

TRANSCENDENTAL URGENCY OF LITERATURE**Taufiqurrohman**

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at socializing the importance of using literature. Due to the fact that Indonesian people hold tightly on religion, so this study uses the explanation of literature in transcendental things. The explanation here uses two samples as the topics of transcendental things. Those are literature in Al-Qur'an and in Sufi poems. Result of study on Al-Qur'an shows that God uses literature method. Poem is in every part of Surahs. Prose also exists in many parts of it. Result of study on Sufi poems shows that Sufis love to express their spiritual experiences through poetry. It is proved by the existence of so many Sufi poets in the world throughout history have written poems to express their personal experiences. It is also the fact that they write poems as their medium to get closer to their God. The conclusion can be drawn here is that both Al-Qur'an and religious magnate use method of literature in conveying the teaching. That's why it is urgent for our society to more advance literature.

Keywords: Transcendental, Literature, Al-Qur'an, Sufi Poetry.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mensosialisasikan pentingnya penggunaan sastra. Berkaitan dengan fakta bahwa orang-orang Indonesia yang menempatkan agama sebagai sesuatu yang paling penting dalam kehidupan mereka, maka kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan transendental dalam menjelaskan pentingnya sastra. Penjelasan dalam kajian ini menggunakan dua sampel topik transendental. Dua topik tersebut adalah sastra dalam Al-Qur'an dan dalam puisi-puisi Sufi. Hasil kajian akan topik Al-Qur'an menunjukkan bahwa Tuhan menggunakan po/a sastra dalam menurunkan wahyu. Puisi terdapat di semua surat dalam Al-Qur'an. Prosa juga ada di banyak bagian surat. Hasil kajian terhadap puisi Sufi menunjukkan bahwa para Sufi suka mengekspresikan pengalaman spiritual mereka melalui puisi. Hal ini bisa dibuktikan dari

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adanya banyak tulisan puisi Sufi yang terbentang sepanjang sejarah. Kesimpulan yang bisa diambil adalah bahwa Tuhan lebih memilih sastra untuk menurunkan Al-Qur'an. Selain itu, para tokoh Sufi juga menggunakan po/a puisi dalam berbagi pengalaman spiritual. Dua hal tersebut menunjukkan betapa pentingnya penggunaan sastra bagi manusia dalam kehidupannya.

Kata-kata Kunci: Transendental, Literatur, Al-Qur'an, Puisi Sufi.

This study needs to find the strategic way how to more socialize literature among all people, especially Indonesians. It is going to be achieved because literature, as one of knowledge disciplines, has a right to be known and used closely in people's life.

It is the fact that Indonesian people place transcendental¹ matter as the very important thing in their life. It ensues at the consequence that they take Holy Books as the urgent things for their relation to God and for their guidance in life. In tum, Indonesians see that figures in religion, as the qualified interpreters of Holy Books, are also very vital.

Based on the background above, it is important to find the strategic way how to socialize literature in two strips above, namely socializing literature by describing Holy Books and scholars in religion's like related to literature. As one of Holy Books, Al-Qur'an is used in this study due to the writer's religion and ability. So, in this paper, the writer uses the sample of study from religion Islam, namely Al-Qur'an and Sufi poems.

THE APPROACH AND THE THEORY

Analogy Method

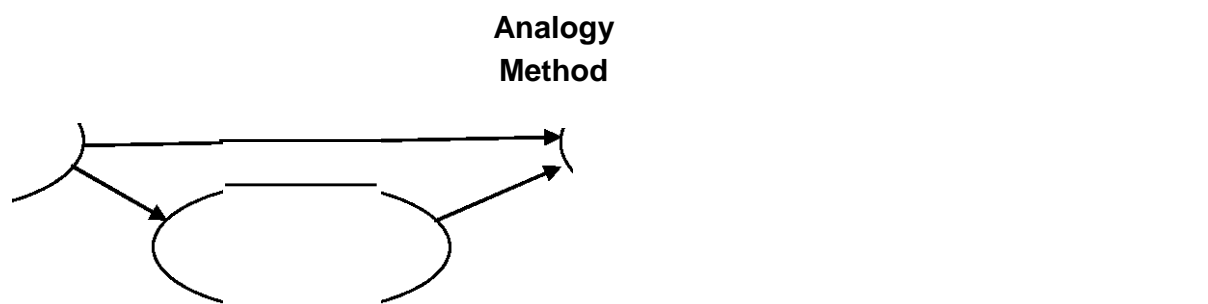
Paper written here uses the approach of literature theory in analyzing the pattern of the contents of Al-Qur'an. It is used by knowing first the literature patterns. Then the literature patterns are analogized into the patterns in Al-Qur'an. The conclusion would be found out next.

