

MALAY THOUGHT ON MANNERS AND KNOWLEDGE: EXPLORING MORAL VALUES AND NATURE IN PANTUN

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ABSTRACT

Pantun acts as a symbol in communication among Malay community whose values and rhyme are inseparable from the culture and heritage of the ancestors. Pantun contains local wisdom in the form of advice, morality, and appreciation of nature and its surroundings. The values in pantun correlate with Islamic teachings making the poetry continue to be relevant, particularly to observe the best manners while interacting with others, and to be keen in searching for and adopting knowledge. As expected, pantun that offers sound advice listed amongst the most timeless, including for the younger generation. In contemporary Malaysia, tech-savvy generation interact with pantun in various social media platforms such as Facebook, and Instagram and a range of computing techniques like augmented reality and mobile game. In long term, this project aims to design and develop mobile game application to facilitate children in learning pantun and explore nature and wisdom being hidden behind the words. Unfortunately, limited research examines both components to serve as the basis for the game learning content. Thus, this paper aims to discuss elements of morality and nature in Pantun using flora and fauna components. These two components appear to be dominant in pantun to mould the identity of Malays. The findings show that pantun demonstrates great respect for nature and applies aesthetic language to teach wisdom. To offer advice, pantun presents the message only after providing

appreciation to nature. The intrinsic interpretations of pantun reveal that they are full of elements related to manners and knowledge. To name a few, good ethics, politeness, education, and teachings are all consistent with the Islamic teaching on universal guidance to mankind.

Keywords: pantun; moral values; nature; children; wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Pantun represents a form of Malay oral tradition that continues to be alive and used by the Malay community up to this time. Pantun construction has some specific rule; the most common pantun come in four lines; and the well-known rule for a pantun construction requires the rhyme scheme for these lines to be accordingly *abab*. By *abab*, the first and third line must rhyme, and so with the second and fourth line. As for the content, the first two lines describe the nature and surrounding to act as some hint, while the last two lines present the message of moral values.

The pantun could serve the purpose of entertainment, commonly as a tool for satire and jokes, however most importantly, the poem acts as a medium in conveying advice and lessons to society members. In the design of earlier pantun, the older generation were so creative in conveying a message in a prudent manner that loaded with religious values, culture, and social norms as well as moral and noble elements.

In long term, this project aims to design and develop mobile game application to facilitate children in learning pantun and explore nature and wisdom being hidden behind the words. Unfortunately, limited research examines both components to serve as the basis for the game learning content. Thus, this paper aims to discuss elements of morality and nature in pantun. The discussion in the next part focuses on moral values and nature in pantun. The elaboration produces emphasise on flora and fauna elements in pantun.

NATURE AND LIVING THINGS IN PANTUN

Pantun creation pays attention to the function of meaning in the selected terms to convey emotions and surroundings in the life of Malay community (Ishak et al. 2018). Furthermore, the diction and order of words should be carefully chosen to produce the desired effect of special feeling and beauty in the hidden message. The specialty of pantun lies in its simplicity, and the density of its form and structure. A stanza of pantun can also radiate the beauty of the thoughts including the nobleness of character, as well as the breadth and depth of perspective. The beauty of the language in the pantun also to express the meaning that is a symbol of the important message beneath.

The beauty of pantun can be seen through its precise internal characteristics, containing meaning, thought and philosophy that are all contained in an expression. Pantun consists of a foreshadowing line and a meaning line.

Nature and living things appear to become the major concern in the shadow and symbol of pantun structure. There are elements of nature such as flora and fauna that are used widely to form a pantun. Various studies aim to examine the elements of fauna as well as the relationship with humans by focusing on the elements of birds. How did the Malay community in the past relate the elements of nature element in pantun? This question require examination and evaluation using systematic approach.

The use of natural elements as a foreshadowing of the pantun requires a sharp mind to understand the implied meaning. Such is the wisdom of the Malay community in satirizing, educating, arguing and all the emotions mixed in the shadow of the pantun (Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018). The pantun's strong relationship with nature is undeniable like a leaf and its veins are unseparated. The pantun creation insists to make natural resources unfold as a flavoring hint. Behind the lexical nature in pantun, exist the the philosophy of life from the critical perspective to respect the environment (Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018).

Flora and fauna theme in pantun has been researched using ecological criticism to unravel the human relationship with the environment (Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018). The following sections appreciate their work to unravel the relationship between literature and nature to emphasise the beauty and pure value contained in the pantun. The use of natural elements in the foreshadowing of pantun proves that the elements are not just a treat for the eyes, but cynically serves as a reminder to society that humans and nature need each other.

