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Akalily Narmi, Mohd. Zariat Abdul Rani, Kamariah Kamarudin, Pabiyah Hajimaming@Toklubok, Samsilah Roslan

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Shah Wali Allah Al-Dihlawi's Ideas on The Study of Modern Malay Literature

Akalily Narmi

Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor

Mohd. Zariat Abdul Rani

Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor
Email: zariat@upm.edu.my

Kamariah Kamarudin

Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor

Pabiyah Hajimaming@Toklubok

Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor

Samsilah Roslan

Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor

Abstract

Shah Waliyullah al-Dihlawi is a renowned Muslim scholar who lived in the 17th century and has contributed his profound ideas in the Islamic scientific tradition. In Malaysia, al-Dihlawi's ideas have influenced the field of Islamic studies in the early 20th century. In the latest development, al-Dihlawi's ideas have also influenced the field of Malay literature. Mohd. Affandi Hassan has made extensive reference on al-Dihlawi's explication on *taklif* in his literary notion namely "*Persuratan Baru*" (translated into English as "Genuine Literature"). The concept of *taklif* in "*Persuratan Baru*" has also been presented as an analytical tool for literary studies. This study aims to discuss the application of *taklif* in the study of modern Malay literature, and summarizes the major findings resulting from its application. This study

utilises qualitative research method, particularly library research and textual analysis. The findings show that the application of *taklif* has allowed academic studies to unravel the confusion of values in the modern Malay literary works. In this context, al-Dihlawi's ideas are considered as a significant contribution to the field of modern Malay literature.

Keywords: Syah Waliyullah Al-Dihlawi, Taklif, Malay Literature, Mohd. Affandi Hassan, Persuratan Baru (Genuine Literature)

Introduction

The Islamic intellectual tradition acknowledges Shah Waliyullah al-Dihlawi (henceforth al-Dihlawi) as one of the leading muslim scholars of the last four centuries (Nadwi, 2005, p. 98; Rahman, 2000, p. 171). Al-Dihlawi, who was born in Delhi, India in 1703, has contributed his ideas in various branches of knowledge including *tasawwuf* (sufism), *fiqh* and *hadith* through a number of his significant scholarly books such as *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, *al-Budur al-Bazighah*, *Fuyud al-Haramain*, *al-Fawz al-Kabir*, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyyah* (Nuruddin & Anwar, 2005, p. 686-687; Hermansen, 1996, p. xxxvi-xxxvii). Al-Dihlawi's ideas spread all over the world when his manuscripts received attention especially in the West. For instance, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* that was written in Arabic, has been translated into several languages such as English, French, Urdu and Malay-Indonesian (Siddiqi, 1966, p. 1577; Usman et al., 2015, p. 403). In Malaysia, the influence of al-Dihlawi's ideas began in Kelantan in the early 20th century and up until now influencing several fields in Islamic studies, especially hadith (Hassan, 1977, 2016; Sukor, 1988; Shukri, 2007).

In the recent development, al-Dihlawi's ideas in Malaysia also influenced the field of modern Malay literature. This is clearly evident when his ideas are quoted extensively by Mohd. Affandi Hassan (henceforth Hassan), a Malay writer and literary critic who has been active in writing since the 1950s. As a writer and critic who is experienced and has built a name that is well established in the Malay literature, Hassan identified a major problem plaguing the modern Malay literature, which is the confusion of values among the writers and portrayed in the works which they wrote (Hassan, 2008, p. 82-87 & p. 142-145). This confusion began with the introduction of the concept of "modern literature" by British colonial through the secular education system they implemented. The concept of "modern literature" is secular because it makes man or human especially their experiences, feelings and perceptions as the backbone of literary writings. This pillar is realized through the emergence of modern literary genres which are largely fictional such as novels, short stories, dramas and poems. This concept of "modern literature" has put aside the role of religion (in the context of Malay literature is Islam), which has become the core of Malay letters activities since 16th and 17th century AD (Hassan, 1992, p. 22-29). In other words, in the concept of "modern literature", literary activities are no longer placed and understood in the context of human responsibility to their religion, instead it is a worldly activity that renders full freedom to the writers (as human beings) to express their own empirical experiences, feelings and perceptions in their literary works. In the context of "modern literary" activities, this philosophy is often expressed as "freedom of expression" and "*licentia poetica*". Thus, "literature" in the concept of "modern literature" is characterized by its "subjective" nature that is dependent on individual tastes, and "relative" which is variable according to certain factors such as evolution of time and environment. In this context, "modern literature" becomes an activity that is secular and individual, and has nothing to do with religion especially religious responsibilities of the writers (Hassan, 1992, p. 35-38, 1994, p. 28-41).

