

Orientalist Discourse In Najib Mahfouz's Short Story *Finjanu-Shay*, Analysis Of Orientalism by Edward W. Said

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ABSTRACT

Postcolonial discourse not only discusses the colonial past, but also examines how colonial heritage continues to shape the perspective and culture of people in former colonial countries. This study examines how traces of colonialism are present in literary works through the analysis of the short story *Finjanu-Shay* by Naguib Mahfouz. Using Edward Said's theory of orientalism as a theoretical foundation, this study uncovers how Western ideologies and values, such as capitalism and socialism, are represented as the standard of civilization, while the East is portrayed as inferior and backward. Through character symbolization and narrative metaphors, Mahfouz criticizes the dominance of Western culture that has been internalized in Eastern society. The results of the study show that today's colonialism no longer takes place through physical colonialism, but through cultural discourse and hegemony that continues to live in the postcolonial world order.

Diskursus pascakolonial tidak hanya membahas masa lalu kolonial, tetapi juga mengkaji bagaimana warisan kolonial terus membentuk cara pandang dan budaya masyarakat di negara-negara bekas jajahan. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana jejak kolonialisme hadir dalam karya sastra melalui analisis cerpen Finjanu-Shay karya Naguib Mahfouz. Dengan menggunakan teori orientalisme dari Edward Said sebagai landasan teoritis, penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana ideologi dan nilai-nilai Barat, seperti kapitalisme dan sosialisme, direpresentasikan sebagai standar peradaban, sementara Timur digambarkan sebagai inferior dan tertinggal. Melalui simbolisasi tokoh dan metafora naratif, Mahfouz mengkritik dominasi budaya Barat yang telah terinternalisasi dalam masyarakat Timur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kolonialisme masa kini tidak lagi berlangsung melalui penjajahan fisik, tetapi melalui wacana dan hegemoni budaya yang terus hidup dalam tatanan dunia pascakolonial.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Colonialism that takes place in a region or country often affects culture, knowledge, economics and politics in the colony. In fact, colonial power still took place in the colonies even after colonization had ended. The same meaning was later known

as the post-colonial condition. This understanding has been implicated in Edward W. Said's study of orientalism, which is considered one of the forerunners of the emergence of postcolonial theories. Said's findings about orientalism were triggered by the visit of a French journalist to Beirut during the civil war that occurred from 1975 to 1976 (Faruk, 2018:22). From the meeting, a new stigma emerged for Said that Timur had become a part of integral of the West. In other words, the existence of the East is the fruit of the discovery of the West, as well as the loss of the existence of the East as the East.

From this, Said developed the term orientalism (a historical term to describe the depiction and study of the West and the East). Said, in his book *Orientalism*, explains his philosophical assumptions about the political manipulation of the West over the East where the West writes (with their views) about the East, as if the East were an invention. (R.Setiawan, 2018:16). This explains the existence of a social construct built by the West to maintain its power mentally. Thus, the relationship between the West and the East is a complex relationship of power, domination, and relations of various degrees of hegemony (Said, 1978: 7).

In his book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978:1-4) Said explained the meaning of orientalism: *first*, orientalism is a way of understanding the Eastern world, based on its special place in the human experience of Western Europe. In this case the East is a geographical region, a civilization, which is the source of the deepest and most frequent imagination in Europeans about the "other world". That is, the East has helped to describe Europe (the West) as a shared image, idea, personality and experience; With him. The East, thus, became an integral part of European civilization and material culture (Faruk 2018: 22). *Second*: orientalism as a worldview, representation, and style of thought based on ontological and epistemological differences made to distinguish between the "East" (*the Orient*) and almost always the "West" (*the occident*). *Third*, originalism is defined as something that is defined more historically and materially.