METHODOLOGY

This paper applies qualitative research methods entirely by focusing on document analysis to identify flora and fauna components. These two components appear to be dominant in pantun to mould the identity of Malays. The analysis on two previous pantun-related studies focus on the meaning and relation to Malay community to enhance the understanding in the topic. The first study examines the relationship between flora elements and their interpretations based on pantuns by Pak Nazel (Nazel Hashim, 2012) utilising the eco-critical theory (Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018).

The second study evaluate the meaning of pantun with the context of fauna elements gathered from the 'Kurik Kundi Merah Saga: Kumpulan Pantun Lisan Melayu' (Maulana Al-Fin & Nor Hashimah, 2018). The analysis summarise the approaches together with pantun example to simplify the procedure to proceed with such objectives.

FLORAL ELEMENT IN PANTUN

Flora or plant stands as one of the diverse living things found in the world. The meaning of pantun under this category in the context of Malay community has been researched (Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018). The plant lexicon in the Pak Nazel's pantun could be divided into two categories: flowers and trees. Floral element appears to be beautiful because of its stunning qualities, has a strong

effect on the structure of the soul, making it enchanted, sensual, and easily captured (softened and yielding). The plants in the pantun not only serve as a flavoring of the poem. The description of its benefits in terms of habitat and botanical characteristics, together with the content, location of plants, types, tips and uses.

The pantun uses plants a lot in terms of habitat, botanical characteristics, nutrients and uses as a food source, medicine and community economy. Plants appear to be one of the environment components that we need to preserve so that they remain in our surrounding despite the changing times and various advances. In the criticism, the quality of the relationship between language and ecology and ecological ethics is examined and evaluated to demonstrate that nature and culture (language) as inseparable. The pantun as a language tool is able to connect the environment and culture or more precisely between ecology and ecological ethics.

Flowers category: saga tree, dedalu flower and family

The original pantun and the respective translation are as follow.

<i>Bawah redup pohon saga, Bunga dedalu jatuh bertebar; Kalau hidup berjauhan keluarga, Berhubung selalu bertanya khabar.</i>	<i>Beneath the saga tree shadowy, The dedalu flowers fall and scatter; If you live far away from family, Keep in touch to feel better.</i>
(Pak Nazel Pantun Keluarga: 106)	(Pak Nazel's Family Pantun: 106)

The pantun is subject to ecological criticism to unravel the human relationship with the environment (Noor Hasnoor, 2016). The ecological items in the pantun are related to saga tree and dedalu flowers (in Figures 1 and 2, each), where more than one flora element has been picked to appear in the pantun hints. This selection shows the closeness of one floral element to the other, to depict the richness of ecological surroundings that live side by side in harmony and sometimes in disagreement to fiercely compete for available and limited resources.

Dedalu flower is used as a hint in the foreshadowing of the pantun. Based on this pantun, Dedalu flower describes how a child or family member needs each other even though they live far apart. The description in the pantun shows Dedalu flower to be falling scattered. The Dedalu has a botanical features to be a type of plant that rides and is parasitic to other bigger trees, such as the Saga tree. The Dedalu flowers release spores that are easy to reproduce with the help of the wind. Meanwhile, Saga trees present the figure of strong plant that produce shining red fruits and has been used as the hint subjects in various pantun.



Figure 1: Saga tree and its fruit



Figure 2: Dedalu flower

The implied meaning of the use of Dedalu flowers refer to the type of this plant as a passenger (parasite) to other trees. This clearly illustrates the meaning based on the nature of the Dedalu flower itself which requires someone or a family member to depend on. The meaning of this pantun is to try to advise someone who lives far away from the family to stay in touch by saying hello so that the bond between the family members keep strong despite being away. The pantun teaches the young generation to not use the distance factor as an excuse not to keep in touch with family members. This is so because, family is a very important person in our life and without the support and encouragement from family members maybe a person will not be successful in his life.

The teaching of Islam urges individuals to appreciate and cherish their family. Family would be the source of happiness and love, as among the mercy of Allah to humankind. One example of this principle could be found in the verse from al-Quran.

And We bestowed on him his family and as many more with them, by way of mercy from Us, and as a reminder to men of understanding.
(38 Saad: 44)

Trees category: frangipani and old folk

Two pantun are selected to describe the nature related to tree in pantun. One comes from the knowledge theme and the other from articulation theme. The original pantun from Pak Nazel and the respective translation are as follow.

