

Prophetic Literature in The Poetry Anthology "Makrifat Daun, Daun Makrifat" by Kuntowijoyo

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Received: 26/11/2024

Revised: 29/11/2024

Accepted: 30/11/2024

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Abstract

This research aims to describe and explain the prophetic literature contained in the poetry anthology "Makrifat Daun, Daun Makrifat" by Kuntowijoyo starting from the dimensions of humanization, liberation and transcendence. The method used in this research is descriptive with research results in the form of qualitative data. The primary data source in this research is the poetry anthology "Makrifat Daun, Daun Makrifat" by Kuntowijoyo. Meanwhile, the secondary data source for this research is scientific theories in relevant reading. Thus, this research focuses on words or sentences in poetic stanzas that contain prophetic literature. Data collection steps use listening, note-taking and data classification techniques. Based on the results of the research carried out, several things can be concluded as follows. First, the humanization dimension of prophetic literature includes (1) sincerity and sincerity in carrying out commendable actions, (2) being a person who can benefit others and the environment, showing selfless behavior, (3) the desire to change the world through respect and shaping beautiful history. Second, the prophetic literature dimension of liberation includes (1) freeing oneself or avoiding spiritual alienation, (2) maintaining the quality of *hablumminallah*, (3) respecting freedom in determining the direction and purpose of life, (4) awareness of the transience of life so that one must continue to struggle and try to build wonderful future. Third, the transcendence dimension of prophetic literature includes (1) a person's longing and seriousness for *taqorrub* and seeking divine truth so as to obtain truth, guidance and closeness to the divine, (2) as well as reflection on the journey of life that will return to its origin.

Keywords: prophetic literature, poetry, kuntowijoyo

1. Introduction

Literature is an expression of human feelings and experiences conveyed through written or spoken forms, often infused with imaginative elements. According to A. Teeuw (as cited in Rofiq & Af'idah, 2022), the term "literature" originates from the Sanskrit word *Shastra*, where *Shas* means to teach, guide, or instruct, and the suffix *-tra* refers to a tool or medium. Lexically, literature can thus be defined as a tool or medium for teaching, such as instructional books (*silapasastra* for architecture or *kamasastra* for romance). Kurniawan (as cited in Satinem, 2019)

explains that literature is a multifaceted concept that cannot be understood from a single perspective. Similarly, Asngadi Rofiq (2022: 285) describes literature as a form of writing that embodies beauty, lessons, and moral guidance intended to influence readers. From these perspectives, it can be concluded that literature is a work, either written or oral, that encompasses elements of beauty, ideas, and messages, serving as an expressive medium for authors to impact their readers.

Literature serves as a medium to depict social life and has become a national identity expressed through creative works. Literary works are a type of writing that conveys clear meanings, expressions, and interpretations of the words employed in their composition (Juwati, 2017: 73). Literary creations represent social realities, presented in texts that mirror various societal phenomena experienced by their authors. These works often include educational, religious, cultural, social, moral, and other values. Among the forms of literature, poetry stands out as a medium that combines high aesthetic value and profound meaning through its language.

Dede Siti F. (2019) explains that poetry is often described as a poet's outpouring of thoughts and emotions about the realities of life. Similarly, Alpiyah (2019:215) defines poetry as a written work that conveys experiences, imagination, and meaningful impressions through indirect language. Thus, poetry can be understood as the poet's emotional expression, presented in written form, aiming to influence readers through rhythmic words that reflect the realities of life.

The journey of poetry in Indonesia has produced numerous exceptional works, each with its unique nuances. One prominent Indonesian writer, Kuntowijoyo, focused on transcendental themes and integrated social issues into his religiously inspired verses. For Kuntowijoyo, literary works should balance humanity and divinity, social and spiritual aspects, historical activism and religious experiences, as well as worldly and spiritual dimensions. This type of literature is referred to as prophetic literature.

Linguistically, the term *prophetic* derives from the English word "prophet," meaning a messenger or someone embodying the characteristics, behavior, and teachings of a prophet (Cahyono, 2021:213). A prophet exemplifies noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*) through words and actions, serving as a role model and guiding their followers in living according to Islamic values. The concept of prophetic literature was introduced by Kuntowijoyo through his framework of Prophetic Social Sciences (PSS), which seeks not only to analyze and transform social phenomena but also to guide the direction of change. Prophetic literature, also known as transcendental literature, aspires to elevate human life toward greater meaning (Gunta Wirawan, 2019).

The social science conceptualized by Kuntowijoyo originates from his reflection on *Surah Ali Imran* (3:110), which states:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient."

