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From Erotic Verse to Sacred Word: Binhad Nurrohmat's Poetic Pilgrimage Through Prophetic Structuralism for Character Education and SDG 4

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To explore the poetic transformation of Binhad Nurrohmat from his urban Jakarta period to his spiritually contemplative works in Javanese pesantren culture. It seeks to understand how this poetic shift reconfigures the relationship between literary practice, ethical subjectivity, and spiritual transcendence. **Method:** The research uses prophetic structuralism, a theoretical synthesis of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production (*habitus*, *field*, *capital*) and Kuntowijoyo's Islamic prophetic paradigm (*humanization*, *liberation*, *transcendence*). Data were collected through close reading of Nurrohmat's selected poetry collections published between 2014 and 2021, as well as contextual analysis of his biographical trajectory from Jakarta to Jombang. **Results:** The findings reveal that Nurrohmat's work embodies a tripartite movement within prophetic structuralism, comprising *Amil*, *Amal*, and *Amul*. First, in the *Amil* dimension, the poet positions himself as an ethical subject situated between the secular and the sacred realms. Second, in the *Amal* dimension, poetry functions as a critical social practice. Third, in the *Amul* dimension, language becomes a medium of contemplative transcendence. The pesantren functions not merely as a backdrop but as a transformative field that reshapes poetic *habitus* and spiritual capital. **Novelty:** Contributing prophetic structuralism as a new theoretical framework for analyzing Islamic literature, moving beyond thematic interpretation to integrate authorial *habitus*, *field* dynamics, and spiritual capital. It offers a broader reflection on Islamic literary modernity that engages deeply with tradition while performing a critical, spiritually infused aesthetics relevant to post-secular literary discourse and SDG 4 (Quality Education), particularly target 4.7 on education for sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

In Jakarta's urban context, poetry frequently reflects bodily, sensual, and worldly concerns. It was here that Binhad Nurrohmat first carved his name into Indonesian letters with collections such as *Kuda Ranjang* (2004) and *Bau Betina* (2007), works pulsating with erotic energy and urban disquiet. These early poems mapped the topography of desire in a rapidly modernizing metropolis, where the body became both a site of liberation and a territory of contestation. Nurrohmat's literary debut coincided with Indonesia's *reformasi* period, a time of political opening and cultural experimentation when previously taboo subjects, sexuality, religious critique, and political dissent found new expression in the public sphere. His poetry became part of this literary efflorescence, embracing what critic Marshall Clark has identified as "the carnivalesque" in post-New Order Indonesian literature, a rebellious energy that challenged social conventions through bodily excess and transgressive humor (Clark, 2011; Fatoni, 2022).

However, a quiet but profound shift awaited this poet, not in the capital's literary cafés or intellectual salons, but in the shaded courtyards of Jombang's *pesantren*, where prayer calls punctuate the day and spirituality is woven into the rhythm of daily life. This geographical and poetic migration, from metropolitan secularism to Javanese Islamic pedagogy, invites more than a biographical reading; it demands a critical framework capable of tracing the transformation of a literary voice from bodily expression to spiritual contemplation. What makes Nurrohmat's case particularly compelling is its apparent extremity: the poet of *Demonstran Sexy* (2008), with its celebration of carnal pleasure, becomes the author of *Kwatin Ringin Contong* (2014), where the typography itself bows toward Mecca in right-aligned verses (Fatoni, 2016; Wachid B.S., 2015). This is not merely a change in theme but what appears as a conversion of poetic consciousness, a transformation that challenges conventional narratives of literary development in modern Indonesia (Fatoni, 2019).

Literary scholarship on modern Indonesian poetry has often struggled to account for such radical transformations in a writer's works. Critical approaches have tended to follow two main trajectories: first, sociological readings that situate literary production within broader political and social changes (as in works by Henk Maier, Tony Day, or Keith Foulcher); second, formalist or thematic analyses that trace aesthetic developments within individual careers (as represented by critics like A. Teeuw or Dorothea Rosa Herliany). While these approaches have produced valuable insights, they often fall short when confronted with cases like Nurrohmat's, where the transformation appears simultaneously aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual (Fatoni, 2019).

The sociological approach frequently reduces spiritual transformation to epiphenomenal status, a mere reflection of changing social conditions or career strategies. On the other hand, formalist readings, with their focus on textual patterns and intertextual references, may capture aesthetic continuities and discontinuities but often bracket the existential dimensions of religious experience that fuel such changes. Neither framework adequately addresses what Islamic intellectual tradition might call *tarbiyah ruhiyyah* (spiritual education), the deliberate cultivation of the soul that appears central to Nurrohmat's later poetic practice (Fatoni, 2016).

