

## ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN THE TALE OF *BAYAN BUDIMAN*

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### Abstract

*This research analyzes the element of anthropomorphism in the classical Malay literary work entitled "The Tale of Bayan Budiman". Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics and behaviors to non-human entities, such as animals and natural phenomena. In this tale, the main character, a Bayan bird, is depicted as having the ability to speak, give advice, tell stories, and lead like a human. This research employs qualitative textual analysis methods to explore the representations of anthropomorphism in the narrative, dialogues, and descriptions of the text. The findings reveal that anthropomorphism is used to convey moral messages, stimulate the reader's imagination, and reflect the Malay worldview on the relationship between humans and nature. However, anthropomorphism can also obscure the essence and nature of different living beings, especially for child readers. This research contributes to the preservation of Malay literary heritage and provides a deeper understanding of the use of anthropomorphism in classical works*

**Keywords:** *Anthropomorphism; Classical Malay Literature; Malay Literary Studies; The Tale of Bayan Budiman.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Tale of *Bayan Budiman* is one of the most famous and popular classical literary works, a heritage of Malay literature that is still preserved to this day. As a classic work, this tale is rich in moral values that can be gleaned by its readers, which is why it remains an interesting and worthy subject of study. Moreover, as a work of Malay literature, The Tale of *Bayan Budiman* reflects the rich Malay culture imbued with values that teach about the meaning and essence of life, lessons that can be learned by its readers, while simultaneously depicting the close connection between the Malay people and nature, as implied in the text, illustrating how the Malays were intimately connected with their environment. In classical Malay literature, statements are often found within theological, didactic, and literary works, especially in the introductions and epilogues of these writings, which contain quite a lot of material to build a "literary self-awareness" in the classical period. It is these introductions and epilogues that form the connecting link between the writings and the universe. (Suharjo, 2014)

Classical literature, including works such as The Tale of *Bayan Budiman*, facilitates profound insights into the culture and ideas of the past. These texts unveil deep-seated values, beliefs, and worldviews (Upartini, 2023). Analyzing the concept of anthropomorphism in The Tale of *Bayan Budiman* not only highlights the wisdom of the text but also the interaction between the Malay worldview and animals and nature at that time.

The Tale of *Bayan Budiman* narrates the adventures of a kind-hearted bayan bird. This bayan bird is capable of behaving like a human. The bird can speak, think, and interact with other characters. The human-like behavior of the bayan bird is a form of anthropomorphism, a concept that expresses how human traits are attributed to non-human entities such as animals, plants, and other objects in the universe. Thus, the figure of the bayan bird found in the text of The Tale of *Bayan Budiman* represents a very clear form of anthropomorphism. Additionally, the bayan bird is not the only anthropomorphized figure in this text, as other animals are also found in an anthropomorphic state. Moreover, the universe itself is depicted as a living entity with emotions.

Thus, anthropomorphism in this text will provide an interesting depiction while simultaneously allowing for a deeper conveyance of messages, as the technique of using non-human entities can have a more profound impression. Initially, anthropomorphic stories were intended for a more significant purpose than just entertaining children. Anthropomorphic characters were used to teach moral values with humor and creativity by presenting proper ways and behaviors. Thus, messages and ideas were conveyed through analogy, where animal characters were given the same characteristics and feelings experienced by children, making the stories more accessible for child readers. (Khodaparast, 2020:1)

Anthropomorphism is the activity of attributing attributes such as human motivations and behaviors to animals, artifacts, and other natural phenomena. (Airenti, 2018:1). So, simply put, anthropomorphism is the insertion of human characteristics and attributes into non-human forms.

Apart from classical literature, anthropomorphism significantly influences modern literature and popular media. In contemporary American culture, animal characters exhibiting human-like behaviors are commonly found in animated films, children's books, and short stories. By examining the historical roots of anthropomorphism as illustrated in works such as *The Tale of Bayan Budiman*, we can understand how these elements have persisted in modern popular culture and literature.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the preservation of the Malay literary heritage. *The Tale of Bayan Budiman*, an important work of Malay literature, contributes to the preservation of the Malay language, culture, and history. This research investigates the application of anthropomorphism in the text, aiming to honor the invaluable contributions of Malay writers and poets and ensure the continuation of this cultural heritage.

