (1979:1) stated Orientalism as a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. There are Occidentals, and there are Orientals, the later must be dominated (Said, 1979:36). Crusoe reflects a colonizer, as a colonizer, he tries to teach Friday related to the life.

Based on the explanation above, there are some reasons in selecting *Robinson Crusoe* as the object matter. First of all, *Robinson Crusoe* is very exciting adventure story because it tells the individual man who tries to live by himself on the island. Finally, He meets Friday and teaches him about the way of life. In this way, Robinson Crusoe represents the Western and Friday represents the Eastern. The representation of the Western and the Eastern in the novel creates some differences. Actually the differences between West and East culture indicate the Orientalism. We hope this research can give a new contribution to the reader, especially students who are interested in Orientalism discourse, and this thesis will inspire the other

researcher to analyze the novel of *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe.

Second, the novel consists of many socio-cultural problems, such as discourses of stereotyping process toward the Eastern subjects—language, religion, culture, and knowledge. It makes us interested to know what reason that creates the superiority of the West in the East. Overall, the use of Orientalism theory by Edward Said here helps to reinforce the critical point that Daniel Defoe as the writer of *Robinson Crusoe* unconsciously represents Orientalism at its show the difference between The Western and The Eastern.

Research Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative research. Blaxter (1996:89) state that “research can also be qualitative, that is, it can describe events persons, and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data”. In qualitative research, the aim is to provide our perspective and study in words and other actions, such as making interpretation, description or observation. In addition, Blaxter argues that qualitative data is based on a research that focuses on understanding and meaning through verbal narratives and descriptions rather than through numbers (1996: 91). In this research, we analyze Orientalism issues in *Robinson Crusoe* relate to the colonial discourse between the European and the non-European.

This study applies documentary method as the technique of data collection. Blaxter et al (2006:154) state that documents is a method in collecting data by using written materials as a basis for the research. Additionally, Blaxter et al (2006:167) explain “researchers are expected to read, understand and critically analyze the writings of others, whether fellow researchers, practitioners or policy-makers”. In other word, collecting data by documents is studying, watching, classifying, and analyzing the data critically. Primary data of this research are fact and information Orientalism issues in *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe. The secondary data are any fact and information about the colonial discourse between the European and the non-European, taken from books as supporting information and also use journals, articles, and internet resources to support this analysis.

This research aims to describe the difference between the Western and the Eastern culture indicates Orientalism issues in *Robinson Crusoe*. After that, the data are collected. Then, we categorize the data based on the phenomenon in the novel. All the collected data related to Orientalism issues that the representation of

the Western and the Eastern subject lead to the first analysis through Edward Said's Orientalism. Then the data correlated to the attitudes of the Western toward the Eastern in the novel are used to answer the second question. The next step the data that indicate the Orientalism in *Robinson Crusoe* are used to answer the third question.

Result

In the novel, Daniel Defoe represents the early colonial and the complicated process of colonial in which the Western should handle the native. The representation of colonialism is clearly reflected through the relationship between Crusoe and Friday. Crusoe has a typical colonial character. He sets on Caribbean island to create his own colony, civilization and culture. Defoe deals with colonialism by portraying two main characters, the Master/colonizer/the Western is represented by Crusoe and the servant/colonized people/the Eastern is represented by Friday. Defoe describes Crusoe as a savior because he rescues one of prisoners from the native people as cannibal. After saving him from cannibals, Crusoe gives him the name "Friday". Crusoe teaches his language (English) to Friday. This is one of the colonizer's strategies to impose their language.

Later on, Crusoe converts Friday as a Christian. It represents transformation process which Friday's identity as the native/cannibal is changed into a Christian. It means that the colonizer wants to spread and implant his religion through Christian doctrine. Friday represents a colonial image and his new identity is established by his European master when Crusoe declares now Friday is a "good Christian." Then, Crusoe tries to change Friday's culture through the way of good eating and wear the clothes. This is the process that technically produces by the colonizers to impose their own religion, culture and identity upon the colonized people. In this case, Crusoe considers Friday as his slave. Crusoe's attitude always underestimates Friday and Crusoe is higher than Friday.

