



## Sundanese prose as a medium for interpretation education: The reception of the Qur'an in short stories and essays by E. Abdurrahman

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**Abstract:** This study examines Sundanese prose as a medium for Qur'anic education, focusing on the reception of the Qur'an in the *carpon* (short stories) and essays of E. Abdurrahman. The findings reveal that E. Abdurrahman integrates Qur'anic values into narrative elements—such as plot, setting, dialogue, and everyday situations—bringing the Qur'anic text closer to readers' lived experiences. His Qur'anic *carpon* and essays function not only as cultural exegesis but also as an educational medium for Qur'anic interpretation, encompassing moral, spiritual, social, and political dimensions. These works can be positioned as a form of cultural exegesis that synthesizes religiosity, aesthetics, and local consciousness. Thus, literature serves as a productive space for creative reception of the Qur'an, contributing to the development of a more inclusive, communicative, and contextual framework for Qur'anic learning in the Nusantara (Southeast Asian) context.

**Keywords:** cultural exegesis; Islamic short stories; reception theory; Sundanese literature

### Introduction

In the map of Indonesian cultural history, Sundanese literature has a significant role in transmitting spiritual and moral values (Ambarwati & Badrih, 2024; Nurjaman, Rasidin, Busni, Witro, & Diana, 2024; Sukirman & Mirnawati, 2020). Whether in the form of poetry or prose, Sundanese literature tends to emphasize the importance of the relationship between God, humans and nature, which is based on religious values and local wisdom (Rohmana, 2021b). On the other hand, Sundanese literature is identified as a medium for forming cultural identity that reflects the social dynamics and intellectual development of Sundanese society from time to time (Rohmana, 2021a; Yanti, 2021).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the dynamics of Sundanese literature showed rapid development with the presence of literary works that absorbed the values of the Qur'an in prose form, namely when the values of the Qur'an were interpreted imaginatively and narratively into literary works, either by using the Indonesian language or local languages (Abshor, 2019; Astutiningsih & Pujiati, 2019; Fathurrosyid, 2016; Machsum, 2013; Muttaqin, 2018). One of the important figures in the development of this genre is E. Abdurrahman, a charismatic cleric among PERSIS activists (Nugraha, Basrawi, & Aljaya, 2024). He consistently incorporated Quranic values into his poems and essays published in the Sundanese magazine *at-Taqwa* and the Sundanese language column in *Risalah* magazine. Through fictional narrative, Abdurrahman not only integrated Quranic interpretation into literature but also transformed it into a learning medium. Interpretation, initially considered difficult and intended for intellectuals, was transformed into a narrative form more easily understood by the general public. This can be seen, for example, in the following poem entitled

"Tongo":

*"Sakadang tongo mani ponyo nènjo tungtung kalam lulumpatan bulak balik dina sarubak kertas. Majarkeun tèh lumpatna leuwih tarik batan mimis, leuwih lepas batan panah. Mani ngan sakilat ngaliwat kana jajaran.., gerat gerit sorana matak katorèkan, siga anu jurat jerit, ceurik maratan langit, cimatana mani ngabayabah ngotoran kertas nu bodes, da puguh cimata raksasa, ngadadak kertas jadi angkeub, alam sakurilingna jadi medem. Keur uleng mikiran kaayaan sakadang kalam, sakadang tongo reuwas asa kagebah, pèdah sakadang kertas bari nangkarak nyentak: "Dasar tongo taya kanyaho, pondok tènjo, deukeut deuleu, ceuk saha kalam bisa hirup, bisa gerak? Ceuk saha kalam bisa lumpat sarta rikat? Ceuk saha alam ,jadi ku manèh? Ceuk saha agama ciptaan manusa?...Sakadang fikir ngahuleng. Najan kaharti, tapi èstu susah pibasaeunnana, siga nu pireu ngimpi, hayang ngalalakonkeun impiananna. Teu kawawa, teu kabasaan! Dongèngkenen aya, tapi kumaha pibasaeunnana, salian ti hèsè tèh sieun aya anu salah dèngè, sieun salah nènjo anu nempo!" Anjeun mah baca baè: «اَفْرُوا وَرَبُّكُمْ اَلَّذِي عَلِمَ بِالْفَلَقِ • عَلِمَ الْاَسْتَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ» (Abdurrahman, 1964b).*

The above quote represents Abdurrahman's interpretation of the relationship between reason and revelation, presented through an imaginative dialogue between Tongo, kretas, tangan, daya, iradah, and fikir. The dialogue between the six imaginary figures demonstrates that the Quran encourages humans to explore external reality to understand the divine reality. Furthermore, despite its extraordinary power, reason has limitations in penetrating the deepest essence hidden behind phenomena. It can only comprehend empirical reality as a sign of God's existence. How to relate to Him, however, is a matter of faith that must be approached through revelation.

This study is crucial for understanding the role of Sundanese literature as a progressive medium for learning creative interpretation, while also critiquing the assumption that interpretation studies are solely oriented toward intellectuals. From the perspective of developing Quranic education methods, this study provides an alternative discourse that balances the dominance of Arabic interpretation through a cultural approach tailored to the characteristics of the target audience (Robikah, 2019).

