

THE REPRESENTATION OF *MERANTAU* AS MINANGNESE LOCAL GENIUS PORTRYED IN THE FANANY'S SHORT STORY COLLECTION *A GIFT FROM AFAR*

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Abstract

The researcher examines local genius in Minangnese tradition of merantau as portryed in the Fanany's short story collection *A Gift From Afar*, which is focused on the characteristics of Minangnese local genius that they brought in rantau land. The objective of the study in this research is to describe the representation of merantau as Minangnese local genius portryed in the Fanany's short story collection *A Gift From Afar*. To analyze the issue, the writer uses cultural studies as the approach, representation, text, text as signifying process concept, local genius concept, and values and identity theory. To arrange the research, the writer applies qualitative research. Narration inside the short stories becomes the data. Meanwhile the data source is the short stories collection *A Gift From Afar* by Ismet Fanany, published by CV Angkasa in 2015. Based on the research, there are values and identity of local genius that Minangnese brought when they go merantau as portrayed in Fanany's short story collection *A Gift From Afar*. The values are religious values, social values, family values, and material values. Meanwhile for the identity of Minangnese are hard worker, have positive thinking and sharpen the skill, hold Minang proverb, and Minang language.

Key words: representation, cultural studies, local genius, values, identity, Minangnese, merantau, *A Gift From Afar*.

INTRODUCTION

Ismet Fanany is an Indonesian writer who writes short stories in English. He had lived in US and Australia and married with native American. He is a professor of Language and society in Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia whose work widely published in the KOMPAS newspaper. According to Marjohan Usman (2013) (a Sumatran teacher and writer from Sumatera, Indonesia) Fanany is the one who is very struggling to get achievement in his life. He is an ordinary people who comes from suburb and could be a notable people. He was born on April 9, 1952, he has great experience and succesful life abroad. The writer believes that there must be a purpose why Fanany writes short stories in English. *A Gift From Afar* is one of his 17 short stories in a book that was published in June 2000. Probably he expects that his writing will be read by many people, therefore; he writes in English.

A Gift From Afar is collection of Fanany's short stories which represent one of Minangnese local genius *merantau*. The stories which are offered in this book can enrich reader's knowledge to understand Minangnese culture of *merantau* as their local genius. The book depicts the unique oriental tradition of man and the values of contiguity between cultures (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018), (Lusa et al., 2020), (Oktaviani et al., 2020), (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021), (Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020). One of the stories in the collection entitled *A Gift From Afar* describes about the culture shock that experienced by

Minangnese who do *merantau*. Some other stories for example *Half Way*, *Hay My Name is Bob*, and *Thank You John* describe humanitarian problems which oscillate in a shift in the culture and describe the various values of life, such as the struggle to achieve the ideals, a resolute, as well as the religious values that should not be abandoned.

Minangkabau is defined as a group of ethnic within Indonesia that follows the *adat* (cultural) law of Minangkabau. (De Jong, 1960). The people of Minangkabau originated from the areas of West Sumatra, parts of Riau, north of Bengkulu, west of North Sumatra, and a part of Aceh. Minangnese actually refers to anyone that honors the Minang Adat law, even if he or she does not reside in Padang. For most of the Minangkabau people, *merantau* is an ideal way to reach maturity and success. Meanwhile, according to KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) *merantau* is (1. *Berlayar mencari penghidupan disepanjang rantau dari suatu sungai kesungai lain*; 2. *Pergi kenegeri lain untuk mencari penghidupan, ilmu, dsb*);). Local genius is a view of life and science and life strategies that intangible activities carried out by local society (Quaritch Wales: 1931).

Based on the explanation above, the example of local genius In *A Gift From Afar* are values, ideas, principle, and so on. *Merantau* is one of Minangnese tradition that becomes a local genius because of its characteristic (Rido & Sari, 2018b), (Gulö, 2014), (Rido & Sari, 2018b), (Mertania & Amelia, 2020), (Kardiansyah, n.d.). It also helps to the life of Minangnese to pursuit knowledge and wealth. That is why the focus of this research will analyze *merantau* as a local genius which becomes the philosophical foundation of minangnese to act, to behave, and to struggle their life. For example in one of the short story entitled *A Gift From Afar*, conveys that *merantau* has significant rule to set the paradigm of people to see that after young person return home, it means that they are ready to get married. In this case, Samsir as the young man who just return home becomes a hot topic to be talked by society there especially parents who have a daughter of marriageable age. Therefore, *merantau* gives additional point plus to change the social status of young man to be better and to be known by society. It makes Samsir easier to choose the girl to be married with him. Most people give attention and respect to them because of their experience of *merantau*.

