

THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE POETIC DICTION OF MASURI S.N. AND A. SAMAD SAID: A COMPARISON

Rahimah A. Hamid

(imah@usm.my)

School of Humanities,
Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM,
Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
Tel.:+604-65333378

Abstract

The beauty of a poem depends on the poet's choice of words—his diction—in expressing what his thoughts. Poetic diction is the careful choice of the most apt, beautiful and accurate words to express all kinds of things. A poet's choice of words is closely connected to euphony and the arrangement of words in a certain sequence by the poet. Diction is also closely related to figurative language, that is, the expressions chosen by a poet to beautify his poem, to enhance its effect, and to create certain connotations in it. Careful choice of words, with emphasis on figurative language, or metaphorical expressions, will cause a poem to be beautiful and contain layers of meaning. The approach used here is to look at the choice of words and figurative language in the works of two eminent writers from Malaysia and Singapore, namely A. Samad Said and Masuri S.N. A close comparison of their works will be made to study the strengths and weaknesses of the diction and figurative language in their poems.

Keywords: diction, figurative, effect, connotations, beauty

INTRODUCTION

Before discussing the figurative language in the poems of Masuri S.N. and A. Samad Said, we should look briefly at the backgrounds of these two literary greats. Masuri S.N., who was born Masuri bin Salikun in Singapore on 11

June, 1927, lived in the area of Teluk Kurau, Geylang Serai, Paya Lebar and Lorong Karaeng. Masuri received his early education (till Standard 4) at the Teluk Kurau Malay School. However, in 1933, Masuri was given the opportunity to further his education at the Sultan Idris Training College, in Tanjung Malim, Perak, in Malaysia. In order to improve his command of the English language, Masuri took classes at the Mercantile Institution and C.Y.M.A College. This educational background allowed him to become a teacher. In the beginning, he taught at the Geylang School, but was later appointed to the post of headmaster at the Tanah Merah Besar Primary School in 1978. Following this, Masuri was made a Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) from 1984 to 1985, and was then given the opportunity to enter an international writers' programme for three months (from June to August 1986) at the University of Iowa. While there, Masuri was appointed Honorary Fellow. From 1991 to 1992, Masuri was invited to be guest writer by the Malay Studies Board of the National University of Singapore (NUS). Masuri was one of the founders of Angkatan Sasterawan '50 (ASAS '50), a body of writers established in Singapore on 6th August, 1950, in order to promote the Malay language and literature. When ASAS '50 split into two factions due to misunderstandings among its members, one advocating "Seni untuk Seni" (Art for Art's Sake) and the other "Seni untuk Masyarakat" (Art for Society), Masuri chose to align himself with the latter faction. From 2001 to 2005, Masuri acted as Ketua I (leader) of ASAS '50. In recognition of his great contribution to Malay literature, especially in Singapore, Masuri was awarded the Tun Seri Lanang Award, the highest honour for litterateurs in Singapore, in 1995. He passed away on 6th December 2005, at the age of 78.

A. Samad Said was born Abdul Samad bin Muhammad Said on 9th April, 1935, in Kampung Belimbing Dalam, in Durian Tunggal, Melaka. At the age of six months, Samad's family moved with him to Singapore, where his father had obtained work as a tram driver. Samad education at the Kota Raja Malay School up to Standard IV (1940 to 1946). Subsequently, Samad continued his education by taking afternoon classes at the Victoria Institution, obtaining the Cambridge Senior Certificate in 1956. Samad's began his working life as a clerk at the Singapore General Hospital, where he worked for six months. After this, he moved to Kuala Lumpur to work for the newspaper *Fikiran Rakyat*, which at that time was headed by Ahmad Boestamam. Here, he also worked for only six months. Samad then returned to Singapore to work for the newspaper *Utusan Zaman* under Usman Awang.

