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# KASYF PHENOMENON IN THE DEFOCALIZATION OF RATIONALITY: A MAGICAL REALIST PERSPECTIVE ON GUS MUS'S *GUS JAKFAR*

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## ABSTRACT

*Gus Jakfar* won the best short story in *Kompas* daily in 2004. This short story by Gus Mus tells of the story of a character named Gus Jakfar who has the privilege of foreseeing other people's fate just by looking at 'signs' (*kasyf*). Later, Gus Jakfar stopped seeing signs after his trip to meet Kiai Tawakkal. The phenomenon of seeing precognitive signs cannot be rationally understood by modern knowledge. The study of *Gus Jakfar* in the present article adopts magical realism from Wendy B. Faris' perspective as a theoretical framework to examine *kasyf* as a defocalization narrative in short stories.

The method of this study is descriptive analysis. The evidence to support the analysis includes words, phrases and sentences in the short story that are relevant to magical realist perspective, particularly in relation to the five elements of magical realism and defocalization. The analysis and description are carried out after collecting pieces of evidence from the short story.

The analysis in this study shows that *Gus Jakfar* has the five characteristics of magical realism in it. From the five characteristics reflected in the text, there is an element called *kasyf* that is found to be an attempt of defocalization which is presented by the author using a mirroring technique. *Kasyf* in this short story is depicted from three perspectives. Although modern rationality has influenced people's identities, the *pesantren* tradition has not been abandoned. In this context, the *kasyf* phenomenon is understood as an alternative source of magical knowledge beyond the modern rational knowledge.

**Keywords:** *realism, magical, sufism, pesantren, kasyf*

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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of magical realism in the last three decades becomes problematic and interesting. It is due to the difficulties in understanding its nature. It is interesting because of its tremendous appeal across regions in several continents, including Indonesia in Asia (Banna, 2016: 1). Prominent Indonesia authors of magical realist works include Danarto, Seno Gumira Ajidarma, Faisal Oddang and Eka Kurniawan, among others. The influence of magical realism in Indonesia cannot be separated from indigenous cultural tradition in the country. Some of Indonesian literary

works from the genre of magical realism has the nuance of Sufism. Danarto, for instance, combines Javanese life philosophy, elements of Sufism, and *pewayangan* (Javanese traditional puppet) stories in his magical realism work (Sundusiah, 2015: 135). This combination of cultural tradition and Sufism has become the distinct characteristic of magical realism in Indonesia. This is the reason why this topic is worth investigating.

*Gus Jakfar* (Mus, 2004) by Gus Mus is an interesting example of a magical realist fiction with

Sufic nuance. It has an Islamic and traditional *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) background. The cultural life in *pesantren* is perceived to be both religious and traditional/pre-modern (Faruk, Dewojati, Manshur, & Anwar, 2020). Gus Mus's works flourish with it, and *Gus Jakfar* is a good example of this cultural-religious influence. The short story tells about Gus Jakfar who has the gift of being able to see a person's fate by looking at certain signs. This phenomenon is known as *Kasyfor Laduni*, an extrasensory ability that is made possible by Allah (Asmaran, 2002: 285). It cannot be acquired through general knowledge and western empiricism. In short, it is irrational in nature.

There have been a number of studies of Gus Mus's *Gus Jakfar*. A study conducted by Aliyatul Himmah (2019) employs Slavoj Zizek's subjectivity approach. Himmah reveals that the *Lelana Brata* that was undertaken by Kiai Tawakkal is a form of radical subject action. Such action in sufism is called *suluk*, which is the path that a sufi must take in order to lead him to Allah. The Kiai Tawakkal's *suluk*, from Zizek's perspective, breaks the symbolic boundaries espoused by Gus Jakfar. This action serves as a medium for *Kiai Tawakkal* to reach the Real (*haq*) (Himmah, 2019).

Another study of the short story was conducted by Tiara Melfaliona Shandy (2016). Shandy examines the religious values that are reflected in *Gus Jakfar* on the basis of Y.B. Mangunwijaya's concept of religiosity and Fatimah's conceptualization of religious values. Shandy found three religious' values in the short story in the form of human's relation with God, with others, and with himself. Another finding is the moral message that *Gus Jakfar* conveys is that humans have no right to judge anyone's deeds/acts because only God has the right to do it (Shandy, 2016).