*Pokok kemboja berbunga tidak,
Daunnya gugur patah ranting;
Tua sahaja akal nya budak,
Apabila ditegur marah melenting.*
(Pak Nazel Pantun Akal: 15)

*Frangipani shrub refuses to blossom,
Its falling leaves have broken the shoot;
A child's heart trapped in an old bosom,
Once rebuked, get angry and snoot.*
(Pak Nazel's Knowledge Pantun:15)

Based on the foreshadowing of this pantun, the author uses the Cambogia tree or its scientific name Frangipani. Figures 3 and 4 present Frangipani tree and flower. Frangipani has some difficulty to produce flowers under a shady place. The nature of Frangipani flowers that require sunlight is the main pillar for the growth of the tree to grow more lushly together with blooming flowers. This is clearly stated in the foreshadowing of this pantun which is "the Frangipani shrub refuses to blossom".



Figure 3: Frangipani tree



Figure 4: Frangipani flower

This description of non-flowering Frangipani tree be linked to the nature of a person who lacks common sense even though he is old. Just like the botanical features of Frangipani flowers that are difficult to grow when they are in a shady place. The tree is described in the pantun to produce plenty of leaves to show the healthy and strong trees. Unfortunately, the expected beautiful flowers to emerge from the tree is not fulfilled. The Frangipani tree usually planted for aesthetic purpose in garden, house compound or even graveyard as a landscape object. The Frangipani flower has paradoxical identity to be the flower of death but also of love, but it offers a stunning colors and sweet scent.

The interest to plant Frangipani in graveyard among Malay community stems from the strong creamy and sweet scent. In the last minute before the flower falls, the frangipani continuous to bloom and keeps a strong fragrance. Despite the gloomy and silence in the location, the presence of Frangipani put some color and fragrance for a along period of time.

The shadow of Frangipani tree provides preparation for the meaning in this pantun. The feature of this tree serves as an allusion to the attitude of an old man. Even though he is getting older, people like this have a hard time listening to advice from others. Most of those who have this kind of behavior are quick to bounce when reprimanded. The hot-tempered nature of a person shows his lack of intelligence and refuse to accept any advice or criticism from people.

The old age shows weakness in physical and mental ability of a human. This period comes after Allah has given strength during the young to adult time, preceded by weakness during infant. The temporary stage in life is part of Allah's knowledge and supremacy.

It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, and after weakness gave strength; then, after strength, caused weakness and old age. He creates what He pleases. He is the All-knowing, the All-Powerful.

(30 The Romans: 55)

The teaching of Islam advice us to be kind, polite and gentle to the old folks, especially to our parents. Despite the importance to give the old parents the message of truth, one need to observe a generous and delicate word to communicate with them.

“Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them, but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small’”.

(17 The Night Journey: 23-24).

Tree category: gelam, senna trees and communication

The original pantun from Pak Nazel and the respective translation are as follow.

<i>Pokok gelam tumbuh merata,</i>	<i>Gelam trees grow evenly,</i>
<i>Pohon sena sukar dicari;</i>	<i>Sena trees are of rare visibility;</i>
<i>Bodoh dalam mengeluarkan kata,</i>	<i>Unable to converse wisely,</i>
<i>Boleh menghina diri sendiri.</i>	<i>Be an insult to your individuality.</i>

(Pak Nazel Pantun Bistari: 37) (Pak Nazel's Articulation Pantun: 37)

The foreshadowing of the pantun uses the Gelam tree and the Sena tree as a biotic cosmology (flora). The botanical characteristics of the Gelam tree or its scientific name *Melaleuca Cajuputi* Powell is a type of plant that grows easily especially in wetland areas. In the pantun hint, 'the gelam tree grows evenly' describes that they can be found growing wild in abandoned and swampy areas. Gelam's easy-to-reproduce nature allows the tree to multiply quickly in wetland areas. Meanwhile, the Sena tree or *Pterocarpus Indicus* is a type of habitat that lives in the jungle areas. Therefore, most of these Sena trees are only planted as decorations and landscape objects.



Figure 5: Gelam tree



Figure 6: Sena tree

In the hint of this poem, a person is imagined to easily get a Gelam tree because of its nature that grows evenly. While the Sena tree requires special care to be able to grow even for the purpose of a beautiful decoration for the eyes. This is a translation of the implied meaning of "Unable to converse wisely, Be an insult to your individuality". The situation related to this hint is when a person is arguing something without the correct facts or proper way will result in public and personal embarrassment. Delivering a message that fully loaded with emotions require some skills that not many have and require some time and training to obtain. Improper conversation and communication would risk a person for self-insulting.

