

AMINA BINT AL-HUDA’S “VIRTUE PREVAILS”

IN THE LENS OF OCCIDENTALISM

A GRADUATING PAPER

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Degree in English Literature



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduating paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other writer's opinions or findings included in this graduating paper are quoted or cited in accordance with the ethical standards.

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Saya menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatian yang diberikan, saya ucapkan terima kasih.

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ABSTRACT

There are a lot of literary works out there that place the East as an object for Western perspective to judge arbitrarily. Unlike others, Amina Bint Al-Huda’s short story titled "Virtue Prevails" is different. This short story places the West as an object for Eastern perspective to explore which later is represented by two conflicting figures, namely Sumayah and Fitnah. With the theory of Occidentalism by Hassan Hanafi, the author's criticism of the Western world has more essential result of study through all the symbols which the story contains. Therefore, Occidentalism by Hassan Hanafi is a good theory to correct the mistaken myths between the West and the East and each perspectives. The purpose of this study is to examine the defensive nature of the Eastern culture against the Western culture which has offensive nature. Ironically, the offensive nature of the Western actually backfire the image of the Western itself. The result of this study reveals that the defensive nature of the Eastern culture and the offensive nature of the Western culture in the “Virtue Prevails” short story are both motivated by the aspect of religion which is a part of the construction of the ideologies from both cultures. This is because Sumayah’s figure as a pious Muslim represents the Islamic puritanism while Fitnah’s figure as a westernized Muslim represents liberal Islam.

Keywords: Occidentalism, western culture, eastern culture, defensive nature.

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ABSTRAK

Ada banyak sekali karya sastra di luar sana yang menempatkan timur sebagai objek untuk dinilai seenaknya dari sudut pandang barat. Hanya saja “Virtue Prevails” milik Amina Bint Al-Huda berbeda. Cerita pendek ini menempatkan barat sebagai objek untuk ditelaah dari perspektif timur yang nantinya akan direpresentasikan oleh dua tokoh yang saling bertentangan, yakni Sumayah dan Fitnah. Dipadu dengan teori Oksidentalisme oleh Hassan Hanafi, kritik pengarang terhadap dunia barat dapat diekstrak lebih banyak melalui segala simbol yang terkandung dalam cerita. Tidak hanya itu, Oksidentalisme Hassan Hanafi juga hadir untuk meluruskan mitos yang keliru terkait barat dan timur. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menelaah sifat defensif budaya timur terhadap budaya barat yang bersifat ofensif, yang ironisnya tindak ofensif barat justru menjadi bumerang yang merusak citra barat itu sendiri. Hasil analisis dari penelitian ini menemukan bahwa sifat defensif budaya timur dan sifat ofensif budaya barat sama-sama dilatarbelakangi oleh aspek agama yang mana merupakan bagian dari konstruksi ideologi pada kedua budaya. Hal tersebut dikarenakan tokoh Sumayah yang mewakili timur merepresentasikan puritanisme Islam sedangkan tokoh Fitnah yang mewakili barat merepresentasikan Islam liberal.

Kata kunci: Oksidentalisme, budaya barat, budaya timur, sifat defensif.

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MOTTO

“Salivili hipput tupput täppyt äppyt tippu hilijalleen.”

– Ievan Polkka by Eino Kettunen –



DEDICATION

I dedicate my graduating paper to:

My dearest self.

My dear mother and father.

My dear best friend.



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Lastly, I realize that there may be a few mistakes in writing this graduating paper. Thus, I really appreciate if the reader gives any suggestion or recommendation to improve the further study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

According to Klarer, ideas in literary works have the power in influencing people's perceptions about various things (1999: 1). It is the same as Orientalists may do through their literary works which is to spread the idea that the Western is more superior than the Non-Western.

They (the Orient) were shot through with doctrines of European superiority, various kind of racism, imperialism, and the like, dogmatic views of “the Oriental.” The much more varied work produced by almost uncountable individual writers, authors dealing with the Orient (Edward W. Said, 1978: 43).

Literary works that promote Western superiority indirectly create negative stigmas that harm the Non-Western parties. The negative stigma itself appears as “if the West is superior, then the Non-West is inferior.”

Orientalism is how Europe (West) as a subject sees non-Europe (East) as an object. As a result of his position as the subject of the reviewer, the complexity of superiority in the European ego emerges. While due to its position as the object being studied, there arises the complexity of inferiority in the non-European ego. The distrust experienced by the East and the superior feeling experienced by the West are the side effects caused by the superior-inferior complexity (Hassan Hanafi, 2000: 26-27).

It is common that there are many mistaken myths about Non-West such as East is backward, East is primitive, East is stupid, et cetera. The reason is likely to be the influence of perception that spreads through the erroneous ideas from literary works.