Informed by the background of the short story and the previous studies of it, the present study aims to identify elements of magical realism in *Gus Jakfar* and look at how defocalization as a narrative technique is used in it to destabilize the realistic representations. The formal object of this study is the magical realist theory formulated by Faris (2004). She proposes five characteristics of magical realist narrative. According to Faris, magical realist text contains: 1) "irreducible" and magical elements; 2) descriptions that show the powerful presence of the phenomenal world; 3) unsettling doubts in an attempt to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; 4) the merging of different realms; 5) disruption to the

commonly held ideas about time, space, and identity (Faris, 2004).

These characteristics are used as a basis to identify defocalization in the narrative text, which breaks the modern single perspective (focalization). Faris (2004) elaborates that defocalization narrative mode is created by means of particular techniques such as magical detail (logical thing but exaggerated so that it becomes magical), naive narrators (the innocent narrators, using characters that are made inferior, and the one who is being narrated can be verified by realism/superior framework), bridges (bridging worlds built through discourse), two-way streets (ambiguity built in order to be identified), narrative distance and chinese boxes (emphasizing fantastic positions, namely the uncanny and the marvelous that provide narrative distance), and mirroring (analogies that often create reference changes).

The method of this study is descriptive analysis. The first step of the study is identifying relevant pieces of evidence or citations from the short story by scrutinizing every linguistic units in the forms of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs in the text under study according to the focus of the study (material object) and the theoretical approach (the formal object) adopted for the study. The material object, *Gus Jakfar*, as mentioned earlier, was written by Gus Mus (2004), and the formal object is the theory of magical realism proposed by Wendy B. Faris (2004). The analysis of the text is also supported by any relevant information and references from sources other than the short story. The next step is the analysis of the selected pieces of evidence and the descriptive presentation of the analysis.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of Magical Realism in *Gus Jakfar*

#### Irreducible Element

The phrase *magical realism* consists of two conceptual, namely the magical and realism. Magical element refers to the extraordinary entities which cannot be described on the basis of the logical and Western based empiricism (Faris, 2004: 7). Faris recognizes this magical aspect as the irreducible element. In the analysis of *Gus Jakfar*, the irreducible element can be observed through the characters and events in the story.

### Irreducible Characters

Gus Jakfar is a fictional character in the story whose role is the *pesantren* administrator and Kiai Saleh's son. He is described as an extraordinary character because of his ability to see the supernatural signs in a person's forehead and interpret them in connection to the person's destiny.

*"Tapi Gus Jakfar memang luar biasa," kata Mas Bambang, pegawai Pemda yang sering mengikuti pengajian subuh Kiai Saleh. "Matanya itu lo. Sekilas saja mereka melihat kening orang, kok langsung bisa melihat rahasianya yang tersembunyi (Bisri, 2014)."*

But Gus Jakfar is indeed extraordinary," said Mas Bambang, a local government employee who often attends Kiai Saleh's dawn sermons. "Those eyes are you. At first glance they see people's foreheads, how they can immediately see the hidden secrets.

In reality, normal people cannot see invisible thing such as destiny. The ability 'to see' it would be a contradiction to the mechanism of visual sensory system of normal people in which the visibility of an object for human's eyes is enabled by the light. In its process, light goes to cornea and is refracted by *aquarus humour* to the pupil (Haeny, 2009). Pupil carries on the light to the lens, through retina, stimulates the rod and cone cells and goes on to the brain. When the brain gives a response to the light, an image is formed. If this explanation is applied to Gus Jakfar's circumstances, what he is supposed to sees when looking at a person's forehead is the person's forehead, not his fate or his future. In the world where ordinary people live with their normal visual sensory, such special ability of Gus Jakfar clearly cannot be founded on rationality, because fate is something invisible and untouchable. In short, Gus Jakfar's ability cannot be accepted by logic and science, and the fate that he sees cannot be verified by human sensory either. Nonetheless, it happens as it is, as what Faris has argued about the irreducible element, "as a given accepted, but not explained (Faris, 2004: 7)."

Another evidence of man's extraordinary ability that is beyond the laws of nature and belief held by Western empiricists appears in the characterization of Gus Jakfar's religious teacher, Kiai Tawakkal. Gus Jakfar sees an invisible sign on Kiai Tawakkal's

forehead that reads 'Hell Proficient' (*Ahli Neraka*). His curiosity about such sign motivates him to investigate it further. To his surprise, Kiai Tawakkal knows what he is doing.

*Setelah saya ikut duduk di sampingnya, tiba-tiba dengan sura berwibawa, Kiai berkata mengejutkan, "Bagaimana? Kau sudah menemukan apa yang kau cari? Apakah kau sudah menemukan pembenar dari tanda yang kau baca di kening saya? Mengapa kau seperti masih terkejut? Apakah kau yang mahir melihat tanda-tanda menjadi ragu terhadap kemahiranmu sendiri.. (Bisri, 2014)?"*

After I sat beside him, suddenly with an authoritative voice, Kiai said surprisingly, "How? Have you found what you were looking for? Have you found the justification for the mark you read on my forehead? Why are you still in shock? Do you, who are good at seeing signs, have doubts about your own skills?"