Hassan believes that the secular and individual concept of “modern literature” is what the modern Malay literary activities hold onto today. This belief has given the writers a full freedom to write fictional works such as novels, short stories, dramas and poems, based on the personal and individual moral framework, rather than on the absolute Islamic morality. Thus, Western ideologies and concepts such as tragedy, realism, absurdism, naturalism, *utile et dulce*, and storytelling techniques such as plots, conflicts and dramatic elements, have become a trend in modern Malay literary writings (Rani, 2011, p. 104-121; Tahir, 2007, p. 27-30). The main principles that support the ideologies and storytelling techniques are “freedom of expression” and “*licentia poetica*”. With this main principle, the works of modern Malay literature are free to describe empirical experiences, feelings and perceptions of the writers. This freedom is among those manifested through Malay novels that dignify the nobility of a prostitute, or expose the badness of religious teachers, and Malay poems that explore the world after life (*alam barzakh*) or defend a rebellious child (*anak derhaka*) to his mother (Hassan, 1992, p. 23-24; 2008, p. 81-85, p. 142-145; 2010, p. 298, p. 301-306). It is more serious when such works are highly rated, praised by literary critics, given literary prizes and pompous labelled such as “international works”, “academic novels” and so on, while the writers are given various recognitions for writing such works (Rani, 2011, p. 480-481). In this context, Hassan observes a trend that seems obvious in modern Malay literature, namely the trend in defence of evil and degrades goodness outlined in the teachings of Islam. According to Hassan, all these tendencies give a clear indication of the confusion of values that is regarded as a major problem in modern Malay literature (Hassan, 2008, p. 82-87, p. 142-145).

In unravelling the problems, “Persuratan Baru” (PB) or “Genuine Literature” was proposed to revive the tradition of Malay letters (*tradisi persuratan Melayu*) in Malay literary activities nowadays (Hassan, 2008, p. 82-83, p. 104). The tradition of Malay letters established during the golden age of Islam in the Malay world (16th & 17th century AD) is characterised by the rigorous writing of scholarly books in various fields of academic including metaphysical and philosophical by local scholars. In other words, intellectualism and rationalism have become fundamental in the tradition of Malay letters. This principle is also changing the paradigm of Malay literature, rather than just the telling stories of superstition and myth, to writing scholarly books. To Hassan, the tradition of Malay letters is a literary tradition that is “*par excellence*”, in which it is transcendent and the best ever achieved in the Malay history and civilisation (Hassan, 1994, p. 18, p. 29-35). However, this “*par excellence*” tradition of letters is then interrupted by the arrival of European colonial who imposed the secular education system which made possible for the introduction of the concept of “modern literature”. To unravel this problem, PB critically re-evaluate the modern Malay literature based on the Islamic-*tawhidic* approach. As mentioned above, the concept of “modern literature” has turned Malay literature as a secular and individual writing activities, which is not related to religion and religious responsibility. In this context, PB strengthen its notion with the philosophy of *taklif* as explicated by al-Dihlawi in his *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*. In the chapter entitled *Sirrul-Taklif* (Secret of *Taklif*), al-Dihlawi (2005, p. 53-54) explicates *taklif* as: - *تقلد عهدة التكليف بأن تتعرض لخطر الثواب والعقاب بالطاعة والمعصية* or translated in Malay by Idris & Abdullah (2015, p. 69-70) as: - “...menggantungkan kesanggupan tanggungjawab dengan dibentangkan kebimbangan pahala dan siksa kerana taat dan maksiat” (...to have willingness towards obligations with concerns of reward and punishment for obedience and disobedience). Hermansen (1996, p. 57) translates al-Dihlawi's explication in English above as:- “... the assumption of commitment to obey God's commands which expose them to the risk of reward on the basis of obedience and disobedience” (Hermansen, 1996, p. 57).

