

## Understanding of Theoretical Foundation with Islamic Values on Malaysian Literary Theory

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### Abstract

This paper aims to examine the essence of theoretical foundation in the literary theory from the Islamic values. With getting a clear relationship between literature and Islam, understanding conditions, functions and goals of literature itself in Islam would enable the strategic theory as a way in the law to make the flow to bring all followers of literature, works and audiences to the perfection of human life. Through the literature, the perfection in the sight of God is true and eternal in putting views and assumptions on the right path (Islam) is in line with the demands of Islam itself. The values could be viewed into *al-ihsan* (goodness, beauty, perfection and beauty) in all things. *Tawhid* is the fundamental problem that is the focus and the idea of thought begin and end, while the three important aspects of science, charity and faith in the ideals behind the Malay Islamic literary theory. The critique practices, on the other hand, reach a holistic literary space and reach the basis of metaphysics.

**Keywords:** Islamic value, theoretical foundation, Malaysian literacy theory

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### Introduction

In general, the theories of modern Western literature have entered the world of Malay literature in Malaysia since the early 1950s. The presence of these theories was somewhat later compared to the development of criticism that had begun earlier than that, namely around the 1930s and

1940s (Ali, 2018). However, literary criticism that arises in this early stage occurs on a small scale and does not have high value (Awang, 1997). In the 1960s and 1980s, theories began to gain a foothold and become part of the family of the Malaysian Malay literature. As a result, there are several literary figures such as Kassim Ahmad, A. Samad Said, Ali Ahmad, Nurazami Kuntum, Shahnnon Ahmad, Mana Sikana began to talk about this literary theory. While among creative writers and literary critic Malays are capable of mastering science and translate theory into action pen creative writing and literary criticism. According to Sahlan Mohd Saman (1997), these theories are practiced and disseminated among the younger generation of young critics, whether through lectures, workshops or through their critical writings that can be read in magazines, especially Literary Council magazine.

Almost thirty years of theories of hegemonic Western literature Malay literature, especially in the field of theory and criticism, then the dean of the 1980s that new Malay Muslim scholars are aware there are many weaknesses and shortcomings of Western literary theories that (Ali, AH, and Ismail, K. (2013). Hashim Awang (1997), explains the theories of Western literature is incomplete, biased and pay attention to the one aspect. Where Sikana (2005) also saw the domination of Western theories in Malay literature as an unusual, as Western theories have been emitting conception Malay literature that is not self-esteem and less in line with the socio-cultural context in the country.

Awareness of the need to have literary theory and the theory of criticism itself begins to sow the atmosphere. The tendency to adopt new approaches in the field of literary criticism is alive and well. There were also loud voices calling for literary criticism to be applied with religious values, asserting Islamic values (Hashim Awang,1997). The main issue to be fundamental weakness of Western theory as a means of criticizing the Malay literary text is separation from Islamic and Malay elements which are the backbone of all processes *penghasilan* work by the author of the Malay Muslim Malays. Malay literature is also an educational platform of education, moral and civic very important and effective way to help the creative process (Abdul Halim, et al, 2020).

## **PROBLEMS**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was an Islamic literary polemic between Shahnnon and Kassim Ahamd. These two literary figures argue scientifically through their writings published in series in the magazine *Dewan Sastera*. The debate within the framework of theoretical

insights to seed accelerate the construction of literary theories rooted in the values of Islam and Malay identity.

In 1989, came the theoretical ideas about the concept of beauty in Malay literature submitted by Muhammad Haji Salleh. These ideas fit in a little book called poetic Malay Literature: A judgment is published by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1989. The idea was formulated in the name of Malay literature poetics are the result of research undertaken by Muhammad Haji Salleh.

After Muhammad Haji Salleh, there are also some prominent thinkers, namely Mohd Affandi Hassan literature with the idea of Aesthetic Education of Tawheed Approach (1992), Shafie Abu Bakar with Takmilah Theory and Methodology Hashim Awang theory Malay (1992). In the mid-1990s also appeared Abdul Rahman Napiah or Mana Sikana who did a lot of research and reading to find ideas and experiences as the core of authorship idealism. It was on this principle and belief in idealism that he finally put forward the Theory of Textualism. Sohaimi Abd Aziz also contributed to the development of Malay literature theory by presenting the theoretical sense, phenomenology in (1994) through studies at the masters who then catch a doctorate.

