

Prophetic Dimensions in Caregivers' Character with Literary and Religious Reflections from Darul Ulum for Quality Education (SDG 4)

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ABSTRACT

Objektive: To explore the prophetic dimensions reflected in the character of caregivers at Al-Hambra Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Jombang, East Java, Indonesia, focusing particularly on those with a literary background. The study investigates how caregivers who are also poets influence educational patterns and character formation within the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) setting. **Method:** Qualitative phenomenological study employs prophetic structuralism, integrating Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature (humanization, liberation, transcendence) and Bourdieu's genetic structuralism (habitus, field, capital). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Binhad Nurrohmah, a poet and caregiver, and analyzed using Creswell's six-step interactive model. **Results:** The findings reveal three interconnected dimensions of prophetic structuralism in Nurrohmah's literary practice. In the *amil* dimension, he exercises moral agency by rejecting shirk, slander, and harmful writing through continuous self-evaluation. In the *amal* dimension, poetry becomes a vehicle for outward goodness (honesty, social bonding, *da'wah*) and inward goodness (gratitude, trust in God, remembrance of death). In the *amul* dimension, engagement with sufism, Qur'anic narratives, and contemplation of death builds divine awareness. **Novelty:** Contributing a new theoretical framework, prophetic structuralism, that integrates literary analysis, authorial reflection, and social reception, extending Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature beyond thematic analysis. Unlike previous studies that focus solely on textual interpretation, this framework combines authorial subjectivity and reader response to offer a more comprehensive understanding of prophetic values in literature. It also demonstrates how pesantren-based education, through caregivers with literary and religious consciousness, shapes students' resilient moral character, thereby supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education), particularly target 4.7.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, Indonesia is experiencing rapid and dynamic transformations. Access to information is now as easy as a tap on a handheld device (Syauqi, 2016). Technology has become an integral part of daily life, especially among the younger generation (Salmah & Murti, 2020). As the world enters the era of the Industrial Revolution 5.0, human interaction with technology intensifies without spatial or temporal limitations. However, this development has also led to a weakening of local wisdom and character values due to unfiltered exposure to global currents (Magnis-Suseno, 1998; Darmana, 2015; Nasrullah, 2017; Faruqi, 2019; Purnomo, 2019). This condition makes it increasingly difficult for parents to safeguard their children from unregulated social interactions (Ma'arif, 2018). As a result, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are often seen as a more secure alternative for moral and religious education (Hasanah & Maarif, 2021).

Pesantren education is valued for its emphasis on religious discipline and its structured lifestyle, which includes both spiritual instruction and character

development. With a boarding system, students (*santri*) live under the guidance of religious teachers (*kyai*) and are separated from familial and social distractions. This setting provides a conducive environment for the cultivation of values through a combination of formal religious instruction and daily behavioral discipline (Ma'arif & Kartiko, 2018). Moreover, character education is emphasized as an essential foundation for nurturing responsible and spiritually aware individuals. This educational model is not exclusive to Indonesia, as similar patterns can be observed in primary Islamic schools in other Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand (Pusvitasari, 2023).

Interestingly, *pesantren* often maintain a deliberate distance from technological advancements, preserving a traditional model of education that prioritizes spiritual over material pursuits. While various studies have examined *pesantren* systems and teaching methods, little attention has been given to the figures of caregivers or religious mentors particularly those who are also literary figures and their influence on students' character development. This study focuses on a unique *pesantren*, Al-Hambra Darul Ulum in Jombang, East Java, Indonesia, where the caregiver is both a *kyai* and a poet. It explores how literary engagement contributes to a distinct educational environment and character formation among students.

Beyond its role as a traditional institution of Islamic education, *pesantren* culture has increasingly been recognized as a strategic vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the Indonesian context. Research has demonstrated that *pesantren* contribute to multiple SDG targets, including SDG 4 (Quality Education) through the integration of value-based and 21st-century competencies (Fadillah et al., 2026; Hidayati et al., 2025), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) via entrepreneurship and vocational training programs such as *santripreneur* (Izza & Masrur, 2025), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through eco-*pesantren* initiatives that implement circular economy practices such as organic waste management and renewable energy (Widodo, 2026). Furthermore, the communal and transformative nature of *pesantren* culture – rooted in local wisdom and Islamic ethical values positions these institutions as strategic agents in fostering social inclusion, environmental awareness, and community empowerment, aligning with the broader national agenda of Indonesia Emas 2045 and the 2025-2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) (Hidayati et al., 2025; Izza & Masrur, 2025). Thus, examining the cultural and educational dimensions of *pesantren* within the SDGs framework offers a crucial lens for understanding how faith-based institutions can contribute meaningfully to sustainable development, bridging local traditions with global sustainability agendas.