When the office of Utusan Melayu moved to Kuala Lumpur, Samad moved there as well. His meeting with A. Samad Ismail, the editor of *Berita Harian*, convinced Samad to work with this newspaper as a Special Assistant to the Group Editor of The News Straits Times. At the end of 1981, Samad was made Editor-in-Chief of *Warta Tebrau*. His final appointment was as the Head of Literature Development for the New Straits Times Group, Kuala Lumpur. Samad was once a member of ASAS '50. Although Samad is a writer very much concerned with the aesthetics of a literary work, he is also concerned with its underlying messages. As a result, Samad emerged in this organization as a writer concerned with combining aesthetics and meaning. Due to his great contribution to the world of Malay literature especially in Malaysia, Samad was awarded the National Literature Award in 1970. This is the highest honour bestowed on writers in Malaysia, and awardees receive the title "National Literature Laureate". Now, A. Samad Said is a fulltime writer who is still active at the age of 79. Most of his current works are poems which he publicizes on Facebook.

Based on the background of these two writers, we can see that there are some similarities. Both have lived for at least some time in Singapore and both were once involved with ASAS '50 and its activities. What differentiates them is that Masuri was a teacher, while Samad was a journalist. This will be scrutinized to discuss and evaluate the use of figurative language in the diction of the two poets, because background or experience may shape certain meanings, which the writers hope to convey to and share with their readers. To discuss this matter, several poems by these two poets, written after 1965, have been selected for study.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In writing a poem, diction or word choice is extremely important because poems are relatively short and require words that are exact, concise, and precise but with deep and wide meanings. Figurative expressions make use of words not in their literal sense, such as referring to something with a different meaning intended (transferred meaning). For example, if a child climbs a tree and its mother tells it to climb higher, the child is actually being told to come down as the mother fears it will fall and get hurt. In various dictionaries, figurative is given as being synonymous with the terms metaphorical, symbolic, allegorical, representative and emblematic (see <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/figurative>). As an adjective the word "figurative" is explained as follows:

The adjective figurative comes from the Old French word “figuratif,” which means “metaphorical.” Any figure of speech — a statement or phrase not intended to be understood literally — is figurative. You say your hands are frozen, or you are so hungry you could eat a horse. (<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/figurative>).

When figurative expressions are used, their meaning will differ from the common meanings of the words. The aims are generally accepted to be for achieving certain effects with specific meanings, as mentioned by Abrams (1981:63):

Figurative language is a deviation from what speakers of a language apprehend as the ordinary, or standard, significance or sequence of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect.

Elements of figurative language differ from elements of rhetorical language. Rachmat Djoko Pradopo (1994:93) shares Altenbernd’s view that figurative language differs from rhetorical language. Similarly, Abrams (1981:63) comes to the conclusion that figures of speech and rhetorical language are elements that are a part of figurative language. There are nine elements in rhetorical style: tautology, hyperbole, pleonasm, onomatopoeia, enumeration, paradox, parallelism, enjambment, and rhetorical reticence. Elements of figurative language are metaphor, personification, simile, epic similes, allegory and metonymy. The combination of figurative and rhetorical language in creative works is called “figure of rhetoric” or “rhetorical figures”. The use of such is aimed at widening and deepening the meaning of words or groups of words in order to obtain a certain effect on readers. In a poem, for example, this is due to the diction of the poet in conveying his thought or message to the reader. These figurative elements will be studied through a look at the diction in some of the poems by Masuri and Samad.

FIGURATIVE DICTION IN THE POEMS OF MASURI AND SAMAD

Poems Concerning Society and Economy

In order to compare the figurative diction in the poems of Masuri S.N. and A. Samad Said, several poems written by them after 1965 will be analysed.

The year 1965 was chosen as the starting point for the works of both the poets as that was the year when Singapore separated from Malaysia. Also, the poems written by Masuri and Samad after 1965 may contain interesting themes for comparison, as writers in both countries wrote works with a new point of view within the sphere of new geographical boundaries.

In the early years after the secession, history shows that both countries grappled with social, political and economic problems. The leaders' agenda was the effort to rectify the political situation, restructure society, and develop the economy of their respective countries. Therefore, in 1965, (1989:107) wrote the poem "Kota" (City) in order to depict the social and economic situation of people in Singapore at the time. City dwellers were depicted by him as being in competition and working hard to make a living to achieve a lifestyle of quality. He writes:

*Berlumba-lumba
memecut urat saraf
merenggut jantung sederap
membesarkan hidup berharap.*

(Racing
with accelerating nerves
simultaneously yanking the heart
flaring the nostrils with hope.)