These developments managed to grow and turn on another branch of science study of Malay literature, especially in the field of literary theory and criticism in Malaysia (Abdul Halim Ali.2001). At the time these theoretical ideas were first introduced and discussed, they were also taught as subjects in public higher education institutions such as Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

In general, the figures who drive the effort to generate ideas for the construction of these literary theories are thinkers, highly qualified academics abroad and within the country. Discovery of new ideas turned into research-based theoretical ideas. Muhammad Haji Salleh who gave birth to the theory of poetic Literature Festival is the result of research funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and SMEs. Shafie Abu Bakar, on the other hand, who came up with the idea of Takmilah theory is a further discovery from the study of the book of Wisdom. While Sohaimi Abd Aziz who introduced the theory of Taste-Phenomenology has the results of his research at the undergraduate level.

The development and growth of literary theory in Malaysia did not stop with some early figures, instead continued with several other figures such as Mohamad Mokhtar Hassan who introduced the concept of Keyword Conceptual (2005), Mohd Yusuf Hassan with the idea of

4L Integrated Thinking System (2004), A.Wahab Ali with the theory of Heritage Literature (2015), Rahman Shaari with the theory of Shift of Meaning (2016) and A.Halim Ali with the theory of Integrated Aesthetics (2010).

A very interesting thing of the development and progress of literary theories in Malaysia is the accumulation of ideas that gave birth to ICCV concepts, basic theory and characteristics of the elements in the Islamic religion and Malay identity. It is very significant to note in Takmilah theory, the theory of French Methodology, theory and the theory of Aesthetics Integrated Systems Integrated 4L thoughts. Not something that is commonly found in the literary history of literature, the elements of Islamic religious values are made the core on which theoretical ideas are based. Even more interesting is that these theories have been used in various academic studies both at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree levels. So is the use of these theories in academic writing for seminars and conferences, discourses and forums at the national and international levels. Also taught at several Asian universities such as Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Singapore.

This matter is very important to refine and investigate to prove the extent to which Malaysian literary theories are different or have similarities with Western literary theories. If this can be proven, then Malaysian literary theories have new and unique values that give an important 'mark mark' that makes Malaysian literary theory comparable or better compared to Western literary theories.

Malay literary criticism by Ungku Maimunah is also writing about the literature that affect the development of reading and literature, including the publication of a literary work (Rahman Shaari.1994.11). Ungku Maimunah opinionated, aspects of literary development also involved as a judgment based on the particular circumstances prevailing in Malay literature itself (Rahman Shaari.1994.10). Ahmad Kamal Abdullah, et al (1990) also explained:

‘Criticism should contain features such as critical observation, focus on both literal and implicit texts, appreciation of the beauty and power of the work, evaluating, comparing, pointing out errors with the intention of improving the work, benefiting the reader and all other researchers. Such treatment must be made with certain approaches within the literary realm itself.’

The above definition is the result of blending the definition of literary criticism from the West which is adapted to the views and needs of the Malay literary audience. From these definitions, Malay literary criticism looks more comprehensive meaning than literary criticism in Western literature focuses more geared textually gusted. The emphasis on literary criticism is the

development of Malay literature. Hence, the Malay literary criticism not simply turn instead of text, but also bring literature itself to the progress of literature and relate to aspects that are beyond the text.

Hence the importance of Malay literary theory, which is to meet the needs in the field of literary criticism Malay itself, which is characterized by Mana Sikana as identity and in line with the country's socio-cultural context. Theories of Western literature and criticism may not be able to reach a height of philosophy of life of the Malays and Islam.

### **ISLAM AS THE FOUNDATION OF THEORY BUILDING**

The foundation in the context of this title means the foundation on which a literary theory is based on its construction. Modern theories of Western literature are founded on the basis of textuality, while the theories of postmodern literature move on the basis of deconstruction. Instead, the Malay literary theories founded on three grounds, namely, the foundation of religion (Islam), Malay national identity theory and criticism. This paper will examine the position of three theories, namely the theory of Takmilah, Aesthetic Education from the Tauhid Approach and Methodology built on the basis of Islam.

Issues related to the religion of Islam is already appearing in traditional Malay literary works. According to Ismail Hamid (1990) missionary impulse and the application of the values of Islam in the Malay community had contributed to the birth of an Islamic Malay literature. Most of the works are types of tales transcribed from Arabic literature, especially stories about the Prophet Muhammad.

However, the reform movement in French literature and criticism of its long heritage has led a revolt against the old Malay culture to the Malay literary writing is no longer seek inspiration from the Islamic cultural resources (Ismail Hamid.1990.122). Islam is not used as a vehicle or disclosure policy priority under the Malay literature either or post-independence era. The influx and influence of theories from the West drown out the role of Islam itself.