Discussion

In this chapter, the data collected are analyzed using theories described in chapter 2. The data of this research are taken from *Robinson Crusoe*. The organization of this chapter is divided into three subchapters. First, this research tries to map out the cultural assumption from Crusoe as the Western

toward Friday as the Eastern in the novel. Then, this research tries to describe the attitude of the Western toward the Eastern. The entire descriptions about Eastern and Western which are taken the novel are used to describe the Orientalism as a part of Colonialism.

Cultural assumptions are created by the Western subject and the Eastern subject when they met each other in Caribbean island. Stereotype appears from both of them. The cultural assumptions describe the Eastern subject at the lower position and the Western subject at the upper position. It creates binary opposition between the Western as master and the Eastern as slave which the mindset of the Eastern regard the Western as the superior subjects.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* describes the main character as a savior. Crusoe rescues Friday who the only native of the story from cannibalistic practice. Both of them are main characters to analyze in this thesis. Crusoe gives a name to Friday. It is an important thing whether Friday is a European or not (Defoe, 2012:177). Crusoe also introduces English as the medium of teaching and learning on the island. The language here is a tool which has power more than the military violence. This is an important aspect that colonizers tried to impose their language to others foreign societies. It is true Crusoe shows his humanity by saving Friday's life from the cannibals but to give him a new life.

However, Crusoe orders Friday to call him as "Master" and starts to teach him some English words for "yes" "no", so that he can convert Friday to a Christian "slave".

"In a little time I began to speak to him; and teach him to speak to me: and first, I let him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life: I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master; and then let him know that was to be my name: I likewise taught him to say Yes and No and to know the meaning of them" (Defoe, 2012:177).

He teaches him only some words which are useful for the master-slave relation and helpful to dependence not for protest. At the moment when Friday calls him "Master", he accepts his colonial identity. In this case, Crusoe is represented as colonizer which is using his knowledge to control Friday's mind via language, but Friday does not consider it as domination; he is still

loyal and thankful to Crusoe. Although, Friday's attitude toward Crusoe is good but Crusoe still considers him as uncivilized, savage, and inferior, so that it appears racial injustice.

In other situation, Crusoe is reflected as a civilized people, imposes his own culture on Friday. Crusoe intends to change Friday into a civilized man like him by giving a religious knowledge.

"The Soul of a poor savage, and bring him to the true knowledge of religion, and of the Christian doctrine, that he might know Jesus Christ, in whom is life eternal; I say, when I reflected upon all these things, a secret joy ran through every part of my soul, and I frequently rejoiced that ever I was brought to this place, which I had so often thought the most dreadful of all affliction that could possibly have be fallen me" (Defoe, 2012:190).

This quotation shows that Crusoe impresses Friday with his belief in Jesus Christ. Crusoe has not only saved the life of Friday but also tries to save Friday's "savage soul" by imparting him the knowledge of religion and the Christian doctrine.

Not only imposing the language and religious knowledge to Friday, Crusoe also wants to change Friday's cannibalistic habits. In this case, Crusoe makes it clear to Friday that this is not acceptable behavior for human. This type of savage practice made them a separate group in this human society. Moreover, the purpose of Crusoe makes Friday being a good people, civilized, educated etc. As it is stated by Crusoe

"I found Friday had still a hankering stomach after some of the flesh, and was still a cannibal in his nature; but I showed so much abhorrence at the very thoughts of it, and at the least appearance of it, that he durst not discover it: for I had, by some means, let him know that I would kill him if he offered it" (Defoe, 2012:178).

Gradually, Crusoe is able to change Friday's eating habits and converts him from cannibal to human

beings by learning to eat the meat of animals rather than human flesh. This is the process that is technically created by the colonizers to impose their own identity upon the colonized groups or nations.

Crusoe supremacy is clearly depicted as he acts himself as the savior. Crusoe acts as a savior because he rescues Friday from cannibals and gives him food, cloth and language. The same time, Crusoe also creates an unequal relationship with Friday. It means that Crusoe is represented as European imaginations, declaring himself as the king or the emperor over the whole country, and Friday still becomes his savage. According to Said (1979: 7) the European is typically superior in one comparison with the Orient or the Occident. This novel provides two main characters that support the Western and the Eastern representation, or how the Western should be constructed instead of their attitudes to the Eastern.