This research aims to analyze the elements of anthropomorphism present in *The Tale of Bayan Budiman*, including the attributes of the bayan bird, the depiction of other animals, and the treatment of the universe as a living entity. Literary analysis methods and cultural context will be used to elucidate the use of these elements in the narrative, ultimately providing a deeper understanding of anthropomorphism in the context of classical Malay literature.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by using textual analysis with a qualitative method, by analyzing the representations and use of anthropomorphism in the classical Malay text *The Tale of Bayan Budiman*. The primary data in this research is the text of *The Tale of Bayan Budiman* itself. The secondary data are articles, books, or journals related to anthropomorphism in literature, Malay culture, and relevant theories. The first step is accessing and thoroughly reading the text of *The Tale of Bayan Budiman*. Subsequently, analyzing the narrative, dialogues, and descriptions in the text related to anthropomorphic depictions of non-human animals and nature. The data obtained were analyzed using literary analysis techniques and theories on anthropomorphism. Data analysis was performed through qualitative descriptive techniques by interpreting the anthropomorphic elements found in *The Tale of Bayan Budiman* and linking them to the cultural context, moral messages, and theoretical frameworks around anthropomorphism in Malay classical literature. (Meleong, 2016)

## **FINDINGS**

Referring to the elements of anthropomorphism proposed by Frisella (2017), which divides anthropomorphism into three elements: human character, emotions (feelings), and human behavior, the emergence of these three elements is depicted in The Tale of Bayan Budiman discussed in this study.

The bayan bird in the text of The Tale of Bayan Budiman behaves like humans, such as speaking, advising, and storytelling. The bayan bird also expresses gratitude and devotion to its master who saved it.

The anthropomorphic figure of the bayan bird is interesting and undoubtedly has a different effect than if this character were portrayed by a human. Through this anthropomorphic figure, the text implies that even an animal can be a creature that is so fearful and obedient to its Creator, let alone humans who should be more obedient and more fearful of Allah because humans are granted more blessings than animals. Thus, this anthropomorphic figure accentuates the meaning that this text aims to convey in making humans aware of their existence as servants of Allah, guided to be obedient and submissive to Him.

Anthropomorphism depicts how animals, plants, or inanimate objects possess human characteristics. In this case, the discussion of anthropomorphism will focus on the bayan bird character in the tale of The Tale of Bayan Budiman. This discussion illustrates how the bayan bird character behaves like a human and performs activities or actions that can only be performed by humans. These behaviors will be discussed one by one.

## **1. Behaving Like a Human**

### **a. The Bayan Bird Speaks**

The Bayan bird was the King of the Bayan birds who was captured by a bird catcher, then sold in the market and bought by a merchant named Khoja Maimun. This merchant bought the Bayan not because he liked birds, but because he felt pity for the Bayan bird being kept in a cage. That is why, after he bought the Bayan bird, he released it. After being released, the Bayan bird followed the merchant Khoja Maimun back to his house. It wanted to serve this merchant as an expression of gratitude to Khoja Maimun. Without informing him of this intention, the Bayan bird had already made its way to Merchant Khoja Maimun's house and a conversation ensued between the two of them.