The arrangement of words of the first stanza is again repeated in the second but with different words, however with a similar effect:

*Berlari-lari
memburu deru hari
merebut nafas sendiri
melupakan igauan hari.*

[Running
chasing the roar of the day
fighting for one's own breath
forgetting daydreams.]

This figure of speech is called tautology. The reason for Masuri to use this figure of speech is to depict how Singaporeans work hard to the

point of exhaustion in order to survive. They need to feed themselves and their families, and they need a place to live. Therefore, they have to forget about social activities, or making small talk with the folk living in their surroundings, because every second is valuable and needs to be filled with competing for meaningful employment in order to shape a better future for themselves. The poet writes:

*Inilah kota kerja
inilah mesin jentera
manusia mengatasi manusia
membisukan budi bicara.*

(This is the city of jobs
this is the machine
people overpowering people
muting discretion.)

The diction of these line clearly shows elements of tautology. Tautology means saying the same thing more than once in order to emphasize the meaning for the audience. This is why tautology is different from other figures of speech, because it is used for emphasis or for getting the effect the writer desires. In other words, the writer's idea is repeated but it is repeated with different word choices. The meaning remains the same because there is no addition that would change it in any way (see Safian Hussain *et al.*, 1988:331). Therefore, in the poem "Kota", when Masuri repeats the same idea in the second stanza, the effect of the diction of the first stanza becomes emphasized for the reader.

Masuri's observations as a teacher about social problems as expressed in his writings, are also found in the poems of Samad, who views them as a journalist. Many of Samad's poems actually deal with these problems because in the course of his own life, Samad experienced the hardship of living in shantytowns in Singapore as a child, and as a journalist. Therefore, in the poem "Di Tepi Telefon, Kopi dan Typewriter" (Beside Telephone, Coffee and Typewriter) (A. Samad Said, 1995: 116-117), for example, which was published in *Berita Minggu* on 21 January 1968, Samad writes about the lives of the underprivileged members of society exacerbated by flooding during the rainy season. The second stanza of the poem goes as follows:

*Hari yang ditinggalkan
lima mati tak makan
pinggan dan cawan
tergenggam di tangan
sedang air mata di rumah
dan di kepalanya kucing gelisah;
sedang tungku ternganga hampa
dan belanga retak di tengah.*

(The day that has been left behind
five have died having nothing to eat
plates and cups
grasped in their hands
while tears remain at home
and at their heads the cat is restless;
the stove gapes disappointedly
and the cooking pot is cracked in the centre.)

Compared to Masuri's poem "Kota", Samad uses many figurative expressions here. For example "kucing gelisah" (restless cat) and "tungku ternganga hampa" (the stove gapes disappointedly) are personifications, as human qualities are attributed to things that are not human. However, just as in Masuri's poem, there is a tautology in the poem which emphasizes its meaning, that is, the problem of poverty and flooding is repeated over and over. For example, the line "lima mati tak makan" (five died having nothing to eat) is further explained through the lines "sedang tungku ternganga hampa/dan belanga retak di tengah" (the stove gapes disappointedly/and the cooking pot is cracked in the centre). This is again emphasized in the next stanza:

*Tapi, masih juga dia bercerita
di tengah lima mayat manusia –
satu, tersadai, dua terhumban dan terapung dua –
kucing lesu tergigil luka
miau, miau, miau sengsara.*

(But, the story is still told
in the midst of the five corpses –
one spread out, two thrown and two floating –
the tired cat is shivering and injured
meow, meow, a meow of suffering.)

This stanza is a further explanation of the one before it, as it merely repeats what has been said in the previous stanza. Therefore, tautology is also evident in this poem. However, Samad's poem is more varied than Masuri's because it also contains epic similes. This is because the five corpses mentioned in the stanza are further talked about in the line "satu, tersadai, dua terhumban dan terapung dua" (one spread out, two thrown and two floating). The restless cat mentioned in the second stanza is also given more detail through the description of "kucing lesu tergil luka/ miau, miau, miau sengsara" (the tired cat is shivering and injured/ meow meow a meow of suffering). The meowing here is onomatopoeia as the words "miau, miau, miau" are arranged to represent the sounds of a cat. The use of such diction to depict the situation of the underprivileged as falling from the frying pan into the fire, shows that Samad employs more figurative elements in his poems compared to Masuri.

