



The Representation of Mimicry in the Short Story *Al-Maliku an-Najar* by Kamel Kaylani: A Postcolonial Study

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Purpose

*This article aims to reveal how mimicry, as a strategy of imitating colonial culture, is reflected in the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* by Kamel Kaylani, particularly in four main aspects: knowledge, livelihood, worldview, and lifestyle.*

Method

*This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection conducted through literature review and text analysis. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The corpus of this study is the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* by Kamel Kaylani, based on the edition published by the Hindawi Foundation in 2013. This article adopts one of the postcolonial concepts introduced by Homi K. Bhabha, namely mimicry.*

Results/Findings

The findings of this study indicate that in the aspect of knowledge, the main character, Batrus, imitates Western scientific methods and ways of thinking to acquire technical skills in shipbuilding. In terms of livelihood, Batrus disguises himself as an ordinary worker and adopts the work ethic typical of the working class. Regarding worldview, a dilemma emerges between colonial modernity and indigenous cultural identity. Meanwhile, in terms of lifestyle, Batrus adapts to the habits of the working class as a form of social adaptation.

Conclusion

*Mimicry in *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* is not merely passive imitation but a complex adaptation strategy that creates space for new identities. While it reflects colonial dominance, mimicry also provides an opportunity for the colonized subject to engage in subtle cultural resistance.*

Keywords

*mimicry, postcolonial, kamel Kaylani, *Al-Maliku an-Najjār**

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Abstrak

Tujuan

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana mimikri sebagai strategi peniruan budaya kolonial tercermin dalam cerpen *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* karya Kamel Kaylani, khususnya pada empat aspek utama: ilmu pengetahuan, mata pencaharian hidup, cara pandang, dan gaya hidup.

Metode

Artikel ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi pustaka dan analisis teks. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode Miles dan Huberman, yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Korpus artikel ini berupa cerpen *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* karya Kamel Kaylani edisi yang diterbitkan oleh Yayasan Hindawi pada tahun 2013. Artikel ini menggunakan salah satu konsep teori poskolonial milik Homi K. Bhaba yakni Mimikri.

Hasil/Temuan

Hasil artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam aspek ilmu pengetahuan, tokoh utama, Batrus, meniru metode pembelajaran dan pola pikir ilmiah Barat untuk memperoleh keterampilan teknis dalam pembuatan kapal. Dalam aspek mata pencaharian, Batrus menyamar sebagai pekerja biasa dan mengadopsi nilai-nilai kerja keras khas kelas pekerja. Pada aspek cara pandang, ditemukan dilema antara nilai-nilai modernitas kolonial dan identitas budaya asli. Sementara itu, dalam aspek gaya hidup, Batrus menyesuaikan diri dengan kebiasaan hidup kelas pekerja sebagai bentuk adaptasi sosial.

Kesimpulan

Mimikri dalam cerpen *Al-Maliku an-Najjār* tidak sekadar peniruan pasif, tetapi merupakan strategi adaptasi yang kompleks, yang menciptakan ruang bagi identitas baru. Meskipun mencerminkan dominasi kolonial, mimikri juga membuka peluang bagi subjek terjajah untuk melakukan resistensi budaya secara halus.

Kata kunci

mimikri, poskolonial, Kamel Kaylani, *Al-Maliku an-Najjār*.

المخلص

الهدف

يهدف هذا المقال إلى الكشف عن كيفية تجلّي المحاكاة كاستراتيجية لتقليد الثقافة الاستعمارية في القصة القصيرة الملك النجار لكامل كيلاني، وذلك من خلال أربعة جوانب رئيسية: المعرفة، وسبل العيش، وطريقة التفكير، وأسلوب الحياة.

الطريقة

تعتمد هذه الدراسة على منهج وصفي نوعي، مع جمع البيانات من خلال مراجعة الأدبيات وتحليل النصوص. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام منهج مايلز وهوبرمان، الذي يشمل تقليص البيانات، وعرضها، واستخلاص الاستنتاجات. تستند عينة الدراسة إلى القصة القصيرة الملك النجار لكامل كيلاني، وفقاً للطبعة التي نشرتها مؤسسة هنداي عام 2013. يستند هذا المقال إلى أحد مفاهيم النظرية ما بعد الاستعمارية التي طرحها هومي ك. بابا، وهي المحاكاة.