This theoretical gap reflects a challenge in literary studies: how to analyze religiously motivated artistic transformations without reducing them to either social determinism or inaccessible private experience. The challenge is particularly critical in postcolonial contexts like Indonesia, where Western secular theories often prove inadequate for engaging with literary traditions deeply informed by religious worldviews. As anthropologist Talal Asad has argued, the secular-religious binary itself is a product of specific European historical developments that may distort our understanding of societies where such distinctions operate differently. Nurrohmat's journey from erotic poet to contemplative writer invites us to develop analytical tools that can navigate this complex landscape (Fatoni, 2022; Kuntowijoyo, 2018, 2019).

This article contributes to growing interest in what has been termed *sastra religius* (religious literature) or *sastra profetik* (prophetic literature). This body of work consciously engages Islamic themes and values (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). Scholars like Abdul Hadi WM, Kuntowijoyo, and Mustofa Bisri have both practiced and theorized this tradition, but critical engagement has often remained within theological or appreciative modes rather than rigorous literary analysis (Hadi W.M., 2008). Recent

works by Wendy M.K. Shaw on Ottoman art and by Leila Ahmed on women and gender in Islam have demonstrated how religiously informed cultural production can be analyzed with sophisticated theoretical tools, but such approaches remain underdeveloped in Indonesian literary scholarship (Fatoni, 2019, 2022).

Simultaneously, this study engages with global conversations in post-secular literary studies. The so-called "religious turn" in the humanities, influenced by thinkers such as Charles Taylor, Talal Asad, and Saba Mahmood, has challenged the secular assumptions that underlie much literary theory. However, as Pericles Lewis notes in *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel*, this engagement has focused predominantly on Western literature, with limited attention to how religious transformations manifest in postcolonial literatures. Nurrohmat's case offers a valuable non-Western perspective on questions of literary spirituality, artistic conversion, and what might be called "devotional poetics" in a global context (Fatoni, 2022).

Moreover, this article contributes to ongoing methodological debates on integrating sociological and hermeneutical approaches in literary analysis. The framework developed here, prophetic structuralism, attempts to bridge what Pierre Bourdieu called the "objectivist" and "subjectivist" moments in cultural analysis (Bourdieu, 1993). By synthesizing Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production with Kuntowijoyo's Islamic literary theory (Kuntowijoyo, 2019) It offers a model for analyzing how spiritual transformations are both personally experienced and socially embedded, how they arise from particular habitus formations within specific cultural fields, while expressing genuine religious intentionality (Fatoni, 2016, 2019, 2022).

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this study mainly contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) through strengthening understanding of spiritual education and character building in pesantren traditions, as well as SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Resilient Institutions) by highlighting the role of religious literature in fostering ethical values, tolerance, and critical reflection in the public space. Thus, Binhad Nurrohmat's analysis of poetic transformation not only enriches the study of Indonesian literature, but also shows the relevance of the humanities in supporting sustainable and humanitarian-centered development.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design, focusing on the poetic transformation of Binhad Nurrohmat. The case study method, guided by Robert K Yin's (Yin, 2016) framework, is appropriate because it allows an in-depth, contextualized examination of a contemporary phenomenon (literary spiritual transformation) within its real-life context (Indonesian literary and Islamic cultural fields) (Creswell, 2015). The primary data consist of seven poetry collections by Binhad Nurrohmat published between 2014 and 2021: Kwatrin Ringin Contong (2014), Kuburan Imperium (2019), Dari Selatan Pyongyang (2020), Kuil Nietzsche (2020), Nisan Annemarie (2020), Santri Celeng (2021), and Tahta Sungkawa (2021). These works represent the post-transformation period following his earlier erotic poetry (Kuda Ranjang, 2004; Bau Betina, 2007; Demonstran Sexy, 2008). Secondary data include in-depth interviews with the poet to understand his personal journey and reflections on the pesantren influence (Fatoni et al., 2025; Nurrohmat, 2023); interviews with two kyai (Islamic scholars) and three senior santri in Jombang to contextualize the pesantren

ecosystem (Fatoni et al., 2025); and archival materials such as photographs of manuscripts, typographic layouts, and pesantren settings.