Therefore, the method used in this study is analogy method. The subject of

the analogy is the theory of literature, while the object of the analogy is the verses of Al-Qur'a. This thing easily can be illustrated below;

Theory of Literature

Verses of Al-Qur'an



Analogy is often be used by people in the world² but it is seldom be discussed in philosophy books. Analogy method can be popularized by us as a significant thinking method in our daily life. This thing is in accordance with what has been said

by Mayer (1951:616); "Much of epistemology will appear merely as a daydream which may be of historical interest but with no significance for the present." Mayer (1951:617) also said that the philosophy glory doesn't lie in the past but tomorrow. That's why it is very good if we can develop analogy as a very significant thinking method in philosophy for the advancement of our future.

We can define analogy by a sentence as follow (Juthe, 2005:5);

"The Analogue is analogous with the Target-Subject with regard to the Assigned-Predicate if and only if there is one-to-one correspondence between the elements of the Analogue which determine the Assigned-Predicate and the elements of the Target-Subject."

The definition says that analogy is used by seeing one or more similarities (assigned-predicate) between the object of the analogue (target-subject) with the subject of the analogue (analogue). The analysis result of the compared two things lies on the connection of the similarities taken.

Literature Theory

Actually literature is the beauty aspects of language. So there are so many genres of literature, such as wise words, idioms, poetry, prose, play, saying, etc. But based on the variety of existence, literature works are divided into three, namely epic, lyric, and play. It was said by Aristotle in Teeuw (1984:109). This statement means that the most common literature genres used in this world are prose, poem, and play. For Teeuw (1984:108), the three genres are suitable to be applied on the other literary works in the whole world.

The first, epic is a text contains story and the characters' statements. Epic can also be called prose (Noor, 2009:240). The examples of epic are novel, roman, and short story.

Lyric is a literary work of which the speaker is the "I" lyric or the poet. It makes lyric called poem or poetry. Poem normally consists of some stanzas and rhymes. Riffaterre (1978:2) says that language expression exists in poem undergoes displacing of meaning, distorting of meaning, and creating of meaning. Therefore, language in poem is often symbolic or figurative language.

Whereas play is described only in "now" so that it only consists of the characters' statements that are divided into some dialogues and actions (Hartoko,

1986:53). The characters are talking each other to form a new unity of happening. There are also the varied values and personalities of the characters.

Literature History

Meanwhile, in analyzing Sufi poems, this study uses the approach of literature

history. Some productive Sufis in the world history would be told in outline based on the chronology of time. But it also uses some samples of Sufi poems and its content to recognize the feeling of Sufi in writing a poem. The samples of Sufi poems later represent their time allocation in history.

ANALYSIS

Literature in Al-Qur'an

There are many stories told by God in Al-Qur'an. The stories use the varied point of view. Even though the stories are all non-fictions, the pattern used is similar to the prose written by human. Some of the stories are delivered in indirect speech and some others are delivered in direct speech. There are also plot, point of view, theme, setting, characters, and message. Besides, extrinsic aspects such as socio-cultural background of course also influence the forming of the literary works.

What makes first prose is different from the second is that the first never loses its beauty although it is prose. Its prose is also at the same time as the poetry.

One example for the explanation above can be seen in surah³ Yusuf. It is one complete surah using a unity of wonderful story with enchanting poems.

The following is one quote of surah YOusuf's translation in English as the example. It is verse 23-29 (Dawood, 1974:40).

"His master's wife sought to seduce him. She bolted the doors and said: 'Come!'

'Allah forbid!' he replied. 'My Lord has treated me with kindness. Wrongdoers never prosper.'

