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## Exploring the intersection of religion and literature: Insights from “Komunitas Pondok Pena Banyumas” as Indonesia pesantren literary communities

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#### Abstract

Religion and literature are two different things. On the one hand, literature is known as a vehicle for freedom of expression, but on the other hand, there are religious values. The case study “Komunitas Pondok Pena” An Najah Islamic Boarding School, Banyumas, Indonesia, has carried out literary activities. This article reveals two things: (1) how the community of Pondok Pena Banyumas incorporates religious values in literary works and (2) how Islamic boarding school cultural values influence the literary creative process. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was obtained through non-participatory observation techniques, and intensive interviews. The research results show that first, religious values are a source of inspiration and worldview for the students which are reflected in the literary works produced; Second, Islamic boarding school cultural values are implemented in the literary creative process which is reflected in the world of Islamic boarding school life.

**Keywords:** culture, literary community, literature, pesantren literature, religious literary



## 1 Introduction

Religion and literature are often seen as two different fields but have intersecting and related aspects (Wiana, 2018). On the one hand, literature is known as a vehicle for the values of freedom of expression, but on the other hand, there are spiritual values that are binding and normative. Both play an essential role in forming the culture of a society. The presence of Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions has added to the treasures of cultural diversity in Indonesia (Sani, M., & Agriyani, D. M., 2023). In their activities, Islamic boarding schools often combine the fields of religion and literature in educational and cultural contexts. As one of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, “Pondok Pena Banyumas Community” emerges as an interesting case study in exploring the intersection between religion and literature.

Most Islamic boarding schools generally place greater emphasis on teaching religious knowledge and instilling Islamic values in depth, with the aim of forming morals, spirituality, and noble character in students. However, the number of Islamic boarding schools that pay attention to developing the talents and interests of individual students could be much higher. One example is the An Najah Islamic Boarding School in Banyumas Regency, Indonesia, which has Pondok Pena community. This has the impact that Islamic boarding schools not only offer religious lessons but also pay special attention to developing potential in the field of writing for their students. In the Pondok Pena community, students are invited to explore the world of writing, which will ultimately produce literary works (Nailiyatul, 2022).

Pondok Pena community was established in Purwokerto under the auspices of the An-Najah Student Islamic Boarding School led by Kiai Muhammad Roqib. In Pondok Pena community, there is a program for developing and publishing literary works. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools hold activities related to literature and involve their students. In addition, Islamic boarding schools provide guidance and encouragement to students to write and publish their works. Literary works, such as short stories and poetry produced by *santri*, are documented and then published in anthology form (Jihansyah, 2019).

In the midst of technological advances and globalization, the existence of religious values is threatened with being eroded by the flow of modernization. However, amidst these conditions, Islamic boarding schools, as Islamic educational institutions, still survive today. In the unique and distinctive Islamic boarding school environment, there is a learning approach that relies heavily on the study of literature in Arabic. Therefore, it is not surprising that discussions about Islamic boarding schools are often closely related to the field of literature, both in the form of works of fiction and non-fiction and including works in the form of poetry and prose (Kort, 1990; Knight, 2009).

As a cultural entity, literature has the power to unite and convey profound messages. Literature is considered to have a *dulce et utile* function (Horace in Teeuw, 1998), namely entertaining and providing benefits. It means that literature does not only function as entertainment, but also as a means to convey thoughts, values, and even life experiences. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, literature plays an increasingly important role in forming a comprehensive understanding of Islam and in enriching the experience of spiritual life (Reckson, 2020).

Several literary works, for example Arabic literature, which are known in Islamic boarding school circles include the kasidah barzanji, the kasidah diba'i, and the kasidah burdah which have been translated into regional languages in Indonesia (Burhanudin, 2017). These classic poems, in the form of songs of praise, are part of the world of literature. Literature is considered essential as a means of building spiritual values and a means of expression among students. This has an impact on the enthusiasm to be creative in the world of literature. In Indonesia, there are many Islamic boarding schools, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and others, which are considered fertile places for developing literary works and producing writers or literary artists (Sungaidi, 2017). Many famous writers came from Islamic boarding schools, such as K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, until the 18th century, as well

as other prominent writers, such as Cak Nun, D. Zawawi Imran, and Gus Mus.

The integration between religion and literature does not always run smoothly, without obstacles. Challenges arise when conflicts between religious interpretation and literary creativity arise (Arifin, 2018). On the one hand, literature has aesthetic and creative needs. On the other hand, pesantren literature, which is closely related to religious literature, is considered too tendentious in conveying religious values, such as Sufism, monotheistic faith, etc. So, how to manage and balance the two is an important question, which is the main focus. As it is based on an in-depth study towards Pondok Pena Banyumas community, it is expected that it can reveal on how the community can overcome the challenges and produce insights full of literary roles in the context of Islam.

There are two main purposes in writing this article and they include: (1) reviewing on how the Pondok Pena Banyumas community incorporates religious values in literary works and (2) investigating the influence of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) cultural values in the literary creative process.