This inquiry is guided by the framework of prophetic structuralism, which comprises three interrelated dimensions: *amil* (moral agency), *amal* (righteous action), and *amul* (transcendent consistency) (Fatoni et al., 2025). Drawing upon the foundational work of Kuntowijoyo (2019) and integrating insights from Bourdieu's (1993) genetic structuralism, the study investigates how spiritual, moral, and aesthetic values are internalized and practiced within a *pesantren* context. Through this framework, the paper aims to contribute to a broader understanding of religious education that integrates literary expression and cultural continuity in response to contemporary moral challenges.

This study employs prophetic structuralism, encompassing three core concepts – *amil*, *amal*, and *amul* as its analytical framework (Fatoni et al., 2025). The first concept is *amil*. The concept of *amil* is derived from the spirit of *zakat* collectors, so in this context,

amil is understood as an agent or representative (Haya & Tambunan, 2022; Rahman, 2021; Rohim, 2020; Syafitra & Mustaring, 2016). The concept of the agent is vital in Bourdieu's genetic structuralism, where an agent navigates within the structure of habitus and field to acquire various forms of capital, including symbolic, economic, cultural, and social capital. These structural ideas from Bourdieu are integrated with the humanism present in Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature, merging structuralist concepts with a more human-centered approach to understanding literature.

The concept of humanization was proposed by Kuntowijoyo due to his observation of signs indicating that society was moving toward dehumanization. Kuntowijoyo identified dehumanization through the objectification of humans, aggressiveness, loneliness, and spiritual alienation (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). This aligns with Kuntowijoyo's belief that a truly committed Muslim writer does not only fulfill the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam, but also approaches their literary work with the intention of worship (Kuntowijoyo, 2019).

The concept of amil encourages doing good deeds. Good deeds are divided into two categories: outward obedience and inward obedience. First, an individual must practice outward obedience, which involves fulfilling the pillars of Islam, including the shahada (testimony of faith), prayer (salat), fasting (sawm), almsgiving (zakat), and pilgrimage (hajj) if able. Additionally, one must maintain relationships with others (hablum minannas), such as striving in the path of Allah, fighting for the purity of religion, fighting for the independence of the country, safeguarding one's safety, protecting one's possessions, eliminating hostility and injustice, and managing all other matters in life, including education, politics, trade, agriculture, and livestock, whether obligatory (wajib), recommended (sunnah), or permissible (mubah) (Aceh, 1985: 64-65). Outward obedience relates to one's relationship with others and the practice of Islamic law (syariat). This relationship must be maintained and lived in a way that brings a person toward happiness.

Second, inward obedience represents a higher level of obedience, focusing on the relationship between the servant (hamba) and Allah. In the book *Arbain fi Ulumu'ddin*, there are ten aspects of this inward obedience: 1) repentance (taubat), 2) fear of Allah (khauf), 3) asceticism (zuhud), or not placing hope in worldly life, 4) patience (sabar), 5) gratitude (syukur), 6) sincerity (ikhlas), 7) trust in Allah (tawakkal), or relying entirely on Allah for one's fate, 8) love for Allah (mahabbah), an unconditional love, 9) contentment (ridha), or submitting to Allah's will, and 10) remembrance of death (zikrul maut), or being mindful of death (Aceh, 1985: 45). If all these qualities are present in an individual, then that person has certainly cultivated goodness within themselves.

The second concept is amal. The theoretical construction of the amal structure is built upon two foundational concepts from Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature: humanism (amar ma'ruf) and liberation (nahi mungkar). Liberation is the second structure that Kuntowijoyo derived from an Islamic concept, namely nahi mungkar (forbidding evil) (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). The Islamic teaching of nahi mungkar (avoiding or prohibiting wrongdoing) is practiced alongside amar ma'ruf (encouraging good deeds). Therefore, in the concept of prophetic literature, these two principles are placed on equal footing. Kuntowijoyo divides liberation in prophetic literature into two categories: (1) external liberation and (2) internal liberation (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). External liberation consists of: (a) colonialism, which today persists only in Palestine, (b) aggression by powerful nations against weaker nations, and (c) global capitalism through economic

manipulation. Internal liberation consists of: (a) political oppression of the arts before 1965, (b) state oppression of the people during the New Order era, and (c) gender injustice (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). Kuntowijoyo's two concepts are integrated with Bourdieu's three concepts *habitus*, *arena*, and *capital* forming a cosmology of goodness.