To be more specific, contemporary Orientalist works have number of changes that their current form is no longer the same as the Orientalist works in the past. Orientalist works today are a legacy from their ancestors who took some values from the former Orientalist works in order to make them more in tune with the time. For example, the contemporary Orientalist works tend to be more subtle in spreading Western influences than the former Orientalist works which tend to be blunt. This fact is supported by Philip Metres in his article titled "The Depictions of Arabs in America" which states that contemporary Orientalists tend to be more subtle and their influence is everywhere.

“Modern Orientalists is echoed with subtle by cultural humanists” (Edward Said, 1978: 250).

The idea that the Western is more superior than the non-Western is delivered by the Orientalists as a “propaganda” that glorifies the West as the center of the world. By the reason that the propaganda is more widely spread through literary works in the form of film, the researcher presents a fresher research by using short story as a medium of research and the theory of Occidentalism as a new perspective in the research.

There are many films that view the East from a Western perspective. Meanwhile, this research uses a short story that views the West from an Eastern perspective. The use of the Occidentalism theory in this study intends to balance the Western and Eastern aspects by providing a new perspective which relates to the West and the East (Hassan Hanafi, 2000: 25-26).

Literature has been a medium to express various ideas. There are many forms of literary works such as novel, film, poem, drama, and short story which can convey the ideas implanted by the authors to their audiences. The ideas that the authors convey through their literature works generally have several purposes. One of the goals behind the ideas in literary works is to portray something, either as something good or as something bad. Objects that are portrayed through ideas in literary works can be in the form of figures which represent a specific culture. The method of portraying object is done by exposing all the advantages of the object, or even by comparing the object to something worse (Mario Klarer, 1999: 1).

The researcher decides to analyze a short story titled “Virtue Prevails” by Amina Bint Al-Huda. This literary work has twenty-two story chapters and it was published by the Islamic Thought Foundation. Although it is a fictional short story, the story is based on moral values that the author sees in the journey of her life. Belief, ideological conflict, vice and virtue, culture, and good deeds are the example of several aspects that contain several values in “Virtue Prevails”. This short story is worth to read because of those uniqueness.

The short story titled “Virtue Prevails” recounts the ideological conflict between Sumayah and Fitnah as the main characters. Although both characters have blood relations, Sumayah often quarrels with Fitnah because of their different ideologies. Fitnah insists that Western ideology is better because it upholds freedom and gender equality. According to Fitnah, Sumayah is restrained by religious doctrine. As a result, Fitnah forces her sister to agree on the ideology Fitnah believes. Meanwhile, Sumayah herself is not shaken in holding on to her Eastern

ideology which she glorifies over the content of its moral values. Sumayah actually judges Fitnah for becoming a slave to lust and she has to be purified again.

The researcher is interested in how the Eastern culture portrays defensive nature towards the Western culture. There are two possibilities when a foreign culture tries to enter local culture, namely defensive and offensive traits. In this short story, the narrator gives position to the West (represented by the Fitnah figure) as the offensive one and the East (represented by the Sumayah's figure) as the defensive one.

Hamid praised Sumayah's efforts for his guidance. He mentioned his ex-wife's name (Fitnah) and wondered what motivated her to act in such a way against Sumayah. Ahmad reasoned that she meant to have revenge and destroy his life. She never imagined that true faith and belief could protect believers. At last virtue prevails while devilish plans come to nothing (Aminah Bint Al-Huda, 2014: 46).

From the citation above, it is interesting to the researcher that Sumayah's defensive nature actually backfires Fitnah who acts offensively and damages the Western image itself. It becomes more interesting to discuss if the perspective of Occidentalism is applied because it has a relation with how the East views the West. Therefore, the researcher uses the theory of Occidentalism in this research to conduct a further study in order to examine the symbols that can be studied behind the defensive nature of the East against the offensive nature of the West. In addition, the title of this short story already implies this defensive-offensive problem. "Virtue Prevails" is interpreted as a "shield" that protects good people from the dangers of

evil. The way the shield works is by reflecting back the evil actions to the perpetrators. It is believed that the good people will win and survive while bad people will be down and eliminated because of the bad actions they do.

Based on the background of study above, this research aims to reveal the reason why Amina Bint Al-Huda's "Virtue Prevails" portrays the Eastern culture for being defensive towards the Western culture through its characters. This analysis uses the theory of Occidentalism as a guide of analyzing. The meaning of Occidentalism itself refers to everything in relation with the Western such as the culture of its people, its ideas, the model of its thinking, its behavior, its outlook on life, and so on. By using the theory, the researcher expects the reader of this study to have better understanding about the quality of the Western and the Eastern moral values in the research.