In terms of “Pondok Pena Banyumas Community,” the intersection between religion and literature has become the literary creativity base and a bridge to spread the religious values towards wider community. By combining both aspects, the literary community in Banyumas can preserve and develop their local cultural identity, while they are still relevant to the current development. This reflects the significance of dialog between religion and literature in enriching cultural heritage of Indonesia.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Literary Community

Literary community is a place for individuals who have same interests and devotion towards literature to meet, share experiences, and develop their understanding and skills in literature. In the literary community, people come from diverse background, experiences, and expertise have the opportunity to explore and deepen their knowledge about literature, also encourage their creativity and personal expression (Salam & Anwar, 2015).

According to Sungkowati (2010), one of the main benefits of literary community is creating a safe and supporting space for individuals to share their literary works, such as poem, short stories, essay, drama script, or other literary works. Through the reading and discussion, the community member can give their constructive feedback each other, enrich their interpretation and understanding about literary works, and give encouragement as well as support to develop their talent in literature. This community also becomes a place for the members to inspire and evoke their imagination each other, creates a strong bond in creativity and literary appreciation (Febriani, dkk., 2023).

Community has a significant role in expanding the insight and knowledge about literature. In this community, the members can share reference, suggestions, and recommendation of interesting literary works. The discussion about various literature, such as poem, novel, drama, or other literary works from various culture and period of time, helps to introduce the diversity of literary works to the community members. It does not only expand the horizon of their literature, but also brings new perception and deeper understanding about perspectives, values, and experiences reflected on the literary works (Manuaba, 2019).

In addition, literary community also plays a role as a cultural centre. The members can hold events of poem recitation, drama performance, literary discussion, or literature festival that involves wider community. These events are not only a platform for the writes and literature enthusiasts to share their literary works, but also a platform to promote the diverse culture, respect the tradition, and build social network among people who are interested in literature (Sugiarto, dkk., 2023).

According to Sungkowati (2010), literary community can be classified based on thre main things, they are literacy, culture, and religion. The understanding about literacy has become the foundation in building literature community, in which the members have passions and proficiency in reading and

writing. Apart of that, the cultural aspect also plays an important role as the literary community often reflects the cultural wealth and diversity in it. Lastly, the literary community can also be created based on religions values and beliefs of its members. By these bases, the literary community classification can show more comprehensive portrayal of dynamics and diversity in literature (Nilofar, 2020).

According to Antika, et al. (2013), literary community provides supports and chances for the young writers to improve. Through writing workshop, literature course, or mentoring held by experienced writers, literary community members can improve their writing skills, understand the literature techniques, and explore unique writing styles. These things can help developing creative and talented young generation, also encourages the refreshing literary works (Saputra & Meliasari, 2020).

Thus, the literary community is a group of people who have same interest and tendency towards literature world. They gather to discuss, share ideas, express literature, appreciate it, and create literary forum both virtually and offline. The community itself consists of writers, readers, literature critics, publishers, academics, even other involved individuals. The main goal of the literary community is to promote and develop appreciation towards literary works and create a supportive environment that enables exchanging ideas, knowledge, and literary skills.

## 2.2 Religious Literature

Research on the relationship between literature and religion was actually started by the American literary critic T.S. Eliot in 1938 (Van der Vat, 1938). He relates literary works to the principles of Christianity and considers the use of literature in Christian religious practices. Research conducted by T.S. Eliot then developed a variety of approaches to suit regional characteristics and the interests of researchers. In Indonesia, a country with a majority Muslim population, there has been a development of studies linking literature to religion (Surahmat, 2017).

Religious literature is a branch of literature that is related to religious aspects. The scope of religious literature includes literary works that express the teachings, values and beliefs of various religious traditions. Religious literature aims to deepen understanding of the spiritual, moral and philosophical aspects of a religion. Types of religious literature include various forms and genres, such as sacred texts, mythology, religious stories, religious poetry, and other literary works that raise religious themes (Wiana, 2018).

From the perspective of literary sociology, religious literature is one part of it. There are two possibilities for religious literature as part of literary sociology (Jasper, 1992). First, literary works may have content related to social life. In a religious context, religious literature can also be created because of spiritual content. Literature and religion are reciprocal, meaning that literature and religion are interrelated and are didactic. Like the function of dulce et utile literature (Horace in Teeuw, 1998), religious literature has tendentious potential in conveying spiritual and religious values. Second, there is also the possibility that religious literature was created in a religious atmosphere, for example, living in Islamic boarding schools, churches, temples, and so on. Therefore, in accordance with the “agreement” of literary creation, literary works are created without emptiness. This indicates that religious literature is work created based on the author’s sociological conditions (Knight, 2009).