Goodness, in this context, can be taught and learned. This is why Islam encourages doing good (*amar ma'ruf*) and avoiding wrongdoing (*nahi mungkar*). Performing good deeds serves as the foundational structure of *amil*, while in the *amil* structure, the foundation is avoiding wrongdoing. The concept of *amil* represents the second level after *amil*. A person who actively engages in good deeds in their life reaches the first level (*amil*). At this stage, they have gained self-control, meaning they can direct their three inner forces toward goodness: intellect (*akal*), desires (*hawa nafsu*), and anger (*amarah*) (Aceh, 1985: 10). Evil (*maksiat*), like goodness (*ketaatan*), consists of outward and inward transgressions. First, outward evil is committed through physical actions. This includes acts such as stealing, robbing, assaulting, murdering, exposing others' faults, cursing, insulting, slandering, lying, distorting facts, failing to lower one's gaze, committing adultery, and so on (Aceh, 1985: 61). Outward transgressions always involve others, whether directly or indirectly. Second, inward evil affects and taints the soul, making it necessary to abandon. These negative traits include *hasad* (envy), *haqad* (resentment), *ujub* (self-admiration), *bukhul* (miserliness), *riya* (showing off), *hubbul jah* (love of fame), *hubbur riyasah* (desire for leadership), *takabur* (arrogance), *ghadhab* (excessive anger), *ghibah* (gossiping), *namimah* (slander), *hizb* (partisanship), *syahul kalam* (excessive speech), *syahut tha'am* (overeating), and *hubbud dunia* (excessive attachment to worldly pleasures) (Aceh, 1985: 31). All these transgressions must be avoided, as refraining from wrongdoing is often more difficult than performing good deeds.

These are the bad deeds that often occur and can have fatal consequences, potentially ruining one's faith. However, the evil actions in the concept of *amil* are not limited to those already mentioned. They extend to all negative traits, such as lacking faith and proper belief (*akidah*), committing sins and neglecting worship, failing to distinguish between obligatory and optional acts of worship, betrayal, greed, following desires, being complacent with wrongdoing, cursing others, blaming others for mistakes, mocking, insulting, being melancholic, quarreling, impatience, anxiety, ingratitude, living luxuriously without frugality, vanity, breaking promises, having excessive desires, lacking shame, lying, and any actions that harm others (Aceh, 1985: 43-44). It can be concluded that any action that harms others falls into the category of wrongdoing.

The third concept is *amul*. The word *amul* is adapted from the event of *Amul Husni*. It is called *Amul Husni* because in that year, Prophet Muhammad Saw. experienced deep sadness due to the loss of his beloved ones, his wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib (Zakaria, 2019). After the sorrowful events that befell Prophet Muhammad Saw., the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj* took place. This sacred event marked the moment when Prophet Muhammad Saw. ascended to the heavens to meet Allah Swt. (Miswari & Fahmi, 2019). Based on this event, it can be inferred that before Prophet Muhammad Saw. was allowed to meet Allah Swt., he first experienced a deep sorrow. This event continues to be a hope for all Muslims: to one day meet Allah in Paradise. However, it is understood that the process of a servant meeting their Creator must be accompanied by a strong level of faith.

The explanation above introduces the third concept of prophetic structuralism, which aims to lead a servant closer to the Creator. This concept has been expressed in Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature ideas, with transcendence adapting Islamic teachings such as *tukminubillah* (faith in Allah). The concept of transcendence in literature is often referred to as Sufi literature. However, Kuntowijoyo emphasizes that transcendence is not merely a form of divine consciousness but can also represent an awareness of meanings that go beyond human consciousness (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). Transcendental literature must embody the essence of Sufism, such as *khauf* (fear), *raja'* (hope), *tawakal* (surrender), *qana'ah* (contentment with God's provision), *syukur* (gratitude), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and so on (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). This concept of transcendence is indeed a compilation of humanization and liberation. Because once one practices goodness (*amar ma'ruf*) and avoids wrongdoing (*nahi mungkar*), the level of faith will naturally increase.