Edwar W. Said's theory of orientalism is basically based on three great European thinkers, namely, Derrida with his deconstruction, Gramsci with his hegemony and Foucault with his colonial discourse. In terms of deconstruction, orientalism by Said is seen in the building of its binary opposition. Said explores how the binary opposition

actually overlaps because what is called the East is actually the other side of the West, becoming integral to Western civilization and material culture, as a way for the West not only to know something far away, which exists outside of itself but also to know something far away from it rather, they know and understand themselves (Faruk, 2018:26). The problem is that to declare clarity and identity to the world of the Oriental is not his own attempt but a whole complex series of manipulations that the West has created, in identifying everything that has to do with the East. Such a condition causes hierarchical differences between the inferior East and the superior West. The common thread of the West's own description of the East has helped define the West as imaginary, an idea, as well as a personality that is the opposite of the West. Thus, the imaginary view of the binary social relations between the Western (colonizer) and the non-Western (colonized) people, creates distance and separation between *Us* and *Them*, which ultimately creates a clinical and cynical view between the Western world and the Eastern world.

The difference between East and West in binary opposition places East and West in ontological and epistemological terms. Ontologically, the East is understood as a distinct entity from the West. In other words, the culture of colonialism and imperialism, the East as its object, has an impact related to the linearization of the history of civilization between East and West, positioning the primitive Eastern world, traditional from its way of life. For epistemological differences, the West is seen as a reference for the modern world around the world, becoming a barometer for the concept of modernization which then gave birth to development theory with the concept of progress, developed countries, developing countries and underdeveloped parts of orientalism (Faruk, 2018: 25).

Such a condition will not be actualized without the process of Western domination over the East. This process led to the theory of orientalism based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony. The East, as an object of colonization, is a world that never ceases from colonialism and its impacts, even though the colonial period is over, but colonial reproduction is still ongoing, this is where the process of hegemony is seen as in the sense of *common sense*. In terms of hegemony, orientalism is understood as an understanding or ideology that continues to be disseminated, instilled, contested, questioned, tested and proven, spoken with certain rhetoric that makes it ultimately acceptable voluntarily, based on agreement (Faruk.

2018:26). With the construction of hegemony, the West can control and control all academic, literary, political, and economic activities Eastern world. *Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far* (Said, 1978: 6). In terms of literature, it should not be based on conceptions produced by dominant powers, meaning that literary works are an independent entity.

The work of art is itself governed by a total law, but a law that appears mysteriously, spontaneously at one with the very self-determining autonomy of each of its component parts. Behind this aesthetic model stands a new kind of bourgeois polity, in which —since the centralized law of feudal absolutism has been overthrown — each individual must somehow give the law to himself, work all by herself, discover the law inscribed in her very affections, sensations, and bodily impulses. What is in question here, in short, is that historically new form of power that Antonio Gramsci has termed "hegemony"—that process whereby the particular subject so introjects a universal law as to consent to its imperatives in the form of consenting to his own deepest being (Seamus Deane, 1990: 32).

The power used to dominate the colonized groups certainly produced a colonial discourse, which in this case, was an actualization of colonial power. In the context of colonial discourse, orientalism can be interpreted in accordance with Foucault's discourse on power and knowledge. According to him, power never stops interrogating, curious, and recording the truth: power symbolizes, makes it professional, gives credit to its search. In other words, we are also the object of truth in the sense that it is the truth that makes laws and produces the real discourse that at least partially decides, transmits, and expands itself in the effects of power (Foucault, 2002: 116-117).

Therefore, the existence of colonial discourse gave rise to hierarchical social partitions. As a discourse, orientalism is an order that regulates what can be said, who can say, in what space and time statements can be made, and so on. (Faruk, 2018: 25). As a result, the procedural complexity of orientalism is a descriptive, applicative and practical action echoed by the colonizers against the Eastern world.