She made for him, and himself would have yielded to her had he not been shown a veritable sign by his Lord. Thus We warded off from him indecency and evil, for he was one of Our faithful servants.

So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back: they both found her lord near the door. She said: 'What is the (fitting) punishment for one who formed an evil design against thy wife, but prison or a grievous chastisement?'

She cried: 'Shall not the man who sought to violate your wife be thrown into prison or sternly punished?'

Joseph said: 'It was she who sought to seduce me.'

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'If his shirt is torn from the front,' said one of the people, she is speaking the truth and he is lying.'

And when her husband saw Joseph's shirt rent from behind, he said to her: 'This is one of your tricks. Your cunning is elation great indeed! Joseph, say no more about this. Woman, ask pardon for your sin. You have done wrong.'

Based on nine verses above, it can be known that al-Qur'an teaches prose in conveying something. Not only using indirect speech, but those nine verses also use quotations from the characters directly. This model is always used by prose. The characters, Joseph, his master, and his master's wife interact each other. There are also "forward" plot, "first, second and third person" point of view, "saving Joseph's

self from the big sin" theme, 'in his master's home" setting, and a message "to be firm in faith".

About poetry, it can be said that Al-Qur'an is one Holy Book that uses poems in the entire verses. It can be read from the first surah (Al-Baqarah) to the last surah (An-Nas).

Besides, almost in the entire surah, it uses the same and similar rhyme. It is like ...*Tn* and ...*an* many times. The ending of words like ...*as*, ...*d* (dead consonant), ...*an* are also embellish the verses. Then there are many varied rhymes can be read in Al-Qur'an.

The meanings can be taken from the verses are also in layers. It doesn't only contain story but also contain values. There are many layers of meaning or exegesis given by the interpreters and Muslim scholars. They are written in many books. These rhymes and layers of meaning are in line with the theory above about the characteristics of poems.

Take for example surah *Qaf* that consists of forty five verses. In those forty five verses, rhyme *dead consonant* lies in the end of every surahs. The most stated is dead *dal* (d). Surah *Muhammad* that consists of 38 verses uses rhyme *dead mim* (m) in all verses except verse 10 and verse 24 which functions as the rhyme intermezzo by tone *haa*. Even surah *Al-Fath* that consists of 29 verses uses rhyme *tanwin dead fathah* (for instance, *baa/ban* from *qaribaa/qariban* and *maa/man* from *adzimaa/adziman*) in all verses of the surah.

The poetic fact told above is in accordance with the meaning of the verses themselves. Even, the meanings have their own layers. It is proved by the existence

of many layers of verses' meanings delivered by *tafsil'* experts in their books. It is the evidence that poems in Al-Qur'an also have *significance* aspect (second meaning).

Thus, rhyme and meaning aspect indeed exist in Al-Qur'an. They show the beauty of poetry both in form and in meaning. They also show the uniqueness of poetry. They show how to implant layers of meaning in a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a poem text. This beauty and uniqueness aspects of poetry can be called important because it is used by God in giving His teachings. At last, this thing concludes that God teaches His teachings through something beautiful, namely poem.

Poetry by Sufis

Sufis⁵ write poems in order to deepen their Sufi experiences before their God. So Sufis must be present in moral situation they create (Wachid B.S, 2002:179). In

other words, Sufis must be honest in expressing their poems. This is what is called Sufi poetry.

Poetry is used by Sufis throughout history of Islam. In prophet era, there is a famous poet named Labid, one of prophet's companion. His one short poem was praised by prophet as the truest lyric at that time because it touched the most substantial thing for human life, namely dependence totally on Allah. The poem was "*Anything else than Allah are false.*"

In classic era, Schimmel (2011:274) gave the example of the most famous two Sufi poets, namely Ibn al-Farid (1811-1235 AD) as the mystical poet and Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273 AD) as the musical poet. Beside them, there were also Hafiz, Sa'di, Sana'i, Muhammad Shirin Maghribi, and 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani. Their poems have been coloring spiritual books until today.

Below is one example of Sufi poems in Classic era. It is one of Rumi's poems. It is translated into English in *Love's Alchemy: Poems from Sufi Tradition* 2006 page 5.