The emergence of literary works can serve as a reflection to experience the sorrow felt by others, without having to experience it personally, as part of the process of increasing faith. However, it must be noted that not all sorrow will automatically elevate someone's faith. Therefore, Kuntowijoyo's concept of transcendence needs to be constructed with Bourdieu's genetic structuralism to lead one toward the stage of drawing closer to Allah Swt.. As a theoretical construction, *amul* can be realized through two steps that must be followed: *mulazamah* (consistency in doing good) and *mukhalafah* (opposing wrongdoing) (Aceh, 1985: 66).

The first pattern, *mulazamah*, is to keep oneself in a constant state of remembrance of Allah. The second pattern, *mukhalafah*, is to always strive to distance oneself from actions that cause forgetfulness of Allah Swt. (Aceh, 1985: 66). A person who consistently practices both of these, yet still feels empty, indicates a limitation within themselves, unless that limitation is removed by Allah Swt.. The essence of human life is to pursue this seeking the pleasure of Allah Swt.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology focuses on the study of objects of human experience. Mountakas defines the object of human experience as phenomena such as loneliness, anger, grief, and so forth (Creswell, 2015a). Creswell categorizes phenomenological approaches from various experts into two types: hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a framework for interpreting texts, whereas transcendental phenomenology is a framework for identifying the meaning of texts texturally and structurally (Creswell, 2015a).

This research is a qualitative study based on the following considerations: (1) The data sources are natural phenomena, namely the condition of society as social beings and as individuals who hold religious beliefs; (2) The researcher acts as the key research instrument, searching for library sources, making observations, conducting interviews, and taking direct field notes; (3) The data collected are descriptive and do not involve numbers or statistics; if any numbers appear, they do not constitute the majority of the data; (4) This study seeks to discover religiosity in the poet's thoughts; (5) The researcher collects the primary data directly from the field; (6) The study uses an emic perspective, prioritizing the informant's views; (7) Data analysis is conducted from the beginning, throughout the process, until the end of the research; and (8) This research does not test theories but builds theory from the data found during the study (Bungin,

2015; Creswell, 2015b). These factors form the basis for selecting a qualitative approach for this research. Because this study falls within the discipline of the sociology of literature, specifically the sociology of the author, its method employs field interviews to complete the data (Damono, 1984; Nasution, 2016). The data source consists of interviews conducted with Nurrohmat, a poet and caregiver of the Al-Hambra dormitory at the Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Jombang. The interview data collection process used a typical sampling technique from purposive sampling. Typical sampling was used because Nurrohmat has been a poet for more than 20 years (Creswell, 2015a). The data analysis steps in this study consist of six stages: organizing the data, coding, describing themes, presenting findings, interpreting data, and validation (Creswell, 2015a).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Nurrohmat's literary and religious dimensions are built upon a deeply rooted foundation. These two dimensions will be analyzed using the concept of prophetic structuralism. The stages of reading Nurrohmat's literary dimension consist of three parts: literature that builds goodness (amil), literature that can erase evil (amal), and literature that builds awareness of the divine (amul).

Table 1. Dimensions of prophetic structuralism in the poetics of Binhad Nurrohmat based on interview results (Nurrohmat, 2023).

Category	Subcategory	Concept	Evidence / Quotation	Interpretation
Literature that Builds the Foundation of Goodness (Amil)	Moral Foundation	Self-evaluation and self-control	"Yes, there are temptations regarding my works... However, I feel the need to constantly evaluate myself."	Nurrohmat shows reflective self-control and continuous moral evaluation in his creative process.
	1) Shirk (Syirik)	Communication with the dead	"I interact with history, with people, with things that have already died..."	He once explored supernatural or metaphysical dimensions but later realized their danger and shifted toward non-supernatural exploration.
	2) Slander (Fitnah)	Ethical writing	"Writing that contains slander clearly causes harm."	He rejects literary works that may spread slander or social harm.
	3) Love for Fame and Renown (Hubbul Jah, Hubbur Riyasah)	Attachment to recognition	"I am always amazed, how can I write like that?"	He acknowledges admiration toward his own creative process while remaining reflective about it.