النتائج

تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة أنه في جانب المعرفة، يقف بطرس، بطل القصة، الأساليب العلمية الغربية وطريقة التفكير للحصول على المهارات التقنية في صناعة السفن. أما في جانب سبل العيش، فيتخفّى بطرس في دور عامل عادي ويتبنى قيم العمل الجاد التي تميز الطبقة العاملة. وفي جانب طريقة التفكير، يبرز التوتر بين الحداثة الاستعمارية والهوية الثقافية الأصلية. بينما في جانب أسلوب الحياة، يتكيف بطرس مع عادات الطبقة العاملة كوسيلة للتكيف الاجتماعي.

الخلاصة

المحاكاة في الملك النجار ليست مجرد تقليد سلبي، بل هي استراتيجية تكيف معقدة تخلق مساحة لهويات جديدة. وعلى الرغم من أنها تعكس الهيمنة الاستعمارية، فإنها تفتح أيضاً المجال أمام الخاضعين للاستعمار لممارسة مقاومة ثقافية خفية.

الكلمات الرئيسية

المحاكاة، ما بعد الاستعمار، كامل كيلاني، الملك النجار

INTRODUCTION

Literary works serve as a reflection of culture, capable of mirroring the social and cultural conditions of each era (Lailiyah, Sasongko, & Pradana, 2024). In literature, mimicry, as a concept within postcolonial theory, is a complex strategy that illustrates the act of imitating the colonizer's culture by the colonized society. However, this imitation is often paradoxical, as it simultaneously involves both replication and resistance (Munaris, Hilal, & Anantama, 2023). The concept of mimicry refers to the adoption or imitation of a form or behavioral pattern from another group or culture (Foulcher, 2006).

As an intriguing example in Arabic literature, the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār* presents a complex portrayal of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized through characterization, dialogue, and symbolism. Despite its seemingly simple narrative, the story contains representations of mimicry that reflect how the colonized society responds to colonial domination in various aspects of life. These representations can be identified in four main aspects: knowledge, livelihood, worldview, and lifestyle, illustrating the dynamics of resistance and cultural adaptation to colonial influence.

Regarding the aspect of knowledge, the story illustrates how the colonized society utilizes the education and technology introduced by the colonizers as a means of empowerment and a way to improve their standard of living. Although this process involves elements of adaptation, it often becomes a form of resistance to achieve intellectual independence. On the other hand, the aspect of livelihood highlights the economic realities faced by the colonized society, including how they are forced to adjust to the labor system and economic structures imposed by the colonizers.

Furthermore, in terms of worldview, the story emphasizes the divided perspectives between the colonizer's culture and local traditions. The protagonist, Batrus, is influenced by modern ideas introduced by the colonizers, such as the importance of progress and efficiency. However, at the same time, he holds firmly to the traditional values inherited from his ancestors. For instance, although he admires the colonial work methods, he remains critical of the social injustices that arise due to colonization. This reflects the dilemma faced by the colonized society, torn between embracing change and preserving their cultural identity.

Lastly, in the aspect of lifestyle, *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani depicts the protagonist's efforts to adapt to foreign cultural influences while maintaining his traditional identity. As a carpenter (*an-najjār*), he attempts to adopt the dress, speech, and social behaviors of the upper social class, which has been influenced by colonial culture. This journal article will analyze the representation of mimicry in *Al-Maliku an-Najār*, particularly in the aspects of knowledge, livelihood, worldview, and lifestyle. This study is expected to contribute new insights into understanding the complexities of cultural identity and resistance strategies in the postcolonial context while also enriching the discourse on Arabic literary studies.

Although postcolonial studies in Arabic literature have developed, there is still a research gap regarding the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani. Based on the author's review, previous research (Masrur, 2023) has primarily focused on the study of symbolic interaction from Herbert Blumer's perspective, highlighting three main principles: first, humans act toward things based on their meanings; second, meaning arises from social interaction between individuals; and third, meaning is modified through an interpretive process.

While many previous studies have applied postcolonial theory from the perspective of mimicry, none have examined *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani as the primary object of research. For instance, (Fitriani & Hariyono, 2023) identified six forms of mimicry in the novel *Critical Eleven* by Ika Natassa, including language, technology, lifestyle, knowledge, livelihood, and ideology. (Hukmi, Juanda, & Usman, 2023) analyzed the novel *Dari Dalam Kubur* by Soe Tjen Marching, identifying mimicry in language, worldview, and lifestyle. (Cholivah & Darni, 2021) examined the novel *Jemini dan Kadu-*

rakan ing Kidul Dringu by Suparto Brata, revealing that language use, lifestyle, and way of thinking reflected colonial influences. Additionally, (Rahul & Qadriani, 2023) explored hybridity and mimicry in the novel *Helen dan Sukanta* by Pidi Baiq, identifying hybridity in language, knowledge systems, technology, religion, and art, while mimicry appeared in language, social organization, tools, livelihood, and religion.