In the first piece of evidence, Gus Jakfar's ability of seeing human's fate cannot be sensed by others including the narrator. Gus Jakfar's ability raises doubts on its believability, even though in magical realism, such an irreducible occurrence is believed to really happen. Hence, to ensure its existence, Gus Jakfar's ability is confirmed by Kiai Tawakkal's response to it. This is similar to the case when Ana Castilo, in her work, confirms a dead person's reappearance by making her sigh verified by several people (Faris, 2004: 8). In *Gus Jakfar* case, this kind of validation shows that Kiai Tawakkal has the same mysterious power. It is even told in detail so that it becomes evidence of magical happening.

### Irreducible Events

Faris describes an irreducible event as something not normally be verifiable by sensory perception, but it involves the detail description of phenomena that is integrated into everyday reality (Faris, 2004). The extraordinary happening is told by the characters consistently till it feels like an ordinary occurrence. Its appearance is addressed in various comments or dialogues made by the narrator and the characters. Therefore, the magical occurrence truly exists as part of the realistic environment.

*"Kami melewati pematang, lalu menerobos*

*hutan, dan akhirnya sampai di sebuah sungai. Dan, sekali lagi saya menyaksikan kejadian yang menggoncangkan. Kiai Tawakkal berjalan di atas permukaan air sungai, seolah-olah di atas jalan biasa saja.. (Bisri, 2014)."*

We crossed the embankment, then through the forest, and finally came to a river. And, once again I witnessed a shocking event. Kiai Tawakkal walks on the surface of the river water, as if on an ordinary road.

Scientifically, human is incapable of walking on the water surface due to their weight, gravitation and water density differences (Minetti, Ivanenko, Cappellini, Dominici, & Lacquaniti, 2012). Minetti clarifies that, by mathematical calculation, even if humans can walk or run on water the ability to do it is very limited, and it cannot be done without technological devices that can support such action. Nonetheless, magical realism depicts phenomenon that is contradictory to logical reasoning. The text describes Kiai Tawakkal who walks on the water with Gus Jakfar as the witness. Gus Jakfar tells the other characters about his surprise over the fact that Kiai Tawakkal do his action as if it is a normal activity.

## Phenomenal World

### The Detail Description

The realistic element of magical realism appears as a phenomenal world. Faris states that the presence of phenomenal world distinguishes magical realism from fantasy and allegorical genre (Faris, 2004). In *Gus Jakfar* text, phenomenal world appears not only in the direct similarities between the real world and the fictional world but also in the realistic description of the event.

*"Maka, ketika kemudian sikap Gus Jakfar berubah, masyarakat pun geger; terutama para santri kalong, orang-orang kampus yang ikut mengjai tapi tidak tinggal di pesantren seperti Kang Solikin yang selama ini dekat dengan beliu. Mula-mula Gus Jakfar menghilang berminggu-minggu, kemudian ketika kembali tahu-tahu sikapnya berubah menjadi manusia biasa (Bisri, 2014)."*

So, when Gus Jakfar's attitude changed, the public was in an uproar; especially the bat students, campus people who participate in the

study but don't live in the pesantren like Kang Solikin, who has been close to Beliu. At first Gus Jakfar disappeared for weeks, then when he returned suddenly his attitude changed to that of an ordinary person.

From magical realist perspective, the magic itself derives from the realism (Faris, 2004). In other words, it shows that extraordinary things are as real as the reality itself. From the evidence above, the readers are presented with the details of the event which is told by one of the characters. It gives more than an information about the world surrounding the character, the duration of Gus Jakfar's disappearance, and the fact that he is actually a normal people. In so doing, the description gives the idea that what is expressed in the text is real. Hence, the magical happening of Gus Jakfar's changing ability coupled with the elaborate description of the event creates a sense of reality to it, although at the same time it suggests an imaginary happening. However, the elaborate or detailed description in effect depicts what Roland Barthes says as *effet de reel* (Faris, 2004).

### Details of Daily Life

Another way phenomenal world is presented in a magical realist text is by providing the date, time and place in the description of the events in the story (Delrosso, 2005). Nevertheless, in this analysis, the writer of this study only discusses the place which is used as the setting of the story.