On the other hand, the normalization of the colonial form also regulates the Eastern paradigm and in such conditions the East reproduces the discourse, this is where the paradoxical attitude of the Eastern hemisphere emerges. According to Said, there are four types of power relations that live in the discourse of orientalism; *political power* (the establishment of colonialism and imperialism), *intellectual power* (educating the East through science, linguistics, and other knowledge), *cultural power* (colonization of tastes, texts, and values, for example, the East has a category of colonial aesthetics, which can easily be found in India, Egypt and other countries), *moral power* (what is good and bad done by the East). (He said,

2. Methodology

The research method used is a descriptive qualitative method. To answer the above problem, the short story "*Finjanu-Shay*" by Najib Mahfouz is the main source of this research. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are various writings in the form of articles, essays, papers, or writings that discuss Arab society. The data collection technique is carried out by collecting texts in short stories related to the discourse of western orientalism, which are then collected, grouped, and validated with data from secondary sources. The data analysis method was carried out, *first*, through textual analysis of the texts contained in the short story "*Finjanu-Shay*", then *second*, the determination of the discourse of orientalism was carried out through the identification of colonialism in Egypt. The theory used in this paper is the postcolonial theory introduced by Edward Said in his book entitled Orientalism. According to Said (1978:120), orientalism is a science with the aim of "dominating" nations outside the West.

3. Results and Discussion

Orientalist Discourse in the Short Story "*Finjanu Shay*"

Naguib Mahfouz's short story "*Finjanu-Shay*" was published in Egypt in 2017, this short story presents a narrative that depicts the complexity of human characters through the interaction between characters enjoying a cup of tea in the morning and mysterious figures who appear from behind the curtain. These figures not only disturb the man's calmness, but also give rise to arguments and perspectives that reframe the way we view the world, especially regarding the East and the West. Mahfouz not only portrays individual characters with specific traits or roles, but also conveys a deeper message related to the social and cultural identities of East and West.

Through this short story, Mahfouz introduces the figures who appear with their conflicting narratives, trying to influence the thinking of the main character. Behind the curtain, we can see a dialogue that illustrates the tension between two worlds: the dominant West and the marginalized East. The existence of these figures not only serves as

characters in the story, but also as a representation of the dynamics of power relations and larger discourse. This is where the relevance of orientalist discourse is seen. In Edward Said's thought, the orientalist discourse describes how the West, in this case Europe, considers itself superior and serves as the center of civilization, while the East is seen as "other", primitive, and in need of improvement (Said, 1978). In Mahfouz's short stories, this narrative that emerges from behind the curtain shows how the West seeks to define, control, and regulate what is considered "normal" or "good". This tension illustrates how the East has always been seen through the lens of Western superiority that wants to influence, even change, the way of life and the way of thinking of Eastern society. This can be seen in the following short story narration:

The curtain moved for the fourth time and a middle-aged woman, holding six newborns in her arms, stood in the middle of the room and said: I am a woman from Cuba, who gave birth to six twins, and all of them are healthy!

The actress said, "Hey, then fix the life of the lights."

– But I am a miracle of life!

The American soldier said: We are in an age of miracles of science and industry, not life, and such a so-called miracle is destined to push the world into the fangs of total famine

Gordyn, for the fourth time, moved. From behind the curtain came a middle-aged woman with six babies in her arms. He stood in the middle of the room and said,

"I am a Cuban woman. I gave birth to six babies at once and they were all in good health."

"You have to improve your life for the future," the actress said

"I am a miracle of the miracle of life"

The American Army said,

"We all live in the miracle of knowledge and technology not mukjizat life. The miracle you imagined is a miracle Default as well as eliminating the hunger that gripping". (Scott, 2001-118)

The quotes in this short story create a tension that illustrates how the West, with all its claims of superiority, views the East as something that needs to be changed and controlled. The Cuban woman, who showed up with six babies in her arms and claimed to be a "miracle of life," described an exotic image of the East that the West often sees as irrational, strange or even primitive. However, the response of female artists and American soldiers who considered these "miracles" irrelevant demonstrates a Western view that emphasizes rationality, science, and technological advancement. The American army, by

saying that "we live in an age of miracles of science and technology, not miracles of life," shows the view that the West controls not only the physical, but also the way of thinking and values that are considered more advanced.

In colonial discourse, this suggests that the West not only dominates the region but also dictates what is considered to be the truth, putting aside views that do not conform to the more scientific and modern Western value system. In other words, this short story shows how the dominance of the West in colonial ways of thinking and discourse persisted, even after physical colonialism ended. Another form of colonial discourse contained in the narrative of this short story can be seen in the following excerpt:

"The curtain moved nervously and two men came out behind it, who rushed into the center of the room, each holding the other's head and trying his best to lower it down. The first of them shouted: Mark is above all. The other shouted: "The franc is second to none.