Political Poems

Looking at the works of Masuri and Samad, a great number of their poems after the years 1965 deal with political issues. As a teacher and later headmaster, Masuri must have been in close contact with ordinary people, especially people living in the area around Geylang and Tanah Merah Besar in Singapore. As a journalist, Samad surely travelled to all the nooks and crannies of Malaysia and heard the complaints of the common folk. To express the lamentations of the people suffering due to the actions of those in authority who seem to be unaware of their existence caused both Masuri and Samad to write poems with political themes, with the intention to address any imbalances and to remind those in power of their responsibilities in advocating better lives for the people. In connection with this, Masuri writes in his poem "Bicara" (Talk):

*Ada ada bicara
kelebihan semalam
hari ini terucap
di tengah kebalauan.*

(There is talk
yesterday's advantages
expressed today
in the midst of chaos) (first stanza).

The words “Ada ada” which Masuri uses unhyphenated in this stanza, contains a parallelism. This is not a dual or plural. It is a repetition to show that there is much talk (*bicara*) being made by the leaders. Reading this, the effect of this parallelism is not as great but when expressed in a declamatory style, its effect is quite great. This is because Masuri depicts politicians as liking to talk but rarely keeping their word. Hence, Masuri adds:

*Tidak lagi terhembuskan nikmat
ucapan pengap
ucapan orang keliling
yang mengangguk
tapi berpaling.*

(There no longer blows pleasure in
stuffy speeches
the speeches of people around
who nod
but look away.)

This means that in the promise of politicians “Tidak lagi terhembuskan nikmat” (No longer blows pleasure) because it is so often broken. To further strengthen these lines, Masuri uses repetition of the word *ucapan* (speeches). “Ucapan pengap” (stuffy speeches) carries the meaning that the politicians’ speeches merely stay confined to the rooms in which they are made, while the “ucapan orang keliling” (the speeches of those around) refers to the voice of the people who “complain” in the background as they dispute the words of the politician. Because of that, the people who listen to the speech merely “mengangguk/ tetapi berpaling” (nod but turn away) because they already know that what they are getting is nothing more than lip service. This poem shows that through simple diction and limited use of figures of speech in his poems, Masuri is able to convey his message to his readers clearly and resoundingly.

Meanwhile, in his poem “Kesan (I)” (Effect (I)) (1962: 27), Masuri shows that the effect of Western colonization has had a very great impact on society. After the British colonists brought in Chinese immigrant to work in tin mines, and Indian workers for their rubber plantations, racial polarization developed based on the divide and rule policy of the British (see Rahimah A. Hamid, 2010). Singapore, a metropolitan city developed by the British, was not exempt from this. Masuri displays the phenomenon in the following way:

*Menemui beberapa perkara
selepas bicara
antara beberapa manusia
persoalannya menjadi bertindih-tindih;*

*mereka meragukan warna
kulit dan kemanusiaan.*

*Mengenal beberapa manusia
sukarnya untuk percaya
mereka bukan berpura-pura
membiarkan rapuhnya jiwa.*

(Finding several issues
after discussion
among some people
the issues become overlapping;

they make one doubt the colour
of skin and humanity.

Knowing some people
it is difficult to believe
that they are not pretending
and leaving the soul to crumble.)

In the lines above, Masuri's diction is quite clear as there are no figures of speech, be they metaphors, similes or others. The choice of diction here makes Masuri's poem seem prosaic. However, Masuri still employs repetition in order to heighten the effect of his poem through such expressions as "beberapa manusia" (some people) (lines 3 and 7), as representing Malays, Chinese and Indians who "meragukan warna kulit dan kemanusiaan" (doubt the colour of skin and humanity) and they are "bukan berpura-pura" (not pretending) to have this attitude. This situation has been established by the colonial powers and has shaped the lives of people.