Therefore, it can be concluded that *taklif* according to the explication of al-Dihlawi means “the burden of man with the divine responsibility to accept all the laws prescribed by Allah s.w.t.”

Al-Dihlawi’s above explication is clearly quoted in PB when Hassan (1997, p. 408) explains *taklif* as follows: - “...the meaning of *taklif* is the attachment of man to the fact of his creation, that is, man cannot escape the fact that he was created by Allah s.w.t., and therefore it is obligatory to follow His laws ” [...maksud *taklif* itu ialah keterikatan manusia kepada hakikat kejadiannya, yakni manusia tidak dapat lepas daripada hakikat bahawa dia dicipta oleh Allah Taala, dan oleh itu wajib menurut hukum-hukum-Nya]. Hassan (2008, p. 89) also clearly stated the source of reference for the meaning of *taklif* which is al-Dihlawi, as he wrote: - “According to the teachings of Shah Wali Allah [al-Dihlawi], the secret of *taklif* or *sirrul-taklif* refers to the natural perfection of man, to achieve three things or goals of his life: justice, knowledge, and good effort...” [Menurut ajaran Shah Wali Allah [al-Dihlawi], rahsia *taklif* atau *sirrul-taklif* itu merujuk kepada kesempurnaan manusia yang semula jadi, untuk mencapai tiga perkara atau matlamat kehidupannya: keadilan, ilmu pengetahuan, dan ikhtiar dan usaha...]. By using al-Dihlawi’s explication on *taklif*, PB is able to place “literature” within the Islamic worldview, that is, as an act of worship or human devotion to its Creator i.e. Allah s.w.t., as explained by Hassan (2008, p. 59, 1992, p. 25) in the following two writings: -

“The central idea of Genuine Literature is the concept of taklif, which describes the essence of knowledge and mankind, which then explains the essence of art [and literature] in Islam. Man in the context of taklif is a kind of creature created by Allah s.w.t., not the result of evolution as assumed by Darwinism.”

[Tunjang gagasan Persuratan Baru ialah konsep taklif, yang menghuraikan hakikat ilmu dan hakikat insan, yang kemudiannya menjelaskan hakikat seni dalam Islam. Manusia dalam konteks taklif adalah sejenis makhluk yang dijadikan Allah s.w.t., bukan hasil evolusi seperti yang diandaikan oleh Darwinisme]

and:-

“Literature in the point of view of Islam is a kind of human deeds that uses creativity (i.e. talent as a responsibility), created using beautiful language and effective techniques to give a deep meaning about the essence of mankind, knowledge and good deeds.”

[Kesusasteraan dalam pandangan Islam ialah sejenis amal manusia yang menggunakan daya kreatif (yakni menjadikan bakat sebagai amanah), dicipta dengan menggunakan bahasa yang indah dan teknik yang berkesan untuk memberikan makna yang sedalam-dalamnya tentang hakikat insan dan hakikat ilmu serta amal]

In other words, the application of *taklif* allows a writer to understand why their works should be made as a platform to uphold the good values and oppose the bad values in Islam. In terms of evaluation, the application of *taklif* also allows PB to evaluate literary works based on the Islamic framework, and not based on personal tastes that are individual, or trends that change according to time and environment. In other words, the evaluation of the quality of literary works based on *taklif* is no longer subjective and relative, as widely practiced in the

modern Malay literature. Therefore, credit and recognition cannot be given to literary works that portray bad values in Islam, as explained by Hassan (2008, p. 174-184):-

“Through the concept of taklif, evaluation is no longer derived from human desire, but is determined by the fact of human creation and the fact of his deeds... Thus he [a literary writer/critic] will not be deceived by the enchanting external beauty, which in fact is mere illusion. Clearly, what was considered as the beauty earlier, in fact, is a kind of evil that is polished in such a way that people who do not understand the very true of reality, and will accept it as something great, beautiful and enchanting.... By setting aside taklif, we arbitrarily include bad values through creative works written and evaluated from an anti-religious Western perspective. Without realizing it, the ignorant way of life and its values were brought into the Malay civilization through aesthetic and literary criticism”