Category	Subcategory	Concept	Evidence / Quotation	Interpretation
Literature that Can Erase Evil (Amal)	4) Actions that Harm Others	Responsibility toward readers	"If the writing would be damaging, I choose not to write it."	Ethical consideration becomes the basis of his literary decisions.
		Sensitivity to others	"If someone feels hurt because of me, I have to pay attention to that."	He distinguishes between criticism and genuine harm caused to others.
	1) Outer Goodness	a) Honesty	"Nature is always honest... It can't pretend."	Poetry is viewed as a truthful reflection of life and nature.
		b) Social Bonding (Silaturahmi)	"Even his parents didn't understand the concept of sowan."	He demonstrates cultural sensitivity and tolerance in social relations.
		c) Poetry as Da'wah	"Poetry can strengthen concepts within a person..."	Poetry functions as a medium of moral and spiritual influence.
		Emotional influence of poetry	"Not everyone will feel the same impact when reading poetry."	He recognizes the subjective and psychological dimensions of literary reception.
	2) Inner Goodness	a) Gratitude (Syukur)	"Until now, I continue to enjoy this creative process."	Creativity becomes a form of gratitude and wonder toward existence.
		b) Surrender (Tawakkul)	"There is another force that surely influences the theme..."	He acknowledges divine influence within the creative process.
		c) Remembrance of Death (Zikrul Maut)	"What we call death is actually just a different form of life."	Reflection on death deepens his spiritual and philosophical awareness.
Literature that Builds Divine Awareness (Amul)	Spiritual Awareness	Renewal of themes	"Changing from theme A to theme B is actually just to refresh myself..."	Different themes become pathways toward broader understanding and consciousness.
	Sufism	Sufism as inspiration	"Sufism is the highest perspective, personally."	Sufism is treated as a dynamic cultural and spiritual source for poetry.
	Qur'anic Interaction	Adaptation of Qur'anic stories	"Stories like this are very poetic to me."	Qur'anic narratives become poetic inspiration and theological reflection.

Category	Subcategory	Concept	Evidence / Quotation	Interpretation
	Graveyard Reflection	Divinity through paradox	"The graveyard is interesting to me because it is an area that cannot be clearly understood."	Graveyards symbolize liminal spaces that stimulate divine awareness and existential contemplation.

The table above demonstrates that Binhad Nurrohmat's literary practice embodies three interconnected dimensions of prophetic structuralism: *amil* (building the foundation of goodness), *amal* (erasing evil through good deeds), and *amul* (developing divine awareness). These dimensions are actively shaped by his human capacity to reflect, create, and take ethical responsibility as a poet and pesantren caregiver. Figure 1 below illustrates the relationship between these three dimensions and their integration within the prophetic structuralism framework. In the *amil* dimension, he exercises moral agency by recognizing and avoiding shirk, slander, love of fame, and harmful writing. His ability to self-criticize and redirect his exploration from metaphysical tendencies to grounded sources shows that humans can consciously choose ethical paths. Similarly, his rejection of destructive writing proves that writers possess the power to anticipate and control the social impact of their work. In the *amal* dimension, he uses his human strength to associate poetry with honesty, social sensitivity, and da'wah, transforming the creative process into a spiritual journey where writing becomes an act of theological reflection connecting human experience with divine consciousness.



Figure 1. Binhad Nurrohmat, poet and caregiver of Al-Hambra Dormitory, Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Jombang.

In the *amul* dimension, Nurrohmat actively cultivates divine awareness through deliberate choices changing themes, exploring Sufism, and engaging with Qur'anic narratives demonstrating that humans can turn sacred stories into poetic inspiration without losing theological meaning. His reflections on graveyards illustrate the human capacity to find deeper awareness of the God-human relationship even in existential uncertainty. Overall, Nurrohmat's poetics reveals that literature functions not merely as artistic expression but as a medium through which human beings exercise moral

responsibility, engage in spiritual contemplation, and actively construct prophetic consciousness.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the poetics of Binhad Nurrohmat cannot be separated from the framework of prophetic structuralism. His literary consciousness reflects the three interconnected dimensions proposed in prophetic spirituality, namely amal (performing goodness to erase evil), amil (building the foundation of goodness), and amul (constructing divine awareness). These dimensions are not only visible in his poetic works, but also deeply embedded in his worldview, ethical considerations, spiritual experiences, and social responsibilities as both a poet and a pesantren caregiver.