Data were analyzed using a three-stage coding procedure aligned with prophetic structuralism: open coding to identify initial themes; axial coding to group themes into Amil, Amal, and Amul; and selective coding to integrate findings into the final framework (Fatoni et al., 2025). The first stage, field analysis, maps Nurrohmat's position within overlapping fields: the literary field (Jakarta) and the pesantren field (Jombang), and identifies forms of capital and habitus transformation (Bourdieu, 1993; Fatoni, 2019). The second stage, textual analysis, consists of close reading of poems to identify thematic, formal, and linguistic elements corresponding to amil, amal, and amul (Fatoni et al., 2025). The third stage, contextual interpretation, synthesizes textual findings with socio-cultural contexts (Islamic tradition, Indonesian literary history, post-secular discourse). All textual data were coded manually using a thematic grid (Fatoni et al., 2025); interview transcripts were analyzed through content analysis to extract patterns of meaning related to spiritual and poetic transformation. To support the analysis, selected visual materials are included as Figures, providing readers with concrete references to the poetic materials and the pesantren environment that shaped Nurrohmat's work (Fatoni, 2019).

Phenomenological hermeneutics was employed to interpret the data (Creswell, 2014; Heidegger, 2001). In this study, phenomenology is used to uncover the leaps in language and thought that Nurrohmat experienced after relocating from Jakarta to Jombang (Fatoni, 2016). As a qualitative study, this research is characterized by: (1) data sources drawn from natural phenomena (poetic texts, social conditions, religious beliefs); (2) the researcher as the primary instrument, engaging in literature searches, observations, interviews, and direct field recording; (3) descriptive data collection without statistical dominance; (4) the search for meaning in poetry, the poet's thought processes, and sublimated activities; (5) firsthand data collection; (6) an emic perspective prioritizing informant viewpoints; (7) data analysis conducted from the beginning to the end of the research process; and (8) theory building from field data rather than theory testing (Bungin, 2015; Creswell, 2015).

Given that this research falls within the discipline of literary sociology, it remains connected to field methods for data completeness (Damono, 1984). The discipline of literary sociology focuses on three areas: (1) the literary text; (2) the author as a biological aspect; and (3) the receptive aspect, exploring the responses of the literary reading public (Nasution, 2016). Systematically, the examination begins with the poetic text, proceeds to the poet, and finally to the readers of the poetic text.

Triangulation was employed to ensure data validity. In-depth interview data with the poet were validated through time triangulation to assess the consistency of responses and the stability of meaning across multiple sessions (Creswell, 2015). Interviews with ulama (Islamic scholars), intellectuals, and socio-cultural documents from the pesantren were validated through source triangulation to assess validity and avoid a single interpretive subjectivity (Lundeto & Ni'am, 2022). Member checking was also conducted by inviting informants to review the accuracy of descriptions and interpretations, followed by an external audit involving an expert outside the research to examine various aspects and provide a more objective perspective (Creswell, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A culturally grounded framework for reading Islamic literary expression cannot be built simply by importing Western critical theories without adjustment. This does not mean that Western theories are irrelevant. Rather, many of them were developed within secular assumptions about language, authorship, value, and social meaning. These assumptions become less adequate when literary works are shaped by religious experience and spiritual discipline. The case of Binhad Nurrohmat makes this problem especially clear. His later writings do not treat language merely as an aesthetic object or a social sign. Language also becomes a medium for expressing surrender, remembrance, and the search for divine nearness. For this reason, his works require an approach that can read literary form, social formation, and spiritual intention simultaneously. Prophetic structuralism is proposed here as an attempt to answer that need.

Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production remains useful for explaining how literary works are formed within particular social conditions. His concepts of habitus, field, and capital allow us to see how writers move through different literary spaces and how their dispositions are shaped by institutional, cultural, and symbolic forces. In the Indonesian context, this perspective helps explain Nurrohmat's movement between Jakarta's more cosmopolitan literary environment and the pesantren-based cultural world of Jombang. Through Bourdieu, such movement can be understood not only as a change of place but also as a transformation of habitus, in which a writer gradually absorbs different values, forms of authority, and modes of recognition.

At the same time, Bourdieu's framework has clear limitations when it is used to interpret spiritually motivated literary practice. His analysis tends to explain religious and artistic claims through their relation to social interest, symbolic capital, and position within a field. As a result, spiritual commitment may be reduced to a form of cultural strategy. This becomes problematic when dealing with works that openly place tawakkal, zikr, qurb, and devotion at the center of their poetic imagination. These concepts cannot be fully understood if they are translated only into the language of social competition or symbolic distinction. Something important is lost when transcendence is treated merely as another expression of social positioning.

Kuntowijoyo's theory of prophetic literature offers an important corrective to this limitation. His framework insists that literature is not separated from ethical and spiritual responsibility. Through the concepts of humanization, liberation, and transcendence, Kuntowijoyo places Islamic literature within a moral horizon: literature should affirm human dignity, resist oppression, and direct human consciousness toward God. This view is significant because it refuses to divide the aesthetic from the spiritual. The writer is not merely a producer of texts, but also an ethical subject whose creative act may become part of worship.

