

# Tracing Back the Humor Style of the Eighth and Twentieth Century Texts of *Abunawas*

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article contains responses toward opinions which say that humor by Abunawas prevailing in Indonesia is fictive and not from Arab. After analyzing texts of the eighth and twentieth century of Abunawas, it is clear that based on the aspects of fictional indications either formal or referential, ill-locution and per-locution, as well as imaginative and non imaginative, texts of Abunawas in the twentieth century is more fictive than the texts of the eighth century. In addition, this article shows that either texts of the eighth or twentieth century both contain humor and non humor. The texts that consist of joking indicate that the type of humor in the eighth century is less than the twentieth century. Based on the categorization mentioned above, this article also tries to say that humors prevailing in the eighth century texts of Abunawas are mostly classified into "superiority theories"; whilst the twentieth century texts are correspond to theories proposed by D.H. Monro (1988).*

**KEY WORDS:** *Humor and non humor, Abunawas, imaginative and non imaginative, and eighth and twentieth century texts.*

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, many books reveal humor from certain groups, communities or ethnicities either local works such as *Kabayan*, or translation from foreign countries such as *Ketawa Gaya Rusia*, *Humor Sufi*, and many others. Some are only short stories, but others are long. Despite humor book serve as entertainment, they also enable us to broaden our knowledge about certain cultures of different groups, communities, and ethnics. *Abunawas* is one of famous funny stories that are very well-known among Indonesian people.

Nonetheless, Ilyas R. Zubaydi (2008) in his research on *Abunawas* stated that humor stories prevailed in Indonesian society is only a fake story and

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not from Arab. In the literature of Islamic history, *Abunawas* did not live at the same era with Harun al-Rasyid, but rather with the later caliph Al-Amin, the son of Harun al-Rasyid. Even more, *Abunawas* has not ever met with Harun al-Rasyid. The humor of *Abunawas* is not available in the books of Islamic history. This story only found in the children story books. The historians acknowledge him as the man of literature.

According to M.B. Rahimsyah (2003), there are so many stories adopted as the stories of *Abunawas*, but they are often irrational and to hurt Eastern people. It is possible that these strange stories are deliberately created by Orientalists in order to humiliate Muslim societies. Therefore, reading the story of *Abunawas* needs some critical and alerted attitudes.

This opinion is supported by Ahmad Amin (1996) who said that humor actor in the Arab society is *Asy'ab al-Tama*, "the humor friend" of caliph Al-Walid bin Yazid during Umayyad dynasty and Abu Dulamah, "the humor friend" of caliph As-Saffah, Al-Mansur, and Al-Mahdi during the dynasty of Abbasid. *Abunawas* was one of very famous poet during the Abbasid dynasty that used many aspects of humor in his poetry, through manipulating and playing word that made other felt fun (*mujun*). He was not a person who liked to play jokes as described in many stories about him.

Whereas, in his research about *Abunawas*, H.M. Usep Romli (2008) stated that Indonesian society believe that *Abunawas* is a joker. It is true that it is because the influence of the book entitled *Hikayat Abunawas* work of Nur Sutan Iskandar, published by Balai Pustaka, which become main references and good resources since the 1930s and 1950s. In contrast, *Abunawas* whose real name is Abu Hani Muhammad bin Hakami, born in Ahwaz, Persia in 735 and he died in Baghdad in 810 is a prestigious writer in the Arab prose of in the mid century. It is because his smartness in using language and Arabic literature, *Abunawas* was productive in making poem with humor and joke (*mujuniyat*).

### **FICTION OR NON-FICTION TEXTS?**

Before elaborating about the aspects of humor in the *Abunawas* texts, this article firstly discusses the genre of *Abunawas's* texts. As stated by Aart van Zoest (1991) that fictional indication is grouped into two parts: formal and referential. Formal signs can be seen from its form, such as phrase "*pada suatu waktu ...*" (once upon time) in the beginning of a story; and "they then continue to live in happiness and long life" in the end of a story. These phrases are usually found in the kid stories.

To see fictional texts of *Abunawas*, the author needs to divide the texts into two parts: the eighth and twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts. In

the texts of 8<sup>th</sup> century, the author does not find any indication of formal fictional as stated above. However, there is also a text that uses a phrase such as "*pada suatu hari*" (once upon time) in the beginning of a text, such as: "*Pada suatu hari, Harun al-Rashid keluar dengan memakai pakaian biasa, didampingi oleh beberapa pengawalnya yang juga berpakaian biasa*".

