

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES: SALMAN RUSHDIE'S ALLEGORY OF KHOMEINI'S VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Oleh:
SRI MUNIROCH, S.S., M.Hum.

ABSTRAK

Dilandasi oleh dasar pemikiran bahwa karya sastra bisa jadi merupakan ekspresi dari imajinasi, pikiran, keinginan, dan pengalaman hidup pengarang; bahwa pengarang bisa menciptakan sebuah alegori dari karya yang ditulisnya; dan bahwa dengan melihat pengalaman hidup pengarangnya, Salman Rushdie, bisa jadi *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* merupakan alegorinya tentang Khomeini; studi ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk mencari jawab apakah *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* memang merupakan alegori yang diciptakan oleh Salman Rushdie untuk mengungkap pemasungan hak kebebasan berekspresi yang dilakukan oleh Khomeini. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan ekspresif, studi kritik sastra ini menghasilkan sebuah temuan bahwa tokoh antagonis, Khattam-Shud, yang digambarkan sebagai tokoh yang membenci cerita, merupakan representasi dari Khomeini mengingat apa yang telah dilakukannya terhadap Rushdie. Khomeini telah memasung hak berekspresi Rushdie dengan fatwa mati yang dikeluarkannya karena terbitnya novel *The Satanic verses* karya Rushdie. Tema novel mengarah pada pemasungan hak berekspresi yang berakibat pada rusaknya peradaban. Analisis tokoh menunjukkan adanya persamaan penggambaran karakter antara tokoh dalam novel dan tokoh dalam realitas. Penggambaran setting menunjukkan kontras yang sangat ekstrem antara wilayah yang penduduknya sangat menghargai kebebasan berbicara yang digambarkan dengan sangat positif dan wilayah yang penduduknya mengekang kebebasan berbicara yang digambarkan dengan sangat negatif. Hasil analisis mengarah pada simpulan bahwa novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* memang merupakan alegori yang diciptakan oleh Rushdie tentang pemasungan hak berekspresi yang dilakukan oleh Khomeini.

Kata Kunci: Allegory, expressive approach, violation, the right to freedom of expression

A. INTRODUCTION

A literary work can be the reflection of the writer's life. In his or her work, he or she not only tells his or her experiences but also expresses his or her ideas. Therefore, a literary work may be assumed as the expression of the writer's idea, imagination, thought, will, and psychological experience. It is in accordance with what Wellek and Warren say that the main cause of the existence of a literary work is the writer (Wellek and Warren, 1995: 82).

In expressing his or her idea, a writer may directly tell it to the readers or may indirectly express it by using other expression to tell what really he intends to express. A kind of literary work a writer may use is allegory. Allegory is fictional literary narrative or artistic expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. As Peck and Coyle say, "An allegory is a work which has a meaning behind the surface meaning" (1986:127).

A writer who often writes allegories is Salman Rushdie. Some of his works were written in the form of allegory. As we know, Salman Rushdie achieved recognition around the world for his controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Following a series of demonstration against the novel, on 14 February 1989, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran issued a *fatwa* decree – calling for Rushdie's death – declaring that the novel had defamed Islam (Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2003. © 1993-2002 Microsoft Corporation).

The scandal forced Rushdie into hiding under the protection of the British government and police. Living in hiding from 1989 until 1995, he continued to produce journalism and fiction. One of them is *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is considered as one of the interesting novels, which is written by a controversial writer in the world especially in Islamic world. Although the novel is a simple child's tale and it is used as a bedtime story for children, and every child may enjoy reading it, the story actually is much more than that. The story novel is a serious novel if we consider that it was written after Rushdie's previous controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* and take into account the content of the story that seems related much to Rushdie's own experience when living in hiding after Khomeini's *fatwa* decree was issued. It seems that Rushdie wants to say something about Khomeini and his policy in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

Considering all the reasons above, the writer is interested in conducting this study, which aims to find out whether *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is Salman Rushdie's allegory of Khomeini's violation of the rights to freedom of expression.