The dimension of amal: Performing goodness to erase evil

Building on the main findings of this study, which identify prophetic structuralism as an integrated framework in Nurrohmat's literary practice, this section examines the amal dimension in comparison with previous studies. The amal dimension in Nurrohmat's poetics is manifested through outer and inner goodness. Outer goodness includes honesty, social bonding (silaturahmi), and the use of poetry as a medium for da'wah. His honesty in the creative process, which he compares to the honesty of nature, echoes Capra's (2002) concept of holistic aesthetics, where artistic expression is interconnected with human consciousness and natural laws. This honesty also relates to Fatkhan's (2019) study on Jayabaya's prophecy, which argues that poets and literary figures possess strong intuition capable of penetrating future realities. Nurrohmat's silaturahmi practice, where he empathetically responds to cultural differences between East and West Javanese parents, reflects Paul Ricoeur's (1976) narrative identity, which posits that individuals can bridge symbolic worlds through interpretation. Similarly, Mustofa Bisri's humble gesture during the 33rd NU Congress (Kholid, 2015) exemplifies how a poet's spiritual depth can transform conflict into peace. Through poetry as a medium for da'wah, Nurrohmat believes that literature can strengthen moral awareness without dogmatic preaching, aligning with Iqbal's (2013) view that poetry can awaken theological consciousness. However, he also recognizes that not all readers experience the same impact, a notion consistent with Stanley Fish's (1980) concept of interpretive communities, where meaning depends on the reader's background and competence.

Nurrohmat's inner goodness syukur (gratitude), tawakkal (trust in Allah), and zikrul maut (remembrance of death) finds strong support in Al-Ghazali's (1990) *Ihya Ulumuddin*. Al-Ghazali states that gratitude consists of three levels: acknowledging blessings, magnifying gratitude, and using blessings to increase devotion (Aceh, 1985, p. 52). Nurrohmat's amazement at his own creative process embodies this gratitude. His tawakkal, expressed through theological awareness and surrender to divine will, aligns with Al-Ghazali's teaching that tawakkul brings benefit and removes harm (Aceh, 1985, p. 54). Furthermore, his contemplation of death in graveyards reflects Al-Ghazali's concept of zikrul maut, which makes a person wise, cautious, and focused on the afterlife (Aceh, 1985, p. 56). This practice also resonates with Schimmel's (1978) *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, where poetry serves as a Sufi instrument to convey divine concepts gently. Nurrohmat's graveyard meditations, documented in *Kuburan Imperium* and *Nisan Annemarie*, show that death is not an end but a transition to a

different life, a perspective that distinguishes religious consciousness from materialism. As noted in the interview, *"What we call death is actually just a different form of life"* (Nurrohmat, 2023). This inner goodness, according to Kuntowijoyo (Kuntowijoyo, 2019), is the essence of prophetic literature, where literature must bring readers closer to Allah.

The dimension of amil: Building the foundation of goodness

In the amil dimension, Nurrohmat's poetics reveal an ongoing process of self-control and ethical restraint. His awareness regarding shirk (associating partners with Allah), slander, harmful writing, and attachment to fame reflects an effort to maintain spiritual balance amid intellectual and creative freedom. This finding supports Aceh's concept (Aceh, 1985, p. 10) that the foundation of goodness must stand upon the ability to control reason, desire, and anger. Aceh further emphasizes that self-control is the first step toward becoming an amil, a person who not only avoids wrongdoing but also guides others to leave behind evil. This aligns with Kuntowijoyo's (2019) concept of liberation (*nahi mungkar*), which requires active resistance against both external oppression (colonialism, capitalism) and internal moral decay.

Nurrohmat's admission that he once "fell into" mystical interactions with the dead illustrates the fragile boundary between spiritual exploration and deviation. This resonates with Humaeni's (2014) study on magical traditions in Banten, where mystical powers are considered part of cultural heritage but can also lead to spiritual harm if uncontrolled. Similarly, Darmana (2015) documents the Barong Using tradition in Banyuwangi, Nurrohmat's ancestral land, where magical practices are deeply integrated into local culture. However, Nurrohmat's later decision to abandon supernatural approaches and focus on non-occult historical sources demonstrates a reflective spiritual transformation. In this context, prophetic structuralism functions not merely as a moral doctrine, but as a process of continuous self-purification within literary practice.

Furthermore, Nurrohmat's awareness of the destructive potential of writing strengthens the argument that literature possesses ethical consequences. His refusal to produce texts that may cause harm or slander indicates that literary production is inseparable from social responsibility. This aligns with the concept of cultural memory proposed by Srikandi (2019), where literature selectively reconstructs reality into meaningful collective consciousness. Srikandi argues that cultural memory is inherently selective, and not all realities can become part of memory; the poet's ideological position determines what is remembered and preserved. Nurrohmat's essays on Bung Karno, which eventually provoked governmental responses and public seminars, show that literary texts can move beyond aesthetic expression and become instruments of historical reconstruction and social intervention. As noted by Santoso (2024), the Jombang government organized a national seminar in response to Nurrohmat's historical writings, confirming that literature can drive social change. Thus, his poetics position literature as both an ethical and political force. This aligns with Heryanto's (1985) view that contextual literature must be aware of its capacity to shape readers' perspectives and social actions. Edward Said (2003) also emphasized the responsibility of the intellectual to consider the impact of their writings, a principle Nurrohmat embodies.