– The mark is a symbol of excellence

!franc is the symbol of humanityThe

"Gordyn was moving hard, from behind him came two men who were struggling, pushing each other. One man presses the other man's head. He tried hard to knock down his opponent. Others shouted,

"Germany above all..."

Others shouted,

"France is no less great."

"Germany is the parameter of civilization" "France is the parameter "Humanity" (Rising, 2001-120)

From the quote from the short story above, the depiction of Germany as a "parameter of civilization," shows the position that the country is considered a benchmark of progress and modernity in the Western view. As Said stated in *orientalism*, that in Western discourse, the East has always been positioned as the antithesis of Western civilization, which is considered more advanced and superior. In this case, the statements that "Germany is above all else", and "Germany is the parameter of civilization" are implicit derogatory and create a very sharp separation between East and West that portrays the position of the East as lagging behind by denying its social life and the West as superior. The portrayal of Germany as a superior civilization indirectly affirms the colonial discourse that assumes that only through the adoption of Western values can the East become more advanced. This view shows how

mental colonialism can survive in the mindset of postcolonial societies, even though physical colonization has ended. Indirectly, the narrative in this short story reveals the influence of colonial discourse on Egyptian authors and society.

Meanwhile, when France is referred to as a "humanitarian parameter," the narrative becomes increasingly complex. On the one hand, France is indeed widely known for its Revolution which gave birth to ideas such as *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, this motto first appeared in Maximilien Robespierre's speech on December 5, 1790 which carried the values of freedom, equality and fraternity. But on the other hand, France was also a colonial power that had instilled its influence in Egypt. So a paradox arises: how can a country that carries human values also become a perpetrator of colonialism? This statement about France indirectly reveals the double face of Western humanism. On the one hand it appears to be progressive, but on the other hand it was born within the framework of bourgeois capitalism which precisely underpins colonialism. The humanist values offered became a kind of ideological wrapper that disguises cultural dominance. Egypt, as a former colony, not only inherited a political and economic system, but also formed its way of looking at modernity and humanity through a colonial lens.

If we trace back to the arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt in 1798, it is clear that what he brought was not just military power. More than that, he also brought a more subtle project of dominance—namely the influence on the way people think. One of the most prominent examples of this heritage is the entry of printing technology into Egypt. At first glance, this seems like a step forward in the world of knowledge. However, if analyzed more critically, printing was actually part of the colonial strategy to regulate and control the production of knowledge. In the context of colonialism, knowledge is not something that is value-free. It is produced and directed to serve the interests of power. France, as a representation of the West, introduced printing technology as a tool to spread colonial discourse that slowly shaped the way of thinking of Egyptian society. Through printed texts, the West frames the East not as an equal partner, but as an object to be directed, explained, and even corrected. In this case, printing becomes a subtle, yet highly effective means of colonization (Said, 2016).

Furthermore, the entry of printing also brought a form of modernity that was packaged in Western values. Although it seems positive because it opens access to science and literature, this modernity is not the result of local dynamics, but the import of colonial

power. So it's no wonder that many of the values that appear along with this technology feel foreign, even forceful. This is how colonialism works in silence—it no longer rules by force, but through knowledge, culture, and technology (Timothy, 1991) At this point, the question arises: does progress that comes from outside always mean liberation? Or is it a new way to subjugate the colonized nation?

It is common knowledge that orientalism not only thrives in academic spaces, but also serves as a means of production of meaning that infiltrates various aspects of social and cultural life. Orientalism, as Edward Said explained, is a Western epistemological project to understand, control, and define the East from a position of power (Said, 2016). In this phase, colonialism is not only at the stage of physical domination, but also a discursive operation that allows the West to distribute the discourse of identity, values, and truth to the Eastern world.