However, Kuntowijoyo's theory also leaves an analytical problem. His ideas are powerful as a normative vision, but they do not always explain how prophetic literature emerges within concrete social, cultural, and institutional settings. In other words, Kuntowijoyo tells us what Islamic literature ought to pursue, but he gives fewer tools for examining how writers are shaped by literary communities, religious institutions, networks of recognition, and historical circumstances. This is where

Bourdieu remains necessary. Without a structural account, prophetic literature risks being discussed only as an ideal, detached from the conditions that make it possible.

Having established the contributions and limitations of Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature and Bourdieu's genetic structuralism, this study integrates both traditions to develop prophetic structuralism as a more comprehensive analytical framework. It does not simply mechanically combine Bourdieu and Kuntowijoyo. Rather, it uses Bourdieu to understand the social formation of literary practice, while using Kuntowijoyo to recover the ethical and transcendental dimensions that Bourdieu's sociology tends to overlook. The purpose of this synthesis is to construct a framework that is both sociologically grounded and spiritually sensitive.

The framework is organized around three key concepts: *amil*, *amal*, and *amul*. These concepts are drawn from Islamic intellectual vocabulary, but they are used here as analytical categories for literary study.

First, *Amil* refers to the writer as an ethical subject situated within specific social and spiritual contexts. The term is inspired by the Islamic idea of an agent who carries responsibility, as in the figure of the *amil zakat*. In prophetic structuralism, the writer is viewed not only as an individual shaped by *habitus* but also as a moral actor whose dispositions are influenced by faith, discipline, and ethical commitment. Thus, *Amil* extends Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* by adding a spiritual and moral dimension to the formation of the literary subject.

Second, *Amal* describes literary practice as both a social action and a spiritual discipline. In Arabic, *amal* means "action" or "deed," but within Islamic thought it also carries ethical and religious significance. In this framework, writing is understood not merely as a strategy within the literary field, but also as a form of meaningful action. It may intervene in society, shape consciousness, and at the same time become part of the writer's spiritual practice. This concept connects Bourdieu's understanding of practice with Kuntowijoyo's idea of literature as ethical and prophetic work.

Third, *Amul* refers to transcendence as the horizon of literary meaning. The term is used here as an analytical development from *amal*, with an added emphasis on the direction of action toward the divine. Unlike Bourdieu's framework, which remains within the boundaries of social relations, *amul* allows literary analysis to recognize that spiritually engaged writing may be oriented toward realities beyond the social field. It does not deny the importance of structure, history, or institution. Instead, it argues that for writers such as Nurrohmat, the social world is not the final horizon of meaning. Literary practice is also directed toward surrender, remembrance, and proximity to God.

Through these three concepts, prophetic structuralism seeks to read Islamic literary expression without reducing it to either sociology or abstract spirituality. It acknowledges that literature is produced within social structures, but it also recognizes that those structures do not exhaust the meaning of spiritually oriented writing. In this sense, the framework offers a way to understand Nurrohmat's poetics as a practice formed by literary fields, *pesantren* culture, ethical responsibility, and transcendental aspiration. This approach allows the analysis to remain attentive to social reality while still taking seriously the spiritual vocabulary through which the author understands his own creative work.

Table 1. Theoretical synthesis: From bourdieu and kuntowijoyo to prophetic structuralism

Bourdieu's Concepts	Kuntowijoyo's Concepts	Prophetic Structuralism
Habitus (internalized dispositions)	Humanisasi (humanization)	Amil, ethically positioned subject
Field (structured social spaces)	Liberasi (liberation)	Amal, literature as a social spiritual practice
Capital (accumulated resources)	Transendensi (transcendence)	Amul, orientation toward transcendence

Manifestations of amil, amal, and amul in Nurrohmat's later poetry

Building on the theoretical framework established earlier, this subsection turns to the analysis of Nurrohmat's poetic works. The transformative journey in Binhad Nurrohmat's poetry reveals itself most vividly when examined through the tripartite lens of prophetic structuralism: Amil (the ethical subject), Amal (social spiritual practice), and Amul (transcendent orientation). This section examines how these three dimensions manifest in specific poems from Nurrohmat's post-2014 collections.