"In the first place, I was removed from all the wickedness of the world here; I had neither the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, nor the pride of life. I had nothing to covet, for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying; I was lord of the whole manor; or, if I pleased, I might call myself king or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of: there were no rivals; I had no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty or command with me: I might have raised ship-loadings of corn, but I had no use for it; so I let as little grow as I thought enough for my occasion" (Defoe, 2012:111).

Furthermore, there is also the representation which shows Crusoe's way to develop and reigns in the island. The missions of Western are not only to visit a foreign land but also to make their colony through their logic of Western civilization and domination.

The Western's cultures give influence toward the Eastern people. Through Crusoe's attitude to Friday tries teaching the way of good eating. Automatically, it erases Friday's identity as the Native. Crusoe is shaping the identity of Friday as his expectation what is suitable for the savage to look like a human. Thus, Crusoe takes Friday back to his "castle" in order to turn him into a human:

“After I had been two or three days returned to my castle, I thought that, in order to bring Friday off from his horrid way of feeding, and from the relish of a cannibal’s stomach, I ought to let him taste other flesh” (Defoe, 2012:181).

By the quotation above, Friday is taught by Crusoe that the flesh of human is not good for him. He should eat other meat which is healthy for human. The Western considers raw food unhealthy and the flesh of human is a strange food. The Western does not eat the flesh of human and all meat always is cooked before being eaten. The Western’s mindset regards a cannibal/the Eastern as uncivilized people and the Western as civilized people. This perception occurs because the difference culture between the Western and the Eastern. In this case, the Western culture gives some domination to the Eastern’s life or has the purposes to colonize the Eastern’s cultures. The Western tries to change the Eastern’s culture and mindset through the way of good eating.

In this case, Friday has been adapted to the new changes in his life. Even the clothes, Crusoe brings to Friday clothes which he brought from the shipwreck. Crusoe said that Friday is naked and he has to wear clothes like human being. This condition can be seen in this following quotation,

“I gave him a pair of linen drawers, which I had out of the poor gunner’s chest I mentioned, which I found in the wreck, and which, with a little alteration, fitted him very well; and then I made him a jerkin of goat’s skin, as well as my skill would allow (for I was now grown a tolerably good tailor); ... and thus he was clothed, for the present, tolerably well, and was mighty well pleased to see himself almost as well clothed as his master. It is true he went awkwardly in these clothes at first: wearing the drawers was very awkward to him, ...” (Defoe, 2012:178-179).

The statements above explain the purpose of Crusoe to dominate Friday’s identity through his style as the Western, and slowly erase Friday’s identity. Friday doesn’t know that he is exploited by Crusoe to become

his slave. Friday always considers Crusoe as a hero. Crusoe rescues Friday from the Native which represents Crusoe’s strategies to get a slave.

These conditions will show what Said notes, the other form of the relation between Western and Eastern is that the Western is always in a good position, means that the Western has the authority toward the Eastern (Said, 1979: 39). The statement explains the Western stereotype the Eastern as uncivilized, backward, cannibal, and inferior.

Conclusion

After analyzing *Robinson Crusoe*, we conclude that imperialism of the European is presented in the novel. Robinson Crusoe is described as a European who is civilized, educated, religious person, conqueror and a hero. On the contrary, Defoe represents Friday as the Eastern/Native who is irrational person, savage people, uneducated and cannibal people, a weak people/victim. Crusoe treats Friday as the subject with different identity or the ‘Other’. Crusoe’s treatment on Friday represents imperialistic attitude of a European man, who tends to be superior to authorize or to dominate others. The colonization is done by Crusoe upon Friday, in which he inherits Christianity, English and European’s manner in Friday.

The discourse of imperialism emerges in stereotyping of “the good” European (Crusoe) as the savior of the non-European (Friday) destroying the self-esteem of the non-European. The European people have high self-esteem to explore their ambition to get a lot of benefit from the non-European people. The European’s position as superior has right to control the non-European as inferior. The European colonizes the non-European through his knowledge of language (English), religion (Christian) and culture. The European tries to change and erase the non-European’s identity. Then, the European dominates the non-European’s identity. Moreover, through the strategy, Crusoe as a European turns to be a colonizer who scatters colonized people’s ideology. The injustice of a European toward the non-European in the novel is opposed by Edward Said’s perspective in his work *Orientalism*.

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