Many studies have been conducted on E. Abdurrahman's thoughts, but they have focused on the political aspects during his leadership at PERSIS (1962-1983) (Bachtiar & Fauzan, 2019), or on the idea of education, especially character education (Nugraha, 2024; Nugraha et al., 2024).

One study that specifically analyzes E. Abdurrahman's thoughts in the field of interpretation is the study conducted by Nugraha & Rohmana. As a PERSIS ideologue, Abdurrahman tends to interpret Surah al-Hujurat within the framework of his ideological interests (Nugraha & Rohmana. 2021: 359). Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing Sundanese Prose as a Medium for Interpretation Education: Reception of the Qur'an in Carpon and Essays by E. Abdurrahman.

In addition to Federspiel's work, a study that is relevant to this research is Rohmana's study of the development of poetic translation and Sundanese interpretation in West Java (Rohmana, 2013). Rohmana also describes the interpretation of Persis activists in Sundanese in his study of the poetic translation of the Quran, "Hariring wangsiting Gusti nu Maha Suci" by Syarif Sukandi (1931-1997) (Rohmana, 2020), and Nugraha's study of "Poetic Interpretation of K.H.E. Abdullah" (1918-1994) (Nugraha, 2022). The study shows that even as PERSIS activists, Sukandi and Abdullah maintain a literary approach in their interpretations as a strategy to bring the values of the Quran closer to local cultural wisdom.

## Method

This research is a literature review that in its discussion will use Wolfgang Iser's literary reception approach, to reveal the "empty space" that is not explained explicitly by E. Abdurrahman and must be filled by the reader through imagination, interpretation and personal experience without ignoring the narrative clues contained in the literary work. The analysis is carried out based on the ways in which the author inserts the text of the Qur'an in cartoons, fairy tales and essays, both explicitly and implicitly through the use of symbols, characters, moral conflicts and story resolutions (Fatemi & Mousavilar, 2021; Yurdakul, 2024). The primary data sources are 16 works and essays by E. Abdurrahman published in the magazine *at-Taqwa* (1936-1951) and the magazine *Risalah* (1962-

1965). To enrich the analysis, the researcher also tried to include data from several other works by E. Abdurrahman (Santana, 2007).

Data collection was conducted through documentation and interviews. Text documentation was conducted by inventorying, observing, and studying the texts of 16 carpons and essays by E. Abdurrahman. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to supplement information regarding the composition of carpons and essays, E. Abdurrahman's background and social interactions. Interviews were conducted with family, colleagues, and PERSIS activists (Hardiman, 2002).

The research analysis was conducted using interactive model data analysis techniques, which consist of three data analysis components, namely: data reduction, data presentation (display) and drawing conclusions (Miles, Matthew B. A; Huberman, 1992)

## Results And Discussion

### Reception of Al-Quran Literature in West Java

The word "reception" comes from the Latin "recipere," meaning "to receive," "to respond," or "to welcome." These three meanings imply an active response from the recipient toward an external entity. In the literary world, this term has evolved into reception theory, which emphasizes the reader's active role in interpreting a text, influenced by their background, experience, and horizon of expectations. Therefore, the meaning of a text is dynamic and can change depending on the social context and who reads it (Istiqamah & Assya'bani, 2021).

In the context of Quranic interpretation, reception refers to the study of how Muslim society welcomes, understands and responds to Quranic verses, both in the form of various readings, interpreting the content of the verses and the way a society implements the values of the Quran. Reception of Quranic verses is not limited to formal interpretation, but also includes the way society expresses God's messages through the medium of language, literature and culture.

In the development of interpretation in West Java, the reception of the Quran is predominantly through traditional literary forms such as dangding (traditional Indonesian folklore), wawacan (traditional Indonesian folklore), pantun (pantun), and pupujian (praise poetry). Through these channels, the Quran's moral messages are conveyed in a more poetic and locally nuanced manner, allowing the public to better absorb the artistic nuances of the Quran's teachings in language, rhythm, and style familiar to everyday life.

In the early 19th century, several Sundanese scholars, such as R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah V (1888-1965), assisted by R.A.A. Soeriamihardja (former regent of Purwakarta), compiled a commentary on Surah Al-Baqarah in dangding form. He also compiled stories about the Prophet Muhammad, some of which were packaged in dangding form. This was the first literary reception of the Quran in West Java that was published in print (Rohmana, 2013; Saepudin, Thib Raya, Kusmana, & Hasan, 2023).

In 1931, KH. R. Ahmad Dimyati, a cleric from the Sukamiskin Islamic boarding school, composed a poetic commentary, "at-tabyinul Ajla wal ahla fi tafsir surat al-'ala." This work was printed by K.H. Zarkasyi Sukamiskin, Bandung. This poetic commentary was printed using the Pegon script, following the rules of the purwakanti form, namely rhyming literature consisting of sentence fragments rich in rhyme and rhythm (Rohmana, 2023; Yani & Hakam, 2022). This work cannot be categorized as a translation, but rather as a work of interpretation of the Quran because it provides an explanation of the meaning of the verses without referring to the word order in the source language.