Table 2. Analysis of Nurrohmat's poetry through prophetic structuralism

Poem Title	Collection (Year)	Dominant Dimension	Key Features
"Sepasang Kuburan"	Kwatin Ringin Contong (2014).	Amil	Genealogical ethics, positioning within Islamic Javanese history
"Jembatan Perpisahan"	Dari Selatan Pyongyang (2020)	Amil	Liminal ethics, hospitality without judgment
"Toko di Sudut Perempatan Jalan"	Dari Selatan Pyongyang (2020).	Amil	Ethical reflection in diaspora, consumer culture critique
"Gurindam Tiga Merah"	Kuburan Imperium (2019).	Amal	Prophetic critique, social justice through Islamic ethics
"Lima Cerita Pantai Utara"	Kuburan Imperium (2019)	Amal	Historical amal, reimagining Walisongo as social reformers
"Santri Celeng"	Santri Celeng (2021)	Amal	Linguistic reclamation, resistance through poetic form
"BERKAH"	Santri Celeng (2021)	Amul	Minimalist contemplation, qana'ah (contentment)
"Sembahyang di Itaewon"	Dari Selatan Pyongyang (2020)	Amul	Diasporic transcendence, translocative prayer
"ILMU"	Santri Celeng (2021)	Amul	Epistemological amul, spiritual knowledge as inner light
"Ringin Contong Siang"	Kwatin Ringin Contong (2014)	Integrated	All three dimensions: urban sacred space, angelic intervention

Amil: The ethical subject in poetry

The concept of amil finds compelling expression in "Sepasang Kuburan" from Kwatin Ringin Contong (Nurrohmat, 2014), a four-line poem that reads: "*Pria Demak di Pajaran merabuk kasih perempuan Bangkalan. Sawah dan surau setia hingga tak lagi bisa menumbuhkan angan. Fajar silsilah pertama berpinak di rimba legam dusun selatan. Tabiat hitam dijamah*

kepal tangan serta kudus pesona tuhan." Through this poem, the poet positions himself as an inheritor of Islamic-Javanese genealogy. The figure of the "pria Demak" (man from Demak) represents the transmission of Islamic civilization. At the same time, the imagery of "sawah dan surau" (rice fields and prayer houses) symbolizes the integration of daily livelihood and religious practice. The phrase "fajar silsilah pertama" (dawn of the first lineage) suggests both biological descent and spiritual transmission, and the contrast between "tabiat hitam" (dark nature) and "kudus pesona tuhan" (sacred charm of God) acknowledges moral ambiguity while ultimately affirming spiritual significance.

Similarly, "Jembatan Perpisahan" from *Dari Selatan Pyongyang* (Nurrohmat, 2020) constructs an ethics of liminality: "*Sebuah jembatan menautkan rekahan tanah di perbatasan dan dilintasi lalu lalang kisah sejak dulu. Yang pergi atau kembali dan yang berjalan atau berlari tak selalu dikenali. Jembatan yang tulus kepada yang melewatinya tak bertanya: 'Kamu siapa dan akan ke mana?'*" Here, the bridge becomes a metaphor for the poet as *amil*, connecting disparate realms without demanding identity or destination from those who cross. This enacts an ethics of hospitality that resonates with the Islamic concept of universal human dignity (*karamah insaniyah*).

Furthermore, "Toko di Sudut Perempatan Jalan," also from *Dari Selatan Pyongyang* (Nurrohmat, 2020), presents the *amil* as a cultural translator navigating the diaspora: "*Toko adalah juru selamat kami yang tak sakral setiap hari. Di kasir tak ada bayang doa dan barang belanjaan yang menjadi persembahan seperti di kuil. Tuhan dan para Rasul tak seperti kami yang keluar masuk toko sampai mati.*" In this poem, the poet positions himself as both a participant in and a critic of consumer culture, embodying *tawazun* (balance) between worldly engagement and spiritual aspiration.

Amal: Poetry as social spiritual practice.

The dimension of *amal* as prophetic critique is powerfully exemplified in "Gurindam Tiga Merah" from *Kuburan Imperium* (Nurrohmat, 2019), which poses a series of arresting questions: "*Apakah kamu tidak sembahyang, Tuan? Orang di simpang kiri juga hamba Tuhan. Para Nabi membela manusia dari tirani. Fasikkah falsafah pembebasan koloni?*" Through these lines, the poem confronts religious exclusivism directly, echoes the Qur'anic insistence on universal human dignity, and connects contemporary struggles to historical patterns of oppression. In doing so, the poem becomes an act of *amal* itself, a literary intervention seeking to correct misunderstanding and promote ethical awareness.

Historical *amal* is further developed in "Lima Cerita Pantai Utara," also from *Kuburan Imperium* (Nurrohmat, 2019). In the section devoted to Sunan Ampel, Nurrohmat vividly depicts pre-Islamic Surabaya: "*Kendi arak dan bahak perempuan menghuni kota berbaur semerbak tajam aroma candu. Para pencuri lambat-lambat memintas dunia tatkala hari berselubung senyap dan lelap.*" Rather than presenting the Walisongo (Nine Saints) as miraculous or superhuman figures, the poem portrays them as social reformers addressing concrete human suffering. Sunan Ampel's response to the city's moral decay is characteristically understated yet determined: "*Tuan Sunan tak jengah memantik cahaya di kelam hari serupa malaikat di pasar malam*" (The Sunan tirelessly kindles light in dark times like an angel in a night market).