Although many studies have analyzed literary works using postcolonial theory from the perspective of mimicry, particularly through Homi K. Bhabha's approach, no research has specifically examined the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani within this framework. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the representation of mimicry in the short story by highlighting four main aspects: knowledge, livelihood, worldview, and lifestyle.

In terms of knowledge, the research explores how mimicry is represented through the adaptation and resistance of the colonized society toward the educational and intellectual systems introduced by the colonizers. In the aspect of livelihood, it examines how colonial economic structures shape and influence the working lives of the colonized. The worldview aspect analyzes the tension between modern values brought by the colonizers and traditional perspectives rooted in local culture, while the lifestyle aspect investigates how characters negotiate colonial cultural influences in their daily practices while maintaining their own identity. Through this analysis, the study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the application of mimicry in Arabic literature and to fill the existing research gap in postcolonial studies focusing on this short story, thereby enriching the academic discourse on cultural resistance strategies and identity in postcolonial contexts.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design. Bogdan and Taylor explain that qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of words, phrases, or sentences, either spoken or written, derived from the behavior of people who become the subject of observation (Rahmah & Syarifuddin, 2021). This understanding is intended to reveal the implicit meanings within the research object. The data source of this study consists of grammatical units (Safitri, 2014), namely words or sentences found in the paragraphs of each page of the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani.

For data collection, this study adopts library research. The primary source is the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār* by Kamel Kaylani, supported by references from books, articles, and other scholarly works relevant to the research object. The data collection strategy includes the reading method, which involves reading and comprehensively understanding the text with careful and repeated examination, followed by textual analysis (Martono, Rossa, & Azminn, 2016). In addition, the note-taking method is applied, namely recording and identifying data relevant to the research focus.

The data analysis in this study applies an interactive analysis technique, consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. First, data reduction is conducted by reorganizing the data based on specific criteria and selecting aspects relevant to the research focus. Second, the data are presented in descriptive form to facilitate a clearer understanding of the research problems. Third, conclusions are drawn by summarizing and comparing the previously categorized data (Afriyani & Hermoyo, 2017).

Regarding postcolonial studies, this research employs one of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial concepts, namely mimicry. Munaris, Hilal, & Anantama (2023, p. 36) explain that mimicry can be understood as imitation carried out by the colonized (the subaltern) toward the colonizer, such as imitating voices, colors, or forms. However, this imitation is not absolute; rather, it is contradictory in nature, as it does not fully replicate the colonizer's culture but instead reaffirms the identity of the colonized. This aligns with Chaerani, Suoriyanto, & Setyaningsih (2022, p. 362), who argue that mimicry serves as a way for the colonized to assert their position within society. Furthermore, Munaris, Hilal, & Anantama (2023, p. 40) emphasize that mimicry in postcolonial theory seeks to identify various realities reflected in literary texts, particularly those oriented toward the discourse

of colonialism.

Table 1. Indicators of Forms of Mimicry

Forms of Mimicry	Indicators
Knowledge	Text contains imitation of ways of thinking
Livelihood	Text contains imitation of occupations beyond native work
Perspective	Text contains imitation of conceptual viewpoints
Lifestyle	Text contains imitation in daily lifestyle

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The term *postcolonial* cannot be equated with *postcolonial* in the sense of merely referring to the period after colonialism, as postcolonial studies go beyond this by critically examining and deconstructing colonial structures and discourse. One of the key issues faced by colonized societies in confronting colonial discourse is the issue of emancipation through imitation or *mimicry*. This imitation is ambivalent, as it simultaneously constructs an identity of similarity while maintaining differences (Faruk, 2001). The European culture often imitated by the indigenous people encompasses the seven universal cultural elements, as discussed by Kluckhohn in his study of *Universal Categories of Culture* (Paden, 2001). In Kamel Kaylani's short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār*, the representation of mimicry is presented through four main aspects: knowledge, livelihood, worldview, and lifestyle.

First, in the aspect of knowledge, it illustrates how the colonized society utilizes colonial education or technology for empowerment and to achieve intellectual independence. Second, the aspect of livelihood highlights the adaptation of society to the colonial economic system, which is often full of compulsion. Third, the aspect of worldview reveals the cultural dilemma of the colonized society between the modernity introduced by the colonizers and traditional values. The main character, Batrus, for example, admires the efficiency of the colonial work methods but remains critical of the social injustices caused by colonization. Fourth, in the aspect of lifestyle, the story presents the main character's efforts to adjust to colonial culture without abandoning his traditional identity.