1.2 Research Question

This research is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the examples of defensive nature in the short story?
2. How is the defensive nature of the Eastern culture towards the offensive Western culture which Amina Bint Al-Huda's "Virtue Prevails" portrays?
3. Why is it portrayed that way?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the research questions above, there are three following objectives of the research.

1. To analyze what the examples of defensive nature are in the short story.
2. To analyze how the defensive nature of the Eastern culture towards the Western culture is portrayed in the Amina Bint Al-Huda's "Virtue Prevails". Specifically, the Eastern culture is represented by Sumayah's figure while the Western culture is represented by Fitnah figure.
3. To analyze why it is portrayed that way.

1.4 Significances of Study

The following is the significances of study on this research.

1. This research reveals that the Eastern culture and the Western culture are duality that cannot be separated even though both have opposing principles. No matter how bad the West in the Eastern perspective is, the East cannot stand alone without the existence of the West. However, both of them still have an important role as the subject of the reviewer and the object that is being studied. Therefore, the East as the subject of the study still values the existence of the West by providing a room for negotiations such as the freedom of speech.
2. This research reveals that culture is a product of construction that can be formed in such a way as to build a meaning. In this case it refers to reducing the degree of the Eastern culture in order to elevate the degree of the Western culture.

1.5 Literature Review

On one hand, the researcher does not find any graduating paper that uses “Virtue Prevails” by Amina Bint Al-Huda as the object after searching through library and various online libraries. On the other hand, the researcher finds a graduating paper that uses the theory of Occidentalism.

The paper is titled "Black Americans Struggle for Equality in the Butler Film", written by Rizka Arindani from State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and is issued on January 15th, 2016. The research in Arindani's paper explains how the black Americans are positioned, how the film tells the struggle of the black Americans in reaching equality, and how Occidentalism is reflected in the struggle for the sake of equality. The result of her study reveals that the black Americans finally succeeded in reaching equality as the goal of Occidentalism itself, namely to neutralize the conflict between the East and the West (Arindani, 2016: 41).

1.6 Theoretical Approach

The researcher uses the theory of Occidentalism in this analysis because the problems are closely related to Eastern and Western cultures. Etymologically, Occidentalism is originated from the Latin *occident* word which means "direction of the sunset". When the researcher views this theory through its ontology, this theory bases a clear distinction between the East and the West. According to James G. Carrier, Occidentalism is the discourse among Orientals about the West, which means the study of Western culture as the object and Eastern people as the subject

of study. In other word, it is likely to be said that Occidentalism is a discipline that studies Western society and culture (Daya, 2008: 96-97).

In this study, the researcher uses the theory of Occidentalism by Hassan Hanafi. The reason is because it is relevant to the problems that the researcher wants to examine, which is related to the Eastern and Western cultures.

1.6.1 Occidentalism Theory

According to Hassan Hanafi as the thinker of this theory, the Occidentalism is a form of rejection of the unfair Western actions against non-Western. This theory exists as a rival and opposition to the Orientalism which examines the East from the lens of Western (2000, 25). Occidentalism exists not only to study the West from an Eastern view but also to balance Western and Eastern elements and prove that Eastern cultural moral values are also better than the Western. Elements in this context include Eastern and Western culture, religion, Eastern and Western history, and the thoughts about Western and Eastern. The balance of Eastern and Western elements is realized by balancing the Western culture which aggressively dominates the non-Western and eliminates the myth that the West is superior to non-Western (2000:26).

In his book which titled *Introduction to Occidentalism* (2005: 5), Hassan Hanafi uses the term "The Ego" to refer to non-Western parties and the term "The Other" to refer to Western parties. The term "The Ego" comes from the Arabic *al-ana* which literally means "I." The Ego represents the identity of Islam as well as Western opposition. The term "The Other" also comes from Arabic *al-akhar* which literally means "the other party". The theory of Occidentalism is divided into three

main points namely Ego in The Past, The Reality of Ego, and Ego of Today. Hassan Hanafi defines Ego in The Past as past history and cultural heritage that builds internal values in The Ego. The Reality of Ego refers to the reality around The Ego (external factors) which also plays a role in building internal values in The Ego. Ego of Today is explained by Hassan Hanafi as The Ego's reaction to contemporary culture which The Other brings (Hassan Hanafi, 2000: 5).

The mechanism of the theory of Occidentalism in this study is divided into four stages. In the first stage, the researcher reconstructs the elements of Eastern culture and Western culture with narratology to examine the symbols that are manifested in the story. In the second stage the researcher examines internal values and external values that influence the non-Western in taking a stand towards the West. In this case the researcher finds out what is the basis of the defensive nature of Eastern culture against Western culture. The third stage is where the researcher observes the reaction of non-Western when it deals with the Western party. Will the cultural values of one of the party change or disappear? Will each party cling to its cultural values? Lastly, the researcher presents the facts related to Eastern and Western cultures in the fourth stage.