Perhaps the most concise performance of *amal* through linguistic reclamation appears in the titular poem "Santri Celeng" from *Santri Celeng* (Nurrohmat, 2021),

which reads in its entirety: "Kompeni benci kiai dan menghasut santri jadi babi hutan setelah mati." In just three lines, the poem simultaneously accomplishes historical witness, linguistic reclamation, and spiritual solidarity. By referencing the colonial Kompeni (VOC)'s attempts to discredit Islamic resistance through the derogatory rumor that followers of Kyai Ahmad Rifa'i would become wild boars after death, Nurrohmat transforms an insult into a badge of resistance, thereby demonstrating how poetry can perform *amal* through both content and form.

Amul: Language at the threshold of the ineffable

The dimension of *amul* as minimalist transcendence is exemplified in "BERKAH" from Santri Celeng (Nurrohmat, 2021), a two-line poem stating, "Yang sedikit mencukupi apa saja. Setitik air seluas dalam samudera." The first line expresses the spiritual principle of *qana'ah* (contentment with little), while the second embodies it through metaphorical compression, performing *amul* not by describing transcendence but by enacting it linguistically. A different aspect of *amul* emerges in "Sembahyang di Itaewon" from Dari Selatan Pyongyang (Nurrohmat, 2020), which explores diasporic transcendence through the lines, "Bahasa Arab tak bermantel di musim salju bersama gema azan di semenanjung tanpa gurun. Tuhan di mana-mana dan kekal di musim apa pun. Arah sembahyang di Itaewon ke ujung haluan matahari terbenam dan subuh berembun menjalar jauh dari penjuru timur." The tension between Islamic ritual and its global practice is resolved in the affirmation "Tuhan di mana-mana" (God is everywhere), thereby performing what might be termed "translocative *amul*." Meanwhile, "ILMU" from Santri Celeng (Nurrohmat, 2021) approaches *amul* through epistemological reflection: "Meski terpejam niscaya berlurus jalan dan melangkah dengan segala terang." This captures the Islamic understanding of 'ilm (knowledge) as spiritual illumination that guides even when physical vision fails, resonating with the Sufi concept of 'ilm al-yaqin (knowledge of certainty).

Beyond these individual manifestations, "Ringin Contong Siang" from Kwatrin Ringin Contong (Nurrohmat, 2014) integrates all three dimensions of prophetic structuralism in a single compact poem: "Lengking masjid meruncing di pucuk daun. Titian penyeberangan mengawan di kiblat. Tak ada nabi dan pendeta mabuk di warung. Kelebat dosa di kaki lima disergap malaikat." As *Amil*, the poet positions himself as an urban ethnographer of the sacred, observing how religious sounds interact with urban space. As a whole, the poem critiques social ills (implied by the negative example of drunken religious figures) while affirming spiritual reality through the image of a bridge that connects daily life with the direction of prayer (kiblat). As *amul*, the final line opens toward a transcendent intervention, in which sins on the sidewalk are "ambushed by angels," transforming mundane urban space into a spiritual battlefield where divine agency operates unseen.

To understand the transformation of Binhad Nurrohmat's poetry, one must first understand the ecosystem that nurtured its metamorphosis: the Javanese *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). In the context of prophetic structuralism, the *pesantren* functions simultaneously as a Bourdieusian field with its own rules and hierarchies and as a Kuntowijayan spiritual arena in which transcendence is cultivated as both a personal attainment and a social good. Three forms of capital prove particularly significant within this field. First, spiritual capital (*barakah*) privileges concepts such as

divine blessing, saintliness (*kewalian*), and divinely bestowed knowledge (*ilmu laduni*), which writers with *pesantren* backgrounds draw upon to authorize their creative work. Second, traditional knowledge capital, understood as mastery of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), particularly in Arabic with Javanese commentary (*pegon*), represents a crucial form of cultural capital. Third, social relational capital, manifested through dense networks of kinship, mentorship, and alum affiliation, carries distinctive Islamic-Javanese characteristics that emphasize spiritual genealogy (*silsilah*). Nurrohmat's integration into this *pesantren* ecosystem involved a profound *habitus* transformation operating on multiple levels: cognitive reorientation from secular to spiritual frameworks; aesthetic recalibration toward a contemplative aesthetic; and ethical reframing of the writer's responsibility as fundamentally ethical and spiritual, aligning closely with Kuntowijoyo's concept of the *seniman mukmin* (believer artist) who sees creative work as a form of worship (*ibadah*).