In other case, According to Adam (1931) most people understand American dream as a part of local genius of America and has become a widespread term to describe the American Way of Life. The American Dreams the belief of the US-American society that each individual can achieve through hard working and strength of mind. Indonesian also has a local genius that become their way of life which is called as *merantau*. The author believes that the story becomes a medium of promotion media or propaganda to the global world and he wants to let everybody knows that Indonesia also has a local genius. Therefore, Fanany writes the short story *A Gift From Afar* in English.

In this research, the writer wants to analyze the literary work in the perspective of representation (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020a), (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020b), (Kuswoyo, n.d.), (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2021). In language (Sari, 2018), (Pustika, n.d.), , we use signs and symbols whether they are sounds (Amelia, 2021), written words (Mandasari, n.d.), electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which

meaning is produced (Hall:1997). In *A Gift From Afar* uses text or written words that contains its meaning which represent Minangnese concept, ideas, and culture.

Therefore, this research is arranged to reveal how the culture of Merantau as Minangnese local genius represented in *A Gift From Afar*. The writer believes that literature (Rido, Kuswoyo, & Nuansa, 2020), (Al Falaq et al., 2021), (Rido, Kuswoyo, & Ayu, 2020), (Amelia, 2016), (Rido et al., 2021) can be a medium to accommodate cultural value of *Minangnese*. Many African writers use literary work (Kuswoyo, 2016), (Lennon, 2008), (Kuswoyo, 2013), (Kuswoyo, 2014) to promote their local genius and the writer believes that what is done by Fanany is also good.

Research

Concerning to the background of the study, the writer formulates the problem into one question, how is the representation of *merantauas* Minangnese local genius in Fanany's Short Story Collection *A Gift From Afar*?

Objective Questions

Based on the problem above, the objective of this research is to describe the representation of *merantau* as Minangnese local genius in *A Gift From Afar* short story collection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACH

The analysis will be about the representation of the characteristics of local genius which are value and identity and the function of local genius itself toward Minangnese culture in *A Gift From Afar* novel by Ismet Fanany. Representation of culture is close related to cultural study. Therefore, the writer employs the cultural study approach to support the analysis.

Cultural study is defined as discursive formation that is a group of ideas, images, practice, that provides ways of talking about conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site. It also can be grasped as a regulated way of speaking about objects (which cultural study brings into view) and coheres around key concepts, ideas and concern that include articulation, culture, discourse, ideology, identity, popular culture, power, representation, and text. (Barker, 2004:42)

The quotation above implies that cultural approach constitutes two things. Firstly it conceptualizes the idea of group ideas, images, and practices (Mulyah & Aminatun, 2020), (Wahyudin, 2018), (Putri & Aminatun, 2021), (Qodriani & Wijana, 2021), (Hasani et al., 2020). These concepts are made by by particular individuals in certain community. These individuals conceptualize the ideology, create the images and conduct the practice based on the wisdom in their group. It suits with the condition of group of tribes which themselves create the concept of ideas, images, and practices. The individual who enters to that group should always follow their concept. In *A Gift From Afar*, as Minangkabau people they should follow the tradition in Minang' principle in this case is *merantau*. Why minangnese should do this because they believe that through *merantau* there are so many life's lesson in it that relates to the values and principal they hold.

Further Barker (2004:43) states “cultural study seeks to develop way of thinking about culture and power that can be agents in the pursuit of change”. It shows that the agent or object who involves in that group gets the change in the term of way of thinking about culture. The agents also encounter themselves to adapt with that community and cheat their way of life. In *A Gift From Afar* for example, in order to survive in America, Iskandar as the agent learns their characteristics that interested him which are their willingness to acknowledge and criticize their own weaknesses, shortcomings, and negatives.

1. Representation

2. General overview of representation

A good deal of cultural studies is centred on questions of representation. That is, on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us in meaningful ways. Representation is the production of meaning through language because language operates as a representational system. In language, we use signs and symbols whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced (Hall:1997).

In other hand, Young (129) points out that the most important condition of something's being a representation is that it stand for something because representation is always about something. Consequently, for every representation there is some object which is represented, or objects which are represented. In *A Gift From Afar* the object is the culture of *merantau* that represented the local genius of Minangnese such as values and identity. Someone who has the capacity to understand a representation has the capacity to grasp what it is about. A representation, then, brings to the mind of the qualified audience member the object which is represented. Further, cultural representations and meanings have a certain materiality. That is, they are embedded in sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, books, magazines and television programmes. They are produced, enacted, used and understood in specific social contexts (Barker:2007:7).