The findings also reveal that the subtle danger of *hubbul jah* (love for fame) and *hubbur riyasah* (love for recognition) remains present within the creative process.

Nurrohmat's fascination with the impact of his poetry on readers indicates an awareness of literary influence, yet it simultaneously exposes the temptation of admiration and symbolic authority. According to Aceh (Aceh, 1985, p. 36-37), these two traits are particularly dangerous because they are not immediately recognized as evil; they operate subtly and can lead to complacency and arrogance. The study finds that prophetic consciousness does not eliminate human vulnerability; instead, it requires continuous self-reflection to prevent spiritual corruption. This nuance becomes important because prophetic structuralism is not portrayed as a perfect moral condition, but as an ongoing struggle against the hidden forms of ego and desire. Al-Ghazali (1990) in *Ihya Ulumuddin* similarly emphasizes that the greatest jihad is against one's own ego (jihad an-nafs), and that constant self-evaluation (muhasabah) is necessary for spiritual growth.

The dimension of amul: Constructing divine awareness

The amul dimension demonstrates the culmination of Nurrohmat's prophetic spirituality. His movement across themes reflects an effort to renew perception and language, while his engagement with Sufism indicates a transition from formal religiosity (syariat) toward inner spiritual exploration (hakikat and makrifat). This progression is consistent with the stages described by Al-Attas (1993), who asserts that a true Muslim must integrate knowledge with spirituality to draw closer to God. Nurrohmat perceives Sufism not only as a religious path but also as a dynamic cultural phenomenon that continuously undergoes dialectical transformation. This perspective enables him to transform spiritual experiences into poetic material without reducing them into rigid dogma. Al-Ghazali (1990) similarly emphasizes that Sufism is the highest personal perspective, where rituals become sources of inspiration and cultural dialectics.

His interaction with the Qur'an further reinforces this transcendental orientation. Qur'anic stories, especially symbolic narratives involving animals and prophets, become poetic inspiration because they reveal paradoxical relationships between humanity and God. Nurrohmat's attraction to figures such as Prophet Yunus suggests an appreciation for imperfection, struggle, and spiritual wandering within prophetic narratives. As he stated in the interview, "*There's a prophet who deserts, yet there remains a relationship between the servant and God*" (Nurrohmat, 2023). These stories provide existential depth for his poetics because they portray faith not as a fixed certainty, but as an ongoing journey toward divine understanding. This aligns with Ricoeur's (1976) hermeneutic symbolism, where texts open new meanings beyond their literal content. Additionally, Kuntowijoyo (2019) emphasizes that transcendence in prophetic literature is not merely divine consciousness but an awareness of meanings that exceed human rationality, a notion Nurrohmat embodies through his poetic exploration of sacred narratives.

Moreover, the graveyard as a recurring motif illustrates Nurrohmat's paradoxical spiritual path. He is attracted to spaces that are ambiguous, dim, and difficult to fully comprehend. Rather than pursuing conventional religious expressions, he seeks transcendence through liminal experiences. This paradoxical tendency resonates with Kierkegaard's existentialist religious thought, as discussed in Li (2019), where true faith emerges from the courage to face absurdity and death. It also aligns with Martin Buber's (Diamond, 1960) concept of I-Thou relationship, where direct encounter with the divine occurs outside institutional frameworks. The findings indicate that prophetic

consciousness in Nurrohmat's poetics emerges precisely from encounters with uncertainty, silence, and existential mystery. This paradoxical tendency distinguishes his literary spirituality from normative religious discourse and positions his poetics as a form of contemplative resistance against superficial religiosity. This dimension also reflects the concept of *mulazamah* (constant remembrance of Allah) and *mukhalafah* (distancing from forgetfulness) as outlined by Aceh (Aceh, 1985, p. 66), where the seeker continuously strives to remain in God's presence while avoiding worldly distractions.