Discussion

The development of prophetic structuralism carries significant implications for literary theory beyond Islamic studies (Fatoni et al., 2025). First, it challenges what Charles Taylor (Segal, 2015) has termed "the immanent frame", the secular assumption that social analysis must exclude transcendental reference. By demonstrating how spiritual intentionality can be integrated into structural analysis without sacrificing analytical rigor, prophetic structuralism opens possibilities for what might be called "post-secular literary criticism", a critical approach that takes religious commitments seriously as genuine motivations rather than ideological mystifications (Kuntowijoyo, 2019).

Second, the framework contributes to ongoing debates about decolonizing literary studies. By synthesizing concepts from Islamic intellectual traditions with Western sociological theory, prophetic structuralism models a form of theoretical integration that respects local epistemologies while engaging global scholarly conversations (Bourdieu, 1995). This represents an alternative to both theoretical imperialism (imposing Western frameworks on non-Western literatures) and cultural isolationism (retreating into untranslatable particularities). As Fatoni (2025) demonstrates, the integration of Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature theory with Bourdieu's genetic structuralism creates what he terms *strukturalisme profetik*, a framework organized around three core concepts: *amal* (social-ethical practice), *amil* (the agent of moral transformation), and *amul* (spiritual transcendence).

Third, prophetic structuralism offers new possibilities for understanding literary transformation. Rather than viewing changes in a writer's style and themes through purely biographical or psychological lenses, the framework demonstrates how such transformations can be understood as complex negotiations between shifting social positions and evolving spiritual commitments (Fatoni et al., 2025). Nurrohmat's journey from erotic to contemplative poetry appears not as an arbitrary personal evolution but as a meaningful reorientation of his entire artistic *habitus* within the gravitational field of *pesantren* spirituality (Fatoni, 2022; Karnanta, 2017). The findings reveal that the *pesantren* environment reshaped Nurrohmat's literary consciousness in three interconnected dimensions: *amal* (manifested in poems rejecting injustice, structural violence, and moral decay by awakening readers' reason and emotions), *amil* (reflected in the poet's position as a boundary-crosser between the secular and spiritual worlds,

between art and *da'wah*), and *amul* (emerging as a spiritual climax through poetry as a medium for *tafakur*, *dhikr*, and contemplation directing the subject toward Allah as the ultimate purpose of life) (Fatoni et al., 2025).

The *pesantren* ecosystem also provides specific literary traditions that serve as resources and models for Nurrohmat's poetic practice, with three streams proving particularly relevant (Hidayat & Hasan, 2021; Li, 2019; Raz, 2020; Sayogie et al., 2023). First, Sufi poetry in the Javanese tradition, produced by Muslim scholars since at least the sixteenth century in forms such as *suluk* and *wirid*, has long expressed Sufi doctrines in accessible vernacular language, thereby establishing a powerful precedent for poetry that is simultaneously literary and devotional (Al-Ghazali, 1990). Second, the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) tradition, including works such as Al-Ghazali's *Ihya Ulum al-Din* and Al-Busiri's *Qasidat al-Burda*, serves as a literary model demonstrating how spiritual concepts can be articulated through aesthetically compelling language, employing rhymed prose, metaphorical density, and narrative exempla (Al-Ghazali, 1990). Third, contemporary *pesantren* literature, produced by writers such as Emha Ainun Nadjib, Ahmad Tohari, and A. Mustofa Bisri, explores the tensions between traditional Islamic values and modern Indonesian realities, often employing irony, humor, and sophisticated intertextuality, thereby creating a space for writers like Nurrohmat to engage Islamic themes without merely reproducing conventional religious discourse (Nadjib, 2020; Wachid B.S., 2015; Wachid B.S., 2019).

Beyond Indonesia, Nurrohmat's transformation resonates with broader patterns in twentieth and twenty-first-century poetry. The late-career turn toward spirituality appears in various global contexts, including T.S. Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism, which transformed his poetic practice from modernist fragmentation to religious seeking in *Four Quartets*, and Mahmoud Darwish's later work, which increasingly incorporated Sufi motifs alongside nationalist themes (Hidayat & Hasan, 2021; Schimmel, 1978; Syadziliyah & Masudiyah, 2023; Tambling et al., 2017; Zirra, 2023). Nurrohmat's distinctive contribution lies in his position at the intersection of several polarities: between secular literary modernism and religious tradition; between metropolitan sophistication and provincial authenticity; between individual spiritual exploration and communal religious identity; between aesthetic innovation and ethical commitment (Fatoni, 2016).