Mimicry in Knowledge

Mimicry in knowledge is one way of imitating the ways of thinking or methods used by a society or nation considered to be advanced (Bhaba, Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse, 1984). In Kamel Kaylani's short story *Al-Maliku an-Najār*, various texts reveal the mimicry of Western culture and thought patterns by the main character, Batrus. This imitation does not only occur in technical aspects such as shipbuilding but also in the systematic approach to learning and development. Here are some relevant texts:

1. Imitation of Western Learning Methods

ثم ومن إنجلترا، إلى ذهب ثم فيه، وتكمل السفن بناء فن من تزود حيث عاد (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

“Then he went to England, continued his shipbuilding education, and returned with that expertise.”

This text illustrates how the main character, Batrus, actively imitates a learning system based on hands-on practice, which is a hallmark of technical education in the West. His decision to go to England and work at a shipyard in the Netherlands shows that he not only adopts knowledge theoretically but also practically through direct experience.

In line with the research (Novtarianggi, Sulanjari, & Alifah, 2020), mimicry in the

context of education often takes the form of adopting learning methods from more advanced groups as part of a strategy to achieve technological and intellectual progress. The study emphasizes that this process is not just imitation, but also involves adaptation and innovation to suit local conditions. By adopting this method, Batrus not only develops his technical skills but also brings home a more effective learning system to be applied in his country.

2. Interaction with the Local Community to Learn Their Mindset

ويعيش الآخريين، الصناع كبقية بين كما يعيشون، كما صغيراً كوخاً وبقطن (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He lives in a small hut, just like the other workers."

Batrus's life among the local workers is a form of mimicry that is not only technical but also social and cultural. By choosing to live with the laborers and experience their life, he tries to absorb the values of productivity, discipline, and work ethics that are part of the industrial culture in the West. This aligns with the research by (Fitriani & Hariyono, 2023), which highlights that mimicry in the cultural context often reflects an effort to understand and adapt to the norms and practices of the group being imitated. The study explains that direct involvement in the social life of the group being imitated allows one not only to acquire technical skills but also to understand the social system surrounding that work environment.

Thus, the steps taken by Batrus have broader implications. By directly blending with the working community, he not only acquires technical skills but also understands the social dynamics surrounding the industrial world in Europe. This process helps him adopt a new mindset focused on efficiency and productivity, which he later applies in his country's development.

3. Transformation of Mindset After Learning Another Culture

الجيش، وترتيب المدن، وتنظيم القلاع، تشييد بلاد (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He improved the army, organized the cities, and built fortresses for his country."

In this excerpt, it is evident how the knowledge Batrus acquires is not only used for personal gain but also applied in efforts to build his country. This transformation is proof of how mimicry can lead to hybridity, which is the blending of native culture with the imitated culture, resulting in a new, more complex, and adaptive identity.

According to research by (Alifiyah, Iswatiningsih, Sunaryo, & Sugiarti, 2024), hybridity is the result of the mimicry process, which allows individuals or groups to integrate new values and methods into the local system, thus creating broader social change. The study explains that this process often produces a unique cultural synthesis, which ultimately reflects a new identity that is more flexible and dynamic.

Batrus's imitation of Western learning methods demonstrates how a lagging nation can accelerate the modernization process through mimicry of an advanced culture. By living in the Netherlands and England, he not only learned shipbuilding techniques but also adopted a scientific mindset based on observation and hands-on practice. The analysis above shows how Batrus absorbed Western thought patterns that prioritize practical learning. His life among local workers also reflects social and cultural mimicry as a means to understand the intricacies of their profession. According to postcolonial theory, such mimicry can create a "third space" where a new identity emerges, blending elements from both the native and the imitated culture (Bhaba, 1994)

Thus, *Al-Maliku an-Najār* is not merely a story about the protagonist's journey in acquiring knowledge but also a depiction of an effective strategy for building civilization

through mimicry of a more advanced nation. Understanding this text teaches us that learning from other nations is not a sign of inferiority but a strategic step toward progress. Batrus's efforts reflect the importance of an open mindset and a continuous desire to learn for the welfare of his society.