1.7 Methods of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative method in analyzing the data. According to Creswell, people use qualitative methods to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups related to social or human problems. (2014: 294). This study uses library study in collecting the data. So, the researcher conducts

the research only by collecting and observing data from several journals, books, websites, and other data sources.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The data source which the researcher uses in this study is one of the short stories by Amina Bint Al-Huda titled “Virtue Prevails”. The primary data is examined in the form of narration. Meanwhile, the supporting data of the research are the references that refer to the East and West elements as well as the theory of Occidentalism itself, whether in the form of journals, books, or articles from the internet.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher uses documentation technique and collects data through several parts. For the first part, the researcher reads the data sources in detail which include the “Virtue Prevails” short story and Hassan Hanafi’s book to obtain the required data which is related to ins and outs about the East and the West.

In the second part, the researcher determines the variables of the narrative itself by discourse. The data on discourse variable is divided into nine categories, namely character, fragmentation, focalization, schemata, deconstruction of the West, deconstruction of the East, Ego in the past, Ego of today, and the reality of Ego.

The last part is where the researcher classifies the data found in the research based on the specified variable. The data in discourse variable is data from the short story “Virtue Prevails” that relates to moral values of the Western and Eastern

cultures. Data in the form of paragraph citations are included in the categories of discourse variable.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher takes several steps in finishing this research. The first step is to find the relationships and correlations between the data. The next step is to explain the relationship and correlation of data to predetermine the variables. Then, the steps end with the conclusion of the research.

Furthermore, the researcher uses narratology as a method of supporting the theory to analyze the data. The analysis method in this research is free indirect discourse where the data in the form of narration that does not count as dialogue are examined as manifestation of symbols in the story.

1.8 Paper Organization

The first chapter consists of background of study, research question, objectives of study, significances of study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. Next, the second chapter presents the plot summary, theme, point of view, settings (place, time, and social condition), plot, and character and characterization. The third chapter deals with the analysis of the short story in the lens of Occidentalism that consists of three parts; evidence that the Eastern culture is better than the Western culture, evidence that the Western culture is worse than the Eastern culture, and evidence of the defensive nature of the Eastern culture against the Western culture. Lastly, the fourth chapter contains conclusion and suggestions

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

In “Virtue Prevails” short story by Amina Bint Al-Huda, the researcher concludes that the discussion focuses on the defensive nature of the Eastern culture towards the offensive nature of the Western culture from the lens of Occidentalism. Occidentalism is a form of rejection of the unfair Western actions against the non-Western.

The result concludes that the Eastern culture is better than the Western culture which is known from the narrator's portrayal through focalization in the form of symbolic annihilation and contrasting descriptions between the Eastern representation figures who tend to be more brilliant than the Western representation figures.

The result of this study also concludes that the Western culture is worse than the Eastern culture which is known from the narrator's portrayal through changing Fitnah's character into a victim of westernization, the negative naming of Fitnah character, and Fitnah's bad actions as a representation of Western culture.

Later, the study reveals that Sumayah's defensive nature as The Ego is motivated by internal and external aspects. The internal aspect of The Ego is in the form of religion as the main guide in life. Meanwhile, the external aspects support the internal aspect as it includes the factor of location that is in Islamic countries, the factor of loving and religious family, and the factor of love romance.

The narrator depicts the defensive nature of The Ego through its attitude when it deals with The Other who carries out an offensive approach. From the analysis which the researcher conducts, the manifestation of The Ego's defensive nature can be in the form of rejection such as being quiet and listening. If The Other takes an offensive approach to dominate The Ego as an object, The Ego may respond it with the defensive nature it manifests in the form of attempts to avoid, to not heed at all or to fight back.

The Ego's defensive nature is a natural response in protecting the Eastern cultural values from The Other's potential invasive offensive approach. It is invasive in the sense of being able to eliminate or change the Eastern cultural values. However, The Ego still respects and values the existence of The Other despite the fact that they have different principles. Therefore, The Ego does not take action to change The Other to be in line with The Ego through either satire, pressure, or threats. This reinforces the fact that the West is not better than the East like the mistaken myths tell about the West.

From this research, it is seen that the defensive nature of the Eastern culture and the offensive nature of the Western culture in the “Virtue Prevails” short story are both motivated by the aspect of religion which is a part of the construction of the ideologies from both cultures. Sumayah’s figure as a pious Muslim is a representative of Islamic puritanism while Fitnah figure as a westernized Muslim represents liberal Islam.

4.2 Suggestion

In order to balance the harsh critic about the West in this research, the researcher thinks that this short story is more interesting to discuss if this short story is researched from the lens of the West with the theory of Orientalism.



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