His work demonstrates that serious engagement with Islamic spirituality need not mean abandoning literary modernism, that traditional religious education can foster rather than hinder artistic innovation, and that spiritual depth can coexist with social critique (Fatoni, 2019). In an Indonesian literary landscape often divided between secular cosmopolitanism and religious parochialism, Nurrohmat's poetry suggests possibilities for synthesis, for a literary practice that is both thoroughly contemporary and deeply traditional, both critically engaged and spiritually serious. As the findings of this study indicate, the prophetic structuralism framework reveals that Nurrohmat's poetry operates on multiple levels simultaneously: as an aesthetic object, as an ethical intervention, and as a spiritual practice (Fatoni, 2019). This tripartite structure, corresponding to the three dimensions of *amal*, *amil*, and *amul*, offers a model for understanding how contemporary Islamic literature can navigate the complex demands of artistic excellence, social responsibility, and religious authenticity in an increasingly globalized world (Fatoni et al., 2025; Kuntowijoyo, 2018; Kuntowijoyo, 2019).

The findings of this study also reinforce the contribution of prophetic structuralism to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education). The integration of literary reflection, ethical responsibility, and spiritual awareness within the pesantren educational environment demonstrates how character formation extends beyond cognitive achievement toward the development of values, empathy, critical reflection, and responsible citizenship, consistent with Target 4.7 of the SDGs. Moreover, the framework encourages dialogue between religious traditions and contemporary educational practices, fostering inclusive and culturally responsive learning that respects local wisdom while engaging with global challenges. By positioning literature as a medium for moral transformation, social responsibility, and spiritual growth, prophetic structuralism provides an educational model capable of strengthening learners' character and promoting sustainable human development. Consequently, this study suggests that integrating prophetic literary values into educational contexts can serve as an innovative strategy for advancing quality education while supporting broader sustainability agendas through culturally grounded and value-oriented learning.

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* (associating partners with Allah), slander, harmful writing, and attachment to fame demonstrate prophetic consciousness forged through spiritual discipline. In the *amal* dimension, poetry serves as a vehicle for outward goodness (honesty, social bonding/*silaturahmi*, and *da'wah*) and inward goodness (gratitude/*syukur*, trust in God/*tawakkal*, and remembrance of death/*zikrul maut*). In the *amul* dimension, engagement with Sufism, Qur'anic narratives, and existential contemplation in graveyards fosters divine awareness through paradoxical, contemplative experiences. The pesantren functions not merely as a backdrop but as a transformative field that reshapes poetic habitus and spiritual capital through three forms of capital: spiritual capital (*barakah*), traditional knowledge capital (*kitab kuning*), and social relational capital (*silsilah*). **Implications:** Theoretically, this study contributes prophetic structuralism as a new framework that integrates Kuntowijoyo's prophetic literature (humanization, liberation, transcendence) with Bourdieu's genetic structuralism (habitus, field, capital), extending literary analysis beyond thematic interpretation to encompass authorial reflection, institutional context, and social reception. For instance, in educational practice, this framework can be applied by encouraging students to compose reflective poetry that integrates ethical values (*Amal*), social critique (*Amil*), and spiritual awareness (*Amul*), thereby fostering moral and spiritual development through literary engagement. In practice, pesantren education led by caregivers with literary and religious competencies offers a viable model for character formation that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and artistic development, supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education), particularly target 4.7 on education for sustainable development. The framework also contributes to decolonizing literary studies by synthesizing Islamic intellectual traditions with Western sociological theory. **Limitations:** This study focuses on a single caregiver (Binhad Nurrohmat) at a single pesantren (Al-Hambra Darul Ulum, Jombang), which limits the generalizability of the

findings to other pesantren with different cultural and geographical contexts. The data rely primarily on in-depth interviews with one poet-caregiver and literary analysis of his works; the perspectives of students, other caregivers, or a broader audience were not included. The study does not measure the long-term impact of prophetic literary education on students' character development beyond the pesantren environment. Additionally, the transitional period of Nurrohmat's poetic transformation (2008, 2014) requires more sustained attention. **Future research:** Comparative studies across multiple pesantren and caregivers are recommended. Longitudinal research is needed to assess the lasting effects of prophetic literary education on students' moral character and social behavior. Researchers could apply the prophetic structuralism framework to other literary genres (prose, drama), to writers from different religious traditions to test its cross-cultural applicability, or to other forms of cultural production such as film, music, or digital media. Quantitative or mixed-method studies could be designed to measure the correlation between caregivers' literary engagement and measurable outcomes in students' ethical reasoning and social responsibility. Finally, reception studies examining how different audiences (literary, religious, and academic) interpret and value prophetic poetry would complement the present textual and theoretical analysis.

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.

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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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