Then, what does Representation have to do with culture, what is the connection between them? Culture is about shared meanings. Stuart Hall (1997) states that now language is the privileged medium in which we make sense of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged. Meanings can only be shared through our common access to language. So language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. From these explanation, the writer believes that Fanany represented Minangkabau's culture through his writing. *A Gift From Afar* is a medium of representation how Minangnese uphold the values of life when they do *merantau*. The writer also believes that this short story is formed by Fanany's experience life in abroad. He stands for Minangnese who experience in merantau. He wants to show to the world that his culture has something to be shared through the text of short story.

2. Text and Representation

In this case, the relationship between text and representation is text as a medium of representation. In literary criticism, formalist critics use the term *text* to refer to a single work of literary art (such as a specific poem, essay, short story). The word text comes from

the Latin *texere*, to weave. According to Barker (2007:7), “Texts, as forms of representation, are polysemic. That is, they contain the possibility of a number of different meanings that have to be realized by actual readers who give life to words and images.” To call something a text implies that the words, phrases (Fischer-Starcke, 2009), lines or sentences of which it consists have not been arranged this way by chance, but have been produced by a person and with certain kinds of intentions. At the very least, meaning is produced in the interplay between text and reader. Therefore, a text contains meaning which is open to interpretation.

In his research, the writer believes that the text of the novel entitled *A Gift From Afar* represents *merantau* as Minangnese local genius and contains some characteristics of local genius it self (Rido & Sari, 2018b), (Rido & Sari, 2018a). Therefore, the writer wants to analyze the problem through the text of on its representation.

1. Text as signyfing process

The central strand of cultural studies can be understood as the study of culture as the signyfing practices of representation. This requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning. Barker (2007:11) points out that the concept of text suggests not simply the written word, though this is one of its senses, but all practices that signify. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects (such as clothes) and activities (like dance and sport). Since images, sounds, objects and practices are sign systems, which signify with the same mechanism as a language, we may refer to them as cultural texts.

All texts are deliberately constructed to convey an agenda and a set of values. This means that every composer has a purpose, which is based on the issues arising from their context and audience. In this case, most probably Fanany tries to globalize the local genius of Minangnese. To that end, the composer uses conflicting perspectives or interplay between history and memory as a vehicle for successfully conveying their purpose to the audience (Pitkin:1967).

Cultural studies has argued that language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meanings and knowledge about an independent object world ‘existing’ outside of language. Rather, it is constitutive of those very meanings and knowledge (Barker:2007:7). It implies that language gives meaning to material objects and social practices that are brought into view by language and made intelligible to us in terms that language delimits. These processes of meaning production are signyfing practices. In order to understand culture, we need to explore how meaning is produced symbolically in language as a signyfing system. To know the meaning and the purpose of the lititery work, the writer uses text as a process of signyfing. So when the writer read the short story, she gets the point that implies some meaning which refers to the Minangnese culture and can identify the issues inside the short story. Thus, reading the text is important in order to gain information about the context of meaning in the short story *A Gift From Afar*.

2. Local Genius

2.4.1 Definition

The concept of local genius first introduced by archaeologists H.G Quaritch Wales in his article titled "The Making of Greater India: A Study in South-East Asia Culture Change" that was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1948). Wales (1962) points

out that the term local genius refers to the characteristics of indigenous it can be both abstract and concrete. It contains as basic personality of each culture. Broadly, local genius can be defined as a process of cultural characteristic, namely the development of a phenomenological process to the cognitive nature.

Local genius is local ideas that is characterized such as: wise, full of wisdom, good values, that planted and followed by society. Local genius is also a local wisdom. It stands from the outer culture, that accommodate and integrate the outer culture into inside, and give them the right way. Local genius emerge into: value, norm, faith, custom, ect. They have special meaning and function. It must be changed because of cross culture and globalization. It gives a challenge to explore and criticize it in scientific ways. (Sartini 2004:111)

Meanwhile according to Ruastiti (2011:241), local genius refers to what humans know, how they behave and what strategies they develop to sustain their existence where they live. The knowledge they have, the way in which they behave and the strategies they develop to sustain themselves imply the local genius of the area where they live. In *A Gift From Afar*, Minangnese do tradition of merantau from generation to generation. A young boy, for instance, has his primary responsibility to his mother and sister clans as represented in one of the short stories entitled *The Eel Catcher*. Therefore they have to leave hometown to go to other region in order to achieve success in term of economy, education, and social status. When Minangnese do merantau, they carry out their cultural values such as obey religious rule, work hard, implement miang proverb, and so on. Thus, Minangnese cultivate the tradition of merantau as a way of life and become their local genius.

2. The Characteristics of Local Genius

2.4.2.1 Values

Our values fundamentally affect the beliefs and mind sets we hold. Mike Munro Turner (2004:7) clarifies the importance of values in our lives. Values describe, and provide a means of talking about, what is important to us. They are ideals we hold that give significance and meaning to our lives and hence they underpin our beliefs, influencing the decisions we make, the actions we take, and the life we lead. Understanding values helps us to understand how we create our own reality and gives us insight into the personal realities of others.