Overall, this study confirms that Nurrohmat's poetics represent an integration of ethics, spirituality, and literary consciousness within the framework of prophetic structuralism, where *amal* (good deeds), *amil* (moral agency), and *amul* (transcendence) form a coherent cosmology. Literature, in his perspective, is not merely aesthetic expression but a medium for ethical reflection, social responsibility, spiritual purification, and transcendental awareness. His works and experiences demonstrate that prophetic literature remains relevant as a cultural force capable of shaping moral consciousness in contemporary society. This study thus extends Kuntowijoyo's (2019) prophetic literature by adding the dimensions of authorial reflection and social reception, and by applying Bourdieu's (1993) genetic structuralism to the analysis of religious poetry. As such, prophetic structuralism offers a comprehensive tool for understanding how literature can embody and transmit prophetic values in the modern world.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that prophetic structuralism in *pesantren* culture contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the dimension of *amal* (righteous action), *pesantren* fosters values of honesty, social bonding, and ethical responsibility, which align with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by integrating moral and spiritual education into the learning process (Fadillah et al., 2026; Hidayati et al., 2025), while the cultivation of inner goodness gratitude, trust in Allah, and remembrance of death supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by promoting mental and spiritual resilience (Al-Ghazali, 1990). Through the dimension of *amil* (moral agency), *pesantren*'s commitment to self-control, ethical restraint, and social critique contributes to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) via *pesantren*-based economic initiatives such as cooperatives and vocational training (Zaki et al., 2022), as well as SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through its resistance against injustice and oppression (Said, 2003; Santoso Heru, 2024). Through the dimension of *amul* (transcendent consistency), *pesantren* fosters ecological consciousness that supports SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), as seen in the eco-*pesantren* movement which integrates environmental education with Islamic spiritual values (Fadillah et al., 2026; Widodo, 2026), while the collaborative nature of *pesantren* education involving *kyai*, *santri*, families, and communities supports SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through partnerships with government, universities, and non-governmental organizations (Fadillah et al., 2026). Thus, prophetic structuralism provides a valuable lens for understanding how *pesantren* culture bridges local traditions with global sustainability agendas, affirming that *pesantren* are not merely religious educational institutions but strategic partners in achieving sustainable development (Izza & Masrur, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Fundamental findings: This study reveals three interconnected dimensions of prophetic structuralism in Binhad Nurrohmat's poetics. In the *amil* dimension, his self-control and rejection of shirk, slander, and harmful writing demonstrate prophetic consciousness. In the *amal* dimension, poetry serves as a vehicle for outward goodness (honesty, *da'wah*) and inward goodness (gratitude, trust in God, remembrance of death). In the *amul* dimension, engagement with Sufism, Qur'anic narratives, and contemplation of death builds divine awareness. **Implications:** Theoretically, this study contributes prophetic structuralism as a new framework integrating Kuntowijoyo and Bourdieu. Practically, pesantren education led by caregivers with literary competencies offers a model for character formation, supporting SDG 4.7. This finding suggests that educational institutions particularly those with religious and character-based missions may benefit from integrating literary appreciation and creative expression into their curricula, as such practices can foster students' moral sensitivity, empathy, and spiritual awareness alongside academic achievement. **Limitations:** This study focuses on a single caregiver at one pesantren, limiting generalizability. Data rely on one poet-caregiver; student perspectives were excluded, and long-term impacts were not measured. **Future research:** Future studies should include multiple caregivers across pesantren, conduct longitudinal research, apply prophetic structuralism to other literary genres or religious traditions, and design quantitative or mixed-method studies to measure ethical outcomes.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Akhmad Fatoni contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the prophetic structuralism framework, field investigation, interview data collection, data interpretation, and drafting of the original manuscript. **Darni** contributed to the validation of the research design, supervision of the study, theoretical refinement, and review of the manuscript. **Anas Ahmadi** was involved in methodology development, formal analysis, validation of the literary and sociological framework, and manuscript review and editing. **Khuaxay Sengsouk** contributed to supporting references, contextual enrichment of cultural and educational perspectives, and review of the manuscript. **Silva Anggi Lestari** contributed to data organization, reference management, manuscript formatting, and editing support. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of this submission.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors state that no financial or personal conflicts of interest exist that may have affected the content or findings of this research.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF AI OR DIGITAL TOOLS IN WRITING

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other digital writing assistants were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All stages of the research process, including data analysis, interpretation, and manuscript writing, were conducted solely by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the content presented in this article.

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