Not long after, in 1967, Syarif Sukandi, a PERSIS activist, composed a poetic reception of the Quran in the form of dangding, "Hariring Wangsiting Gusti nu Maha Suci." In his introduction, Syarif stated that his dangding was inspired by the work of Wiranata Kusuma. He positioned his work as an tafsiriyah translation (Sukandi, 1967, p. 8)

In 1970, K.H. E. Abdullah (1918–1994), a PERSIS activist, composed three Quranic reception works in the form of praise poems: "tahlilan," "muludan," and "al-fajr." Wal Fajri praise poems explicitly represent his reception of Surah al-Fajr (89:1–5), which was published in the October–December 1970 edition of Iber Magazine. In this work, K.H. E. Abdullah interprets verses about the phenomenon of time as a metaphor for the journey of human life. Tahlil and Muludan praise poems represent receptions of Surah Yasin and An-Najm, respectively. These praise poems are structured according to Sundanese rules of praise, such as the number of lines, syllables, and final rhyme (a-a

a-a), demonstrating his efforts to maintain local literary traditions in conveying the message of the Quran(Nugraha, 2022).

In 1977, H.S. Ronggowalujo, the former regent of Purwakarta, composed the discourse "Hirup Sabada Maot." This discourse is a translation of Bey Arifin's book "Life After Death." It focuses on the issue of faith in the afterlife, beginning with the death procession (Ronggowalujo, 1980, pp. 13–22).

Furthermore, in 1980, H.R. Hidayat Suryalaga (1941–2011), a Sundanese cultural figure, conducted a reception of the Qur'an in its entirety over a period of 18 years (1980–1998). This reception became a monumental work of poetic translation of the Qur'an into Sundanese, entitled Nur Hidayah: Saritilawah Basa Sunda 30 Juz, consisting of 6,000 verses. In this work, Hidayat Suryalaga structured his understanding of the essence of the Qur'an by following the rules of pupuh(Muchtar & Luthfiana, 2021; Rohmana, 2013).

#### Profile E. Abdurrahman

Endang Abdurrahman was born in Pasarean village, Bojong Herang, Cianjur, on June 12, 1912. He was the eldest of 11 children. His father, Ghazali, worked as a tailor, while his mother, Hafsa, worked as a batik craftswoman. After being deemed competent in reading and writing the Koran, his parents sent him to Al-I'anah Cianjur Islamic Boarding School, an Islamic boarding school under the guidance of Muhammad Nuh bin Idris, a famous cleric and prolific writer, father of Abdullah bin Nuh (1905-1987) (Ridwan, Fauzan, & Fata, 2021).

After graduating from al-I'anah, Abdurrahman moved to Bandung at the request of Hassan Wiratmana to become a teacher at the Madrasah Al-I'anah Bandung (1928-1930). In 1930, Alkatiri, a prominent merchant in Bandung, asked E. Abdurrahman to teach his children (Fauzan & Fata, 2021). Besides being a businessman, Alkatiri owns the Islamic Basic Education Council (MPDI) in Kebonjati Bandung. The management of MPDI was entrusted to E. Abdurrahman and O. Qomaruddin Shaleh, a modernist Muslim activist who also managed the Al-Hikmah Madrasah in Rancabali Padalarang. During his activities at MDPI, E. Abdurrahman began to be interested in the PERSIS teachings delivered by A. Hassan on Jalan Pangeran Sumedang Bandung. At first, E. Abdurrahman felt offended by A. Hassan's views until finally a debate took place which A. Hasan won. Abdurrahman then joined the PERSIS movement and became the second teacher after A. Hassan.

When al-Katiri learned of Abdurrahman's change of heart, he was stripped of his position as MPDI administrator and preacher at Pakauman Bandung, and expelled from his official residence. Abdurrahman was considered a major contributor to Islamic educational institutions within the PERSIS community (Abdurrahman, n.d., p. 1). In 1934, Abdurrahman became a teacher at the Islamic Education Institution (Pendis) under the leadership of Natsir. He also taught at HIS, MULO, and Kweekschool. He also taught and developed small Islamic boarding schools, especially after A. Hassan moved to Bangil in 1940. During the revolution (1945-1949), the Persis Islamic Boarding School, under the leadership of Abdurrahman, was moved to Gunung Cupu, Ciamis. It then moved back to Bandung in early 1949.

Since 1934, E. Abdurrahman has been known as a loyal Persis activist. His first position was Head of the Tabligh and Education Division (1952), and Secretary General of Persis (1953) alongside Isa Anshary. In 1962 (the 7th Persis Congress), E. Abdurrahman was elected Chairman of Persis. Previously, in 1957, E. Abdurrahman was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia from the Masyumi Party. When The Constituent Assembly was dissolved by Sukarno, Abdurrahman withdrew from the political stage (Bachtiar & Fauzan, 2019).

E. Abdurrahman was known as a humble man. He spent his time reading, teaching at an Islamic boarding school, and writing books and magazine articles. His madrasa education did not prevent him from gaining broad insights. In addition to mastering Arabic, Sundanese, and Malay, E. Abdurrahman also studied English and Dutch. He subscribed to numerous Malay and Sundanese newspapers such as Sipatahoenan, Kompas, and Pikiran Rakyat, as well as the English-language newspaper, The Indonesia Observer. He also regularly received Arabic-language magazines from Saudi Arabia and Egypt(Nugraha & Rohmana, 2021).