Mimicry of Livelihood

Mimicry, in a postcolonial context, refers to the act of imitation or adaptation of culture by individuals or groups in relationships of asymmetric power. In Kamel Kaylani's short story *Al-Maliku an-Najjar*, mimicry is evident through the transformation of the main character, who chooses to disguise himself and take on a profession that was unusual for the nobility of his time. This exploration aims to uncover the aspect of mimicry in livelihood, where the character imitates the work done by common people.

1. Working at a Dutch Shipyard as a Carpenter

في متكرًا هولندا ويمم الأشراف، لأحد مكانه وترك والفنون، العمال. زي في السفن بناء مصنع في واشتغل (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He disguised himself as a common worker in the Netherlands, leaving his homeland, and worked at a shipbuilding factory as a carpenter in worker attire."

In this section, the main character, originally from Russia (Moscow), clearly depicts the act of disguising himself as a common worker in the Netherlands, leaving his original background and immersing himself in a profession vastly different from his social standing. The mimicry here is the process of imitation or disguise undertaken to adopt the identity of the local people. The character not only wears the attire of a common worker but also engages in a job that requires technical and physical skills, namely as a carpenter at a shipyard. Thus, the element of mimicry here is not only physical imitation but also imitation in terms of work, signaling an effort to adapt to the local way of life by replacing his traditional job with one more accepted in Dutch society.

This kind of imitation reflects the social dynamics in the process of cultural assimilation. According to a study by (Sarifah & Safitri, 2023), mimicry is not merely a visual imitation, but also involves an effort to adopt the dominant culture by mimicking the behavior and social structure of the more powerful society. In this context, the main character not only imitates clothing or occupation, but also aligns themselves with the norms and values of the Dutch workers' environment, indicating an effort to shed their noble identity in order to merge with the working class.

2. Disguising Himself as a Common Worker

وكان البطرسي المعلم باسم: زملاؤه يناديه وكان يفعلون، كما يوم كل بيده طعامه ويهيئ (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He was called 'al-Mu'allim al-Bathrusi' by his colleagues, preparing his own meals every day just as other workers did."

Here, the main character further strengthens his disguise as part of the local worker group by imitating their daily habits, even though his original identity was that of a king in Moscow, such as preparing his own meals. The element of mimicry in this part emphasizes the social and cultural aspect. The character not only imitates the physical job but also the daily habits or rituals considered typical of common workers. By calling himself "al-Mu'allim al-Bathrusi," he emphasizes the identity he has adopted in order to blend in with the local worker environment. This mimicry shows how the character attempts to shed his original identity and fully enter the world of the workers, a form of adjustment to

a lower social class.

In the book written by (Surur, 2023) it is explained that mimicry functions as a strategy of resistance that disguises power differences. The character who adopts the habits of an ordinary worker is not merely imitating, but also attempting to master survival methods in a simpler world, while simultaneously critiquing the existing social class distinctions. In this regard, mimicry is not just self-adjustment, but also a form of strategic adaptation that demonstrates how the colonized control their space and time within the context of power.

3. Experience as a Diligent and Thrifty Worker

لنفسه، اشتراه لحذاء ثمناً أجره من فادخر والدعوب، النشاط مثال وكان (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He became an example of a hard worker and saved from his earnings to buy his own shoes."

In this part, the imitation of the other workers' habits goes beyond physical or social imitation and also includes the values attached to their work. The main character becomes a role model in hard work and thrift, two qualities often associated with the working class that lives simply. This mimicry serves to show how the main character integrates the values regarded as noble in his work environment: perseverance and thrift. The process of saving to buy his own shoes reflects the character's ability to live much like the local workers, who often have limited income and rely on discipline in managing their finances.

As stated by (Anantama, Widodo, & Setiawan, 2021) this mimicry process depicts the tension between the desire to preserve one's original identity and the pressure to conform to the norms of a new environment. Here, the main character not only adapts in terms of work but also internalizes the life values of workers, emphasizing diligence, thrift, and simplicity as part of the working class struggle.

The above quotes depict that the main character, a nobleman, disguises himself as a carpenter in the Netherlands. This action is not merely an individual choice but holds symbolic dimensions within a colonial context. By imitating the way of life of common people, the character demonstrates success in understanding and adapting to a different socio-cultural condition, reflecting the characteristics of mimicry as explained in Homi K. Bhabha's theory.

According to (Bhaba, 1984), mimicry is "imitation with a difference" that often challenges dominant authority but also maintains hierarchy. In this case, the character's decision to work as a carpenter and adjust to local routines illustrates how he "respects" European culture while still preserving his identity. This is relevant to Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism," which examines how figures from the East face Western modernity. The character succeeds in practicing the values of hard work, independence, and thrift as seen in his work narrative. This also indicates a symbolic attempt to erase the social boundaries between nobility and common people, while learning strategic skills that could be brought back to his homeland.