Nonetheless, the usages of formal signs are neither applied in the beginning nor the end a narration. The phrase "*pada suatu hari*" above is only used for opening a narration to go to the next information, but it has no story flow nor ending part as it is usually applied in the fictional texts. Furthermore, not all eighth *Abunawas* texts are opened by using words, "*pada suatu hari*" since his texts consists of poem and prose. In fact, the opening phrases can not be generalized as special formula of eighth century of *Abunawas* texts, as it is usually used in all kid stories mentioned above.

Furthermore, the end of the story does in the seventh century of *Abunawas* texts do not have a special sentence to closing the story as usually prevailing in other fictional texts, such as: "*Kemudian Abunawas berkata bahwa ayat itu diturunkan pada bulan Juli dan untuk orang-orang Hejaz, bukan bulan Januari dan untuk orang Baghdad*". This kind of sentence is not the end of a story, but it is merely the closing sentence of a dialog which has no narrative relation with the words "*pada suatu hari*" in the beginning of a story. Therefore, it can not indicate any formal fictional.

Almost all texts of the eighth *Abunawas* prose are short dialogues which have no flows of story that used to prevail in other fictional texts. They are different with the twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts that appeared in the form of narration with clear flows. Both opening and closing part of a story have relationships, as indicated in this example: "*Pada suatu hari, Pangeran jatuh sakit. Sudah banyak tabib yang didatangkan untuk memeriksa dan mengobati tapi tak seorang pun mampu menyembuhkannya*".

The above text is opened by the words, "*pada suatu hari*". This opening story shows the existence of fictional formal since it is part of story flow and has relation with the ending story that is "*Abunawas benar. Begitu mendengar persetujuan sang Raja, sang pangeran berangsur-angsur pulih. Sebagai tanda terima kasih, Raja memberi Abunawas sebuah cincin permata yang amat indah*".

Other examples of the twentieth century of *Abunawas* stories also show similarities with the above story which begin with an opening sentence and finished by a closing sentence, such as "*Pada suatu sore, ketika Abunawas sedang mengajar murid-muridnya. Ada dua orang tamu datang ke rumahnya. Yang pertama adalah wanita tua penjual kopi, sedang satunya lagi adalah*

*seorang pemuda berkebangsaan Mesir*". This is the beginning of a story in the twentieth century of *Abunawas* story whilst its conclusion part is formulated as follows. "*Pemuda Mesir itu betul-betul mengagumi Abunawas. Ketika ia kembali ke negeri Mesir, ia menceritakan tentang kehebatan Abunawas itu kepada penduduk Mesir sehingga nama Abunawas menjadi sangat terkenal*".

Based on both texts and other texts that will be presented later, it is clear that there is certain formula prevails in the twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts as a sign of formal fictional. It is different with the eighth century of *Abunawas* texts in which both opening and closing has no flow relationship but only part of a dialogue that its fictional indication do not appear.

Moreover, the indication of referential fiction includes some aspects and signs of text which have a clear fictive denotation. The simple example is the name of a person mentioned in the text but has never existed. Based on the author's research from the eighth century of *Abunawas* story, some names are mentioned such as Harun al-Rasyid, Khalaf al-Ahmar, Ar-Raqasyi, a woman slave, beggar, a mosque congregation, and Usman bin Hafish al-Tsaqafiy. Whilst some names used in the twentieth century of *Abunawas* story are Harun al-Rasyid, yoga player, priest, an elephant, two females, *Abunawas* students and friends, the cheater, thief, nun, and *Abunawas*'s wife.

Considering names used in the twentieth century of *Abunawas* text, it is clear that referential fictional indications are plenty. Even though we need to prove further whether or not the eighth century of *Abunawas* text are fictive, based on names used such as Harun al-Rasyid, Khalaf al-Ahmar, Ar-Raqassyi, and Usman bin Hafish al-Tsaqafi, we can conclude that such story is real. In contrast, names used in the twentieth century of *Abunawas* text need more clarification and can not justify the authenticity of the story. We need to analyze other aspects which may support such referential fictional indication. We don not find other names except *Abunawas* and Harun al-Rasyid whereas in the eighth century of *Abunawas* text there are many figures despite *Abunawas* and Harun Rasyid.