Original Text:

*"Tak lama kemudian, saudagar itu sampai di rumahnya. Belum sampai membuka pintu, ia dikejutkan oleh suara, "Assalamualaikum, Tuan." Khoja Maimun melihat di sekelilingnya, tidak ada manusia, "lalu, siapakah yang mengucapkan salam kepadaku?" bisiknya dalam hati. "Assalamualaikum Tuan," suara itu Kembali terdengar. Khoja Maimun mencari asal suara itu dan ia melihat ke atas pohon. Betapa lebih terkejut ia Ketika di dahan itu ia melihat seekor burung yang tadi dilepaskannya dan telah diusirnya dan kini berada di dahan pohon di pekarangan umahnya. Iapun hampir tidak percaya karena burung itu bisa berbicara seperti layaknya manusia." (Ekawati, 2016:5)*

Translation:

*"Not long after, the merchant arrived at his house. Before opening the door, he was startled by a voice, "Assalamualaikum, Sir." Khoja Maimun looked around, but there was no human being, "then, who greeted me?" he whispered in his heart. "Assalamualaikum Sir," the voice was heard again. Khoja Maimun searched for the source of the voice and saw a bird in a tree branch. He was even more surprised when on that branch, he saw a bird that he had released and chased away, but now it was on the branch of the tree in his yard. He could hardly believe it because the bird could speak like a human being."*

The communication that took place between the bayan bird and the people it interacted with was not only in everyday communication but also more intense when the bayan bird told stories to the wife of the merchant Khoja Makmun.

#### **b. The Bayan Bird Advises**

Some time later, the merchant Khoja Maimun went away on business and he instructed the Bayan bird to guard his wife who was left alone at home. Not long after Khoja Maimun's departure, the prince who was walking past Khoja Maimun's house saw Khoja Maimun's wife. Seeing the beauty of Khoja Maimun's wife, the prince fell in love with her, and thus tried to get her attention.

Khoja Maimun's wife refused to reciprocate the prince's love. The prince felt very curious and continued his efforts to get her. The prince intensified his pursuit of Khoja Maimun's wife. The Bayan bird realized that its master was in danger. The Bayan bird worried that its master's defenses would weaken due to the intense pursuit launched by the prince, which is why the Bayan bird advised its master to strengthen her heart.

Original Text:

*"Suara Bayan mengejutkannya, "Tuanku Perempuan tidak usah memikirkannya." istri Khoja Makmun menoleh ke arah Bayan. Di dalam hatinya, ia membenarkan kata-kata Bayan bahwa ia memang sedang memikirkan putra raja. Bayan berkata lagi, "Sudah biasa sifat laki-laki seperti itu, Tuan. Padahal mungkin iapun sudah beristri ataupun memiliki kekasih. Akan tetapi bila melihat Perempuan lain yang cantik di manapun, iapun akan tertarik, lalu jatuh cinta. Jangan hiraukan kata-kata manis putra raja, Tuan. Tuan akan berdosa dan mendapat murka Allah subhana wa taala apabila Tuan menuruti permintaan putra raja." (Ekawati, 2016:16)*

Translation:

"The bayan's voice startled her, "My lady, you should not think about it." The wife of Khoja Makmun looked towards the bayan. In her heart, she acknowledged the bayan's words that she was indeed thinking about the prince. The bayan said again, "It is common for men to behave like that, My Lady. Perhaps he is already married or has a lover. But whenever he sees another attractive woman, he will be drawn to her and fall in love. Ignore the sweet words of the prince, My Lady. You will commit a sin and incur the wrath of Allah subhana wa ta'ala if you obey the prince's request."

The more Khoja Maimun's wife rejected him, the more curious the prince became. He tried every effort to get that woman, until finally Khoja Maimun's wife's defenses weakened and

she agreed to meet the prince one night. So, Khoja Maimun's wife told the Bayan bird that she would go out that night. The Bayan bird once again tried to stop her and advise her again.

Knowing this, the Bayan bird tried to advise Khoja Maimun's wife by reminding her of the torment and punishment that would be inflicted on someone who commits adultery.