This study is pointed to find the parallel between the content of the story and Rushdie's experience related to Khomeini's *fatwa* decree. The analysis of the content is focused on the theme, the characters, and the setting. The three aspects are considered the important aspects that can help to show the allegory. The second analysis is focused on the relation between the content of the story and Rushdie's life experience in between 1989 and 1990 that is related much to what happened to him after the issue of Khomeini's *fatwa* declaring a call for his death due to the

publication of his novel *The Satanic Verses*. 1989 is the year when Khomeini's fatwa was declared and 1990 is the time of the publication of Rushdie's novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the one we focus on in this study.

This study is a literary criticism and uses expressive approach to deal with the data. It is a literary criticism because in this study the writer conducts discussion of literature, including description, analysis, and interpretation of a literary work, that is, the novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. It uses expressive approach because in this study, the analysis is focused on studying the forces beyond the author's conscious intentions that can affect what he or she actually communicates.

The data of this study can be classified into two. The first are the primary data, that is, all the data from the novel. They are taken from *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* written by Salman Rushdie. The version used is the one published by Granta Books in 1991. The second are the secondary data. The kind of data are taken from all references discussing Salman Rushdie's life experience at the time when the novel was written.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Allegory

When a writer wants to express his or her idea in a different way from what he or she actually wants to convey, he or she may use allegory. This kind of literary narrative is usually used when a writer wants to camouflage or disguise what he actually wants to express. An allegory is "a story or narrative, often told at some

length, which has a deeper meaning below the surface” (Croft and Cross, 1997:256). Allegory conveys a symbolic meaning. It is parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. It is also an extended metaphor. The symbolic meaning is usually expressed through personifications and other symbols. Related forms are the fable and the parable, which are didactic, comparatively short and simple allegories (Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2003. © 1993-2002 Microsoft Corporation).

2. Structures of Novel

In this study, the structures of novel that are focused on in this analysis are the theme, the character, and the setting. The three elements are considered important to reveal the answer of the main question of this research.

Theme is “the meaning of the story releases; it may be the meaning the story discovers.” (Kenney, 1966:91). Theme can also be defined as the main idea that the writer expresses or the underlying meaning of the story (Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2003. © 1993-2002 Microsoft Corporation). As the meaning or the main idea of a story, theme is related to any other intrinsic elements of the literary work in question. All the other elements should support the theme the writer wants to convey.

The theme of a literary work is more than its subject matter, because the theme is not static, it develops along the story that is related much to the way the author tells the story as the characters develop the conflict and the actions. The theme of a novel, for instance, is often interpreted in various ways. Because of the

complexity of novels related to the characters, conflicts, and scenes found within them, readers can look at different aspects of the work to uncover different interpretations of the meaning of the tale. We can find various themes revealed by the novelists. The common one is the conflict between appearance and reality. Another common theme is the search for personal identity. The theme of an individual who strikes out alone to face the world is used in many works. Some novels feature people who cannot break from their society's conventions and instead become disillusioned with the conflict between their aspirations and the reality of their lives. Throughout the history of the novel, a major theme has been whether people can change their situations in life or whether they are in the grips of forces beyond their control.

The character is somebody or the one of the people portrayed in a book, a movie, or any literary work. The characters are "the fictional figures who move through the plot" (Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2003. © 1993-2002 Microsoft Corporation). They are fictional because they are invented by the author through his words. Therefore, we cannot expect them to have all the attributes of real human beings. Nevertheless, novelists do try to create fictional people whose situations affect the reader as the situations of real people would. Kenney says that they have to be natural or lifelike (Kenney, 1966:24). In portraying his characters, a novelist may use various ways. The characters may be revealed through the author's description, the character's dialogue, thought and feeling, actions and reactions, and also the use of imagery and symbols (Croft and Cross, 1997:74)

The setting is the time and place of the action in a literary work. It is important to the creation of a complete work. As any other elements of fiction, the setting is also related much to the other elements. The setting help determine characters' conflicts, aspirations, and destinies.

3. Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India from a Moslem family. He was educated at the University of Cambridge. The novels he wrote in his early time are *Grimus* (1974), *Midnight's Children* (1981), and *Shame* (1983). In these three novels he employed fantasy and dreams in a surrealist style. His second novel, *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize in 1981 and got an unexpected critical and popular success. Beside novels, Rushdie also wrote a report on his travels in Nicaragua, *The Jaguar Smile* (1987). *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, his children's book after the controversial novel *The Satanic Verses*, was published in 1990 (www.goegle.com. Accessed on 15 January 2006)

Salman Rushdie is a quite famous name, especially for Moslems in all over the world. The name is always related to the controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* he wrote in 1988 from which he drew the condemnation of Islamic fundamentalists and the novel was banned in several Islamic countries. This controversial experience leads this study to be done because *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* was written exactly afterwards. In February 1989, Khomeini put a bounty in excess of \$1 million on Rushdie's head. Rushdie was forced into hiding, and his book subsequently became the center of one of the most significant and highly publicized literary

controversies in recent years, encompassing complicated political, economic, and religious issues. The pressure and unstable nature of Rushdie's life since 1989 have hampered his writing. Although he has produced a well-received children's book and a collection of short stories, he was frustrated by the slow progress on his follow-up novel to *The Satanic Verses*. After the period, Rushdie published his collection of short stories *East, West* in 1995, *The Moor's Last Sigh* in 1995, and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* in 1999

4. Expressive Criticism

Expressive Criticism mainly relates a literary work to the author. A literary work is the expression, feeling, and images of the author who works with his thought and feeling (Pradopo, 2003:193; Endraswara, 2004:30). It emphasizes the existence of the author as the creator of a literary work. The basic of the analysis is the author's ability in expressing his or her great ideas and overflowed emotion, and in composing all of them to be a high-valued work (Fananie, 1982:113; Semi, 1989:44; Suwondo in Jabrohim (Ed.), 2003:53). It does not merely emphasize the way the literary work is created, but also the forms expressed in the literary work. Therefore, the area of this study is the author himself, his or her thought, feeling, and works (Ratna, 2004:68). It is in accordance with what Abrams says, "Poetry is the overflow, utterance, or projection of thought and feeling of the poets; or else (in the chief variant formulation) poetry is defined in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts, and feeling of the poet. This way of thinking, in which the artist himself becomes the major elements generating both the

artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged, I shall call the expressive theory of art” (Abrams, 1979:22).

C. FINDING

The result of analysis leads to the prompt answer of the research question, that is, is *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* Salman Rushdie’s allegory of Khomeini’s violation of the rights to freedom of expression?, as the findings. From the result of analysis, the writer finds out two kinds of findings, that is, the substantive finding and the formal finding. The substantive finding of this study is explained as follows.

The allegory of Khomeini’s violation of the rights to freedom of expression in the novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* can be traced from the theme, the characters, and the setting presented by the writer.

The analysis of the theme shows that the violation of the rights to freedom of expression is the central idea the writer wants to express. It can clearly be identified from what Khattam-Shud does. As the ruler of the Land of Chup – his people are called Chupwalas – he forbids his people to speak; closes all the facilities that enable people to express their idea, such as, schools, theatres, even law-courts; and destroys the Ocean of the Streams of Story from which all the stories in this world come. While, all the other characters, especially people from the Land of Gup – the Guppees, wish the tyrant can be defeated because all of them love stories and like talking. When the two parties are involved in a war, the winner is the Guppees. From the way the writer support to, we can see that the people with high regard to

stories are regarded as the people who can reach a high achievement in all aspects of their lives. They finally can be the winner of the war as the following data say.

... All the arguments and debates, all the openness, had created powerful bonds of fellowship between them. The Chupwalas, on the other hand, turned out to be a disunited rabble. ... many of them actually had to fight their own, treacherous shadows! And as for the rest, well, their vows of silence and their habits of secrecy had made them suspicious and distrustful of one another. They had no faith in their generals, either. The upshot was that the Chupwalas did not stand shoulder to shoulder, but betrayed one another, stabbed one another in the back, mutinied, hid, deserted ... and, after the shortest clash imaginable, simply threw down all their weapons and ran away. (HSS, page 185)

The analysis of the characters shows that there are two parties of characters. The first is the one who love stories; the second is the one who hates stories. Haroun Khalifa and Rashid Khalifa represent the first in this analysis; Khattam-Shud represents the second. Haroun and Rashid love *stories* and they are the two heroes who fight to rescue the Ocean of the Streams of Story – it means to protect the rights to freedom of expression.