In addition, other aspects in determining whether or not the text is fiction is through analyzing the figures mentioned in the text. Names such as a female slave, beggar, and mosque follower that are introduced in the eighth century of *Abunawas* text and yoga player, priest, an elephant, two women, *Abunawas* students and friends, cheater, thief, nun and *Abunawas*'s wife are important aspects to be considered. A female slave, beggar, and mosque follower in the eighth century of *Abunawas* text are seemed to be logic whereas the presence of an elephant in the twentieth century of

*Abunawas* text is likely irrational. This kind of analysis can be used to refer the presence of referential fictional indication in a text.

The impossible space where the story takes place and the shift of time from prehistoric era toward future is another important aspect to be studied. Places used by the eighth century of *Abunawas* text is real, such as the city of Basrah, palace, mosque, and public areas. On the contrary, the twentieth century of *Abunawas* text has some features indicating that the text is fiction as stated follow: "*Suatu kali, Abunawas berkelana mengelilingi dunia, dan tibalah ia di suatu kota yang tidak ada penduduk laki-lakinya*".

From the text, we can infer that setting of the story is fiction, a city that has no male population. Is it possible? Another indication that this story is fiction that most biography of *Abunawas* does not tell about *Abunawas* has ever traveled around the world; he only took trip around the city of Basrah, Bagdad, and Egypt.

Since the text used narrative indication, it is likely that the text is fiction. From this aspect, we can conclude that the twentieth of *Abunawas* text is more narrative than the eighth's. For this reason, the twentieth century text is more fiction that the eighth's.

In general, we have never experienced with both the eighth and twentieth century of *Abunawas* text but we know them through narration passed to us and we trust them. We suppose that figures such as *Abunawas* and *Harun al-Rasyid* are real and they existed long times ago. The problem is whether the story about both figures told in the texts are based on reality?

In the text of eight century, the figure of *Harun al-Rasyid* does not appear often. The partner of *Abunawas* not only *Harun al-Rasyid* but also involved many figures as described above. Even more, the Arabic text does not mention the full name of "*Harun al-Rasyid*". He was called just "*Ar-Rasyid*" and it is arguable that it may not specifically indicate to *Harun al-Rasyid* or even some one else. For instance, *Al-Amin*, son of *Harun al-Rasyid*, was also called *Ar-Rasyid*. *Ar-Rasyid* means "someone who is repentance, conscious, smart, bright, guided, and adult" and this title is given to anyone who deserve. Whilst in the twentieth text, the figure of *Harun al-Rasyid* appears in almost all stories, except in some current stories. Do we believe that the figure of *Harun al-Rasyid* found in the eighth and twentieth century is truly a real person?

To answer this question, let's see the quotation of *Abunawas'* biography written by *Ali Ahmad Zubaydi* stated below:

*Abunawas* was forced to depart for Egypt after he wrote a elegy poem dedicated to *Barmaki*, belongs to a prestigious family who were killed by Caliph *Harun al-*

Rasyid. He returned to Baghdad in 809 during the death of Harun al-Rasyid. His successor, Muhammad al-Amin, the son of Harun al-Rasyid, aged 22 years old was Abunawas' first student. Many scholars believe that Abunawas wrote almost all his poems during the reign of Al-Amin. His esteemed position in the palace was as a poet praising toward Al-Amin (Zubaydi, 1909).

Based on the above text, we can say – as stated by Ali Ahmad Zubaydi – that Abunawas was more acquainted with Muhammad al-Amin rather than with Harun al-Rasyid. Therefore, *Abunawas'* text which contains the figure of Harun al-Rasyid is fictive (Zubaydi, 1909 and 2008).

Another thing we need to consider is about the validity of a text that not only concerns the matter of the illocutionary forces (right or false) but also its per locution (what can be done by a text). According to the description mention above, from the illocutionary aspect, the twentieth century of *Abunawas* text is more fictive than the eighth one. Whilst, from per locution aspect, it can be say based on the source of the eighth century text that the text was not presented for ordinary people aiming to entertain the readers but rather as a compilation of an experience note from a certain civilization. This differs from the twentieth century of *Abunawas* text that was created for the public readers as entertaining that need more fictional aspects.