*"Di antara putera-putera Kiai Saleh, penguah pesantren "Sabilul Muttaqin" dan sesepuh daerah kami, Gus Jakfar-lah yang paling menarik perhatian masyarakat (Bisri, 2014)."*

Among the sons of Kiai Saleh, the teacher of the "Sabilul Muttaqin" Islamic boarding school and the elders of our area, Gus Jakfar is the one who attracts the most attention of the people.

The similarity between the fictional world and the factual world in the abovementioned quotation is *Pondok pesantren Sabilul Muttaqin*. *Pondok Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) is traditional educational institution that functions as a place to study, understand, appreciate and practice Islamic teachings that emphasize religious morals as the basis for daily behavior (Dhofier, 1994). In several regions in Indonesia, *Pondok pesantren* can be easily

found since Islam is the religion of the majority of Indonesians. Hence, the setting of the story is an imaginary educational institution that is very similar or parallel to the one in reality that exists in many places in Indonesia. The phenomenal world of this story differs from those in other magical realist stories which emphasize historical phenomena in a particular period of time. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, for example, sets her phenomenal world in the American slavery period. García Márquez builds one of his phenomenal worlds around banana massacre in Columbia (Bowers, 2004: 39-76).

*"Setelah saya melewati kuburan dan kebun sengan, beliau berbelok. Ketika kemudian saya ikut belok, saya kaget, ternyata sosoknya tak kelihatan lagi. Yang terlihat justru sebuah warung yang penuh pengunjung. Terdengar gelak tawa ramai sekali. Dengan bengong saya mendekati warung terpencil dengan penerangan petromak itu (Bisri, 2014)."*

After I passed the cemetery and the sengan garden, he turned. When later I took the turn, I was surprised, it turned out that his figure was no longer visible. What you see is a shop full of visitors. There was a lot of laughter. I dazedly approached the remote stall with the petromak lighting.

As mentioned in the excerpt above, the similarities between the fictional world and the factual world in the text are created through the presence of not only *Pondok pesantren* but also the graveyard, *sengan* (albizia) trees garden, and *warung* (traditional Javanese stall). The setting presents the atmosphere of rural village that corresponds to the real rural village in Indonesia which is still surrounded by the trees, specifically the albizias. In a magical realist text, the inclusion of fictional object that is parallel to that in reality functions as an anchor for the magical happening itself. It controls the magical, prevent the text from being fantasy or allegory.

### Unsettling Doubt

Magical realist mode creates two contradictory events in the narrative text, namely magical and realism, which invoke unsettling doubt in the readers' mind. Such doubt is associated with the irreducible element, that is the extrasensory phenomena in the story that

is narrated in realistic mode (Faris, 2004: 17). This mode of narrating raises the question whether the extrasensory event is true or not. In *Gus Jakfar*, such hesitation affects not only the character and the narrator but also the readers.

*"Kata Kiai, Gus Jakfar itu lebih tua dari beliau sendiri," cerita Kang Solikin suatu hari kepada kawan-kawannya yang sedang membicarakan putera bungsu Kiai Saleh itu. "Saya sendiri tidak paham apa maksudnya (Bisri, 2014)."*

Kyai said, Gus Jakfar is older than himself," said Kang Solikin one day to his friends who were talking about Kiai Saleh's youngest son. "I don't know what that means myself.

The character makes a confusing statement about a son who is older than his father, and even the father is reticent about his son. It is something that cannot be understood by logic, unless Gus Jakfar has a progeria syndrome, a genetic condition characterized by rapid aging of childhood. However, there is no evidence in the text that indicates that Gus Jakfar has a disease. The question remains unanswered, and therefore creates hesitation in the reader's mind.

*"Apa yang begitu itu disebut ilmu kasyaf?" Tanya Pak Carik yang sejak tadi haya asyik mendengarkan. "Mungkin saja," jawab Ustadz Kamil (Bisri, 2014).*

What is it called kasyaf science?" Asked Mr. Carik, who had been listening for a long time. "Maybe," replied Ustadz Kamil.

Nevertheless, irreducible element such as Gus Jakfar's magical ability in the text does happen. The hesitation that the phenomenon causes may be associated with differences in the belief system among the readers. The readers whose belief system accepts magical phenomena will be less doubtful. For instance, even if other characters in the story doubt Gus Jakfar's extraordinary ability, they may try to connect it to their belief system instead of thinking that it is just a trick. According to Al Ghazali's explanation, *kasyf* is the opening of the wall (*hijab*) so that a Sufi person can see the nature of truth (al-Haqq) with the eyes of his heart (Basyir, 2012). *Kasyf* is achieved when a sufi has reached the peak of the sufic stage. Hence, a sufi can see things that cannot be seen by ordinary visual

sense. However, the question that is asked by Pak Carik does not get a definite answer of yes or no. The answer actually floats, causing doubts in the reader's mind that are not resolved.