‘Haroun Khalifa,’ said the Walrus, getting to his feet, still slightly out of breath and holding his aching sides, ‘to honour you for the incalculable service you have done to the peoples of Kahani and to the Ocean of the Streams of Story, we grant you the right to ask of us whatever favour you desire, and we promise to grant it if we possibly can’ (HSS, page 200)

While Khattam-Shud hates *stories* and *conversation*. He does not believe the truth of stories and wants to destroy the Ocean of the Streams of Story to foster the Laws of Silence.

The Cultmaster came over and peered into Haroun’s face. ‘What brought you up here, eh?’ he asked in his dull, dull voice. ‘*Stories*, I

suppose.’ He said the word ‘stories’ as if it were the rudest, most contemptible word in the language. ‘Well, look where *stories* ends with spying, and that’s a serious charge, boy, no charge more serious. You’d have done better to keep your feet on the ground but you had your head in the air. You’d have done better to stick to Facts, but you were stuffed with *stories*. You’d have done better to have stayed home, but up you came. *Stories* make trouble. An Ocean of *stories* is an Ocean of Trouble. Answer me this: what’s the use of *stories* that aren’t even true?’ (*HSS*, page 155).

The analysis of the setting shows the extremely different condition between the Land of Gup where the people who love stories live and the Land of Chup where Khattam-Shud and his people live. The Land of Gup is bright and full of sunshines, while the Land of Chup is dark, cold, and always in the middle of the night.

Thank to the genius of the Eggheads at P2C2E House,’ Butt began, taking pity on Haroun, ‘the rotation of Kahani has been brought under control. As a result the Land of Gup is bathed in Endless Sunshine, while over in Chup it’s always the middle of the night. In between the two lies the Twilight Strip, in which, at the Grand Comptroller’s command, Guppees long ago constructed an unbreakable (and also invisible) Wall of Force. Its goodname is Chattergy’s Wall, named after our King, who of course had absolutely nothing to do with building it.’ (*HSS*, page 80)

Brightness means happiness. Darkness means unhappiness. The description of the setting shows that People who love stories live happily, while people who hate stories live unhappily.

‘Gup is bright and Chup is dark. Gup is warm and Chup is freezing cold. Gup is all chattering and noise, whereas Chup is silent as a shadow. Guppees love the Ocean, Chupwalas try to poison it. Guppees love stories, and Speech; Chupwalas, it seems, hate these things just as strongly.’ It is a war between Love (of the Ocean, or the Princess) and Death (which was what Cultmaster Khattam-Shud had in mind for the Ocean, and for the Princess, too). (*HSS*, page 125)

The result of analysis of the three aspects is then related to the real incidents in the writer's life. It shows that Khattam-Shud represents Khomeini by considering what Khomeini did to Rushdie. Khomeini had eliminated Rushdie's rights to freedom of expression by issuing his fatwa decree declaring a call for Rushdie's death due to the publication of his novel *The Satanic Verses*. The fatwa says, "The author of *the Satanic Verses* book, which is against Islam, the Prophet and the Koran, and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death. I ask all Muslims to execute them wherever they find them." Rushdie, then, went into hiding and had British police protection. He lived under heavy guard and always moved from one location to the others in England. It was hard for Rushdie living in such condition. He was safe under the protection of British police, but at least two persons associated the novel publishing, a Japanese translator, was stabbed, and an Italian translator was knifed. The years have been extremely difficult and fearful for Rushdie. Not only he felt he lost his freedom, but he also found his family disintegrated. He could not see his beloved son, Zafar, and he was divorced from his second wife. He earned criticism from the society who think that the money spent for him for the cost of his guards and his efforts to make the fatwa lifted is not as valuable as what he contributed from his book. Living in such condition, being depressed and insecure, have impeded his writing. He could not freely express his idea and was frustrated. But while continuing living in hiding, he still produced writing and speaking in a voice that could not be silenced. Being so pressured, once Rushdie announced that he was opposed to the issuance of a

paperback version of the book and said he had embraced Islam, but then he regretted because despite his declarations, religious officials in Iran said that the death edict still stood. And in this kind of personal life condition, Rushdie produced *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