[Melalui konsep taklif, penilaian tidak lagi berasal daripada kemahuan manusia, tetapi ditentukan oleh hakikat kejadian insan dan hakikat amalnya... Dengan itu dia tidak akan tertipu oleh keindahan luaran yang mempesonakan, sedangkan pada hakikatnya tidak lebih daripada sejenis ilusi. Jelasnya, apa yang dianggapnya sebagai keindahan tadi, pada hakikatnya adalah sejenis kejahatan yang digilap begitu rupa sehingga orang yang tidak mengerti hakikat di sebaliknya, akan menerimanya sebagai suatu yang agung, indah dan mempesonakan.... Dengan mengetepikan taklif, kita memasukkan sewenang-wenangnya nilai-nilai mungkar melalui karya kreatif yang ditulis dan dinilai daripada perspektif Barat yang anti-agama. Tanpa disedari, cara hidup jahiliah dan nilai-nilainya dibawa masuk ke dalam tamadun Melayu melalui estetika dan kritikan sastera]

It is clear that according to PB, the production as well as the evaluation of literary works which is based on the meaning of *taklif* can unravel the confusion values which has become a Affandi's huge concern about modern Malay literature. It is important to state that as a scholarly notion, PB offers analytical tools that can be utilised to study literary texts. One of them is *taklif* which has been proposed as a concept which is ready to be applied to solve problems related to values in literary texts. From what has been observed and up until now, there have been numerous academic studies in modern Malay literature that utilise PB including *taklif* as an analytical framework. This current development raises several important questions for this study. First, how does the concept of *taklif* applied in the study of modern Malay literature? Second, what are the main findings that resulted from its application. It is the objectives of this study to discuss the application of the concept of *taklif* in the study of modern Malay literature, and summarizes the main findings resulting from it.

Research Methodology

This study utilises qualitative research method particularly library research and textual analysis. This approach is in line with the objectives of the study that is “discussion” in nature, and therefore requires the study to refer, describe and analyse the study materials which are in the form of texts. The studied texts were studies on modern Malay literary texts which have applied the concept of *taklif* that has been explicated by al-Dihlawi and conceptualised as an analytical tool in PB. Therefore, this study collects studies in modern Malay literature that applies the concept *taklif* for analysis. The analysis was conducted to examine the problems

highlighted in the studies of modern Malay literature. This is followed by summarizing how the application of the concept of *taklif* has helped these studies in solving the problems raised.

Analysis and Discussion

Study by Mohd. Zariat Abdul Rani entitled “Seksualiti dalam Novel Melayu: Satu Analisis Teks Berdasarkan Persuratan Baru” (Sexuality in Malay Novels: A Textual Analysis Based on Genuine Literature) (2004) was the first doctoral thesis to apply PB as an analytical framework. This thesis raises the concerns about the inclination of Malay novels towards the issues of sex and sexuality. Studied novels are works that are considered “canon” in Malay literature as they were recognised through literary prizes including well received by literary critics, whether the novel itself or the novelist. As clearly stated in the title, this thesis applies PB including the concept of *taklif* which defines the responsibility of writers to utilise their literary works as a platform in delivering the truth in Islam. By applying PB and the concept of *taklif*, this thesis concludes that most of the Malay novels studied placed sinful sexual desires as the central theme of the narrative including highlighting confusing values that are misleading in Islam. This confusion of values refers to the portrayal of the sinful sexual desires as noble, as clearly described in his conclusion: -

“By placing taklif as its central idea, as well as reliance on the meaning of Qalam, the literary function according to Genuine Literature is blinked as a tool to educate and remind the people of the truth in the sight of Allah s.w.t. Such understanding and function of literature at the same time puts the importance of the true knowledge in the sight of Allah s.w.t. as a pillar of literary activity according to the framework of Genuine Literature.... The use of the above framework in the content analysis of the studied novels produces some important findings. Among them is the dominance of the story's central idea that discusses the issue of human sexual desire, especially the evil aspect....The analysis also identifies several novels that demonstrate the confusion of values in Islam. Moral confusion occurs when the bad values are displayed as ideal values or softened with certain justifications.”