Further, Turner (2004) points out that values are constructs that we hold as important, beliefs are constructs that we hold to be true, and experiences are constructs about reality. The way in which we see and experience the world our world view depends on how we interpret the outer world of nature, things and people, and also on our level of consciousness, which in turn depends on our value priorities. Thus, values have significant contribution in shaping peoples way of life because following values determines the identity of Minangnese . The experience of merantau provides many life lessons to the Minang people. Some of them are able to survive by upholding the values of the local culture, but some of them also ignore some values that Minangnese uphold for example in one of the short stories entitled *A Gift From Afar* that represents how a man who return home use his own way to do something. He thinks that he already know the world so he can do anything based on his perception.

2. Identity

Anthony Giddens in Golubovic (2010), traditional identity conveys from generation to generation, in modern societies identity is conceived as a matter of rational action and being dynamic. Giddens thinks that one may speak of identity as a symbolic construction, which helps people to find their own place in time and preserve continuity.

In other case, based on the website which concern to the critical media project, identity defines as a socially and historically constructed concept. We learn about our own identity and the identity of others through interactions with family, peers, organizations, institutions, media and other connections we make in our everyday life. When we think about identity, we may focus on external markers what we can see, on our biology or physiology, or how we were born, however, it's also important to understand that our identities are comprised of ideas, ideologies, and ways of seeing the world around us. Our identities, therefore, are socially constructed, and the way we were born is only part of who we are.

In *A Gift From Afar*, maintaining identity as Minangnese in foreign country "is not easy" because they will face different culture which lead to different thinking and perspective of people. Some of them proud to be Minangnese with kinds of its *adat* and can mingle with foreign people. But some of them also lose their identity as Minangnese. Identity is important to construct the ideas of Minangnese. If they already know who they are and where they are from, they will always proud to insert values and knowldeges that they have got in daily life.

METHOD

Data Collections and Data Analysis

Data collecting technique is the way that is used to gather the data. Those data will use to support the analysis. There are some steps that done by the writer for do this research which are Reread the short story *A Gift From Afar* by ismet Fanany (2015), learn what issue that exist on that novel, noted several lines and narrations from the short story to be marked as evidence and find some quotation in some part of the short story that show and represent the issue. The data that have been found by the writer are arranged and categorized, then applying the theory that is used by the writer to this research. The second are classifying, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and concluding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 The Characteristics of Local Genius in *A Gift From Afar*

1.1.1. Religious Values of Minangnese

One of the values that Minangnese have is religious value. Minangnese is well known as religious devout ethnic. Their Islamic culture is very strong because of their tradition refers to the holy Qur'an. In this analysis there is a character named Rusli, a Minangnese who does merantau in Tasmania, Australia. There, he finds the life which is extremely out of the ordinary. The values there, are completely different. Rusli is facing perhaps the most important test of a person's character, whether he could maintain and apply his values when the environments no longer required it.

“When he first arrived, he prayed five times a day right on time. He never failed to pray and never forgot. Even though on some days he had only an hour for lunch, he would always go home to pray.” (Fanany, 2015:5) The quotation above shows that eventhough Rusli lives in Australia, the country which has different environment with his village, he still uphold and obey the religious rule as a Moslem that he brings at the very first time. He prioritizes pray upon anything. Though it is very hard for Rusli to maintain his time because he has tight schedule, he could not pray on time but he still pray.

“At home, he was known as a religious man. At one time, he had been a preacher in his village. In Padang, he often led the group prayers. People saw him as being able to position himself among others.” (Fanany, 2015:10)

Marantau then becomes something more than leaving the house to its rightful owner, the women, but rather for the men to become useful for their religion. Rusli is believed to be ambassadors of Islam, he is teaching and spreading words about the religion in his village. The obedience of Rusli towards his faith represents the characteristic of Minangnese.

1.1.2 Social Values of Minangnese

Ordinarilly value means belief about what is right and wrong and what is important in life. Social value means the norms or forms of behavior which are widely acceptable and admirable in society. Social are the root of all virtues that pave the way for the harmony of a society. It is the social values that are the key to the development of a society. With social values, a person shapes up as a good human being and plays an important role in society’s development. That can be beneficial for the society as well as that particular individual.

Thus if every individual develops good social values and play crucial role in the society’s development with those values, that will be of maximum benefit to that particular society. The social values that the writer finds are social status of young man who return home after *merantau* and the values how to respect other people as seen in the quotation below.