The theme of the story leads to the revelation that the violation of the rights to freedom of expression will result in the fatal destruction of human civilization. Concerning the characters of the novel, the writer find the similar description, in a certain extent, between the characters of the novel and some figures in the reality, such as Haroun and Zafar, Rashid and Rushdie, and Khattam-Shud and Khomeini, and the names of many characters and places that have been derived from Hindustani words suggest to the emphasis of everything related to stories and talking, for instance, Batcheat ('baat-cheet', that is, 'chit-chat'), Bat-Mat-Karo ('Do-Not-Speak'), Bezaban ('Without-a-Tongue'), Bolo ('Speak!'), Chup ('quiet'), Chupwala ('quiet fellow'), Gup ('gossip'), Haroun and Rashid (both named after the legendary Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun al-Rashid, who features in many Arabian Nights tales), Khalifa ('Caliph'), Kahani ('story'), Khattam-Shud ('completely finished', 'over and done with'), Kitab ('book'), and Mudra (any one of the gestures that make up the language). While the setting suggests Rushdie's tendency to make a gap between the world (the countries) that respect the rights to freedom of expression and the world (the countries) that support censorship, they the Land of Gup and the Land of Chup.

Based on all of the finding, it can be concluded then that the novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is really Rushdie's allegory of Khomeini's violation of the rights to freedom of expression.

The conclusion, as the substantive finding of this study, suggests us at least two formal findings. The first is related to the literary theory asserting that a literary work is the expression, feeling, and images of the author who works with his thought and feeling (Pradopo, 2003:193; Endraswara, 2004:30); it emphasizes the existence of the author as the creator of a literary work and the basic of the analysis is the author's ability in expressing his or her great ideas and overflowed emotion, and in composing all of them to be a high-valued work (Fananie, 1982:113; Semi, 1989:44; Suwondo in Jabrohim (Ed.), 2003:53); it does not merely emphasize the way the literary work is created, but also the forms expressed in the literary work; and therefore, the area of this study is the author himself, his or her thought, feeling, and works (Ratna, 2004:68). The theory is called "the expressive theory of art" (Abrams, 1979:22). In accordance with the theory, this study proves that a literary work is indeed the reflection of the author's thought and feeling. The result of analysis shows that *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is the reflection of Salman Rushdie's idea on the rights to Freedom of expression. The finding supports the expressive theory of art.

The second concerns with allegory in a literary work. As stated in the previous chapters that in expressing his or her idea, a writer may directly tell it to the readers or may indirectly express it by using other expression to tell what really he intends to express. For the second purpose, a writer may use is allegory. It is used

when a writer wants to express his or her idea in a different way from what he or she actually wants to convey. Allegory is usually used when a writer wants to camouflage or disguise what he actually wants to express. As we know that it is “a story or narrative, often told at some length, which has a deeper meaning below the surface” (Croft and Cross, 1997:256). Allegory conveys a symbolic meaning. It is parallel to but distinct from, and more important than, the literal meaning. The symbolic meaning is usually expressed through personifications and other symbols. In allegory, characters and incidents are present to signify qualities and must be consistent with the qualities they signify. The characters and the incidents presented represent the real thing the writer wants to present behind what he or she states explicitly in his or her work. In this sense, we have just proved that in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* that is literally children’s story, we can search that it implies something behind the content of the story. The experience the characters undergo in the story is led to the revelation that there is contrast between the world supporting the freedom of expression and those rejecting it. The former is observed in positive point of view, while the later is in negative point of view. The former is always bright, while the later is always dark. The contrast reveals in which part Salman Rushdie puts his support. Furthermore, the parallel between the content of the story and Salman Rushdie’s real experience related to Khomeini’s fatwa to him suggests clearly that *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is really his allegory of Khomeini’s violation of the rights to freedom of expression. And, it, once more, proves that allegories really exist in literature.

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