[Dengan menjadikan taklif sebagai paksinya, serta sandaran terhadap pengertian Qalam, fungsi sastera menurut Persuratan Baru dikejapkan sebagai alat untuk mengajar dan mengingatkan manusia tentang kebenaran di sisi Allah s.w.t. Pengertian dan fungsi sastera yang seumpama ini sekaligus meletakkan kepentingan ilmu yang benar di sisi Allah s.w.t. sebagai tunggak kegiatan sastera mengikut kerangka Persuratan Baru. ...Penggunaan kerangka pemahaman di atas dalam analisis isi (content) novel-novel menghasilkan beberapa penemuan penting. Antaranya ialah dominannya paksi cerita yang berlegar soal nafsu seks manusia, khususnya aspek kejahatan. ...Analisis turut mengenal pasti beberapa novel yang memperagakan nilai yang keliru di sisi Islam. Kekeliruan moral berlaku apabila nilai-nilai jahat itu diperagakan sebagai nilai yang ideal atau dilunakkan dengan justifikasi tertentu] (Rani, 2004, p. 265, p. 570).

This finding reinforces the PB hypothesis of confusion of values which is a problem in the modern Malay literature. It is clear that by applying *taklif* as an analytical tool, Rani's study is able to identify the confusion of values in the novels studied.

Dinamika Pemikiran Sastera Melayu (Dynamics in Malay Literary Thoughts) (2008) is a scholarly book written by Ungku Maimunah Mohd. Tahir (hence Tahir) and also applied the

philosophy of *taklif* in its analysis of Hassan's novel entitled *Pujangga Melayu*. This book aims to debate the dominant thoughts by scholars and literary critics in Malay literature. The debate began with an argument that modern Malay literature is synonymous with realism, a Western aesthetic ideology that claims empirical experience as a legitimate source for literary writing. With that source, literary works are conceptualised as documents that record physical realities especially sordid details. This documentation is realised through various fictional stories in Malay novels, short stories and dramas. More importantly, such "concepts of literature" (as proposed by realisme) became dominant ideas in modern Malay literature including literary criticism. According to Tahir, with such ideas, "knowledge" (*ilmu*) in the modern Malay literature is defined as a "story" (*cerita*) including those that captures sordid reality. However, this definition is criticised by PB who defines "knowledge" based on Islamic epistemology which recognises revelation (*wahyu*) as the ultimate truth of knowledge, and determines the "truth" or "reality" describes by the human empirical experience and observations. PB's recognition on revelation (*wahyu*) justifies the concept of *taklif* which Tahir (2009, p. 86) explained as "responsibility and obligation, which is a position that puts the writer in a state of constant sensitivity to the reality of human creation and the essence of knowledge according to Islamic worldview that puts literary activity as *ibadah* (worship) [*pertanggungjawaban dan pengwajibkan, iaitu pendirian yang meletakkan penulis dalam keadaan sentiasa peka terhadap hakikat kejadian manusia dan hakikat ilmu menurut pandangan-hidup Islam yang menjadi kegiatan sastera sebagai ibadah*]. Tahir explained that as an effort in explaining the concept of *taklif*, PB utilises the work of renowned scholars such as al-Dihlawi. In order to further explain about PB as a significant notion, Tahir's book provides a specific division that analyses the novel written by Hassan, entitled *Pujangga Melayu*. Tahir appointed *Pujangga Melayu* as the concrete manifestation of PB in the form of a novel that captures "reality" according to the Islamic worldview. For that reason, Tahir explained the meaning of "true knowledge" (*ilmu yang benar*) in Islam, including the concept of *taklif* translated in *Pujangga Melayu* through a life story of a professor who is married to four women who are highly educated. The choice of polygamy as the context of the story is considered significant because the practice of this marriage is in fact allowed in Islam. Tahir believes that this choice reflects the stand of PB which defines "true knowledge" (*ilmu yang benar*) according to the Qur'an and hadith as the ultimate authoritative source of knowledge, as opposed to empirical experience. In this context, Tahir concludes that the story in *Pujangga Melayu* translated the meaning of *taklif* which refers to the imposition of the religious obligations, as she wrote:-