“who cared about so-and-so’s opinion on the topic? To them, young person who returned home to enter the marriage market. So, it wasn’t surprising that, since he returned to the village from the United States less than a month before, the name ‘Samsir’ had been on everyone’s tongue. Every family with a daughter of marriageable age was considering the possibility of making the young man with his doctorate from Harvard their son in-law”. (Fanany 2015:13)

The quotation above represents the function of *merantau* as a way to enter the value and the status of young person who return home to enter the marriage market. It conveys that *merantau* has significant rule to set the paradigm of people to see that after young person return home, it means that they are ready to get married. But it does not mean that all young men who do not *merantau* unable to have this kind of chance. In this case, Samsir as the young man who just return home becomes a hot topic to be talked by society there especially parents who have a daughter of marriageable age. Therefore, *merantau* gives additional point plus to change the social status of young man to be better and to be known by society. It Samsir easier to choose the girl to be married with him. Most people will give attention and respect to them because of their experience of *merantau*.

“The young men of Kotopanjang who were unemployed like them preferred to spend their time playing dominoes in the coffee shop rather than do something useful in the village.” (Fanany,2015:16)

The quotation above shows that unemployed men of Kotopanjang are unuseful in the village unlike Samsir. They wasting their time by doing something unvaluable like stated in the quotation above. If all the young men of Minangkabau like this, the village will not be developed and will bring trouble for the society in the village.

“The young people that you will see there, ranging from just school age to the end of the teenaged years, are unemployed and are a problem for people in the village, especially their parents. They are too lazy to go to school, and they don’t want to work. Wearing shorts and a sarong hanging around their neck, they chatter about things and laugh when it is not clear that anything is funny. Often with a cigarette hanging from their lips, they wander up and down the village road.”(Fanany,:58-59)

It describes the condition of young men in the village who do not want to go to school either go to work. They do not have something matter with the good of Minangkabau. They only causing problem for the society there. As young Minang, they suppose to uphold the values as Minangnese which have set at the very first place. For example seek education, work hard and respect society.

“The older ones tease the girls who are on their way to the bathing place. When they have no money for cigarettes, for instance, one of the neighbors might find they are missing a chicken.” (Fanany,2015:59)

Bothering and teasing other people especially women is doesn't reflect the good values of Minangnese. In Minangkabau’s society woman placed in high priority than man as the tradition refers to matrilineal system where the royal succession and inheritance trace through the mother. That is why it is better for young men in West Sumatera to go *merantau* as a way to reach maturity and success. As Minang’s gentleman it is very important to have value to respect woman.

“To their friends, who also do not want to go to school but instead choose to leave the village to seek their fortune in accordance with the good Minangkabau tradition they are so proud of, the occupants of Simpang are ‘male chickens with female feathers’: ferocious in the coop. They are afraid to leave but cause trouble for people in the village.” (Fanany 2015:59)

The quotation above implies that young men of Minangkabau better to go *merantau* than only do something unuseful. The social value there shows that if they are not go to school, it is much better for Minangnese young men to go to merantau in order to seek betterment for their life and to continue the tradition of *merantau* than doing nothing in the village. Luckily, not all the young men of Kotopanjang who do not leave the village become a denizen of Simpang and act like a thorn in the village’s side. There are others who don’t feel like they can do well in school. They choose not to go away because they have to help their parents. It is proves to us that these young men still consider the good values of

Minangkabau. They realize that as a member of Minangkabau, they have to understand and uphold the values in society.

1.1.3 Family Values of Minangnese

Family values considered either good or bad. These derive from the fundamental beliefs of the parents, who use them to educate their children (Pustika, n.d.), (Saputra et al., 2020), (Febriantini et al., 2021), (Aguss, 2021). Family values involve all of the ideas of how member of family want to live their family life, and they are often passed down from previous generations. They can help define behavior in various situations, help youth make good choices, and solidfy the bond that their family has. In this research, the writer finds some values in family such as sharing, happiness, and honesty. Listen other family member's opinion is also form of family values since all opinions are important.

His experiences of the past were still too bitter. He had no conception of Padang in the 1980s. To him, Padang, and the journey there, remained as they had been 60 years before. But now he saw the clear light of the future there for his grandchildren. He hoped to live long enough to share in their happiness. In Padang now, hard work meant something, honesty was praised and had appropriate rewards. (Fanany 2015:95)

Salim realizes the important of values in family. He does not want his grandchildren experience too bitter life like he did in the past. That is why sharing is one of the way to get closer with his grandchildren. Through sharing he wants to teach how valuable it is to have honesty in human being. Honesty is important in creating good relationships with people as well as achieving personal development. Salim understand that honesty is an important value because it contributes to a positive mindset and facilitates morally acceptable behavior that will be beneficial to his family. He also wants to covey to his grandchildren how important it is to work hard in order to achieve prosporeous life.