The Same Language

*To speak the same language
Is kinship and affinity,
yet a person stuck with those*

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*he can't confide in
is trapped like a prisoner
enchained by a lack of understanding*

*It is, indeed, ironic:
There are many people
from India and Turkey
who speak the same language,
while there are countless Turks
who really can't understand one another.*

The universal language is authentic insight.

*To be one in heart is surely superior
to only speaking the same words.*

The poem is both transcendental and universal. It uses the symbol *language* to express the deepest relationship between God and men. Rumi said that if someone, no matter from which backgrounds, has been so closed to God, he would feel that the most important thing is God alone. This is what he said "*The Same Language*". At this poem, Rumi felt that only men's closeness to God could make anyone be universal men.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there were Hamzah Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Sumatra'i in Classic Malay era. In contemporary era, there are also many Sufis poets

like Musthofa Bisri (born in 1944) and Emha Ainun Najib (born in 1953)⁶ from Indonesia. There are also Danielle Abdal Hayy Moore (born in 1940)⁷ and Tiel Aisha Ansari (born in 1964)⁸ as the productive contemporary Sufi poets from United States of America. Finally, there are so many poems are written in many books in this world.

Below is one example of poems in this contemporary era. It is Tiel Aisha Ansari's poem written in her book which was published in 2008, *Knocking from Inside*, page 44.

*Knives of Sorrow, Knives of Joy
I danced over the knives of sorrow.
I fell on the knives of joy and embraced them.
They cut the same, you know –
one in the other's path.*

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*Ice burns like fire, earth moves like wind.
Never settle for half a glass,
drink bitter with sweet,
dive into a dark well and find it full of stars.*

This Sufi poem says about couple theory that is represented by word *sorrow* and *joy*. Tiel says that all things are in pairs. Some relationships amongst them are in contrast. Some are in complement. It is like sorrow and joy in human life. Even though they are contrastive, they are complementary for human life. It is like finding eases (*find it full of stars*) behind difficulties (*dive into a dark well*).

The poem above also explores universal thing for human life. Tiel has a message that human should understand the ins and outs of universe and life, especially at human psychology. If human know the knowledge of the couple theory, they will be wise in achieving life. So the Sufi poem is universal based on the content it was written.

Based on the outline of history and sample of Sufi poems above, it can be known that Sufi share their experiences in their relation to God to the readers and listeners. Although there are many feelings and expressions of Sufis based on the poems they have written, still their poems can be concluded as transcendental and universal. Beside it is proved by the samples of poems above, it is also witnessed by any media and reviews throughout history. So it is taken for granted that literature, represented by poetry, has significant role in this world history.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, prose and poetry are indeed used in Al-Qur'an. So it can be said that God gives His teachings by using literature. Prose and poem are used by God in Al-Qur'an as told above. These things also indicate that God

teaches His teachings through something beautiful, namely poem. This is what mankind also does.

It also can be said that literature is indeed urgent in human life. It is because of the fact that God chose literature in conveying His revelation. If God chooses literature, it is very worthy for human to use literature too. Besides, it is emphasized

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by religion magnates, represented by Sufis, who like to use poems to express their close relationship to God.

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ENDNOTE

¹ In www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/transcendental, transcendental means something related to spiritual realm.

² Even in religious form in Indonesia, analogy is used as the fourth law of Islamic jurisprudence, after *Al-Qur'an*, *Al-Hadits*, and *Ijma'*, by the biggest religion organization in Indonesia, *Nahdlatul Ulama'*, by the name Qiyas.

³ Surah is one name for the part classification of *Al-Qur'an*. There are 114 Surahs in *Al-Qur'an*.

⁴ *Tafsir* is a discipline for meanings of verses of *Al-Qur'an*.

⁵ In book *The Elements of Sufism* (1993:3), Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri said that a Sufi is a Moslem who always rinse his heart, protect it from things grim it, to achieve the point of harmony between him and his Creator.

⁶ It can be seen in Abdul Wachid B.S.' book, *Religiositas Alam (dari Surealisme ke Spiritualisme D. Zawawi Imron)*, year 2002 page 181.

⁷ It can be seen at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=47288>

⁸ Look it up at http://www.famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/iel_aisha_ansari/poems/22914
