

# Hybrid Identity as a Sign of Social Status in Gadis Pantai Novel by Pramoedya Ananta Toer

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**Abstract:** *This research analyzes the postcolonial discourse on hybridity in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel, Gadis Pantai. The novel tells the life of Gadis Pantai figure who came from a coastal fisherman community married to a priyayi. The purpose of this study was to find the form of hybridity that occurs in the interaction between the Gadis Pantai and the priyayi life. Using postcolonial approach and descriptive analysis method found three aspects of hybridity in the novel 1) style of dress, property and food, 2) language, and 3) attitude and mindset.*

**Keyword:** Postcolonial, Hybridity, Novel, Gadis Pantai

## 1. Introduction

Colonizing that goes on for 3.5 centuries made Indonesia much influenced by the identity of the colonizer. The social and cultural environment is an element that is much influenced by people who have been colonized. Literature as a form of culture itself is certainly also affected. Teeuw argues that literary works was not born from cultural emptiness. Literary works which born within a certain time will record events that are close to the time of their creation. Therefore the work created close to the time of colonialism and post-colonialism often raises the story of colonialization or the story of the impact of colonialization that is still felt by the people, even though the colonialization is over.

*Gadis Pantai* novel by Pramoedya Ananta Toer is one of the literary works that raises the picture of society post-colonialism which is still affected by the colonizing itself. Postcolonial in terms does not mean Post-Independence (post / after independence) or after colonialism (after the colonial era), because postcolonial is not the end of the colonialization process. Postcolonial is a discourse of conflict caused by colonialism (Appiah in Ashcroft, 1995: 117). Postcolonial theory is a criticism of decolonization nationalism, both came from the consideration of the colonial body, objects of epistemological and physical violence and subject to racialization and objectivity as human subjects that have not been emancipated (Carie, 2009: 74). In this case, postcolonialism is a criticism of ideology (ideas) of colonialism; criticizing the forms of totalization, predominate and forms of cultural leadership (hegemony), it can be said that postcolonialism is resistance against new form imperialism. The new form of imperialism is characterized by the imitation of Western cultural models and dominant consumption of Western products. Moreover by follower of Marx, the ongoing influence of the West and allocated in a flexible combination of economic, political, military and ideological fields (but more likely to be of economic interest) is still called colonialism, namely new colonialism, while the process is called new imperialism (Williams 1994:3).

The old colonizing had an impact on the social and cultural order of the people, giving rise to new norm that was brought by the colonizer. It is more dominant on the lives of

the priyajis as people who have a closer relationship in terms of interaction with the colonizer, rather than the relationship between colonists and the people. So the priyayi pribumi were more affected and new norm emerged as a result of the interaction between priyayi indigenous and colonialists. The people are also indirectly affected by the new values that arise as a result of the interaction between the people and the priyayi pribumi. This phenomenon is present in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai* novel. It tells about a coastal girl from the village of Nelayang who was married to a Bendoro. The difference in social status between the Gadis Pantai and Bendoro families made Gadis Pantai do adaptation to family of Bendoro. This caused her to have a new identity or hybrid identity as a priyayi's wife.

According to Bhaba, the concept of hybridity is used to describe the joining of two forms that give rise to certain traits of each form, and at the same time negate certain traits possessed by both (in Faruk, 2007:6). The terminology of the third world and the first world is also the two key words of Bhabha's theory. The postcolonial situation presents multiple or hybrid identities and there are stages in hybridity, such as: (a) adopt, because of ambitions to adopt forms as a foothold, (b) adapt, with the aim of adapting to the colonies. (c) adept, because the character is a colonial assumption that has proficiency (Barry, 2010:227). Hall emphasized that identity is not something rigid with fixed characteristics that do not change from time to time. Identity is something that is constantly formed in a historical and cultural framework, something that is positioned at a place and time, in accordance with the context. Searching for one's identity is always related to the problem of how the person is trying to place himself (positioning) in a society that has placed himself in another scope (being positioned) (1993:227). This is based on the idea of superiority which projects that excellence as a universal discourse. The purpose stated in examining (western) universalism, there are no two conflicting positions but one, singular here (Fanon, 1967:xviii).

Cultural relations, in this case colonizer and colony are in interdependence and construction of mutual subjectivity. According to Bhaba, culture and cultural systems are formed in the third space. Interdependence takes a face in hybridity. Identity hybridity, arises in culture, language, race and so

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on. Hybridity is a meeting of two or more cultures which then appear to a new culture, but which is not abandoned. Hybridity refers to the creation of new transbudgets in the meeting area that are produced through the process of colonialization (Ashcroft, 1998:55). In hybridity, usually the old identity does not just disappear, even though the new cultural identity will strongly influence the old identity. This is where what happened to what Bhaba referred to as identity ambiguity brought someone in the position of "in-between" aka "in the middle" (Rutherford, 1990:211). Bhaba added that postcolonial not only creates culture or practices of hybridization, but also creates new forms of resistance and negotiation for a group of people in social and political relations (Bhaba, 1994:113-114), or in other words this hybridization process will be examined through two important areas of social and cultural practice (Raffin, 2008:330).