Mimicry in Perspective

Mimicry in the aspect of perspective, according to (Bhaba, 1984) refers to the imitation of the worldview and values held by colonial power, in this case, the colonizers or the ruling class. This process often goes beyond mere imitation; it also contains distortion and uncertainty, creating tension between the colonized and the colonizer. Mimicry becomes a way for the colonized subjects to adapt to the norms and ideologies of the colonizers, while still retaining elements of difference that undermine the dominant structure. In this context, characters such as Mikhael and Batrus demonstrate various forms of mimicry towards the higher worldview of the ruling class, even though they come from very different backgrounds.

1. Mikhael and the Concept of Longing for the Homeland

ألا تشعر بحنين إلى بلدك الذي نشأت فيه، والذي نعمت بجماله، وامتألت نفسك بحبه؟ بلدك الذي ترنو إليه نفسك، وتسعى لعودتك إليه، بلدك الذي يعيد إليك جمال الطفولة وذكريات الماضي الجميلة (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"Do you not feel a longing for your homeland, where you grew up, enjoyed its beauty, and filled your soul with love? Your homeland, which your soul yearns for, and you strive to return to, a place that brings back the beauty of childhood and the wonderful memories of the past."

Mikhael exhibits the adoption of the European aristocratic worldview during the colonial era, specifically the concept of nationalism and patriotism. Longing for one's homeland is often depicted as a noble attribute, with aristocrats glorifying their homeland and considering it an integral part of their identity. In the context of mimicry, Mikhael, who is from the lower class, adopts this perspective to imitate the view of the upper class.

This process not only shows Mikhael's aspiration to identify himself with values considered "civilized" by the colonial power, but also illustrates the tension in his identity. Despite being socially alienated, he attempts to align himself with higher ideals, ultimately creating a "same, but different" characteristic of mimicry, as described by (Bhaba, 1984). This aligns with findings in research showing that mimicry often involves the adoption of dominant cultural values by individuals from colonized cultures as an effort to improve their social status (Sultoni & Utomo, 2021).

2. Batrus and Adaptation to the Worker Culture

أعمل بيدي وأقطع الخشب وأبني السفن الكبيرة. لا توجد مهنة وضيفة إذا كان العمل يتم بصدق وحب. لم أرَ عارًا في العمل بين العمال، بل وجدت فيه فرصة لفهم الحياة من منظور مختلف (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"I work with my own hands, cutting wood, and building large ships. There is no disgrace in any profession if the work is done with sincerity and love. I do not see shame in working among the laborers, but I found it an opportunity to understand life from a different perspective."

Batrus, who comes from an aristocratic background, shows the adoption of hard-working values typical of the working class. By adopting the lifestyle and worldview of the workers, he tries to understand a social reality different from his own origins. In the context of mimicry, Batrus adapts with the goal of learning and absorbing a different perspective, but at the same time, he retains his identity as an aristocrat.

This imitation contains a subversive dimension because an aristocrat, who usually views manual labor as the task of the lower class, chooses to engage in it with pride. Batrus emphasizes that no work is degrading if done with love and honesty, a value typically associated with the working class. As Batrus adapts to the worker culture, he also shows the limits of this imitation. His original identity as an aristocrat is not completely erased, but instead, it serves as a foundation for assessing work from a more philosophical viewpoint, understanding life. This reflects the concept of mimicry described by Bhaba, where the imitation by the colonized subject is never fully identical to the colonizer's culture but always contains differences that can destabilize colonial authority (Bhaba, 1984).

3. Mikhael's Mimicry of Power and Social Structure

أنا فقط أريد أن أخدم وطني وملكي بإخلاص. إذا أتيت لي الفرصة، فسوف أكون جنديًا أو عاملًا مخلصًا. الطاعة

للوطن والقانون واجب كل رجل شريف، وأنا لا أستطيع سوى أن أتمسك بهذا الواجب (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"I only wish to serve my country and king sincerely. If given the opportunity, I would be a soldier or a loyal worker. Obedience to the country and the law is the duty of every honorable man, and I can do nothing but hold fast to this duty."

In this quote, Mikhael imitates the European aristocratic worldview, which emphasizes absolute loyalty to the country, the king, and the law. This illustrates the complex element of mimicry, where the colonized individual attempts to internalize the values created by the colonial ruling class to maintain its power. Mikhael views loyalty to the country as an expression of honor, a value often associated with the upper class in colonial society.