From this verse, Kuntowijoyo derived the idea that human existence within history (*ukhrijat linnas*) encompasses three core principles: *amar ma'ruf* (humanization), *nahi munkar* (liberation), and *tu'minunabillah* (transcendence).

Humanization represents the effort to restore humanity's essence and dignity. It is a derivative of *amar ma'ruf*, which linguistically means advocating or upholding goodness. This concept involves uncovering, elevating, and realizing the positive dimensions and potentials (*ma'ruf*) inherent in every individual. In contemporary society, humanization is critically needed due to signs of dehumanization, such as the emergence of mechanized humans, mass culture, moral decline, and other concerning phenomena. Humanization seeks to address these challenges by fostering the values of compassion, understanding, and human dignity in social life.

Liberation is a creative interpretation of *nahi munkar*, which means preventing or prohibiting actions that can harm individuals or the surrounding environment. The term *liber* signifies freedom, specifically liberation from ignorance, oppression, or poverty. In the context of Prophetic Social Sciences, the liberative value aims to free humanity from the shackles of evil, cruelty, poverty, consciousness hegemony, or oppression by dominant structures (Arum K., 2018).

Transcendence, terminologically derived from *tu'minunabillah*, means faith in Allah SWT. This aspect of transcendence is a fundamental element of Islamic social teachings embedded in Prophetic Social Sciences (PSS) and serves as the foundation for the other two aspects: humanization and liberation. These three elements are interdependent, each playing a vital and interconnected role.

In literature, the prophetic spirit is considered essential as it bridges the social and transcendental dimensions within a work of art (Kusnita, 2020). Prophetic literature serves as a benchmark for rediscovering human identity by addressing fundamental issues rooted in truth. Kuntowijoyo's poetry collection *Makrifat Daun Daun Makrifat* (MDDM) comprises 47 short verses imbued with a strong sense of religiosity while maintaining an emphasis on horizontal life relations. This collection stands as one of Kuntowijoyo's literary works that embodies profound prophetic values.

Based on the explanation above, the author is intrigued to explore directly the prophetic ideas proposed by this literary scholar through his works. This study focuses on the prophetic elements present in Kuntowijoyo's poetry anthology titled *Makrifat Daun Daun Makrifat* (MDDM). The purpose of this research is to describe and analyze the prophetic elements in the MDDM anthology, particularly from the dimensions of humanization, liberation, and transcendence. The findings of this research are expected to provide theoretical contributions by enriching and complementing the existing body of knowledge in the field.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, which focuses on generating analyses that are not statistical or quantified in nature. Qualitative research aims to describe and understand social phenomena through words and language rather than numbers (Rofiq & Af'idah, 2022). The type of research adopted is descriptive, which seeks to depict conditions as they are concerning social phenomena that serve as the focus of the study. This aligns with the objective of this research: to

describe the prophetic literature elements found in Kuntowijoyo's poetry anthology *Makrifat Daun Daun Makrifat* (MDDM).

The primary data source in this study is the poetry anthology *Makrifat Daun Daun Makrifat* by Kuntowijoyo. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources consist of relevant theoretical readings. The data used include words, sentences, or verses from the MDDM anthology that contain prophetic elements. Data collection is conducted using the *listening* technique, which involves reading and comprehending the meanings embedded in the verses of the poetry. This is followed by the *noting* technique, where words or verses containing prophetic values are classified. Subsequently, the data are identified and reclassified based on the three dimensions of prophetic literature as proposed by Kuntowijoyo: humanization, liberation, and transcendence.

3. Results and Discussion

Prophetic literature is deeply connected to the journey of humanity in life, encompassing both worldly (*dunyawiyah*) and spiritual (*ukhrawiyah*) aspects. As previously discussed, this journey is encapsulated in three core categories: (1) humanization, the principle of humanizing humans; (2) liberation, the pursuit of freedom for a better social quality of life; and (3) transcendence, the vertical connection with the divine. The findings of this study elaborate on the prophetic literature elements found in Kuntowijoyo's poetry anthology *Makrifat Daun Daun Makrifat* (MDDM), which encompasses these three dimensions: humanization, liberation, and transcendence.

3.1 Humanization Dimension

The primary objective of humanization is to uphold the dignity of humanity. Evidence of humanization in the MDDM anthology is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Dengan ikhlas
Kutanam pohon untuk burung
Yang sanggup
Memuji tuhan dengan sempurna
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 7)

This verse reflects a profound respect for nature and creatures beyond humanity, emphasizing a collective responsibility to create harmony and serve others. Planting a tree for birds symbolizes an altruistic act to ensure life and sustenance for other beings, which mirrors the essence of humanizing humanity. It highlights the significance of nurturing life not only for oneself but for the collective benefit, embodying the principle of *amar ma'ruf* or advocating goodness.