“People’s lives sometimes look very different, Nur, but at base they’re all the same.’ Majid recalled his conversation with Nuraini the night before after their five children had gone to bed. The traffic jam was getting worse. And their conversation was becoming clearer in the Majid’s head , like a video replying over again.” (Fanany, 2015:168-169) Make conversation and sharing as values in family is one of the way to get closer to them. When people do *merantau* they don’t have anyone except their supouse.

1.1.4 Material Values

Material values allow us to survive, and are related to our basic needs as human beings, such as food and clothing and protection from the environment. If exaggerated, material values can be in contradiction with spiritual values.

“Who could blame me for the leap of joy I felt when Tracy told me I was hired to work at HSN. I knew this was not the greates employment in the world. I had to work from 5:00pm to midnight and drive 30 kilomrters to get there for not so much money. But it meant I could once again by toys for our son, and we wouldn’t worry about paying the rent and buying food.” (Fanany, 2015:28)

It shows that material value is important for Minangnese in order to fulfill the needs of their family. The value inside material value is when Iskandar able to buy toys for his son, to pay the rent, and to buy food. These mean Iskandar can see the happiness of his son when his father give him toys and relieve the worries of his wife if they can not buy food and pay the rent. Even though his job was not give proportional wages to fulfill his family needs, but he accept it gratefully. As a value that he understood from Minangkabau's people is that work hard meant something. He believes that someday his struggle will be paid off (Mandasari, 2016), (Berlinda, 2015).

1.1.5 Moral values of Minangnese

Moral values refer to a set of principles that guide an individual on how to evaluate right versus wrong. People generally apply moral values to justify decisions, intentions and actions, and it also defines the personal character of a person. An individual with high moral values typically displays characteristics of integrity, courage, respect, fairness, honesty and compassion. In this research, the moral values that Minangnese hold is on how Majid make a decision upon his life.

“No, Nuraini,” he said to himself in the car. ‘I am not going to be like Asa. Even though I have been thinking about him a lot lately.’ (Fanany, 2015:175)

The quotation above implies how Majid tries to learn the story of Asa. He awares that what Asa did in the past is wrong. Suicide is not the way to solve the problem in life. As a Minangnese, Majid understood that he still have moral value to keep struggle in his life. Majid thinks that he is the same with Asa but he doesn't wants to end his life like him. Even though he less successful live in Jakarta but he doesn't wants to give up as what Asa did, he still has hope.

1.2.1 Hard Worker

Minangnese well known by their struggle to achieve betterment in life. They are brave enough to compete with other ethnic even foreign people.

“I was not as lucky as my other Indonesian friends at Cornell because I didn't have a scholarship from anyone. I had to work full time while doing my degree. While I was still taking classes, I had been employed as an instructor of Indonesian at the university. When I finished my coursework, I had to do field research.” (Fanany, 2015:27)

The quotation above shows the struggle of Iskandar as a Minangnese to seek education by himself without any kind of scholarship like what his friends got. He realizes that it is not easy to for him to study in foreign country without scholarship. Therefore, have to work hard in full time in order to finish his degree and fulfill his needs. Minangnese also face how difficult it is to be a worker in US like Iskandar's experience when he work in Home Shopping Network. His customer often mock his name because it sounds strange.

“Indonesia, huh? So what are you doing here? Why don't you go back to your own country? You're stealing our jobs.’ There would be other insults as well. (Fannay, 2015:33)

The quotation above shows another insult coming from his customer. He often loses a customer who hated the fact that he was not American. Iskandar is afraid that he would be fired by the company but fortunately he did not get fired because people in his company knew there were all kinds of people in the world with all kinds of views. Iskandar keeps struggling, he keeps thinking about how to make people uninterested with his name. Then, he finds an idea, he does not use his own name. He changes his nickname to become 'Bob' in order to avoid the curiosity of customers toward his origin name.

“Hi, my name is Bob. This is HSN. What would you like to purchase?”
‘Bob?’ I could hear the disbelief in the voice coming over the phone. ‘You don’t sound like a Bob! Where are you from?’ ‘I’m Indonesian, I replied honestly. ‘Don’t lie! You are obviously not Indonesian.’ I became angry. ‘How do you know? I know where I’m from. And what do you care?’ ‘You’re Japanese. That’s certain. I know a Japanese accent!’ (Fanany, 2015:34)

It shows how he still faces this kind of problem even after he changes his name to become one of the popular names of Americans.