### **Merging Realm**

Another characteristic of magical realism is the merging realm. Faris (2004:21) states that in this characteristic, realism and magical are so close that it seems as if they are almost united, which then it opens a space in between or a space of uncertainty. Merging realm at Gus Jakfar can be identified in the following quotation.

*"Hanya ada satu hal yang membuat saya terkejut dan terganggu. Saya melihat di kening beliau yang lapang ada tanda yang jelas sekali, seolah-olah saya membaca tulisan dengan huruf yang cukup besar dan berbunyi "Ahli Neraka" (Bisri, 2014)."*

There is only one thing that surprises and annoys me. I saw on his broad forehead there was a very clear mark, as if I was reading writing in large enough letters that read "Hell Expert".

The two opposite phenomena are present and seem to be merging together, that is the sign of the *Ahli Neraka* that Gus Jakfar sees on Kiai Tawakkal's forehead. The appearance of this sign is not a rational occurrence, but a magical one which can be considered as an irreducible element. Moreover, such magical occurrence of having a sign of hell that happens to Kiai Tawakkal is contradictory to the fact that he is a *kiai*, which is an expert in Islam that is usually spiritually close to Allah. So he is not supposed to be awarded hell, a place where bad people is punished in the afterlife (Hanafi, 2020). The *neraka* or hell writing is also a magical element, but Gus Jakfar as a Muslim believes in the supernatural aspect of life and the relation between humans' fate/destiny and their behavior or deeds. Hence, Gus Jakfar is told to find out why Kiai Tawakkal was destined to be *ahli neraka* (the inhabitant of hell), just like what the sign on his forehead says. The events of him reading the sign are a fantastic or magical occurrence, but they are always connected and coincided with the real or non-magical events.

### **Disruption of Time, Space and Identity**

In the normal and realistic world, people's mind about time is set based on mathematical and physical calculation. Time is about duration which can be calculated and set in the units of second, minutes, hours and days. Unfortunately, the insertion of magical occurrence to the realistic world is capable of disturbing the absolute concepts of time and space, as well as the idea of identity (Faris, 2004). Take, for example, in the following quotation from the short story, the ideal concept of time is violated by the teleportation of one of its characters.

*"Ketika saya ikut bangkit, saya celingukan. Kiai Tawakkal sudah tak tampak lagi. Dengan bingung saya terus berjalan (Bisri, 2014)."*

When I got up, I looked around. Kiai Tawakkal is no longer visible. Confused I kept walking.

Based on scientific explanation, in quantum mechanics, teleportation is possible in transporting information and electron, not human being (Valich, 2022). It is impossible for human being to suddenly dissipate. At least it takes some minutes for someone move from one place to another. However, in the event described above, time seems folded to teleport Kiai Tawakkal and make him disappear rapidly. In magical realism, the disruption of time can take place, for example, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which rain is poured down for four years, eleven month and two days (Faris, 2004: 23).

### *Space*

The second interruption happens to space. Like the disruption of time, the disruption of space appears to take place between the magical and the reality. The disruption of space is identified in the following quotation.

*"Suatu malam saya bermimpi ketemu ayah dan saya disuruh mencari seorang wali sepuh yang tinggal di sebuah desa kecil di lereng gunung yang jaraknya dari sini sekitar 200km ke arah selatan. Namanya Kiai Tawakkal. Kata ayah dalam mimpi itu, hanya kiai-kiai tertentu yang tahu tentang kiai yang usianya sudah lebih 100 tahun ini. Santri-santri yang belajar kepada beliau pun rata-rata sudah disebut kiai di daerah masing-masing (Bisri, 2014)."*

One night I dreamed that I met my father and I was told to find an old guardian who lives in a small village on the slopes of a mountain, which is about 200 km to the south. His name is Kiai Tawakkal. My father said in a dream, only certain kiai know about this kiai who is more than 100 years old. On average, the students who study with him are already called kiai in their respective areas.

In the world where science and logic are used as the foundation of thought, everything is supposed to be understood based on scientific and logical principles. Space is no exception. Science set a clear boundary between the rational and the irrational, between the world in a dream and the real world. Magical realism, nonetheless, blurs the boundary, bridging the gap between the two, so that the dream world merges with the real. In the short story, Gus Jakfar is instructed by his father to meet Kiai Tawakkal somewhere in the dream, but it happens in the real world. This mixing of the dream and the real at the end creates the disruption of the space and erases the boundaries between them.