The quoted verse is a part of the subheading in the poem titled "*Sajak-sajak yang Dimulai dengan Bait al-Barzanji*". The use of the word *ikhlas* (sincerity) in the verse highlights pure intentions and selflessness. It portrays sincerity as a noble act performed without expecting any reward or recognition from others. The act of planting a tree in this excerpt symbolizes an effort to provide life and sustenance to the surrounding environment, representing sustainability and creating long-term positive impacts.

This verse reflects the value of selfless behavior that significantly benefits others and the environment. It aligns with the concept narrated by At-Thabari about the best kind of people, *khoirunnas anfa'uhum linnas*, which means "the best of humans are those who bring the most benefit to others." The poem thus emphasizes the importance of altruistic actions, underscoring how such deeds contribute meaningfully to societal and environmental well-being.

*Aku ingin
Meletakkan sekuntum sajak
Di makam nabi
Supaya sejarah menjadi jinak
Dan mengirim sepasang merpati*
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 5)

The excerpt is part of Subheading 1.3 in the poem "*Sajak-sajak yang Dimulai dengan Bait al-Barzanji*", specifically the second stanza. This stanza conveys the poet's deep connection to history, spirituality, and hope. The phrase *sekuntum sajak* symbolizes beautiful and meaningful words, representing a tribute or offering. Here, the use of *sajak* reflects an act of reverence or homage to something profound.

The term *makam nabi* refers to the final resting place of a prophet, traditionally regarded as a sacred and venerated site where prayers are offered. This highlights the poet's respect and devotion. The last two lines express hope for a peaceful and harmonious history, with the pair of doves serving as a symbol of peace. The mention of *sejarah* (history) suggests the present state, which will eventually become the history of the future.

Overall, this stanza reflects a deep desire to connect with the values and teachings of the prophet through acts of reverence and hope, aspiring for a history that transforms into one of peace. It implies that the poet envisions a positive impact on human history driven by a profound spiritual longing and respect, symbolizing the aspiration to change the world through spiritual values and homage.

3.2 Liberation Dimension

The **Liberation Dimension (Liberasi)**, as derived from the concept of *nahi munkar*, focuses on freeing individuals from harmful elements, both externally and internally. The concept of *liberasi* in the poem is vividly represented in the following excerpt:

*Suatu hari ku temukan
Burung di sangkar termenung membungkam
Aku bertanya dan dengan sedih dia mengatakan
Mereka yang melupakan Tuhan
Tak berhak mendengar burung bernyanyi*
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 55)

This excerpt is from the poem "*Pertentangan ialah hukum surgawi*" and presents the idea of liberation through the imagery of a bird trapped in a cage. The *burung di sangkar* (bird in a

cage) symbolizes the soul that is confined and deprived of true freedom. The phrase *termenung membungkam* reflects a deep sadness or silence caused by something that obstructs the freedom to express oneself.

The following lines explain why the bird chooses to remain silent, emphasizing the idea that those who forget God lose their entitlement to the beauty and serenity of life. The poem conveys a powerful message about the importance of maintaining a strong spiritual connection, practicing self-reflection (*muhasabatun nafsi*), and liberating oneself from spiritual alienation. Without this connection, one loses a vital aspect of existence, symbolized here by the bird's inability to sing.

In this context, the poem encourages readers to free themselves from spiritual neglect, as the loss of this connection leads to inner turmoil, isolation, and a lack of peace, highlighting the liberating power of spiritual awareness and connection to God.

*Yang membeku bukan hanya es
Kau tahu semua yang bergerak akan berhenti
Engkau penguasa mata angin
Usirlah senja
Sebagai orang merdeka
Engkau pun punya hak
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 30)*

The phrase "*Yang membeku bukan hanya es*" (what freezes is not just ice) suggests that the concept of being "frozen" or immobilized goes beyond physical matter; it extends to emotions, thoughts, or social circumstances. The reference to freezing here symbolizes a loss of freedom, creativity, or action, and points to the idea that life itself, like a moving object, will eventually come to a stop. This acknowledgment of life's impermanence creates space for individuals to take control of their path, thus reflecting on the need to guide one's life consciously.

In the following lines, "*Engkau penguasa mata angin / Usirlah senja*" (You are the ruler of the wind's direction / Drive away the dusk), the speaker emphasizes individual power and freedom. The "ruler of the wind" signifies the ability to control one's direction in life, navigating through its challenges with purpose and determination. The metaphor of driving away the dusk (symbolizing darkness, despair, or the end of something) calls on the individual to embrace their freedom and exercise their rights to shape their own future.