Compared to Masuri who merely depicts the power and attitudes of those with authority, Samad's poems foreground a politics which, in his eyes, is a hodgepodge of things, with his views on political leaders and his open support of some. In his poem "Kepada Pemimpin Yang Itu" (To That Particular Leader) (2003: 65-67), which he wrote between 3 and 12 August,

1999, Samad clearly shows his admiration for one political leader while rejecting another. He writes:

*Bersilat di tengah topan mendengar serapah dusta
dinampaknya ramai pendekar hanya galak bertingkah,
Dia berhujah dengan akal, bersetuju dengan hati
kerana lebih ingin menyambung jambatan asli.
Dia masih belayar antara kalut mengemudi arah syahdu
terimbas pulau direstui kelasinya berlabuh dahulu.
Dirinya memang perintah pertama mengasihani murba,
gelak terakhir setelah menghayati senyum mereka.*

(Wrestling in the midst of the typhoon listening to incantations of untruth it seems many warriors are merely keen on acting, He reasons with intelligence, agrees with emotion for he prefers to complete the true bridge. He is still sailing in the confusion steering towards tranquillity Spying an island he allows his sailors to anchor. He is certainly the first mourner to pity the common people, laughing last after appreciating their smiles.)

This poem was written after the political leader Samad was in support of was fired from the cabinet on 2 September, 1998. To express his admiration for this leader, Samad chose to employ many metaphors. For example, “topan” (typhoon) is a metaphor for the chaotic situation that enveloped the nation after the removal of this political leader from his post; “serapah dusta” (incantations of untruth) represents the many accusations levelled against this political figure; “jambatan” (bridge) is a symbol of the relationship that he hopes will be re-established between this politician and his former allies; “kelasi” (sailors) are the common people.

Samad’s admiration for this political leader is sometimes inexpressible. Therefore, the poet uses a reticent rhetoric, using punctuation to express that which is difficult or impossible for him to express in words. This is seen in the following examples:

Telus suaranya ---- cekat , tabah dan mengerti
(His voice comes through clearly ---- resolute, brave and knowing) (line 14)

Memang tulen mercupnya ---- damai, sedar dan segar
(He sprouts purity ---- peaceful, aware and fresh) (line 40)

Samad's voice against authority is even more obvious in his poem "Peludah Warna" (Spitters on Colour) which he wrote and published on his Facebook page on 1 July, 2011 (<http://facebook.com/asamadsaid>). He writes:

*Kuasa gusar kini menggelegak murka;
warna kuning diisytihar racun terbisa.
Diragutnya baju-T segeram tenaga
dan diumumkan itulah busana bahaya.*

*Tapi, kita jahit semula perca kain,
menjadikannya panji terindah dan tulen.
Warna kuning yang teramat tenang dan syahdu
kita kembalikan damai ke dalam qalbu.*

*Kini cahaya mentari mungkin diramas
dan sinar kuningnya juga mungkin dicantas.
Memanglah mereka kini peludah warna
sedang menghimpun lendir kahak sebanyaknya.*

*Kerana nikmat amat lama berkuasa,
kuasa pun seolah menjadi hartanya.*

(The wrathful authorities now boil with anger;
the colour yellow has been declared the most lethal poison.
He rips off his T-shirt with the energy of anger
and announces that this is the clothing of danger.

But, we again sew together the shreds of cloth,
making out of it the most beautiful and pure banner.
The most soothing and calm colour of yellow
returns peace into our hearts.

Now, the light of the sun may be squeezed
and its bright yellow may have been trimmed.
Truly, those who are now the spitters on colour
Are collecting spittle and phlegm as much as they can.
Because they have enjoyed power too long,
power it seems is now their own.)

Here, Samad chooses "warna kuning" (yellow) as a metaphor for the Bersih 2.0 gathering that he supported and attended. This is because in this

gathering, the supporters of the opposing party chose yellow as their emblem, and wore yellow T-shirts. Because of this, the expression “racun terbisa” (the most lethal poison) is the metaphor the poet uses to describe the feeling of hurt that Samad experiences and that the government is responsible for due to this huge gathering. In the fifth line, “kita jahit semula perca kain” (we again sew together the shreds of cloth) is a metaphor meaning that if the authorities interfere with this struggle by preventing this gathering, they will again unite more closely to oppose such actions. Also, the expressions “cahaya mentari mungkin diramas” (the light of the sun may be squeezed) and “sinar kuningnya juga mungkin dicantas” (its bright yellow may have been trimmed) symbolize that their rising struggle may still be broken by those in authority, yet Samad is convinced that it will only be outwardly broken. The expression “peludah warna” (spitters on colour) to represent the authorities that are considered by Samad as being against such as gathering. This poem has been chosen because it is a work that is highly figurative and contains metaphors that show Samad is able to use language in such a way as to affect his readers and plant his ideas within them. This poem also shows that Samad’s diction is more figurative than Masuri’s.