Original Text:

*"Dengan tutur katanya yang halus dan sopan, Bayan berkata, "Tuan adalah seorang Perempuan, sangat tidak pantas seorang Perempuan menemui laki-laki pada malam hari begini. Apakah tuan tidak takut kepada Allah subhanahu wa taala dan malu kepada Rasulullah alaihi wasalam? Ingatlah tuan, hukuman Allah itu sangat keras terhadap orang yang melakukan zina. Zina termasuk dosa besar, Tuan. Perbuatan itu sangat diharamkan Allah subhanahu wa taala." (Ekawati, 2016:27)*

Translation:

"With a gentle and polite tone, the bayan said, "My Lady, it is highly inappropriate for a woman to meet a man at night like this. Are you not afraid of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and ashamed before Rasulullah alaihi wasalam? Remember, My Lady, Allah's punishment is very severe for those who commit adultery. Adultery is a grave sin, My Lady. This act is strictly forbidden by Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala."

The advice that the Bayan bird gave to Khoja Maimun's wife made her realize her mistake. This advice made her grateful for the presence of the Bayan bird accompanying her, so she felt there was someone guarding and guiding her when she was anxious with the prince's temptation. That is why she was very grateful and thankful to the Bayan bird. She expressed this gratitude and thanks by placing the Bayan bird as a parent who guards and advises a child.

The figure of a wise and prudent bird in giving advice made its master realize her error, and she was grateful and thankful to the Bayan bird for saving her from a despicable act. In this case, the Bayan bird not only behaved like a human, but it also became a figure representing the voice of conscience and the good soul, guiding to the path blessed by Allah.

### **c. The Bayan Bird Storytells**

The Bayan bird was very skilled at storytelling. To Khoja Maimun's wife, it told various stories from which lessons and wisdom could be drawn. The Bayan told the story of a wife who betrayed her husband, it also told the story of a faithful wife, and it also told the story of a treacherous brother.

Original Text:

*"Baiklah, kali ini aku akan bercerita tentang siksaan yang akan didapat oleh orang yang berbuat zina." Kata bayan. Pada saat datangnya malaikat maut mengambil nyawa Perempuan yang berbuat zina itu, kulitnya seperti ditarik dengan sangat kuat sehingga terkelupas. Betapa perih dan sakitnya siksaan itu. .... Setelah mati, Perempuan itu dimasukkan ke dalam kubur dan beberapa saat setelah itu, jasad Perempuan itu didatangi malaikat Munkar dan Nakir. Salah seorang malaikat bertanya sambil tangannya memegang alat pemukul yang sangat besar, ketika Perempuan itu tidak bisa menjawab pertanyaannya, maka dia dipukul berulang kali....setelah mendapat sksa di dalam kubur, Perempuan itu dimasukkan ke dalam neraka. (Ekawati, 2016:29-30)*

Translation:

Very well, this time I will tell you about the torment that will befall those who commit adultery," said the bayan. At the moment when the angel of death takes the soul of the adulterous woman, her skin will be pulled so tightly that it will be flayed. How painful and agonizing that torment will be. ... After death, the woman will be placed in the grave, and shortly after that, the body of the woman will be visited by the angels Munkar and Nakir. One of the angels will ask, while holding a very large rod, when the woman cannot answer the question, she will be beaten repeatedly... after receiving torment in the grave, the woman will be cast into hell.

The bayan bird's behavior in advising and choosing to advise its master through storytelling illustrates human behavior that not only storytells and advises well but also with wisdom.

#### **d. The Bayan Bird Expresses Gratitude and Serves**

The Bayan bird behaved very well. When the merchant Khoja Maimun bought it and freed it so that it would not be caged, the Bayan bird expressed its gratitude by stating its desire to serve the merchant Khoja Maimun.

Original Text:

*"Izinkan hamba mengabdikan kepada Tuan. Tuan adalah orang yang baik hati karena telah membebaskan hamba. Hamba sangat berterima kasih kepada Tuan. Sebagai ungkapan rasa terima kasih itu, hamba ingin mengabdikan diri hamba kepada Tuan."* (Ekawati, 2016:6)

Translation:

"Allow me to serve you, Sir. You are a kind-hearted person for having freed me. I am very grateful to you, Sir. As an expression of my gratitude, I wish to dedicate myself to serving you."