The poem encourages readers to value the freedom and rights they have in life, urging them to strive and act with full intention and effort to achieve the life they desire, regardless of inevitable challenges. The freedom to choose one's path is a significant theme, showing that, despite life's inherent uncertainties, individuals have the power to influence their own fate.

3.3 Dimension of Transcendence

Transcendence refers to the effort to return oneself to the true nature of humanity. An excerpt from the poetry anthology *MDDM* that illustrates the aspect of transcendence is as follows:

*Aku ingin
Jadi pencuri
Yang lupa menutup jendela
Ketika menyelinap ke rumah Tuhan
dan tertangkap*
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 9)

This excerpt is from subheading 1.7 under the title "Sajak-sajak yang dimulai dengan bait al-Barzanji" The metaphor of the thief here likens a person trying to take something secretly or without permission. The second line illustrates a state of negligence or the inability to conceal the actions taken. The third line portrays the thief's attempt to sneak into God's house, symbolizing a person striving to get closer to divine truth (*taqorrub*). In the end, the thief is caught, meaning that the effort to approach God (truth) is eventually revealed. This excerpt describes a person's longing and earnestness in seeking divine truth, even through risky means. However, in the end, their efforts result in what they sought: discovering the truth, receiving guidance, and fulfilling the longing by drawing closer to the divine.

*di ujung makrifat
bersama malaikat
ketika angin dan ruh
dan Hu terjatuh
dan Engkau*
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 42)

This excerpt carries profound meaning about spiritual recognition and the mystical experience of an individual. The achievement of "makrifat" reflects that one has reached the highest level of recognition and deep knowledge of the divine. The phrase "with the angels" signifies that an individual who has reached the degree of divine knowledge (*makrifatulloh*) will always be accompanied, guided, and directed in their spiritual journey. The word "wind" represents the breath of life or an unseen force that can be felt, while "soul" refers to the spirit or life force, a gift from the Creator. The term "Hu" indicates the divine presence, which in Islamic tradition is often used in dhikr to remember God. The personal experience is shown in the word "You," suggesting that anyone who brings themselves closer to deep knowledge of the divine will inevitably reach the true recognition of God (*makrifatulloh*).

*yang selalu ialah alif lam mim
yang sempurna ialah kabut
ketika menyebut nun
lalu menyelinap ke laut
marhaban. Ahlan wasahlan*
(Kuntowijoyo, hal. 51)

This excerpt is a fragment from the poem titled "Pertentangan ialah hukum surgawi" with subtitle 43. Overall, the poem reflects spiritual and mystical concepts. This can be seen in the use of "alif lam mim," which symbolizes eternity. In the Islamic context, "alif lam mim" refers to the disjointed letters at the beginning of several surahs in the Qur'an, considered divine secrets (only Allah knows their meaning). These letters symbolize the eternal presence of God or the mystery of life. Another symbol is the word "mist," which signifies something that is hidden, unclear, and mysterious. The line "slipping into the sea" represents a journey back to its origin. The sea symbolizes depth, tranquility, and infinity. Overall, this verse reflects the mystery of life's journey and eternal existence, which ultimately returns to its origin and is welcomed (*marhaban, ahlan wasahlan*) like a soul returning to the Creator.

4. Conclusion

In a literary work, the prophetic spirit is considered important. This is because the prophetic dimension plays a central role in connecting the social dimension with the transcendental dimension within a work of literature. Prophetic literature can serve as a benchmark for the discovery of human identity by addressing fundamental issues grounded in truth. The poetry collection *Makrifat Daun, Daun Makrifat* (MDDM) by Kuntowijoyo contains 47 short poems that carry a strong religious essence while also acknowledging the horizontal aspects of life.

Based on the research conducted on the poetry anthology *Makrifat Daun, Daun Makrifat* by Kuntowijoyo, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, in the dimension of humanization in prophetic literature, it includes: (1) sincerity and genuineness in performing virtuous actions, (2) becoming a person who is beneficial to others and the environment, showing selflessness, (3) the desire to change the world through respect and creating a beautiful history. Second, in the dimension of liberation, it includes: (1) freeing oneself or avoiding spiritual alienation, (2) maintaining the quality of *hablumminalloh* (relationship with God), (3) appreciating freedom in determining one's direction and life goals, (4) awareness of the transient nature of life, thus continuing to strive and work towards building a beautiful future. Third, in the dimension of transcendence, it includes: (1) longing and seriousness for taqorrub in seeking closeness to God and truth, ultimately attaining truth, guidance, and closeness to the divine, and (2) a reflection of the life journey that eventually returns to its origin.

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