### *Identity*

Another form of disruption found in this short story is the disruption of identity. Kiai Tawakkal's identity was disrupted. His identity is narrated in fragments in the story without any concrete answers to the question about his real identity. In Gus Jakfar's dream, Kiai Tawakkal is depicted as an old *kiai*.

*Namanya Kiai Tawakkal. Kata ayah dalam mimpi itu, hanya kiai-kai tertentu yang tahu tentang kiai yang usianya sudah lebih dari 100 tahun ini (Bisri, 2014).*

His name is Kiai Tawakkal. Father said in the dream, only certain kiai know about this kiai who is more than 100 years old.

The narrator, which is represented by Gus Jakfar, describes that Kiai Tawakkal is actually an old *kiai*. Readers will assume that if a person has reached the age of one century, his body will match that age, but this assumption is challenged, because the age mentioned in the dream and the reality (of the story) when Gus Jakfar met Kiai Tawakkal is very different, as described in the following quotation.

*"... dan kalian tahu? Ternyata penampilan Kiai Tawakkal sama sekali tidak mencerminkan sosoknya sebagai orang tua. Tubuhnya tegap dan wajahnya berseri-seri. Kedua matanya indah memancarkan kearifan. Bicaraya jelas dan teratur. Hampir semua kalimat yang meluncur dari mulut beliau bermuatan kata-kata hikmah (Bisri, 2014)."*

... and you know what? It turns out that Kiai Tawakkal's appearance does not reflect his figure as a parent at all. His body was sturdy and his face was beaming. Her beautiful eyes radiate wisdom. Speak clearly and regularly. Almost all the sentences that came out of his mouth were filled with words of wisdom.

Kiai Tawakkal's age and physical condition contradict the general understanding of reality that has been accepted in Western empiricism. In addition, the real identity of Kiai Tawakkal remains unknown to the surrounding community. His neighbors know him as Mbah Jogo. The unanswered question is whether Mbah Jogo and Kiai Tawakkal are the identity of the same character. Even the personal and non-personal presence of Kiai Tawakkal or Mbah Jogo is also a disorder of his identity.

*"Beliau di mana?" tanya saya buru-buru. "Mana saya tahu?" jawabnya. "Mbah Jogo datang dan pergi semaunya. Tak ada seorang pun yang tahu dari mana beliau datang dan ke mana beliau pergi (Bisri, 2014)."*

"Where is he?" I asked hastily. "How would I know?" he answered. "Mbah Jogo comes and goes as he pleases. No one knows where he came from and where he went."

The conversation between Gus Jakfar and one of the residents of the *surau* quoted above shows Gus Jakfar who is asking about Kiai Tawakkal's whereabouts. It turns out that no one knows about his whereabouts. This moment corresponds to the moment when Gus Jakfar found that Kiai Tawakkal had suddenly disappeared from his sight. These occurrences then raise the question whether Kiai Tawakkal is a human or non-human.

## Relationship Between Elements

The previously described findings support the argument that *Gus Jakfar* can be categorized as magical realism. The story of Gus Jakfar demonstrates five characteristics of magical realism that were posited by Wendi B. Faris. These seemingly independent aspects are connected to one another. In “Gus Jakfar,” magical events that cannot be reduced or explained by Western empiricists such as exemplified by Gus Jakfar’s ability to see ‘supernatural’ signs and predict one’s fate according to them, raises unsettling doubt. Unsettling doubt is the kind of doubt that the reader may feel because of the magical elements presented in the text. The doubt is unsettling because no answer is provided for any questions that may arise about the magical events.

The next characteristic of magical realism that is evident in the text is the phenomenal world. In this kind of world, the real world is presented and constructed in a fictional form to balance the magic, so that the magical and the real portions are balanced. The world that appears realistic in the short story is places that are called *pesantren* and *warung*. The presence of realism can also suppress the magical part so that it doesn’t turn into fantasy. The phenomenal world is then associated with the merging realms in which the real world intertwines with the magical world. In *Gus Jakfar*, this encounter of the real and magical worlds is represented by the case of Kiai Tawakkal, on whose forehead, a mysterious sign written “*Ahli Neraka*” appears. The result of this real-and- magical encounter is the disruption of time, space and identity.

## Level of Magical Realism

The level of magical realism can be determined from the identification of the five characteristics previously mentioned. The process involves the determination of whether the characters, events and objects characterize a realist, magical or magical realist dimension. In terms of character, the short story features a character named Gus Jakfar that is presented as a human being, but he has supernatural abilities that cannot be accepted and explained by scientific laws or logic. In that case, Gus Jakfar represents an element of magical realism. By the same token, a character named Kiai Tawakkal is presented as a human being in some parts of the story, but in some others his human-like characteristic is questionable.