Obviously, modernism saw the rejection of Islam in the Malay literature, as modernism which marginalises the moral teachings and killing living in European society in the early 20th century. However, this situation changed by the 1970s, when the desire to return to Islam began to be felt. Ustaz Yusof Zaky, Shahnnon Ahmad, Uthman El-Muhammady and Kamal Hassan are among the important figures behind the restoration of Islamic literature.

As a result of the call, many seminars and colloquiums on Islamic literature were held. Many factors that helped this situation develop, among them are the emergence of the Islamic revival era in Southeast Asia, the influence of Islamic movements from the Middle East and the emergence of Islamic-based bodies in the country such as ABIM, government involvement and the establishment of institutions such as Dewan Bahasa Pustaka (Shafie Abu Bakar, 2000: 432).

These developments have changed the stance and attitude of many Malay literary figures that were previously very thick with Western literature. Shahnon Ahmad was the earliest figure who separated himself from Western theories and declared himself a fan and connoisseur of Islamic literature. Some poets of the 80s such as Kemala, Suhaimi Haji Muhammad have also turned to Islamic poetry.

Islam is no longer seen from a narrow angle that is limited to the chapters of jurisprudence and special worship alone. Islam was believed by many scholars and literary figures Malays at that time as the culmination of a search that can lead to grave audience. Letters to the Malays who are Muslims are not visible on the nature, form and structure of the building literature alone, but it is closely related to liability to the side of the Creator, the two associations, namely the relationship slave, an author fellow servants and relations slave with God.

Some Malay literary figures such as Ustaz Yusof Yaacob Zaki, Uthman El-Muhammady, Kamal Hassan has pioneered the idea of theoretical literature on Islam, by giving specific definitions of Islamic literature. Yusof Zaky Yaacob, for example, sees Islamic literature as dakwah literature, Uthman El-Muhammady thinks that Islamic literature is Mukaddas literature, Kamal Hassan thinks that Islamic literature is literature born from writers who are committed to the Islamic view and value system, while Ismail Ibrahim states Islamic literature is the result of writing based on monotheism (Shafie Abu Bakar.2000.432).

Shahnon Ahmad enters the theoretical boundaries and more seriously when he talks about the concept of Islamic literature in depth through his book entitled `Islamic Literature and Ethics`. Shahnon asserted that Islamic literature is literature because of Allah and wisdom to all human beings (Shahnon Ahmad.1981: 3). Based on human nature as a servant of Allah (abdullah-abdullah), then we only carry out our role in literary activities as one of the sacred activities of tathidup (Shahnon Ahmad.1981: 122).

Down the views expressed by some Malay literary figures, we certainly can smell the theoretical start to seed. But more important than that is the compatibility of their views which is consciously based on the foundation of Islam. Islamic terms such as da'wah, makaddas,

tauhid and hikmah are Islamic terms that are specifically chosen to describe Islamic literature from the point of view of meaning.

Some new leaders who have contributed significantly to the building of Malay Islamic literary theory after Shannon was Mohd Affandi Hassan Shafie Abu Bakar Hashim Awang. The three leaders were formulating this idea teorikal Malay literature on the basis of religion. Mohd Affandi Hassan as early as his speech has set his stance on the Islamic path. He said:

'We should take advantage of all the world best literary works in a comprehensive aesthetic education curriculum, which the basis is the absolute values of the teachings of monotheism. With that the trial of Islamic literature will be clearer, more directed to understand the Islamic worldview in art with a monotheistic approach' (Mohd Affandi Hassan, 1992).

To ensure that the idea of aesthetic education is true on the basis of Islam, Affandi defines aesthetic education as a manners education that includes three aspects of human life (Mohd Affandi Hassan, 1992). Clearly, literature becomes material, education, while education as a tool and Islamic manners as an aesthetic goal. So aesthetic education in the intended sense will examine the literary work in terms of its meaning to the formation of civilized human life (Mohd Affandi Hassan, 1992).

When we connect this concept of aesthetic education, then we will find that, it is based on the Islamic aesthetic foundation. Bukhari in his narration presented the hadith of the Prophet which means that Allah is Beautiful. She loves Beauty. In one sense a set of Arabic poetry is mentioned:

The beauty (beauty) of a person is not because her jewellery, but indeed the beauty is beauty because of knowledge and polite manners (Mohd Kamal Hassan, 1979).