Religious Poems

As a writer ages, the creative process is also affected. This is also obvious when it comes to Masuri and Samad. Dharmawijaya, who analysed the poems of Masuri written between 1957 and 1995, and the poems of Samad written in 50 years of his life, says that based on his research, there is a significant change on their thinking. In fact, even the outward form of their poems changed as they grew older. (see Dharmawijaya’s Introduction in Masuri S. N., 1989 and A. Samad Said, 2005).

When it comes to Masuri, the change due to age affects the themes in his poems. The collection *Mimpi Panjang Seorang Penyair (The Long Dream of a Poet)* (1995), for example, is that of poems concerning man’s relationship with his Creator. One of these is “Mengenali-Mu, Ya Allah” (Knowing You, O Allah) (1995: 185). In this poem, Masuri says:

...sentiasa mengingati-Mu
adalah tandaku
dalam ikatan-Mu

(...always remembering You
is my sign
in Your bond)

The word “ikatan” (bond) here is a metaphor for the protection Allah SWT gives His servants who always remember Him. This poem is a long one, containing over 70 lines. Actually, there are not many long poems that are produced by Masuri. However, even though this poem is long, this is the only metaphor in it. This poem is also prosaic in other ways, as can be seen in this extract from the poem:

*Mengenal-Mu, ya Allah
Rasa-rasanya makin merindu
...
Ketika masih belum mengaji
Mukadam dan al-Quran
aku sudah diberi kenal
ada bintang
ada bulan
ada matahari
dan awan
ada yang menjadikan;
begitu aku terasa
tanpa bertanya
aku ingin makin mendalam
sudah kuterima kenyataan
bahawa alam jagat dan
seluruh mahluk ini
ada yang menjadikan*

(Knowing You, O Allah
It feels as if the longing increases
...
Before I ever learnt to read
the Muqaddam and the Qur'an
I already recognized
there are stars
there is a moon
there is a sun
and clouds
there is a Creator;

this I felt
without asking
I wanted to know more
I had accepted the fact
that for the whole world
and all its creatures
there is a Creator.)

Still, figurative language can be seen in this poem. There is the repetition of “ada yang menjadikan” (there is a Creator); and following this repetition there is anaphora: “ada bintang/ ada bulan/ ada matahari” (there are stars/ there is a moon/there is a sun). This repetition not only serves to strengthen the effects of the poem for the reader but also somehow becomes a focal point that seems to magically attract the reader’s attention to understand the aim of his poem.

The relationship with God receives further attention from him in his collection of poems titled *Suasana Senja (At Nightfall)* (2003). To show that in his twilight years, it is important for him to bring himself closer to his Creator, Masuri chose “suasana senja” (at nightfall) as a metaphor to show that his life is almost coming to its end. Muhammad Haji Salleh explains that “senja” (nightfall) in this poem is a symbol of death being close, and Masuri is preparing himself to face it (Muhammad Haji Salleh, 2011:79). Still, the use of metaphor in the poems in is quite limited.

The use of the word “senja” as a symbol of advancing age and humans moving closer to Allah SWT can also be seen in Samad’s poem titled “Tetamu Senja” (Guest at Nightfall). He writes:

*Kita datang ini hanya sebagai tetamu senja
bila cukup detik kembalilah
kita kepadanya
kita datang ini kosong tangan dada
bila pulang nanti bawa dosa bawa pahala.*

*Pada tetamu yang datang dan
kenal jalan pulang
bawalah bakti mesra kepada
Tuhan kepada insan
pada tetamu yang datang
dan lupa jalan pulang*

*usahlah derhaka pula
pada Tuhan kepada insan.*

(We come only as guests at sunset
when our time is up we return
to him
we come with empty hands and chests
when we return we bring sin and good deeds.

To those guests who come and
recognize the way back
bring good deeds to
the Lord of Man
to those guests who come
and forget the way back
there is no need to go against
the Lord of Man.)

(<http://penyair.wordpress.com/2007/04/06/tetamu-senja-a-samad-said/>).