His expertise in religious matters covers many fields, such as fiqh, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, kalam, *tafsīr*, hadith, and others. E. Abdurrahman was once a lecturer at the Islamic University of Bandung (Unisba) in 1959 and IKIP Bandung in 1967. During his life, Abdurrahman actively wrote in several magazines, especially magazines published by Persis such as at-Taqwā, Risalah, Iber and others. He

also wrote many Islamic books such as Sababaraha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat al Hudjurot (Korps Muballigh Bandung, 1971); Dirasah Ilmu Hadith; Comparison of Madzhab (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1986); Risalah Wanita (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1987); Ahkamusy Syar'i; Risalah Jum'at; Istifta: Questions and Answers on Religious Issues (Bandung, TB. Al-Huda, 1991); Recik-recik Dakwah (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1993); Takbir and Eid Prayers Complete with Eid al-Fitr Sermons; Mernahkeun Hukum dina Agama; Syiatu 'Ali; and others.

E. Abdurrahman died on Thursday, April 21, 1983, at Hasan Sadikin Hospital due to asthma. He was buried in Karang Anyar Cemetery, Bandung.

### **Narrative Elements of E. Abdurrahman's Sundanese Prose Interpretation**

In terms of plot and setting, E. Abdurrahman's prose works, published in at-Taqwa magazine between 1949 and 1951 and Risalah magazine between 1962 and 1965, can be categorized into two large groups. The first group emphasizes reflective and in-depth storytelling, grounded in an understanding of Quranic verses and Hadith. The second group tends to depict the inner tensions experienced by the characters when facing conflicts that require an understanding of the values of the Quran and Hadith.

In some of his prose, Abdurrahman sometimes chooses a narrative technique that cites Quranic verses, positioning them as the primary reference in developing the story. These Quranic verses serve as guides, providing direction and meaning to the overall narrative, and also inviting readers to deeply reflect on the story being told.

At the beginning of the sosonoan carpon, for example, Abdurrahman quotes Q.S. Luqman: 33-34. According to him, these two verses are a warning that all humans will always be faced with supernatural problems beyond their control, such as rain, disease, death, and the apocalypse. This warning encourages humans to always realize that life on earth is only temporary. To make the meaning of these two verses easier for readers to understand and feel, Abdurrahman says:

*"Pikeun nerangkeun hikmatna, perlu di dieu diterangkeun hiji carita: "Ki Syakir kasohor jalma anu haseum budi, salilana alum éstu taya kaberagan, saumur umur ngandung kabingung, nyangga kasusah, sarta sagala kasab jeung usahana, éstu taya anu kajadian nasibna ngan nete semplok, nincak somplak, dagang tinggal kesang, tani kari daki, lain gedong anu ngajegir tapi hutang anu ngajegur, sahingga akhirna mah manéhanana putus asa, sarta nyokot kaputusan rék ngagantung manéh" (Abdurrahman, 1950b, p. 1).*

Through such techniques, the story not only narrates the plot, but also invites readers to interpret life holistically by positioning spiritual moral values as important elements that shape and direct the journey of human life to safety in the afterlife.

In several other episodes, Abdurrahman presents the story in its entirety, allowing the narrative flow to develop naturally. He then concludes by quoting relevant verses from the Quran. He then explains the story's meaning based on his understanding of the verses he quotes, and also provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between the story and the Quranic verses (Abdurrahman, 1949b, pp. 1-5).

This narrative technique not only enhances the quality of the story but also serves as a vehicle for reflection and learning for the reader. Through narratives drawn from the essence of Quranic verses, readers are invited to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between the verses and the realities of life, while also being encouraged to reflect on the lessons to be learned from each narrative (Yusuf, 2013).

The second example can be seen in the "Huis" poster. In the opening section, Abdurrahman describes the feeling of looking in the mirror and discovering a single gray hair for the first time:

*"Kalèrèt dina eunteung, dina sela-sela sisir, bet aya nu ngagurilap bolas bëda ti tatanggana, ana disidik-sidik, sihorèng èta tèh salambar buuk anu salin rupa tina hideung kana bolas, gugurilapan nyelap sorangan dina kumpulan anu masih kénèh hideung, siga ofsr Inggris diaping ku urang Gurka, siga sinar kingkilaban di tengah leuweung, mangsana poèk mongklèng anyar raat tas hujan gedè, karasa seger bari keueung. Emh, lumayan pangèling-ngèling!"*

At the end of the story, Abdurrahman quotes two verses from the Koran as a closing statement of his reflection on the changes in hair as reflected by the Prophet Zakaria which was immortalized in the

Koran in the letter Maryam: 4-5, also quoting the letter Fathir: 37 (Abdurrahman, 1949c, pp. 1–3).

Meanwhile, from the perspective of the characters, E. Abdurrahman's sixteen prose works contain several distinct characters. In the Winangun fairy tale prose, the characters depicted are only mentioned by their position or rank, such as the king and prime minister in the prose narrative "Kabawa." (Abdurrahman, 1949a, pp. 1–3). In the prose, the new king symbolizes the new man, while the prime minister symbolizes the life experiences of his predecessors. In the tales of "sosonoan" and "dokter," the name Syakir is mentioned, symbolizing Syakirin (Abdurrahman, 1950a, pp. 1–3).