His mysterious identity is predominantly magical. Even *kasyf* itself is defined here as magical because it is associated with phenomena beyond the realistic world.

In terms of object, the story presents element of realism such as coffee shop, albizia forests, and *pondok pesantren* to balance up the supernatural objects in it. Occupations or roles such as government employee and *kiai* are also elements of realism presented for the above mentioned purpose.

From the perspective of the readers who live in modernity, two contradictory things or elements that are presented together can raise a doubt about the magical parts. Readers who are accustomed to magical realism genre may consider such narrative mode fantastic. So this identification of magical realist elements reveals that the portion of magic in realism is predominant even though the realistic objects are also presented in *Gus Jakfar*.

## Tradition and Defocalization Narrative

The magical realist nature of a literary work is not only identifiable through its characteristics but also through its narrative techniques. The five characteristics that have been described previously serve as the basis for defocalization, a mode that breaks the modern single perspective (focalization).

This kind of narrative mode is what Faris calls shamanic narrative healing (Faris, 2004). It refers to a ‘healing’ for the gap between the empirical and the imaginative, the scientific and the traditional, and the rational and the spiritual. Faris explains that defocalization is created by means of narrative techniques such as magical detail (logical thing but exaggerated so that it becomes magical), naive narrators (the innocent narrators, using characters that are made inferior, and the one who is being narrated can be verified by realism/superior framework), bridges (bridging worlds built through discourse), two-way streets (ambiguity built in order to be identified), narrative distance and chinese boxes (emphasizing fantastic positions, namely the uncanny and the marvelous that provide narrative distance), and mirroring (analogies that often create reference changes).

Faris also mentions that this narrative mode is related to cultural condition (Faris, 2004). In *Gus Jakfar* case, the cultural background of the story is the *pesantren* tradition in Indonesia. *Pesantren* is a



fertile place for a culture that is not only religious but also traditional and pre-modern. The *pesantren* environment holds cultural wealth that offers myths, legends, and beliefs in magical entities (Faruk et al., 2020). This cultural background has the potential to be the source of magical elements for magical realism in Indonesia.

The cultural background of *Gus Jakfar* writer is the *pesantren* tradition. The author of the short story has created a story setting that corresponds to Indonesian cultural tradition that is related to *pesantren*. The word *Gus*, for example, is a form of address that is closely related to the *pesantren* and the *kiai's* family. *Kiai* is the most important element in the *pesantren*. In Javanese culture, *gus* is associated with three types of titles: 1) honorary title for items that are considered sacred; 2) honorary title for parents in general; and 3) the title given by the community to religious experts who have founded or hold an administration role in an Islamic boarding school and teach classical Islamic books (Dhofier, 1994).

*Pesantren* tradition is closely related to sufism. According to Bruinessen *pesantren* tradition characterizes sufism and *ubudiyah* tradition (Bruinessen, 1995). Sufism is a theme that has been widely explored in modern Indonesian literature since the 1970s. Several examples of prominent Indonesian literary authors who have explored this theme in their works are Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, Taufik Ismail, Zawawi Imron, Hamid Jabar, and Danarto. Magical elements in their works are often associated with sufism and myths in Javanese tradition. Their distinct characteristic has contributed to the identity of magical realism in Indonesia (Sundusiah, 2015).

The *pesantren* tradition described in *Gus Jakfar* characterizes a community's tradition that has been influenced by modernity, which corresponds to Indonesian *pesantren* in reality. As the story goes, several high-ranking officials plan a special visit to see Gus Jakfar. In the short story, Gus Mus emphasizes the reality of our society that moves between rational and irrational, between formal logic and spiritual logic.

The form of tradition that plays a central role in *Gus Jakfar* is the phenomenon of *kasyf* (seeing signs) that still persists today in modern society. *Kasyf* is like an opened curtain that is made possible by Allah for certain individuals so that they can see what others cannot see (Asmaran, 2002). *Kasyf* or *mukasyafah* cannot be achieved by reason, as what Imam Ghazali

describes it, *fauqa thur al-'aql* (above the peak of reason). The *kasyf* phenomenon in this short story is presented through three narrators, namely the common people, Gus Jakfar and Kiai Tawakkal. It is told in the story as something beyond reason.

*Kasyf* from the perspective of the common people appears in the conversation between characters such as Kang Solikin, Mas Bambang, Mas Guru Slamet, Ustadz Kamil, Lik Salamun, and Pak Carik. *Kasyf* here is seen as something extraordinary, making Gus Jakfar respected in the society. Some of the people are even afraid of it.