Types of religious literature vary depending on the particular religious tradition. For example, in the Islamic religion, religious literature includes various types of literary works that raise Islamic themes such as monotheism, morals, and sharia. In Hinduism, themes that appear in religious literature include matters containing mythology, philosophy, and religious rituals are often the main focus. In Christianity, religious literature can take the form of literary works that raise Biblical themes, the lives of saints, theology, and spiritual reflection. Apart from that, Christian religious literature also includes poems praising God, meditation poems, and theater works based on stories in the Bible (Hesla, 1978).

It is essential to understand that religious literature is not just a collection of literary works that raise religious themes but is also a means of conveying religious teachings, understanding, and

experiences to readers or listeners in a didactic manner (Kort, 1990). Thus, religious literature has a vital role in strengthening religious identity, deepening understanding of religious teachings, and inspiring spirituality.

### 2.3 Pesantren Literature (Literature of Islamic Boarding School)

According to Manshur (1999), pesantren literature is a unique literary product that has unique spiritual power. Meanwhile, according to Machsum (2013), pesantren literature literature is a type of literature that is rooted in the Islamic boarding school environment. There are two definitions of pesantren literature. First, pesantren literature refers to literary works that explore traditions in the Islamic boarding school environment. Second, pesantren literature reflects the psychological character of pesantren with dominant religious aspects (Tabroni, 2019; Hermawati, et al., 2022).

Pesantren literature has at least three different possible definitions. First, this literature refers to literary works that appear in the Islamic boarding school environment. Second, pesantren literature is literary works written by individuals who come from Islamic boarding schools, such as Kiai, Islamic boarding school students, or Islamic boarding school alums. Third, pesantren literature has themes related to Islamic boarding school life and culture (Machsum, 2013)

The themes of pesantren literature are very varied. Munawwar divides pesantren literature themes into two types: old themes and new themes. Old themes include things like Divine love, esoteric religious values, Sufistic experiences, transcendental expressions, and the beauty of the universe. Meanwhile, the new theme is more popular and subversive. However, this new theme is still closely related to the old themes periodically (Afiah, 2021; Maula, 2022)

The scope of pesantren literature includes various types of literary works produced in the Islamic boarding school environment or by individuals who come from Islamic boarding schools, such as Kiai, Islamic boarding school students, or Islamic boarding school alums. This literary work includes various forms of expression, from poetry and prose to drama, and can appear in various media, including written, spoken, or recorded. Pesantren literature also covers various themes, such as daily life in Islamic boarding schools, religious values, and morality, as well as spiritual and Sufistic experiences. Apart from that, pesantren literature also often raises themes that are relevant to the social and cultural context of Islamic boarding schools, such as local traditions, local wisdom, and the struggles of life in the Islamic boarding school environment (Azhari, et al., 2022).

The types of pesantren literature are varied and they can be in various expressions. Some types of pesantren types include religious poetry that reflect admiration towards the greatness of God, moral and ethical stories that portray religion values in daily life, also the literary works that explore the spiritual experiences and sufistic life in pesantren environment. Moreover, the pesantren literature also includes more modern and contemporary types of literary works, such as literary works that explore popular themes or subversive, which is still connected to the traditional context and values of pesantren (Nugroho, 2018).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that pesantren literature is a literary work resulted from individuals who come from pesantren environment. Their works reflect pesantren traditions and culture and tell about Islamic aspect and pesantren values that are dominated by religious atmosphere. Moreover, pesantren literature also includes popular and subversive themes, but they are still connected to the traditional themes one.

## 3 Methodology

A qualitative approach through in-depth exploratory analysis of literary activities in the Pondok Pena Banyumas Community was used in this research. Researchers went directly into the field (field research), namely the Komunitas Sastra Pondok Pena at the An Najah Islamic Boarding School, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, by adjusting the time and capabilities of the research object to obtain data



holistically (see Rohidi, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The case study design was implemented with an orientation toward literary activities (literary appreciation and expression) within the Pondok Pena Banyumas literary community. Technically, researchers focus on the phenomenon of religious literature within the scope of Islamic boarding schools.

The main subjects of this research are Pondok Pena Banyumas community activists. Technically, the researcher focused on the founders, administrators, and members of the literary community as essential sources for extracting information about the process of religious literature-based education in Islamic boarding schools. In the Pondok Pena An Najah community there are 25 administrators in the community, ranging from caretakers to division members. The number of personnel is 25 people as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Community Management of Pondok Pena**