Clearly, the concept of aesthetics in Mohd Affandi's theoretical idea is based on Islamic aesthetics which contains elements and images of the Beauty of God reflected in His Essence such as *Jamal* (beautiful, beauty), *nazif* (clean), *Karim* (Noble) and af'al, He is like *Tayyib* (good), *Jawad* (philanthropist), *Rahmat* (Grace) who all support all the elements of beauty in his world. Undoubtedly, Mohd Affandi put the idea of esthetical education on the right track, embodied from its true source, full of truth and convincing.

The definition of aesthetics given is far different from the concept of aesthetics understood by Western scholars. Western scholars understand aesthetics as something related to 'beauty' or 'beautiful' which is not based on any solid source and foundation. Mohd Affandi also discusses

the function of literature from a Western and Islamic point of view. According to Mohd Affandi:

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Shafie put forward the term *Takmilah* to complete the literal meaning of his literary theory based on Islam. *Takmilah* means to make more perfect (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1997). Shafie uses this term to see at an early stage that literature and the wider art that emphasizes beauty, namely aesthetics. The peak of beauty seen by this theory is Beauty which is an attribute in the essence of Allah (al-Jamal) itself.

The term *Takmilah* is in itself related to the nature of Allah whose literary characteristics depart from it leading to *Takmilah* (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1997). Based on this term, Shafie believes that, all the process of creation (creators, works and audiences) is a process leading to perfection. The perfection of the work in the Islamic context we can understand as all the behaviors, intentions and utterances involved and involved in the process of the work are ultimately headed and directed or directed to the central of Islam which is monotheism.

Literature in the framework of monotheism is in the same position as other sciences that are not out of the field of Islam. This means that the rhythm and rhythm of literature should be controlled so that it is on the right track and in line with the demands of monotheism. Any conflict with the beliefs, laws, laws and values of Islam, in fact it is contrary to the principle of monotheism (Shafie Abu Bakar, 1997).

In order to refine and interpret this theory to function as a theory of Islamic literary criticism, Shafie presents some theoretical principles as a basis for criticism. These principles are the



principle of Divinity, which is *Kamal*, the principle of Apostolic which is *Kamil*, the Principle of Islam which is *Akmal*, the principle of knowledge with literature which is *takamul*, the principle of literature which is aesthetic and *takmilah* nature, the principle of creator who should be self-deprecating and the principle of audience which is the nature of perfect human nature (Shafie Abu Bakar.1997).

In this regard, *Takmilah* theory acts with two very familiar roles, namely connecting all aspects involved in the process of creation with God. The beauty embodied in a literary work should lead to the true beauty so that the nature of the literature looks perfect. Shafie explained that the role is supportive and complete and inseparable (Ungku Maimunah, 1997).

*Takmilah*'s theory projects its position on the basis of Islam in the framework of the philosophy of oneness that is linked and linked by some attributes of God such as *Kamal*, *Jamal*, '*Alim*, *Qadir*, *Qahhar* and *Jalal*, then passes through the attributes of the Prophet, Islam and knowledge and then penetrates into every space of literary practice (involving artists, works and audiences). His critique practice proves a 'journey home' from the practice of literature (involving artists, works and audiences) to the level of knowledge, so that literary knowledge is useful and true, then adapts at the apostolic level, so that the creator or audience reaches the level of *Kamil* human beings and finally linked on monotheism which is the culmination of its perfection.

Understanding the theory of *Takmilah*, we will be able to identify and know the role of the philosophy of oneness (as the bedrock of Islam) in literary activities. This *Takmilah* theory gives clarity to the direction and purpose of the literature itself (Ungku Maimunah.1997).

Understanding the idea of Aesthetic Education from the Approach of Tawhid by Mohd Affandi and Theory of *Takmilah* by Shafie Abu Bakar, then we can conclude that monotheism is the real way to all literary activities, because they have laid the groundwork of thought in line with Islamic demands. After a long-lost soul Islamic Malay literature, both these figures appear to restore the soul to the place of origin. According to Affandi (1992) the Islamic soul was lost when there was a massive secularization of literature, especially after the Second World War.

Clearly, Shafie Abu Bakar and Mohd Affandi Hassan have a literary goal that is worship, rewarding and gaining the pleasure of Allah SWT. That is the ultimate goal of all the literary activities they desire, in line with the concept of human devotion which is a servant in the sight of God in accordance with His Word means 'I made jinn and humans, in order to obey only to Allah' (Al-Quran Karim, Adz- Dzaariyaat: 56).

Another theory is the theory of Malay literature Malay Methodology proposed by Hashim Awang. Malay Methodology is divided into two methodologies as an important substance, namely Methodology and Methodology Religious Naturalists. In each of these methods there are also approaches that point to the theoretical path.