As mentioned by Aart van Zoest (1991) that the validity of a text is determined by its author. It is the writer who decides whether or not his or her writings are formed as a fiction or non fiction. As an example, the eight century of *Abunawas* texts were not equipped with the pictures of Abunawas who lived in the eighth century event though the author maybe ale to imitate the Abunawas picture which is painted by Khalil Gibran, in *Al-Fauzan*, Vol.2, No.1, June 1916. It is likely that the author worried about the presence of a fictional indication that contradicts with the texts he wrote. Different to the *Abunawas* text that emerged in the twentieth century, almost all texts used the picture of Abunawas with funny and various Arab faces. For this reason, based on the above indications, the readers are able to interpret which *Abunawas'* texts are fictions or non fiction. In addition the readers are also able to see which *Abunawas'* texts are beneficial for them.

## **NARRATIVE OR HUMOR TEXT?**

According to H.B. Paksoy (1988), humor is part of literature's tradition in the society. Whilst for Jakob Sumardjo and Saini KM (1994), based on the imaginary nature and the language usage, literature's works can be divided into two groups: imaginative and non imaginative literatures. The imaginative literatures have many imaginary natures and the emphasis

on the usage of language that contains various meanings comparing to non imaginative literatures. Yet, the non imaginative literatures consist of more facts than imaginations and use denotative language. However, both literatures have similarities in terms of the fulfillment of esthetical aspects of the arts.

Non imaginative literatures have many types such as essay, critics, biography, autobiography, and history as well as memoir, diary, and letters. Imaginative literatures mainly include prose and poem. Prose has two categories: fiction and drama. Fiction is divided into novel genres or romance, short story, and novel; whereas drama includes comedy, tragedy, melodrama, and tragic comedy. In addition, poem contains epic, lyric, and dramatic poem.

Based on the above description, it seems that *Abunawas'* texts can be categorized into two types: imaginative and non imaginative texts. My study shows that all the twentieth century of *Abunawas'* texts published in Indonesian language are imaginative ones. It can be observed from the presence of various imaginary natures of the texts, such as a story entitled "Tugas yang Mustahil" [Impossible Mission] by M.B. Rahimsyah (2003), "*Beberapa hari terakhir ini Baginda merencanakan membangun istana di awang-awang. Karena sebagian dari raja-raja negeri sahabat telah membangun bangunan-bangunan yang luar biasa*".

From the above text, we can see many imaginative aspects, in particular a story about a planning to build a palace in the sky which is impossible to be realized based on our current knowledge, even though the one who intends to build it is a king.

In addition, the Indonesian humor texts of the twentieth century do not use connotative words. If the texts are used connotative terms, the readers will not able comprehend the story and loose its funny aspects. If we analyze the Arabic texts of *Abunawas* story, it seemed that such texts can not be categorized as humor texts, but narrative texts or let's say poetry that contains funny stories. It is because these texts are compiled in a book that is not specifically a humorous book as it is given an example follows, "*Beberapa jamaah masjid melihat Abunawas sedang berdoa di antara mereka, lalu mereka bertanya sedang apa Abunawas berada di sana, maka Abunawas pun berkata, 'aku sedang menaikkan berita yang unik ke langit'*".

The story of *Abunawas* by Ahmad Muhammad al-Hufi (1956) quoted from a book entitled *Mukhadarat al-'Udaba wa Muhawarat asy-Syu'ara* (Lessons from the Men of Literature and Dialogues of Poets) written by Abu al-Qasim al-Husain bin Muhammad known as Ragib al-Asfahani (d. 502 H).

This book is very important, particularly for experts in literatures, students of Arabic language, and classical literatures. Most of his monographs become important collections in the library of Iskandariyah, Egypt. By considering the title of the book, it is clear that this book is not a humor book but still it may contain few texts that have humorous aspects.

Furthermore, there are some books about the story of *Abunawas* published in Indonesian language. One of them is a book which does not indicate that it is a humor book, written by M.B. Rahimsyah published by Aprindo in Jakarta in 2003, entitled *Kumpulan Kisah Abunawas (Collection of Abunawas Story)*. However, this book not only tells about Abunawas but also Nasrudin Hoja, a funny figure from another Middle East countries.

In general, the book written by M.B. Rahimsyah does not give any indications that it is a humor text. We just realize that it is a funny book when we have read the statement on the back side of the book as stated follow: “[...] funny, amusing, wonderful, annoying but people still love and like it [...]. This is Abunawas” (Rahimsyah, 2003). We also find in its introduction stated that Abunawas is always able to resolve the problem with his humorous style.