*Kasyf* from the perspective of Gus Jakfar as the person who experience it as a supernatural gift is complicated. He likes his ability to read signs at first, but then he prefers to stop having it. This development is motivated by the understanding of *kasyf* from the perspective of the common people, and also a new understanding about it that he gains from Kiai Tawakkal. Gus Jakfar as a sign reader used to find that the sign (magic) he reads on a person match the person's fate (real), but when he reads the sign that he sees on Kiai Tawakkal's forehead, it is not the case. This particular sign, that reads *Ahli Neraka*, does not match what he knows about Kiai Tawakkal.

Finally, *kasyf* from the perspective of Kiai Tawakkal is presented in the text when he criticizes Gus Jakfar. Kiai Tawakkal is described as having the ability to see supernatural phenomena too. He knows that Gus Jakfar is looking for answers to the signs he has seen on his forehead. Kiai tawakkal perceives *kasyf* as a test. This means that grace and disaster are both a test from God.

*"Cobaan yang berupa anugerah tidak kalah gawatnya dibanding cobaan yang berupa penderitaan. Seperti mereka yang di warung tadi; kebanyakan mereka orang susah. Orang susah sulit kau bayangkan bersikap takabbur; ujub, atau sikap-sikap lain yang cenderung membesarkan diri sendiri. Berbeda dengan mereka yang mempunyai kemampuan dan kelebihan: godaan untuk takabbur dan sebagainya itu datang setiap saat. Apalagi bila kemampuan dan kelebihan itu diakui oleh banyak pihak (Bisri, 2014)."*

Trials in the form of grace are no less serious than trials in the form of suffering. Like those in the shop earlier; most of them are hard people.

Difficult people you can imagine being arrogant; ujub, or other self-indulgent attitudes. Unlike those who have the ability and advantages: the temptation to takabbur and so on comes every time. Especially if the abilities and strengths are recognized by many parties.

The quotation above shows the way Kiai Tawakkal sees *kasyf*. He explains that it is a gift from Allah, but at the same time it is a test from Him. This perspective changes the way Gus Jakfar thinks about his ability. He, who used to like to read supernatural signs, stops doing it completely after his meeting with Kiai Tawakkal. This *Kasyf* phenomenon breaks the modern perspective that knowledge can only be accessed by what is visible and rational, which is empirical and measurable. In fact, there are many things that cannot be reasoned but can be verified.

This is related to the defocalization mode in the short story. In narrating the *kasyf* phenomenon, the author mostly uses mirroring technique, which is drawing analogies that create changes in references. One example is the case of an analogy between a shining forehead and the moment when Sumini found a future husband. Another example is an analogy between a hooked nose and the boredom in breath or the signs of Kang Kandar's death. There is also an analogy between a full pocket and a big project whose truth is verified by the character named Lik Salamun.

### **Knowledge: Between the *Kasyf* and the Rational**

Through *Gus Jakfar*, we get an alternative insight that the *kasyf* phenomenon can challenge the uniqueness of the Western Empirical perspective that knowledge rests on an agreed logic-based rationality. This insight is in line with A. K. Soleh's statement that *kasyf* is a way to get knowledge (*ma'rifat*) directly from God, unlike the knowledge obtained through transformation (*naql*), and rationality (*aql*) (Soleh, 2010). This knowledge is referred to as that which is presented differently from the rational knowledge that is sought and cultivated (Supriatna, 2019).

Al-Attas (1990) confirms the position and authority of this intuitive source. According to him, all knowledge about reality and truth as well as a vision of the natural world view are obtained through intuition, and one of them is obtained through *kasyf*. Furthermore, he argues that it is this intuition that is

capable of integrating things that are seen as separate entities by reason and by empirical experience into a whole coherent meaning of reality (al-Attas, 1995: 38). In this sense, intuition is a source that is strongly recognized in the epistemology of sufism.

### **CONCLUSION**

Gus Mus's short story, *Gus Jakfar*, contains five characteristics of magical realism posited by Wendy B. Faris. Those five aspects interrelate to each other, and the elements of realism and the magical are equally presented in the story. It shows how the irrationality of *kasyf* breaks into the reality of modern society. Gus Mus applies the mirroring technique in his short story, presenting analogies that create a referential change. It exposes the *kasyf* phenomenon that is associated with irrational knowledge. *Kasyf*, in this context, represents a defocalization of irrational knowledge by breaking the singular perspective of modern society's rationality. It offers a different perspective about the knowledge that comes directly from God.

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