"... Pujangga [Pujangga Melayu] MAH [Hassan] wanted to "locate it [polygamy] at an honored place, as meant in the teachings of Islam... This means that the task of Pujangga is to offer a different perspective, namely a clearly different perspective from the norms in Malaysian Malay creative works. Firmly, it is the view from the perspective of the truth... based on the Quran and hadith, and based on taklif, Pujangga [Pujangga Melayu] contests this physical reality, which able to mesmerize according to PB; hence it is a pseudo reality. Instead PB directs its view to the absolute reality [in Islam], that is, beliefs and values that are beyond material existence, which appreciate the essence of humanity and its attachment to the primordial covenant"

[...Pujangga MAH ingin "meletakkannya di tempat yang terhormat, seperti yang dimaksudkan dalam ajaran Islam...Ini bererti antara tugas Pujangga ialah

menawarkan perspektif yang lain, iaitu perspektif yang jelas berbeza daripada apa yang lumrah kelihatan dalam karya kreatif Melayu Malaysia. Tegasnya, ia adalah pandangan daripada perspektif ilmu yang benar ... dengan berteraskan al-Quran dan hadis, dan berpaksikan taklif, Pujangga [Pujangga Melayu] mempertikaikan realiti fizikal ini, yang menurut PB mampu memukau; justeru ia realiti semu. Sebaliknya PB mengarahkan pandangan kepada realiti hakiki, iaitu keyakinan dan nilai yang melampaui kewujudan kebendaan, yang menghayati hakikat keinsanan manusia dan keterikatannya kepada janji azali] (Tahir, 2009, p. 6, p. 108-124).

The use of PB and *taklif* explicitly described in the title of a master's thesis by Elizatul Nastaysah Binti Kamaruddin (henceforth Kamaruddin) entitled “Representasi Watak Wanita dalam Karya Sastera Melayu Moden berdasarkan Kerangka *Taklif*” (The Representation of Women Characters in Modern Malay Literary Works based on *Taklif* Framework) (2016). This thesis problematises the representation of female characters in the short stories of Hamzah Hussin and Anis Sabirin, as well as the novel *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* by al-Syed Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi and *Jakah Salmah?* by Ahmad Rashid Talu. These works of modern Malay literature is considered have demonstrated confusing values according to Islamic teachings. In order to solve this issue, Kamaruddin (2016, p. 25) applied PB as an analytical framework, especially the concept of *taklif* which was explained as “the secret of religious responsibility on human beings” (*rahsia kebertanggungjawaban agama ke atas diri manusia*). Kamaruddin states clearly that she refers to al-Dihlawi's description of *taklif* based on the English translation of *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* by Hermansen (1996). By applying the concept of *taklif*, Kamaruddin describes the rights and roles of women in Islam in various contexts namely protection and respect, knowledge and education, marriage and society. Kamaruddin's study also found that the Malay short stories and novels studied were featuring female characters with the un-Islamic styles and appearances, besides rejecting Islamic law regarding *aurat* and marriage. Thus, Kamaruddin concluded that the texts of modern Malay literature studied represent Islam female characters that are contrary to the concept of *taklif*, as she writes: -

“According to the framework of *taklif* that supports the idea of PB (which is the framework of analysis), the presence of the protagonist characters with such character, by itself puts the representation of these characters as female characters who contradict Islamic law and at the same time disobey to the framework of *taklif*.”