However, this process of imitation also reveals ambiguity. Although he tries to mimic a worldview that supports the power structure, Mikhael remains in a socially unequal position compared to the rulers. This imitation becomes a subtle form of resistance, as he uses colonial values to demonstrate that even the common people can fulfill the same criteria of honor. In the context of mimicry, Mikhael's imitation creates tension because he tries to show that colonial values such as loyalty and honor are not limited to a specific class. Therefore, he indirectly challenges the social hierarchy that separates him from the ruling class. This aligns with the view that mimicry can be a subversive strategy used by the colonized subjects to undermine colonial authority by imitating and simultaneously altering colonial practices (Widyaningrum, Hasanuddin, & Ambarwati, 2024).

Based on the analysis of Mikhael and Batrus, it is clear that both attempt to imitate the views and values held by the ruling class, even though they come from very different backgrounds. This mimicry reflects an effort to adapt to the dominant social and cultural structure, but also creates tension between their original identities and the perspectives they adopt. Through this process of mimicry, Mikhael and Batrus show that even though they imitate, there are elements of difference that continue to emerge, depicting the complex dynamics in colonial relationships between the colonized and the colonizer. Therefore, mimicry is not just passive imitation, but also a tool for challenging the existing power structure.

Mimicry of Lifestyle

Mimicry in the aspect of lifestyle, based on the theory of Homi K. Bhabha, refers to the efforts of colonized subjects to imitate the lifestyle and norms of the ruling class or dominant groups. This mimicry can include imitation of everyday lifestyle, dress, and occupation, which essentially aims to adapt to or assimilate with the group, though there is often tension between the original identity and the one being imitated. In the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najjar* by Kamel Kaylani, the character Batrus demonstrates a concrete example of mimicry in lifestyle, by imitating the working class life even though he comes from the aristocracy.

1. Everyday Life Simplicity

يهيئ بيده طعامه كل يوم كما يفعلون، وكان زملاؤه ينادونه باسم: المعلم البطرسي (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He prepares his food every day as they do, and his colleagues call him 'Teacher Batrus.'"

Batrus, who is an aristocrat, imitates the habits of ordinary workers by preparing his own food, an action generally associated with the lower class or workers. In this case, mimicry is evident in Batrus' attempt to adapt to a simple lifestyle, far from the luxury he usually enjoyed. Although he comes from a higher class, Batrus tries to fit in with the social norms of the workers by performing everyday, simple tasks. This illustrates the tension between his actual social status and the lifestyle he chooses to imitate. The nickname

"Teacher Batrus" also indicates how he is accepted in that community, even though his original identity is higher in the social hierarchy.

Batrus' mimicry aligns with the concept proposed by Bhabha in his research (Tri R., Riafi, Fauzi, & Wardianto, 2021) which states that imitation of the dominant group is never fully identical, but always contains differences that indicate the ambivalent position of the individual within the social structure. This is further supported by recent research that affirms that mimicry often reflects the social and economic aspirations of individuals in colonial and postcolonial environments.

2. Everyday Clothing

وكان يقيم في كوخ صغير كما يقطنون، ويدخر من أجره ثمنًا لحذاء اشتراه لنفسه (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He lives in a small hut like others, and saves part of his earnings to buy shoes for himself."

Batrus, who comes from a noble family, chooses to live in a small hut, a dwelling typically associated with workers or lower-class people. This reflects an imitation of the lower class lifestyle, which values simplicity and sustainability over luxury. In terms of mimicry, Batrus' choice to live in a hut and save his wages to buy shoes indicates an effort to absorb simpler values and hard work, which are often associated with workers. Although his social identity does not fully change, he seems to be attempting to adjust to a more "people-oriented" lifestyle.

According to a study by (Salindri, Nugroho, & Nuryatin, 2022), the practice of mimicry in clothing and lifestyle is often used as a means of gaining legitimacy within a community different from one's social origin. This is also in line with the theory proposed by (Bhaba, 1994) that mimicry is not just about similarity, but also about creating new spaces for the subject who imitates and adapts to a broader social context.

3. Identity Adjustment

ترك مكانه للأشراف، ويمم هولندا متكرًا في زي العمال (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He left his place among the aristocrats and went to the Netherlands disguised as a worker."