The various discourse offers negotiated by the West through colonization are a form of discourse distribution to control all identities inherent with the East. That is, when the West came to power as a colonial power, it not only controlled the colonized territories, but also established itself as the center of meaning or determinant of what was considered rational, meaningful, and even "humane". Through various colonial instruments, including educational systems, language, media, and technology such as printing, Eastern societies were positioned as parties who had to be "taught", "guided", or even "saved". Therefore, this is not just material domination, but the cultivation of a certain way of thinking that makes power relations seem more natural.

In such conditions, all aspects of the life of the Eastern people ranging from culture, religion, to social systems were regulated and rearranged to be in harmony with colonial logic. This process proceeds not by overt coercion, but by normalization: something that is formed and conditioned to appear as "common sense". This is where we see how colonialism not only conquered physically, but also shaped the minds and perceptions of colonized societies. If we go back to the beginning, this kind of dominance model is already seen in the early quotes in this article, namely:

The American soldier said, "We are in an age of miracles of science and" industry, not life, and such a so-called miracle is destined to push the ".world into the fangs of total famine

The American Army said,
"We all live in the miracle of knowledge and technology not mukjizat life. The miracle you imagined is a miracle Default as well as eliminating the hunger that gripping". (Scott, 2001)

From the quote from the short story above, a paradox emerges between the author's perspective and the American view. Why did the author choose American soldiers to make this argument? The presence of American soldiers who are able to make such statements creates a distance between the powerful and the controlled. This shows that the author, either consciously or unconsciously, has given legitimacy to the American state as a superpower. The configuration of the system of ownership inherent in America has been formed in the thought of Egyptian authors, who defined this social reality in a complex way, involving a process of differentiation that was considered "normal".

This process then became the forerunner of Antonio Gramsci's concept called Hegemony. Hegemony refers to the way in which one class or social group dominates another, not through physical violence or direct coercion, but through the influence of culture, ideology, and values that shape people's consciousness and behavior. (Osanloo, 2023). In this case, the American state, through the narrative represented by the army, plays a dominant role in shaping social consciousness and accepted norms as truth, which ultimately strengthens their position as rulers.

This situation, on the one hand, reflects colonial efforts to shape colonized societies into disciplinary societies, with the human body as the object of the colonial paradigm. As Said points out, in the culture of imperialism, there is a reciprocal relationship between the social consciousness of the individual, the world, and the text where social existence and text play a role in determining each other. Said mentioned that there is a complex relationship between written artifacts, such as European realist novels, and the practice of imperialism applied in regions far from the center of power (William, 2004: 88).

In the further narrative of the short story, it tells the story of two investors, Americans and Russians who come out from behind the curtain. They exchanged arguments while congratulating each other on the success of their respective countries. In the middle of the conversation between the two investors, the man on the bed with a cup of tea also joined in the conversation, his conversation seemed to justify the conversation. This can be seen in the following text excerpts:

The man in the bed said, "You are a pink dream in a tar world!"
– Thank you, comrade.
– Thank you, customer.
The bedman said, "Thanks to science, miracles occur."
The Russian said: Thanks to the communist regime.
The American said, "It is thanks to the capitalist system."
".The bedman said, "You have risen to the heavens of God Almighty

The man on the bed said,
"Kalilan dreamed of roses in this steel world!"
"Thank you Friend"
"Thank you to the visitors"
The man on the bed said,
"With the grace of knowledge, miracles can be realized"
"Also by the grace of socialism," the Russian added
"don't forget, also with the grace of capitalism," the American
leads"
The man on the bed said
"You have truly soared to the sky of Allah 'azzawajalla"

The text excerpt above presents a debate between various ideological systems, namely; capitalism, communism, and "science" as the forms of magic that underlie change. The man in bed as the main character who conveys the view of science as a source of miracle can be seen as an allegory of how mental colonialism works, where these various power systems seek to dominate and control the way society thinks. This reminds us of Gramsci's view of hegemony, which shows how dominant ideologies (in this case capitalism, communism, and science) influence people's perception of their world, creating what is considered "normal" or "right."