Meanwhile, in the *carpon* which is packaged in a dialogical manner, the characters that appear are non-human figures, such as the figure of a nose and a wall clock who are having a discussion in the middle of the night.(Abdurrahman, 1964a) Likewise, in the *carpon* "tongo", Abdurrahman presents the figures of tongo, kretas, hands, energy, iradah and thoughts who are discussing the essence of al-Mabda (Abdurrahman, 1964b).

Table 1.

No	Title	Her	Plot and settings	Category	Figure	Publication
1	Firindu	The journey of human life	Forward. Setting: story in the Land of Firindu	Monologue story	King-patih	At-taqwa
2	Support	Dhikr al-mawat	Forward. Place setting not specified	Fairytales	Syakir and his friends	at-taqwa
3	Nose	Gratitude	Forward. Setting: late night chat	Dialogue story	Nose and wall clock	Brochure
4	House	Dhikr and gratitude	Go ahead. Set up in front of the mirror	Monologue story	Self-Huis	At-taqwa
5	fly	Baudhah dan dzubab	Forward. Setting: a bedtime story	Monologue story	Mosquito Self	At-taqwa
6	Morning	The relationship between power, will and thought	Forward. Setting: the story at the time someone is writing	Dialogic Carpon	Tongue, hand, creta, power, will and thought	Brochure
7	Country	Ahsan amala	Forward. Setting: remote island	Fairytales	The characters are simply called characters.	At-Taqwa
8	If you are good	Independence	Forward. Setting: in the library at night	Monologue	Self-cat	At-taqwa
9	Spiritual doctor	Physical-spiritual relations	Forward. Setting: Middle Eastern country	Fairytales	Amin-tohir-sjaamah	At-taqwa
10	Waiting for the passion	Deifying lust	Forward. Setting: river where bathing takes place	Fairytales	Wajir	At-taqwa
11	White crow	Namimah	Forward. Setting rivers and forests in a country	Fairytales	The crow, the snake and the princess	Brochure

12	The closure of the ikun	Independence	Proceed	Fairytales	Wahab-cat	Brochure
13	The Ratu is not fair.	Heart		Essay		At-taqwa
14	House ruins	Democracy		Essay		At-taqwa
15	Musyarakat Doctor	At-Thur		Essay		At-taqwa
16	raccoon	Iltibas, choosing a leader	Proceed	How	Carefree, chicken, starling	Tamhid

### **Quranic Exegesis in Abdurrahman's Prose**

#### *1. Ahsan Amala*

The Quran affirms that Allah created death and life to test the "good character" of His servants (Q.S. al-Mulk: 2). This verse emphasizes two main themes: the human journey and God's criteria for success. To explain the process of the human journey and good character, Abdurrahman designed it in the form of a short story. He says:

*"Barang kapal anu djedjel padet ku hamba Allah, andjog tepi ka pulo anu ditudju, paheula-heula ninggalkeun kapal, moro pulo anu geus lila dipisono, burber paburentaj, masing-masing mawa karepna, njiar pangabetah njusul pangabutuh."*

The quote above shows that the characteristics of life in the womb are depicted by a ship loaded with passengers before docking at an island (the world). When the ship docks at the pier, the passengers disembark in droves, scattering according to their desires and goals. The story does not describe the life process in detail, from pregnancy, birth, childhood, adulthood, old age, and death. Abdurrahman chooses to describe it briefly with the words "berdesakan" and "paburencay." Implicitly, these two words were chosen as interpretations of His words: "tsuma Idza antum basyurun tantasirun." (Q.S. 30: 20)

Furthermore, Abdurrahman grouped the attitudes of the passengers while on the island into three which became an interpretation of the verses regarding human attitudes towards God. First, the wise. They are characterized as cautious, carefully considering the long-term impact of their words and actions. The future becomes the controller of their lustful desires and anger. The quality of work and sincerity are the main considerations (52: 26-28; 23: 1-9; 51: 16-19) (Abdurrahman, 1949a, pp. 1-3).

Second, recklessness. Humans tend to ignore rational considerations. Good and bad are measured by quantity. Abdurrahman equates such people with "carangka runtah" (trash cans). Everything will be thrown in without any selection, their behavior is easily influenced by the customs of the surrounding community (luak leok ngalun kabawa ku serah zaman). Superstition and innovation, even though they are difficult, will be carried out willingly and considered as worship (Q.S. 35:37 and Q.S. 47:12) (Abdurrahman, 1949a, pp. 1-3).

Third, forgetting to return home. The island, with its various pleasures, has lulled them to sleep by the reality that life on earth is limited by time. Life is merely a game; play is never enough, desires never end, and the ship of death will force its way home. Breath cannot be bought or sold, nor can it be replaced, while death must happen once (Q.S. 7:34; 6:61; 10:49; 62:8) (Abdurrahman, 1949a, pp. 1-3).

#### *2. Human journey*

The "Nagara Firindu" (State of Firindu) carpon interprets humanity's journey from this world to the afterlife. Worldly life is symbolized by the Firindu state, while humanity is symbolized by the king. Once the king is deposed, he is immediately banished inhumanely. Unable to request a temporary respite, he must be carried to the place of exile on a stretcher. Abdurrahman relates:

*"Nagara Firindu hidji nagri anu lohdjinawi, pasir wukir wibawa sagala aja, ngan handjakal anu djadi rajatna teu ari balas mestakeun radja, sabab radjana gunta-ganti sarta aneh dimana datang mangsana ngusir radja estu kedjem sarta teu rasrasan, tara mere kasempetan anu lila. poë eta keneh kudu indit digarotong dipindahkeun ka tempat anu suni, anu djauh ti alam rame"* (Abdurrahman, 1949b, pp. 1-5).

