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**CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THREE *MOTINGO*  
BUSYE'S ROMANCE "POPULAR" NOVELS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study is entitled *Cultural Diversity in Three Motingo Busye's Romance "Popular" Novels* and explored three novels written by Motingo Busye (hereinafter abbreviated to MB), *Fatimah Chen Chen*, *Hotel Halekulani*, and *Seribu Senja di Roma*. It aimed at identifying the cultural styles used in the three novels using the theory of intertextuality proposed by Julia Kristeva. It investigated how the writer described the images of many cultures in the world narrated in the three novels using the sociological approach and psychological approach. It revealed **the characterization** of the main characters during their lives through the sequence of *id*, *ego*, and *super ego*. Apart from that, several cultural forms as to how the writer named the characters in the three novels were also investigated.

The forms of cultural diversity found in the present study are as follows (1) out of 76 characters in the three novels coming from four countries, seven cities and regions, 38 forms of images coming Europe, America, and Asia (Taiwan and Indonesia) were found; (2) from the process of characterization of the main characters, as far as their images were concerned, it was found that the forms of cultural pluralism varied; they were *samen leven* (living together), polygamy, and the phenomenon of illegitimate children; (3) Apart from that, with regard to how the characters were named (the naming process), the three novels showed the nuance of cultural pluralism involving various cultures in the world. It turned out that how the so many characters were named needed high and wide awareness and knowledge of various cultures as the material of the essence of the images.

Keywords: cultural diversity, romance "popular" novels

## 1. Introduction

A literary work represents “life”, and such a life is mostly made up of social facts, although it also “imitates” the man’s nature and subjective world (Budiana et al., 2002: 19). According to Semi (1988:47), the world in a literary work is the one which is always with problems. Life appears in an instable condition; it undergoes deviations which are presented in the form of conflicts making the literary work alive. The deviations taking place in life are criticized by the writer, especially the writer of popular stories or dime novels. However, as far as popular stories and dime novels are concerned, they are not so well treated that many female writers such as Jaenar Maesa Ayu, Sri Utami, Dewi Lestari, and so forth have appeared. They have tried to create histories which may be categorized as dime novels or in the context of “pornography”, which present the matters pertaining to women’s physical enchantment. However, as those who talk are women, pragmatically, they are not refused; even it is agreed that such stories “inspire voluptuous feeling” and can be classified as the initial resurgence of ‘the 2000<sup>th</sup> literature’.

In Indonesia the novels with the themes of different cultures have appeared since the period prior to *Balai Pustaka*, and even have been appearing until now. However, the stories with the themes of cultural pop-styles have not been accepted by most Indonesians, especially the literary critics. One of the popular novelists after the above period (Balai Pustaka) was Motingo Busye (hereinafter abbreviated to MB). At that time he was frequently engaged in polemics; furthermore, he was not “entirely” recognized as the 1966’s writer. In general, MB, in his novels, adopted many themes which were related to the matters taking place within and outside Indonesia, which was unconsciously taking place in our community such as marriages among those coming from different countries, affairs, families without marriages referred to as *samen leven* (living together), children who are born from families without marriages

(illegitimate children), and prostitution. However, it turned out that the readers, especially the young ones, liked such novels, although MB used limited porno but not vulgar words.

It was not fair that the Indonesian community could accept the dime novels written by the writers coming from *Angkatan 2000* whose themes were completely vulgar, while those written by MB using not vulgar words were not accepted; as a result, MB was not recognized as a writer and man of letters. This was the first reason why MB was adopted as the object of the present study.

## **2. Research Method**

This present study was conducted using qualitative method. The data needed were collected using library research. Bogdan and Biklen (1982:28) state that qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in the forms of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. Furthermore, it is explained in *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (2005:1163) that research refers to the activities of collecting, processing, analyzing, and systematically and objectively presenting data in order to solve a problem or to examine a hypothesis as an attempt to develop general principles. Thus, this present study refers to the activity of collecting data taken from various sources, which were then analyzed and presented systematically. In this present study, the data were collected from books or references. Both the primary and secondary data were processed, analyzed and presented systematically. The primary data were taken from the three novels written by MB which had been selected before such as *Fatimah Chen Chen*, *Hotel Halekulani*, and *Seribu Senja di Roma*. The secondary data were taken from several theories of literature which were related to the present study. Sociological and psychological

books and other several books and articles which were related to the development of Indonesian literature and MB and his literary works were also used.

### **3. Discussion and Result**

The popular novels written by MB were analyzed based on the problems formulated above and the results were as follows.

#### **3.1 Cultural Diversity in the Images of the Global Community through Characters.**

The images given by the global community to the three novels *Fatimah Chen Chen*, *Hotel Halekulani* and *Seribu Cinta di Roma* could be grouped into three forms of cultural comparisons such Europe, America, and Asia. Moreover, the Asian region could be further divided into two comparisons such as Taiwan and Indonesia.

##### **3.1.1 The Image of European Community**

The images of the European community in the three novels written by MB were dominated by the form of images of the Italian community followed by the images of the Dutch community. There were only four images – not too many. In this case, MB generally wished to show to the readers that Europe had the most established culture and that its culture did not highly vary. Sociologically, it could be stated that Europe had the most established and solid culture. The reason was that all the cultures in Europe generally came from and were influenced by the Roman and Greek (old) cultures as the mother cultures.

##### **3.1.2 The Image of American Community**

The America described in the novels *Hotel Halekulani* and *Seribu Senja di Roma* was the United States of America. Based on the setting of time, when the novels were written and when the images were made, it was identified that the event took place around two decades after World War II. After the war came to end, America had been the “magnate” of the world

community. Many immigrants rushed there for a better living. Therefore, at that time America was popularly known as *A Country of Immigrants* or a *Land of Hopes*.