[Menurut kerangka *taklif* yang menunjangi gagasan PB (yang menjadi kerangka analisis), kehadiran watak-watak protagonis dengan perwatakannya yang sedemikian, dengan sendirinya meletakkan representasi watak-watak tersebut sebagai watak-watak wanita yang menyanggah syariat Islam dan sekaligus meningkari kerangka *taklif*] (Kamaruddin, 2016, p. 146)

Another study that clearly uses the term *taklif* in the title is a master's thesis in Malay literature by Nurul Atira Tonya (henceforth Tonya) entitled “Penerapan Kerangka *Taklif* dalam Filem ‘Sepet’ dan ‘Muallaf’ Arahkan Yasmin Ahmad” (*Implementation of the Framework Taklif in 'Sepet' and 'Muallaf' Film Directed by Yasmin Ahmad*) (2018). Compared to Kamaruddin who apply *taklif* to analyse Malay novels and short stories, Tonya thesis offers interesting observations as she uses the film genre as her study material. Tonya argues that “religious pluralism” is an ideology that is contrary to the genuine Islamic teachings. This becomes a

problem because most of the existing studies on Islam in Yasmin Ahmad's films apply "religious pluralism" as an analytical framework. In this context, Tonya justifies her study to apply *taklif* as described by al-Dihlawi to analyse the manifestations of Islam in the stories of two Yasmin Ahmad's works i.e., "Sepet" and "Muallaf". Tonya (2018, p. 26) explains that according to al-Dihlawi, *taklif* refers to man's accountability to Allah swt (*kebertanggungjawaban manusia kepada Allah swt*). In addition, Tonya relates the concept of *taklif* to the concept of "primordial covenant" described by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Tonya's analysis identifies that there is a manifestation of "religious pluralism" in the two studied films. By applying *taklif*, Tonya's study concludes that these manifestations are contrary to the worldview of Islam, as she writes:-

"With the application of taklif which clearly an analytical framework that is based on the main sources of knowledge in Islam, namely al-Quran and Hadith, it is clear that the portrayals of life which are said as manifestation of "Multiculturalism", "Religious Tolerance" and "Religious Pluralism" in Yasmin's films are against the Islam teachings."

[Dengan penerapan konsep *taklif* yang jelas merupakan satu kerangka analisis berteraskan sumber utama ilmu dalam Islam, iaitu al-Quran dan Hadis, jelas bahawa pemaparan-pemaparan kehidupan yang dikatakan sebagai pemaparan "Multikulturalisme", "Toleransi Agama" dan "Pluralisme Agama" dalam filem-filem Yasmin ini adalah bertentangan dengan tuntutan Islam] (Tonya, 2018, p. 108).

In addition, Mohd. Adi Amzar Muhammad Nawawi (henceforth Nawani) and Zulkarnain Mohamed (henceforth Mohamed) also use the term *taklif* as the title of their article entitled "Penilaian Konsep Taklif dalam Novel *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* Karya Habiburrahman El Shirazy" (Evaluation of the Concept of *Taklif* in the Novel entitled *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* by Habiburrahman El Shirazy) (2012). This study raises the issue of the author's responsibility to produce literary works that display the true values of Islam. In this context, this article focuses on the concept of *taklif* which is clearly associated with PB, by making Habiburrahman El-Shirazy's *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* as the text to study. This study identifies four storytelling strategies, namely faith (*akidah*), the use of al-Quran and hadith, manipulation of characters toward goodness, and the absence of erotic and sexual elements. Their study found that the studied novel features the protagonist character who has a strong Islamic belief and his actions are in line with Islamic teachings, as well as the use al-Qur'an and hadith to explain the true knowledge of Islam. This study concludes that *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* manifests *taklif* through its story that highlights the good values and eliminates the bad values according to Islam, as it is summed up: -

"Overall, the novel Ketika Cinta Bertasbih by Habiburrahman El Shirazy can be seen as one of the examples of novels that meet the evaluation criteria of the concept of taklif as a whole. The novel not only displays the story, but also beyond the nature of knowledge in writing, which is a reflection of the author's understanding of the concept of "caliph" [vicegerent or khalifah] who aims to prosper the land of Allah in any matter and situation. The application of beliefs such as Tauhid uluhiyyah, the use al-Qur'an and hadith in the work, the manipulation of the novel protagonist towards the portrayal of good character, and lastly, the clear absence

of erotic scenes are the important elements used by Habiburrahman in lifting his work in line with the concept of taklif.