Source: Interview with the Pondok Pena Community Management

No	Name	Occupations	Role in An Najah	M/F	Age (year)
	Prof. Dr. KH. Moh. Roqib, M.Ag.	Lecturer, religious leader	Management	M	56
	Irkham Auladi	Student	Pesantren Headman	M	22
	Nisrina Tuhfatul Azizah	Student	Pesantren Headwoman	F	22
	M. 'Ain Nur Rokhmat	Student	Consultant	M	23
	Umi Sarifah Maesyaroh	Student	Consultant	F	22
	K.R.T. Dimas Indianto Sastrowinoto, M.Pd.	Lecturer, Literary activist	Supervisor	M	34
	Irna Novia Damayanti, M.Pd.	Literary activist	Supervisor	F	30
	Iis Sugiarti, M.Pd.	Literary activist	Supervisor	F	26
	Hafizh Pandhitio, S.H.	Literary activist	Supervisor	M	27
	Abdur Rouf	Student	Leader	M	23
	Dwi Ariyani	Student	Secretary	F	22
	Ashfiyatun Ni'mah	Student	Treasure	F	21
	Rini Linda Dwi Astuti	Student	Fiction Division Coordinator	F	20
	Refi Mariska	Student	Fiction Division Member	F	20
	Imelda Maulidya	Student	Fiction Division Member	F	21
	Ghani Aurina Sahera	Student	Nonfiction Division Coordinator	F	20
	Ade Indah Puspitarini	Student	Nonfiction Division Member	F	19
	Nila Anggun Lestari	Student	Nonfiction Division Member	F	20
	Hilda Ariyani M.	Student	Nonfiction Division Member	F	19
	Rachmadi Rasyid	Student	Journalism Division Coordinator	M	21
	Nae Lurrokhmah	Student	Journalism Division Member	F	20
	Sinta Nurrohmah	Student	Journalism Division Member	F	20

No	Name	Occupations	Role in An Najah	M/F	Age (year)
	Novita Nur Halizah	Student	Journalism Division Member	F	20
	Kharisma Nawarul Jannah	Student	Public Relations Division Coordinator	F	19
	Siti Nadhifatul Hajar	Student	Public Relations Division Member	F	19

The research location was mapped from a geographical perspective. Geographically, the research will be located on Jl. Moh. Besar, RT.6/RW.3, Dusun II Prompong, Kutasari, Baturaden District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Baturaden District is located in the highlands with beautiful landscapes and lush nature. This region is known for its cultural diversity, history, and natural beauty. Jalan Moh. Besar, where the An Najah Islamic Boarding School literary community is located, is the primary access that connects the surrounding area. Dusun II Prompong is located in Kutasari, an area famous for its vegetable gardens and natural charm.

An Najah Islamic Boarding School, as a place where literary community activities take place, is an environment full of religious and educational values. This community may consist of Islamic boarding school students who have an interest and talent in literature. Daily life in Islamic boarding schools creates an atmosphere that is thick with religious values, traditions, and discipline, which can have a strong influence on literary development.

The geographical location of the An Najah Islamic Boarding School literary community in Kutasari, Banyumas Regency, provides its unique features. The natural beauty, cultural diversity and religious atmosphere of Islamic boarding schools create an inspiring environment for community members to explore and develop their interest in literature.

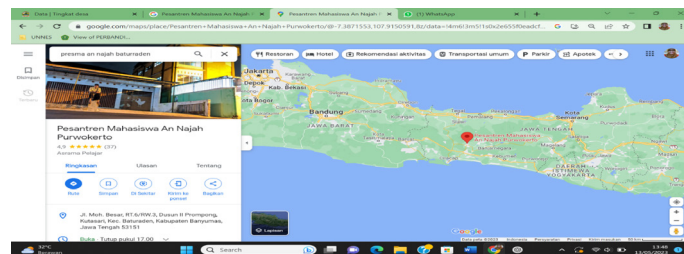


Figure 1. Location Map of Pondok Pena Pema An Najah in Baturraden, Banyumas Regency, Indonesia.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pesantren+Mahasiswa+An+Najah+Purwokerto>



Figure 2. Location of Pondok Pena Literary Community

Source: Personal Documents (Febriani, 2024)

Research data was collected through observation techniques, interviews, and studying documents/artifacts of literary works as a basis for building understanding and reflection in the literary community.

In this research, non-participatory observation was used in literary activities in the Pondok Pena community. Observations use visual, audio and audio-visual recording tools. Observations were made on (1) the literary community/literary activist environment, (2) the literary community community environment, (3) the literary education process, and (4) the educational-socio-cultural situation. This research uses unstructured interviews. Researchers interviewing informants do not use standard and detailed questions with rigid answer points. However, the questions asked are more flexible with a predetermined outline of the problem and can develop during the interview process. The informants interviewed were (1) members of the literary community, (2) administrators of the literary community, (3) founders of the community, and (4) local people who were involved or not. Document studies that will be collected in this research include (1) literary products/literary works produced (literary artifacts), (2) activity documents in literary education, (3) interaction documents in literary education, (4) method and technique documents literary education, and (5) literary education media documents. In carrying out data collection, researchers use ethical suitability guidelines to obtain data that is valid and in accordance with socio-cultural conditions in the research locus.

Methodologically, the analysis procedure uses a thematic data analysis model (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Thematic data analysis makes it possible to explore the meaning, patterns and significance of the data studied in the form of an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of community-based literary education. In thematic model data analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2006), there are six phases, including (1) organizing the data, (2) generating categories or themes, (3) coding the data, (4) testing the understanding that emerges from the data, (5) looking for alternative explanations of the data, and (6) compiling data analysis. The scheme of this research method is systematically presented in Figure 3 below.