The word “tetamu” (guest) here is a metaphor for a short visit, while “senja” (nightfall) is a short span of time at the end of every day, and thus emphasizes the short existence of every human being in this world. The word “pulang” (return) is a metaphor for death while “datang” (coming) is a symbol for the birth and temporary existence of man on this earth. Samad widely employs the use of metaphors throughout the rest of the poem. As a result of this poem’s great effect on the human consciousness, the musical group Koprata made it into a song titled “Kita Ini Tetamu Senja”(We Are Guests at Nightfall) in 1995.

In fact, many of Samad’s poems have a religious theme, and the climax of his works that shows his awareness of the relationship of humans with their Creator is a poem titled *Rasulullah Al-Amin: Puisi Panjang (The Truthful Messenger: A Long Poem)* (1999). This book-length poem taking up around 317 pages is rich in all kinds of figurative expressions such as beautify a poem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the poems of Masuri S.N. and A. Samad Said above, several deductions can be made. Firstly, Masuri prefers a more simple

diction with short lines in his poems, mostly with around three to five words a line. Masuri remains committed to the concept of poetry as outlined by some scholars, according to which a poem should be a composition reserved for expressing beautiful thoughts in beautiful language, to show the sweetness and beauty of language (Za'ba, 1965: 28); in the words of S.T. Coleridge, "the best words in their best order" (see Muhammad Haji Salleh, 2005:5). Therefore, Masuri's diction is rather economical. In this, he differs greatly from Samad, whose poems are mainly narrative ones.

Because of his preference for narrative poetry, Samad knows how to manipulate language. He uses many figurative elements and rhetorical devices in composing his poems, to achieve certain effects and convey the message within his poems. As such, his poems are more multi-faceted than Masuri's. Moreover, Masuri's preferred technique is to compose poems using statements, thus it is only natural that he would choose compact and exact expressions to express his thoughts.

Where figurative language is concerned, Samad's works are more beautiful than Masuri's. However, where content is concerned, both are equal as the works of both poets deal with themes close to their hearts and convey meanings that are felt with equal force by their readers.

REFERENCES

- A. Samad Said, 1999. *Rasulullah al-Amin: Puisi Panjang*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- A. Samad Said, 2003. *Suara Dari Dinding Dewan – Sebuah Kumpulan Puisi antara Dua Abad*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn. Bhd.
- A. Samad Said, 2005. *A. Samad Said: Sebuah Antologi Puisi Yang Menghimpunkan Karya-karya Selama Lebih Setengah Abad*. Compiled and with an Introduction by Dharmawijaya. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn. Bhd.
- A. Samad Said, 2011. "Peludah Warna" in <http://facebook.com/asamadsaid>. Retrieved on: 25 November 2013.
- Abrams, M. H., 1981. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehardt and Winston.
- <http://penyair.wordpress.com/2007/04/06/tetamu-senja-a-samad-said/>. Retrieved on: 20 April 2014.
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/figurative>. Retrieved on: 22 November 2013.
- <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/figurative>. Retrieved on: 22 November 2013.

- Masuri S.N., 1962. *Warna Suasana*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Masuri S. N., 1989. *Puisi-puisi Pilihan Masuri S.N.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Masuri S. N., 1995. *Mimpi Panjang Seorang Penyair*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Muhammad Haji Salleh, 2005. *Pengalaman Puisi*. Edisi Kedua. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Muhammad Haji Salleh, 2011. “Berdialog dengan Subuh dan Senja: Sajak-sajak Masuri Melalui Waktu.” in *Masuri S.N.: Sasterawan Melayu di Persada Dunia*. Hadijah Rahmat, Mukhlis Abu Bakar and Rokhsana Abdullah (eds.). Singapore: National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University.
- Rachmat Djoko Pradopo, 1994. *Prinsip-prinsip Kritik Sastra: Teori dan Penerapannya*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Rahimah A. Hamid, 2010. *Fiksiyen Pascakolonial: Yang Menjajah dan Dijajah*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Safian Hussain *et al.*, 1988. *Glosari Istilah Kesusasteraan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Za‘ba, 1965. *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

(Translated by Md Syaihan Syafiq bin Mohd. Anuar and Tanja Jonid)