Batrus performs a disguise to leave the aristocratic world and enter the workers' world in a very symbolic way: he moves to the Netherlands and wears workers' clothes. The imitation of the workers' attire and identity reflects an attempt to form a new identity more in tune with the social environment he chooses. This disguise represents mimicry in a stronger sense, where Batrus not only adopts the lifestyle of the workers but also literally covers his original aristocratic identity by dressing as part of a lower class.

In the context of postcolonial theory, this act of disguise shows how mimicry can be used to obscure the boundaries of social identity. As research by (Berliana & Agustyowati, 2023) shows, individuals who adopt new identities through mimicry often face an identity dilemma that reflects the tension between their social origins and their new aspirations. In other words, mimicry is not just a form of adaptation, but also a strategy for achieving social mobility in a hierarchically constrained environment.

4. Disguise as a Carpenter

اشتغل في مصنع بناء السفن بهولندا كعامل بسيط، وكان يعيش بينهم كما يعيش الصناع الآخرون (كيلاني، ٢٠١٢)

"He worked at a shipbuilding factory in the Netherlands as a simple laborer, living

among them as the other workers do."

Batrus takes a job as a carpenter at a shipbuilding factory in the Netherlands, a job traditionally performed by the lower class. In doing so, he demonstrates a deeper form of mimicry toward the working class life, not only socially, but also in terms of physical labor typically done by people from lower classes.

Mimicry here highlights that Batrus is not merely adapting to the workers' lifestyle, but fully immerses himself and blends with the lower class by performing the same job. This is consistent with the analysis by (Wibisono, Waluyo, & Subiyantoro, 2018) which emphasizes that mimicry can serve as a subtle form of resistance against a social system that restricts individual mobility based on class and social status. Thus, through the analysis of characters in *Al-Maliku an-Najjar*, it is seen that mimicry serves not only as an adaptation tool, but also as a means to question and challenge the existing power structures. The imitation performed by the characters reflects the complexity of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, and shows how identity can be negotiated and reconstructed through the process of mimicry.

In this analysis, the lifestyle mimicry demonstrated by Batrus portrays how the imitation process can encompass various aspects of life, from work to dress and residence. Although Batrus comes from an aristocratic background, he tries to imitate and assimilate with the working class life, whether in how he works, lives, or interacts with those around him. This mimicry is not just an imitation, but also a reflection of the identity tensions that arise between his social origins and the lifestyle he chooses to imitate. Thus, this mimicry process becomes Batrus' way of responding to the existing social structure and adjusting himself to values that emphasize hard work and simplicity.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the representation of mimicry in the short story *Al-Maliku an-Najjar* by Kamel Kaylani using Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory. The findings indicate that mimicry in this story is not merely a passive imitation of colonial culture but rather a complex adaptation strategy that creates space for a new identity. In the aspect of knowledge, the main character imitates the Western education system and scientific methods to acquire technical skills, reflecting how the colonized society adopts colonial knowledge as a strategy for survival and empowerment. In the aspect of livelihood, mimicry is demonstrated through the protagonist's disguise as an ordinary worker, symbolizing an effort to absorb the work ethic of the colonial working class. Meanwhile, in the aspects of worldview and lifestyle, the story portrays the identity dilemma between colonial modernity and native culture, as well as adaptation to working-class habits as a form of social integration.

From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, these findings affirm that mimicry does not merely reproduce colonial domination but also has the potential to serve as a subtle resistance strategy. By adopting elements of colonial culture without fully becoming part of it, the protagonist creates an ambivalence that can undermine colonial authority itself. This aligns with Bhabha's concept of "ambivalence," where mimicry can function as a subversive tool that destabilizes colonial order.

The implications of this study suggest that the representation of mimicry in Arabic literature, particularly in *Al-Maliku an-Najjar*, can serve as an important discourse in understanding how cultural identity is negotiated in colonial and postcolonial contexts. This study also provides a new perspective in postcolonial studies, particularly in understanding how Arabic literature reflects cultural resistance in colonized societies.

As a recommendation, this research suggests further studies on the phenomenon of mimicry in other Arabic literary works to expand the understanding of identity dynamics in postcolonial societies. Furthermore, deeper exploration of the linguistic aspects of mimicry can offer additional insights into how language is used as a tool for adaptation and resistance in literary texts. Additionally, this study can be developed by comparing

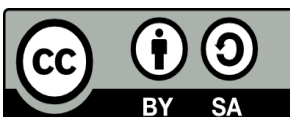
the concept of mimicry in Arabic literature with that in literature from other regions that experienced colonialism, to gain a broader perspective on adaptation strategies and cultural resistance in various historical contexts.

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