Although this theory called Methodology Malay, but aspects of the religion (Islam) is also involved in an integrated manner. There are two runways that are in this theory to approach and understand the Malay literature, which is linked to the concept of Malay and Islam as the natural complement.

Understanding Award for Hashim Awang text requires the reader to observe how steeped in socio-cultural and community life of the system itself. Natural factors have contributed to the creation of value and image, sense and identity of the Malays their intimacy with life around him. The result of that intimacy gives birth to high-value aesthetic expressions. Most notably the utterance, this reaction is evoked in various forms of modern literature, more liberal literature, but still preserves the elements of beauty in the metaphorical tone of Barat (Hashim Awang, 1997).

As a Malay Muslim, the pronouncements must be connected and associated with Islam which is their belief. Both of these elements in Hashim, is the main track to see, appreciate and understand the Malay literature itself. As Mohd Affandi and Shafie Abu Bakar Hashim Awang also set a goal of theory and criticism RASIS Malay-based methodologies, namely in order to highlight the true research and understanding of the features of modern Malay literature (Ali, 2018).

Finally, a theory that emerged in 2010 is the theory of Integrated Aesthetics put forward by Abdul Halim Ali. This theory was originally a conceptual framework used in academic studies at a doctorate in philosophy in 2010. The core of the idea is based on the concept of beauty reflected in the beauty of language and religious message. This theory thoroughly refers to the source of the Qur'an as the original text which gives evidence and the character of true beauty which reflects the beauty of manifestation in literary texts. According to Abdul Halim, the beauty of manifestation is in the creation of Allah SWT. The culmination of the perfection of the beauty of manifestation is the creation of man who is considered the best by God a perfect and beautiful creation.

In this regard, Abdul Halim refers to Haron Din, et al (1997), who argued that the beauty of human creation consists of two forms: physical beauty and *nafsani* beauty. Although these two

beauties are required to be taken care of, Islam demands that they put the second beauty (the beauty of their eyes) as its foundation and purpose is to achieve self-perfection throughout their life in the world (Haron Din, et al., 1997). The combination of beautiful elements from the physical and natural order of man makes human beings in the most perfect (beautiful) state. Allah explains in the Quran in several surah such as surah Nuh, verse 17, Surah as-Sajdah, verses 7-9, Surah al-Mukminun, verse 23, Surah al-Isra verse 70 and also the description of al-Hadith. Based on the Quran narrations, hadiths and descriptions of Islamic history, the beauty and perfection of human creation occur through the process of integrating various physical and spiritual elements that distinguish human beings from other beings. This created being has a direct relationship as a servant to its Creator (vertical) and as a complement to other beings (Abdul Halim Ali, 2019).

Man is given the task of being the caliph, conveying and carrying out his Commandments, which is to convey the message of truth (*haq*) to other human beings. In the context of carrying out that responsibility, man was actually created solely for the purpose of concentrating himself on his Creator in all things. Abdul Halim believes that literary texts have similar functions and characters to humans. The literary text is not just the text, but the belief fills the teaching and carries the true message of the Creator and the author ('creator' of manifestation) to bring man with the truth to serve the true Creator. Therefore, according to Abdul Halim, a literary text is also a 'beauty text' born from the process of integrating various elements of language, ideas and thoughts, teaching and message.

Just as human beings are made up of a union of spiritual and physical elements, literary texts are also developed by the author in the process of integrating spiritual and physical elements. Language is the physical element of the text, while themes and questions, ideas and thoughts, teachings and messages are the spiritual (inner) elements of the text. Therefore, Abdul Halim argues that in order to understand the meaning of beauty in the text then the external (physical) and inner (spiritual) elements of the text need to be researched and refined (Ali, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on several theories presented in this discussion, it is clear that there is a very relevant relationship between literature and Islam, especially in terms of understanding the conditions, functions and goals of literature itself in Islam. The reader can understand that the theories presented only as a way included in the law in making the strategic flow to bring all followers of literature, works and audiences to the perfection of his life through the vehicle of literature,

while Perfection in the sight of God is true and eternal. Putting views and assumptions on the right path (Islam) is in line with the demands of Islam itself. It is narrated by Prophet; indeed, Allah has obligated the implementation of *al-ihsan* (goodness, beauty, perfection and beauty) in all things. *Tawhid* is the fundamental problem that is the focus and the idea of thought begin and end, while the three important aspects of science, charity and faith in the ideals behind the Malay Islamic literary theory. His critique practices, on the other hand, reach a holistic literary space and reach the basis of metaphysics.

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