[Secara keseluruhannya, novel Ketika Cinta Bertasbih hasil karya oleh Habiburrahman El Shirazy ini mampu dilihat sebagai antara contoh novel yang menepati kriteria penilaian konsep taklif secara keseluruhannya. Novel ini bukan sekadar memaparkan cerita malahan menjangkau kepada hakikat ilmu dalam penulisan yang merupakan refleksi kepada pemahaman penulis terhadap konsep khalifah yang bertujuan memakmurkan bumi Allah dalam apa jua urusan dan keadaan. Penerapan fahaman akidah seperti tauhid uluhiyyah, penggunaan Al-Qur'an dan hadith dalam karya, penggemblengan watak utama ke arah pemerian watak berunsur kebaikan, serta yang terakhir pengabaian secara jelas babak-babak erotik adalah merupakan modal penting yang digunakan Habiburrahman dalam mengangkat karyanya selaras dengan pendirian konsep taklif] (Nawawi & Mohammed, 2012, p. 521).

Finally, an article by Tuan Sanira Mohd. Zawawi et al. (henceforth Zawawi et al.) entitled “Unsur Tauhid dan Taklif dalam Novel *Murtad*” (Elements of *Tawhid* and *Taklif* in *Murtad*) (2013). This study raises the significance of the works of Harun Haji Salleh, a novelist from Sabah who is said to be inclined towards Islam. Accordingly, this study analyses Harun Haji Salleh's novel entitled *Murtad*, by applying PB including the concept of *taklif*. Zawawi et al. (2013, p. 139) explains that *taklif* refers to the ultimate purpose of human life that is to do justice through true knowledge and strong efforts. With this understanding, the study finds that the story in the studies novel highlights the turmoil of its characters in performing good and abandoning evil according to Islamic teachings, including manifesting remorse of repentant characters from their mistakes. More interesting is the conclusion that regards PB as an appropriate analytical framework to evaluate the elements of *taklif* in literary works, including conveying the true knowledge through literature, as concluded:-

“The idea of PB (Genuine Literature) is seen as very suitable to see the elements of tauhid and taklif in creative works such as short stories and novels. Through the elements of tauhid and taklif, the author can further highlight the authorship and creativity based on true knowledge. Goodness and truth (uswah hasanah) should be emphasized by writers and literary critics through the knowledge of tauhid and further strengthened by the element of taklif that is always underlying the writing of literary works.”

[Gagasan Persuratan Baru dilihat amat bersesuaian untuk melihat unsur tauhid dan taklif dalam karya kreatif seperti cerpen dan novel. Melalui unsur tauhid dan taklif, penulis dapat menyerlahkan lagi kepengarangan dan daya kreatif berlandaskan ilmu yang benar. Kebaikan dan kebenaran (uswah hasanah) perlu dititikberatkan oleh penulis dan pengkritik melalui ilmu tauhid dan seterusnya dikukuhkan pula dengan unsur taklif yang sentiasa mendasari penulisan karya sastera] (Zawawi et al., 2013, p. 144).

Conclusion

The above discussion has highlighted some important conclusions. First, the alignment of the meaning of *taklif* applied in studies on modern Malay literature. This alignment is clear when the academic studies generally define *taklif* as the burden of human beings with the

responsibility to accept all the laws prescribed by Allah s.w.t. This definition is made possible by the effort of PB in explaining al-Dihlawi' explication on *taklif*. This evident as most of the academic studies apply *taklif* as one of the analytical tools of PB, as well as acknowledge al Dihlawi's definition of the concept. Second, *taklif* is applied in the academic studies to unravel the issues related to values in the modern Malay literature. By applying *taklif*, these academic studies are able to identify confusion of values arises when the literary texts describe evil deeds as noble, or instead portray the evils of good deeds in Islamic teachings. Most studies found that the works in modern Malay literature demonstrate a strong inclination towards portraying human evil including sinful sexual desires and ideologies that are contrary to Islamic teachings. The studies also confirm the stories of goodness, especially the obedience of the characters carrying out the command and abandoning the prohibitions of Allah s.w.t., as a manifestation of *taklif*. The findings show that the application of *taklif* has allowed those studies to unravel the confusion of values in the modern Malay literary works. In this context, al-Dihlawi's ideas have made a significant contribution on the study of modern Malay literature.

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