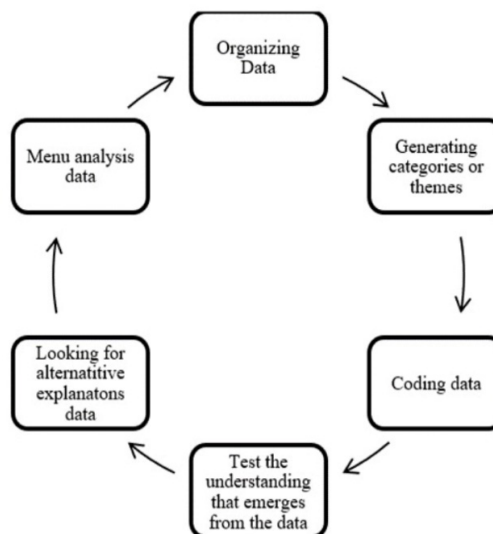


Figure 3. Thematic Data Analysis  
Source: Marshall and Rossman

## 4 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Religious Values in Literary Works in the Pondok Pena Banyumas Community

Pondok Pena community carries out its literary activities, such as appreciation event and literary expression. The literary expression refers to the activity that *santri* who are as the community members produce their literary works in the form of poetry, prose, and drama. Pondok Pena Banyumas community is also an environment that is full of religious values reflected through the literary works produced. Each of the work from the community contains moral and ethical values from Islamic teaching and it becomes the main theme. Through poetry, short stories, and other literary works, the Pondok Pena Banyumas







community always puts an attempt to deliver the religious messages such as affection, fairness, simplicity, and sincerity towards the readers. In their literary activities, the use of religious terms is often found. It can be from the Koran or Hadith, and the portrayal related to religion practices in the daily life.

Moreover, the religious values in the literary works of Pondok Pena Banyumas community are also reflected through the characters and story plot. The characters are portrayed as an individual who has firm belief towards the religious principles, face the struggles with strong faith, and attempt to live based on the religion teachings. Therefore, the works produced by the Pondok Pena Banyumas community are not only as entertainment means or art appreciation, but also as a medium that can deliver and strengthen the religious values in the daily life.

The following are several literary works produced by the Pondok Pena Community which were selected using purposive sampling.

**Table 2. Literary Products of Pondok Pena Community**

Literary Works	Information
	<p>A poetry anthology composed by the member of Pondok Pena community. This anthology is a gift made for K.H. Roqib (Management of An Najah Islamic Boarding School). It tells stories about love for everyone including parents, relatives, teachers, and romantic partner.</p>
	<p>Buletin Sastri is a regular bulletin published by the Pondok Pena community. It is published with 16 pages including poetry, essays, news, short stories, documentation, and imaginary conversation by the management. It is a literary work that is published through creative process and work curation by the literary tutors.</p>
	<p>This literary work is a result of Pesantren Menulis 2 (biannual national agenda). This book contains short stories from the national competition of short stories writing. The book “Misteri Jodoh” (The Mystery of Soulmate) is published by Pustaka Sastra. It is an anthology of short stories with the theme of love under Islamic perspective.</p>

Literary Works	Information
	<p>This literary work is a result of Pesantren Menulis 4 (Biannual national agenda). This book contains inspirational stories with the theme pesantren. The stories in this book are inspirational experiences happen in pesantren/islamic boarding school. Not to mention, this book has also gained warm speech by Indonesian National Writer, Mr. Ahmad Tohari.</p>
	<p>This literary work is a result of Pesantren Menulis 4 (Biannual national agenda). This book contains short stories with the theme of love life in pesantren. The love life in pesantren is known for its uniqueness because it is covered with Islamic belief. Therefore, the stories in this book are Islamic love stories.</p>

Based on the book, which contains a collection of literary works, the following are samples of excerpts from poetry, short stories, and inspirational stories as follows: (1) the poem “Hujan dan Senja,” (2) the short story “Guruku Adalah Penerangku,” and (3) the poem “Cahaya di Kegelapan”.

First, a poem entitled “Hujan dan Senja” (Rain and Sunset) by Zahrah Nur Fitri.

Sajak Zahrah Nur Fitri	Poem by Zahrah Nur Fitri
<i>Hujan dan Senja</i>	<b>Rain and Sunset</b>
<i>tangisan semesta jauh</i>	the weeping of the universe far away
<i>menabrak bentala tanpa ampun</i>	crashes relentlessly against the sky
<i>awan dan alam saling menyentuh</i>	clouds and nature touch each other
<i>disaksikan raga yang termenung</i>	witnessed by a pensive soul
<i>berwisata masa lalu</i>	traveling through the past
 <i>kemudian senja berbinar</i>	 then the sunset shines
<i>hanya sesaat</i>	only for a moment
<i>dan kembali membuat kenangan</i>	and once again creates memories
<i>dengan lukisan nirmalanya</i>	with its serene painting
 <i>Purwokerto, 30 Maret 2022</i>	 Purwokerto, March 30, 2022

In the poem “Rain and Sunset,” there is an emphasis on the greatness of God, which is reflected through natural images. First, the cry of the universe crashing mercilessly describes God’s unstoppable power and greatness. It reflects the concept of God’s power in the Islamic religion, where the universe and everything in it is subject to His undeniable will. Apart from that, clouds and nature touching each other reflect the harmony and order arranged by God as the creator. It confirms belief in the greatness of God, who perfectly created the universe, depicting order and harmony in His creation.