The quote above illustrates Abdurrahman's interpretation of the characteristics of the human journey through life. Birth, childhood, adulthood, old age, and ultimately, a new person is replaced. When death comes, the human body is immediately ushered into the grave through a procession that contrasts with the procession of its arrival into the world. As a new, inexperienced creature, it is welcomed with joy. Although the language is unclear, God's grace facilitates communication between two parties at different levels (Abdurrahman, 1949b, pp. 1-5).

Gradually the new human develops, hearing, sight and heart are activated (Q.S. 67: 23), until finally he is ready to accept the taklif as a caliph which is indicated by the willingness to reflect on the history of life as material for ibroh which in the carpon is illustrated by the willingness of the new king to dig up information from the patih (Q.S. 47: 13; 40: 21 and 82).

Next, Abdurrahman describes the characteristics of the afterlife with a magical land termed Aen. Although it is in one space, it has contradictory characteristics, batinuhu fihi rahmat, wa dahiruhu min qibalihi al-adzab. (Q.S. 57: 13). The outer part of the Aen is a rock without plants, no trees can grow except thorns and poisonous trees such as the zaqum tree whose fruit is like a snake's head, all the places where one steps are full of burning embers, there is no house suitable for habitation. All pains are united in the outer part (Q.S. 56: 52; 37: 65). In contrast to the inner part, it is filled with pleasure, shady trees with various colored fruits, chatting with others, palace buildings with all their luxurious facilities (Abdurrahman, 1949b, pp. 1-5).

Meanwhile, the connection between the land of Firindu and the land of Aen suggests that humans are able to "ngaduakeun huap" (share equally between the needs of this world and the afterlife). Therefore, Abdurrahman divided wealth into three: 1. Pakeun. 2. Akueun 3. Bawaeun djeung sampeureun. Pakeun wealth is clothing that has been worn out and food that has been eaten until it is destroyed. Akuan wealth is wealth to be inherited. Meanwhile, bawaeun and sampeureun wealth, namely all wealth, energy, deeds and words used in the way of Allah and based on sincerity for Him that have been transferred to the land of Aen (the afterlife) while he was still alive in the land of Firindu (the world).

### 3. *Gratitude*

Carpon's "sakadang Irung" describes an imaginary dialogue between an "irung" (nose) and a wall clock in understanding the verses of *kauniyah*. This reality is then interpreted and reflected upon based on the verses of gratitude. The composition aims to critique human attitudes toward God, which tend to be ungrateful for blessings. The nose and the wall clock move according to the speaker's interests, describing the results of his reflections on reality and the Quran. Abdurrahman states:

*"Ana ditenget-tenget, mani siga ruruntuk manusa, urat kendor, mata paor, cetuk huis; kumis bodes, janggotna nyapuan dada, panonna celong, gular giler dina logak, ngan irung anu masih ajeg nangtung. Leumpangna bongkok siga anu kaleuleungitan, mapay jalan, nenget<sup>2</sup> tincakeun, bisi aya poè kaliwat, aya waktu anu kalarung atawa siga anu beurat ku momotan, dongko bongkok bakating beurat ku lalakon hirup dina jero genep puluh taun.... Manèhna keur reureuh miceun kacapè anu karandapan poè èta. Khadam<sup>2</sup> kabèh rareureuh, kabèh anggota istirahat. Tapi sanajan leungeun ngarumbay, suku ngalonjor, istirahat rareureuh, sakadang irung mah teu bisa reureuh, kudu tetep digawè ngasupkeun bahan bakar, ngaluarkeun hawa kotor, ngahaneutan getih jeung awak, kalawan teu meunang reureuh sanajan sakerejep!"* (Abdurrahman, 1964a).

The quote above is a reflection of the sacred text and the reality of life when someone has entered the phase of old age, which in the language of the Quran is termed "syuyukho" (Q.S. 40: 67). The phase where the body has experienced decline as a sign of having experienced countless blessings. Even though the elements of the body have decreased, the pleasure of sleep is still felt. All the difficulties of life are forgotten so that we can enter a miniature death (Q.S. 39: 42). During deep sleep, all parts of the body rest except the nose, which must work to supply fuel for life, expelling dirty air to keep the blood warm. Humans need a third of a cubic meter of air with each breath, far more than food and drink. Implicitly, Abdurrahman invites readers to reflect on His words, "wa fi anfusikum afala tubshirun" (Q.S. 51: 21) and "wa in ta'udu nimatallah la tuhsuhuha." (Q.S. 16: 18).

### 4. *Dzikir al-mawt*

Carpon Huis is an interpretation of the Quranic verse describing Zakaria's reflection during prayer (Q.S. Maryam: 4-5). The word "sayban" refers to the change in hair color from black to white,

a sign of entering old age. On the one hand, the phenomenon of gray hair refers to physical changes as a natural law inherent in every human being. On the other hand, the Quran uses grey hair as a warning against the threat of death.