The description of the impact of colonialization appears in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai* novel. The meeting between two different values finally resulted in a new identity for some of the characters. To be clearer about the hybrid identity that appears, it will be presented in the discussion.

This study uses content analysis using a qualitative approach. Qualitative content analysis methods are used to understand the hybrid identity that occurs in characters. Postcolonial theory is used to describe the emerging hibritas. The data instruments used in this study were the researchers themselves with the help of work tables based on the research subfocus, namely forms of hybridity in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Gadis Pantai* novel.

## 2. Research Methods

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach. The data sources were examined in the form of *Gadis Pantai* novels by Pramoedya Ananta Toer published by Lentera Dipantara in 2003. According to Ratna (2004:46) qualitative research was carried out solely to elaborate facts about an image with what is or is natural in the form of description, namely by written or oral words from the subject under study. The data in this study are written documents in the form of words, sentences, and paragraphs in the *Gadis Pantainovel* that shows mimicry.

The data collection techniques used in this study are documentation techniques. Documentation techniques are data search techniques regarding things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, minutes of meetings, briefs, agendas, and so on (Arikunto, 2013:274). Data collection is carried out by: (a) carefully reading repeatedly, (b) selecting data, and (c) coding for each finding. The data analysis technique of this study consisted of three activity lines, as expressed by Miles and Huberman (1992:16), namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

## 3. Research Results and Discussion

### 1) Dress Style, Property and Food

Gadis Pantai Figure in the novel is a fisherman's child. In the life of the fishing village improving social status is a business desired by the family of Gadis Pantai. The efforts carried out by the parents of female puppets through methods that are considered practical, namely by imitating the way of life of nobles and becoming part of them in the form of marriage. As in the following quote.

Ia dibawa ke kota. Tubuhnya dibalut kain dan kebaya yang tak pernah diimpikannya bakal punya. Selembur kalung emas tipis sekarang menghias lehernya dan berbentuk medalion jantung dari emas, membuat kalung itu manis tertarik ke bawah. Kemari ia telah dinikahkan. Dinikahkan dengan sebilah keris. Detik itu ia tahu: kini ia bukan anak bapakmu lagi. Ia bukan anak emaknya lagi. (*Gadis Pantai*, hal. 12)

The quotation shows that the double identities built by the Gadis Pantai family by imitating priyayi clothing and jewelry are a form of consciously created hybrid identity. Created consciously because it was created and planned by the parents of the Gadis Pantai. His parents had prepared so that the Gadis Pantai could be worthy of being side by side with a Bendoro. He was married to an unusual procession, namely with a dry form as a symbol of the power possessed by Bendoro and he realized that marriage would bring him into a new life, far from his parents.

Gadis Pantai actually never dreamed of changing her social status, let alone being a wife of Bendoro. But the life experience of Gadis Pantai's parents do not want to see their children have the same fate, if he still lives in the fishing village. The description that this desire is not the will of the Gadis Pantai is illustrated in the following quote.

“Ssst. Jangan menangis. Mulai hari inikau tinggal di gedung besar, nak. Tidak lagi di gubuk. Kau tak lagi buang air di pantai. Kau tak lagi menjahit layar dan jala, tap sutera, nak. Ssst, ssst. Jangan nangis.” (*Gadis Pantai*, hal. 12)

...  
“Sst. Jangan nangis, nak. Hari ini kau jadi istri orang kaya.” (*Gadis Pantai*, hal. 13)

...  
“Aku dan bapakmu banting tulang biar kau rasakan pakai kain, pakai kebaya, kalung, anting seindah itu. Dan gelang ular itu...” sekarang emaknya terhenti bicara, menahan sedan. (*Gadis Pantai*, hal. 13)

The quote shows that Gadis Pantai was not happy with the decision of her parents to marry herself to a Bendoro, because she herself had never complained about her parents' lives. But different things are shown by their parents. He was happy that his son had become the wife of a Bendoro and automatically his parents were besan from a prijaji. In the view of the fishing village community, being a person, means that he has become part of the family. So automatically there is pride in parents. Gadis Pantai have become part of a Bendoro family, even though in reality the efforts of parents of Gadis Pantai seem to impose their

ability to buy clothes and accessories used by priyajis to create an equal feeling.