Then, the image of a sparkling twilight only momentarily illustrates the concept of God’s provisions in the Islamic religion. The twilight that shines only for a moment reminds us that the beauty of the world and material pleasures are only temporary. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the limitations of this world and preparing oneself for an eternal afterlife. Thus, this poem not only reflects the greatness of God in the creation of nature but also teaches about God’s provisions and the importance of understanding the nature of mortal life and preparing oneself for eternal life in the afterlife.

Second, a short story entitled “Guruku adalah Penerangku” (My Teacher is My Light) by Dyah Sekar Ayu L.

<p><i>Pernahkah kau mempunyai seorang guru, yang tak akan pernah kau lupakan, walaupun waktu terus berlalu? Bu Aslamiyah, beliau guruku saat SMP yang bersifat lembut nan keibuan. Walaupun usiaku kini sudah berkepala dua, tetapi masih teringat jelas di ingatanku bagaimana beliau mengajari kami dengan penuh kesabaran.</i></p> <p><i>Bu Aslamiyah sebagai wali kelas bukan hanya mengajar secara akademis, namun juga menumbuhkan karakter yang baik untuk kami. Orang bilang, guru merupakan orang tua saat bersekolah dan aku menyetujui itu. Bu Aslamiyah sudah seperti ibuku sendiri, tempatku mencurahkan seluruh isi hatiku tanpa harus takut untuk disalahkan. Beliau selalu mencari jalan keluar di setiap permasalahan kami.</i></p> <p><i>“Karena ibu tau, kamu dan teman-temanmu adalah anak yang baik.” Begitulah kata beliau. Kasih sayang Bu Aslamiyah begitu tulus tanpa membedakan kami. Semuanya sama di matanya. “Kalian semua memiliki kepintaran yang sama, hanya berbeda di bidang saja. Dimana pun kalian nyaman dengan bidang tersebut, kembangkan hingga kalian bisa terbang tinggi dan melampaui orang lain.”</i></p> <p>.....</p>	<p>Have you ever had a teacher whom you will never forget, even as time continues to pass by? Ms. Aslamiyah, she was my teacher during junior high school, gentle and motherly in nature. Although I am now in my twenties, I still vividly remember how she taught us with full patience.</p> <p>Ms. Aslamiyah, as our homeroom teacher, not only taught us academically, but also nurtured good character within us. They say a teacher is like a parent during school, and I agree with that. Ms. Aslamiyah has become like my own mother, a place where I can pour out all my thoughts without fear of being blamed. She always sought solutions to every problem we faced.</p> <p>“Because I know, you and your friends are good kids,” she would say. Ms. Aslamiyah’s affection is so genuine, without any discrimination among us. We are all equal in her eyes. “You all have the same intelligence, just different fields. Wherever you feel comfortable, develop it until you can soar high and surpass others.”</p> <p>.....</p>
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In the short story above, the religious values are reflected through the relationship of the teacher and students. Especially the character of Miss Aslamiyah. First, the kindness and motherhood of Miss Aslamiyah has reflected the affectionate and forgiveness values taught by Islam. She is not only a teacher, but also a caring mother and she is ready to help her students in any issues. This reminds the readers about Islamic teaching on the significance of affection and care towards humans, especially as an educator.

Secondly, the inclusivity that Miss Aslamiyah shows to her students reflect the Islamic teaching about the equality in front of Allah and the importance of respecting the uniqueness of individuals. She does not treat her students based on their intelligence or background, but she treats them full of affection and teaches that every individual has their own potentials to grow and develop. This attitude is in line with the equality values and fairness taught by Islam, where each individual is considered as valuable in front of Allah without any differences.

The third literary work is the poem “Light in the Darkness” by Fadil Mukti Mubarok.