At the same time, when the merchant Khoja Maimun brought the Bayan bird to his wife, the Bayan bird further emphasized its expression of gratitude and desire to serve by showing its quality as a bird that knows how to repay kindness.

Original Text:

*"Namun hamba bukanlah termasuk burung yang tidak tahu berterima kasih kepada orang yang telah berbuat baik kepada hamba. Hamba sangat berterima kasih kepada Tuan laki-laki. Sebagai ungkapan rasa terima kasih hamba, izinkan hamba mengabdikan kepada tuan berdua."* (Ekawati, 2016:7)

Translation:

"However, I am not a bird that does not know how to be grateful to those who have done good to me. I am very grateful to you, Sir. As an expression of my gratitude, allow me to serve both of you."

#### **e. The Bayan Bird Praises**

When Khoja Makmun's wife was visited by Mak Inang, the messenger of the prince, who persuaded her to meet with the Prince, Khoja Makmun's wife politely declined because she felt it

would not be good if she went to meet the prince. However, she was a married woman, so it was not proper to reciprocate the prince's feelings who was attracted to her.

When the Bayan bird heard the refusal of Khoja Makmun's wife, the Bayan bird was very happy because Khoja Makmun's wife had acted correctly, and that is how a good wife should be, one who knows how to guard herself when her husband is not at home. So, the Bayan bird praised her.

Original Text:

*"Bayan yang mendengarkan percakapan istri Khoja Makmun dan Mak Inang sejak mulai bicara. "Tuanku Perempuan, duduklah. Hamba sangat kagum dengan jawaban tuanku kepada Perempuan tua itu. Memang sudah seharusnya Tuan menolak ajakannya. Bukankah tidak pantas seorang Perempuan mendatangi seorang laki-laki meskipun ia anak petinggi di negeri ini. Hamba bangga dengan keteguhan pendirian Tuan." (Ekawati, 2016:19-20)*

Translation:

"The bayan, who had been listening to the conversation between the wife of Khoja Makmun and Mak Inang from the beginning, said, "My Lady, please sit down. I am very impressed with your answer to that old woman. You should indeed refuse her invitation. Is it not inappropriate for a woman to visit a man, even if he is a nobleman in this land? I am proud of your firm stance, My Lady."

## **2. Human Character and Emotions in the Bayan Bird**

The bayan bird possesses several human characteristics such as leadership and anger.

### **a. Leadership**

The Bayan bird was the king of the Bayan birds who led the Bayan bird nation. As a leader, the Bayan bird had leadership qualities, so he felt responsible for protecting the other Bayan birds when they got stuck in trees that had been coated with a sticky glue, causing the birds to adhere to the trees. To save themselves, the King Bayan offered an idea.

Original Text:

*"Sebagai pemimpin, Raja Bayan menyampaikan idenya kepada bayan-bayan yang lain, "Kawan-kawan, ketahuilah bahwa kita terkena jebakan manusia, tetapi kita harus tetap tenang. Hari sudah malam, dan besok pagi manusia yang menjejak kita pasti datang. Ketika dia datang, kita semua harus berpura-pura mati. Tahan nafas kalian dan jangan sampai ada yang bergerak. Dia pasti akan mengambil kita satu persatu dan menjatuhkan kita ke tanah. Siapapun diantara kita yang terlebih dahulu dijatuhkan ke tanah harus tetap diam dan jangan langsung terbang sebelum semuanya jatuh ke tanah." Bayan-bayan yang lainpun mengerti dan berjanji akan menaati perintah raja mereka." (Ekawati, 2016:1)*

Translation:

"As the leader, the bayan king conveyed his idea to the other bayans, "Friends, know that we have fallen into a human trap, but we must remain calm. It is already night, and tomorrow morning, the human who trapped us will surely come. When he comes, we must all pretend to be dead. Hold your breath and do not move. He will surely take us one by one and drop us to the ground. Whoever among us is dropped to the ground first



must remain still and not fly away until everyone is on the ground." The other bayans understood and promised to obey their king's orders."