The use of accessories in everyday life also seems to be a symbol of its peak social status. Gadis Pantai usually use a regular comb to tidy up their hair. But now he uses a silver-framed turtle comb. As in the following quote.

Gadis Pantai sudah tak peduli pada keaneh sebutan itu. Tangannya segera meraih sisir penyir berbingkai perak. (Gadis Pantai, hal. 27)

The quotation shows that in the life of a priyayi, the items used are symbols of the owner's social status. Then the comb used is not solely derived from its function but also the aesthetic factors of the item.

## 2) Language

The life of a priyayi is different from that of most people. Likewise in language. The choice of the vocabulary of the pruyayi group is considered more reflective of a civilized person. As in the following quote.

“Di mana emaknya?” bapak bertanya.  
“Ssst. Sst. Dia tak ber-emak, anak priyayi ber-ibu.”  
“Di mana ibunya?” bapak mendesak.  
“Pulang ke kampung.”  
“Kapan kembali lagi ke mari?” bapak mendesak terus.  
“Takkan balik lagi. Dia diceraikan.” (Gadis Pantai, hal. 18)

The quotation shows that the choice of words in a social environment determines how social the person has. The use of the word "mother" is identified with the use of most people, while the use of the word "mother" is used by a handful of people namely priyayi.

The Priyayi group also wants the equality of social status with social status on it. In this case the colonizer. Because the colonial hegemony carried out by the Dutch was so long and extensive, the use of Dutch became a matter of prestige. As in the following quote.

“Sekecil itu sudah bisa bicara bahasa Belanda. Satu kata pun kita tak paham. Anakmu nanti,” kepala kampung menghadapkan mukanya kepada Gadis Pantai, “Juga bakal diajar seperti itu.” Gadis Pantai kecut, wajahnya meraih tangan emak dan menggenggamnya erat-erat. (Gadis Pantai, hal. 21)

The quotation shows that the priyayi in relation to mimic to be recognized by the social status above by using the same language as the language of the invaders in this case the Dutch.

## 3) Attitude and Mindset

Attitudes and mindsets are one of the factors that are influenced by the hybridity process that occurs in the figure of Gadis Pantai. The change in attitude experienced by Gadis Pantai is a change in the attitude of others towards him. As in the following quote.

Gadis Pantai berdiri dari kursi. Bujang itu membungkuk padanya, begitu rendah. Mengapa ia membungkuk? Sebentar tadi ia masih sesamanya. Mengapa ia begitu merendahkan dirinya sekarang? Gadis Pantai jadi bimbang, takut, curiga. Apakah semua ini? (Gadis Pantai, hal. 26)

The quotation shows the change in the attitude of others towards Gadis Pantai because previously Bujang or the servant who could help in the Bendoro neighborhood did not yet know that Gadis Pantai was a new term for Bendoro. But after Bujang knew that what he was facing was a wife of Bendoro, the Bujang changed his attitude to be more polite.

Changes in attitude must also be studied by the Gadis Pantai as a wife of Bendoro. As in the following quote.

“Ceh,ceh,ceh. Itu tak layak bagi wanita utama, Mas Nganten. Wanita utama cukup menggerakkan jari dan semua akan terjadi.” (Gadis Pantai, hal. 28)

The quote shows that a primary woman should maintain honor by not working or by ordering. This makes the difference between social status in society.

Changes in the lifestyle of Gadis Pantai initially did not make him comfortable. Because he has always lived in a fishing village since he was a child. As in the following quote.

Bau-bauan harum yang membumbung dari tubuhnya membuat ia mula-mula agak pening. Ia merasa asing. Badannya tak pernah seharum itu. Itu bukan bau badannya. Dan pakaian terlalu ringan dan halus itu masih juga memberinya perasaan ia masih telanjang bulat. Tapi selop rumput memang menyenangkan tungkainya. (Gadis Pantai, hal. 29)

The quote shows that there are things that Gadis Pantai can not directly accept, such as her clothes that make her feel still naked and the fragrances she doesn't normally smell are now attached to her body. But the grass slippers that are worn make him immediately feel comfortable.

## 4. Conclusion

*Gadis Pantai* novel by Paramoedya Ananta Toer is a novel that describes the conditions of the paca-colonialism community. The description is illustrated in the interaction of two people who have different social statuses. The interactions that occur between the fishing community and the environment of the priyayi life give rise to a new identity for the character of Gadis Pantai. As a society with lower social status, Gadis Pantai has a hybrid identity that comes from her husband who is a priyayi. There are several aspects that stand out as aspects of hybridity. These aspects are divided into 1) dress style, property and food, 2) language, and 3) attitude and mindset. All three are forms of hybridity from the results of interactions that occur between social statuses.

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