The ability to converse wisely is among the important aim of pantun (Nirwana Sudirman et al., 2017). In the context of high morality standard, pantun are created to instill great importance to politeness in language and communication order (Siti Hajar, 2013). The use of pantun avoids impudence or sloppiness to convey a message that can upset, frown, eventually create antagonism in society (Ahmad & Shaiful Bahri, 2021). The ethos of communication in challenging and emotional situations, not only train proper manners in communicating, but also form a prudent personality order and control personal actions and emotions (Norazimah Zakaria et al., 2017).

The advice in the pantun to communicate wisely is compatible with the teaching of Islam which asks us to use kind speech and forgiving; prohibits us from behaving snobbishly, arrogant and superior. Many places in alQuran mention about this especially in the following verses.

"So leave them alone to indulge in vain discourse and amuse themselves until they meet that Day of theirs which they have been promised. "

(43 The Gold Adornments: 84)

"Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing. "

(2 The Calf: 263)

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah . Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”

(3 The Family of Imran: 159)

“Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing.”

(4 The Women: 148)

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”

(16 The Bee: 125)

Furthermore, each Muslim must learn and apply the principles of communication in Islam that fall into six points (Ezzudin, 2020): True Speech, Right on Target, Mild Words, Speaks Softly, Noble Words and Kind Words. True Speech has no ambiguity and it is clear; Right on Target are words that effective; Mild Words involve concise and precise language. Speaks Softly means use soft words and full of hospitality; while Noble Words mean using gentle words accompanied by respect and admiration; and Kind Words refer to polite and honourable words.

FAUNA ELEMENT IN PANTUN

The elements of fauna could be found vastly in pantun to show how well the relationship between humans and living creatures. Among the popular element would be the elements of birds of many types and species (Maulana Al-Fin & Nor Hashimah, 2018). Three most dominant types of birds appear in Malay pantun, namely pigeons, doves and sparrows.

Dove, pigeon and humanity

There is slight modification from the original pantun to suit love and humanity message for children audience.

*Burung merbuk burung merpati,
Terbang berpusing hala bendang;
Budi elok menawan hati,
Siang malam hamba terkenang.*

Kurik Kundi Merah Saga: Kasih
Sayang

*Dove and Pigeon fly in joiner,
Over the paddy field they would twist,
You have such a wonderful manner,
I shall not forget while the world.*

Kurik Kundi Merah Saga: Universal
Love

In the foreshadow, the pantun describes two types of birds, the dove and the pigeon. The two birds flew together, circling towards the bendang or paddy field. In the traditional life of Malay, the common place to observe the birds would be likely the paddy field. Not only provide food for human and animals, these fields offer magnificent natural scenery to rest the body and soul. The birds enjoy the fields as where they can fulfil the tummy as much as they can mingle freely. So, the paddy field is one of the strategic places to get food sources for their daily needs, the source of hope for the birds and many others.



Figure 7: A dove



Figure 8: A pigeon

The paddy fields covers the most basic food source for the community and other living things in the system to describe an ecosystem. The ecosystem in the fields show dynamic interaction among each components involving producers (rice), primary consumers (birds, grasshoppers and mice), secondary consumers (birds, chickens and snakes) and tertiary consumers (hawks). Doves and pigeons not only eat grains but also insects such as grasshoppers.

The implied meaning of the pantun shows that a person has been captivated by the kindness of another person with a beautiful manner. The moment is substantial; to the point that the incident stores in the long term memory. The kindness of one person may leave a significant meaning of life incident to the other person. The act of kindness shows a selfless soul who are willing to sacrifice and share whatever the person owns sincerely, without any expectation of the return. As human who owns brain to think and heart to sense emotion, the person who receives kindness would be thankful and appreciate to obtain such wonderful things.

One of the ways to return the kindness would be by words and saying gratefulness of the life has to give. However, action speaks louder than words to imply that there are better ways than simply say thank you. People's actions show their real attitudes, rather than what they say. To remind a person own self regarding the kindness of others appear to be better outcome as the action motivates him/her to continuously do righteous and kindness to other people as long as time permits. This is described as chain of kindness.

The meaning in the pantun clearly shows that a person senses love and humanity from the other's kindness. The person will be in a state of agitation and thinking about gratefulness. The depiction of the birds in the pantun represents human behavior from the view of the Malay community. Paddy field is an area that is one of the hopes for birds to get food including pigeons.