Another book about Abunawas, which is available in Indonesia, is a book published by Malaysian publication written by Abu Hikmah al-Husni (2003) in Malay language entitled *Dipetik dari Buku 1001 Malam: Kisah Abunawas Si Penglipur Lara, Siri 1 (Quoted from a Book 1001 Nights: Stories of Abunawas, an Entertainer, Vol.1)*. From the title, we see that the clue indicating a humor text is through the words *Si Penglipur Lara (An Entertainer)*. The dictionary of Indonesian language, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, gives meaning the phrase *Si Penglipur Lara* as “penglipur hati yang duka” (TPK PPPB, 1994). The problem is whether the phrase “Si Penglipur Lara” means that the book is humor.

Moreover, if we look at the title *Dipetik dari Buku 1001 Malam*, it is clear that it is part of a well known story of 1001 nights in which Arabic literatures consider it as *Adab al-Qashshas* (Folklore) containing many stories not only related to humor. Therefore, when we read the book, it becomes clear that this book does not specifically tell humors but even more containing serious advices and wisdoms.

For this reason, it can be concluded that both the eighth or twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts are not specifically humor ones but some texts may have humors or even not. The following will be presented to what extent humor is available in the texts of *Abunawas*.

## **THE HUMOR OF ABUNAWAS**

As discussed earlier that the type of the eighth and twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts is different. The texts of the eighth century are very short and non narrative ones with a simple narration which only has one or two lines and some dialogues without a closing sentence; whereas the twentieth century ones are longer with a narration which has a closing sentence. The difference style in presenting the texts results in the difference of their style of humor. There are some aspects can be analyzed from these texts, in particular the way the humor is presented, such as unintended and intended humor or topics and another aspect related to the type of humor in the texts.

Victor Raskin (1985) classifies humor into unintended and intended humor. Unintended humor means a humor which occurs when a person does a verbal or non verbal action and the listener or observer perceives it as a humor. Generally, speaking this kind of humor happens without intention of its actor. The actor does not deliberately create or perform a humor. Whilst intended humor is a humor which happens with intention of the actor to create humor or do something funny. It is intentionally created in order to amuse, humiliate, and laugh someone else. Therefore, both the eighth and twentieth century texts of *Abunawas* are classified as intended humor, in particular the twentieth century texts that are full of belittling comments and humiliation to show the quarrels between Abunawas and Harun al-Rasyid.

In addition, Victor Raskin (1985) also explains some ways in presenting humor. *First*, ridicule is a type of humor containing mockery, belittling, humiliation, and many others. Ridicule can be non verbal which is not said out loud but it is obvious through a physical signal or movement and verbal one which is expressed orally and intentionally. *Second*, riddle means a collection of sentences or words that is arranged in a way similar to a puzzle with unpredicted answers that bring funniness. Conundrum or punning riddle is part of riddle that is presented through playing words. Pun is a real words trick, not a puzzle. *Third*, suppression or repression humor that is a humor occurs in repressed situations or conditions. One of example of riddle is as stated follows:

*Wahai Abunawas, manakah yang lebih banyak jumlahnya: bintang-bintang di langit ataukah ikan-ikan di laut? "Ikan-ikan di laut", jawab Abunawas dengan tangkas. "Bagaimana kau bisa langsung memutuskan begitu. Apakah engkau pernah menghitung jumlah mereka?"; tanya Baginda heran. "Paduka yang mulia, bukankah kita semua tahu bahwa ikan-ikan itu setiap hari ditangkapi dalam jumlah besar, namun begitu jumlah mereka tetap banyak seolah-olah tidak pernah berkurang*

*karena saking banyaknya. Sementara bintang-bintang itu tidak pernah rontok, jumlah mereka juga banyak”, jawab Abunawas meyakinkan.*

Sigmund Freud (1928) attributed this kind of humor as a motivated humor in which funny acts are presence with motivations. This humor is used to release emotions related to individual feelings, ethnicity, religion, and others. The forms of humor are many such as to disturb, amuse, and laugh someone.

Another general aspect, which can be explored from the eighth and twentieth century texts of *Abunawas*, is topics. Sigmund Freud (1928) classified the type of humor into sexual, ethnic, and political ones. Anti Aarne and Smith Thompson distinguished it the topics of humor into a crazy man, wife and husband, man, smart person, stupid man, religious man, religious institution, and certain community (in Brundvand, 1968). Jan Harold Brundvand (1968) divided also it into different topics, such as sexual, ethnic, nation and religious issues.