Grey hair is a reminder for humans to always remember death. Gray hair moves quickly to affect the black hair around it, which Abdurrahman illustrates with: the destructive movement of a drawn sword that drags a human to the edge of the grave; Like a white flag as a symbol of defeat; Like a piece of white dye on a loom, finally weaving itself into a white cloth to wrap the rough body which reminds that age is measured by breath on the ground; Flashing like light accompanied by thunderous thunder that triggers fear; moving quickly to provoke neighbors to immediately change color; coming without warning, suddenly changing everything.

Therefore, Abdurrahman positioned gray hair as a messenger of the angel of God, encouraging greater devotion to God. Its arrival should be a source of awakening and spiritual awakening. Abdurrahman equated gray hair with a guiding teacher, the foremost awakening teacher, a brave preacher who knows no fear, and a controller of desires that tend to be uncontrollable (Q.S. 35:37).

### Symbolic Interpretation

In the poem "*laleur*," Abdurrahman invites readers to interpret the mosquito symbolically (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 26). Abdurrahman contemplates the mosquito through an imaginative dialogue while trying to sleep. He concludes that despite their small size and short lifespan, mosquitoes are never extinct. They spread rapidly: one dies, and hundreds of thousands of eggs are laid, which will become the next generation, disrupting human comfort.

The description of the characteristics of mosquitoes was then used as a symbol of "sucking" which Abdurrahman termed "*Laleur dayeuh*" whose behavior is much more cruel than real mosquitoes (Abdurrahman, 1951, pp. 1–3). The true mosquito only sucks blood, saving the victim's life; it attacks only until its stomach is full; it never seeks anything other than blood. Unlike the *dayeuh*, who suck the blood of their fellow human beings, sparing no one's wealth, honor, life, or nation. They ask Allah for sustenance, but when they succeed, they use it to deify lust and passion. The *dayeuh* seeks survival by destroying life. They seek safety by harming others, profiting through deception, and wealth by being stingy and withholding zakat. Violence becomes their self-image, yet they feel good because their identity is listed as Muslim. They tout small acts of charity as a shield against being labeled bloodsuckers.

Table 2. Example of Winangun prose interpretation

No.	Verse	Description of the interpretation
1	Q.S. 7: 34; 6: 61; 10: 49; 62: 8	Firindu is a country of the <i>Lohdjinawi</i> , the sands of the mountains are full of power, only the jackals are the kings. They do not always have a king, because the kings change and are strange. When the time comes to expel the king, he is very stubborn and uncompromising, not giving him a long chance. That day, he must be moved to a safe place.
2	Q.S.1: 1	The farmer was carrying a bundle of wheat in his garden when suddenly the bundle broke, the wheat fell on the road, some of it fell on rocks, some of it fell on the ground, and the soil was full of weeds. And those who had planted it in his garden, who had been able to cultivate it, were also crushed, and the soil was clean and tidy.
3	Q.S. 40: 67	He was bent over, his face like a human skeleton, his veins loose, his eyes sunken, his nose narrow; his moustache was white, his beard swept his chest, his eyes were wide, his cheeks were round, only his nose was still standing. He walked with a hunchbacked gait, as if he had been lost, walking slowly, waiting for something to happen, in case a day had passed, a time had passed or as if he were weighed down by a burden, his hunchbacked body weighed down by the work of living for sixty years.
4	Q.S. 16: 18	"Ah, that's enough! I'm sixty years old. In a minute, you have to breathe in at least eighteen times one-third (18 x 1/3) cubic meters, which is six (6) cubic meters, in an hour that means three hundred and sixty (360) cubic

		meters of air, and in a day, a person breathes in at least twenty-four times three hundred and sixty (24 x 360)...
5	Q.S 34: 13	So during the fasting month! Even though I'm resting from eating and drinking, I don't really rest, I don't really fast, I still have to breathe air! I really want the owner to understand! What does it mean that the air that is inhaled is made of hydrogen and oxygen, which has so many benefits and functions....
6	Q.S. 19: 4-5)	Looking in the mirror, between the combs, there was one that shone white, different from its neighbors, and was scrutinized, that sliver was a mass of hair that changed from black to white, its brilliance shining on its own in the still-dark mass, like a British officer surrounded by Gurkhas, like a ray of light in the middle of the forest, when it was dark and just after a heavy rain, it felt fresh and refreshing. Hmm, quite a reminder...!
7	Q. S. 35:37	You are the guru murshid, the ultimate awakening teacher, the unsurpassed missionary, you are the messenger that everyone is waiting for, because you are the one who conquers the desires that are bound, not a few people follow you while saying: "Ah, it's time to stop now, it's too late"....

### Sundanese Prose and Essays as Media for Learning Interpretation

E. Abdurrahman's Sundanese prose and essays, published in At-Taqwa and Risalah magazines, hold a strategic position in the realm of tafsir learning media. Through these prose and essays, Abdurrahman explains the textual meaning of the Quran in narrative form rich in imagination, symbols, metaphors, and contextual illustrations typical of Sundanese. In this context, prose and essays serve as educational media to bridge the gap between the sacred text and the reader through a local cultural and linguistic approach that touches on the affective, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions (Achsani, 2018; Muhsin, Marwati, Saleh, Nuur, & Nuqta, 2025; Nathaniel Hendradi, 2022).