Since then the American races were simplified into three types; they were white people, black people and colored people. In general, the last race occupied the western beach area of America, where the story narrated in the novel *Hotel Halekulani* took place. The existence of various races certainly contributed to the plural cultural colors. It was this which was adopted by MB in the novels he wrote to give a lesson to the Indonesian readers in particular that the new cultural forms in Indonesia such as *samen laven* (living together) had been taking place in America for a long time.

### **3.1.3 The Images of the Asian Community**

Implicitly, it could be stated that MB wished to show the readers that life in Asian area was much more passionate as it was much more diverse. If compared to the two previous regions, Europe and America, according to MB, the Asian region was much more interesting regardless the different images they had. Asia, which was diverse with respect to its religions, races, ethnic groups, nations and states, formed a beautiful mosaic with different colors such as white, yellow, red, grey and even black which reflected a more plural and highly enthusiastic community.

### **3.2 Cultural Diversity of the Main Character: *Don Juan* and His Loyalty to his Family**

Although the three novels discussed about love, their themes were completely different. The novel *Fatimah Chen Chen* turned out to discuss about the love made by the main character which led it to the theme of **polygamy**. Dira Almin, one of the main characters, was married to all the women whom he had loved. However, finally, he lived happily with two wives. The novel *Hotel Halekulani* was dominated by the story of a Japanese soldier coming from Indonesia

named Bono. He lived in America and lived a *samen leven* life. He lived with an American widow with white complexion named Leslie Heart. He lived with two children without officially marrying her. They turned out to be able to live happily by loving one another. The novel *Seribu Senja di Roma* presented the existence of a child who was born from a couple of parents without being married.

### **3.3 Cultural Diversity in Naming Characters**

It seemed that the names given to the characters in the three novels had been thoroughly prepared by MB. He had prepared certain naming techniques and patterns; as a result, unconsciously the names used implied various cultures as a cultural pluralism. The name of an expert was certainly different from the name of a common person. The name of someone with a particular religious background was certainly different from the name of someone with another religious background. The name of a nobleman was certainly different from the name of a common person. As well, the name of someone coming from an ethnic group was certainly different from the name of someone coming from another ethnic group. Names varied depending on their respective concepts and goals. This did not take place automatically but had been planned based on in-depth observations and studies; the result was that such names reflected the forms of the culture from which the characters came from.

## **4. Conclusions and Suggestions**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

*First*, the cultural styles which could be seen from the characters in the three novels written by MB, *Fatimah Chen Chen*, *Hotel Halekulani*, and *Seribu Senja di Roma* were in the forms of the images of the characters. Four types of images were found in the European region; as a result, it was regarded as having more established, strong and old culture. Eight types of

images were found in the American region, meaning that the American culture, in addition to coming from the European culture, was also influenced by the immigrants' cultures. The Asian region was divided into two; Taiwanese group and Indonesian group. In the Taiwanese community six images were found, less than the images found in the American community. The reason was that Taiwan used to be colonized by England which indirectly influenced the European images which were already established. Twenty types of images were found in the Indonesian community; the greatest if compared to the other regions. Although Indonesia was a unitary country, it was made up of tens of ethnic groups spreading out from Sabang to Merauke. Every ethnic group had its own images, and it was this which enriched the images of the Indonesian community. The 38 images found in the three novels indicated cultural pluralism as the title of this dissertation.

*Second*, the forms of cultural styles found through the characterization of the main characters in the three novels written by MB could be explained as follows. (1) The novel *Fatimah Chen Chen* implied that polygamy was a solution to life; it was not supposed to be the source of problems as believed by the common people and the Indonesian government which issued an Act to prohibit polygamy among the government civil servants. (2) The novel *Hotel Halekulani* implicitly evaluated that the *samen leven* (living together) was not as bad as what had been supposed by the Indonesian people in the era of 1980s. It could be stated that this novel gave knowledge of "kumpul kebo" or *samen leven* (living together) at that time to the common people. (3) The novel *Seribu Senja di Roma* twisted a fact that "anak haram" (illegitimate children) were not sinful; therefore, they should not be concealed; instead, they should be accepted as holy children 'fitrah'. They were born to be holy; it was their parents who were

sinful. The three themes in the novels written by MB described cultural pluralism in the community.

*Third*, how the characters were named in the three novels was based on regulations. The names of the Moslem leaders were created based on Arabic names; the names of the *mu'alaf* were taken from the names of the Moslem leaders, or the combinations of Arabic names and local ones. The names of educated characters were different from the names of the common characters. In addition, MB also distinguished the names of Indonesian educated characters from the names of foreign educated ones based on the number of syllables. *Mr* and *Madam* were added to the names symbolizing appreciation given to the characters that had rendered many services. Such provisions certainly contributed to the diversity of forms of names given to the characters in the three novels. The diversity in names caused cultural diversity or cultural pluralism to appear.

#### **4.2 Suggestions**

Based on the objectives of the study and the conclusions drawn, several suggestions could be recommended as follows. The Indonesian literary critics should be aware and widen their way of thinking in such a way that they may tolerate whatever literary works the writers produce. In addition, the readers and those who are interested in literary works should be given an opportunity to evaluate and limit quality literary works including popular novels; in other words, evaluation should not only be made by the literary critics. Listening and understanding the phenomena taking place in the community before making decisions should be the roles played by the government. Then the existence of MB in the treasury of Indonesian literature should be reviewed again. If the generation of *Angkatan 2000* could be tolerated and accepted, why then the works written by MB are still discriminated up to now. To know MB better, it is

expected that the teachers and lecturers of literature should direct their students to start exploring MB and his literary works. It is expected that scientific researchers should treat MB and his works more fairly in the mini thesis, thesis and dissertation they may write in the future.

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