There are similar and different topics in the texts of eighth and twentieth century. Their similar topics lay in the issues of religion whereas they have differences regarding the sexual issues. Sexual topics appear in the twentieth century texts of *Abunawas* as described follow:

*Pada puncak keheranannya, Biarawati tersebut melepas handuk yang menutupi sebagian tubuh Abunawas. Ia kaget setengah mati karena “burung” Abunawas tiba-tiba bangun, lalu dipegang-peganglah “burung” Abunawas tersebut. Karena tidak tahan dengan rasa yang sulit dibayangkan itu, tiba-tiba sikat gigi yang dipegangnya jatuh.*

D.H. Monro (1988) classified this kind of humor as impolite meaning something that is inappropriate to done or expressed.

Strictly speaking since the eighth century texts of *Abunawas* appear in dialogue, therefore the analysis should be concerned on dialogue. In Ahmad Muhammad al-Hufi (1956), the author finds many types of humor related to dialogue such as: (1) *Al-La’bi bi-alfaz*, a humor happens because the ability of someone in using words; (2) *Al-Tahakkum bi al-Uyub al-Jasadiyah*, a humor appears because of the skill of someone in mocking the physical conditions of a disable person; (3) *Al-Tahakkum bi al-Uyub al-Khuluqiah wa an-Nafsiah*, a humor presents because of the ability of someone in ridiculing the misbehaviors of someone else; (4) *Al-Du’abah*, humor is judged based on the skill of someone in humiliating his or her opponent; (5) *Al-Takhallusu al-Fakihu*, a humor based on the intelligence of someone in giving answers when he or she in difficult situations; (6) *Al-La’bu al-Ma’ani*, a humor based

a different perception in understanding the meaning of words: imaginative or real, denotative or connotative; and (7) *Al-Ijabat bi-Ghayri al-Matlub*, a humor happens because someone answers the question with something that is not supposed to say.

D.H. Monro (1988) categorizes the above type of humor as part of tricks of words, a collection of words or sentences which is arranged in a certain form that becomes a puzzle or a words order and causes funniness, joking or something impossible to happen. It can be also an arrogant or an utterance that is not based on realities and a disguised humiliation and yet humor aims to amuse, belittling and laugh something or someone else.

Wendell White (1955) said that psychiatrics classify conditions that make other people to laugh, such as because of verbal expressions, to create a disordered sentence, answer with unrelated responses, change one meaning with another, and change abstract meaning into practical one.

An example of the above classification can be seen in An-Nuwayri, *Nihayat al-Arab*, as follows:

*Suatu hari, ketika Abunawas bersama beberapa saudara laki-lakinya, keluarlah seorang budak perempuan putih dengan mengenakan baju berwarna hijau. Melihat budak itu, Abunawas agak tercengang. "Aku bermimpi, kuharap mimpiku akan menjadi kenyataan", Abunawas bercerita. "Apa yang Tuan impikan?", tanya budak perempuan itu. "Apakah kau bisa menafsirkan mimpi?", Abunawas balik bertanya. "Bisa", jawab budak perempuan itu. "Aku bermimpi seakan-akan aku sedang naik kuda yang mengenakan pelana hijau. Kuda itu senang sekali berada di bawahku", cerita Abunawas. "Kalau mimpimu itu benar, itu artinya kau akan menjadi penjual sayuran", jawab budak perempuan itu meyakinkan (An-Nuwayri, 1986:20).*

One thing that makes the above story funny is the words, "*I dream as if I am riding a horse with a green saddle. The horse is happy under me*". Why it is so funny? There is similarity between the dreams with the condition of the woman slave. A green saddle wore by a horse is similar to a green dresses wore by a woman slave. In fact, the words expressed by Abunawas aims to tease the woman. The utterance of Abunawas means that he is interested in that woman as well as the woman.

Nevertheless, the hint used by Abunawas is understood by the woman with a denotative meaning and in doing so she replied, "*If your dream is true. It means that you will be a vegetable's vendor*". This text has a real humor, in which Ahmad Muhammad al-Hufi (1956) named it as *Al-La'bu al-Ma'ani*, a humor happens because of the different interpretation about the verbal expression, abstract and concrete, denotative and connotative. Therefore, this kind of humor is unlikely to be understood easily and make

someone to laugh since it needs the ability to understand the text based on knowledge about language and rhetoric.