#### **b. Anger**

When Khoja Makmun's wife began to be tempted by the prince's persuasions and was willing to go meet the prince one night, the Bayan bird was very angry. However, the Bayan bird tried to calm himself down because he should not offend his master. Just like humans who get angry, the Bayan bird also had emotions of anger, and just like humans, he tried to control his anger in order to maintain relationships with others.

Original Text:

*"Ketika mendengar perkataan tuannya, Bayan sangat marah, namun kemarahannya itu ditahannya jangan sampai tuannya tahu. Hal itu tentu akan sangat menyinggung perasaan tuannya. Dengan tutur katanya yang halus dan sopan, Bayan berkata, "Tuan adalah seorang perempuan. Sangat tidak pantas seorang Perempuan menemui laki-laki pada malam hari begini." (Ekawati, 2016:27)*

Translation:

"Upon hearing his master's words, the bayan was very angry, but he restrained his anger so that his master would not know. That would certainly offend his master's feelings. With a gentle and polite tone, the bayan said, "My Lady, it is highly inappropriate for a woman to meet a man at night like this.""

### **3. The Essence and Nature of Humanity**

In creating a text, anthropomorphic elements are used in order to stimulate the development of the reader's imaginative powers. This anthropomorphic element invites the reader to immerse themselves in the non-human world (not human) so that the reader can understand the world outside the human world. Texts like this perform the action of attaching or affixing characteristics or attributes to non-human entities, in this case, a Bayan bird.

The act of attaching or affixing human attributes to non-human entities can obscure the nature or essence of that entity. Essentially, every being has its own essence and nature that distinguishes it from other entities. By attaching human attributes or characteristics to animals, plants and other objects, the reader does not see the difference in essence in different beings, so different beings are believed to be the same. Thus, anthropomorphic texts obscure the nature and essence of humans with their unique roles, responsibilities and characteristics, which are certainly different from those possessed by animals or other objects. Thus, on one side anthropomorphism stimulates high imagination and creativity in a person, but on the other side it provides inaccurate knowledge that can confuse the reader, especially child readers who really like this anthropomorphic character.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This research has provided an in-depth analysis of the anthropomorphic elements present in the classical Malay literary work, "The Tale of Bayan Budiman". Through a qualitative textual analysis approach, it has explored how anthropomorphism is represented in the narrative, dialogues, and descriptions within the text. The findings reveal that anthropomorphism plays a crucial role in conveying moral messages, stimulating the reader's imagination, and reflecting the Malay worldview regarding the relationship between humans and nature.

The central anthropomorphic figure, the Bayan bird, is depicted as possessing human-like abilities such as speech, storytelling, and the capacity to provide advice and guidance. This anthropomorphic representation serves as a vehicle to impart valuable lessons and wisdom to the readers, particularly in terms of moral conduct and spiritual awareness. Moreover, the employment of anthropomorphism invites readers to immerse themselves in a non-human realm, fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the potential drawbacks of anthropomorphism, as it may obscure the inherent essence and nature of different living beings, especially for younger readers. While anthropomorphism stimulates imagination and creativity, it can also propagate inaccurate perceptions, blurring the distinct characteristics and roles of humans, animals, and other entities.

As we navigate the realms of anthropomorphic literature, it is pivotal to cultivate a balanced and responsible approach. Educational endeavors should prioritize nurturing a profound understanding of the distinctions between fictional narratives and the authentic nature of living beings. Concurrently, literary scholars and critics should continue to delve into the nuances and implications of anthropomorphism within the rich tapestry of classical Malay literature, thereby contributing to the preservation and appreciation of this invaluable cultural heritage. By embracing a judicious and thoughtful utilization of anthropomorphism, writers and storytellers can harness its power to convey profound messages while maintaining a respectful and accurate depiction of the natural world and its inhabitants.

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