“Bastard, I said to myself. I wanted to insult the caller, but Tracy was right that there was no point in having a heart attack because of people who behaved like this. When I thought of how open and willing to accept me Tracy and everyone at HSN was, I felt better, ‘What would you like to purchase?’ I asked politely. ‘Nothing. I don’t want to buy anything from the Japanese. They killed my uncle at Pearl Harbor!’ I heard him slam down the receiver as hard as he could.” (Fanany, 2015:35)

The quotation above implies the difficulties that Iskandar found in doing his work. He realizes that not all people accept his existence in their country. He understood that he is a minority, he has to be more patient to face these kinds of problems. As a Minangnese, mocking and insulting other people is not the characteristic that exists in Minangkabau’s community. That is why, he tries to be calm and more polite to the caller because this is the consequence from seeking fortune in foreign land.

1.2.2 Positive Thinking and Sharpen the Skill

In this research, Iskandar, one of the characters in the short stories represents Minangkabau people as a person who stays positive thinking. It means that he always tries to keep optimistic in doing his job or other task. This characteristic leads him to be more spirited to do many things regardless of success and failure. He believes that struggle and being an optimist will bring him to the fortune as long as he does not give harm toward other people. Besides staying positive thinking, Minangnese love to sharpen their skills. They never feel shy to learn from anyone. This is also the characteristic that makes them stronger. They believe that strengthening their skills is important to avoid getting stuck in the same place. Furthermore, Minangnese like challenges to always be developed people.

“Sometimes, I thought about my life as being a chain of coincidences. It was a coincidence that I was offered a teaching job at Cornell. It was a coincidence I had been accepted to study there. It was a coincidence that, among the mass of bitter experiences I had looking for work, that I had heard they were hiring at HSN. But, on the way home that afternoon, I saw

that the coincidences in person's life were often the result of that person's willingness to accept challenges with open mind. Amid all those challenges, a person had to stay positive and keep trying and trying again." (Fanany, 2015:28-29)

From the quotation above, the writer concludes that Iskandar is the representation of Minangnese who has tendency to absorb knowledge from any environment, he became very open-minded during his *rantau*. It gives value that the one who stay positive and admit wisely the bitterness of life will understand how important life lesson is. Therefore, Iskandar never give up on every challenges that he face. He know well who is he, a Minangnese who seek fortune in foreign land. Hard work mean something, just keep trying and trying till the sun go down from the east.

1.2.3 Minang Proverb As Foundation of Minangnese Life

This culture of *merantau* does not just done without any prior preparation before. Like a building foundation is always there that it is based. The better foundation, the higher buildings can be built . So did Minangnese, in preparing for this life journey of every child get the basic knowledge stock that has always been a grip on the journey through this life, especially when there are no parents who watch and remind what they do. A proverb that is very profound for Minangnese has always been a reminder to prepare a good foundation. Proverb is a brief, simple and popular saying, or a phrase that gives advice and effectively embodies a common place truth based on practical experience or common sense. A proverb may have an allegorical message behind its odd appearance. Proverbs play many roles in society. The first, possibly, most common role that a proverb plays is to educate. Most often tossed around as expert advice in conversation, the innate role to educate people on what might happen if they do something.

"There's no fool like an old fool! So the proverb says", said Iskandar. 'If an old person like me is naive, he's really naive!' It seemed that Iskandar had read Amin's mind. And as he left the office, Amin wonder whether the professor was really as simple as the proverb implied." (Fanany, 2015:57)

From the quotation above, the writer concludes that Minangnese often use proverb under certain condition. The uses of proverb in this case is to give the real portrayal of Iskandar. The meaning of proverb above is that old people are supposed to be wise, so if an old person behaves foolishly, it is worse than a young person behaving foolishly. It seems worse than when a younger person does the same, especially in relationships, as an older person should know better. An old person should have learned from experience not to make the kind of mistakes a young person makes.

1.2.4 Minangnese Language As The Identity

Culture is a defining feature of a person's identity, contributing to how they see themselves and the groups with which they identify Culture may be broadly defined as the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another. Every community, cultural group or ethnic group has its own values, beliefs and ways of living. Language is intrinsic to the expression of culture. As a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it has an important social function and fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity. It is the means by which culture and its traditions and shared values may be conveyed and preserved. Language has a general function to use

as a tool for expression, communication, and tool to conduct integration and social adaptation.

There were many reasons the young Indonesians respected and admired Professor Iskandar. He had lived abroad for decades but his ability to speak his native language, our Minangkabau, had not changed. (Fanany 2015:49)

The quotation above shows that even though Professor Iskandar had lived in a foreign country for a long time, but he still can speak his mother tongue language. It proves to us that Iskandar's identity as a Minangnese still can be recognized by his language. Iskandar understood that language is fundamental to his cultural identity. The unique world is expressed in through language. For this reason, it is important for Iskandar to keep his own language alive. The ability of Professor Iskandar to speak his native language is the representation the identity of Minangnese which still kept by themselves.