Despite the analysis of dialogue that contains humor, the twentieth century texts of *Abunawas* also can be approached through its description or narration. The following is one example:

*Setelah cukup dekat dengan Baginda, Abunawas berdiri, kemudian menungging menunjukkan potongan karpet yang ditempelkan di bagian pantatnya. Abunawas kini seolah-olah memantati Baginda Raja Harun al-Rasyid. Melihat ada sepotong karpet menempel di pantat Abunawas, Baginda Raja tak bisa membendung tawa sehingga beliau terpingkal-pingkal, diikuti oleh para undangan.*

The above humor is different with humor in the eighth century texts that is mostly arranged in dialogue form. The humor appears through a physical movement done by Abunawas. According to psychologists, something that may be able to make someone to laugh is through physical movements.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the author would like to quote the opinion of D.H. Monro, a Professor of philosophy at the Monash University, Victoria, Australia in his article "Theories of Humor" (1988). He categorizes humor into three types: superiority, incongruity, and relief theories. Superiority theories are theories which say that a humor may occur when someone look at someone failed in doing something, see the disable persons, mentally or physically, observe unfortunate persons, and to witness someone doing wrong. The pioneer of this theory is Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). According to this theory, all humor are ridicules in nature.

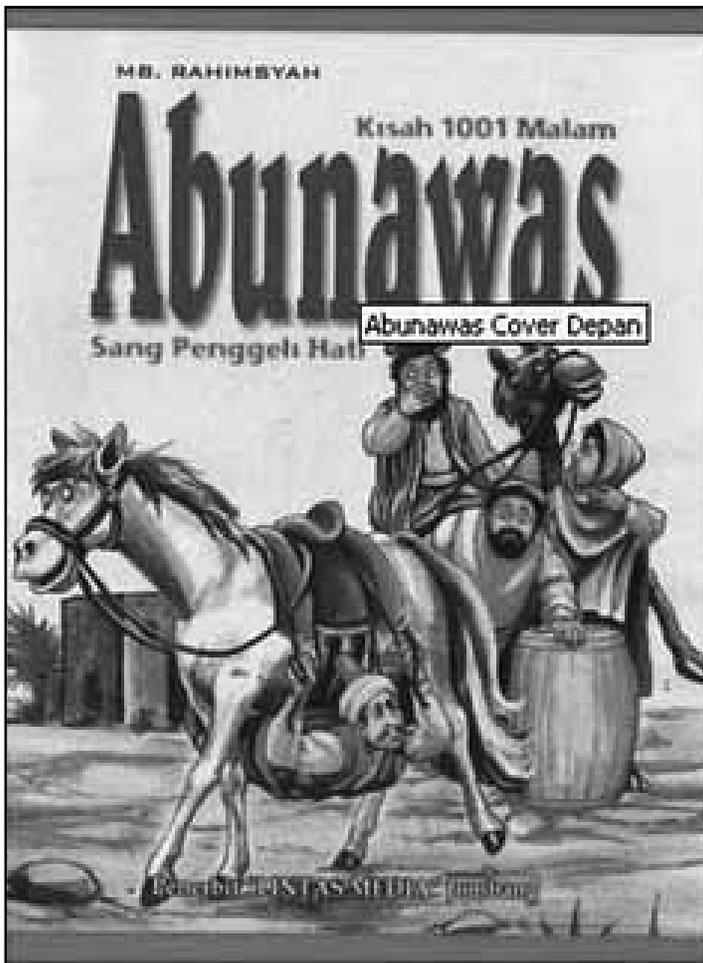
Whereas incongruity theories are theories which explain that a humor may happen when something inappropriate occurs. This theory is mainly found by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Finally, relief theories are introduced by a psychologist, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), by emphasizing that a humor is an instrument to deceive sensors or restrictions. According to Sigmund Freud (1928), sensors will follow us in order to guide us not to go astray. In order to escape from these restrictions, we may trick and deceive them through humor.

Based on the categorization mentioned above, this article tries to say that humors prevailing in the eighth century texts of *Abunawas* are mostly classified into "superiority theories"; whilst the twentieth century texts are correspond to theories proposed by D.H. Monro (1988).

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MAMAN LESMANA,  
*Tracing Back the Humor Style*



It can be concluded that both the eighth or twentieth century of *Abunawas* texts are not specifically humor ones but some texts may have humors or even not.