<i>Cahaya di Kegelapan</i>	<b>Light in the Darkness</b>
<i>Karya: Fadil Mukti Mubarok</i>	By: Fadil Mukti Mubarok
<i>Kulihat engkau dalam gelapnya malam</i>	I see you in the darkness of the night
<i>Malam yang penuh dengan kesunyian</i>	A night filled with silence
<i>Malam Yang penuh dengan kehampaan</i>	A night filled with emptiness
<i>Tersorot engkau dalam kesepian</i>	You shine in solitude
<i>Cahaya seputih salju</i>	A light as white as snow
<i>Menyatu menjadikannya satu</i>	Merge to make it one
<i>Tubuh yang kedinginan</i>	A body that feels cold
<i>Kini berubah menjadi kehangatan</i>	Now turns into warmth
<i>Mei 2023</i>	May 2023

The poem “Light in the Darkness” portrays the silence and voice experienced by someone. Those themes, in terms of religion, can be comprehended as the representation of someone’s life journey in facing the darkness and obstacles. When a poet portrays “you” that is seen in the darkness of the night, it can be considered as an embodiment of God’s presence who enlightens in the amidst of silence and void. It can reflect the religious values that teach humans the significance of belief and hopes in facing life obstacles, also belief that God is always present to give humans hope and warmth in the darkness.

Moreover, the portrayal of light as white as snow unites and gives warmth to the cold body that contains religious values. It can be interpreted as a portrayal of affection between human and God’s power that changes difficult times to be better. In religion teaching, light often represents wisdom and truth that brings protection and warmth to His followers. Therefore, this poem can be taken as a reflection of the presence of God in giving His light, protection, and hope in the middle of darkness and obstacles.

Based on the literary works above, it can be seen that Pondok Pena Banyumas community is a living proof on how literature can incorporate the religious values inside the literary works. First, through the theme and story plots chosen, this community often chooses the subjects which are relevant to the Islamic values, such as fairness, simplicity, and sincere. Thus, they can deliver the religious messages indirectly through the stories they write.

In addition, the use of language and literary styles chosen by Pondok Pena Banyumas community often adopts the religious terms, quotes from Koran or Hadith, and terms that portray the daily religious practices. It can help strengthening the relationship between the literary works and religious values they want to deliver to the readers.

Following the facts above, the characters portrayed in the literary works are often the individuals who live their lives by faith and patience. They stick to the religion principles and attempt to live their



lives based on the Islamic teaching. Consequently, these characters become reflection of the religious values that Pondok Pena Banyumas community wants to deliver.

In addition, they frequently use the plot and character interactions in their writing to convey moral or religious lessons to readers. The values embodied in these messages are tolerance, absolutism, and kindness – three of the primary tenets of Islamic doctrine.

Ultimately, the Pondok Pena Banyumas community offers its members a platform to comprehend and enhance their religious beliefs within a literary framework by means of discourse sessions, work readings, and other literary gatherings. They can accomplish their goal of balancing literary freedom with the standards and principles of the religion they follow in this way.

#### **4.2 The Influence of Pesantren Cultural Values in the Creative Process of Literature in the Pondok Pena Banyumas Community**

Pesantren, students, and literature are basically one unit that cannot be separated. Literature comes from the word “sastri,” which means studying religious knowledge, or in other words, literature, and students have the same position as seekers of truth, which is called salik. Islamic boarding schools themselves have long been involved with literature, especially from reading books taught at Islamic boarding schools, which have a precise literary dimension. For example, *nadhom*, which is taught in Islamic boarding schools, is an important part when students learn the book by singing it to make it easier to memorize. That is where the literary dimension in Islamic boarding schools becomes real. The presence of literature in Islamic boarding schools is significant because, through literature, students are taught to know the world outside themselves, increase awareness of the environment, and also form good morals in accordance with the lessons contained in the books they study.

The Pondok Pena Community has a vision “To become a Literary Writing Community based on Islamic religious values and internationally competitive that is responsive to developments in the world of literature.” The writing study missions set include: (1) exploring and developing the writing potential of Pesma'an Najah students at national and international levels; (2) forming a joint learning activity that prioritizes literary education; (3) advancing the quality of members regarding literary understanding; (4) develop creativity in writing universal language and literature; and (5) giving birth to a new generation of writers who are competitive and uphold religious values.

There are several activities carried out by the Pondok Pena Community, including (1) regular Sunday afternoon meetings, (2) book reviews, (3) drama performances, (4) literary safaris, (5) writing boarding schools, and (6) literacy talks. Firstly, the regular Sunday afternoon meeting is a scheduled meeting consisting of activities that hone points of view, discussion, material, writing, reading, laughter, and strengthening the family ties of the Pondok Pena Community. Second, a book review is a book dissecting activity in the form of book appreciation and criticism. In this activity, the community will invite experts to become discussion starters. Third, drama performances are an appreciation and expression activity carried out by community members. Appreciation is given to the drama script that is performed. The drama script is the work of community members or writers. Drama performances are carried out with preparation in the form of routine training and the peak event, namely the drama performance. Fourth, Literary Safari is a literary exploration activity including visits to writers, literary communities, libraries, museums, etc. Fifth, writing Islamic boarding schools is a forum that provides opportunities for students to express themselves and develop their literary talents. This activity focuses on religious education; writing activities are an alternative that allows students to explore the world of literature, both in the form of poetry, short stories, and essays. Through this activity, Islamic boarding school writing is not only a means of honing writing skills but also becomes an opportunity to deepen understanding of religion through a literary perspective and enrich literary cultural heritage in an Islamic context. Sixth, a literacy talk is a literary discussion activity in the context of literacy products.