The circling behavior of doves and pigeons depicts that humans are always in a state of fear and hope in looking for something unsure of the result. This is highlighted in the place or area that is intended, which is paddy field. The Malay community considers that paddy field is a vast and expansive place, a source of sustenance not only for humans but also for animals.

The paddy fields are also where farming activities that involve not only the elderly but teenagers. Pigeons and doves are like humans who wander the world to find other human fellow who offer a new life experiences and lesson. This can be analogous to the behavior of pigeons. So, what is highlighted in this pantun is the hope that the person do the least justice to return the kindness from the other by not simply forget the occasion and promise to find ways to do the similar in any opportunity. The interpretation above seems to suit the general reference to dove and pigeon to the theme of peace and love.

The life of a bird itself has plenty of inspirations for Muslim to ponder. The following verse and prophet saying suggest that we take the moment to think about Allah's creations, big and small and be thankful to be able to think.

"Do you not see the birds held high between the heavens and the earth? Nothing holds them (aloft) but God. There are verily signs in this for those who believe. "

The Bee: 80

"Umar said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him say: 'If you were to rely upon Allah with the reliance He is due, you would be given provision like the birds: They go out hungry in the morning and come back with full bellies in the evening.' "

Sunan Ibn Majah 4164

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper provides discussion on elements of morality and nature in Pantun by giving specific focus on three categories of nature: flowers, trees and animals. The points are based on the selected pantun and discussed meaning from previous research (Maulana Al-Fin & Nor Hashimah, 2018; Nordiana & Nurul Ain, 2018). The selected pantun fits to the target user of children that has universal message on wisdom and manners. Meanwihle, children may explore how nature plays significant role in the life of Malay community.

The use of Dedalu flower and Saga tree in pantun foreshadowing symbolize the ecological system in comparison to a person and the family. Admire being a parasite, Dedalu flower depends and relate to the bigger unit to survive, in particular a Saga tree. A person who is away from family seems to

have broken physical connection to the home, but the missing part can always be replaced by communication especially with the available facilities nowadays to strengthen family bonding. Family provides pertinent source for strength, joy, happiness, and mental support for a person to deal with responsibilities and challenges for being away from family.

In tree category discussion, the Frangipani parable uses description of incapable to flowering to present a specific weakness of an elder person. It is unfortunate for someone who has physical limitation to also suffer from mental and spiritual limitation. This is the case for a child who trapped in an old body for unable to respond and function wisely in community. The other pantun involves Gelam and Sena trees comparison around the issue of abundance versus scarcity, for us to ponder about quality and content. The parable highlights the importance of communication ethos to deliver message during challenging situations and overwhelming emotions that one should master. Luckily our great grandparents had leaved us with treasures in the form of pantun to deal with those difficulties.

The parable of birds falls into animal category. Doves and pigeons represent birds to exemplify the closeness of the Malay community to animals. The use of birds in the pantun acts as a symbol of humans themselves. The birds refer to universal love, peace, humanity and loyalty that exist in pigeon and dove pantun. For everyday dealings in community, birds suggest courage, freedom, kindness and wisdom. There is clear application of fear and hope principle as human who shares the earth with fellow community in competing and tolerating sources for food and basic needs. Fear of life risks triggers human to the sense of God existence, God fearing or taqwa with the belief that His Mercy and Power undermines every worry to watch, protect and return their actions, be they good or bad.

In conclusion, the relationship between the emotions and thoughts of the past community is usually formed in terms of natural elements. The pantun produced by Pak Nazel or generated by Kurik Kundi collection, apply many elements of nature to describe important things. By giving the nature of flowers, trees and animals to humans to be attached in message will appear more refined and polite despite in challenging times such as anger. The inclination to use nature in pantun partly due to the past generation's great appreciation to nature including to be able to translate nature's condition into good decision making.

For younger generation especially children, the pantun provides opportunity for them to learn the heritage. The prospect to explore nature and morality in pantun offers better coherent and understanding of their identity. These children would comprehend how the living things need to be consumed wisely to be inherited to their grandchildren and that follows. The use of game to learn about pantun will use the content presented in the discussion.

This paper has demonstrated the dominants of morality and nature elements in Pantun using flora and fauna components. The next stage of the research aims to address the long term goal. There are some limitations in this research that could be enhanced in future. The pantun discussion observes practical information related to the description and background of nature, the

carried meaning of pantun and how they would mean to a person, and consistency of pantun message to Islamic teaching. The list could be enhanced to include ecological system, lexical similarity, and many useful linkages.

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