Among the pedagogical approaches used by Abdurrahman is the symbolic narrative approach as can be seen in the prose "Kabawa" which is a reception of Q.S. Al-Mulk: 2, "Liyabluwakum ayukum ahsan 'amala". This verse is not interpreted literally, but is presented in the form of an allegory: the boat and the island are used as symbols of human existence journey.(Mufid, 2013) Through this symbol, Abdurrahman categorizes humanity into three categories: the wise, the reckless, and those who forgot to return home. Each character represents the diverse responses of humans to God's teachings and serves as a reflection for readers to assess their own position (Abdurrahman, 1949a, pp. 1–3).

In the *Nagara Firindu* carpon, Abdurrahman uses an allegorical narrative to explain the human journey from this world to the afterlife. This approach is based on the view that the Quran has levels of meaning (Rosalnia & Isnaini, 2022). The land of *Firindu* is depicted as a mortal world full of deceit, while the land of "Aen" symbolizes the afterlife with its two dimensions: God's wrath and mercy. Through this allegorical narrative, Abdurrahman deliberately inserts a pedagogical message that life must be oriented towards investing in the afterlife (Q.S. al-Qashash: 77). Through this work, Abdurrahman presents an interpretation of the Quran in a dramatic and imaginative form, so that the messages of the Quran feel more alive and closer to the experiences of the Sundanese Muslim community. Educational values are conveyed not dogmatically but reflectively and inspiringly (Abdurrahman, 1949b, pp. 1–5; Chan & Lee, 2021; Kusmoro, 2025).

This tendency to prioritize a reflective approach is also seen in the carpon *Sakadang Irung*, where Abdurrahman uses the human body as a medium for reflection on God's blessings. By referring to Q.S an-Nah: 18 and ad-Dzariat: 21, Abdurrahman positions the nose and the wall clock as two characters engaging in an imaginary dialogue, a creative way to raise awareness of the importance of being grateful for blessings that are often forgotten, such as air and the respiratory system (Abdurrahman, 1964a, p. 23).

Furthermore, Abdurrahman's consistency in using human inner experience as a medium for learning Quranic interpretation is also evident in the cartoon "Huis." Here, gray hair is used as a symbol of the threat of sudden death as a response to Surah Maryam verses 4-5, particularly the word "sayyiban," which suggests physical changes as an indicator of old age. Gray hair is positioned as a

"guru mursyid" who guides humans to be more prepared for death. The imaginary dialogue between the character and his gray hair is used as a medium to increase awareness of death, self-reflection, and repentance (Abdurrahman, 1949c, pp. 1–3).

In line with the symbolic approach, Abdurrahman also presents an interpretation nuanced social criticism through the prose "Laleur" (flies), which is a reception of Q.S. al-Baqarah: 26. If in Huis the symbol is taken from physical changes, then in Laleur, Abdurrahman presents the symbol of a small animal as a critique of the practice of human exploitation. Flies, which in the prose are mentioned together with mosquitoes, are presented as a metaphor for groups of humans who oppress and exploit the rights of others. The characteristics of laleur dayeuh are equated with mosquitoes in the real world: noisy, sucking blood, and being a source of disease. Through symbols and language that are easy to understand, the messages of Surah al-Baqarah: 26 regarding social injustice can be conveyed contextually and touch the critical awareness of its readers (Abdurrahman, 1951, pp. 1–3).

These data confirm that E. Abdurrahman's Sundanese prose and essays serve not only as a medium for aesthetic expression but also as a medium for learning interpretation. The narrative, symbolic, and reflective approaches were deliberately chosen to open up opportunities for communicative interpretation, thus enabling them to serve as a medium for learning interpretation using language and experiences more relevant to the daily lives of the Sundanese people (Cahyati & Arifin, 2021). This fact further emphasizes that interpretation does not always have to be designed in a rigid academic form, but can also be designed in cultural forms such as prose and essays. In this context, E. Abdurrahman's prose and essay interpretations can be categorized as cultural-educational interpretations, namely interpretations that stem from the creative interaction between the reception of the Quran and the cultural realities of the Sundanese people. This model not only enriches the treasury of local-Indonesian interpretations but also emphasizes that Islamic education can be delivered contextually and transformatively through the medium of literature.

## Conclusion

E. Abdurrahman's Qur'anic essays and essays in the Sundanese magazine *at-Taqwa* (1936-1954) and *Risalah* (1962-1965) demonstrate that E. Abdurrahman used literature, especially Sundanese essays and essays, as a medium for creative reception of the verses of the Quran. The moral-spiritual values of the Quran are integrated into narrative elements, such as plot, setting, dialogue, and everyday life, to bridge the sacred text with the experiences of local readers. This form of interpretation serves not only as a medium for religious interpretation but also as an educational medium that encompasses moral, spiritual, social, and political aspects.

E. Abdurrahman's prose and essays can be positioned as a form of cultural interpretation that integrates religiosity, literary beauty, and local awareness. Implicitly, his works suggest that interpretation need not be confined to academic formats, but can be presented through more lively, touching, and down-to-earth literary narratives. Through this approach, E. Abdurrahman demonstrates that a creative and educational reception of Quranic verses not only enriches the Indonesian treasury of interpretation but also emphasizes that local literature serves as a medium for Islamic education. This approach opens up space for the development of a more inclusive, communicative, and contextual model of interpretation learning.

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