Figure 4. (1) Theatrical Poetry “5 Tuhan by Nurma Adi Satria” Director: Rini Linda Dwi. A.; (2) Theater Performance “Orang-orang Bersarung”. Script & Director: Hilda Ariyani M & Wahyu Dzul; (3) Poetry Recitation by Community Member; (4) Literary Safari

Life in Islamic boarding schools greatly influences the creative literary process. This influence can be seen from two things. First, based on the ideology of thought that they adhere to influences the literary works produced. Second, the atmosphere of daily activities carried out by the students (*santri*) as members of the community influences the creative literary process.

First, the ideology of thought of the *santri* as the members of the community influences how they produce the literary works. The ideology of thought they have is based on the Islamic teachings that are reflected on the themes, moral values, and other values they want to deliver through the works. The *santri* who have grown up in the pesantren environment tends to own deeper understanding towards religion teaching and spirituality values. Those values can be seen through their works. It can be in the form of values highlight, such as fairness, courage, affection, and forgiveness, that become the main points of Islamic teaching. Furthermore, those values are reflected through the characters, plot, and messages conveyed in the literary works.

In addition, the ideology of thought of the *santri* also influences the point of view of the literary works. *Santri* who has pesantren as their background tends to see the world through the point of view of Islamic teaching and moral values that they believe. It can be reflected through the themes which are relevant to the religious life, moral conflict, and spiritual challenges faced by an individual or wider society. Moreover, their point of views related to social, political, and cultural issues are often influenced by Islamic teaching as it is reflected on how some solidarity, fairness, and sense of empathy are highlighted on their works.

The ideology of thought of the *santri* towards tradition and local wisdom also influences their literary works. *Santri* who have grown up in pesantren environment often possess deeper understanding towards local tradition, myths, folklores, and other cultural heritage related to Islamic teaching. It is reflected on their literary works through the use of local patterns, pesantren-related background, and also the highlight on cultural and moral values on the local tradition.

Therefore, the ideology of thought owned by *santri* as the community members have significant influence towards the literary creative process. The influences can be seen through the themes, messages,

point of views, or conveyed values. It creates diversity and deeper literary expression that reflect the identity and spiritual experience of the writer in the context of pesantren.

Secondly, the daily atmosphere lived by the *santri* as community members also influences on their literary creative process. The pesantren environment which is full of religious routine and spiritual learning influences the thought and emotion of the *santri*. The activities such as salat (pray), *tilawah* (recite Koran), tadarus (memorize Koran), and religious talk are their main activities to form their sensitivity towards the spiritual values and self-reflection. This atmosphere of solemn and contemplative can trigger the inspiration and deeper thought, which is reflected through the spiritual themes, moral conflicts, and meaning of life.

Additionally, the social interaction in pesantren An Najah is often dominated by strong interpersonal and supportive relationship. That interaction also influences the creative process of the *santri*. The atmosphere of togetherness, solidarity, and brotherhood/sisterhood built by the *santri* creates a safe space for collaboration, idea exchange, and supports in making the works. The discussion of literary works, experience sharing, and giving feedback have been integral part in the life of pesantren environment. It enriches the perspective and inspiration of the writers, and also helps them to develop and improve their works through diverse point of views and constructive critics.

Furthermore, the serenity and orderliness in the pesantren An Najah impact the focus and discipline of the *santri* on exploring their ideas and writing their works. The strict regulation about the time and daily life, such as studying, taking a break, and religious activities, helps them to create structure and routine that supports productivity and concentration. The *santri* learn to manage their time efficiently and make time for literary work between their religion obligation and academics. The organized atmosphere facilitates their creative process and enable them to express themselves more on track and productively.

Therefore, the daily life situation in pesantren has given significant contribution towards the students' creative process in making literary works. The environment that is full of spirituality values, supportive social interaction, and strict discipline rules create fine foundation of inspiration, collaboration, and focus in making literary works.

## 5 Conclusion

In exploring the intersection of religion and literature, the insights from Pondok Pena Banyumas community highlight two crucial aspects. First, it is revealed how the community succeeds in combining the religious values in their literary works. Through theme choices, moral values, and characterizations with full of religion values, the literary works produced reflect the harmony of spirituality and art expression. The involvement of the community member is inspired by the religion teaching, with a deeper view towards the religion values, has created a space for the literature to enrich the souls and deepen understanding about spiritual values.

Second, the influence of pesantren values during creative process is influenced by two things, namely (1) thought ideology that they follow influences the literary work produced and (2) the daily life atmosphere by the *santri* as the community member influences the literary creative process. Overall, through the harmony of the religion and cultural values of pesantren in the literary works, Pondok Pena Banyumas community has proven that religion and literature are not opposite each other, but they can complete and inspire each other. Therefore, the intersection exploration between religion and literature in the context of pesantren gives valuable contribution for the literature development in Indonesia that is diverse and rich in meanings.

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