4.3 The function of Merantau as Minangnese Local Genius

According to Mochtar Naim and his dissertation titled *Merantau: Minangkabau Voluntary Migration*; he mentioned that he believed Minang people practiced *merantau* also to "learn and understand", following a Minang proverb "*Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*" (our expanded environment will teach us). Therefore, Minang people seek new environments to learn more about things they did not have knowledge of. Due to their curiosity and thirst for knowledge, Minang people who began the *merantau* custom as a part of their *adat* law, then voluntarily *merantau* to teach themselves new knowledge and wisdom. Minang people understood the benefits of exploring the world outside their hometowns.

In *A Gift From Afar*, Minangnese prove that *merantau* is one of the ways to expand their knowledge and to gain degree in education which give them advantages in their life. Ellen, Parker & Bicker (2005) defines knowledge as a knowledge that is associated with a place, a set of experience, and developed by the local people. Knowledge also acquired through mimicry, imitation and experimenting meanwhile day to day practical knowledge gained from trial and error. A comprehensive and integrated knowledge in the realm of tradition and culture. In *A Gift From Afar*, Minangnese prove that *merantau* is one of the ways to expand their knowledge and to gain degree in education which give them advantages in their life. When they are teenagers, they are encouraged to leave their hometown to learn from schools or from experiences out of their hometown so that when they are adults they can return home wise and useful for the society

Amin's coming to America had had nothing to do with Iskandar, but he respected the older man whose hair was turning gray with age. Maybe because he lived outside of Indonesia for so long, Iskandar still clung to a few small ideals based what he heard about his native land from afar. One of them, that he said was within his power as an ordinary professor at one of America's giant universities, was to give other Indonesians the opportunity to experience life in a different world. Iskandar felt that he had been fortunate to have this himself. (Fannay 2015:56-57)

It shows the function of *merantau* that felt by Iskandar. He has more knowledge, become people who respected by others, and he can compete with American. Iskandar realizes that gain knowledge is very important because knowledge will long life. He can invite other young Indonesian to come join him to experience life abroad. This case is the

representation on how *merantau* as Minangnese local genius give such advantages toward Minangnese itself.

CONCLUSION

Seeing the existence of *merantau* as Minangnese local genius as portryed in the Fannay's short story collection *A Gift From Afar*, the writer draws the conclusion based on the research question which has been answered in the previous chapter. The Minangnese local genius seen in *A Gift From Afar* short story collection are about the values and identity. Those values are religious values, Social values, family values, and material values. Meanwhile for the identity of Minangnese that found in *A Gift From Afar* are hard work, positive thinking and sharpen the skill, uphold Minangnese proverb, and Minangnese language.

First is about the values within *merantau*, values serve as the foundation, the reason or motivation in all behavior and actions. Values reflect the quality of action and view one's life in society. One of values that the writer found as the reprsentation of Minangnese characteristics in *A Gift From Afar* short story collection is religious values. Religious values For Minangnese it is important to hold their faith whenever they go. Through religious values Minangnese have basis to run the life in foreign country. In this analysis the writer found two religius values of Minang people which are pray five times on time and preach other people based on Islamic knwoledge. When Minangnese already know the religious values that they believe, then they will understand how to act in the society because society have rules and values should be followed by its member. In this research there are two social values which are social status of young man who return home after *merantau* and the values how to respect other people. Third is family values. Family values play important rule in shaping a good family. The family valuse that found by the writer is the values of sharing and having conversation with their spouse. The forth is material values, seeking material values for family is important because it fulfill the needs inside the family. When the basic needs include food, cloths, settlement, and stuff like that fulfilled, they able to fulfill other needs such as proper education. These are the values that Minangnese brought when they are *merantau*. Because of these kind of values implement by generation to generation of Minangnese, that is why it called as local genius ar local wisdom.

The second representation of Minangnese local genius when they do *merantau* is their identity. In *A Gift From Afar* represents Minangnese as hard worker, positive thinking and sharpen the skill, uphold Minang proverb in their daily life, and can still preserve their native language. These are important for Minangnese to maintain their identity in foreign country because when they can not both maintain their identity and mingle with other culture, they will lose the value of identity itself. Therefore Fanany tries to give representation of certain character as a sample of Minangkabau's identity.

The third is the about the function of local genius itself. In this analysis proves that the values inside Minangnese local genius help them to built their carrer in foreign country. With the values that they have, they able to compete with other culture even American. Minangnese realize that education is important to expand their carrer. Moreover, through upholding the values, they become wiser man. To be a professor and gain PhD title is often gotten by Minangnese in US and Australia besides looking for job. Therefore the writer hopes that through this research, it gives such inspiration toward people to gain success life

in other region especially in foreign country. Also, hopefully Minangnese can sustain their culture and tradition till the end.

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