The debate that has arisen between the Americans who support capitalism, the Russians who worship communism, and the "science" that has become the universal narrative shows the attempt to dominate discourse and shape society through the ideology they embrace. In this narrative, the "Man on the Bed" acts as a mediator or even a reminder that all these ideologies, although different, ultimately aim to elevate themselves as holders of absolute truths that society must follow. This separation shows how the tensions between the West (both American and Russian) and the East are often framed in a narrative that competes with each other to claim itself as the pinnacle of civilization, both in terms of capitalism, communism, and science.

Here, we can see how in the colonial context, each of these ideologies served as a tool to dominate. Every ideology has a claim to universal truth that leads to a "miracle" that can only be achieved through acceptance of the system they adhere. Thus, this text continues the previous discussion of how the various major ideologies, coming from the West, not only sought to change the social and political structure of Eastern countries, but also changed their way of thinking and the way they viewed the world.

The colonization carried out by the West has essentially caused social and cultural chaos in the Eastern world. As a result, the original existence of the East seems to have disappeared, replaced by the "East of the West" or the "East of the West" which is the main goal of orientalism. In this case, the success of the power of orientalist discourse not only dominates the physical domain, but also succeeds in hegemonizing the minds and perceptions of the Eastern people. This is illustrated in the excerpt of the text above, namely through the author's narrative that unravels the contrast between the Western and Eastern worlds. The metaphors used, such as "You have indeed soared to the sky of Allah Azzawajalla", describe how the West, with all its civilizational and technological advances, is considered to have a higher degree than the East.

The mention of Russia and America in *Finjanu-Shay*'s short story is clearly not just a coincidental narrative choice. These two countries, as representatives of the two great ideological poles, namely socialism and capitalism, are described as forces that both have global ambitions. Both carry an agenda of expansion and domination, which in the context of this short story, touches the level of daily life of the Eastern people. This means that all forms of activities, values, and even the perspective of Eastern society cannot be completely separated from the influence of the global ideology they bring. This is the subtle face of ideological domination: when hegemony works not through weapons, but through discourse that is considered "natural" and "reasonable."

In this context, the concept of *cultural hegemony* put forward by Antonio Gramsci becomes very relevant. He explained that power does not always manifest itself in the form of physical violence, but is often present in the form of cultural consensus in which the dominated society actually reproduces the dominant values that conquer them. Edward Said raised this phenomenon more specifically in the framework of *orientalism*. According to

Said, cultural hegemony is the face of modern colonialism that no longer rules with weapons and troops, but with representations, discourses, and knowledge systems that systematically regulate how the East should be seen and explained (Said, 1978: 184).

Said argues that the legacy of this model of orientalism will continue to live on even in the postcolonial world. It is secularized, disciplined, and institutionalized through various cultural and academic mechanisms that seem neutral, when in fact they are directing. This form of domination is therefore even more dangerous: it takes root in the mind, becomes part of "common sense," and ultimately affects the way of life of society structurally. Thus, it can be said that Najib Mahfouz's *Finjanu-Shay* short story becomes a kind of allegory of the never-ending ideological battle, in which the East is constantly a space for penetration and redesign by various forms of global power.

4. Conclusion

The short story *Finjanu-Shay* by Najib Mahfuz reveals how the legacy of Western colonialism lives on through the orientalist discourse that shapes the way of thinking of Eastern society. Referring to Edward Said's theory, the study found that Western ideologies such as capitalism, and socialism are shown as the standard of civilization and humanity, while the East is positioned as a backward and backward party. This discourse functions subtly through a process of cultural hegemony, in which Western values are internalized in Eastern social and cultural life, so that Western influence is accepted as "normal" and undeniable. In addition, this short story features ideological symbolism through characters that depict the world's great powers such as America, Russia, and European countries that control the world narrative. Through metaphors and symbolism, Mahfuz criticizes how the East is constantly measured by the West's benchmarks. The short story also presents a contemporary portrait of the continuity of orientalism, in which colonial power is no longer armed, but discourse and cultured, permeating every aspect of the life of the colonized society. The results of the analysis show that orientalism is not just a legacy of the past, but a construction that continues to strengthen its position in the social and cultural structure of the world, including the Eastern world as postcolonial.

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Reserved, Najib Mahfuzh. Shay's cup. Egypt. Connected
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